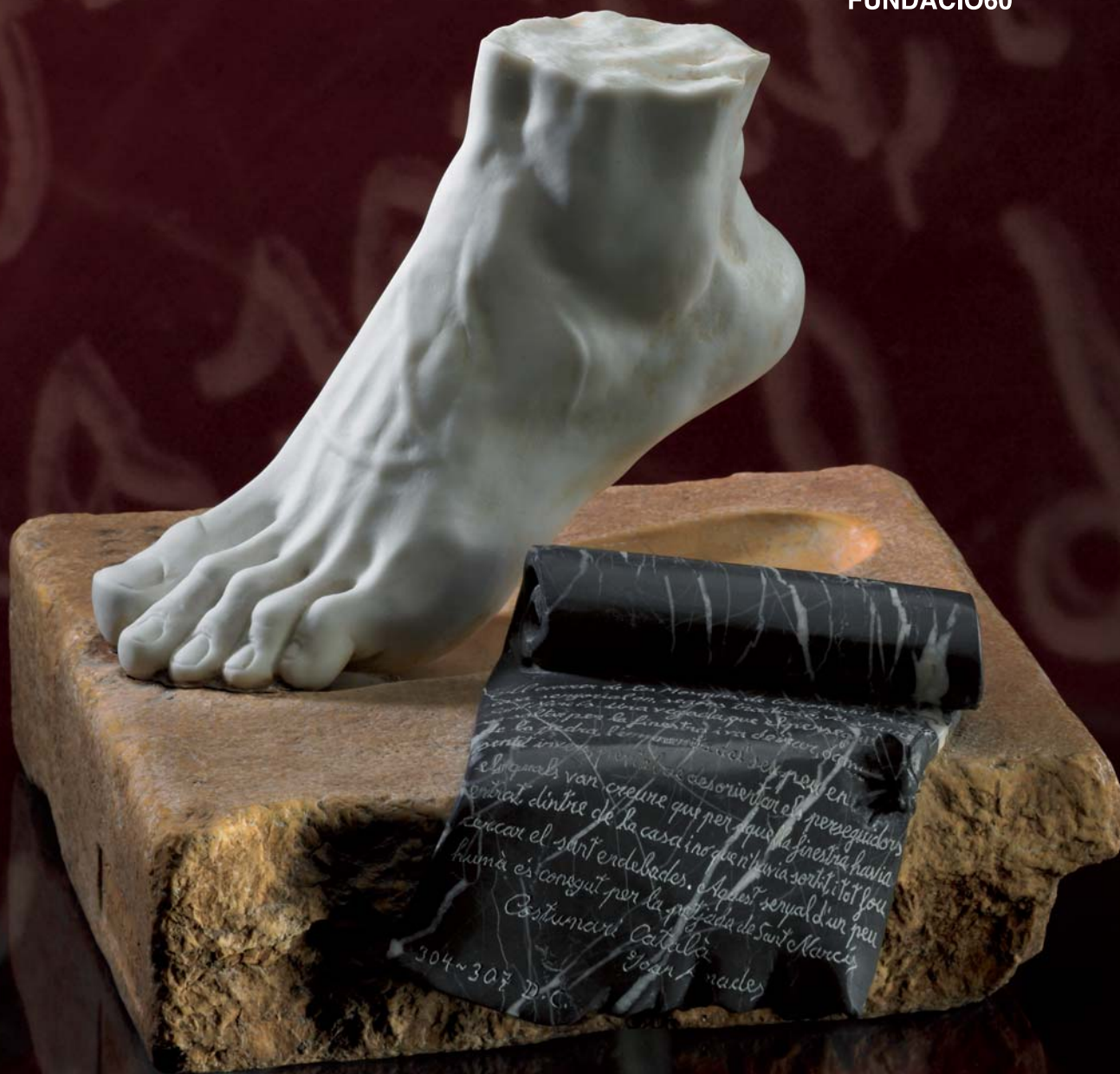


# 42 MAGICAL STORIES

## "LEGENDS OF GIRONA"



FUNDACIÓ60



...l'arribada de les flors de la primavera de Girona...  
...s'apropia d'un regim de la vida...  
...dona vegeu que el...  
...per la fantasia i va desfer-se...  
...la vida...  
...descripció...  
...perseguidors...  
...la finestra havia...  
...el sant endebades. Aquest senyal d'un peu...  
...humà és conegut per la petjada de Sant Narcís...  
...Costumari...  
...Català...  
...Joan...  
...nades...  
304~307 D.C.

We wish to dedicate this work to the memory of Roser Vallmajó i Trayter, President of Funcació60, author of the idea and this cultural-business project. She died in Girona at 51 years of age on 28 February, 2007.

Here your visit to  
Magical Girona begins



# 42 MAGICAL STORIES

"LEGENDS OF GIRONA"



**Einstein** said that if you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales. Read your children stories every day, legends, tales and more fairy tales...



**Gerard Roca Ayats**, was born in Sant Gregori (Girona) on the 9th of December, 1972 (34). He is a painter and sculptor and is author of the forty-two marble reliefs of the legends of Girona that appear in this book and which will be the theme of the Hotel Llegendes de Girona (October, 2007). He lives in Anglès.  
[gerard.roca.ayats@hotmail.com](mailto:gerard.roca.ayats@hotmail.com)



**Nuri Ros Rue**, was born in Palafrugell (Girona) on the 31st December, 1975 (31). She is a journalist and a social and cultural anthropologist at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She combines journalism with social work; currently she is working for the Jaume Bofill Foundation on the Panel of Social Inequalities in Catalonia. She is the author of the written versions of the legends of Girona which appear in this book. She lives in the city of Girona.  
[rrnurry@hotmail.com](mailto:rrnurry@hotmail.com)

The rights and intellectual property of the marble reliefs as well as the texts of the forty-two legends of Girona appearing in this book belong to Fundació60, which is making them available to the citizens of Girona and its visitors.

This book was published on 23rd April, 2007, on Saint Jordi's Day, in Catalan, Spanish, English, French and German.

An extended edition is planned for 2008, with more of Girona's legends, more marble reliefs, more sculptures, more charm, more magic and more legendary mystery. It is to be edited in Italian, Russian, Dutch, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese, eleven languages in all.

(e-mail: [info@fundacio60.org](mailto:info@fundacio60.org) / [www.fundacio60.org](http://www.fundacio60.org)).

# Preface to the edition

## THEME HOTEL OR EXTRA VALUE

In our modern culture of so much mobility –and particularly in so-called cultural tourism– the place you stay in has more and more values attached to it all the time.

Naturally, the world of legends forms part of our collective set of ideas.

So the idea of blending legends and sojourns is along these lines; adding more values, those we are all so often looking for.

Our country is without doubt one of traditions and roots, a country of customs and continuity, of popular trades and identities and of crafts and history.

But it is also a country that goes back a long time, to when our legendary tradition finds its roots in its own ancestral mythology.

Catalan customs, and by extension Catalan legends, are heir to these traditions and are especially fertile. Our written history is widely documented with important names behind it (Joan Amades, Aureli i Maria Aurèlia Capmany), and it has had periods of investigative and informative drive that is connected to the recuperation of identity.

The wealth of our legends can be seen in our regions and also, especially, in the city of Girona, essentially concentrated, –obviously– on the heart of the historical city. Among the many collected together in this current collection, we find religious and irreverent ones, those of cults, historical ones and those with popular roots...

All in all, it is quite a varied, attractive and suggestive selection for a hopeful hotel adventurer.

The building chosen to accommodate the hotel is doubtlessly of great significance in that world between fantasy and tradition, sited as it is on one of the vertebral axes of legendary Girona and very near to where the figure of St. Narcís is recorded.

Two of the legends here described seem to have, in one of their hypotheses, their origin on this actual site, or in these whereabouts.

The building, in its most recent form, was a rented property containing various homes and was extensively modified inside, but it still

had some interesting features that were recoverable.

Another remarkable thing about the building is the persistence of the rather striking elements on the facade, especially on that which overlooks the carrer Portal de la Barca, which is part of later renovation work that introduced large windows and balconies of a certain quality with the aim of ennobling the property.

The current process of work is revealing the presence of still more features, which may bring light to its past and to the written history of the quarter.

The thematic thinking based on the world of legends, as well as the formal definitions in the interior, introduce a very meaningful storyline.

The work's basic proposal is to incorporate this distinctive trait so that it is beyond that of a mere reference and becomes a distinctive part of the restoration of the building itself.

This then is a new line of thinking: an attempt to root the originality of this hotel in popular wisdom.

The information available on the Old Quarter of the city is widely documented and one can follow the story from the first wall of the late Roman period. This drew an irregular, vaguely triangular, perimeter and was not modified until the late 9th Century, with the construction of the Castle of Gironella and an extension towards the Galligans River.

Then, in the 11th Century, a great deal of construction activity took place, both in the interior of the city and around the edges (the Cathedral, Saint Pere, Saint Nicolau, Saint Daniel, Saint Martí, Saint Eulàlia, Saint Susanna...), and likewise building in the Saint Feliu area started.

It was, however, not until the 14th and 15th centuries that the great growth of the city consolidated the building down towards the flatter area. A product of this time, around the middle of the century, was the beginning of the construction of the existing wall and the

new walls which were to encircle a much larger area. Also during that period, the new wall of the Mercadal was being planned, even though it did not actually materialise until the end of the 15th Century.

And, inside this precinct, we now have this whole multitude of monuments, buildings and history in stone, which attract so many visitors today and which the city is struggling to convert into a living city and not into a tourist theme park.

In fact, there is no doubt that the historical centre of the City of Girona, an authentic focus of life and dynamism until the end of the 60's, as Joaquim Nadal has described very well several times, has, since then, had to go through a radical process of transformation and revitalisation. This was after a loss of vitality and was due to the resulting uncontrolled and even anarchic growth which the ambitious general plan of 1970, known at the time as the "Gran Gerona" (Great Gerona), engendered.

The key instrument of the special plan has enabled us to tackle the essential rebirth of the old city which has brought us now to a situation where its monumental importance and the necessity of making it more cultural –even making it more touristy- have to be compatible with it being a lively quarter, and more essentially, one that is inhabited.

This was democratic Girona's choice and, despite the many difficulties, we can now see the light at the end of the long tunnel. And, in a way, the same kind of choice has been made in selecting the site for this hotel premises.

The location of the hotel, in the area of Pou Rodó, in the atmosphere of old tradition in the old quarter of Girona, an area which has become not only the reference for urban action, but also an authentic new focal point for restoring life to the historic centre, gives it a certain value as a gateway, an point of access and welcome. And what could be better than to use the best of the illusions and fantasies that emanate from the world of legends as hostesses in this welcome?

It is a starting point for a journey into a whole world of sensations.

Cities are much more than stones, spaces or areas. Cities are a deposit for traces of the lives of its inhabitants; they are impregnated with their life experiences, with the history of all their thousands of hopes and efforts, and they are even a hoard of imagined happenings and traditions which time can transmit to us in many ways; but it does so too in the form of legends, which have existed from the beginning of time and in all cultures.

Our regions, Girona and –especially- its historical centre, are deposits of an exceptional treasure in this field. Preparing ourselves to perceive, to follow and to experience this magic world of fabulation, rooted in popular ideology, seems to me to open an extremely attractive world of possibilities.

A restful stay in a hotel can be a certain parenthesis in our daily life, like a small gift to oneself during our otherwise agitated life, like one of those instants of happiness which we need to give to ourselves; and all these propositions are not far from this idea which is closer to the spiritual than the material.

The historical city can be read many ways, it offers many routes around it and has many angles from which it can be approached.

One can structure a visit or an itinerary around its monumental wealth, visiting its many icons of interest and quality; or one can follow its historical thread, from the Roman precinct to the walls of the Mercadal; or one can choose tours centred on spaces with the typical things; or one can enjoy the commerce, gastronomy, and culture, the new urban and architectural features...

Also, legends can, partly, be a way of approaching and getting to know these corners; a different and meaningful way.

### **Josep Riera Micaló**

President of the Girona area  
of the College of Architects of Catalonia





## GIRONA: A SMALL, QUIET, MODERN AND ACCESSIBLE CITY

Girona is a beautiful scenic place where history flourishes in every corner; it is close to its inhabitants and to all those who neither renounce the past nor those opportunities that are offered by our own times.

A small, quiet, modern and accessible city, where a simple stroll can satisfy all interests, with its exceptional architectural heritage, more than two thousand years of history and a large number of different legends: an intangible and versatile resource telling history from a fantastic, imaginative and playful perspective. It is a legacy which, through the passing of time, has become consolidated as a tourist resource of the Old Quarter and so, by extension, of the whole city.

We invite you to enjoy Girona through its legends. Girona has many of them: The Witch of the Cathedral, the Lioness' Bottom, The Flies of Saint Narcis or the Cocollona. These are some of the most popular; they are the cultural heritage that is representative of the identity and history of our city.

We congratulate Hotel Llegendes of Girona for adding this idea with its innovative and distinctive edge to our city's tourist offer; an idea which they have been wise enough to come up with by looking into our popular traditions and chronicles.

**Anna Pagans Gruartmoner**

Mayoress of Girona

## THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF GIRONA IS REFLECTED IN ITS LEGENDS

A Legend is a narrative, both oral and written in tradition, which is more or less historical in form. It has a well defined space and characters and is combined with imaginary and fantastic elements. Legends are tales that have the appearance of reality, but which mix historical and real events with other, fantastic or false, but seemingly possible, events.

Every human group has created its body of legends to tell and to write down the facts which are considered to be most important; and it has done this, not objectively, but from its own point of view. The group defines itself as the good, the true, the brave, which has often been attacked by others, who are the barbarians, and it has emerged heroically and victorious. In this sense, legends give us information about the historical past of a community, but especially too, about how this community has lived through the past and interpreted it.

The history of the city of Girona is reflected in its legends. The agitated past of Girona, resulting from its geographic and strategic situation and because it is a gateway to the entrance of various cultures, its years of bad harvest, famines and epidemics, its heroic resistance in times of siege and the people's devotion to the saints of the city...all of these elements...have left their stamp on each and every one of Girona's legends.

The act of narrating a legend is, in itself, a ritual which attempts to make those who are listening to it identify with the group it belongs to, with a common heroic and victorious past. A part from giving a feeling of belonging to the group, the legends also carry the imprint of the character of the community and pass on the community's values, beliefs and rules, as well as the punishments that are applied to those who deviate from this behaviour.

The legends, apart from their aesthetic, cohesive and socialising function, have also been used to fit together the individual pieces of knowledge from each period so as to explain and attribute a reason and origin to unknown, frightening or inexplicable phenomena: springs, lakes, bridges, strange sounds and so on.

Legends are living, they are not static, but, when passed down they evolve, they adapt to new times or to the imagination of every narrator. For this reason, we find different versions of the same legend. Some are borrowed from other cultures, adapted to the cultural characteristics of the group. Though originally the legends were the fruit of popular creation and were passed on by word of mouth, there are also legends of learning which have become popular.

The society of scientific knowledge and of the new information technologies has not stopped the process of the creation of legends, but instead the legends have adapted to the new context and it is now the internet that is used to disperse them. Urban legends about celebrities, commercial brands and horror stories appear, and very often, the basic themes are the same as those of the old legends, although they have been modernised and adapted to today's context.

**Nuri Ros Rue**

Journalist and Anthropologist

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(\*) 14 legends related to Saint Narcís  
20 legends related to the city of Girona and the surrounding areas  
8 legends related to the Comarques of the Girona region



# 1 Banyoles Lake

*Banyoles Lake is an irregular figure of eight in shape. From north to south it is 2,080 metres in length and has, from east to west, a width of 730 metres.*

*The maximum depth is some 60 metres and it is fed by subterranean waters from the River Lleirca and the Borró Stream.*

*The lake started to form in the Cuaternaria Age, 250,000 years ago.*

*With so many years of life, the lake has seen everything happen near its waters: children-eating dragons, water nymphs...and even The Olympic Games.*



250,000 years ago - Banyoles (Girona).



This is the legend of a farmer called Morgat who was witness to the birth of Banyoles Lake. Many thousands of years ago, where now the church of Santa Maria of Porqueres stands, there was a fertile plain with wheat fields, which extended as far as the town of Banyoles. On the day in question, Morgat went to plough the field with his bullocks, just as he usually did. After a while, Morgat heard a voice calling "Morgat, Morgat, take your plough and take shelter". Our farmer stood in his tracks. Yes it was strange! That voice, so clear...where was it coming from? Surely it was his own imaginings? Morgat looked to the left and then to the right and could not see a soul...he thought that as he had already had breakfast some time ago, perhaps hunger was playing a dirty trick on him...and he continued with his work. The cattle had not made two steps when he heard the voice yet again, insisting: "Morgat, Morgat, take the cattle and go home". Poor Morgat did not understand anything...if it wasn't the cattle speaking, he had no idea where the voice could be coming from. He returned to work, thinking that the sooner he finished, the sooner he could start for home. But the voice came again and this time it was even clearer and louder: "Morgat, Morgat, go home or you'll regret it". This time Morgat paid attention to the voice, he herded

up his cattle and home he went as fast as he could! When he arrived at the farmhouse, he heard a very loud noise, as if the ground itself was shattering. Morgat turned round and saw how, from under the fields, huge waves were bursting out and raging over the the whole land, flooding it and taking with them trees and crops. When the waters calmed down, a lake appeared which stretched from the area of Lió up to Estunes and also from where the church of Porqueres stands today as far as the town of Banyoles.

Since that time, Banyoles Lake and its mysterious surroundings has received fantastic beings such as the Dragon of Banyoles or the goges. The goges are water nymphs who live at Estunes, at the foot of the Sant Patllari mountain chain. By day they live in underground passages, with walls of gold studded with precious stones and protected by a fine web of silk. At midnight, these fairies come out to put out the light of the moon and to wash their fine veils and see their reflexions in the waters of the lake. Have you never seen them?



## 2 Geriό, founder of Girona

*A handful of mythological heroes from all over the Mediterranean passed through Girona's territory to found a city, to act out some passages from Homer's Odyssey and participate in a few combats of war. Túbal, Geriό, Heracles-Hércules and Pirene tinge the lands of Girona with myths and epic tales.*

14



2220 B.C. - Girona.

# L E G E N D S O F G I R O N A



Gerió, son of Crisaor and Col-lirroe, is represented as a giant three-headed monster. On one of his journeys around the Mediterranean, he arrived in our parts from North Catalonia, where he founded Cotlliure and then, in the land of the Laietans, on top of a small mountain, on the right bank of a river named The Onyar, Geriό founded a city which he baptised with the name, you will never guess which, Geriona! However, the lands that Geriό conquered, were not orphans, but in fact belonged to the Kingdom of Túbal, the King of Iberia. Geriό fought against Túbal in a bloody battle in which Túbal died and so Geriό took possession of his lands. Túbal's daughter, the beautiful Pirene, fled to take refuge in the mountains of the north. Geriό, however, was not satisfied with the disappearance of Túbal and fearing that Pirene, the legitimate heiress to the Iberian lands, might snatch the throne back one day, searched for her all over the realm. The three-headed giant knew that Pirene had hidden in the woods of the north and started a fire there. And now that no one could hinder his yearning for power, Geriό settled in the south of Iberia. By chance, fate brought Hercules to these lands to carry out his twelve tasks. The powerful hero found the beautiful Pirene. The heiress had survived the terrible fire but she was in her last agony. Before she died, she had time to tell Hercules how her father was killed by Geriό, who had usurped his kingdom, and how he had set fire to the lands where she was taking refuge.

Hercules, on hearing the story and seeing the beautiful heiress dead, felt the desire within him to take revenge on behalf of Pirene. Moreover, one of the 12 tasks to be carried out in the Mediterranean area, it is said it was the tenth, consisted of stealing a herd of cattle from Geriό. Hercules set off towards the lands of the south, where he found Geriό's herd, guarded by his two-headed dog, Ortre, in the city of Gades. Hércules killed the two-headed dog and took possession of Geriό's herd of cattle. The tenth task was now accomplished, but still Hércules was not satisfied: he wanted to fulfil his personal revenge for the death of the beautiful Pirene. So Hercules continued his search for Geriό. When he found him, they confronted each other in a terrible battle that caused the lands of the realm to quake. Hercules killed Geriό striking him with his sword on both sides of his head. After killing the tyrant, Hercules gave over his lands in the north to Geriό's sons. The Gerion triplets, in order to obtain pardon for the memory of their father, enlarged Girona from the Gironella Tower so that it formed a triangle and, at each corner, they built a tower. And the mountains where Pirene had died, were baptised the Pyrenees in her honour.





### 3 Afra's conversion

*One of the few things that we know about Saint Narcís, before he came to Girona definitively, is his journey with his assistant, the Deacon, Saint Feliu of Augusta (Augsburg). On that journey, he went to the house of Afra, a beautiful pagan woman, who, according to legend, was so moved by her guest's religion that she decided to convert to Christianity herself.*

16



304 A.D. - Augusta, (Augsburg), Germany.



Saint Narcís arrived in Augsburg with his deacon, Saint Felix and, as they were looking for shelter for that night, divine providence took them to Afra's house. Afra was a follower of the pagan religion of Venus. The mistress of the house invited the travellers to stay at her home that night and ordered her servants to prepare rooms. It seems that the lights were not ready and Afra scolded the servants. Then, Saint Narcís blessed the oil lamps with his hand and, without having put in a drop of oil nor lighting them, they lit up by themselves, bringing about a miraculous brightness. Afra was amazed at the miracle and became interested in her guests' religion. After a long night of theological conversation with Saint Narcís, Afra repented for her previous life, wished to renounce her old religion and receive the waters of baptism. After a week Afra and her servants, Digna, Eunòmia and Eutròpia converted to Christianity.

The news reached the ears of Gaius, the prefect of the city, who ordered Afra's capture and death. Saint Narcís hid in the house of Hilaria, Afra's mother, so as to carry on with his evangelical tasks. He created the

Diocese of Augsburg, and transformed Hilaria's house into a cathedral. The first bishop was Afra's uncle, Dionís, who had also converted to Christianity.

Afra dedicated her life to preaching Christianity in the city; meanwhile the authorities were not far behind her. Then, on the 7th of August, 304 she was captured while she was preaching to a group of followers. Afra did not want to give up, nor renounce her new religion and, with great courage, she accepted her martyrdom. Afra was burnt alive on one of the banks of the River Lech. Saint Narcís admired the Saint's bravery so much that he took charge of her body and arranged a tomb for her. When Saint Narcís left for Girona, he took one of the Saint's bones as a relic.

The people of Girona and the neighbouring villages greatly admired the story of Saint Afra, and some years later, in 1344, they decided to honour her by building a sanctuary which they built at Ginestar, in the district of Sant Gregori. Saint Afra's Day is celebrated every 5th of August. And according to the saying: "On Saint Afra's Day flies will not bite nor will bees sting".



## 4 Saint Narcís' housekeeper

*We will now tell of an apocryphal legend, which was only created a short time ago, but which, just like the legend of the cocollona, has become truly part of Girona's legend book. It is the legend of a rather gossiping, but good-hearted housekeeper, who Saint Narcís had supposedly employed at his house in el Pou Rodó (The Round Well).*

18



304 B.C - Al carrer de les Mosques, 1, de Girona.



St Narcís' housekeeper was the great aunt of Afra who accompanied Saint Narcís when he settled in Girona, when he came back from his stay in Augusta. This good woman was over one hundred years old, but in appearance she was surprisingly young and blooming. She had baby soft skin and she was majestically fat. The housekeeper had great cooking virtues and had invented some exquisite dishes such as goose with pears and stuffed apples and black sausage; she knew about medicinal plants and knew how to cast spells. Once, when she was angry, she filled all the churches of Girona with cobwebs and strange many-coloured spiders.

Sant Narcís' house keeper was very proud, she dressed up in ostentatious hats and bright coloured dresses with little bells sewn along the hems. She went for walks around the streets of Girona, with her servants, who carried her in a chair when she became tired of walking. This much-loved character, however, had one fault: she was rather a gossip; she liked to listen to people's private matters and spread their business about the town. One bad day, she told some gossip about Sant Narcís that reached the ears of the Saint. Saint Narcís became angry and removed her from her position.

The housekeeper, who had been so loved, became the laughing stock of the city. She was seen walking along the streets in a dazed state and she did not even change her expression when people crossing her path, threw their leftovers at her. One day she had a vision of the martyrdom of Saint Narcís and Saint Feliu. Not long afterwards, the vision became a reality and, from that time on, the housekeeper lived a life of penitence and dedicated herself to looking after the the poor and weak.

When the housekeeper felt that her own death was very near, she lit a bonfire in front of the Cathedral of Girona and, in a final act of love towards those that are least valued, she invented a mint soup, for the ill and the poor.

It is said that, when they buried her, her large body was as light as a sparrow. In memory of the penitent housekeeper, the people of Girona raised a statue in Girona stone, near to where she had lived, in a house near the little gardens in front of the Arabian Baths. It represents the figure of the housekeeper, standing up, large bellied, the book of Mysteries in her hands.





## 5 Saint Narcís' footprint

*Not many facts are known about the life of Saint Narcís before he arrived in Girona. Nor is there any agreement on the origin of the Saint. Most of the information about him is from the period when he was in Girona, during the last part of his life, since only three years after coming to the city, he would die as a martyr, while he was celebrating mass, in the year 307 A.D. Even though he was only in the city so*

*few years, Saint Narcís had time to leave his footprint, in the literal sense of the expression.*

20



305 A.D. - Al carrer de les Mosques, 1, de Girona.



The story tells us that, at the end of the year 304 of our times, Saint Narcis arrived in Girona with his deacon, Saint Feliu, and at the beginning of the year 305, he decided on Girona as his episcopal residence. According to popular memory, the Bishop Saint settled in a house between Saint Narcis Street, Carrer Pou Rodó, and Carrer de les Mosques. At that time, Christianity was gaining followers and this was seen as a threat to the Roman Empire. The Emperor Dioclecian ordered the last great persecution against the Christians, during which Saint Narcis met his end in martyrdom, together with his deacon Saint Felix.

Out of the historical facts, the legend was born: during one of these persecutions, Saint Narcis thought up an escape route, a good enough idea for the best secret agent, for foiling his pursuers. Saint Narcis fled from the house in Pou Rodó by getting out through the window, but at the same time it occurred to him to leave a footprint facing the other way; so that it appeared that he had entered the house and not gone out of it.

When his pursuers arrived at the house, they saw

the footprint and, supposing that the Saint was hiding inside, went in to search for him again and again in every corner of the house, and this gave Saint Narcis time to hide somewhere else far away. After that, the footprint remained on the sill of that same window of Number Five, Carrer Pou Rodó, at the very heart of the mythology of Girona, just as Joan Amades recounts, in his Book of Catalan Customs in 1952.

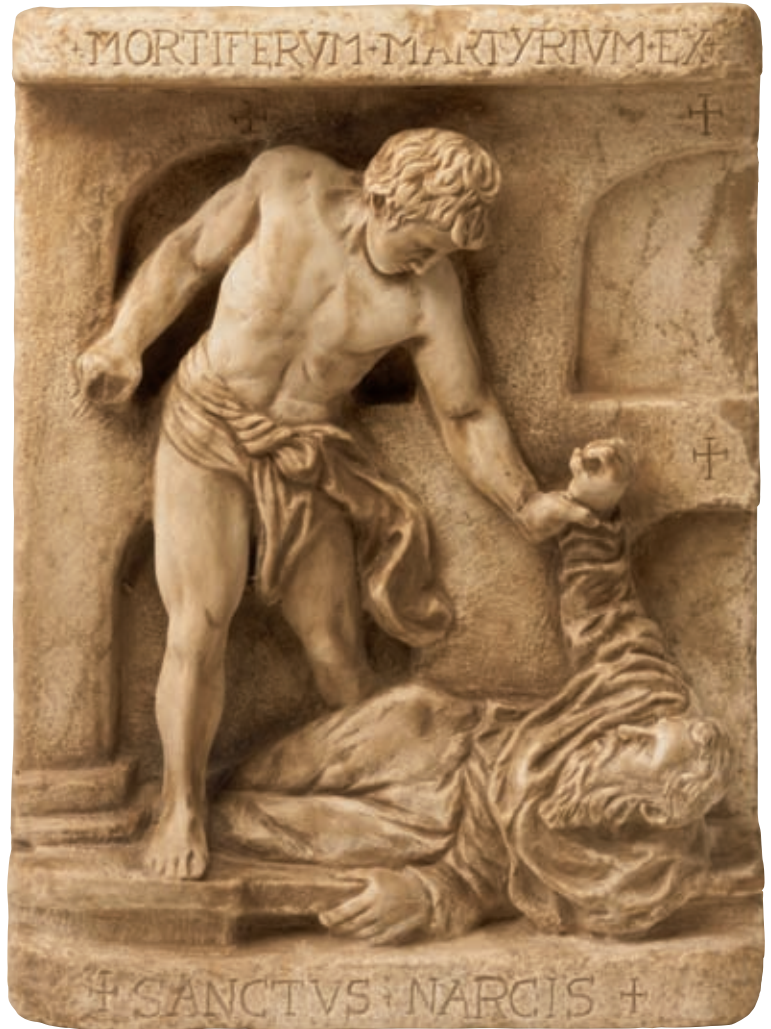
The cult of unearthly footprints is very old and appears in various cultures around the world, which interpret them in different ways: footprints belonging to Christian saints, or to the devil, to Buda, to Adam... The Ancient Greeks and Romans celebrated a cult of De Bacus' and Heracles' footprints and it is possible that the first Christians adapted them to their new religion. Near Girona we have other examples of these footprints: in the Gavarres and the Guillerries, we find the footprints of Saint Marti and his horse, and in the rest of the Catalan speaking countries, in Mallorca and in Valencia, they are interpreted as the hoof prints of King Jaume I the Conqueror's horse.



## 6 The catacombs

*The word catacomb is derived from the Greek 'katá', below, and 'kymbé', excavation, and refers to subterranean places where the first Christians met to pray, bury their dead and glorify their martyrs. In the time of the persecution against Christianity, the Christians had to hide in the underground areas of cities in order to be able to celebrate their cult.*

22



*Beginning of the IVth Century of our era, during the last great persecution of the Christians.  
Near the Church of Saint Felix and El Carrer del Pou Rodó, Girona.*



The city of Girona suffered the persecution of Christianity, just as all the cities of the Roman Empire did. It is for this reason that the first Christians of Girona were obliged to meet in secret in the catacombs. There is no physical proof of the existence of catacombs in Girona, like in other cities, but there is documentation which speaks of the catacombs of Saint Feliu. Saint Narcís deacon, Saint Feliu, was buried in these catacombs and for many years he remained there, forgotten by the people of Girona. After some centuries, his tomb began to give out the sweet smell of saintliness which reminded the city of his presence. The people of Girona opened up his tomb and took him to the great altar in the church which, since then, has been consecrated to the veneration of this Saint.

It is believed that house Number One, on the Carrer de les Mosques, is where Saint Narcís lived, and very near to where he suffered martyrdom with his dean there was an entrance to the catacombs of Girona, and as Jaume Marquès i Casanovas relates in his book, a collection called Old Girona, this connected them to the well in the cloisters of the Cathedral or to that in the church of Saint Feliu. A part from the catacombs of Saint Feliu, the Girona subsoil may

also hide the mythical crypt of the primitive Romanesque cathedral, which has never been found.

The catacombs form part of the legends of the subsoil of the city, and are said to be next to the network of subterranean passages which, as has been proved, run under the whole of the old quarter and which come out beyond the city walls. An example of these is the well-known tunnel of the Carbonera, which connects today's City Art Museum, with Carrer Ballesteries, at the corner of the Pujada de Saint Feliu. Some of these passages had military purposes and connected the Torre Gironella with the bed of the Galligans River and the castle of Montjuic. Others connected private houses or convents and churches. The Jews used some of these passages to escape from the Jewish Quarter when they were attacked by Christians.

Perhaps one day, when work is carried out on one of the houses, the entrance to the catacombs will come to light and we will finally find out about the underground history of the city.





# 7 Charlemagne

*In the Middle Ages, the people of Girona, like people of many other towns of the period, were fascinated by the deeds of Charlemagne, whom they considered to be their founder. Despite the fact the Frankish Emperor did not found Girona, he did free it from Muslim domination in the year 785 A.D. Many quite extraordinary, legends about Charlemagne's relationship with Girona have survived, as well as a legacy of buildings and objects, related in one way or another to the Emperor with the Long Flowing Beard.*

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*785 A.D., Freedom from Muslims - Girona.*



# L E G E N D S O F G I R O N A

The figure of Charlemagne is present in numerous legends related to the city of Girona and its foundation. In the most fanciful version of how Girona was founded, the magnificent sword of the Emperor of the Flowing Beard has a leading role. It is said that, a long time ago, La Selva and El Gironès were an immense lake; the people of the Empordà were invaded by Sarecens. Charlemagne thought up a trick to liberate the lands of the Empordà from the Saracens and, on his way back founded the city of Girona. The Frankish emperor divided the mountains of Saint Julià de Ramis with a firm slice of his sword, opening up the place which is known today as El Congost. The waters of the lake opened up a path by raging between the separated mountains of Saint Julià de Ramis and they reached the lands of Empordà. These lands were flooded and the waters swept the Muslims away out to sea, freeing the Empordà from Muslim domination. Then Charlemagne, right in the middle of the drained lake land, founded the city of Girona.

Other times, the legend emphasises the most religious outpourings of the Frankish emperor and tells us how he was helped in his actions by Saints and Mothers of God to gain victory over Muslims who had taken possession of Girona. In the conquest of Girona, Charlemagne was guided by a shower of drops of blood which became crosses as they fell to the ground and

the apparition of a cross of fire over the mosque of Girona, which signalled the exact moment they were to attack the Muslim positions and predicted victory over the Saracens.

Apart from these legends, the people of Girona can still enjoy seeing the Charlemagne Tower, the old bell tower of the Romanesque part of the cathedral, which acts as the buttress for the nave, on the south facing wing of the old cloister. It still has the complete north facing wall, with seven decorated floors with a frieze of Lombardy arches. And, inside the temple, behind the great altar, the Charlemagne chair stands, cut from a single block of marble. The chair is eleventh century and is one of the most outstanding examples of an episcopal chair in European Romanesque architecture. Tradition tells us that if a couple sit there together, they will be married before a year is out; but if a man sits there alone, he will never get married.

Girona began to venerate Charlemagne, from the year 345 A.D., when the Bishop Arnau of Camprodon encouraged followers of the cult. And, despite the fact that Pope Sixt IV suppressed the festivities, in 1484, Girona continued to celebrate the lithurgical services for it until the 17th Century.



## 8 Guifré the Hairy

*The Catalan flag is one of the oldest in Europe, and in the whole world. Originally, it was the heraldic symbol of the line of Counts of Barcelona and later it represented the whole of their territory. The first in the dynasty of these Counts of Barcelona, Guifré the Hairy, has become legendary as the father founder of our territory and our flag: the four red lines of the count's blood on a golden background. Count Guifré is buried in the Monastery of Ripoll.*

26



897 A.D.

*The Monastery of Saint Mary of Ripoll, where Guifré the Hairy is buried.*



Born around 840 A.D., he inherited the counties of Urgell and the Cerdanya from his father. In 878 the Frankish king entrusted the counties of Barcelona and Girona-Besalú to him. His greatest achievement was to repopulate central Catalonia, establishing a frontier with the Muslims on the western side of the River Llobregat and the Cardener. This resettlement was accompanied by the foundation of churches and monasteries, such as Saint Mary of Ripoll, where he is buried, and Saint Joan de les Abadesses. During the latter part of his government he had to defend his lands against the Muslims. In one battle against the army of the Muslim governor of Lleida, Llop ibn Muhammad al-Qasi, he was wounded and he died on the 11th August, 897. He is the first count in the hereditary succession of the house of Barcelona and is the initiator of independence from the Franks. On his death, disregarding the will of the Frankish monarch, he divided his lands between his sons. This dynasty governed Catalonia from 878 until the line was extinguished in the year 1410. In the ancient 12th Century book of the Monastery of Ripoll, Comitum Barcinonensium, he is considered to be the father of the country.

If history recognises this merit, the legend, attributes another, no less important one, to him: the creation of the Catalan flag, our standard. The first reference to it is in 1420, in the book of Deeds of Arms of Catalonia: It recounts the legend that Guifré died as a consequence of the wounds he received in a heroic battle against the Normans, on the side of the Frankish king, Charles the Bald. When Guifré was agonising in his tent, the Frankish king, wanting to reward the bravery of the Catalan count in the fighting, he awarded him a coat of arms. The emperor joined his hands together with those of Guifré and, wetting his fingers with the blood of the Count's mortal wounds, he drew four vertical lines on the golden background of his shield.

These four lines became the Count of Barcelona's coat of arms and, later they represented the whole of his territory. The standard is one of the oldest flags in the world. The first image of the four lines is from 1150, on a shield belonging to King Ramon Berenguer IV, even though it had already been used before as a pre-heraldic symbol on the tombs of Ramon Berenguer II, in 1082, and on that of his great aunt Ermessenda of Carcassone, in 1052, in the Cathedral of Girona.

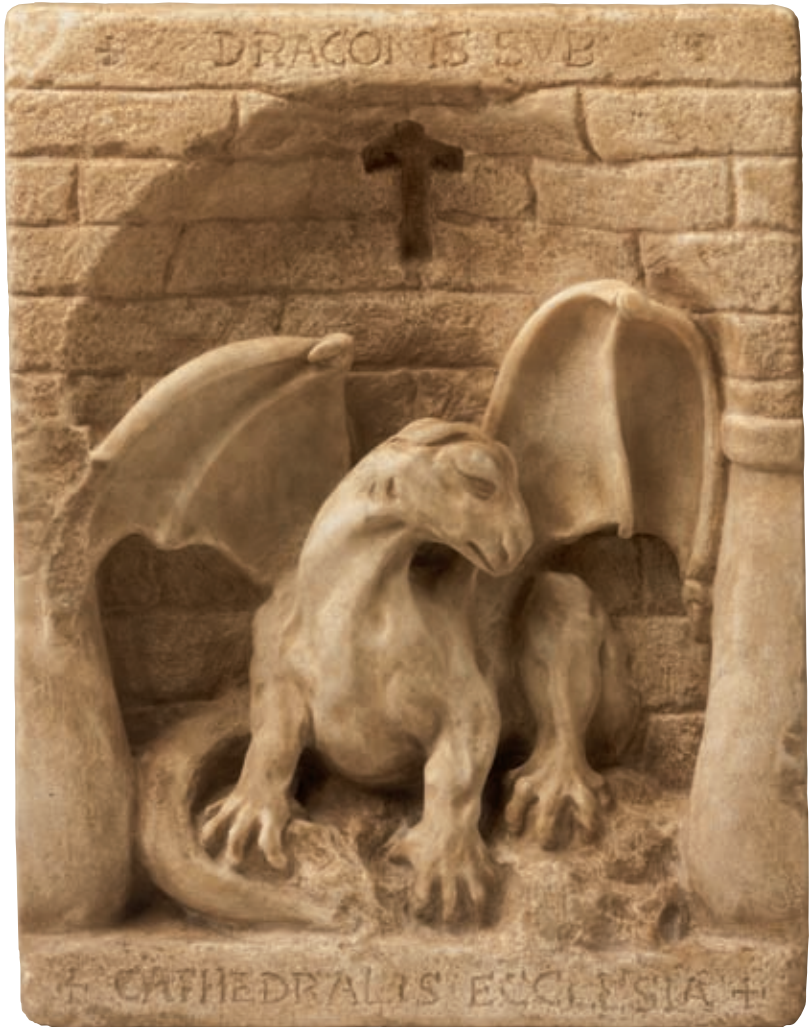




## 9 The dragon under the Temple

*The Gothic see of Girona rises up over the Romanesque, which, in its time, was built over a primitive church which, in its turn, is supposedly constructed over a Roman temple. And it is probable that this temple was built over a previous sacred place. The fact that every succession of cultures chose the same place as the scene for representing its cult could respond to the desire to appropriate the symbols and cultural places of antecedent cultures, but perhaps the explanation is to be discovered underground.*

28



11th to 18th Centuries - Girona Cathedral.

The period which extends from the 11th to the 18th Centuries is a period of construction of cathedrals, which were mainly dedicated to Saint Mary. The builders of cathedrals were a kind of universal brotherhood, of masons or free bricklayers. Masons, when constructing the cathedrals, included symbols and signs with esoteric meanings, which were only understood by the initiated: elements of the Jewish cabala and of the alchemist tradition. This symbology, which was more than merely decorative, did not contradict the use and dogmas of Christianity, but added other knowledge and interpretations to them.

It is believed that the cathedrals of this period are found in special energetic places, over underground water currents and other "energies", such as tectonic plates and magnetic fields. In the language of druids, these telluric forces are called vouivre, which can be translated as serpent or dragon. The dragon is a compendium of enigmatic animal parts feared by the people of the Middle Ages (bats' wings, snakes' scales, eagles' talon and so on) and represented the hidden, unknown energies of the subsoil.

There is the belief that, when one builds over sacred places, telluric energies intervene. These then become modified and are put to the service of the temple. We do not know if the Cathedral of Girona is built over one of these places of power, nor what role masonry had in its construction, but the omnipresence of the dragon in the iconography of the cathedral surprises. The dragon always appears as dominated by the forces of Christianity: Saint Michael, the co-patron of the cathedral, is represented dominating the devil in the form of the dragon, also there is an image of Saint George killing the dragon and Saint Margareth and Saint Martha are also represented dominating their dragons. And, if we look carefully in every corner of the cathedral, in the rose window, in the corbels of the chapels... we will see many representations of dragons. Perhaps it is a representation of this telluric dragon which inhabits the subsoil of the cathedral and that, once dominated by the forces of Christianity, fills the cathedral with a special energy.





# 10 Saint Maurici and the Bad Old Women of Caldes

*This legend tells us about the origin of the name of the village Caldes de Malavella, located some twenty minutes from Girona. In the 18th Century, one of the chapels in the parish church of the Mercadal, in Girona, was dedicated to Saint Maurici. And there were many of the people of Girona who went there for the Feast of Saint Maurici, on the 22nd of September.*

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*11th Century. The building of Saint Maurici's Chapel, at Saint Maurici's Castle. Caldes de Malavella (Girona).*

# L E G E N D S   O F   G I R O N A

Once upon a time, there was an orphan boy, named Maurici, who arrived in the village of Caldes, looking for a way to earn his living. The young Maurici, found himself in a village strangled under the tyranny of its mistress and grieving for the number of deaths that were occurring among their children, apparently due to a werewolf. That same day, Maurici had an encounter with the bad mistress of Caldes. Hunger caused the boy to steal some coins, and unluckily he was caught by Punestret, the bad old woman's secretary.

The bad old woman of Caldes, greatly admiring the youth's bravery, wanted him to become her servant. And the good Maurici settled into the tyrant's gloomy castle, whose extension stretched beneath the depths of the village. But the grand lady had not counted on the bravery which she had so admired in that small boy bringing her to her own end. The good Maurici, a part from being brave, was also curious and had a strong sense of justice. These inquietudes brought him to discover the evil woman's secret. One night he saw the dwarf Sucdebruc, the palace jester, going into the kitchen,

loaded with a sack, his face covered with a mask of a wolf's head. The monstrous cook was waiting for him in order to cook the contents of the sack: a tender child.

Maurici took advantage of a moment when the cook was distracted to push her into the cauldron, but he was seen by Sucdebruc. After a fight the boy broke free and Sucdebruc lay stunned.

Maurici brought the food into the old lady, but, on this occasion, the spread was not the flesh of a child, but dogmeat. The bad old woman was furious, but outside the people of the village, alerted by the boy, had encircled the palace and started a fire. Our hero was able to escape before the bad old woman was swallowed up by the flames. The bad old woman, without her ration of baby flesh, had lost her immortality and the villagers of Caldes de Malavella had regained their freedom.



# 11 Ermessenda of Carcassone

*This is the story of a woman who did not want to resign herself to being just a spectator in the political life of Catalonia during the 11th Century. Countess Ermessenda was remarkable for her beauty and became legendary for her strong and decisive character. From the very first, she became fully involved in Catalan politics and participated directly in the tasks of government of her husband's counties and in the presidency of assemblies and tribunals. She even accompanied Count Borrell III on many military campaigns to Al-Àndalus.*

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1058, the Countess Esmessenda of Carcassone dies - Cathedral of Girona.





Ermessenda of Carcassone, daughter of Roger I of Carcassone and Adelaide of Gualdà, was born around the year 975. She married the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Borrell III, in the year 993. But Count Borrell died, when his son, Berenguer Ramon I, the Corbat, was still a minor, and Ermessenda took over the regency of the counties until her son became of age, enjoying the usufruct of the counties of Girona-Osona, according to her husband's will.

After the regency, the determined countess refused to renounce her power and her brother, Pere Roger of Carcassone, Bishop of Girona, had to act as mediator between mother and son, establishing an agreement, according to which, her son Berenguer Ramon, would temporarily give up his title to the city of Girona to his mother, as well as to various castles and rents.

But Berenguer Ramon I died in 1035 and Ermessenda de Carcassona became regent once again, on this occasion over the counties of her grandson, Ramon Berenguer, until 1056.

Apart from these intriguing episodes, of struggles for power and an active participation in the political life

of Catalonia, Countess Ermessenda is remembered for her close relationship with the Catalan Church. As governing lady of the city of Girona, Ermessenda of Carcassone, founded the Monastery of Benedictine monks of Saint Daniel and the Monastery of Sant Feliu de Guixols. In 1015, Ermessenda and her brother, Pere Roger, started the most important religious building in Girona: the cathedral, built over the old Roman temple, with a donation of 100 gold unces (an ancient coin). The Romanesque Cathedral of Girona was, as it is today, a church with one sole nave, covered with a vault of cannon lead and with three doors. It was consecrated on the 21st September, 1038.

When Countess Ermessenda died, in 1058, following her wishes, they moved her tomb with the county of Barcelona's coat of arms, to the Cathedral of Girona. In the 14th Century, King Pere the Cerimonious ordered her tomb and that of her grandson, Ramon Berenguer II, to be covered over with a gothic sepulchre. A sculpture of Ermessenda, the work of Guillem Morel, was erected over the countess' sepulchre.



# 12 Cap d'Estopes' Falcon

On this occasion, the historical facts which bring about the legend are well defined in both space and time. In 1053, the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer I, had decedents: twins who were destined to reign over the county together. The boys were baptised as Ramon Berenguer, also known by the name of Cap d'Estopes, for his blond head, and Berenguer Ramon. On the fifth of December, 1082, Ramon Berenguer II was found murdered near Girona.

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1082, death of Cap d'Estopes - Saint Feliu of Buixalleu / Girona.



# L E G E N D S   O F   G I R O N A

The legend is rooted in the historical event of the violent death of Ramon Berenguer, son, while he was hunting at Montnegre, in the region of Gaserans, between Hostalric and Sant Celoni, near Saint Feliu de Buixalleu. Flaxenhead or Cap d'Estopes told his brother that they had already caught enough and that he was returning to Barcelona to see his first born son, who had just been born. But Ramon Berenguer II never returned to Barcelona again. His body was discovered by a peasant, who was alerted by the cries of the Count's falcon. The Count's body was in a pool, now known as the Count's Pool, a lonely spot which, since then, has taken the name Voral de l'Astor or Perxa de l'Astor (Goshawk's Bank or the Goshawk's Pole).

The remains of the count were transported to the Cathedral of Girona, where he was buried. It seems that the grieving falcon followed the funeral procession as far as the cathedral, where it flew in circles over Berenguer Ramon, before it fell down dead from exhaustion and grief over the coffin of its master.

People have always believed that Berenguer Ramon, must have had a direct relationship with the murderer and, from that day on, they would call Berenguer Ramon, the Fratricide. The legend also recounts that, at the funeral, the priests who had to sing the funeral mass, inexplicably made mistakes in their chanting and were only able to keep repeating "Ubi est Abel frater tuus?" Where is Abel, your brother?

Ever since that time, the remains of Ramon Berenguer II, lie with his armour and his sword in the Cathedral of Girona, over the the door of the old vestry, in the conventual chapel. The people of Girona did not forget the faithful falcon, and they awarded it a place of honour in the cathedral, near its master's tomb, on one of the trusses of the archway over the entrance to the chapter rooms.

When, in 1982, the original sarcophagus of the Count was opened, which by order of King Pere the Cere- monious had been covered with slabs of alabaster, a representation of the four lines, the oldest image of the coat of arms of Catalonia, can be found.



# 13 The Lioness' Bottom

*An animal that is typical of Girona, apart from the fly, is no other than the lion. Historically, Girona people have been rather attracted by this animal. But because of their lack of zoological knowledge they confused wolves with lions, like at La Font dels Lleons, which was called this because there were many...wolves in the area. And with this tendency to get confused on the question of lions, the people of Girona confused the sex of another famous lion: that of el Carrer Calderers.*

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12th Century - Carrer Calderers, Girona.

# LEGENDS OF GIRONA

In Calderers Street, previously known as Perolers Street, at Number 19, there was a Romanesque column with a lion climbing up it. Possibly, this sculpture was used to give the famous Hostal de la Lleona, which was functioning during the Middle Ages and continued right up to modern times, a claim to fame. This hostel was situated in a good place, at the entrance to the city and all the travellers who were coming to Girona from France stopped there.

Despite the fact that the sculpture represents a male lion, it was first confused with a monkey, perhaps because it was climbing, and later on it became part of Girona's mythology as a lioness.

As the figure was not very high up, if people stood on tiptoe, and stretched up their arms, they could just reach and touch the small beast's bottom with their hands. And since we Catalans are rather destiny fearing in our ways, the act became a ritual. The lioness became quite famous among both Girona people and visitors. In time, the rite of touching or even kissing its bottom became a sort of baptism for newcomers to Girona, after having signed the city register and, for those of Girona, a guarantee of a happy return to their city, after having been away. This ritual is accompanied by its saying:

*He who has not kissed the bottom of the lioness is not a good citizen of Girona.*

Since 1986 a reproduction of the lioness has been erected in Carrer Calderes, in Saint Feliu Square, very near to the place where the original figure was. It has steps to facilitate the ritual.

The reproduction of the lioness continues to receive kisses on its bottom from Girona people and visitors, while the original statue receives her visits in the city's Museum of Art.



# 14 Wolf Street

*El carrer del Llop (Wolf Street), now Pujada del Rei Martí l'Humà, hides several mysteries. The street level was raised in 1750 to avoid floods. This means that the lower floors today correspond to the first floors of the houses, and the balconies of earlier days are now the doors to the houses. On covering over the street a part of history was also covered over, such as the chancel of a Visigoth temple, possibly dedicated to Saint Feliu; but one curious sculpture did survive the raising of street level.*

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12th Century, date of the relief - El carrer Pujada del Rei Martí, Girona.



In the old quarter of Girona, in front of the Gate of Sobreportes, near the Galligan River, there is La Pujada del Rei Martí el Humà. This is a dark and narrow hill, damp, with the smell of old stone, which in old times was known as El carrer del Llop. In this street there was a lintel of sculptured stone which is found today in Girona's Museum of Art. The sculpture represents a large wolf, with a mane like a lion, devouring a child. It appears that this stone relief commemorates some tragic events which happened a long time ago in this street. The legend recounts that, one bad day, a hungry lion, came down from the valley of Saint Daniel and, looking for something to stay his hunger, he came to El carrer del Llop. There the starving animal saw a small boy who was playing happily and it pounced on him. From this point on in the legend there are different versions: there are those that say that the wolf carried away the lad and ate him up, others say that some hunters were able to frighten away the wolf, who then dropped the child and returned to Saint Daniel with its tail between its legs; according to others, the boy was an altar boy who ended up being devoured by the wolf right in the middle of a procession.

Nothing is really known about the sad event, nor is there proof that in fact it ever happened. Perhaps after the sad occasion a sculpture was made, as a sign to others to warn them against danger, or perhaps popular imagination has created the legend out of the sculpture that was already in the street. It is one more mystery which is added to the other unknown things about this street.

Also, in the same carrer del Llop, there was a convent of nuns whose facade had a representation of the Mother of God of Milk, to which mothers went if they had lost their milk and could not breast feed their children.

It does, at least, turn out to be a curious thing that there is an image of this Mother of God in el carrer del Llop, since the she-wolf is also related to maternal milk and it was a she-wolf that fed the twin founders of the city of Rome.





# 15 The Siren of the Galligans

We have information about the existence of the Romanesque Monastery of Saint Pere de Galligans from the year 988. At the beginning the 12th Century work on the Church of Saint Peter and the cloisters of the monastery began, and they were finished before the end of the century. In the small cloisters of the monastery, there is a capital with a very special relief on each of its four faces: an enigmatic siren. The siren of the Monastery of the Galligans is not the typical reproduction of a siren with a female body with long hair and a fish tail.

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12th Century - Monastery of Saint Pere de Galligans, Girona.

# LEGENDS OF GIRONA

This Girona siren is represented by a woman's body and, not one, but two fish tails. The siren of Galligans floats over the waters, with her eyes wide open, holding the tips of the two tails with her hands. At the tip of each tail there is a drawing which seems to represent the two sexes. The enigma of this untypical siren becomes greater even because there is no reference explaining its origin, nor its meaning.

All cultures have used mythological beasts to explain things unknown and to symbolise dangers, threats, virtues, sins, according to their system of beliefs. The first references to sirens are in the Grecoroman culture, which had taken this mythological animal from eastern cultures. Sirens bewitched sailors with their beautiful chants and caused them to be hurled against the rocks. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Ulysses asked to be tied to the mast of the ship so as to resist the temptation of the sirens' chant. Christianity adopted and Christianised many ancient cultural symbols, among them, the figure of the siren.

On the Island of Lesbos, in Greece, on the altar of Mitelene, there is a siren which is very similar to that of Galligans; with the same gesture holding on to the points of the two tails. Medieval art borrowed this Greek representation and, sometimes the long hair is confused with the tails: in a miniature by Beato de Osma, Babylon is represented as a woman stretching out her hair. Basque Romanesque art reproduces sirens similar to those of the Galligans.

Medieval cloisters represent the union of that which is earthly and profane with that which is divine, and they combine fantastic elements in their symbology to spread their message. The waters where the siren rests represent the occult and dangerous, such as wild gushing waters. Sirens symbolise luxury, and the medieval representation of the siren with two tails and one sex on each one reinforces this symbolism. Perhaps the siren of Sant Pere de Galligans, with its eyes wide open like oranges, was a warning to the faithful of the period of the dangers that the sin of luxury could unleash.



# 16 The Son of the Castle

*Traditional societies have some rigid rules of behaviour and some mandatory punishments for those who deviate from these rules. Despite everything, sometimes divine forces might forgive the very slips which society has condemned. That is what happened to the daughter of Cal Sobrà of Santa Creu, who became pregnant when she was courting with a young man.*

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*13th Century - The Castle of Farners.  
Santa Coloma de Farners (Girona).*





When the parents of a poor girl found out, they put her out of their house. The unfortunate pair only had one choice: to flee together. They got married secretly so their families did not know, in the hermitage of Saint Miquel of Cladells and they accepted the the hermit's offer to stay and live with him there. It seemed that life was beginning to smile on the pair and they were happy with the new life that they led in the hermitage. But one bad day, the girl found her husband and the good hermit murdered. The widow was too frightened to stay at the hermitage, and could not return to her family, since, not having any proof of her marriage, they would not have taken her in.

Soon her child would be born and desperation drove her to the ruins of the old castle of Farners, to rest and bear the oncoming pain. The poor girl, looking for solace looked towards the hermitage of the Mare de Déu de Farners, at the foot of the castle, and implored help in her misfortune. Then the walls of the castle lit up with a white light and the figure of a beautiful lady appeared from nowhere and helped the widowed girl to give birth to her son. The beautiful lady, who was no other than the Mother of God, gave the child to a couple who had recently lost a son and asked them to take care of him.

Two years passed, the parents went to the castle to return the child. The Mother of God filled the woman's skirt with something heavy, as payment for nursing the baby and asked them not to look to see what it was until they arrived home. The couple, however, could not wait and, half-way home, they stopped to look at the mysterious payment, which was nothing more than a pile of earth. Angrily they threw away the earth and returned home. When the woman took off her apron, one grain of earth fell to the ground and it turned into an unça (an old coin) of gold. If they had taken note of the words of the Mare de Deu, they would have been rich.

The daughter of Can Sobirà became a nun and her little boy grew up brave and charitable and everyone knew him as "Son of the Castle".





# 17 The Jews in Girona

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*The diaspora, the dispersion of the Jews, began in the year 70 of our times. The first reference to the Jews in Girona is in the 9th Century. In the 11th Century, there was already a whole community rooted in Girona, which had its own space within the city, the Call, until it was expelled, in 1492. Out of the legacy of the co-existence of these communities we find some personal stories which have become legends.*

*1270, death of de Mossé Ben Nahman, Bonastruc ça Porta, Jewish Quarter, Girona.*



Born in Girona in 1194, 4954 on the Jewish calendar, Mossé Ben Nahman, also known as Nahmànides or by the Catalan name Bonastruc de Porta, was the rabbi for the Jewish community in Girona. His works figure among the most important in the Jewish literature of the Iberic Peninsula. King James I designated him to be the representative of the Jewish communities of the Crown of Aragon over the controversy of the Dispute of Barcelona with the Jewish convert Pau Cristià. After his defense of Judaism and, despite the fact that he counted on the sympathy of the king, the Church forced Nahmànides' exile. In 1276 he arrived in the city of Akko. He died at 76 years of age, but founded a synagogue in Jerusalem which continued to function until 1585.

Meanwhile, a wave of anitsematism reached Girona which had already run through the Kingdom of Castille. On the 10th of August, 1391, there was a riot against the Call and the authorities closed the Jews in the Tower of Gironella, to protect them. But the refuge turned into a prison, from which the Jews could only leave if they became converts to Christianity. Amongst the Jews in the Torre Gironella who did convert there was a Francesc Guillem of Vilaritg, but his wife, Tolrana, refused to convert and she remained in the tower. On the 27th of September, Francesc Guillem sent his lawyer, Francesc Cervera, to tell Tolrana that he required her to come with

him. But Tolrana refused to convert and live with her husband also a convert, according to the laws of the Catholic Church for marriages between Christians and "infidels". The notary Lluís Carbonell recorded these events. The legend says that Tolrana preferred to kill herself before changing from Judaism, and threw herself from the top of the tower. And from then on, on the cold nights of the Tramuntana wind of the north, down the alleyways of the Call, you can still hear the mournful singing of Tolrana's ghost.

The situation became worse and worse for the Jews. In 1490 the tribunal of the inquisition was set up in Girona and two years later, on the 30th of April, 1492, a letter from Ferran the Catholic arrived with a decree expulsing all Jews from the Crown of Castille and Aragon. On the 12th of July, the Jewish community of Girona, the aljama, sold all its properties and, after a month, in August, 1492, no Jew remained in the city officially any longer.



# 18 The Flies of Saint Narcís

*Girona has suffered an infinite number of sieges, at least thirty can be counted, between the 3rd Century and the last, in 1874. Every siege left a city devastated with many deaths among its inhabitants, but after the siege of 1285, the people of Girona were able to count on the help of Saint Narcís and his army of flies to drive away the armies of every siege, especially those that came from France. Let us look at the historical events, collected by the chronicler Bernat Desclot, in 1288.*

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*1285, siege of the French King Philippe of Ardit.  
Church of Saint Feliu, Girona.*





Girona, because of its geographic position, beside the Via Augusta, has always been a highly coveted city, for political, commercial and military reasons. Philippe d'Ardit of France, due to a territorial dispute with King Pere, Count of Barcelona and King of Aragon, decided to lay siege to Girona. In 1285, the men of the king of France arrived in the city. The people of Girona, and the troops of King Pere, defended the city, during the months from June to September. The French could not conquer Girona, but they occupied some areas outside the walls of the city. The Church of Saint Feliu was located outside the walled precinct and Philippe d'Ardit's men occupied it as a barracks. The French, enraged because they had not been able to occupy the city, desecrated the tomb of Saint Narcís, and they spread the remains around. It was lucky that a carpenter, who saw the occurrence, collected up the saint's remains and put them in a box. That same day, the carpenter was witness to an exceptional event: he saw how a swarm of strange flies flew out of the tomb of the saint.

The flies came out in thousands, they were bigger than usual ones, they were the size of an acorn, they were bluish green in colour and they had a large sting on their heads. The immense green patch of the troop of poisonous flies flew deafeningly towards the French army, which had occupied the city. The poisonous flies attacked the soldiers and horses diving down on them; from every bite one of them died a very painful death. In the end, between cries of pain from the soldiers and horses' neighs, the army had to withdraw. There were large numbers of deaths with regards the French side; thousands of horses and other soldiers, even the French King died on the way to France.

From that siege in 1285, every time Girona was under seige, the people of Girona carried their Saint's tomb to the walls so that he could defend the city with his powerful army of poisonous flies. The last French siege was that of Napoleon, from 1808 to 1809. On this occasion, the army of flies did not act, but the Girona people attributed the brave defence of the city until its capitulation, on the 10th of December in 1809, to Saint Narcís' protection. In thanks to the Saint, on the 27th of November, 1808, the Supreme Board of the Principality awarded Saint Narcís the rank of General.





# 19 The Lowing of Castelló

*Legends spring up so often to make events that have no apparent explanation comprehensible. Victories in tough battles, standing stones, springs, bridges... even strange cries could be explained through a legend. What's more, legends also serve to show the modes of acceptable behaviour in a society and the punishment for those who deviate from this behaviour. On this occasion we will see how the cry of a bird can warn us what could happen to us if we are avaricious.*

48



1333, year of the famine in Catalonia - Castelló d'Empúries (Girona).

In the times of the Count of Empúries, Ponç Hug, in the 14th Century, the crops had a very bad year. The Count, who had a great sense of justice, called in the whole harvest in order to divide it up into equal parts between his subjects and so, in this way, to avoid starvation among his poorest peasants.

However, just as has happened so many times, there was a rich man of the region who wanted be able to live better than others. He gathered up all the corn that he could and he loaded it onto a cart pulled by bullocks. The richest man of Castelló wanted to go to Roses, and there a ship would be waiting to take him to lands far away. The escapade had to be in the dark of night and across the lakes, because he did not want to be discovered.

On reaching the treacherous area of the pools, the bullocks, cart, corn and rich miser began to sink into the mud. Nothing could be done against the forces of the lakes, which ended up swallowing them all up. And since the night when that happened, they say you can still hear the bellowing of the bullocks, those innocent accomplices in that reproachable act.

There are various versions of the legend. It is also said that the person who was engulfed by the pools was in fact the Count of Empúries himself, who did not really want to share out the corn amongst his subjects. Another version of the legend relates the bullocks' bellowing to an entrance to hell which was supposed to be on the bed of the pools, just as in the lake at Sils.

The explanation for this legendary lowing is given us by the science of ornithology: the bullocks' strange bellowing is no other than the song of the *botaurus stellaris*; that is, the kingfisher, a bird that inhabits the reed beds of lagoons and that, in the early evening in spring, when it is breeding season, it produces a sound which reminds us of a bullock's lowing. After the nineteen sixties, the bird disappeared from the zone, but with the the recuperation of the National Park of the Aiguamolls del Empordà, in 1963, the lowing cry of the kingfisher returned to the Empordà and so did the legend of the Lowing of Castelló.



## 20 The Apples

*Girona has had an ambivalent relationship with its four rivers. The city has benefitted from their waters for various agricultural uses, for mills and for its inhabitants' water consumption. But the same rivers that supplied water to the city, periodically denied it to her too. Girona had to think of ways of defending itself from these rivers when they broke their banks. The first flood to be documented was in 1193 and since then, the city of the four rivers has suffered quite a number.*

50



1336, building on the banks of the Onyar - On the River Onyar, Girona.





Flood waters have been a recurrent evil in Girona. People living in the Mercadal area suffered from the floods of the Rivers Güell and Ter and those in the area of Sant Pere, from those of the Galligans. When, in 1336, King Pere the Cerimonious gave his permission to build on the banks of the Onyar, the problems became graver. If the Onyar overflowed, it could damage the lower streets, as far as the Plaça del Vi and el carrer Ciutadans. People had to take refuge in the higher part of the city. After the year 1732, the citizens of Girona thought of an network of safety bridges, which they attached to the first floors of the houses where the streets often flooded, and which led to the highest parts of the city, to el carrer Força and La Pujada de Sant Feliu. Another solution was to open holes in the walls so that the water could flow out of the city. But when these ingenious human ideas did not suffice to defend the inhabitants of the city of the four rivers, the people of Girona had no other remedy other than to turn to their faith and prayers, and provide themselves with a few of Saint Narcis' apples.



These apples came from a property belonging to the brotherhood of the Saint near Banyoles. They were small red apples. On Saint Narcis' Feast Day they put them on his tomb, during the eight days of the Saint's festival, after which they were to be shared among devotees. Once they were blessed, it is said that they kept for a whole year and, furthermore, they had the power to calm the waters of the rivers, when they overflowed. The inhabitants of the houses on the Onyar had a good store of them in their pantries and when there was a danger of floods, they threw them into the river to tame the waters.

This ritual is surely passed down from the days when the Romans carried out human sacrifices by throwing victims into the River Tiber when it threatened to overflow, a ritual which other cultures later substituted for straw dolls or bread. And the apple would indeed be the symbol of man, passed through the sieve of religion, of course, and then blessed.

With the process of disentanglement of 1835, which affected many of the Church's possessions, the Chapel of Saint Narcis lost ownership of the apple orchard in Banyoles and, in order to keep the tradition going, apples were bought. The tradition was lost in around 1870.





# 21 Saint Felix and the Thief of the Collegiate Church

*The principal character in these events is the other guardian of the city, the man at Saint Narcís' side: Saint Feliu. These legends tells us that Saint Feliu's spirit was worried because there was a thief in Girona who had taken a fancy to stealing chasubles and other lithurgical ornaments, and so he decided to take a nocturnal stroll so as to put a stop to these robberies.*

52



*14th Century - The Church of Saint Feliu, Girona.*

# L E G E N D S O F G I R O N A

It was in the dark of night, when the burglar was walking through the city of the four rivers, disguised in the fog and the darkness and with a sack where he had put that evening's booty on his back: some chasubles which he had stolen from the Collegiate Church. While on his way, the thief came across a nocturnal traveller and they walked together for a while, making conversation. The mysterious traveller immediately knew how to gain the thief's confidence. And soon the thief wanted to tell him his secret, perhaps hoping for a secret from his companion in return.

The traveller told the thief that he could indeed share his secret with him, as he would not tell anyone else. So the thief showed him all the contents in the sack and the stranger told him that they could go and leave it in a big house that he owned. The burglar readily agreed and followed the traveller, who took him to the Church of Saint Felix itself. On arriving at the Collegiate Church, the stranger said to the thief: "Leave it all here, this is my house". And after pronouncing these words solemnly, he disappeared into the city fog.

The burglar was astounded, he rubbed his eyes: he turned to look again and saw no trace of the mysterious nocturnal traveller. Then, the thief recognised the church that he had desecrated some hours previously and, trembling, he emptied the whole contents of the sack onto the floor of the temple. When he raised his head and looked towards the image behind the great altar, he saw that it had the same face as the mysterious traveller who had accompanied him to this place. The burglar understood that Saint Feliu had found out about his robbery. The Saint had given the burglar a good lesson... and he never carried out his dishonest work again, at least not in the house of Saint Feliu.



## 22 The Tarlà

*In el carrer Argenteria, during the spring festival, a puppet can be seen dressed as a harlequin, holding on to a horizontal bar which is fixed across from balcony to balcony. The puppet performs delightful antics for the passers-by, especially for children, with a tireless repertory of somersaults and tumbles. This is the Tarlà, or the Xato. This festival continued to be held, with some interruptions up until last century. Later the tradition was recovered and the Tarlà was integrated into the spring festivals of the Ramba and el carrer Argenteria, around Saint Jordi's Day.*

54



1348, the bubonic plague - Argenteria Street, Girona.



# L E G E N D S   O F   G I R O N A

The origin of this celebration, according to the legend, is found in one of the terrible epidemics of the plague that Girona suffered between the years 1348 and 1654 and which affected el carrer Argenteria. Quarantine was declared and the residents of the street put bars across the access to the street and secured the windows and doors of the houses with fascines, locks made from green canes, and they invoked Saint Augustine to liberate them from the epidemic. The only contact they had with the city was through the tolling of the bells announcing the deaths caused by the epidemic. The quarantine would have been more distressing for the people of the street if it had not been for the Tarlà, one of the neighbours who entertained the whole street with his somersaults and jests. Once the epidemic passed, which provoked the death of one person, a little girl, the neighbours decided to remember those days and give thanks to Tarlà's cheer, so they made puppet representation of him at a feast. Also, in thanks to Saint Augustine, the feast was celebrated on his saint's day. This feast was still being celebrated in the

18th Century, and had a religious side to it, which then became diluted, especially as the 20th Century advanced.

Every 27th August, on the eve of the Saint's Day, the neighbours decorated their streets with the green cane sticks, they chose the person who was to represent Tarlà and they hung a wooden puppet over the street. The first documentation on the Tarlà is from the year 1814 and goes up to the last third of the 19th Century; the wooden Tarlà presided at the feast together with the flesh and blood Tarlà. The last living Tarlans, Capeta and Xarron, were in 1870.

The following day the religious acts took place and on the third day they went to feixina, which was a tea-supper held on the outskirts of the city and which closed the festivities. This tradition makes us recall the bonfire, lit on the outskirts of the city with the cane fascines, like those which had protected the Girona people from the plague.

The celebration of the Tarlà reminds us too of the medieval festivals of the insane. It is a festival that involves going beyond the limits of authority, like the carnival. Several days of debauchery, where the social order is turned upside down, are an escape valve for daily social conflicts.





## 23 The Witch of the Cathedral

*This story tells us of an event that happened in the obscure times of witchcraft. Witches were people, generally women, with malevolent powers, who had the gift of being able to fly and who had made a compromise with the devil to harm Christians. Catalans of the Middle Ages feared them more than anything else, and they considered them to be responsible for the worst evils: bad harvests, droughts and floods, deaths of stock, epidemics and miscarriage...*

56



1350, the date of the gargoyle - The Cathedral of Girona.

# L E G E N D S O F G I R O N A



Despite their powers, witches do not always come out victorious with their wicked arts. The church had arms to combat them: crucifixes, holy water...And, moreover, the inquisitors pursued them to torture them and burn them alive. Nicolau Eimeric, the great inquisitor, became famous for his inquisitor's zeal and for his manual for inquisitors. In Girona, they say that a witch was punished, not by earthly powers of inquisition, but by divine powers. And a reminder of her punishment continues to be on show at the cathedral, in the form of a gargoyle, as a lesson to her and a warning to any who might have diabolical, occult intentions.

They say that there was an old witch who showed her hatred of the forces for good by throwing stones at the cathedral temple and in the path of the procession of Corpus, according to another version. Until one day, when up her usual tricks, she received a punishment which all the people of the Girona were thankful for: the bells rang out and, by divine art, the witch was turned to stone.

The people of Girona hung the witch on the highest part of the cathedral as a gargoyle. Since that day, we have been able to see the figure of the witch, perpetually looking downwards to the ground, condemned to never being able to look up to heaven. Swear words or curses no longer fall out of her mouth, but she is purified by the clean waters of the rain.

The gargoyle of the stone witch is mid-14th Century and it is easily recognisable because it is the only gargoyle on the cathedral which is a human figure. Any mortal passing by under the cathedral, near to the Charlemagne Tower, can see her, gazing down with her mouth wide open, and without any fear of diabolic reprisal, you will be able to yell out at her:

*You throw stones, you will throw stones,  
You will turn to stone.*



## 24 The Devil's Bridge

*The devil and his surprising skill for building bridges in a short period of time, normally until before midnight or until the first cock crows, and in exchange for somebody or other's soul, are present in numerous legends related to the origin of our bridges. In Catalonia there are at least 20 legends about bridges and devils, in Martorell, in Olot...and in the city of Girona there are two bridges which must have their origins in the building efforts of Banyeta and, in Olot too, there is a devil's bridge.*

58



1357 - Pont del Dimoni and Pont Major, Girona.





The Pont Major, where the River Ter joins the Onyar and connects Sarrià de Ter to Girona, does not in fact carry the devil's name, even though the legend tells us how Maligne and his gifts of engineering were present during the construction of the bridge.

Maria, the loveliest girl in the area, loved Jacint, a rich heir from the other bank of the Ter. Seeing how strong the love between the two young people was, the families agreed to the match. The day before the ceremony, Maria went across the river, as usual, to meet her beloved. However, that day a strong easterly wind prevented the lovers from crossing the river to meet. Desperate, Maria cried out: "I would give my soul to whoever could build a bridge to cross the river!" Then the devil took advantage of the occasion to appear before Maria and to promise her that the bridge would be finished by midnight, but it would be, in exchange for her soul. The bargain made, Banyeta and thousands of winged devils began to work, carrying stones from Montserrat and the Pyrenees. But now Maria felt the weight of guilt upon her, and regretting her bargain, she called upon Mary the Mother of God. Her prayers were heard and strong winds and quaking from the mountains prevented the evil forces from finishing the work before midnight and they were obliged to drop the last stones around different parts of region. These are the Standing Stones which can be found from Santa Pau and Sant Hilari to the Aro Valley. Maria then agreed, most thankfully, along with her fiancée, to postpone their wedding for a year in order to atone for her sins.

Other times, the legend does not end so well. In the quarter of Sant Narcís, in Girona, the bridge, which for many years was the connecting point between this area of the village of Saint Eugenia over the River Güell, has been named the Pont del Dimoni. It was built in 1357 by the master builder Guillem Granollers, of Montfullà, and he is said to have counted on the collaboration of Lucifer. Master Guillem did not sell his soul, but he mortgaged it. He had to spend 1,000 years in hell, one for every stone he asked of the devil to build the bridge, of which he has almost completed 700. And it is certain that, on seeing how it was pulled down, in 1968, to eliminate the railway track to Olot, and the stones laid by in the cemetery of Saint Eugenia, he must have repented even more.





## 25 The Vampire of the Rambla

*If we walk around the historic streets of Girona, looking carefully at our surroundings, looking at every stone of every facade, at every column, every archway, every niche under every roof ... if we do not keel over and fall flat on our faces, we will discover a few silent inhabitants of the city that normally escape our notice.*

60



14th Century - Under the arches of the Rambla, Girona

# L E G E N D S   O F   G I R O N A

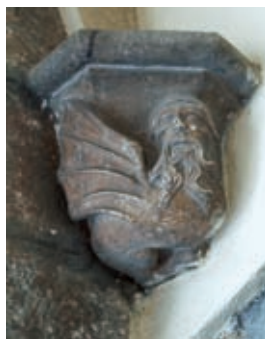


These citizens of stone, live, camouflaged, in different places in the old quarter of Girona, keeping company with the famous lioness and the the witch of the cathedral. At the door which opens into the Assembly Hall in the Girona Town Hall, there is a figure representing a man's head biting his own tongue and with a tree coming out of his forehead. This mysterious head might be there to evoke the wisdom of those who meet together in this town hall meeting room and the secrecy of the affairs that are dealt with there.

Very near by, in the Plaça del Vi, on an old facade, we find another head which represents the head of a demon. We do not know in this case either who put it there or when. So with no facts, we have to turn to the explanation passed down by the local tradition. It appears that, some time ago there was a market that took place in the square and a money lender had his stall there. This money lender made the most out of the people of Girona, demanding more and more money of them, until one day he appeared turned into stone, in the shape of a demon's head, in the place where he had had his stall. They say that, since then, he is watching over to make sure that all the

Girona citizens pay their taxes. This character is known in Girona by the name of Banyeta.

Another of the famous and mysterious stone characters in the city is the vampire of the Rambla. This stone vampire is found in a dark, shady place, between two of the arches in the Rambla. It is a smallish head of a man with a long beard and the wings of a bat. Despite his rather diabolical appearance, this character is in fact a romantic vampire, converted into a sort of small cupid, who is on guard every day of the year. According to tradition, the vampire of the Rambla likes to use his powers to make the citizens of Girona fall in love. If a boy or girl brings the person they like under the figure of the vampire and manages to get the other to give them a present, the vampire of the Rambla will make love bloom between the pair. Only he knows how many couples have been formed in the shelter of the arches of the Rambla.



## 26 The Golden Bull

*The Jews of Girona were a very rich community, until they had to abandon the city, in the year 1492. In the imagination of Girona's people it was always believed that there was the possibility that a Jew had buried his treasure somewhere in the city, but one had to be careful since Jewish gold was acquired through the forces of hell. The legend of the Golden Bull, and its different versions, combine these ingredients: a belief in great Jewish fortunes buried in Girona and identifying these with the devil and hell.*

62



*1492. After the expulsion of the Jews from the city.  
At the Golden Bull, Girona.*



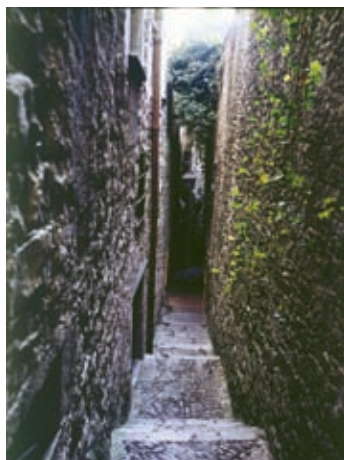


At the foot of the hill of Montjuic, on the Pont Major side, there was a place with a quarry and a bridge that, until the 19th Century, was known as the Golden Bull. There was a rumour that where two paths crossed, there was a ruined house with a large stone box encasted into its walls. There was possibly treasure there, but due to the stories that people told about it, no one ever dared to open up the mysterious box.

One dark night, four players were walking down the street cursing the bad luck that they had had losing all their money in a gambling den. They met a strange person who told them to accompany him to a place where there were many riches and said that they would be able to take as much of it as they liked. With this promise, the four gamblers hardly gave a thought to how black the night was, to the thunder and lightning of the storm or to the fact that the rain was pouring down, nor did they pay attention to the chiming of the church bells which recommended they should go home and lock themselves in. They followed the man to the outside of the city

walls, they passed through Pedret and then, crossing the bridge of the Golden Bull, they came to the house with the stone box.

The mysterious person guided them through the dark right to a well behind the rubble of the house and made them go down a spiral staircase into it. They took a long time going down that never ending staircase; meanwhile the man kept shouting down to them not to stop. One of them, tired of so many rungs, exclaimed "My God, when is this descent going to finish?" The moment he had made this invocation, the four men shot out of the well, flying through the air, and were scooped up as if by a whirlwind. Each of them ended up in an extremely awkward place: one landed on the bridge in Sarrià, caught on the railings over the river; another ended up in the same position, on the bridge of Saint Francesc; the third found himself hanging from the bell tower of St Feliu's Church and the fourth, the one that had shouted out, landed up on the angel on the cathedral. It was evident that this holy invocation had saved them from continuing this devil's path of no return to hell.





## 27 Saint Antoni's Pig

*This is the story of a saint who sympathised with a small deformed pig and, it is also the story of the gratitude this piglet felt towards his healer. The people of Girona were extremely moved by this legend, which they remembered, in the form of a draw, for quite a number of years. It is certain it was a really worthwhile prize!*

64



16th Century - Girona.

# L E G E N D S   O F   G I R O N A

The winter celebrations come to an end with the feast of Saint Antoni, on the 17th of January, in the week of the Bearded Men. It was the most important feast of the winter. Saint Anthony was considered the patron saint of animals, and for this reason, the owners of hooved animals took them, nicely decorated with bows and coloured ribbons, to the area outside the Church of the Mercadal where, after the religious service, they were blessed and they were given out little pieces of blessed bread.

From the 16th Century and up to 1882, one of the most important acts in the Saint Antoni celebrations was a special kind of raffle: the raffle of Saint Antoni's pig.

Behind this very profitable draw, there is, of course, a legend. A legend which tells us how one day a sow came right up in front of Saint Antoni carrying a piglet in her mouth, which had been deformed at birth, and she left it on the ground, at the feet of the Saint. The good Saint was moved by the squeals of the poor creature and picked the piglet up and hugged it to his chest. He took the damaged foot and made a sign of the cross. When he set the piglet down on the ground, it began to walk as if it had never been damaged. The little pig was so grateful to Saint Antoni that it never again wanted to leave his side. That pig followed Saint Antoni everywhere. They even say it dug out the Saint's grave when he died.

Girona, like other towns in the Catalan Countries, celebrated the pig raffle in honour of Saint Antoni. On the Saint's day they took their pig out into the main streets of the city, so that everyone could see that it was nicely fat and robust. The piglet was well decorated with a red rug and a bow on its tail. Tradition said that a lot of pork meat was eaten on Dijous Gras before the fasting of lent.



## 28 Life and Miracles of Saint Felix

*Saint Felix, companion in preaching and miracles to Saint Narcís, was highly venerated in Girona and he was the first saint to whom the citizens of Girona dedicated a temple, which was constructed over his tomb on his martyrdom. The peculiarity of the saint is that he is a mixture of two different "Saint Felius": the African saint and the Dean of Saint Narcís. Through this coincidence of names, the Saint Feliu of Girona was built up in the imagination of the people, combining the life and miracles of the two saints.*

66



*1567, solemn rogatory to Saint Feliu to ask for rain.  
Sant Feliu de Guíxols (Girona).*





Saint Feliu the African, was not born in Girona, but did preach there. Born in the north of Africa, he drowned at sea, a millstone tied to his neck. Saint Feliu, Saint Narcís' Dean, was born in Girona where he also died, probably in the year 307, when he received martyrdom together with Saint Narcís while they were celebrating mass. Charlemagne carried the remains of the Dean of Saint Feliu away to France, while the relics of the African saint, are at rest, in the middle of this confusion, in his church, that of Saint Feliu, Girona.

The people of Girona created a fitting combination out of the attributes of these two saints: the Saint Feliu of the Girona, people say, is a son of Girona, who was the Dean of Saint Narcís and he accompanied him on his journeys and flights from the persecutions against Christians. This Girona saint is usually represented with attributes of the two Saint Felius: both dressed as a dean and with a millstone tied round his neck.

The Church was aware of the popular mixture of the two saints, but it respected this Girona figure of creation. From the 6th Century and until the 11th Century, Saint Feliu was Girona's patron Saint, but he was eventually replaced by Saint Narcís and his miracles.

As for Saint Feliu's relationship with water, when Girona people want rain, they take their relics to Sans Cove, in Sant Feliu de Guixols, into which, it is believed, the Romans threw the saint, a millstone round his neck. When they reached the beach, they soaked the saint's relics with sea water and then rain was assured. This journey, though, could not be done in one go. On arriving in Penedes, the relics obliged the accompanying procession to stop and pray. It appears that, after being thrown in by the Romans, his friends and disciples pulled him out of the sea, half dead, and they took him there, to Penedes, where he then died.

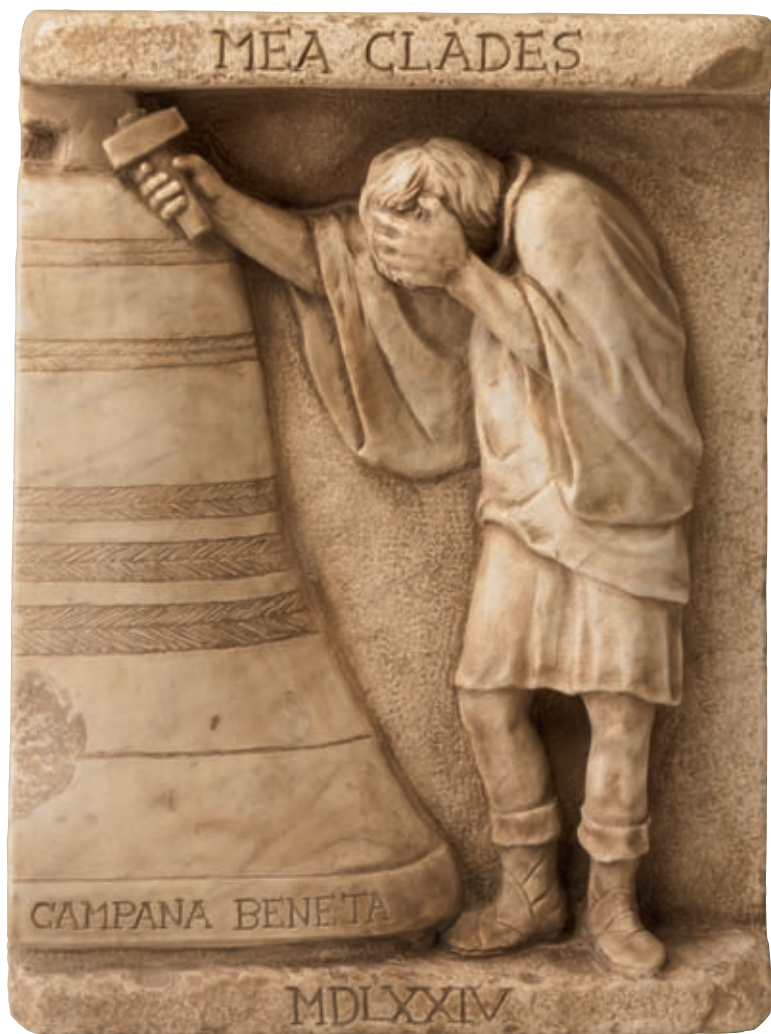
In 1567 there was a terrible drought and a solemn rogatory was carried out in Saint Feliu Church to ask for rain. The good Saint Feliu, however, did not live up to expectations, or perhaps, on that occasion, they had left him soaking for too long, and in 1568 there were terrible floods and the Onyar rose up to the Plaça del Vi. It seems that Saint Narcís had to intervene with his apples, but that is another story...





## 29 The Bell Beneta

*The bell, of Girona, Beneta, weighs 4,800 kilogrammes, its diameter is 1.9 metres, its height, without counting the handles, is 1.78 metres and the hammer, with which it strikes, weighs 70 kilogrammes. From the very same day as its complicated founding, legends began to be created about its difficult construction, its power and its powers of prophesy.*



1574, the year the bell was cast - Cathedral of Girona.



The bell, Beneta, is the largest bell in the Cathedral of Girona and it is in the centre of the bell tower. It was given this name in honour of Saint Benet, although the people of Girona have always known it by the name of the "Bombo", because of its size and its deep sound, a sustained powerful do. In Girona they say it is the best bell tone in all Catalonia.

It seems that, because of its great volume, casting the bell was very difficult. They cast it three times and it cracked, the fourth attempt was good at last, since it did not get damaged coming out of the mold. It is also said that the founder was far too impatient to find out how the bell sounded, and once it was taken out of the mold, he wanted to try the sound by striking it with a hammer. But the poor craftsman made a mistake when he hit it and he hit the handle of the bell instead and it emitted a groaning and cracking sound. The founder, thinking that the bell made that sound, was so embarrassed by his failure and left the city as fast as he could, and never came back. And he fled so quickly from the city that he was not able to hear the true sound of

the bell, which had been already hung in the bell tower of the Cathedral and was a more magnificent sound than any other bell had made before. The Beneta bell has, since 1574, marked the daily life of Girona's citizens: striking the hours, holidays and funerals, and warning them, by striking the alarm, when the city was under siege.

It used to be said that four shoemakers stretching the lingel could fit under the Beneta bell; that is, pulling the threads with which they sewed shoes. It is also said that, because of its huge size, Beneta could not be rung hard, since the powerful boom would break all the window panes of all the houses of the old city and damage the ears of all the bell tollers who carried out the operation. If we go still deeper into the legend, it is said that this bell had the ability to predict the death of the canon. When the canon was about to die, a resounding rumbling was heard through the arches of the cathedral, without any bellringer having anything to do with it: three tolls of the bell announcing the death of the clergyman.



## 30 Sant Narcís and the French Poisoner

*Once more the omnipresent protector of the people of Girona, Saint Narcís, saved Girona. On this occasion it was from an epidemic of the plague, one of the worst occurrences in the city, together with the floods and sieges. And it is curious how, once again, the threat came from France.*

70



*1592, the first procession of Saint Narcís.  
Pedret Spring, Girona.*

# LEGENDS OF GIRONA



They say that a Frenchman named Bernat who wished to cause some real harm, was going round the region of Girona contaminating the sources and wells that he found on his way with poisonous substances that were deadly for man and beast alike. The evil Frenchman had already spread the plague through the waters of the Empordà and La Selva and other areas near to the city of the four rivers.

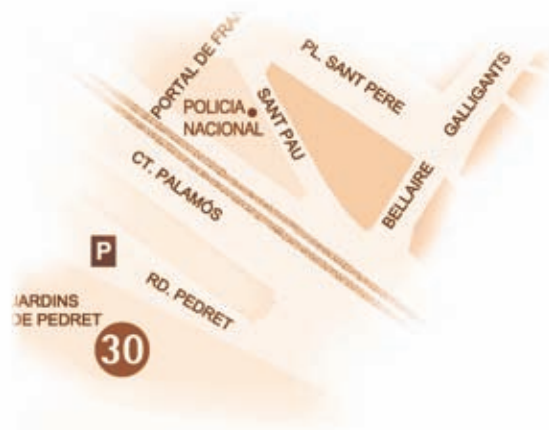
Girona's citizens, warned by the neighbouring villages, followed the trail of the bad Frenchman and were able to catch him. When they had him captured, they asked him why, after having poisoned the waters in the surrounding areas, he had not done the same with the city waters. The Frenchman answered that it had not been because he had not wanted to, but that he had not been able to. Once he had tried, but "something" had prevented him.

The Frenchman explained that just on entering Girona, near to the spring in Pedret, a mysterious figure had appeared, as if by magic, out of nowhere. It was a bishop dressed in pontifical robes. The apparition, as if he were able to read his thoughts, threatened him with a thousand evils if he entered the city to carry out his dark intentions. The Frenchman was frightened by this and decided it was not worth contaminating the city and left to cause harm to another place, when he was captured by the citizens of Girona.



Thus, Saint Narcís, had once more saved Girona from disaster. And it was not the first time that he had saved a land from the plague; it appears that he had also done the same in foreign lands. During his stay in the city of Augusta (Augsburg), fleeing with his dean, Saint Feliu, from persecutions he won an argument with the devil over Saint Afra's soul. The devil accepted defeat, but he said that he needed to kill someone in order to calm his rage. So Saint Narcís proposed that he kill a dragon that was contaminating the waters of that region at that time.

The Courts of Girona recorded the events which took place that night on the 29th of October in 1592 and after that, to show their gratitude, the citizens took part in a procession carrying his image, on every eve of Saint Narcís' Day.





# 31 Pericot's Spring

*Water has been, and still is, one of the most highly prized goods. By contrast to dirty and stagnant waters, which spread epidemics, springs are the origin of life. The abundant spring water, which came out inexplicably from between rocks was seen as a mysterious gift for the earth and its people... and for those people, this good thing was worth a legend. In the Valley of Saint Daniel, we have Pericot's Spring and, of course, its own legend.*

72



*1631, the first bed of Mary, Mother of God - Girona Cathedral.*

Nowadays, the bitter water of this spring is no longer drinkable, but once upon a time, there was oil, the finest, not water, flowing from the spring. In Girona, the people were unable to make use of it, since close to the spring there lived a huge serpent which devoured everything which came near it.

One day, a farmer from Saint Daniel, passing by the place, saw the frightful guardian close up. The snake, terribly long and horrible, slithered along up to the oil fount and stopped to put down a precious stone it was carrying in its mouth and which shone dazzlingly. When it had finished drinking, it picked up the shining stone in its mouth and left. The farmer left, deep in thought and wondering how to get hold of the jewel and, thinking and thinking, he finally had a thought. The next day, after a night spent striking hammers, nails and working saws, he went back to the spring. He had made a wine barrel, holed with sharpened nails and which looked like a hedgehog. On the lid he had made a hole through which he could put his arm out.

The fearful farmer waited inside the barrel, near to where the serpent left the stone to drink at the

spring. When the serpent went to drink the oil, the farmer stretched out his arm and took the stone. Now it was his! When the huge snake realised that it had been robbed, it lifted its head, blowing out so heavily that it made the trees and stones tremble. It threw itself onto the false hedgehog, winding its immune body round, squeezing, biting and shrieking. They rolled up the path, and down the verges. Now the farmer saw that his last hour was coming and called on Mary, Mother of God. The snake gripped the barrel and the nails stuck into it, until, they rolled all the way down hill to the River Galligans, where the barrel smashed against a stone. The half dizzy farmer saw that the snake was dead from the nails sticking through it, and he ran to offer the precious stone to the Mother of God.

They say that this stone decorated the great golden crown that was over The Mother of God's bed, which was taken up to the cathedral every year on Assumption Day. This was one of the most important processions in Girona and it took place from 1574 onwards. We hear about two beds of the Mother of God: one from the 17th Century and the other from the 18th Century; of the mysterious stone, however, we know nothing at all.



## 32 The Miraculous Cotton

*Saint Narcís, patron saint of Girona, not only protects the city from a great number of evils and threats (floods, sieges, epidemics...) but also dedicates himself to curative actions and gives personalised assistance to the people of Girona who suffer from various illnesses and cures them from sprains of the outer limbs, palpitations and earache...*

74



1638 - Cathedral of Girona.

# L E G E N D S O F G I R O N A



Saint Narcis is called upon for earache. Every 29th of October, in the Cathedral of Girona, small paper bags which contain a fragment of the so-called miraculous cotton is handed out to the faithful. It is in fact cotton which has been blessed and which has been in contact with Saint Narcis' tomb and his incorrupt body, acquiring health giving powers. This Saint Narcis' cotton has the ability to cure earache instantly and, even, to prevent deafness.

From the beginnings of the cult of Saint Narcis, in about the 11th Century, a multitude of Girona people have been cured of all manner of ailments by this healer-saint, whether it be with the miraculous cotton, with the healing oil of his lamp or through the ritual of the candle novena. For this reason, the devotees gave thanks for all Saint Narcis' healing works through some goigs (verses of thanksgiving):

*Thou who reaches the fevrous  
And by whom a bad wound is seen...  
The Lame, contractions, with few remaining days,  
Broken, Imprisoned and Lesioned  
By different illnesses,  
God, by you they have been cured...  
Against the plague, hunger and war  
You are special protector  
And of dry season  
You keep the fruits of the earth.  
Of deafness and of all pain  
You heal if you are called upon...*

The saint's fame for protection did not stop growing and extending all over the province of Girona. This growing devotion came to an end when in 1638 Rome canonised the popular cult of Saint Narcis and in 1689, when Carles II asked Rome for the festivities of Saint Narcis to be conceded to other realms of the peninsular and to lands overseas...

75





# 33 The Lamp Oil

*The protective and curative powers of Saint Narcís extend to many areas and are seen and are performed through different elements: from the apples of Saint Narcís, the miraculous cotton... to the oil lamps which cure and prevent a large variety of ailments.*

76



*1685, offering of the Viceroy of Catalonia a silver lamp belonging to Sant Narcís.  
Church of Sant Feliu, Girona.*

# L E G E N D S   O F   G I R O N A



The legend tells us that in all the churches where Saint Narcís officiated mass it was never necessary to put oil in the lamps, nor to light them, but that they lit up by themselves and they always remained lit up. During his stay in Augusta, at the house of Afra, Saint Narcís had already given a demonstration of his ability to illuminate; he lit the lanterns in the house without putting a drop of oil in them, nor touching them, merely through the gesture of blessing them.

Apart from this miraculous combustion, lamps had other faculties for Girona people. It was considered that the oil of the lamp that was burning continually at Saint Narcís' altar had healing properties.

In order to activate the healing power of the lamp of Saint Narcís, it was necessary to carry out a short ritual: the novena of the candles. This ritual consisted of going round the sepulchre of the saint nine times, carrying a lighted candlestick which was changed for another on every round. Once the nine prescribed rounds were accomplished, then oil from the lamp could be applied to the infected part of the body: sores, sprains of limbs, and so on... and all these ills were cured by it. This ritual even prevented the breaking of bones.

The belief grew in strength especially from 1685, a year after the siege by Marshall Bellefonds, when the saint's protection manifested itself through some mysterious lights which surrounded the Church of Saint Feliu, for three days, until the French troupes withdrew. To give thanks for this new protection of the city from the patron saint of Girona, on the 23rd of May, 1685, King Carles II chose a beautiful silver lamp of 954 unces as an offering to the patron saint of Girona. During the Napoleonic sieges, this lantern was taken away by the French army, but the people of the city continued to have faith in the health giving power of Saint Narcís' lamp.



## 34 The Pond at Sils

*Lakes are mysterious. In the evening they are surrounded by a low mist, which disfigures the shapes of the surrounding vegetation, while the light of the moon creates strange reflections which evoke fantasmagoric shadows and excite people's imagination in the region. With the first settlers in the Sils area the first legends related to diabolic forces about the lake sprang up.*

78



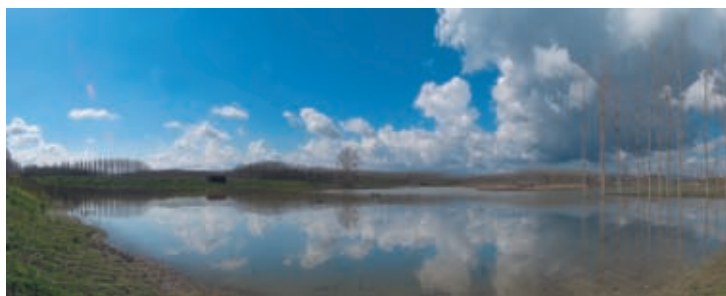
17th Century, first written reference to this legend - Sils (Girona).



The inhabitants of Sils had to live together with the lake which played against them. Its waters propagated diseases and prevented the farmers from using more land for cultivation. Moreover, there was the belief that it hid an entrance to hell. For this reason, the story of the lake of Sils is the story of the attempts to drain it. The legend of Pere Porter tells of a visit to hell which he made by going through the lake of Sils, before it was drained. Pere Porter was a farmer in Tordera who had to go to Maçanet to resolve a problem about a family debt. It appears that the debt had already been paid, but the notary of Hostalric had died without registering the payment. While good Pere was making his way to Maçanet, he met another man also walking, who was no other than the devil himself. But, on this occasion the devilish person must have felt some sympathy for poor Pere Porter and, for once, he decided to do good and wanted to help him.

The solution to the misunderstanding, according to Banyeta, was to be found in hell and, since that day

he was not as evil as he usually is, he offered to accompany him. The entrance to hell was through the lake of Sils. Once they arrived in hell, Pere was surprised to see so many well-known people from life on earth, among whom there was Gelmar Bonsons, the notary of Hostalric. En Pere Porter explained to the notary what his motive was for his visit and once the notary showed Pere Porter where he could find where the payment of the old debt had been registered, Pere returned to earth. And if the entrance to hell was in Sils Lake, it seems the exit brought you out in Morvedre, in the country of Valencia. This journey did not turn out to be free: poor Pere had to pay a fine in the form of a strange illness which lasted from the first of September until the first of October. When Pere was better after the illness he continued his Odyssey back to Hostalric in order to go and find the register of payment. On the first of November, the All Souls Day, Pere arrived in Hostalric, where he told his fellow townsmen about his extraordinary adventure. There were many who did not believe him, and they took him for a madman or for a ghost, but when, on following the dead notary's instructions, they found the register of payment, everyone had to believe him and the Porter family regained its good name.





# 35 The Witches of Llers

*Catalonia was, in the Middle Ages, a land of witches, especially in the Pyrenees and in the Alt Empordà. There were those who were witches by choice, calling the devil by means of rituals, but in other cases, there was no choice: family inheritance, the day of birth or the village of birth were what determined whether you were considered a witch. In the village of Llers, it is said that all the women born were witches, and the most powerful ones.*

80



17th Century, the height of the persecution of witches - Llers (Girona).



In the Middle Ages, the Alt Empordà and the village of Llers were known and feared for their witches. In those days, any misfortune was attributed to witchcraft. From the forced relationship of the Empordà people with witches, quite a number of legends have been handed down.

The tenant farmer of Llers saw a big black bird ocelot flying over the lands of the farm. To drive away the evil omen, he took his shotgun and he fired two shots at it. Even though he had hit the bird, (he had aimed well) the big bird continued flying. The next day he saw how his two sons suddenly died. The priest told him that it was to do with witches and that, to defeat the witchcraft he should have shot with blessed pellets.

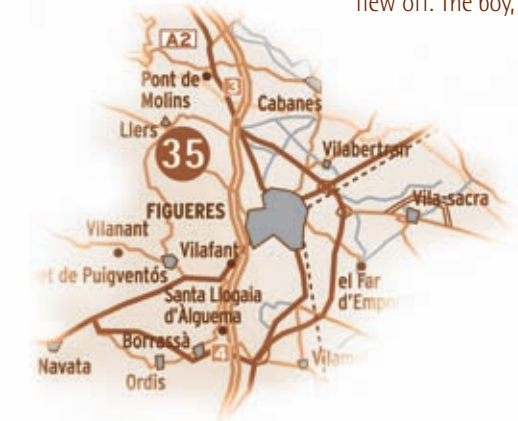
The people of Llers were afraid but also curious about the witches, but this curiosity did not usually end well. A young fellow of Llers who was courting with a girl, experienced it himself in the flesh. The girl was granddaughter, daughter and sister of witches. The boy did not believe and, one night, tired of them making him leave before midnight, he hid to spy on his future wife. The girl came out into the yard, she oiled her thighs with an ointment, while reciting some strange words, and immediately, she flew off. The boy, wanted to follow suit, but he made

an error in one of the words, and a strange a power began to bounce him from the roof of the house to the ground, until he lay there dazed.

The witches of Llers had quite a lot of social life. On Saturdays they met with other witches of the region to comb their hair before flying up to the sabatic gathering of the Thirteen Winds, Canigó, and on New Year's Eve they met to give the evil welcome to the new year, casting all sorts of evil spells.

The most well-known illdoing of the witches of Llers is the attack on the bell tower Figueres. The witches wanted to destroy Figueres' belltower, because the chiming of the bells undid their evils. So they went flying like a gust of north wind up to the belltower. Luckily, the belltower was ready and it had time to ring its bells. The belltower was not destroyed; it was only cracked by the collision with the army of witches.

The witches and their symbology continue to be very present in the village of Llers. In fact, they say there still are witches, luckily though, their evil spells are unknown.



## 36 About the illuminations

*Saint Narcís continued the activity that was started in the siege of 1285, leading his army of flies against the troops of the French king, Philippe III the Ardit, during every attack that Girona experienced. On this occasion, during the siege of Marshall Bellefonds, the victory of Girona was attributed to the famous flies of Saint Narcís and some mysterious lights which appeared in the church of Saint Feliu.*

82



*1684, the siege of Marshall Bellefonds  
The Church of Saint Feliu, Girona.*



# L E G E N D S O F G I R O N A

In the spring of 1684, the French army, commanded by Marshall Bellfonds, entered Catalonia crossing the Empordà and lay siege to Girona. The people of Girona, since they had been prone to so many sieges, united their forces to defend their city, hoping that there would be yet another intercession from the patron saint of the city.

And, very soon, the saint's protection showed up; this time, through some strange lights which had never been seen in Girona before. On the night of the 22nd February, the citizens of Girona saw how some strange small lights appeared inside the church of Saint Feliu, which moved around the arches of the temple and the roof. The mysterious lights were present once again at the act on the 23rd and 24th, before the combat which would lead to the victory of the Girona people.



On the night of the 24th and 25th of that month of May, 1684, the Girona people went to the sepulchre of the Saint to show him how grateful they were for the recent victory against the French. And, according to what is stated in the act taken by the Judges of the city, at two o'clock in the morning, a fly was seen over the sepulchre of the saint. Since it was a larger fly than the others, longish and green, the people of Girona understood that they were confronted with another of Saint Narcis' miracles. The news spread like wildfire and the Collegiate area soon filled with people of the city and with authorities wanted to see the miracle personally. On the floor of the cathedral seven French flags were found, which were kept as trophies of the saint.

But lights and flies were not the only divine manifestations which worked against the French; other miraculous energies of Girona united forces against the invading army. Months before the siege, the French had tried to enter the city on the night of All Saint's, but the church bell, Susanna, church bell of the Mercadel, began to ring sometimes all by herself, waking the citizens of Girona and warning them that they needed to defend their city.





## 37 The Miraculous Stone

*They say that these events happened in the time of Bishop Lorezana, at the end of the 18th Century. This bishop started the building of a chapel dedicated to Saint Narcis, in the church of Saint Feliu. It appears that the patron saint of the city protector liked the idea; so much that he provided the city with the material itself to construct the chapel and protected the workers in the building work.*

84



*1782-1792, building of the chapel of Saint Narcis.  
Església de Sant Feliu, Girona.*



The cult of Saint Narcís began in the 11th Century and, since then, at every siege, at every flood, in every disaster when the city came out of it victorious, devotion became stronger. Despite the fact that more erudite circles preferred to restore the cult of Saint Feliu, Bishop Lorenzana listened to the people and decided to build a chapel to the saint more in accordance with the great devotion which the people of Girona held for him.

While the bishop was arguing about the details of the future chapel of Saint Narcís, which was being constructed on the site of the old cloisters of the Collegiate, an old shepherd was driving his flock over the mountain of Saint Miquel. On that day, something drew the shepherd's attention: A stone which was glittering under the sun's rays. The shepherd went to have a closer look, very curious, and he saw a large stone which was sticking out of the ground and which was shining as no other had before. The shepherd told his acquaintance about it and he brought them to see the stone. Very surprised, they saw that it was stone made of a very fine marble, streaked with black and white.

The news reached the Bishopry, which interpreted the event as the saint having given his permission for the project and, since in 1782 the work had already begun, the Bishop ordered the extraction of the marble for the construction of Saint Narcís' chapel.

Three months after laying the first stone, one of the houses near to the works collapsed and five workers were trapped under the ruins. Since not one of the workers was injured, the fact was interpreted as another of the Saint's miracles in favour of the chapel that the Girona people were building. After 10 years, on the 2nd of September, 1792, the sepulchre of the Saint was moved there and, on the celebration of the first liturgical service, the chapel of Saint Narcís was inaugurated, made of all that Girona marble streaked with black and white.

They say that once the chapel was finished, that seam of marble which seemed to be inexhaustible, ran out and then it was no longer possible to find another piece of marble on the whole mountain of Saint Miquel. Michael.



## 38 The Bride of Can Biel

*Can Biel farmhouse, in Anglès, dates from the 16th Century. It is a majestic farmhouse, fortified, its principal characteristic being an extraordinary square defence tower. But despite the beauty of the place and the wealth that you breathe in there, this house was the scene of a miserable event, the day on which the wedding of the village heir and a rich heiress was celebrated there.*

86



*The first half of the 19th Century - Anglès (Girona).*



# L E G E N D S   O F   G I R O N A



The wedding invitation list brought together all the main characters of the region: the rector of Anglès, the provosts, the beadle, the main landowners and even, a canon or so. After the banquet and the dancing, someone proposed that they should play hide and seek, without knowing that this innocent game would bring tragedy to Can Biel.

As everyone wanted to find the bride, she was forced to find herself a good hiding place. The bride went up the stairs on to the top of the tower. The tower of defense had not been used for years because the bandits had stopped working in that area and it had been converted into a type of store room. The tower was full of dark corners where you could hide yourself, old bits of junk in disuse, old furniture covered in dust... and right in the middle of the place, a beautiful bridle chest which, years before had been used to keep the dowry of a country house heiress. The bride opened the lid of the chest and hid inside. But once inside, the box remained closed and the unfortunate bride could do nothing to get out of her hiding place.

The guests looked for the bride in every corner of the mansion, except up the tower. When they were tired of searching, they called to her to come out of her hiding place, since they had given up. On not getting any reply, they began to get worried. By the end of the evening, the guests left without the bride having come out of her hiding place. The bride stayed there in her suffering.

People said that perhaps the bride had fallen into the River Ter and the current had swept her away; others said that perhaps the men of Ramon Felip the bandit had kidnapped her, and once the ransom had been paid up, the bride would be returned to the house. But the bride did not appear either that night nor ever again. After some years, one day destiny caused an heiress to the house was able to make the journey across to the tower and became curious on seeing a bride's chest there, covered in dust. The heiress opened the box and inside she discovered a skeleton with a bride's dress and wedding jewels.





## 39 The Symbolism of Saint Caterina

*The image of Saint Caterina is recurrently present in the symbology of the regions around Girona, in the cathedral and in many chapels and hermitages dedicated to this saint, even in the provincial hospital. Saint Caterina represents wisdom, but she personifies esoteric knowledge too. It is in the pharmacy of the old hospital, where her presence is most felt.*

88



19th Century, St Caterina's Hospital, Girona.

The hospital of Saint Caterina has nearly 800 years of history. The old hospital of Saint Caterina was created by the Brotherhood of Saint Martin, in 1211, on some land outside the walls, where the Market Square is today. In 1666 it was rebuilt in the Plaça de l'Hospital, where it continued to be until it was moved to Salt. The building follows the model of the hospitals of the 18th Century, with a central courtyard, a church and austere outer decoration. In this building there is a pharmacy from the 17th Century, covered with a ribbed arch and with decorative paintings on the ceiling. The original paintings were baroque, but in the 19th Century new decoration was ordered. The paintings finished two centuries ago reproduce allegoric scenes which evoke the process of elaboration of formulas for medicines out of exotic substances brought from faraway countries.



These paintings, however, also appear to be reproducing alchemic scenes. It is probably due to chance and the unknown artist who was charged with the decoration of the old pharmacy was inspired by old alchemical sciences thinking that they would be fitting enough in an apothecary. In these pictures many alchemical symbols appear such as athanor, the alchemical oven, the curcubita, the alchemical glass recipient vial in the form of a pumpkin and the antlers of a deer, which in alchemy represents nature controlled by man and at his service. Chance seems to encourage us and our suspicions grow of alchemy in the ceiling of the pharmacy of Saint Caterina's hospital, if we look closely at the occult and alchemic meaning of the saint. Saint Caterina is the Christian adaptation of Hipatia, an Alexandrine intellectual, famous for her esoteric knowledge and who died from strangling under the orders of the Bishop of the city. She adopted the name of Caterina, a noble lady, famous for her wisdom, who died in similar circumstances. Saint Caterina's initiates consider her to be the Great Mother, the goddess of wisdom. All in all, a good handful of coincidental events which lead us, even though it might be just in passing, to see alchemical meaning of the old pharmacy of the Hospital of Saint Catherine.



## 40 Lover's spring

90



*This legend has various versions, all tell the story of the origin of a bitter spring which is found at Congost, on the banks of The Ter. This spring comes out as a result of the bitter tears of a repentant girl, when she saw that she was responsible for two deaths.*

*19th Century - Al Congost, Girona.*



# L E G E N D S   O F   G I R O N A



The legends recount that Sara, a rather plain girl, agreed to a gypsy's spell so that her until then, impossible love for Albert, a young man of the region and who was courting another girl, would be returned. The gypsy promised her a potion that would give her the heart of the one she loved for ever. After, however, the same gypsy predicted to Albert that he would kill his loved one and that he would be punished for his crime.

Albert went out hunting, along the banks of The Ter, on the side of the Congost, thinking about the strange words of the gypsy, when a white pigeon flying over distracted him from his thoughts. Without thinking about it for a moment, he shot at it and the bird fell to earth, wounded, behind some rushes. The young man went to pick up the pigeon when he noticed that he had cramp in his legs, that his feet did not work and that they dragged along the ground and his body was changing into a tree trunk. Just at that moment of the evening, Albert, changed into a gigantic oak, he was able to see how the body of the pigeon was transforming into a human body... covered in blood. It was the body of his beloved, which some water nymphs were in a hurry to carry up river, towards the fairies' cave.



The wicked prediction of the gypsy had been fulfilled. When Sara found her loved one converted into a tree and his betrothed dead, she embraced the trunk, crying bitterly. And she cried so much with such remorse and despair, seeing that she was responsible for those deaths, that she ended up turning into a spring.

The next day, the city of Girona buried a young man and two dead maidens who had died a mysterious death the previous evening. And since that day, now one hundred years ago, at Congost, at the foot of a holm oak, a spurt of sharp tasting water has been bubbling out, fruit of those bitter tears.





# 41 The Baker of the Mercadal

*The cult of Saint Narcís began in the 11th Century. This devotion would become stronger and stronger with the passing of time and the recurring miracles of the saint. Despite this, sometimes saints can impose certain conditions on their followers. Saint Narcís did not like his devotees to work on his saint's day and he made this clear to a baker of the Mercadal and a miller of Peralada.*

92



*1864, Saint Narcís patron saint of Girona and of the Diocese. Plaça del Mercadal, Girona.*

Saint Narcís has been the patron saint of the city of Girona since the 14th Century and, in his honour a very popular fair was celebrated. They say that a baker who had his bakershop between the Plaça del Mercadal and the Plaça del Moli, went to work at night on the Eve of Saint Narcís. Thinking more about all the money that he would not now be losing, by not taking a holiday on that so special day, than about his religious duties, he began to knead the dough so that he would be able to sell bread the next day. While he was kneading he saw how the yeast began to turn the colour of blood, and the more he kneaded, and the more he turned the dough around with the yeast, the redder the dough became. The baker understood by this that Saint Narcís did not like him to be working on his feast day and, so frightened, and fearing a worse punishment, he closed the dough room and ran to the Church of Saint Feliu to implore for Saint Narcís' forgiveness, kneeling before his tomb.

The baker did not dare to return to his work place for three days. When he opened up the baking room he saw that the dough had lost the threatening red colour and had kept its freshness, and was still just right for baking. The baker breathed a sigh of relief, baked the dough and took good note of the episode, for the following year.

A similar thing happened to a miller of Peralada, centuries later, also on the 29th of October. This miller of Peralada went to work at his mill, without having to worry about the ban to work on this holiday, because outside the city of Girona it was not a holiday. But on this occasion too, the Saint boycotted the poor miller's work, changing the corn into sawdust.

This occurrence reached the ears of the Bishop of Girona, Constantí Bonet, who, in order to avoid more even worse punishments, asked Pope Pius IX for Saint Narcís' patronage to be extended to the whole bishopric from that year, 1864, onwards making the Feast of Saint Narcís become strictly observed in Girona and the whole diocese.



# 42 The Cocollona

*We have wanted to include another apocryphal legend in this collection, which because of its power and rapid spread, has entered, in a short time and fully, into the body of the legends of the city of Girona and has become one more symbol within the iconography of Girona.*

94



20th Century - The Convent of Santa Clara, Girona.

Creators: Dolors Codina,  
Emili Massanas and Carles Vivó

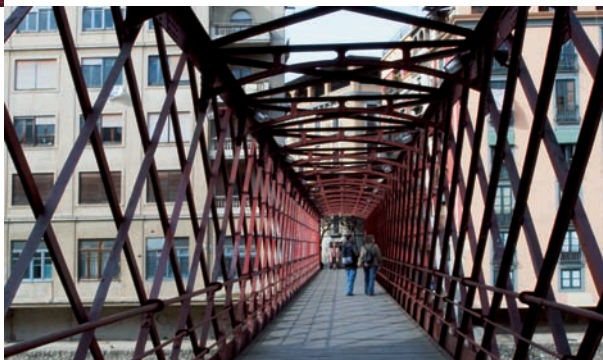


On the left bank of the River Onyar, in the area of the Mercadal, there was a convent of Clarisses (Franciscan) nuns. In this convent there was a nun who was locked in with a padlock and key in a damp dark subterranean cell, very near to the dry river bed of the Monar.

The reasons why this novice, who has been named Rosalia in the legend, was locked in the cell are different according to the function of the legend. Some maintain that the nun was unhappy with the very debauched life that her sisters were leading and she was always accusing them. The nuns, in order not to listen to her accusations any more and to be able to continue their sinful life, decided to lock her up underground. In the basement. The other, more romantic version, tells us how the novice, escaped at night through the underground passages to meet her lover, a Franciscan monk from the monastery of Saint Francis, and it is clear that when the Mother Superior discovered this, she decided to keep her in behind locked doors.

What is certain is that, once locked inside that damp dark cell, the poor nun had a most dreadful time. Whether it was because of the dampness of the place or the tears that her lover wept, the body of the novice went through a strange metamorphosis: it slowly became covered with scales until it turned into a kind of crocodile, while, on her back, as if to compensate for her repulsive appearance, butterfly wings began to appear. Thus it was that the novice changed into a mixture of a crocodile and a butterfly...into a cocollona.

When the nun died, after some years of still being locked in the cell, they say that Girona flooded although not a drop of rain had fallen. Since then, her cocollona body regularly passes by either swimming down the River Onyar or flying overhead. If you want to see the cocollona, you have to go for a walk between the Pont de Pedra (the Stone Bridge) and the bridge of the Peixateries Velles, on one of those nights that the light of the moon enables you to see ghosts silhouetted in the Girona fog.





## SIGN OF WISDOM

On Saint Narcís' Day in 1946 a small and valuable jewel was published at a printing house in the city of Barcelona: *Girona. A Brief history of the city, of its traditions and its folklore*. The work of J.Gibert, a Girona man, the book was a collection of the customs and traditions of the city of Girona, and was written, as he himself declared "because it conserves, at least in written form, Girona's tradition". Moreover, Gilbert had picked through the life of the city carefully, day by day, finding the traits which most probably make the people who live there most particular: their refrains, songs, legends, traditions and dances.

Like Gibert, Vivó and Fañanàs –amongst other writers–... and now Nuri Ros, have taken the legend, fantasy and tradition and converted them into something else; so that they now take the leading roles in their investigations and works and, in doing so, they have passed on that popular wisdom to all of us, that spilling out of the popular imagination. These are fables and myths which, in a roundabout way, walk in parallel to real history, or what is investigated, reasoned and written by historians. To know the legends of a city is to penetrate the very shell of the city itself, it is to perceive the feelings and lives of the community which has drawn them. That is why we have the duty to listen to them, and to read them, so that later on we can retell them. The initiative taken to create this book, an initiative that will help to pass Girona's legends down from generation to generation and to make them known to other peoples, is a sign of wisdom. Congratulations!

**Arcadi Calzada Salavedra**

President of Girona Savings Bank

## GIRONA IS UNIVERSAL. THE LEGENDS MAKE US THE HEIRS TO KNOWLEDGE

What a magnificent idea. Creating this publication by gathering together all the information on this subject is extremely well thought out. The legend, the myth and the tale: these three take us closer to a dreamlike reality with a background of truth. So for this reason, I must congratulate those who out of their own desire to remember, have contributed specifically to this type of amusing and intellectual activity. Girona is a city of legends, like all cities with a long history. The myths and the legends teach us about ourselves and about our surroundings, making us more social beings and thus bringing the people of a region together.

From the legend of Geriò to the Lioness' Bottom, from people and characters from Girona to those from outside Girona, but who nevertheless are closely tied to our culture, this exhaustive re-examination is both elegant and consistent. Its consistency comes out of the exhaustiveness of the discourse and its framework within the anthropology of social knowledge. This is an authentic book of customs about relationships between human beings, about what they are, what they represent, and also in their natural context.

The legend makes us more human, it makes us dream about something that our childlike minds can analyse and make its own. Who does not feel drawn by a legend, however distant it may seem to us? Deep down, there are legends around us, and in my travels I have been lucky enough to hear many of them. And do you know what I

think? That all of them are the same and tell us of the same things; that is, they tell us what makes us human beings universal.

Girona is universal and its citizens should want it to be more so. Those who do not understand and do not like the legends of their own town or city will find it hard to be universal. The legends of Girona, from my scientific perspective, help us to become more human and make us heirs to a knowledge which, if it were not for this type of initiative, would disappear.

Congratulations on this project.

### **Dr. Eudald Carbonell Roura.**

Rovira i Virgili University

Area of Prehistory

Co-director of Atapuerca

Director of the Catalan Institute of Human Paleoecology and Social Evolution

## GIRONA HAS KNOWN HOW TO CONSERVE ITS ORAL HISTORY THROUGH ITS LEGENDS

A stroll through the Old Quarter of Girona is an essential activity for any visitor who wants to discover the city and its magic or capture something of the passing of the centuries and the character of its people.

As you walk around the old city, you immediately realise that those uphill alleyways hide a great deal of history. Moreover, Girona has known how to conserve its oral history through its legends: the Lioness, Saint Narcís, Gerió or the Witch of the Cathedral. When you discover them, they enchant you just as the city does, and they pass on to us the best of Girona's popular traditions.

You will allow me, I hope, to choose as my favourite a legend which is one of Girona's, but not of the capital itself: the legend of Guifré the Hairy. I choose it because it has its roots in our national identity as a people, and also, because I was born in Ripoll.

I have always subscribed to that saying that declares: He who loses his roots, loses his identity. Now, more than ever, we should be especially careful to keep them. Thank you, then, all of you who have had the wisdom to look after and promote the legends of Girona.

### **Eudald Casadesús Barceló**

President of the CDC in the Girona regions

Delegate of the CiU party in the Parliament of Catalonia

## THE LEGENDS OF GIRONA AND ITS REGIONS HAVE TODAY TURNED INTO STONE

Following the style of the Mesopotamian steles, of the Greco-Roman reliefs, and even all those funereal reliefs of the neoclassical tomb stones, the legends of Girona and its regions have today turned into stone –or rather, into marble- by the hand of Gerard Roca i Ayats, an artist from Besanó who is especially sensitive to tradition and with a taste for legends which will help all of us to understand our history, or perhaps better said, the subjective interpretation of some of the more perturbing elements of our past.

To the symbolic value of the legends now we can add artistic value; and, it should also be said, the choice of materials is not fortuitous: if we desire something to last, stone becomes an indispensable requirement, and among types of stone, marble has been chosen so that something that is so popular may become more noble. The clean, clear style of the reliefs brings to them a didactic touch, in the same way that Romanesque reliefs in the churches instructed laymen in divine and earthly matters, often using exaggerated but perfectly recognisable images. We should also bear in mind, and continue to be aware of, the framework of the work as a whole: the magnificent medieval building situated in the heart of the city of Girona, which in this case has its very own legend, that of Saint Narcís' footprint.

It is neither simple nor easy to incorporate the magnitude of a legend into an image of three dimensions; to do it, it is necessary to have the special skill of composition and imagination. All of us have the legends more or less formed in our memories, but they are not defined in an

image, nor do we have the proportions, or the details.

I think that Gerard is saving us a lot of work, and that to the undeniable value of his workmanship as a craftsman in marble and as a sculptor in these reliefs, are added his good taste and great talent as an illustrator.

May we all enjoy these representations of legends, which will surely be even more popular from now on.

### **Lluís Costabella Casadevall**

Poet, musician and composer

Bachelor of Arts (History of Art)



## RECOVER OUR LEGENDS AND KEEP OUR FEET ON THE GROUND

All civilisations, all peoples, have been born and have developed under the shelter of myths and legends. The history of humanity can be followed to a great extent through the mythological narrations and legends which have originated in each country. From Isis and Osiris in ancient Egypt, through to the gods and heroes of Classical Greece and right up to our own days, cultures and nations, have developed alongside a list of ancestral myths which have helped to mitigate their idiosyncrasies. An organised human group, without its myths, without its legends, or without its religion, is an organism lacking in something very important.

However, it must be said that societies which have advanced most in obtaining rights and levels of welfare for its members are those who have learnt to soften the restrictions that sometimes myths bring with them and instead they have taken them simply for what they are: an instrument that at their particular moment in time helped to give relevance to a people, a nation, but which today cannot be a motive to put a brake on progress and the modernisation of the community.

Girona, a wise and ancestral city, with a rich and complicated history, has learnt very well how to combine these two elements: to have respect for the popular and cultural fact of its legends (Gerió, Charlemagne, the Witch of the Cathedral, The Flies of Saint Narcís, The Tarlà of the Argenteria ...) and, at the same time, to keep a permanent

mobilisation of all the agents so as to keep the improving levels of welfare going, both for the citizens and for the visitors of today and tomorrow. This is to say, it has maintained a respect for the past, but keeps working for the present and preparing for the future. In other words, we do have legends indeed, but we keep our feet on the ground too.

The proposal which the Hotel Llegendes de Girona is presenting is a good example of this desire to work for the present good while thinking of the future and yet with a nostalgic and –why not?– an amusing look back into the past. A past which, even if it was not always exactly as we tell it, at least would be have been good if it had been so.

Good work and good luck.

**Francesc Francisco-Busquets Palahí**

Subdelegate to the State in Girona

## GIRONA IS STONE AND WATER, MATTER AND MEMORY

Down the centuries, Girona, with the walls which have defended it, has been creating written evidence attesting to its own vitality and to that of the men and women who suffered and worked there. The earlier human settlements in Girona's history gave way to Roman structures, to medieval labyrinths, to powerful civil and religious buildings. Girona is stone and water, matter and memory.

But its reality is also formed out of popular contributions, out of the capacity to generate imaginings which help us to understand the long progress through the centuries. Girona is this too: legends which have passed on to become the outer shell of a city protecting the richest of interiors, and one of the highest in standard.

**Anna M. Geli**

Rector, University of Girona

## A HOUSE IN WHICH YOU CAN IMAGINE A STORY, A LEGEND, IN EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY

Hotel Llegendes de Girona, what an honour to be part of the group of people who will make it possible.

With my humble contribution as the architectural engineer I will have formed part of the history of the Old Quarter of Girona and in particular I will have contributed to the restoration of a house in which you can imagine a story, a legend, in every nook and cranny. Congratulations for the name given to the hotel, a name which it will surely live up to.

I would like to mention the legend of Morgat, which affects me personally because of my connection with the Porqueres Village Council, I have to say it is one of the legends that impressed me most and which made me think. We tend to see legends as stories coming from long ago, or at least that is how I have felt. On the other hand, the legend of Morgat really is a legend which has a certain realism behind it. Those of us who know the area a bit know this, because we have been able to see it with our very eyes. Over the years different pools have gone on being formed and they could still go on being created, especially in times of drought, such times as we are in now.

**Xavier Gifra Darné**

Architectural Engineer

## IT IS HERE THAT YOUR VISIT TO MAGICAL GIRONA BEGINS

A legend is a narration which is either passed on orally or written down, in prose or in verse, is more or less historical in appearance, with greater or lesser parts of imaginary elements.

Legends can also be popular (generally spontaneous or unconscious in creation), erudite or the result of a combination of elements from both sources. They could originally have had a literary background and then, after, become popular stories.

Regardless of how long they are (although in general they are short) what defines a legend is its subject or content, since the legend is always an account that tries to explain a natural phenomenon through a fantastic story.

We citizens of Girona may allow ourselves to be seduced and enraptured just by seeing in the Hotel Llegendes de Girona the multitude of legends which Imperial Girona has. The magic of Girona is found in its traditions, in its legends, even in the urban legends that enliven its streets.

In this hotel you will discover many hidden facets. It is here that your visit to magical Girona begins.

**Fernando Lacaba Sánchez**

President of the Provincial Audience of Girona

## OUR GENERATION HAS BEEN DENIED THE CHANCE TO INSTIGATE LEGENDS

The legend is deeply engraved in the human desire to pass on any extraordinary event; to pass it on to third persons and to reach new generations; it is in the vital need to immortalise something, the need to overcome time and become fixed in time itself.

Our generation has been denied the chance to instigate legends. Facts are what they are, they have their main characters and witnesses, and moreover, we almost see them at first hand wherever they happen. Objectivity remains and we are denied the subjectivity that is our almost innate penetration into the events. This is the result of the evolution of technology, the child of man and woman, who have become slaves of their own advances. If all legends have more imagination than certainty, and if all legends themselves potentially evolve, today, when every act of war is broadcast live, for example, even bomb explosions and human tragedy, today, as I said, it is no longer possible either to create a legend nor to instigate one, nor to leave one as a token of a present which will certainly be overcome by the passing of time...

This was not daily life when the original building of today's Hotel Llegendes de Girona was created, right in the middle of the Old Quarter. This is the place which gave heart to the city of those days and to which economic activity and humanist sentiment have given enough strength to continue beating for the benefit of all of us, as well as of those who visit us, drawn by our past and by the wise restoration which is being carried out.

In those times, times without newspapers, radios, televisions, cinema, and obviously the Internet, news of events was passed on by word of mouth, well roasted on its way by the imagination which expanded it. That is legend: a certain fact around which poetic beauty has been woven and which gives the first explanation and the final result at the same time. It has body and soul too. It is the soul which draws us into making the possible out of the impossible: what happened? While more imagination is added, ours in this case, to the legend to find its storyline, we can enjoy the services of a hotel which is daring enough to bear the name Llegendes. The establishment is of this day and age, it is a tangible reality, marked out and measurable, but why do we not leave our own private legends in the archive of silence? I invite you to do it and, as they say, to rediscover everything that the old quarter of ancient Girona has experienced of our hearts.

### **Josep López de Lerma**

President of "Tribuna Girona", a forum  
for debate in Girona



## THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF GIRONA HAS ITS OWN STRENGTH

Just as a house exists for a family, the city exists for its society, and just as every family goes on forming their private and vital space in their own way and according to their own their own particular character, society goes on creating and giving form to its urban space, so that it can be worthy of the admiration of all its inhabitants, the rest of the country and also of that of foreign cultures.

We all like to enjoy certain things at home, things which enable us to reach into another world through our senses, a superior world where every emotion and every sentiment brings us closer to our condition as an individual. Sculpture, painting, architecture... The city, then, is a great house for us all.

The city with its stones and its people, are our human reaction to nature. Girona, the charming city of the four rivers, has had a cultural and artistic life from the beginning that has its own personality stamped on it. Its sculptures, its churches, its houses, each one of its corners and stones have witnessed the creation of the city, the battles, sieges, festivals, legends, innovations, performances, the arrival of industry, great social movements, the transformation of the last thirty years... But all of them remain there, contemplating the changes which go on happening and they understand that they are in their place, an eternal place.

For this reason, this great house, in which, according to the legend, 1,700 years ago, Saint Narcis, bishop, martyr and patron of Girona lived, and in which his essence still lives, is evolving positively in this same direction and is now facing a project which will allow people from all over the world to go deeper into Girona's history, a history with its own strength, so worthy of admiration.

**Oriol Mallart Vallmajó**

Student of Architecture

La Salle School of Architecture

## FORTY-TWO MAGICAL STORIES: LEGENDS OF GIRONA

Legends, normally accounts that were originally passed down orally, with many imaginative and mythological ingredients, sometimes religious in theme, others pagan and often simply popular, almost always have a historical root, so when someone collects together forty-two of them, as the Hotel Llegendes de Girona has done in this case, a good part of the city's history is brought together. It is a different history, but a no less important one, and one which has been gathered gradually by the people who have lived in the city or by those who one day, perhaps by chance, simply stopped there.

Legends tell us not only about the facts, but also the fears, the dreams and especially the fantasies of the people who, in another time, lived in the same street or perhaps, even in the same house we live in today. Every one of these forty-two magical stories make up collection of imaginative works which exudes a style of being, living and thinking which, in its way, has certainly helped to create the real Girona of today, still as magical as ever.

It only remains for me, then, to congratulate the initiators of the project and the authors, and wish them much success.

### **Jordi Martinoy Camós**

Territorial Delegate for the Government of the Generalitat of Catalonia in Girona

## LEGENDS, HISTORY'S CLOSE RELATIONS

Legends are not history; but they are history's close relations; there is always a historical background to all legends which when passed down, take on their own identity through time, giving to certain facts a fantastic and even supernatural character against a background of reality.

If history belongs to the studios, the legend is essentially popular and has a wider audience. This popular source favours the artistic creation that is taken from the historical moment.

Girona, a city with a long and eventful history, has also a great wealth of legends.

This is why decorating the hotel with the motives of our local and regional legends is a great choice of theme.

As the name Llegendes de Girona is a great choice for the establishment.

### **Enric Mirambell Belloc**

Official Chronicler to the City of Girona

## ONE OF THE BUILDINGS OF GREATEST HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE AND ORIGINALITY

In a pleasant corner of Girona one of the buildings of greatest historical importance, of greatest originality, is being restored. It is surely the most intact of these old buildings in the whole area of the old city and one that has been least modified. This is a sector which bubbles and changes boldly, but at the same time it produces quality.

A hotel is a good use for a noble building. There is a value added to the nobility of the walls, to the heaviness of its history.

It is, certainly, a clear and coherent bet for the future considering all the changes that the historic centre of Girona has experienced.

A welcoming cosy building in the heart of the city, right at the gates of the city, almost on the banks of the River Onyar and at the foot of Saint Feliu Church.

### **Joaquim Nadal Farreras**

Minister for Territorial Policy and Public Works Generalitat of Catalonia

## GIRONA'S POPULAR CULTURE, THE LEGACY OF HISTORY

We build up the history of humanity through the combination of individuals' roles in relation to their environment, and it is this means of building it up that they call culture. Still, culture can also be considered the whole of a legacy or heritage produced consciously, accumulated and transmitted by individuals through time. So then, if we consider these different concepts of culture, the history of Girona that ought to be shown is not only the history of heroic gestures, and great battles, which pass into our collective memory like that of immortal Girona, but it is also the history that is totally rooted in and constructed through its legends or myths; myths which are camouflaged in the historical heritage of the city and therefore shape Girona's popular culture.

Girona, gateway to Catalonia, has always been a meeting place of different civilisations which have left their legacy in the city's streets; a city built on a foundation of legends, which form part of the popular culture, designed with a great artistic heritage and archaeological dignity, -though humbly-, so as to equal itself to the great European cities. "The Hotel Llegendes de Girona" is a beautiful example of how to make use of this heritage, not only to help recount the history of Girona to its citizens, but also make it possible to collect together different accounts and preserve our more intimate and personal history and culture; a culture which we are still forming together, and which will enable people from other places to understand our past at a deeper level. The hotel is situated in an area where in ancient times several paths from the north crossed near the entrance to the city, and this chance has not been left to waste, since, its situation, even today, will give visitors a comfortable and

pleasant arrival through the charms of the most beautiful (and old) area of Girona.

For all these reasons, Girona is a city with many charms of heritage of all of which contain a legend from within the collective imagination, and these attractions amaze visitors who find themselves more or less obliged to taste the legends under the appearance of millenary monuments and shady, austere alleyways. Currently, cultural tourism has become very popular, where visitors go on trips and hire tourist guides, visiting monuments they have come to know about through the media, museums, and so on, and in this way, individuals acquire education. But what really extols the most essential culture of a people is its myth and popular legends, fictitious tales which are transformed into historical reality when a common feeling flows out from individuals towards these stories.

I want to end with a quotation from the book by Jaume Marquès, "Old Girona", which shows precisely the importance of the ancient heritage of the city for the society of Girona: "Common love towards this old Girona will contribute to bringing all its inhabitants closer together and make our collective life together more peaceful and pleasant".

### **Eduard Nadal Martín**

History student at the Autonomous University of Barcelona



## OUR REGION IS GROWING

Visitors that come to the city of Girona or who walk around any of the places in our region are drawn here by our different character traits and conditions; this begins with our landscape, and is followed by the taste of our cuisine, the enjoyment of leisure time and our cultural legacy. The legends of Girona forged in traditions and popular chronicles form part of this heritage.

From the Diputació of Girona we are thankful that there are such ambitious projects as this; one which has engaged Fundació60 with the Hotel Llegendes de Girona. It is thanks to this type of initiative that our region is growing and it is becoming more abundant in offers and wealthier in infrastructures.

### **Carles Pàramo Ponsetí**

President of the Provincial Delegation(Diputació)  
in Girona

## LEGENDS ARE A PROJECTION OF A PEOPLE'S FEELINGS

Our past often presents itself to us the form of a stone monument, a type of inert and even boring object. On the other hand legends, thanks to their extraordinary symbolic significance, take away our worries, the negative things, the fantasies and illusions of the real protagonists of Girona's history. So, they offer us an effective antidote to that black and white appearance, and take us back to the living dimension of our history.

So that is why we can say that legends are a projection of a people's feelings. One look into our past will serve, not so that we stay anchored there, but quite the opposite, so we can look at our present with a clear idea of who we are and advance towards the future with our eyes wide open about who we want to be.

The Girona of today, so rich in history, is very different, however, from the Girona of those legends. So it would be an error for us to search for a mirror image of the city in that immobile past. The challenge that our city faces today is for it to absorb the wealth of our history, but at the same time to move forward and advance towards new horizons. This is the only way that we can make sure that the Girona people of the future will continue to feel proud of their past.

### **Carles Puigdemont Casamajó**

Candidate for Mayor for the CiU Party, Girona  
County Council

## A FIRST CLASS TOURIST SERVICE

I read the book you sent to me, Hotel Legends of Girona, carefully from cover to cover. I wish to congratulate you on its contents and on your completely novel way of working to make this new first class tourist service become known.

Congratulations and may it go well.

### **Ramon Ramos Argimon**

President of the Tourist Board  
Costa Brava-Girona

## CULTURE, HERITAGE, "GLAMOUR" AND MYSTERY: A PLACE THAT WILL PROVIDE FOR THE TOURIST WHO IS SEARCHING FOR REST, QUIET AND NEW EXPERIENCES

Well done! Now it is about time we understood that strengthening our potential for tourism right here at home should be done through showing off our cultural legacy to those who visit us. Tourism is a synonym for culture and so, if we want to do things well, we have to show what we have got. A rich history and an impressive heritage...!

If to these basic elements we add some quality services, we will have put down some very solid foundations for maintaining, for some time into the future, a type of tourism that will be far from the standard mass tourism. So, we will not have to depend on the economic flow imposed on us by the tour operators.

Small hotels, well equipped with all kinds of services, are what guarantees the quality which enables us to attract the kind of tourist that is looking for rest, quiet and new experiences in the city of Girona. These basic elements are currently very difficult to find, if it is only because of the mass tourism which has affected the type of holiday offers available.

If to some undeniably good quality services you add the necessary "glamour", which one must always bring to the service of guests and if, moreover, they can breathe in an air of legendary mystery which would enable them to get a grasp of Girona's legends, sculptured out in the beautiful marble stones, success will most certainly be assured.

To end, I would like to congratulate the sculptor Gerard Roca Ayats for the magnificent marble cuts he has made, the journalist and anthropologist Nuri Ros Rue, for her collection of legends and, the Fundació60 for this extremely ambitious cultural-business project.

**Emili Rams Riera**  
Municipal Archivist Girona

## GETTING TO KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE GIRONA REGION BETTER

I thank you for sending me the book published with the forty-two legends of Girona.

And at the same time, I wish to congratulate you sincerely for this really innovative and interesting cultural-entrepreneurial initiative.

I think that the publication of this book is a very suitable project. On the one hand, the guests of the hotel that visit Girona will have, at arms' length, a good number of legends and engravings which will give them the chance to get to know the history of the Girona region better. What's more, it shows willingness for this new hotel premises in Girona to root itself here and identify itself with the city.

I wish you the best of luck.

**Xavier Soy Soler**

Vicepresident

Diputation of Girona



C/ Portal de la Barca, 4 - GIRONA  
[www.fundacio60.org](http://www.fundacio60.org)





C/ Mosques, 1 - Carrer Pou Rodó, 5 GIRONA



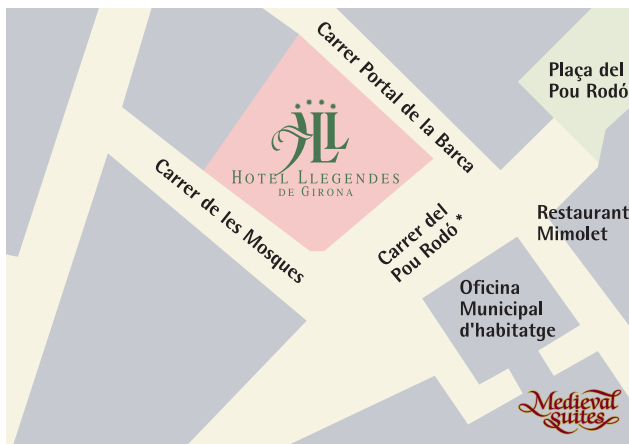
Old Quarter  
Near the Church of Sant Feliu - GIRONA

The members of the Fundació60 (Trust60), the Mallart family at a celebration with the Bishop of Girona, Monsenyor Carles Soler. In the photograph from left to right: Oriol Mallart (Board spokesperson), Anna Mallart (Board spokesperson), Roser Vallmajó (R.I.P. 28.2.2007), Mon. Carles Soler, Bishop of Girona, Carles Mallart (Trust Vice-President), Marc Mallart (President of the Trust), Baby Estel with Astrid.



Funcació60 Administration  
[www.fundacio60.org](http://www.fundacio60.org)





\* Until 1964 Carrer de Sant Narcís  
Old quarter - GIRONA



F60 in Girona's Comarques



# The City of Girona

- 2 Geriό, Founder of Girona
- 4 Saint Narcis' Housekeeper
- 5 Saint Narcis' Footprint
- 6 The Catacombs
- 7 Charlemagne
- 9 The Dragon under the Temple
- 11 Ermessenda of Carcassone
- 12 Cap d'Estopes' Falcon
- 13 The Lioness' Bottom
- 14 Wolf Street
- 15 The Siren of The Galligans
- 17 The Jews in Girona
- 18 The Flies of Saint Narcis
- 20 The Apples
- 21 Saint Feliu and the Thief of the Collegiate Church
- 22 The Tarlà
- 23 The Witch of the Cathedral
- 25 The Vampire of the Rambla
- 27 Saint Antoni's Pig
- 28 Life and Miracles of Saint Feliu
- 29 The Bell Beneta
- 30 Saint Narcis and the French Poisoner
- 31 Pericot's Spring
- 32 The Miraculous Cotton
- 33 The Lamp Oil
- 36 About the Illuminations
- 37 The Miraculous Stone
- 39 The Symbolism of Saint Caterina
- 41 The Baker of the Mercadal
- 42 The Cocollona

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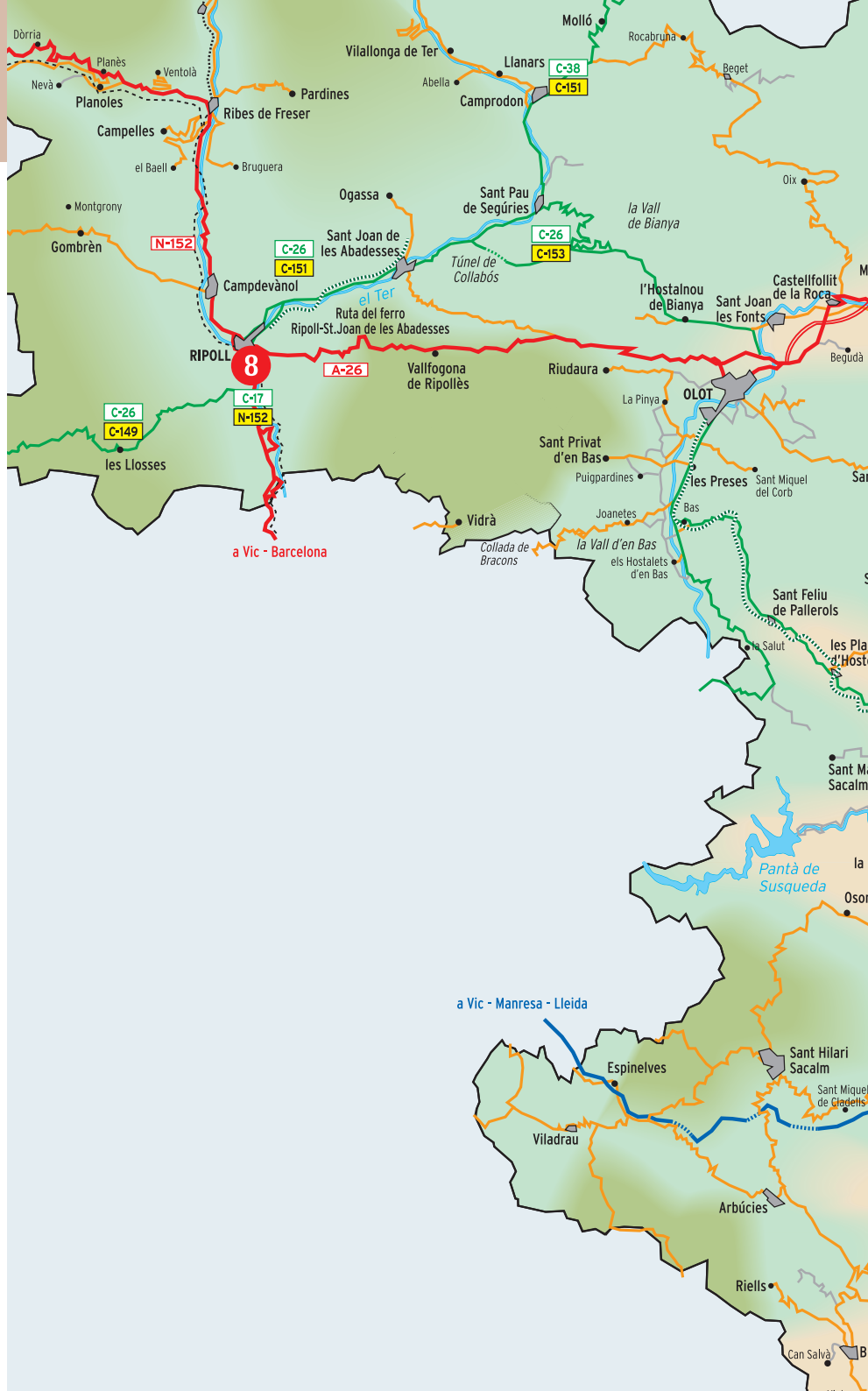




# The Comarques of Girona

- 1 Lake Banyoles
- 3 Afra's Conversion
- 8 Guifré the Hairy
- 10 Saint Maurici and the Bad Old Woman of Caldes
- 16 The Son of the Castle
- 19 The Lowing of Castelló
- 24 The Devil's Bridge
- 26 The Golden Bull
- 34 The Pond at Sils
- 35 The Witches of Llers
- 38 The Bride of Can Biel
- 40 Lovers' Spring

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**Edited by:** FUNDACIO60  
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**Marble reliefs:** Gerard Roca Ayats  
e-mail: gerard.roca.ayats@hotmail.com

**Author of legends:** Nuri Ros Rue  
e-mail: rrnurry@hotmail.com

**Graphic design and layout:** Estudi Sicília  
e-mail: sicilia@intercomgi.com

**Photographs:** Pere Sicília  
PTCBG, Antonio Garrido, Francesc Tur, Kim Castells, J.L. Banús, Pep Iglesias, Joan Ureña, Ariadna Àlvarez, Jordi Mas, Josep Padilla, Toni Soriano, Fundació Gala/Salvador Dalí

**English traduction:** vivien.greatorex33@gmail.com

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