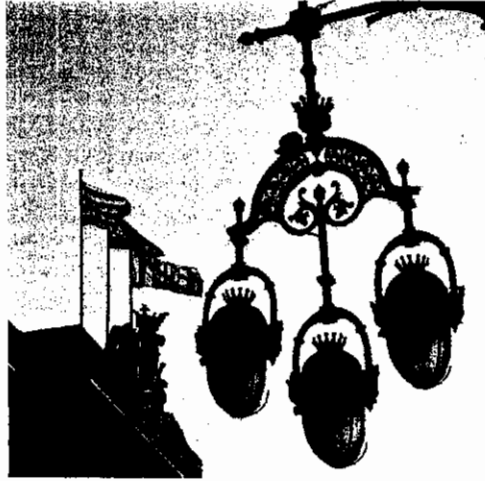


Sant Feliu de Guixols

1

LA JOIA VERDE



F. VDBINICHEIN

Cataluña

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ya que, sobre todo en
incontable.

(1858-1939)

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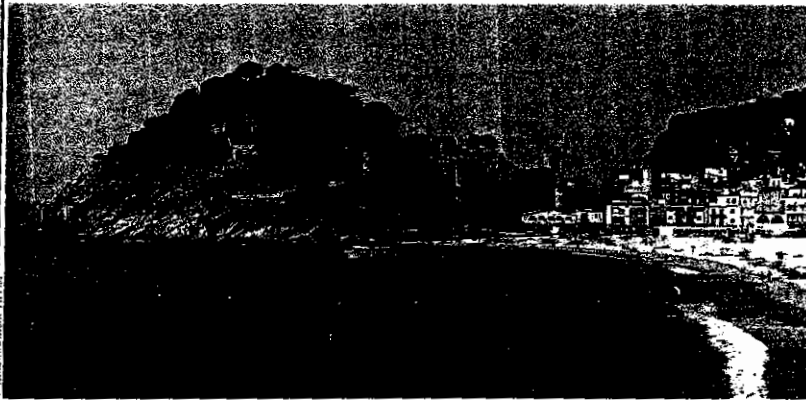
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Tossa de Mar

Al Norte de su acogedora bahía, en lo alto del promontorio del "cap de Tossa", se halla la **Vila Vella*** (ss. XII-XIV). Este notable recinto fortificado conserva su perímetro original, con sobrios muros almenados de mampostería, cuatro torreones y tres monumentales torres cilíndricas (del Codolar, de las Horas y la Torre de Jonás) rematadas por matacanes.

La Vila Nova, conjunto de modernos hoteles, apartamentos y restaurantes, se extiende paralela al mar.

Museo Municipal* - Abre 10-14 y 16-18, do y fest 10-15. De jun-sep: lu, do y fest 10-14 y 16-20; resto días 10-20. Cerrado lu (exc verano), 1, 6 y 23 ene, 25 y 26 dic. 3€. ☎ 972 34 07 09.

Fundado en 1935, ocupa la antigua casa del gobernador o "batlle". Se exponen numerosos hallazgos arqueológicos de la cercana villa romana de Els Ametllers (ss. I-IV). Destaca la importante **colección de arte contemporáneo***, con obras de artistas nacionales y extranjeros (Marc Chagall, André Masson, Rafael Benet...) que frecuentaron Tossa durante los años treinta.

Sant Feliu de Guíxols*

Esta población marinera está situada en una pequeña bahía, protegida por los últimos contrafuertes de la sierra de Les Gavarres. El **Paseo del Mar**, trayecto arbolado que se extiende paralelo a la playa, es la arteria más dinámica de la ciudad. En verano sus numerosas terrazas y cafés de aire modernista (**Casino dels Nois**) ofrecen un aspecto muy animado. Son curiosos los comercios dedicados a la **artesanía del corcho**. En ellos se pueden encontrar desde los típicos tapones hasta artísticas piezas.

Iglesia-monasterio de Sant Feliu* - Abre 8-11 y a las 20.30; do y fest sólo en horas de culto. Cerrado lu, 1 ene y 25 dic. ☎ 972 82 15 75.

Los restos de este antiguo monasterio benedictino (s. X) se encuentran en la Plaça del Monestir, presidiendo el núcleo urbano. Inicialmente fortificado, se trata de un auténtico mosaico de estilos arquitectónicos. Las torres del Fum y del Corn, así como la **Porta Ferrada****, enigmática portada con arcos de herradura de estilo prerrománico, son los vestigios más antiguos. La iglesia, gótica, posee tres ábsides poligonales y una sola nave cubierta con bóveda de crucería. Las dependencias monásticas, remodeladas durante el s. XVIII, albergan el **Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat**. Abre sá 11-14 y 16-19 (17-20 en verano); do y fest 11-14. Resto días previa cita. Cerrado 1 ene y 25 dic. Grat. ☎ 972 82 15 75.

Capilla de Sant Elm - Vis previa cita. ☎ 972 82 15 75.

Según parece, el periodista **Ferran Agulló** bautizó el litoral con la expresión "Costa Brava" desde este espléndido mirador. Las **vistas**** que se observan de la costa en forma de cornisa son impresionantes.

Pedralta*

Situada en el límite con el municipio de Castell d'Aro, esta piedra basculante -considerada una de las mayores de Europa- es otro singular mirador sobre la bahía.

S'Agaró*

Lujosa urbanización con bellas mansiones residenciales. Fue iniciada en los años veinte por el arquitecto Rafael Masó según la estética novecentista, aunque más tarde se construyeron casas modernas. Desde el llamado Camino de Ronda se distinguen excelentes **perspectivas*** de los acantilados.

LAS PLAYAS DE TOSSA

El gran atractivo de la villa son sus encantadoras playas de arena fina, ideales por su poca profundidad, para el baño. La **Platja Gran (Playa Grande)** -situada frente a la Vila Nova- es la más amplia y concurrida. Por detrás de la Vila Vella se encuentra la pequeña Cala Codolar, un auténtico remanso de tranquilidad. Cercanas al núcleo urbano se hallan las calas Bona, Pola, Givarola y Llevado, desde donde se puede visitar el faro, situado sobre un acantilado a 60 m de altura.

Platja d'Aro

En verano los visitantes llenan las calles de esta localidad costera, donde se respira un ambiente cosmopolita y bullicioso. Se trata de una población acondicionada única y exclusivamente para el entretenimiento.

Palamós

Localidad con un activo puerto deportivo y pesquero, Palamós es conocido por sus apreciadas gambas. Se trata de uno de los lugares más concurridos de la Costa Brava, con una completa oferta lúdica y de servicios.

Cova d'en Daina* - 4 km al Oeste desde Palamós. Una tranquila y sinuosa carretera se adentra en la Sierra de Les Gavarres hasta llegar a Romanyà de la Selva. Pasado el pueblo, en mitad de un tranquilo bosque, se halla este interesante sepulcro megalítico.

DE PALAFRUGELL A LAS ISLAS MEDES

59 km hasta L'Estartit. Este itinerario recorre un tramo del litoral para posteriormente descubrir algunos de los bellos pueblos y paisajes del interior ampurdanés.

Palafrugell

Situada a pocos kilómetros de la costa, Palafrugell es una población con una intensa vida cultural. A principios del s. XX tuvo gran esplendor la industria artesanal del corcho, actualmente desaparecida. Numerosos visitantes acuden a esta villa durante el verano pues Palafrugell, que cuenta en su término con los importantes núcleos costeros de Llafranc, Calella de Palafrugell y Tamarit, es conocida por su ambiente festivo y por el "suquet de peix", sabroso plato realizado a base de pescado.

Museo del Suro - Abre 17-20; do y fest 10.30-13.30; 15 jun-15 sep 10-14 y 16-21. Cerrado lu (exc. verano), 1, 6 ene, 1 may, 25 y 31 dic. 2,50€. ☎ 972 30 78 25.

Se muestra el proceso de fabricación de los tapones de corcho. Son muy interesantes los rudimentarios utensilios que se utilizaban para lavar, cortar y marcar las planchas.

Tome la autovía que va a la costa, señalización Calella.

Calella de Palafrugell*

Igual que Llafranc, esta antigua aldea de pescadores se ha convertido en un refinado núcleo turístico. Posee, sobre la misma línea de mar, la popular calle de Les Voltes. En este pórtico de arcos blanquíssimos se celebra cada primer sábado de julio el concurrido Festival de Habaneras, donde los asistentes se deleitan bebiendo "cremat" (café con ron flameado), al son de melódicos cantos marineros.

Jardín Botánico del Cap Roig* - Abre 9-18 (20 abr-sep). 3€. ☎ 972 61 45 82.

Desde este jardín, situado en las afueras del pueblo, se observan espectaculares vistas** de la costa. La visita transcurre entre más de 1.200 especies vegetales distribuidas en varias terrazas frente al mar. Arbustos y ejemplares de las más exóticas latitudes llenan de aroma y colorido este paradisiaco lugar. Abundan los rincones tranquilos (pequeños pasadizos hechos con entramados florales, jardines de aire romántico y miradores que ofrecen panorámicas impresionantes sobre los acantilados). En el interior, oculto tras una alameda, se encuentra el castillo de Cap Roig, obra neogótica que Nicolás Woevalsky, excoronel del ejército zarista, y su esposa Dorothy construyeron en 1924. El aspecto fantástico de esta construcción de ladrillo rojo y cúpulas en forma de aguja aporta un toque misterioso al conjunto.

Tome la pequeña carretera de la costa.

Llafranc

Las casas de pescadores han sido sustituidas por segundas residencias. El puerto deportivo, con 140 amarres, es la principal atracción de Llafranc. Junto a él una pequeña playa sirve de escenario a numerosas actividades veraniegas (conciertos al aire libre, competiciones deportivas, etc.).

Far de Sant Sebastià*

El faro (1857), uno de los más potentes de España, se halla en un minúsculo cabo, rodeado por agrestes acantilados. La ermita de San Sebastián, situada a pocos metros, goza de una bella panorámica* sobre la superficie del mar.

Tamarit

Las calas Gelida, Llarga y Marquesa, de gran belleza paisajística, se conservan prácticamente vírgenes gracias al selecto turismo que visita esta zona.

Begur*

La villa se eleva 200 metros sobre el nivel del mar, dominando un bello conjunto de calas. El paseo por sus estrechas callejuelas transcurre entre casas ochocentistas -generalmente bien conservadas- torres de defensa y típicas viviendas

JOSEP PLA (1897-1981)

Este prolífico escritor fue hijo ilustre de la villa de Palafrugell. En sus escritos describió con un lenguaje ocurrente y muy rico en metáforas el paisaje marítimo de la zona.



Llafranc

marineras. En lo más alto del pueblo se alzan las ruinas del cast desde allí Begur ofrece todo el pintoresquismo de su irregular Calas - Siga los indicadores que conducen a ellas. Los antiguos bar son actualmente zonas turísticas y residenciales de gran enve todas ellas destacan Aigua Blava, Sa Tuna, Aiguafreda y Sa que se observa desde cualquiera de ellas es espectacular: a cubiertas de pinares que caen sobre el mar, playas pequeña embarcaciones y, sobre todo, una visión privilegiada del Medit Abandone la carretera de la costa para dirigirse a Pals.

Pals*

El pueblo domina la desembocadura del río Ter y cuenta con antiguo, el Pedró, muy bien restaurado. En los alrededores masías, muchas de ellas fortificadas. Estas construcciones típicas tratan con los elementos más turísticos: abundantes urbanizaciones de Golf de Pals.

El Pedró* - Este conjunto monumental, un recinto amurallado perfección el ambiente medieval, conserva en su interior notable que citar la iglesia gótica de Sant Pere, la Torre de Rom y las Hores, desde donde se divisa una magnífica panorámica de casas rosadas tienen mucho encanto.

Tome la GI 652 y, posteriormente, gire a la derecha por la C 66.

El Pedró, Pals



10 p.

MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN PORTS

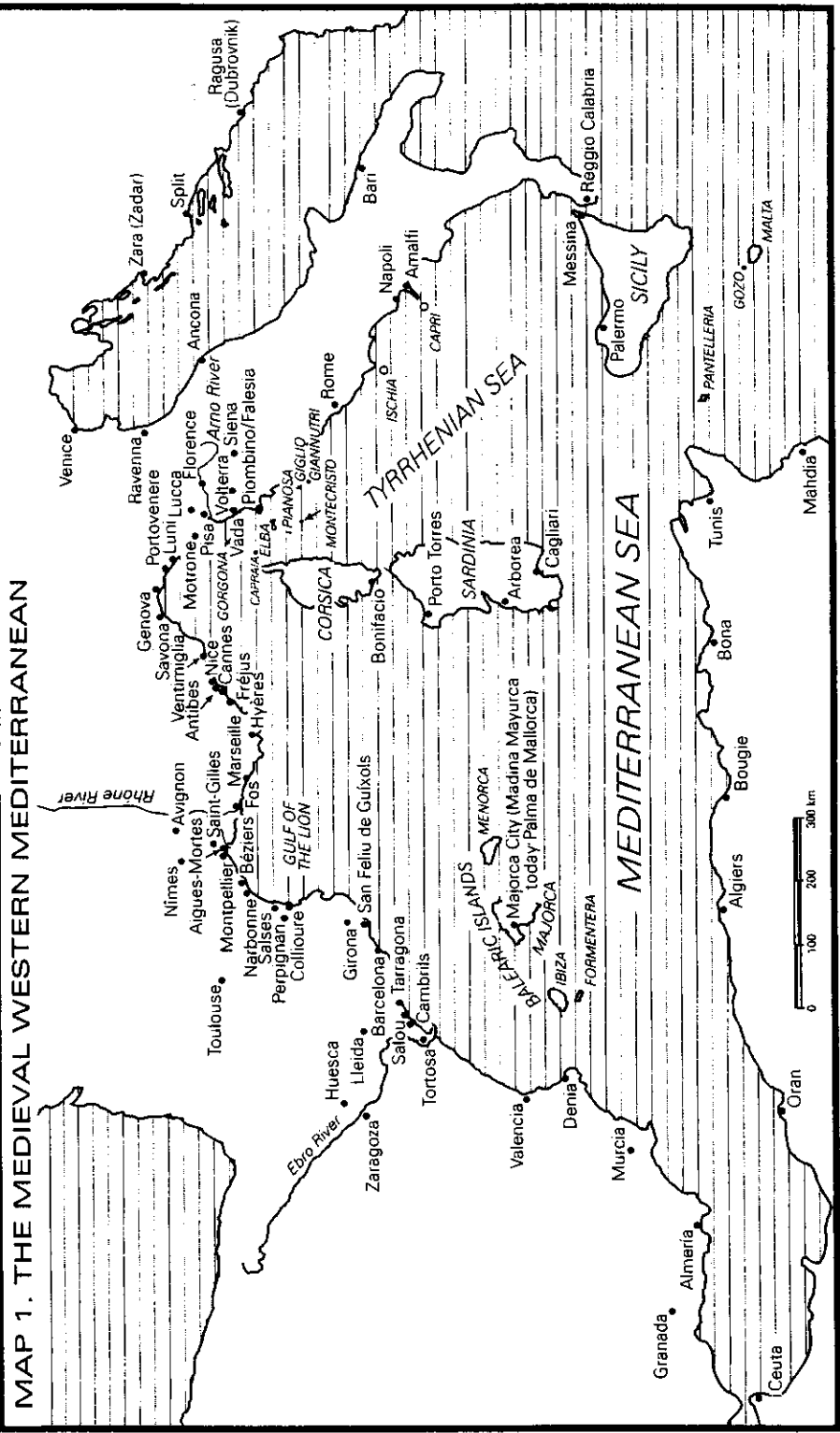
The Catalan and Tuscan Coasts, 1100 to 1235

BY

SILVIA ORVIETANI BUSCH



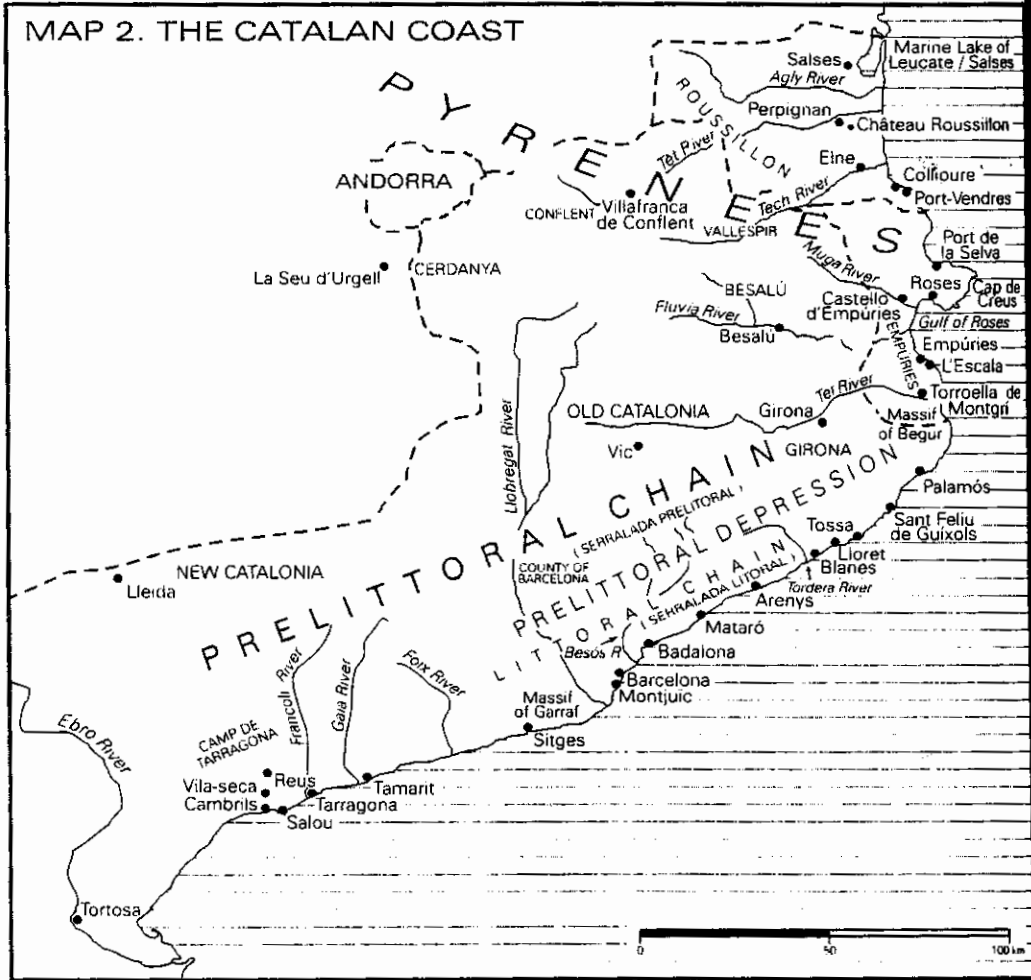
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MAP 2. THE CATALAN COAST



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CHAPTER ONE

THE CATALAN COAST AND THE CROWN OF ARAGON:
A BRIEF HISTORY

The coastal area that is the subject of this study stretches from the seaside town of Cambrils—seventeen kilometers south of the city of Tarragona—toward the north, passing the Pyrenees and reaching the port-town of Collioure, near Perpignan in Roussillon. Today this portion of the western Mediterranean littoral is divided by the Pyrenees between France and Spain. However, from the first half of the twelfth century to the Christian conquest of the Balearic islands in 1229–1235, the period here considered as chronological frame, the Pyrenees constituted merely a geographical border,¹ and this littoral was the Mediterranean outlet of Catalonia, one of the cultural-political entities which formed the Crown of Aragon.² The years chosen represent the time immediately preceding the maritime as well as the political and economic expansion of the Crown in the Mediterranean.³

¹ The mountainous chain of the Pyrenees began to mark a political frontier only from the middle of the seventeenth century. In fact, it was the Treaty of the Pyrenees, signed on 7 November 1658 at the end of the Thirty Years' War between France and Spain, that established this geophysical element as a fixed political border between the two countries.

² The limits of Catalonia are given in the Crown's documentation from the end of the twelfth century as extending from the river Cinca, which marked its western border, to the promontory of Leucate and salty lagoon of Salses, on the coast 28 kilometers north of Collioure (*universa Catalonia a Cinca usque ad Salsas*). That area roughly corresponds to and constitutes the continuation over the centuries of the Visigothic Marchland of Catalonia (F. Soldevila, "El territori i la seva delimitació històrica," in *Geografia de Catalunya*, ed. L. Solé i Sabaris, I (Barcelona, 1972), 641–646). Even today, without engaging in a political debate, Catalonia can be regarded as a historic cultural-linguistic entity straddling the Pyrenees and including Roussillon. On the evolution of the medieval borders and the notion of Catalonia see the detailed analysis by F. Sabaté i Curull, "Un país anomenat Catalunya," *El territori de la Catalunya medieval. Percepció de l'espai i divisió territorial al llarg de l'edat mitjana* (Barcelona, 1997), 267–368.

³ The expansion of the Crown of Aragon into the Mediterranean is considered unanimously by historians of the Middle Ages as starting with the capture of the Balearic islands in 1229–35 and continuing in a crescendo until the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples, a little more than two centuries later. See for an overview: A. Santamaria, "Precisiones sobre la expansió marítima de la Corona de Aragón," *Anales de la Universidad de Alicante* 8 (1990–91), 189; J. Salrach, "La formació dels

During this time, the ports along the Catalan coast—Collioure, which was part of the County of Roussillon annexed in 1172, and, further south of the Pyrenees, Sant Feliu de Guíxols, Barcelona, Tarragona, Salou, and Cambrils—became the Crown of Aragon's stepping stones into the Mediterranean region.⁴

The analysis of their characteristics and development in this crucial period becomes then one of the keys to understanding the roots of the Crown's Mediterranean expansion and to identifying certain attributes of the medieval maritime network of southern Europe. To follow and better comprehend the evolution of these ports between the beginning of the twelfth and the central years of the thirteenth centuries, it is first necessary to summarize briefly the history of the Crown of Aragon at the time, focusing on the historical and political background against which these ports are to be viewed. Yet political events and economic conditions were not the only factors which determined the choice of one landing over another nearby and defined its future as a port. In an age not as yet provided with the technology to substantially alter the natural habitat as is ours, a port was heavily dependent on the geographical setting of the area in which it was located and on the geophysical characteristics of the harbor itself. Knowledge of the coast's physical aspect and of the ports' structural qualities and handicaps, both in relation to naval technological requirements and to the needs of the mercantile circulation of the time, is a precious tool for the historian. The interplay of local geomorphology and geography with history along the Catalan coast will be examined then in the second chapter, while the third and fourth chapters will consider more in depth each individual port.

Països Catalans i l'expansió mediterrània (sigles XIII-XIV)," in M. Aventin, J. Salrach, *Història medieval de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1998), 94.

⁴ These are the ports identified as such during our chronological frame by contemporary documents and sources, from the *Liber Maiorichinus* to the autobiographical Count-King James I's *Llibre dels feits*. The Crown's ports active only after the 1230's are not included in this study. Despite its annexation into Christian Catalonia in 1148, Tortosa has also not been included, because of the chronologically later revitalization of its port. In fact, its role as port of the Crown begins to be documented only after the conquest of Valencia in 1236. Therefore, the subsequent rise of the port of Valencia is also not discussed nor are those Catalan ports not under the Crown at this time, such as Roses and Castelló. They were part of the then independent County of Empúries, as will be outlined in more detail in the next chapter.

*Assessing the Land. Aragon's
Mun's Ebro Frontier under
under (1104-1134). 1995.
1978*

on, D.J. Kagay & P.G. Pad
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THE CATALAN COAST:
AN INTERACTION OF HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY,
AND GEOMORPHOLOGY

Although the eye is mostly drawn to its coast, graced with Mediterranean sinuosity and radiance, Catalonia is a region essentially mountainous. Its few plains are generally modest in dimension. The only two major plains in the northern sector are the plain of Empúries and the plain of Roussillon, both of which open eastward towards the sea. There are other smaller littoral plains, such as the plain of Maresme, and more recent ones, such as the one at the mouth of the Ebro river, reclaimed only during the past two centuries. Overall, Catalonia's relief is varied and uneven, with a few peaks above 2000 meters and the greater part of the internal tableaux and mountainous terrain averaging around 700 meters. Structurally, Catalonia is subdivided into three principal geomorphological units: the Pyrenees, the Central Depression, and the Mediterranean System.

The Pyrenees are a chain of the Alpine group, with numerous typical Alpine steep crests and dramatic ravines, oriented east/west, reaching their highest level in the west and declining as they approach the Mediterranean coast. The Central Depression consists of tablelands closely related to the mountains towering behind and slightly inclined towards the course of the Ebro river. The soil is argillaceous and thus easily erodable, which has allowed rivers and torrents to hollow out deep, large valleys. The Mediterranean System is actually formed by two mountainous chains parallel to the coast, stretching northeast to southwest: the Prelittoral, more internal, and the Littoral or Marine. In between lies the Prelittoral Depression. Similar in structure to the Central Depression, the Prelittoral Depression is formed by erodable soils, argillaceous or sandy, excavated by rivers, while the Prelittoral and the Littoral chains present harder soils and moderate heights.¹ On the northern extremity of Catalonia, the plain

¹ L. Solé i Sabarís, "Configuració general," *Geografia de Catalunya*, ed. L. Solé i Sabarís (Barcelona, 1963), 1:25-30. Regarding the geomorphology of Catalonia in

of Roussillon is limited to the south by the Pyrenean massif of Albers and north by the calcareous rocks of Les Corbières. Created by the sediments carried eastward by the rivers Agly, Têt, and Tec, it rises moderately above sea level and slightly inclines toward the sea. The promontory of Leucate marks the northern limit of the plain's shallow coast.

An important factor in the shaping of Catalonia's landscape and a fundamental element of the natural habitat is the river system. It modifies the soil, creating large valleys and, at the same time, the water's paths, flowing from the Pyrenean and Prepyrenean mountains to the sea, constitute an element of union among the geomorphological entities. The rivers in this area, from the Agly, Têt, and Tech, north of the Pyrenees, to the Ebro and its tributary Cinca in the southern border of the region, are characterized by irregularities of flow, more pronounced for those rivers of non-Pyrenean origin. At their egress into the sea with their sediments, they create marshes and fluvial-marine lagoons as well as alluvial plains, most noticeably in the case of the Llobregat, near Barcelona, and the Ebro.²

In comparison with other Mediterranean regions, Catalonia presents an impressive extension of coast: 415 kilometers of varied sea littorals.³ The coastline in proximity to Barcelona, the Costa Daurada, is low, rectilinear, and sandy, with few pronounced indentations and promontories; the Costa Brava and Côte Vermeille in the north, which mark the encounter of the Pyrenean chain with the Mediterranean sea, are rocky and more elevated above the sea. Because only the major rivers, such as the Besòs, the Llobregat and the Ebro, create a massive deposit of detritus at their deltas, it is the sea itself that holds an important role in shaping the littoral. The largest part of the Catalan population, since the early twentieth century, has con-

particular see also: all the four volumes of *Geografia de Catalunya*, ed. L. Solé i Sabaris (Barcelona, 1963-1981); P. Vila, *Resum de geografia de Catalunya*, 9 vols. (Barcelona, 1928-1935); O. Riba, et al., *Geografia física dels Països Catalans* (Barcelona, 1973); J. Vilà, *Cataluña*, in the series *Tierras de España* (Madrid, 1974); *Catalunya dins l'Espanya moderna*, ed. P. Vilar (Barcelona, 1964); P. Vila, *Fisonomia geogràfica de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1977); idem, *Aspectes geogràfics de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1978).

² See the complete treatise on the subject by L. Solé i Sabaris, "La xarsa hidrogràfica" and V. Masachs, "Els rius," both in *Geografia de Catalunya*, 1:145-160 and 187-207. For the Ebro delta, *Els sistemes naturals del Delta de l'Ebre*, Istitució Catalana d'Història Natural (Barcelona, 1977) and B. Bomer, *Le bassin de l'Ebre et ses bordures montagneuses. Etude géo-morphologique*, 3 vols. (Tour, 1978).

³ *Geografia General de Catalunya*, ed. F. Carreras i Candi (Barcelona, s.d.), 1:12.

centrated on the coast.⁴ The marine currents erode the rocky areas and redistribute along the coast the sediments resulting from this erosive action and from the materials carried down by rivers, causing a progressive regularization of the littoral profile. Another factor is fluctuations in the sea level, which modify the location of the sediments and the waterline.

Due to these powerful and constant actions, the Catalan coast has modified its appearance not only throughout the grand geological eras but also during the historical periods close to us.⁵ Since the first centuries BC, the tendency for the majority of the sandy littorals has been towards enlargement, due to the deposit of river sediments and to some regression of the Mediterranean in this area.⁶ An exception seems to be the coast of the Maresme, just north of Barcelona, which shows signs of subsidence. As for the rocky portions of the coast, aside from being subjected to various amounts of marine erosion, sandy detritus tends to surround and level them with the rest of the coastline, more visibly so around the smaller formations.

Just north of the Pyrenees, the coastline of the plain of Roussillon presents a shallow and linear profile, interrupted by two marine lakes, the *étangs* of Leucate (or Salses) and of Canet, enclosed by sandbanks. The coast here has a marshy nature, due to its low level on the sea and the torrential flow of its rivers, the Agly, the Têt, and the Tech. It constitutes an unstable area subjected to inundations and a constant need for draining, whether man-guided, through a tight net of canals, or natural, facilitated by *graus*, openings of the coast into the sea. The reclaiming of this coast has proceeded faster since the end of the nineteenth century⁷ with the extensive establishment of vineyards and the tourist utilization of the sea border. At the southern end of this flat stretch of sandy coast, a rocky littoral begins, the Marena, better known to tourists as the Côte Vermeille, whose geological composition is essentially of scistic and micascistic rocks.

⁴ Since 1960 more than two thirds of the total inhabitants of Catalonia have chosen to live along its littorals (*El front marítim català*, Generalitat de Catalunya, Comissió Interdepartamental de Recerca i Innovació Tecnològica [Barcelona, 1989], 63).

⁵ Solé i Sabarís, "La façana litoral," *Geografia de Catalunya*, 1:137-140.

⁶ Now researchers in the field believe that a rise of the mean sea level is taking place all around the Mediterranean basin (E. C. F. Bird, R. Paskoff, "Morphological Problems of Mediterranean Coasts," *Coastal Problems in the Mediterranean Sea, Proceedings of the Symposium* [Bologna, 1983], 7-17).

⁷ F. Doumenge, "El Rosselló," *Geografia de Catalunya*, 2:286-7.

Because of the shifting marshes in the northern area, this part of the littoral has been until recently the only maritime outlet of Roussillon. Its small but partially protected inlets have stimulated the growth of port settlements: Collioure, Port-Vendres, and Banyuls-sur-Mer.

Collioure and Port-Vendres were certainly active as harbors connected to the nearby Greek-Iberian settlement of Illibéris, today called Elne, between the fourth and first centuries BC, during the Greek colonization of this area.⁸ With the arrival of the Romans in the first century BC, their role as ports of call⁹ was maintained; but in the Middle Ages it was Collioure that increased its importance as the main port of Roussillon and of its new urban center Perpignan.¹⁰

The continuous use of the inlet of Collioure is due to its favorable geomorphology. The relatively vast gulf has a regular horse-shoe-like shape, sloping like an amphitheater toward the sea. The seashore, rockier on the southern side, is dominated by two half-moon-shaped beaches, the "port d'Amont," at the north, and the "port d'Avall," located more internally at the center of the inlet. They are separated by an oblong rocky hill, which was the first site of the fortified settlement, by virtue of its inaccessibility from the seaside. The harbor is partially protected from high sea waves by a little bluff, while the spurs of the Albères, surrounding the inlet, intercept the offshore wind currents. Because of its eastern exposure, Collioure is slightly more open to the east winds blowing from the sea than is Port-Vendres. Still, the two ample sandy beaches—a feature missing from the rockier and narrower site of Port-Vendres, a few miles south—were naturally suitable for the necessary shipyards and also facilitated loading and off loading. Its relative closeness and

⁸ A. Ayats, "Le besoin pour les Français d'un port en Roussillon: la fortification de Collioure, un pis-aller," *110 Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes*, (Montpellier 1985), 501-2. Ayats and other scholars affirm the use of the natural inlets of the Côte Vermeille as harbors already by the Phoenicians in the sixth century BC and the presence of settlement in the area since the Paleolithic. Both views are highly probable, but no archaeological proof has been found yet. The oldest testimonials discovered in Collioure until now are from the Roman period. In the case of Collioure, the name Caucolibéris or Cocoliberis used in Latin sources can constitute a first confirmation because of its pre-Roman origin (A. de Saint-Malo, "Port présumé d'Illibéris," *Publicateur des Pyrénées-Orientales*, [1836], 25).

⁹ See for example the finding near Port-Vendres of a early Roman Imperial cargo ship (B. Liou et al. "L'épave Port-Vendres II et le commerce de la Bétique a l'époque de Claude," *Archaeonautica* 1 [1977]).

¹⁰ While the main settlements of the Roussillon during the Greek-Iberian and the Early Middle Ages periods had been Illibéris (medieval and modern Elne) and, under the Romans, Ruscino (today Château-Roussillon) along the Via Domitia.

ease of on-land access to Perpignan was another determining factor in Collioure's choice over Port-Vendres and its evolution in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Collioure developed around its castle. Conscious of the importance of Collioure as the natural port of Roussillon, Count-King Peter conceded a charter of settlement in 1207 to attract more inhabitants and stimulate commercial life.¹¹ In 1223, his son James I confirmed to the inhabitants all the privileges granted them by his father. The port of Collioure had meanwhile attracted enough mercantile traffic to warrant the imposition of a tax, which was collected from 1216 by Catalan Lord of Roussillon Nunyo Sanç.¹² And in 1252 a detailed list of the amount of commercial and transit taxes levied in Collioure was officially issued to be used as a model of the *leuda* of Tortosa.¹³ Collioure's importance continued to grow in the thirteenth and in the following centuries with the increase of maritime commerce, in particular with the Balearic islands, but also thanks to coastal traffic of local products up and down the Catalan and Occitan littorals. Never to become a large settlement (the major center always remained the more centrally located Perpignan), today Collioure is a lovely fishing and tourist town along the Côte Vermeille, combining sensible economic development with the preservation of its natural and historic heritage.

As we proceed south, the Franco-Spanish border marks the beginning of the Costa Brava, morphologically and structurally similar to the coast of Roussillon. In its northern part, corresponding to the region of the Alt Empordà, it presents a succession of smaller rocky inlets, culminating in the promontories of Creus and of Norfeu, extensions into the sea of the pre-Pyrenean chain of Roses. These inlets are now occupied by thriving tourist and fishing centers, such as Portbou, Port de la Selva, and Cadaqués. But during our time frame, because of the lack of extensive sandy beaches and good inland communication, they were not consistently settled and were used only as emergency landings. They developed in the following centuries,

¹¹ J. M. Font Rius, *Cartas de población y franquicia de Cataluña* 2 vols. (Barcelona and Madrid, 1969-1983), 308-310, n. 223.

¹² B. Alart, *Privileges et titres relatifs aux franchises, institutions et propriétés communales de Roussillon et de Cerdagne depuis le XI^e siècle jusqu'à l'an 1660* (Perpignan, 1874), 1:159. An in-depth analysis of Collioure and Nunyo's role there in the next chapter.

¹³ A. de Capmany y de Montpalau, *Memorias históricas sobre la marina, comercio y artes de la antigua ciudad de Barcelona* (Madrid, 1779), 2 vols., 2:21, n. 11.

and particularly in the twentieth century, with the increase of fishing activities and seaside tourism.

At the southern foot of the chain of Roses lies one of the largest Catalan plains. Alluvial in origin, like the plain of Roussillon, the plain of the Empordà was formed by the detritus carried since the beginning of Quaternary Era by the Muga and Fluvià rivers. Its convex curve, bordering the Mediterranean, forms the gulf of Roses. Due to the local rivers' powerful torrential nature, responsible for sudden inundations and for irregularity in the channels' path, the coast is sandy and shallow, with a high number of lagoons, in large part reclaimed by human intervention during recent times but still subject to flooding. The majority of today's lagoons, much smaller than those that were here in the Middle Ages, are located between the mouths of the Fluvià and Muga rivers and are interconnected by small canals. Some of them are protected now and have been included in the Parc Natural dels Aiguamolls de l'Empordà.¹⁴

Here, on the northern side of the gulf of Roses, lie the port and town of Roses.¹⁵ It occupies a sandy area bordered at the east by a rocky promontory and at the west by fluvio-marine lagoons. Since the Greek colonization of this coast—in the seventh century BC—a settlement has been there, called Rhode, that was also a port of call for the more frequented harbor of Emporion/Empúries, a few miles south on the coast. Roses still claimed a minor role as a land-

¹⁴ M. A. Marqués, R. Julià, "Coastal Problems in Alt Empordà, Catalonia," *Coastal Problems in the Mediterranean*, eds. E. Bird, P. Fabbri (Bologna, 1983), 83-90.

¹⁵ In this study some of the smaller ports of the coast will not be analyzed in detail in the next chapters. Although they are all culturally and geographically Catalan, they were, during the chronological mainframe of this work (middle of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth century), not yet part of territory of the Crown of Aragon (such as Castelló d'Empúries, in the County of Empúries), or, if they were part of the territory of the Crown such as later Palamos and Torroella de Montgrí, they had not yet developed as such or the information about their port activity is, for that period, nonexistent. The lordship of the Catalan littoral, especially in this area, was very fragmented and in large part not directly controllable by the Crown. From the Pyrenees to Torroella de Montgrí the coast belonged to the Count of Empúries, independent at this time from Barcelona, the area of Begur to the Lord of Cruïlles, of Palafrugell to the Prior of Santa Ana de Barcelona, and of the territory around Sant Feliu de Guíxols to its monastery. Tossa was in the hands the Abbot of Santa Maria de Ripoll, while south of it the coast pertained to the Chapter of Girona (Y. Barbaza, *El paisatge humà de la Costa Brava* [Barcelona, 1988], 238). Sant Feliu of Guíxols, although under the lordship of its abbot, was used early by the Crown, as we will discuss in the next chapter, as port of call and customs station.

ing during the Roman era because of silting. Its medieval resettlement was stimulated by the foundation of the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria de Roses, between the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, which reorganized the agricultural activities in the territory. From the twelfth century on, fishing in the coastal lagoons and along the sandy littoral developed steadily.¹⁶ Its port acquired importance again in the fourteenth century because of the silting of the nearby port of Castelló d'Empúries. Naturally protected by the northern winds, the port of Roses is today frequented by fishing and tourist boats.

Since the end of the ninth century and for the following three centuries, the capital seat and the main port, both military and commercial, of the counts of Empúries was Castelló, situated in the coastal lagoon where the Muga river had its mouth. From this harbor, connected to the sea by an opening in the lagoon, the Counts of Empúries launched their ships, which sailed the Mediterranean seas especially in the twelfth and thirteenth century, privateering but also carrying local produce along the Catalan-Occitan littorals and even as far as Egypt, while chartering pilgrims to the Holy Land.¹⁷ In 1229, the count's ships and men took part in the capture of the island of Majorca, together with those of the Crown and those from Occitania. In the fourteenth century its lagoon was silting, making it progressively impossible for vessels to reach Castelló. Over time, maritime commerce was rerouted from this port to Roses. Today, Castelló is, in fact, an inland center, five kilometers in from the coastline.

At the southern end of the vast gulf of Roses, there was the Greek and Roman port settlement of Empúries.¹⁸ Near its beach, Greek colonists from Marseille founded a *polis*, called Emporion, near a small Iberian village. Emporion developed into an important colony, a flourishing hub of trade with the other Greek settlements. Under the Romans, the colony grew into a commercial, fishing, and agricultural town, Emporiae. A breakwater built between the II and I century AC to protect the harbor probably accelerated the silting of

¹⁶ *El Port de Roses*, ed. R. Junyent i Comas, (Barcelona, 1991), 15-29.

¹⁷ Barbaza, *El paisatge humà de la Costa Brava*, 238.

¹⁸ For the plan of the various settlements and coastline of Emporion/Emporiae, and also regarding Greek and Roman navigation along the peninsula see *Puertos españoles en la historia*, Centro de Estudios Históricos de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo (Madrid, 1994), 152-159.

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the port. The center started to lose importance and inhabitants already in the III century AD.¹⁹ After the Visigothic conquest, an episcopal seat was established here, but the population continued to diminish. A disastrous Muslim raid, followed in the ninth century by an incursion of Viking pirates, gave the final blow to the settlement, and it was abandoned. The nearby monastery of San Martí d'Empúries became, in the Middle Ages, the nucleus of a small cluster of life. This coast was slowly reoccupied during the late Middle Ages and in the modern era, but only during the twentieth century has its population greatly augmented. Nearby L'Escala is today a lively vacation and fishing center, and Empúries has become one of the most important archaeological sites along this coast, thanks to the careful excavations and study of its Greek, Roman and Visigothic remains.

Immediately south of the calcareous massif of Montgrí, another alluvial plain opens, created by the Ter and Daró rivers. Smaller in its extension than the plain of Empúries, its coastline nevertheless is low on the sea level and intermixed with wetlands and closed to the south by the massif of Begur.²⁰ From here begins the Serralada Litoral or de Marina, a rocky littoral formation which, after creating the southern part of the Costa Brava, continues slightly inland behind the alluvial beaches of the Costa Daurada to end fifty kilometers south of Barcelona. A few miles inland along the Ter river, Torroella de Montgrí became one of the most densely populated settlements of the area in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It even had a palatial residence for the count-kings, while its port was the main entry point—for this part of the coast—of imported grain (especially from Sicily and Provence). But the progressive silting at the mouth of the Ter river halted the life and operations of this port by the sixteenth century.

In this northern part of the Catalan Serralada Litoral, there are few minuscule inlets but five main landings are present: Palamós, Sant Feliu de Guíxols, Tossa, Lloret, and Blanes. The northernmost one, the port of Palamós, is located on a small sandy strand on the southeast side of a small promontory, Punta del Castell. Though well

¹⁹ J. Alemany, *El port de Barcelona* (Barcelona, 1998), 30.

²⁰ A. Compte, "Plana y Muntanya," *Geografia de Catalunya* 2:306-8; M. A. Marqués, R. Julià, "Caratéristiques lithostratigraphiques des embouchures des fluvies du N.E. de l'Espagne," *Approche écologique de l'homme fossile* (Paris, 1977), 192-193.

utilized as a harbor from the pre-Roman age and during the Roman era, as archaeological excavations have revealed,²¹ there is no documentary information that it was in use during our time frame. Its reuse as a port and the development of its settlement were launched by the Crown of Aragon only in the last decades of the thirteenth century to support the increase of mercantile activity along the Catalan coast.²²

Without a doubt, the most favorable location for a port along the littoral north of Barcelona in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries was Sant Feliu de Guíxols. Its natural configuration consists of a square inlet, forming a haven of 40 hectares. Opening southward, the bay presents at its end an ample sandy beach, where two small rivers, the Tueda and the Sant Feliu, have their mouths. The inlet's eastern and western sides are instead rocky, protruding into the sea as the promontories of Llevant and of Garbí. The harbor presents an entrance 1200 meters wide and between 10–12 meters deep, over a sandy sea bottom. Though fairly protected from winds from other directions, the harbor is particularly undefended from southern winds. Thus, notwithstanding the presence of a sandy beach, use of this location as a port was still risky because of the action of southerly winds and the presence of high rocky sides, characteristics that made entering the harbor difficult during storms.

Nevertheless, Sant Feliu de Guíxols acquired superiority as a port above the other nearby harbors. Its natural features—an ample bay, protected for the most part from winds, currents, and enemy attacks, and a large beach—were extremely useful for ancient ships. Two other conditions should not be overlooked as reasons for the development of this port: the geomorphological aspect of the neighboring coast and its inland connections. South of Sant Feliu, towards Barcelona, the littoral becomes far too flat and unprotected, abundant in sandy beaches but lacking bays. The coast to the north alternates instead between shores, often too rocky, and ample and sandy,

²¹ A. Marin, "Aportacions a l'estudi del poblat ibèric del castell," *XX assemblea intercomarcal d'estudiosos* (Sant Feliu de Guíxols, 1976); Barbaza, *El paisatge humà de la Costa Brava*.

²² R. M. Medir, C. Sapena, *Palamós. Quaderns de la Rivista de Girona*. (Girona, 1988); and *El Port de Palamós*, ed. R. Junyent i Comas (Barcelona, 1991), 15–20. The first move of the Crown (in the person of Count-King Peter the Great) was to issue, in 1279, a charter of settlement, which encouraged new inhabitants to come and commercial and economic activities to develop.

but less sheltered, littorals. Otherwise, it has smaller havens. Sant Feliu was also favored for its ease of communications with the interior. The valley lying northwest behind it, the Vall d'Aro, offers a direct passage, through the natural corridor created by the valley of La Selva, to Girona and to the main peninsular road network.²³

The first to settle in this area, at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the fourth century BC, was an Iberian population showing strong Greek influence.²⁴ They chose the Point dels Guixols or Fortim, the smaller rocky promontory on the northern side of the main beach, a site easily defensible, both on land and from the sea. The inhabitants dedicated themselves to agriculture, as well as to fishing and commerce, and the name Guixols itself could have been inherited from these first settlers. Under the Romans, the village grew to also occupy parts of the plain behind the beach. In the following centuries, despite numerous attacks, it survived, as testified by the archaeological remains of a Christian building and its adjacent necropolis, dated at the end of the fifth century AD, near the present monastery which gave its name to the settlement.²⁵

It is still uncertain when the Benedictine monastery of Sant Feliu de Guixols was founded, whether during the Visigothic period or by Charlemagne or in the first half of the tenth century by the counts of Barcelona.²⁶ The first certain reference is in a 961 will,²⁷ but the area of the monastery's hinterland, the Vall d'Aro, had been slowly resettled since the ninth century.²⁸ The reluctance to repopulate the littoral itself and the nearby enclaves of the province of Girona during the ninth and tenth centuries was due to their closeness to the sea and the lack of already walled centers, as Pierre Bonnassie points

²³ F. Martínez Abella, *El port de Sant Feliu de Guixols*, (Barcelona, 1993), 17-22.

²⁴ The necropolis of this settlement was discovered and excavated in 1903 (L. Esteva Cruaia, "Primitiva població guixolense," *Revista Ancora* [1967]; and E. Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo histórico de la villa de San Feliu de Guixols*, Tesis de Oposición (1905), reprinted in *Col·lecció historia y vida, Revista Ancora*, [Sant Feliu de Guixols, 1970], 20-30).

²⁵ A. Himénez i Navarro, "Sant Feliu de Guixols," *Quaderns de la Revista de Girona* 8 (1986), 9.

²⁶ Probably the date of foundation will remain impossible to pinpoint with complete certainty, although the latest date is more probable.

²⁷ This reference has been found in the will of the Deacon Otger published by A. Udina in *La successió testada a la Catalunya altomedieval* (Barcelona, 1984), doc. 10, pp. 155-156.

²⁸ J. Blanco de la Lama, *El monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols (segles X-XI). La formació del domini* (Sant Feliu de Guixols, 1991), 2-5.

out, which made this zone extremely vulnerable to seaborne attacks.²⁹ From the second half of the tenth century, with the concession of a diploma by the Emperor Lothar in 968,³⁰ the patrimony and the importance of the monastery grew steadily in the valleys and mountainside behind the coast. Inevitably, this brought about conflicts with the lords whose interests and properties lay in that same area. The ensuing territorial disputes were finally settled at the beginning of the twelfth century by the intervention of the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer III, in favor of the monastery.³¹

Information about the settlement and the port of Sant Feliu de Guixols prior to 1113 is nonexistent. In that year, the famous Italian fleet bound to attack the Balearics ended up spending two months here.³² This information shows that the harbor and the nearby coast were not only sufficient enough to house a large number of ships but also offered them easy conditions for the provision of victuals and dockyard operations for at least two months. Some limited infrastructures connected to sporadic coasting navigation must have been present, including an established settlement. In fact, just a few years later, a document records the Genoese promising to pay Ramon Berenguer III a tax on the transit of their ships between Nice and Salou, a tax to be paid either in Barcelona or in Sant Feliu de Guixols.³³ At that time, Sant Feliu was one of the most important nodes along the coast of Catalunya, so much so, in fact, as to be the only one mentioned besides Barcelona. It was linked to the comital house of Barcelona, in addition to the abbot's lordship, and used by foreign ships: by the Genoese and also by ships from Montpellier, mentioned in this document as also paying transit dues to the count. Sant Feliu's position on the sea routes along the littoral, its ease of inland communications, its geomorphological conformation, and its

²⁹ P. Bonnassie, *La Catalogne du milieu du X^e à la fin du XI^e siècle. Croissance et mutation d'une société* 2 vols. (Toulouse, 1975-76), 1:93-98. This reason applies also to the rest of the Catalan coast, obviously, and to the greatest part of the Mediterranean Northwestern littoral.

³⁰ Diploma dated 17 May 968, published in Ramon d' Abadal's *Catalunya Carolingia. Els diplomes carolingis a Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1926-1950), 1:202-204. It was issued to the monasteries of Sant Feliu de Guixols and San Pol de Mar, which shared in those difficult times the same abbot, the skilled politician and diplomat monk Sunyer. Regarding him see R. d'Abadal, *Els primers comtes catalans* (Barcelona, 1961), 295-299.

³¹ E. Grahit, *Memorias y noticias historicas para la historia de la villa de San Feliu de Guixols* (Girona, 1874), appendix 2, 211-2.

³² *Liber maiolichinus de gestis pisanorum illustribus*, ed. C. Calisse (Roma, 1904).

³³ 28 November 1127 (ACA, Chancery, Parchments, Ramon Berenguer III, n. 293).

being a fairly developed settlement (and enough so, evidently, for the Catalan count could rely on it for collecting his revenues), all contributed to favor it as a transited port of call and consequently an excellent tax-harvesting point.

Unfortunately, documentation about the settlement and the role of the monastery in sea activities is lacking until the second half of the twelfth century. In 1181, the abbot of Sant Feliu granted a charter to the inhabitants, conceding some tax exemptions and clearly establishing the amount that the fishermen had to pay to the monastery on their catch. There is no mention of tolls to be imposed on passing ships, probably because this was under the Crown's jurisdiction.³⁴ The community of Sant Feliu grew fast and friction started with the monastery. In 1238, the abbot was forced to concede to the inhabitants of Sant Feliu and the suburb of San Amans more advantageous conditions for the selling of wine and salt,³⁵ thus revealing to us a community by now well involved in the commerce of local products. Besides exerting seigniorial rights over the settlement and the hinterland areas, the monastery had other interests and a larger political influence. Abbot Bernard participated, as did other lay and religious lords, in the conquest of Majorca organized by Count-King James I in 1229. His role was far from secondary and, after the conquest, he became bishop, albeit for only a short time, of the islands.

As we shall see in more detail in the next chapter, the port of Sant Feliu upgraded from simply a natural port of call for passing ships to a commercial node and tax-collecting point for the Crown of Aragon during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The monastery concentrated on maintaining its seigniorial rights over the inhabitants and nearby areas. The community grew as well, diverting its focus from the initial agricultural and fishing activities to the increasingly more profitable trade in local products, in particular wine, salt, and grain. Today Sant Feliu de Guíxols is a tourist and commercial town; despite abandonment and devastation during the past centuries, and various architectural modifications, its monastery still retains an important role as museum, city archives and cultural center, although only parts of the original high-medieval structures have survived.


³⁴ J. M. Font Rius, *Cartas de población y franquicias de Catalunya*, doc. 163, p. 22.

³⁵ Transcription dated 1136. Arxiu Municipal de Sant Feliu de Guíxols, *Llibre Vermell*, fol. 16. Published by Grahit, *Memorias y noticias*, appendix 9, pags. 219-220.

LESSER PORTS OF THE CATALAN COAST:
COLLIOURE, SANT FELIU DE GUÍXOLS, SALOU,
AND CAMBRILS

As demonstrated in the first two chapters, the varied geomorphological aspect of the Catalan coast allowed for the use of several areas as landings for ships during Greek and then Roman colonization. After a period of decline in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages, the presence of favorable geomorphological factors, the beginning of mercantile and political development of the Crown of Aragon, and the economic impulse in its lands and throughout the Mediterranean brought about the evolution of some specific landings into ports, each to its own individual extent, over the course of the central medieval centuries.

During the chronological period studied here—from the first half of the twelfth century to 1231—these ports, besides the main Catalan coastal cities Barcelona and Tarragona, stand out for their documented activity. Though they did not evolve into major urban settlements like Barcelona and Tarragona, their strategic and, in some cases, also commercial significance in the first phase of maritime development in Catalonia cannot be denied. These “lesser but nevertheless important” ports—Collioure, Sant Feliu de Guíxols, Cambrils and Salou—deserve a study separate from the two main port-cities of their coast.



At the southern end of a long and sandy stretch of coast, the littoral of Roussillon becomes rockier as it approaches the Pyrenees. This area, called Marenda but now more famous to tourists as Côte Vermeille, creates a few inlets, whose largest one harbors Collioure. As noted in the previous chapter, Collioure's relatively vast natural gulf presents a characteristic horseshoe shape, degrading regularly towards the sea. In the center of the inlet is a rocky oblong little

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its lack of geographical centrality in Roussillon. The distance from the main, and more internal, roads and areas of production was a fundamental element for development. The more central Ruscino, now Château-Roussillon, Elne, and later Perpignan were the main centers in this area, and Collioure simply remained their port. From the end of the thirteenth century, when naval technology changed, Collioure and nearby Port-Vendres shared some port functions. Collioure maintained the role of commercial port because it was closer to Perpignan and more suited for the operation of loading and off-loading of merchandise. Port-Vendres, with its deeper and rockier configuration, specialized as a military harbor.⁵¹

Sant Feliu de Guixols

While Collioure during the early thirteenth century was evolving into the port of Perpignan and Roussillon, a similar process was taking place in another nearby harbor. Just south of the chain of the Pyrenees, Sant Feliu de Guixols became the Crown's main port north of Barcelona for this period. Similar to what was happening between Collioure and Perpignan, one of the reasons for development of the port of Sant Feliu de Guixols was its accessibility from Girona, another rapidly growing inland Catalan center in need of an outlet into the Mediterranean. In fact, Sant Feliu is located near the eastern limit of the Val d'Aro, a natural corridor that allows communication towards the valley of La Selva and the area of Girona. Considering the harshness of the rest of the coastline and the presence of coastal mountainous formations, such as the Serralada Litoral and the Massif of Gavarres, a large part of this coast just south of the Pyrenees is almost impossible to reach from the hinterland. This explains the difficulty in the development of natural harbors such as Tossa and Lloret, further removed from the major land arteries of communication. For these same reasons, Sant Feliu de Guixols and

⁵¹ In his will dated 1272 James encouraged his son Jaume II, heir of the Kingdom of Majorca of which Roussillon had then become part, to use five thousand sous of the leuda for works in the port of Port-Vendres, and especially to continue the construction of the port infrastructures in Collioure, started by James himself in front of the town, "for the utility of the merchants" (Alart, *Privèlèges et titres*, 1:317). Collioure and Port-Vendres in fact were indispensable points of connection between the inland part of the Kingdom and the Balearic islands.

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later nearby Palamós became the main port centers of this region, easily connecting it on the sea with Barcelona, the rest of the Crown's coast, and with the Balearic islands.⁵²

Aside from being the best access to the sea for two growing inland urban centers, Collioure and Sant Feliu de Guíxols present some similarities in their geomorphological configurations. Both have a long strand of sandy beach, divided by a small rocky promontory that also cuts the bay into two parts while a small river secures the supply of water.⁵³ But the inlet of Sant Feliu de Guíxols has a square shape, and it is considerably smaller than Collioure's. Moreover, as already noted in the previous chapter, the harbor of Sant Feliu de Guíxols is protected by the rocky promontories of Llevant and of Garbí, which enclose the harbor on its eastern and western sides, only from the winds of the first and third quadrant (northeast and southwest). It is instead fairly open to strong bouts of wind currents from the south, north and northwest. Until the beginning of this century, moreover, the harbor did not have any protection from the waves created by the Sirocco, the omnipresent Mediterranean wind from southeast. As a consequence, the harbor of Sant Feliu was, in the case of a storm, often inaccessible from the sea. This happened also when Pisan ships first entered its harbor in 1113. They were fought at its entrance by fierce winds.⁵⁴ Because of these not overly favorable geomorphological conditions, Sant Feliu de Guíxols' success as a port was due especially to its facility of communication with the interior, a condition that was lacking in the other natural inlets along that coast.⁵⁵

As for human settlement at the site of Sant Feliu in historic times,⁵⁶ the first testimony tells us of an Iberian population castled on the rocky little central hill, the promontory called Fortim or Guíxols.⁵⁷

⁵² F. Martínez Abella, *El port de Sant Feliu de Guíxols* (Barcelona, 1991), 17-18, also agrees on this point.

⁵³ In the case of Sant Feliu de Guíxols two small rivers have their mouths in the bay: the Tueda and the Sant Feliu.

⁵⁴ . . . cuius [of Sant Feliu de Guíxols' port] *ad ingressum ventus pugnabat iniquus* (*Liber maiolichinus de gestis pisanorum illustribus*, ed. C. Calisse [Roma, 1904], v. 341).

⁵⁵ Martínez Abella, *El port de Sant Feliu de Guíxols*, 22.

⁵⁶ Some archaeological traces of settlement have been found also in the area of Sant Feliu during prehistoric eras: the Paleolithic but especially from the Neolithic to the Iron Age.

⁵⁷ There are various theories on the origin of this name. One hypothesizes a Greek origin, from the word "sea littoral" (*cetaus*), thus connecting the primitive

This first phase of settlement, characterized by agriculture as well as textile manufacturing and seaside commerce, has been dated as between the fourth and the second centuries BC.⁵⁸ Roman colonization arrived in the area in 218 BC, with the establishment of the main Roman center in nearby Emporion/Emporiae. But it seems that the population was fairly unaffected by that event, and life on the small rocky hill continued almost the same until the turn of the era. In the first century AD, thanks to the greater security along the littoral, the inhabitants abandoned the hill and moved onto the central plain near the beach and the sources of water. Only a few coins have been found from the Roman phase of occupation of Sant Feliu. Thus, it is very difficult to establish whether this was truly the place where the torture of the martyr Felix from Africa at the beginning of the fourth century took place, as tradition narrates. In the chronicles of this saint, he is said to have been preaching in the area of Girona and to have been killed, by order of the Prefect Rufinus, on the coast near the Fortim.⁵⁹ Undoubtedly, the memory and the name of the saint were somehow connected to the area; and one of the first documentary attestations of the local monastery, dated 968, already bears the name of the saint tied to the place name: [monastery] *in honore sancti Felicis in eodem* [of Girona] *comitatu in loco qui dicitur Iecsalis.*⁶⁰

Nothing is left in the documentation regarding the fate of the set-

tlement to some form of Greek colonization (E. Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo histórico de la villa de Sant Feliu de Guixols* [1905], printed by *Revista Ancora*, [1970], 31).

⁵⁸ I. Esteva Cruaia, "Primitiva població guixolense," *Revista Ancora*, (1967). See also A. del Castillo, "La Costa Brava en la Antigüedad," *Ampurias* 1, (1939).

⁵⁹ Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo histórico*, 34. Many other historians of Sant Feliu and of its monastery do not give much credit to this tradition. For example, Emilio Grahit, in his detailed *Memorias y noticias para la historia de la villa de Sant Feliu de Guixols* considers the foundation of the settlement here to be directly connected to the establishment of the monastery (*Memorias y noticias para la historia de la villa de Sant Feliu de Guixols*, [Girona, 1874], 106-109). After the finding in our century of archaeological remains from the pre-Roman and Roman periods up to the fifth century AD, the statement of Grahit should be reinterpreted as the monastery having given the impulse for the growth or re-establishment of a settlement here. Again, the discovery of a Late Antiquity settlement does not endorse by itself the authenticity of the story of Saint Felix's martyrdom here. See J. Calzada, L. Esteva, "Sant Feliu l'africà i Sant Feliu de Guixols," *Estudis sobre temes del Baix Empordà*, 3:11-30.

⁶⁰ *Catalunya romànica*, vol. 8, *L'Empordà*, 268 (regarding this document, see below in this chapter). The spelling "Iecsalis" may be a variant or the error of the copyist: in 993 the name of the monastery was "Sancti Felicis de Gissalis" and in 1016 it had finally acquired the spelling that it will maintain in the following centuries: "Sancti Felicis Guixolensis" (*Catalunya romànica*, vol. 8, *L'Empordà*, p. 265).

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⁶¹ À. Jimé (1986), 8-9. the church, i entom al pri on the south was built in

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tlement after the fall of the Roman Empire and during the first centuries of the Middle Ages. However, thanks to archaeological investigations, we know that, as happened in Collioure and in other centers along the Catalan coasts, a small population remained at least until the fifth century AD. Its traces have been found under a tower of the medieval monastery.⁶¹ With a general rise in insecurity and the appearance of Muslim pirates, the inhabitants moved to places in the mountainous and safer interior of the country.⁶²

The only certain sign of life here during the central centuries of the Middle Ages is connected to the Benedictine monastery of Sant Feliu de Guixols. The date of the actual foundation has been debated at length. Many historians of the monastery in past centuries have connected the creation of this religious foundation to Charlemagne at the beginning of the ninth century.⁶³ Jaume Marquès and Joan

⁶¹ À. Jiménez i Navarro, *Sant Feliu de Guixols, Quaderns de la Revista de Girona*, 8 (1986), 8-9. The base of the "Torre del Fum," the tower on the northern side of the church, is a structure dated to the fifth century (P. de Palol, "Algunes reflexions entorn al primer cristianisme gironí," *Revista Ancora*, 1048-1049 [1968]). The tower on the southern side, the "Torre del Corn," is based on a Roman structure, and was built in the Early Middle Ages (*Catalunya romànica*, 8:267-272).

⁶² This same process happened in most of the coastal settlement of historical Catalonia (Bonnassie, *Catalunya mil anys enverà*, 1:93-98). Jiménez hypothesizes that the area of Sant Feliu was never completely abandoned during the early Middle Ages (A. Jiménez i Navarro, *Sant Feliu de Guixols. Una lectura històrica* [Sant Feliu de Guixols, 1997], 39-40).

⁶³ The most famous is Father Alfonso Cano, the well known historian of Sant Feliu de Guixols, who was a monk in the monastery in the seventeenth century. He wrote in 1606 a manuscript of 286 folios, divided into 54 chapters, *Discurso general sobre este antiquissimo Castillo y Monasterio de Sanct Feliu de Guixols*, using the documentation of the monastery's archives, which have since suffered great damage. Regarding this hypothetical deed of Charlemagne, see the careful analysis and dismantlement of the supposed proofs by Grahit, *Bosquejo historico*, 110-114; J. Cervera i Berta, *Història del Monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols* (Girona, 1984), 13-15; and particularly J. Calzada i Olveras, "Sobre un diploma de Carloman," *Estudis sobre temes guixolencs* 2 (1980), 21. This foundation by the "Great Emperor" was similar to those claimed in the later centuries of the Middle Ages by other Catalan monasteries. In the case of Sant Feliu, a few of its ancient historians have attributed to Charlemagne not the foundation but the restoration of a even more ancient monastery created here in 584 and destroyed by Muslims in the eighth century (I. Gil Dalmau—who was abbot of the monastery in the 1830's—*Sinopsis cronològica de los sucesos principales de la historia del monasterio de San Feliu de Guixols*, [1853], printed in *Estudis del Baix Empordà*, 9 [1990], 164). In this regard, it should be noted that a source of the seventeenth century reports that all the documentation of the monastery "between the year of its foundation, 785, and 986," was lost in a fire during a Muslim attack in the tenth century. We know that probably in 965 there was the worst attack ever, which caused the destruction of parts of the monastery. However it was not the last one. Another incursion, with minor consequences, was carried out by another

Blanco de la Lama, in two of the most recent and complete studies about the early history of the monastery, have fixed its date of foundation in the first decades of the tenth century. The solid base for their affirmation rests in an analysis of the political-demographic situation of the Val D'Aro in the ninth and tenth centuries, as well as in a meticulous survey of the documentary related traces.⁶¹ Notwithstanding the fact that the interior was safer, this coastal area was selected as the place to establish a Benedictine monastery, which was to have the core of its patrimony in the nearby and more inland valleys. This choice would depend, as Blanco de la Lama points out, on the convergence of various factors: presence of a good natural anchorage, the possibility of an easy retreat into the nearby hillsides in case of attack from the sea, and—not to be forgotten—the tradition that indicated this location as the site of martyrdom of Saint Felix of Africa, thus allowing us also to hypothesize the pre-existence here of a shrine.⁶²

We know that the first archival mention of the monastery is in 961,⁶³ while the first document directly related to the institution and to one of its abbots is dated 17 May 968.⁶⁴ In this charter, King Lothar establishes Sunyer as abbot of two monasteries, Sant Feliu de Guixols and the nearby Sant Pol de Mar.⁶⁵ The concessions

Muslim squad twenty years later (J. Blanco de la Lama, *El monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols (segles X-XI) La formació del domini* [Sant Feliu de Guixols, 1991], 1-2 and 14-16).

⁶¹ J. Marquès, "Consideracions sobre l'origen del monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols," *Estudis sobre temes del Baix Empordà* 1 (1981), 207; J. Blanco de la Lama, *El monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols (segles X-XI) La formació del domini* (Sant Feliu de Guixols, 1991), 1-11. Already in the 1950's the then-director of the Archives of the monastery, Deacon Lamberto Font Gratacós, had arrived at that same conclusion (*Sant Feliu de Guixols-Costa Brava*, reprinted in a summarized form: "Breve reseña histórica de Sant Feliu de Guixols y su monasterio," *Revista Ancora* [1985]).

⁶² Blanco de la Lama, *El monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols*, 10-11.

⁶³ It is the will of the Deacon Otger, who donated a couple of oxen to the monastery (A. Udina i Abelló, *La successió testada a la Catalunya altomedieval* [Barcelona, 1984], doc. 10, pp. 155-156). Also, in that same volume, a similar attestation to the existence of the monastery is found in the will of Viscountess Riquilda, dated 962 (doc. 11, pp. 156-159).

⁶⁴ R. d'Abadal, *Catalunya Carolingia. Els diplomis carolingis a Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1926-1950), 1:202-204; it is also published in *Catalunya romànica*, 8:267.

⁶⁵ The monastery of Sant Pol lies on a stretch of sandy coast about twelve miles south of the Tordera river. The date of its foundation is unknown, but the monastery stands in the same place as a late-Roman settlement, whose remains, dated fifth-sixth centuries, have been found under the monastery's church. The first certain attestation of the Benedictine monastery is from 955, and, from this moment on, its patrimony extends into the areas of Girona and Barcelona. In 1068, probably because of some

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granted, at the request of Sunyer⁶⁹ and with the intercession of the queen and the archbishop of Reims, are important. Sunyer was nominated abbot of both monasteries, which after him would again have separate abbots. These future abbots would then be nominated as had been established in the Benedictine rule and subject to no other authority than the king of France. Both monasteries would safely retain, without any disturbance, all of their possessions. The extent of properties of Sant Feliu de Guixols was already quite vast, stretching into the Val d'Aro and nearby valleys, with at least two parishes. In addition, the king exempted the monasteries forever from paying taxes to anyone.

Ramon d'Abadal notes that this document is an anomaly. In fact, the concessions granted are different and much more important than those given in these same years to other Catalan monasteries by the king in only apparently similar documents, which are merely confirmations. Here, in Lothar's charter, we have not only one person placed in charge of two monasteries but also great financial and political power, both in terms of exemption from taxes to anyone and degree of independence. The privileges granted here were evidently to protect the monasteries from the authority (and greed) of local personalities, either lay or religious. Moreover, this is one of the last documents requested from the king of France on behalf of a Catalan monastery. From the 970's on, Catalan monasteries asked for grants from the Catalan counts instead, a clear indication as to where the real authority over that area had shifted.⁷⁰

What was the life of this monastery like at this time? We have to

difficulties, its administration was given by the count and countess of Barcelona to the Benedictines of Sant Honorat in Lerins in Provence, to take residence here. The subordination to the Provençal monastery continued until the middle of the thirteenth century, when Sant Pol was sold to become a Carthusian monastery dependent on the Catalan monastery of Escaladei (*Catalunya romànica*, 20:513-519).

⁶⁹ Sunyer was a remarkable personality of the time. Monk of Sant Miquel de Cuixà, he was close to high personages of the royal entourage. First known abbot of Sant Feliu, he died in 981 (E. Zaragoza i Pascual, *Abaciologi del Monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols (segles X-XIX)*, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat [Barcelona, 1998], 11). On the role of Sunyer at Cuixà, see R. d'Abadal, "Com neix and com creix un grand monestir pirinenc abans de l'any mil: Eixalada-Cuixà," *Dels visigots als catalans*, 1 (Barcelona, 1969), 423 and 427; also idem, *Els primers comtes catalans* (Barcelona, 1965), 295-299.

⁷⁰ d'Abadal, in *Catalunya Romànica*, 1:IX, 277, and 313. Also d'Abadal, *Els primers comtes catalans*, 288; and J. Salrach, *El procés de feudalització*, vol. 2 of *Història de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1989), 293.

remember that Sant Feliu de Guíxols was a monastery built on a shore and, thus, subjected to frequent attacks by Muslim pirates. They had scoured the coast in 935, and, as Father Cano reports, they burned the monastery in 965.⁷¹ The destruction and consequent crisis of the monastery, and probably of the entire area including the monastery of Sant Pol, was the reason behind the charter of Lothar to Sunyer. An exceptionally dire situation required this exceptional action.⁷² The monastery itself appeared like a fortress, as the traces of the oldest structures show, today mixed with and covered by more recent additions. It had a church endowed with a front portico with columns and arches, whose remains are now the "Porta ferrada," connected with two side towers.⁷³ The main function of Sant Feliu de Guíxols, as well as that of other Benedictine monasteries nearby, was to encourage the repopulation of the area, creating a center for agricultural and settlement organization, defense, and religious administration. This role was obviously well received and also stimulated by the comital authority; concession of such vast autonomy as in the charter of 968 became a point of friction between the counts and the monastery, and later also with local lords.⁷⁴

During the following century the monastery grew rapidly in power and wealth, as we notice by comparing this document and the confirmation of privileges and properties by Pope Alexander III in 1163.⁷⁵ Some of the conflicts with local magnates over holdings and

⁷¹ Cano, *Discurso general*, folio 19. As mentioned above, it was attacked again in 985 (Jiménez, *Sant Feliu de Guíxols. Una lectura històrica*, 49).

⁷² De la Lama indicates also, as motivation for confirming the possessions, the burning of the archives of the monastery by the Muslims, and the consequent necessity of having all the properties, of whose possession no more juridical proof was left, clearly and precisely confirmed by the highest authority (*El monestir de Sant Feliu de Guíxols*, 19).

⁷³ Besides the remains of the bases of the towers "del Fum" and "del Corn," which are Roman and Late Antiquity, the façade of the first church, called nowadays "Porta ferrada" was built in the first half of the tenth century (X. Barral i Altet, *L'art pre-romànic a Catalunya* [Barcelona, 1981], 275; J. Badia i Homs, *L'arquitectura medieval de l'Empordà*, vol. I *Baix Empordà* [Girona, 1977], 358; *Catalunya romànica*, 8:273-275). The attribution is still uncertain, though. A document dated 1277 calls "porta ferrada" the arches of the eastern part of the monastery, near the choir, under which the deceased abbots were buried (*Catalunya romànica*, 8:270). The majority of the oldest surviving structures, partially covered and modified by later additions and transformations, date back to the mid-eleventh century (L. Esteva i Cruaïes, "L'abat Arnau, probable constructor del temple romànic guixolenc," *Revista Àncora*, [August 6, 1978]).

⁷⁴ Bonnassie, *Catalunya mil anys enrera*, 1:89 and 223.

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rights during the eleventh century were resolved in favor of the monastery by the counts of Barcelona, who were also generous in granting the monastery their protection. The patrimony of the monastery continued to extend steadily into the valleys of the hinterland, well beyond the Val d'Aro, in a radius of more than ten kilometers from the religious center into the Baix Empordà and La Selva. More structures were added to the older monastic plan.⁷⁶ But Sant Feliu de Guixols' wealth did not lay exclusively in the rural hinterland: a great source of produce, and later also of power and revenues, was about to come from the sea, that same sea that in the previous centuries had brought to the monastery only desolation and destruction. Furthermore, the military defense of this coast had been entrusted to the monastery. In fact, in 1041 the religious institution was granted, by the counts of Barcelona and the bishop of Girona, the littoral castle of Benedormiens, a few kilometers north of Sant Feliu, so that it could be used to guard the coast that was under the jurisdiction of the monastery.⁷⁷

In 1113, the Italian fleet organized by Pisa to conquer the Balearic islands moved to the harbor of Sant Feliu de Guixols, after having been stranded by a tempest on the Catalan littoral. The composite fleet remained in this area for a two-month period, and in this port the Pisans met the highest authorities of the region to solidify their military support and to organize together an attack on the Balearics. Here, *prope ecclesiam Sancti Felicis de Gerunda*, was signed the concession of protection to the Pisans by the Count of Barcelona Ramon Berenguer III, whom the Pisans had nominated military leader of the expedition.⁷⁸ Not only was the harbor of Sant Feliu able to

the freedom of the monks in the election of their abbot (*Marca Hispanica*, ap. 440, coll. 1336-1338). The monastery had been confirmed to remain under papal protection also in 1094 by Pope Urban II (Zaragoza i Pascual, *Abaciologi*, 14).

⁷⁶ On this first phase of the expansion of the monastery see the central part of the careful study by de la Lama, *El monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols*, 25-71. On the subject of the abbots' election, see J. Calzada i Oliveras, "Acta de elecció i consagració d'Arnau, abat del monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols l'any 1052," *XX Assemblea intercomarcal d'estudiosos*, Sant Feliu de Guixols 1976, (Sant Feliu de Guixols, 1977), 1:89-100.

⁷⁷ Zaragoza i Pascual, *Abaciologi*, 12.

⁷⁸ *Siquidem cum Pisanorum exercitus, . . . divino ducatu in portu Sancti Felicis prope Gerundam apud Barcinonam applicuisset, prenominate Raymundus excellentissimus comes, cum Raymundo Barchinonensi atque Berengario Gerundensi venerabilibus episcopis ac Nogelario ecclesie Sancti Ruffi religioso abbate necnon et Bernardo Guillelmi de Sardagna strenuissimo comite, Guillelmo Arnaldo vicecomite, Guillelmo Gaufridi de Cerviaria, Guillelmo Raymundi aliisque suis militibus, causa*

contain that fleet, or at least part of it, but the port and its surroundings could sustain the whole army and its horses for two months.⁷⁹ After the signing of the document and an unsuccessful attempt to reach the islands, the fleet disbanded, with the promise of reuniting the following year. In 1114 the final rendezvous point was the harbor of Salou, further down the coast near Tarragona, from which the final, this time successful, attack on the Balearics was launched.⁸⁰

In 1118, the monastery endured a serious crisis, this time not caused by Muslim raids. The year before, Ramon Berenguer III had donated Sant Feliu and the monastery of Sant Pere de Galligans to the Benedictine monastery of Lagrasse in Occitania.⁸¹ The abbot and monks of Sant Feliu de Guixols strongly resisted being put under that authority. In 1118, the abbot of Lagrasse, Berenguer, arrived with an army, attacked the monastery, and occupied it. The abbot of Sant Feliu then turned for protection to the bishop of Girona.⁸²

confirmande societatis et amicitie . . . ad Pisanos in predictum portum Sancti Felicis venisset . . . (7 September 1113). Text of the 1113 document survives only in the transcription done in the concession to the Pisans by James I on 8 August 1233 (*Liber maiolichinus*, ed. Calisse, app. 1).

⁷⁹ The choice of the harbor of Sant Feliu de Guixols had not been made casually. In fact, the Pisan fleet had touched the Catalan coast at Blanes, and the harbor of Sant Feliu was chosen because it was better located and equipped for the needs of the army and its fleet, and also it was the best place along that coast to meet the count of Barcelona and the other lords. Nevertheless, the Pisan army was hit during its stay by an epidemic, and many died there, *patrias non toti ituri ad oras* (*Dumque moras faciunt* [the Pisans], *morbosam peste fluente, Multi de populo fati superantur iniquis*. In *Liber maiolichinus*, vv. 423-424).

⁸⁰ In that same year Ramon Berenguer III, now more familiar with the monastery and its abbot, conceded a confirmation of possessions and grants from his predecessors (Gil Dalmau, "Sinopsis cronológica" 167). In this document, the individual properties are not listed by name or location but referred to only as a whole, as the *alodium*, while the monastery had to purchase in gold this confirmation of all its possessions from the count (E. Grabit, *Memorias y noticias historicas para la historia de la villa de San Feliu de Guixols* (Girona, 1874), appendix 2, pp. 211-2). On the evolution of the monastery's patrimony during these first centuries of its history, I suggest the careful and detailed exposition by Blanco de la Lama, in *El monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols*, 19-71.

⁸¹ The abbot of Lagrasse was the natural brother of Ramon Berenguer III (Cervera i Berta, *Historia del monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols*, 24-25). The monastery of Lagrasse, still partially standing and restored today, is approximately 40 kilometers southwest of Narbonne.

⁸² The document of protection by the Bishop of Girona Berenguer is dated 29 August 1118 (*Espana Sagrada*, ed. E. Florez [Madrid, 1787-1849], 43-458). Some conflicts between the bishops of Girona and the abbots predictably developed in the following years, regarding the share of revenues from the area's natural resources.

It was a painful move to surrender the monastery's freedom, granted by papal authority, to the religious head of the region, but there was no other alternative to successfully resist the abbot of Lagrasse, who was supported by the count of Barcelona. The bishop's action succeeded, and the abbot of Lagrasse had to relinquish Sant Feliu de Guíxols.⁸³

This event also gives us an indication of the new and stronger interest taken by the count of Barcelona in this monastery. Thanks to the expedition to the Balearics, Ramon Berenguer III had occasion to inspect closely not only the affluence of this religious institution, but also the strategic location of the harbor and its aptness for naval traffic. All of this fit perfectly into the plans of Ramon Berenguer to expand into the Mediterranean area, and to increase the mercantile importance of the coast of Catalonia. The role of Sant Feliu de Guíxols became that of the first major Catalan port encountered by ships coasting toward Barcelona and southern Spain. The harbor was a port of call for passing commercial vessels as well as a toll station. In fact, in the already cited agreement signed in 1127 by Genoese envoys, each Genoese ship bound to Muslim Spain and landing, along its way, anywhere between Nice and the mouth of the Ebro would pay to the count ten morabatins in Barcelona *or* in Sant Feliu de Guíxols.⁸⁴

This marks, indeed, the first appearance of the mercantile role of Sant Feliu de Guíxols. The monastery continued to accumulate prestige and freedom. In 1163 the abbot obtained, in a bull from Pope Alexander III, the privilege of being subjected again to papal authority only and not to the diocesan or comital rule. With this important political victory, Abbot Berenguer was also granted papal protection

In 1143 an arbitration sentence established the portions due respectively to the bishop and the abbot of the fish caught along this littoral (Arxiu municipal de Sant Feliu de Guíxols, Llibre Vermell, f. 23). Later sentences, in 1199 and 1200, concerned the attribution of tithes from disputed parishes.

⁸³ *España sagrada*, 20:200, app. 38-39; Sobrequés, *Els grans comtes*, 187, note 179; *Marca hispanica*, doc. 362. This last document confirms the fortified plan of the monastery, protected by high towers.

⁸⁴ 28 November 1127 (ACA, Chancery, parchments Ramon Berenguer III, nr. 293). The count and countess also signed a reciprocal contract, where safety of transiting Genoese was stressed, as well as the duty of Genoese to pay transit and commercial tolls, without creating disturbances (ACA, Chancery, parchments Ramon Berenguer III, nr. 2402, extra inventory). See J. Balary y Jovani, *Orígenes históricos de Cataluña* (Barcelona, 1899; 2nd ed. San Cugat del Vallés, 1964), 658; Ferrer i Mallol, "Els Italians," 429; and Batlle, "Els francesos," 362.

and confirmation of all possessions and rights of the monastery, no interference in the election by the monks of the abbot, as well as severe punishments against anyone, religious or layman, who would act against these concessions.⁸⁵ Meanwhile the number of inhabitants gathered around the monastery was increasing, and the abbot recognized the importance of a growing community for the monastery. Thus, the dues and the relations between the inhabitants and their lord, the abbot of the monastery, had to be made precise.

In 1181, Abbot Bernard, *una cum consilio omnium fratrum, respectu utilitate domus et augmentationis et meliorationis totius villae, et pro honore et dilectione omnium habitantium*, conceded to the present and future inhabitants a charter of settlement, which stated the mutual legal grounds.⁸⁶ Many of the traditional seigniorial rights, such as those over measurement taxes and water, as well as the right over properties of persons who died without a will or legal heirs, were waived.⁸⁷ This part about the deceased *intestatus* is quite interesting because it stated that the properties of the deceased would have been assigned *cum ordinatione et consilio honorum virorum villae et senioris ipsius*.⁸⁸ It gives us another clue as to the development of the settlement and its active community. In fact, there already was a group of notables who interacted in the administration of the settlement with the abbot, as well as with others claiming some seigniorial right—in this latter case, the deceased man's direct lord, who could or could not be the abbot. The tax on bigger fish caught, previously belonging to the monastery, was waived for the fishermen. As to the rest of the catch from the

⁸⁵ 25 June 1163. Edited in *Marca hispanica*, 440; also Cano, *Discurso general*, 58-59. In 1145 the conflict between the monastery and the bishop of Girona had been reignited by the imposition on the monastery of rents and dues, as well as by confiscation of properties. The abbot then requested another arbitration between the monastery and the bishop, but the outcome of the sentence did not satisfy Abbot Berenguer, who decided to appeal to the pope himself (Gil Dalmau, "Sinopsis cronologica," 167-168). It is important to stress that in the 1163 bull the pope did not make any reference to mercantile rights of the monastery. The only sea-related revenue that the institution was entitled to was the tithe on fishing along its coast. It did, however, own properties and houses in Barcelona and Girona.

⁸⁶ 1 June 1181 (*Marca hispanica*, app. 477; Alart, *Privileges et titres*, 1:65-66; Font Rius, *Cartas de poblacion*, doc. 163, p. 22).

⁸⁷ *Intestia* was the feudal right of the overlord to confiscate half or one third of the possessions of the vassal who died without a will, while *exorquia* was the right of the lord to inherit one third of the possessions of the vassal deceased without legitimate heirs.

⁸⁸ Similarly, persons about to die without legal heirs, *exorqui*, were given freedom to choose their heirs without limitation, but *cum consilio abbatis et bonorum virorum*.

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sea, the monastery would take half, giving the fishermen three pounds of grain and three measures of wine in exchange, without requesting more.

In the latter half of the document, the men of Sant Feliu de Guíxols promised in exchange always to be under oath as *fideles* of the monastery and *boni defensores . . . ad meliorandam villam et utilitatem domus et reverentiam abbatis et seniorum, et bonorum virorum*. This seems to have been the contingent reason why the abbot was conceding the charter and such generous tax breaks. In fact, in 1178 an attack by Majorcan Muslims had destroyed the nearby monastery of Santa Maria d'Ullà and taken as hostages the monks themselves. The abbot of Sant Feliu wanted to insure that, in case of a similar aggression, he had the manpower to avoid such an outcome for his monastery.⁸⁹ Here, the major players in Sant Feliu de Guíxols appear: the monastery and its abbot; other individuals or institutions, who claim seigniorial rights (one could be the diocese of Girona but also some of the monks, often from noble local families), but also the "good men" of the Sant Feliu's community. To all those the whole community of Sant Feliu swore to be always loyal, ready to fight, to perform their vassal military duties, and to patrol the area (*in hostis, in cavalcatis et in missionis guardiarum*).

This document has been widely commented upon. The first historians of Sant Feliu and, in general, of the Benedictine order, had always considered Bernard as the founder of the settlement in 1163, gathering in this place people who had until then been living scattered in the area.⁹⁰ They believed that Bernard's strategy was aimed at having men and resources ready to use for the protection of the monastery and its possessions, which he well knew were at risk. In exchange, he would have granted some relief from feudal dues. Obviously, this theory does not stand. Both the mooring of the Italian fleet for well over two full months in the harbor and the presence,

⁸⁹ Zaragoza i Pascual, *Abaciologi*, 16.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Gil Dalmau, "Sinopsis cronológica," 168; and the most important of them, Father Cano. More modern historians have also followed this theory, which calls for Bernard to have grouped near the monastery all the inhabitants "dispersed" along the beachfront and in the nearby valley of Sant Amanç, "where they were exposed to continued invasions" (Cervera i Berta, *Història del monestir de Sant Feliu de Guíxols*, 26). The emphasis on the foundation of the settlement by a planned act of the abbot was due to the need, in the eighteenth century, to confirm the supremacy and jurisdiction of the monastery over the settlement against the claims of the inhabitants.

in the 1181 document, of an already organized community with its "good men" acting side by side with the seigniorial lords, indicate the presence here of a settlement that was well established before 1143, although probably not too densely populated.¹¹ Abbot Bernard reorganized his relationships with the inhabitants, relinquishing some of the more unpleasant obligations and taxes in exchange for a confirmation of his authority in terms of judicial matters and some seigniorial rights (also including the salt), as well as a guarantee of fidelity and feudal military assistance in case of attack. The result was a controlled (Bernard would have preferred "supervised") evolution of the economy of the settlement.¹² In the beginning, the sea probably played only a limited role in the life of the settlers, as a source of fish, salt, and short-range coastal commercial travel. However, with the increase of navigation along the Catalan coast in the latter part of the twelfth century, as well as with the major involvement of the Crown in maritime commerce and Mediterranean affairs, all that was about to change.

We do not have any document indicating the amount of commerce passing through the port of Sant Feliu de Guíxols—in transit or bound to and from Barcelona or Girona—during our time frame. Certainly also foreign ships used it as port of call throughout the twelfth century. An indication of its importance is in the 1167 agreement between the Count-King Alphonse and the Genoese. The Catalan ruler promised the Genoese that Pisans would not be

¹¹ Already Villanueva (*España sagrada*, 15:10), E. Grahit (*Memorias y noticias para la historia de la villa de San Feliu de Guíxols* [Girona, 1874], 129-130) and Gonzales Hurtebise (*Bosquejo histórico*, 48-49) had recognized the historical invalidity of this role of Abbot Bernard. In addition, as Gonzales Hurtebise stresses, in the document there is no indication of the "foundation" at that moment of the settlement itself.

¹² As Font Rius notes, the concession of charters of settlement, where specific exemptions and other concessions were granted, was a phenomenon quite widespread in the territories of the Crown of Aragon from the mid-twelfth to the fourteenth century. It caused a slow movement of settlers towards more advantageous areas and, consequently, a chain reaction that produced additional charters to stop the hemorrhage of inhabitants and entice new ones. The authority that conceded most of these grants is the royal-comital acting in the Crown's lands as well as in the newly conquered territories. Many times the count-king was issuing the charters at the request of the local lords, but sometimes the local lords, lay or religious, can be the originators of the documents. The area in question could have been already settled or not. Thus, the issuing of the charter itself cannot be accepted as definitive proof of the presence or absence of an earlier settlement. (Font Rius, *Cartas de población*, 668 and ff.)

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allowed to obtain even victuals anywhere "from Sant Feliu to Nice, and not even in the port of Sant Feliu."⁹³ The presence here of a comital toll station at least since 1127 and the strategic position of the harbor, the main one in the area and the best connected to Girona, must have stimulated local economic activities. The inhabitants surely benefited from the increase in maritime trade in the latter years of the twelfth century. The consequent intolerance of the community for the feudal ties and duties to the monastery were surely the reasons behind a concession granted by the Count-King Peter to the abbot of Sant Feliu in 1203. Here Peter, at the request of the abbot, conceded a permit to relocate the monastery and the settlement to a different site, the *castellare*,⁹⁴ or any other one considered suitable, and to build in the new location fortifications and defenses. Most importantly, in the new place the abbot and the monastery were going to have complete feudal rights over the settlement, without any interference from the count-kings or their representatives *sicut melius et plenius vos et antecessores vestri habuistis et tenuistis in monasterio et in villa et in habitatoribus et terris et vineis. . .*⁹⁵

The emphasis then is on the underlying rebellious attitude of the inhabitants against feudal tolls and duties, perceived as limitations, and on the attempt of the abbot to insure a firmer grip over the new community, while the alleged reason for the move was the danger due to the Albigensian war raging nearby. Obviously, this document can also be read as an element of blackmail and leverage by the abbot against the inhabitants who, if not "behaving," would have been deprived of the defense and the economic activity provided by their proximity to the monastery.⁹⁶ The count-king on this occasion teamed up on the side of the local lord, the monastery. The only

⁹³ *A portu Sancti Felici usque ad Nizam neque in ipso portu Sancti Felici nec ibi aliquid sustentamentum accipiant* (ACA, Chancery, Alphonse I, 42).

⁹⁴ Today the rude rocky hill of Sant Elm, on the southwestern end of the inlet, considerably further away from the beach and the port.

⁹⁵ 12 March 1203 (Cano, *Discurso general*, folios 77 and 78; Grahit, *Memorias históricas*, 218).

⁹⁶ Gonzales Hurtebise (*Bosquejo histórico*, 50) and, following him, Font Rius (*Cartas de población*, 604) doubt the authenticity of this document, because they fail to see a motivation. However, it is very easy to imagine how disputes between the inhabitants and the monastery may have failed to leave traces in the documentation, contrary to what happened to a royal document, which was to be carefully preserved in the archives of the monastery, to be used at any time against the contentions of the inhabitants.

concern of Peter was to continue to receive taxes from the commercial vessels in transit, the *quinta barcharu[m] sicut ego et antecessores mei consuevimus accipere in navibus mercatorum que de Hispania cum mercibus veniunt*. Thanks to this document, we now also know that taxes were paid in Sant Feliu de Guíxols and that they were due from the commercial vessels arriving from Muslim Spain. It meant that only foreign ships that continued their trip to Occitania or Italy were obliged to pay, while local commerce, bound to or coming from Barcelona and other Catalan markets, was exempt and thus advantaged.

None of the abbots of Sant Feliu de Guíxols ever moved the location of the monastery or the settlement, and both continued to grow throughout the thirteenth century.⁹⁷ In 1229, Abbot Bernard (elected in 1228, died in 1253) took part in the conquest of Majorca organized by James I. During the famous assemblies of Barcelona, where the contributions of every Catalan participant was finalized, Abbot Bernard promised to participate personally with five vassal knights. To these knights were then added one hundred seventy soldiers completely equipped at the monastery's expense. They were in the division commanded by the bishop of Barcelona.⁹⁸ This relevant feudal army indicates the extension of the seigniorial power of the abbot of Sant Feliu, and it is a direct example of the application of the military oath sworn by the inhabitants in 1181. After the conquest of Majorca city and following a few conflicts regarding the division of booty—some of the expedition's prelates had to barricade themselves in one of the city buildings, as James recalls—the abbot got his share. It consisted of one hundred and sixty-nine and a half units of property, reward also for his commitment to maintaining forever on the island an armed horseman for the defense of the territory. In addition, the monastery obtained eighty houses, lands, and other properties all over the island.⁹⁹

Most importantly of all, Abbot Bernard was nominated by James

⁹⁷ Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo historico*, 49–50; Cervera i Berta, *Història del monestir de Sant Feliu de Guixols*, 26–27.

⁹⁸ The importance reached by the monastery of Sant Feliu de Guíxols in the Crown of Aragon is also highlighted by the order of its abbot's intervention in the list of the speakers in the assembly. In the autobiography of James, *El Llibre dels feits*, he is said to have spoken as the fourth religious personality, after the archbishop of Tarragona and the bishops of Barcelona and Girona (Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo historico*, 51–52).

⁹⁹ *Llibre del repartimiento de Mallorca*, later copied in the *Liber privilegiorum major Sancti Felicis Guixollensi* (Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo historico*, 52–54).

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as the first bishop of the new diocese created in the Balearic islands in 1232. In that year, James granted to the new bishop and all his successors the tithes over the royal properties in Majorca, and over what he was ever to acquire in Minorca and Ibiza.¹⁰⁰ One of the documents that the new bishop signed as a witness, on 12 April 1232, was an exemption from payment of commercial taxes for the people of Girona.¹⁰¹ The choice of Abbot Bernard of Sant Feliu de Guíxols as the first bishop of Majorca had been dictated in part by his rank and participation in the enterprise and the vicinity of his see to the islands, but it was especially due to the friction between the bishops of Barcelona and Girona on one side, and the archbishop of Tarragona on the other, for the control over the new and rich diocese. Bernard had been selected as the person above the parties. However it did not last long. The pressure was too intense, and Bernard was soon forced to resign.¹⁰² In 1237, the pope, maintaining for the Apostolic See the right to elect the bishop of Majorca, asked the bishops of Lleida and Vic to nominate the new bishop, prohibiting anyone from the archdiocese of Tarragona from being appointed.¹⁰³

Meanwhile, the settlement and the community of Sant Feliu de

¹⁰⁰ J. Villanueva, *Viaje literario a las iglesias de España* (Madrid, 1851), 15:21.

¹⁰¹ Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo historico*, 54.

¹⁰² The desire to win control by each of the two sides was great. The revenues from the islands were the prize. Already in January 1232 Bernard donated nineteen property units in the island of Majorca to the bishop of Girona. Predictably, Bernard was very soon caught between the conflicting interests of the archbishop of Tarragona on one side, the count-king, who supported his nomination, and the bishops of Girona and Barcelona on the other. In fact, the newly conquered islands represented not only wealth-producing territories but also important commercial and mercantile outposts, while being in a geographical position accessible from each of the three sees. Villanueva speaks of these struggles as already manifested in 1233. Citing as proof missives of Pope Gregory IX, Villanueva indicates that supremacy over this diocese ultimately fell to the pope, who tried to offset the power of the archbishop of Tarragona (Villanueva, *Viaje Literario*, 21:64-67; document transcription, 21:284-86). The first effective bishop of Majorca, Raymund de Torrella, signed himself as such in October 1238 (Villanueva, *Viaje literario*, 21:127). Gonzales Hurtebise analyzes in detail the rewards given in Majorca to the monastery and the role of Abbot Bernard in this military enterprise, listing carefully his documentary sources (Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo historico*, 51-55). So does, far less extensively, Grahit in *Memorias y noticias*, 134-135.

¹⁰³ This prohibition indicates the problems still pending regarding control over the Balearic diocese, which was detached from the archdiocese of Tarragona and maintained under direct papal supervision until 1492 (Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo historico*, 54-55; regarding the documents see Villanueva, *Viaje literario*, 21:64-70 and 127, 284 and 286).

that same Abbot Bernard obliged himself—for the price of three hundred sous of Barcelona for a total of eighty-eight silver pounds—to the inhabitants of Sant Feliu de Guixols and of its burg San Amans, to limit his commerce of wine and salt, so that the selling of these items by the inhabitants could be more competitive.¹⁰⁴ In 1258, Abbot Gerard conceded specific land for the construction of shipyards in Sant Feliu.¹⁰⁵ These shipyards soon became very important for the marine activity of the Crown: Muntaner recalls that various kinds of ships, used by King Peter the Great for the conquest of Sicily in 1282, were built here.¹⁰⁶ However, the year 1285 marked a disastrous setback for the monastery and the settlement. They both were razed by the French fleet during the crusade against Peter the Great, and almost all the inhabitants were killed.¹⁰⁷ In 1287 the work to rebuild the monastery and villa began. To attract new settlers, Abbot Gilabert conceded to the inhabitants many feudal freedoms and commercial exemptions.¹⁰⁸ It was after this time that the present, perfectly regular plan of the village was laid down.

Sant Feliu de Guixols has been called an example of a settlement whose development depended on a local religious institution.¹⁰⁹ Already inhabited during Roman times, the creation of the monastery in the tenth century gave new life to this location, and the medieval center slowly grew together with the religious institution, emphasiz-

¹⁰⁴ Arxiu Municipal de Sant Feliu de Guixols, *Llibre vermell*, folio 16; Grahit, *Memorias y noticias*, 219–220. This document is also important because it is the first documentary witness to the organized “universitas,” as a legal entity, of the men of Sant Feliu de Guixols. In another 1238 document, the abbot sentenced the people of nearby Sant Amans to sell wine and salt at a price higher than that charged by the inhabitants of Sant Feliu de Guixols, who were ultimately the ones profiting from all these charters.

¹⁰⁵ Arxiu Municipal de Sant Feliu de Guixols, parchment 108, *Llibre vermell*, folio 15. Cano, *Discurso*, folio 116.

¹⁰⁶ Grahit, *Memorias y noticias*, 135. For a synthetic overview of the acquisition of possessions of the monastery in this time, see Gil Dalmau, “Sinopsis cronológica,” 168 and ff.

¹⁰⁷ Gonzales Hurtebise, *Bosquejo historico*, 56–57.

¹⁰⁸ 1 August 1287 (Font Rius, *Cartas de poblacion*, 515–517). The process of repopulation went quite slowly. In 1290 there were only six houses, still much less than the one hundred that existed before the French incursion.

¹⁰⁹ Font Rius, *Cartas de poblacion*, 604–607.

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ing agricultural and fishing activities. The presence of the fortified monastery protected the harbor, already privileged by the favorable geomorphology and ease of communication. Opposition between the monastic lord and the inhabitants over feudal rights did not contribute to the growth of the port, and the authority and power of the monastery alone were not sufficient to greatly stimulate the commercial exchanges. Instead, a more direct subordination to the countings in this period¹¹⁰ would have provided a larger array of economic advantages. The establishment here of a toll station from the beginning of the twelfth century did increase mercantile traffic, but only in the mid-thirteenth century did the abbots understand the full importance of maritime revenues for the economy of Sant Feliu. Later, the disasters of war and the creation by Peter the Great of nearby Palamós¹¹¹ as royal port weakened the role of Sant Feliu as the most important port of the northern Catalan coast.¹¹² However, it continued to be a relevant node for coastal commerce and for trade with the Balearics, and its merchants could be found as far away as Sicily.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ In 1354 the abbot of the monastery sold to King Peter the Great civil and criminal jurisdiction over the settlement. Sant Feliu became then a royal "villa," and twenty years later the surrounding smaller villages also were freed from the jurisdiction of the monastery, but still obliged to its military defence. For an overview of the history of the settlement of Sant Feliu de Guixols in the Late Middle Ages see J. Colls Carreras, "Evolución de un municipio medieval en la costa catalana: San Feliu de Guixols," *Cuadernos de temas guixolenses*, 1:1-13. For the later periods see Jiménez i Navarro, "Sant Feliu de Guixols," 4-92; and Martínez Abella, *El port de Sant Feliu de Guixols*, 39-125.

¹¹¹ Font Rius uses Palamós as a case of royal foundation of a port center from anew. Until the middle of the thirteenth century the inlet of Palamós was completely deserted. On the beach there was only a minuscule cluster of fishermen. On the promontory of Cap Esteban a fortification was the only defense for the few inhabitants of the area. The foundation of Palamós carries the date of 25 October 1277 (ACA, James I, register 40, folio 33v). James had chosen Bailiff Astrug Ravaya to organize the first phase of settlement. The first move had been, in the middle of that same 1277, the acquisition from the Canons of Girona of the castle of Sant Esteban. On 18 May, Astrug was invested with the responsibility of starting the actual settlement (Font Rius, *Cartas de població*, 606).

¹¹² For Yvette Barbaza, the creation of the port-town of Palamós caused the fragmenting of mercantile commerce and urban settlement along this coast, which consequently limited the development of Sant Feliu and weakened the economic and demographic potential of the whole area (*El paisatge humà*, 255).

¹¹³ D. Abulafia ("Catalan Merchants and the Western Mediterranean, 1236-1300: Studies in the Notarial Acts of Barcelona and Sicily," *Viator* 16 [1985], 236-240) has investigated the activities of a merchant of Sant Feliu de Guixols in Sicily at the end of the thirteenth century.

CARLOS GARRIDO

El caminante de Empúries

EDICIONES PENÍNSULA

BARCELONA

IMPURIAE

lucha humana entre los jirones de vapor. Perdiéndose por el antiguo porticado.

Las «domi» lujosas eran un montón de ruinas. Se diría que los saqueadores se habían ensañado con ellas, rompiendo a conciencia hasta las tejas que las cubrían. Algunos estucos pintados habían sido violentamente destruidos y rascados. En una esquina aparecería incluso una placa de mármol con letras grabadas, casi cubierta por la vegetación.

Una de las visiones que más impresionarían serían las puertas de la ciudad. Enteras, con los hierros desnudos que sirvieron de goznes, abiertas y desencajadas en un gesto de pavor. Al asomarte, verías sólo calima. Un campo pintado por la nada.

SAN FÉLIX EL AFRICANO

Los historiadores destacan el papel de Emporiae en la difusión del primer cristianismo, aunque los testimonios históricos sean realmente escasos. Las nuevas ideas religiosas llegaban sobre todo del norte de África. La Bética era por ello una de las regiones más cristianizadas. Y parece lógico que el puerto emporitano, muy bien conectado con unas Baleares que actuaban como puente entre ambos lados del «Mare Nostrum», fuera también un punto de llegada.

Las leyendas ya ofrecen una primera pista. Así, las tradiciones apócrifas aseguraban que el apóstol Santiago desembarcó en Emporiae o que el mismo San Pablo llegó a predicar en la ciudad. Otra tradición mantenía que Paulo Sergio, discípulo de San Pablo, vivió en una cueva de Sant Pere de Rodes, de la que salía para predicar en las tierras circundantes, entre ellas Emporiae.

El único hecho cierto se refiere a un personaje que pasearía por estas ruinas como yo. Quizás también en una mañana de niebla. Lo imagino menudo y delgado, de ojos vivos, un poco ojerosos, combustionados por la vida interior. Un joven de complexión frágil que pasaría la mano por los muros caídos, reflexionando sobre la futilidad de lo terreno. Quizás pensaría en la metáfora de la niebla. Igual que este cielo opaco, cegado en sí mismo, la existencia no tenía sentido sin la luz poderosa de la verdad.

ES



Había nacido en Cilitania, provincia de Mauritania, en el último cuarto del siglo III. Por aquellos tiempos, el cristianismo se extendía sobre todo en las ciudades. Era una visión del mundo diferente, que rechazaba el régimen esclavista, glorificaba el amor místico en el seno de la «ecclesia» y se dejaba guiar por un Buen Pastor que en cierto modo recordaba la figura dulce de Orfeo. Cuando Nerón dictó su persecución bajo el lema «non licet esse vos» (no os es lícito existir), los mártires alumbraron aún más la llama de la fe. Las conversiones se multiplicaban incluso en el seno de las legiones, como fue el caso de la VII Gemina que tenía a su cargo la custodia de Hispania.

Se llamaba Félix (Feliz en latín) y junto con su hermano Cucufate (Cugat) fueron a estudiar a la ciudad africana de Cesarea (actualmente Cherchell, cerca de Argel) donde abrazaron la nueva fe. Tenían una buena formación, sabían las reglas de la retórica, conocían la historia, y se instruyeron en alguna comunidad cristiana donde se repetían las enseñanzas de San Pablo y los relatos apostólicos.

Ambos hermanos terminaron por abandonar sus estudios y decidieron trasladarse a Hispania, donde podrían encontrar numerosas comunidades cristianas en las que perfeccionarse. Se embarcaron para ello en una nave que según cuentan las actas «intentaba, Dios mediante, ir a Hispania con diversas mercaderías, y llegó después de próspera navegación a la ciudad de Barcelona, con el auxilio divino. Y él (el santo) como simulare ser un mercader, comenzó a preocuparse de qué modo podría alcanzar el reino de los Cielos y lo más excelso de la vida eterna».

En Barcino, los dos hermanos se encontraron con una situación inesperada. El emperador Diocleciano había desencadenado una nueva persecución contra los cristianos, encargando a su legado Daciano la «limpieza religiosa» de Hispania. Su delegado en las tierras de Barcino y Gerunda fue un oficial llamado Rufino, que pasó tristemente a la historia como verdugo de mártires. Diocleciano puso en marcha una represión sistemática y de gran alcance contra los personajes significados de la «gens christiana». Sería la persecución más metódica de las que habían tenido lugar hasta entonces.

La gravedad de la situación no arredró a los dos hermanos.

Cucufate se quedó en Barcino, donde poco después moriría al igual que Santa Eulalia de Sarrià. Félix o Feliu, por su parte, «se trasladó por mar de Barcelona a Ampurias, y asentándose allí, inició sus actividades religiosas y se entregó arduamente a la oración, de tal modo que mereció ser estimado por el pueblo» (códice de Moissiac).

El joven encontró una Emporiae en ruinas, cubierta por la arena. Forzosamente hubo de instalarse o en la acrópolis fortificada de Sant Martí o en alguna de las villas que funcionaban en los alrededores. Y probablemente, escogió el terreno de la antigua ciudad para sus paseos y meditaciones. Como una visión anunciadora del final que esperaba a los tiempos paganos y la gloria futura de otros valores.

A los ojos del hombre moderno, aquellos primeros mártires han terminado por enmascararse en las figuras pías y santurronas de la religiosidad popular. Convertidos en personajes de almanaque, trastos ingenuos y hagiográficos de lo que fueron. Pero muchas veces me he preguntado si se trató realmente de personas iluminadas por la fe, poseídas por un amor divino tan absoluto que no les importaba la muerte a manos de sus verdugos. O si por el contrario, eran activistas convencidos, con una idea social y política imbricada en lo religioso. Semejantes a los idealistas de todas las épocas que defienden su credo hasta la muerte.

Recuperar la verdadera dimensión humana, fuera de lo milagroso y lo extraordinario, significaría comprender por fin a hombres como Félix el Africano. Caminar con él por la playa, discutir del sentido de la vida, compartir un poco de vino y un pan muy tostado. Si los tiempos han conservado su recuerdo, por algo será. Una mirada brillante, un carácter fuerte, la voluntad de convencer, una dulzura persuasiva, algo tendría su personalidad para impresionar a sus coetáneos. Santidad aparte.

El resto de su historia pertenece a la leyenda áurea. Quedó trascrita en los pasionarios que se multiplicaron a partir de los siglos VI y VII, cuando se desarrolló un verdadero tráfico de reliquias martiriales.

Según la tradición, Félix abandonó su refugio de Empúries y se dirigió a Gerunda. Tal vez en un día caliginoso, a bordo de un carro que traqueteaba por el camino empedrado. Antes de perderse en la

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neblina, se volvió hacia los que se habían reunido para despedirle. Entre ellos, un hombre ya mayor, enjuto, con el pelo corto y blanco. Su amigo y protector durante aquellas semanas o meses. Félix pudo ver por última vez, siluetada por las nieblas, la ciudadela de Sant Martí. Y moviéndose entre los fardos y toneles, levantó el brazo en señal de despedida. Poco después, se perdió en la bruma.

En Gerunda, Félix se refugió en casa de una dama cristiana. Predicaba «el camino de la salvación» sin importarle el riesgo que corría, y no tardó en ser localizado por los hombres de Rufino.

Félix fue encarcelado, y el propio oficial le ofreció la libertad a cambio de que abjurara de su fe y sacrificara a los dioses. El joven se negó, y Rufino se declaró asombrado de su «gran sabiduría y muy bellas palabras». Pero la ley era la ley, de modo que lo hizo apalear por sus esbirros, sin conseguir que su voluntad se doblegase.

Cuanto más se resistía, más se despertaban los instintos brutales de su torturador. Le desgarraron las carnes con garfios de hierro, le arrastraron por las calles de la ciudad. Al mismo tiempo, el oficial romano le ofreció una mujer y riquezas, una vida normal. Pero él lo rechazaba, consolado por los ángeles y un «joven vestido con blancas vestiduras» que le visitaba en la mazmorra.

La leyenda asegura que esta resistencia aumentó todavía más el carisma de Félix, admirado en secreto por los resistentes de Gerunda. Su prestigio se expandió por la región, y tal vez llegó incluso a Empúries donde sus amigos se enteraron horrorizados de la suerte que le había sido reservada. El hombre de pelo blanco se escondió temiendo ser perseguido a su vez.

Rufino siguió sometiéndole a torturas, a pesar de lo cual los guardianes de la prisión—quizás en la lóbrega Torre Gironella que presidía la ciudad—comunicaban al oficial las «maravillas y cánticos angélicos que ven y escuchan».

El romano se dio cuenta de que la situación escapaba de su control. Ordenó entonces que el prisionero fuera llevado a la playa y lanzado al mar. Así lo hicieron. Quizás en el mismo Sant Feliu de Guíxols, el santo fue embarcado. Se le ató una «mola asinaria» o rueda de molino al cuello, las manos y los pies fuertemente amarrados. Y cuando la embarcación se adentró veinte estadios en el mar (poco menos de cuatro kilómetros), le arrojaron entre burlas e insultos.

La crónica de la «passio sancti Felicis», que parece copiar literalmente la historia de San Vicente de Valencia, asegura que los ángeles le rescataron, llevándole sano y salvo a la costa. Por eso, a partir de entonces, será representado con la piedra de moler y una palma en la mano, símbolo de la victoria del mártir.

En la orilla, Rufino en persona le infligió nuevos tormentos con hierros y garfios, hasta que Félix entregó tranquilamente su alma a Dios. Una mujer, quizás la misma dama que lo acogió en su casa, se encargó de llevar el cuerpo hasta Gerunda. Donde descansa para siempre, bajo el templo dedicado siglos después a su memoria.

La celebración litúrgica de Sant Feliu figura entre las más antiguas, tiene lugar el 1 de agosto y arranca de la época de su martirio (entre los años 303 y 304).

El nombre de San Félix el Africano—que no hay que confundir con otro Félix diácono y compañero de San Narciso, obispo y también mártir—ha quedado unido desde entonces a Gerona. Pero fue en Empúries donde, durante un tiempo, forjó su espíritu. Entre las ruinas, el puerto y los montículos de arena. También allí, en cierto modo, quedará su recuerdo.

Solitario, ensimismado, caminante de la niebla.

EL CEMENTERIO

A finales del siglo IV la estructura del imperio romano empezó a desmoronarse. Los pueblos germánicos, presionados a su vez por los hunos, cruzaron las fronteras. Fue como la caída de un «telón de acero» que dividía dos mundos. El poder imperial se disgregó en intrigas y luchas intestinas. Las comunicaciones ya no eran seguras como antes, no existía un ejército que garantizase la paz y la seguridad. Sólo los ricos terratenientes, que contaban con tropas privadas, podían defenderse. Finalmente, en el año 476 desaparecía definitivamente el Imperio Romano de Occidente.

En este contexto, las ideas cristianas del juicio universal, el fin de los tiempos y la resurrección de los muertos actuarían como proyecciones de un miedo generalizado al futuro. La inminencia de un cataclismo que se consideraría universal.

