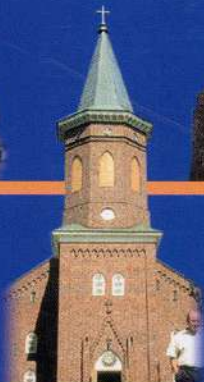


PAN-EUROPEAN CULTURAL CORRIDORS:

Itineraries on ancient
trade routes



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trade routes

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INDEX

INTRODUCTION	17
THE SALT ROUTES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN TO THE BASIN OF ST. MARK	29
MASSIMO COSTANTINI	
VENETIAN MARITIME TRADE ROUTES AND FORTIFICATIONS: CASTRORUM CIRCUMNAVIGATIO: THE IONIAN ISLANDS CASE	51
Iphigeneia Georgopoulou - d'Amico	
SALT ROUTES OR SALT-CULTURAL TRADE ROUTES IN SOUTH EUROPE	69
MARIA LAMBRINO	
SMALL FORTIFIED CENTERS IN PANEUROPEAN CULTURAL CORRIDORS A CASE STUDY: PAROS AND THE CYCLADES IN THE AEGEAN SEA	83
MARO APOSTOLOU	
HÄME OXEN ROAD A TRADE ROUTE BETWEEN FINNISH FORESTS AND THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT	99
HANNELE YRJÖ-KOSKINEN - SARA NYBERG	
A COMMERCIAL SYSTEM BASED ON THE STOCKFISH TRADE ROUTE PRIVATE HOUSES, WAREHOUSES AND PORT INFRASTRUCTURES IN BERGEN	115
MARCO TREBBI - INGFRID BÆKKEN	
SIX-FOURS-LES PLACES PROPOSAL OF PAN EUROPEAN ROUTES	139
ANDRÉ RIBOT	
CITY OF SIX-FOURS-LES-PLACES: PRESENTATION OF THE TOWN	151
JEAN-SÉBASTIEN VIALATTE - ANTONIN BODINO - DOMINIQUE BLANC	
ARRUDA DOS VINHOS A PRIVILEGED ROUTE	155
GUILLERME CARDOSO - JOSÉ D'ENCARNAÇÃO	
LÍRIA AND THE TÚRIA VALLEY IN THE IBERIAN PERIOD (5TH TO 2ND CENTURIES B.C.)	175
PIERRE GUÉRIN	
ITINERARY THROUGH THE BORGÍAS POSSESSIONS IN THE VALENCIA REGION	189
MARIANO GONZÁLEZ BALDOVÍ	

PAN-EUROPEAN CULTURAL CORRIDORS:

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PAN-EUROPEAN CORRIDORS of CULTURE: ITINERARIES ALONG THE ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES

INTRODUCTION

Communications by land and sea have played an important historical role in the relations between often very different countries and peoples. These overland and sea routes created economic, social and cultural contacts which influenced all the areas involved. Rediscovering these itineraries today is not only a question of gaining historical insights but also of understanding the geographical area united over the centuries by the sea and the human and environmental complexity and wealth of the old continent.

The intention is therefore to reassess the historical and cultural inheritance of Europe through the rediscovery of the trade routes which, in the past, brought countries closer together. The itineraries should be seen as historical links created by one country's search for goods, and subsequently acting as a means of economic and cultural exchange between peoples, beyond their own borders.

Today, to travel along those land or sea routes, not only on the occasion of civil Exhibitions or religious festivities (the Jubilee), but within the framework of a medium to long-term cultural project is also a way of reassessing the architectural structures –bridges, castles, towers, city walls, fortresses– built along those routes. These buildings –once used to control and defend the territory, and in transit to other areas– could be used today as part of a European intercultural project. By focusing on these buildings, located on old trade routes, and characterised by a wealth of architectural remains, buildings, civil, military and religious infrastructure, it will be possible to reassess the historical significance of the European cultural heritage and **the enormous variety of original sources of this culture, all of which were indispensable for the construction of a European identity**, within the framework of the political and cultural –not only economic– unity of the Old Continent.

During the first meeting, held in Venice on 10-11 March 2000, the **First Project Report** was drawn up. The report includes the initial statements of the nine participating countries in relation to their most important historical trade routes and the complex human relation

which took place upon them, creating immense artistic and cultural value. These were used to short-list a "project reserve", on the basis of which further deadlines were set on the basis of additional thoughts, in order to produce optimum project co-ordination.

From the outset, the idea of using trade routes for only one type of goods was excluded, as inadequately representative of the complexity of European economic history, represented by the documents submitted for the project. The "**salt route**", for example, is a good example of the Mediterranean area (Italy, Greece, France, Spain), and a wider area from the Strait of Gibraltar to the North Sea, but this would exclude Northern regions (Norway and Finland), requiring another "**route**", or **trade network**, involving the Baltic Sea, Central and Northern Europe, Russia and Scandinavia. These two **large trade routes** flourished in the late Middle Ages and could be considered one large network, due to the **extremely close links between them**.

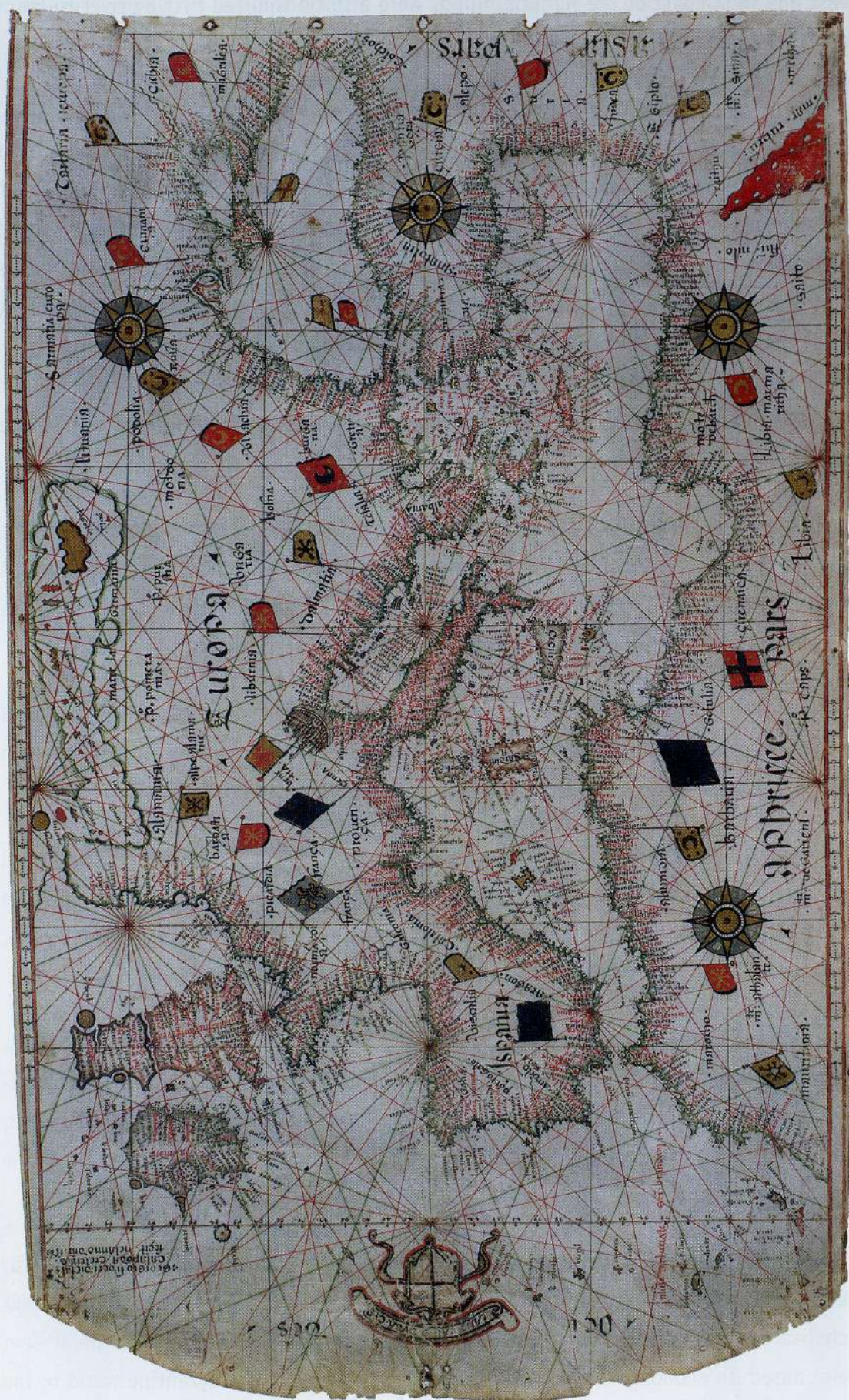
The **interface** of the two economic systems was in the north-west of the Old Continent, where the overland and sea routes met, in Bruges, London and Southampton, where large **Mediterranean fleets** (from Genova and Venice) docked, together with **Atlantic fleets** from Spain, Portugal and France and **Nordic fleets** from Holland, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. **Overland goods** followed the Rhine, Rhone and Saône river valleys.

The most important Mediterranean goods (spices, silk, cotton, wine and textiles) were transported by land and sea from Venice to Bruges.

The **sea** route was westward towards Spain, Portugal, France, Flanders and England.

Overland routes included the Rhone and Saône river valleys from Provence to Champagne and Bruges. This was the "**Provençal itinerary**", mirrored by a **sea route from Venice to Aigues Mortes**. Venetian vessels did not only link up with the overland route from Provence to Bruges but also went along the coastline to the main ports of Provence and the Languedoc (Toulon, Narbonne, Montpellier, Aigues Mortes, Marseilles).

Returning from **Bruges (Flanders), Southampton (England) or Aigues Mortes (Provence)**, the Venetian fleets loaded up salt from the mines in Sardinia (**Cagliari**) and, above all, the Balearic islands (**Ibiza**). On the eastern route the ports of call were the **Crimea, Alexandria and Cyprus**. Venetian boats **used goods that could be sold (salt), rather than a worthless commodity such as rocks or sand, as ballast**. The salt from Sardinia, the Balearic islands, the Crimea, Cyprus and Egypt was unloaded near the Customs Houses (*Punta della Dogana*) in Venice and stored in salt warehouses (*Magazzini del Sale*). Hundreds of small boats (*barche* and *burchi*) collected the salt and headed for the river Po, which was used to deliver goods to the regions of Emilia and Lombardy, or for the



Giorgio Sideri called Cappollada da Candia, *Europa Mediterranea e atlantica, Mar Nero e Africa settentrionale*, 1561 approx., Venezia, Museo Correr. (photo archives)

east and west coast of the Adriatic. Goods were also transported first by river to Friuli and then overland to Central Europe.

For the purposes of maintaining its **monopoly** on the sale of salt, Venice destroyed, restricted or controlled the production of salt in the Adriatic, forcing merchants in Italy and the Balkans to buy only from Venice. The system of using **salt for ballast** meant that Venetian vessels could load from very distant ports: the earnings from the sale of salt paid to the ship-owners helped the ship owners to reduce the cost of other goods and made long distance transportation possible. The combination of goods with great value but low weight, like spices and textiles, and a product of low value but high weight, such a salt, made the sea routes viable and reduce the transport cost of the goods. *Only Venice was able to combine the transportation of **precious goods with huge loads of salt**.*

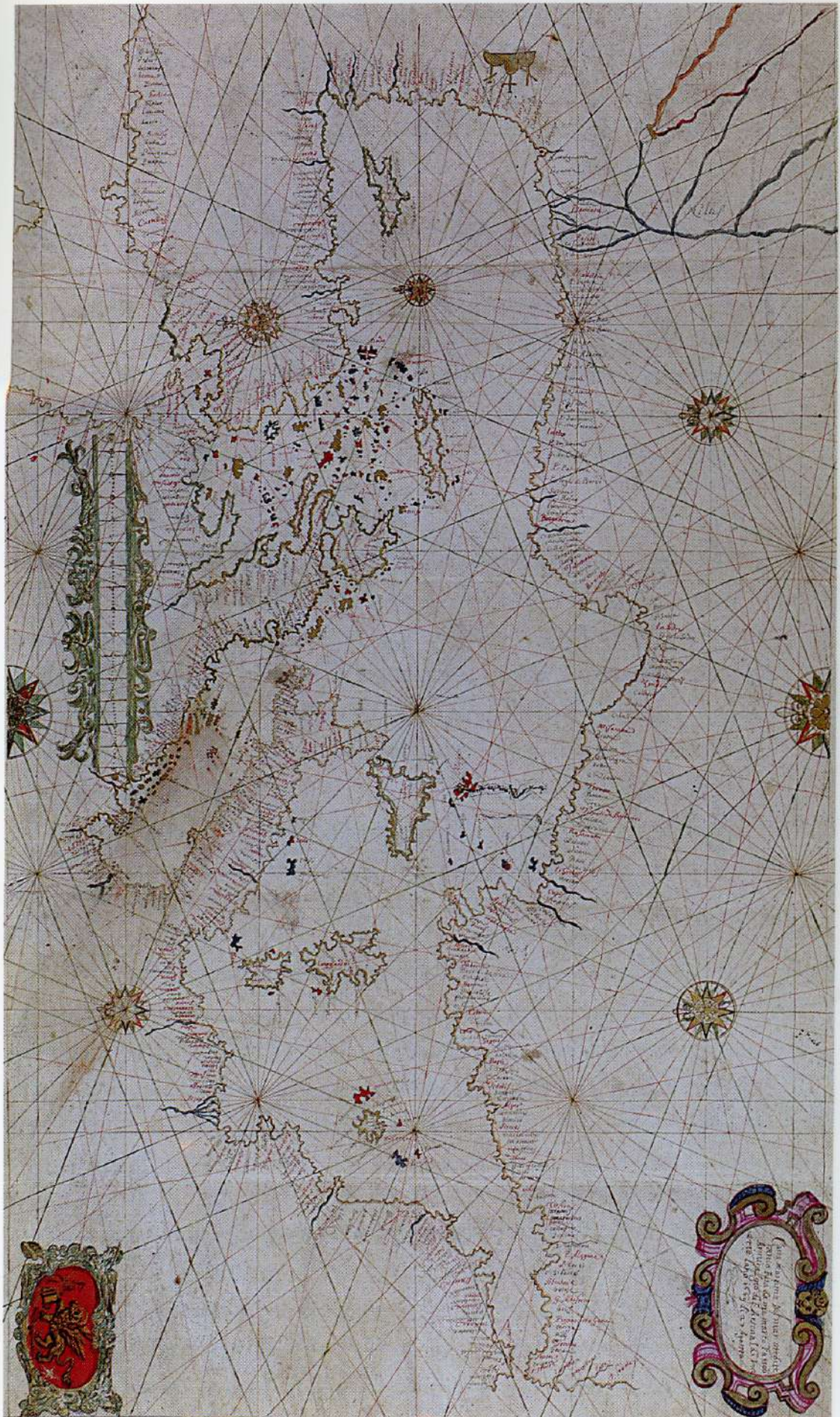
Nonetheless, the salt route was only one of a larger network of trade routes by sea (**the Atlantic route**) and over land (**the Provence route**), reaching the north-western European coast, through the English Channel to the North Sea and the Baltic. **From Bruges the cities of the Hanseatic League distributed goods to Scandinavia.**

These two routes –across the **Mediterranean** and the **Baltic** seas– are fully represented by the project partners and laid the basis for economic, social and cultural life in fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe, before taking on global dimensions.

Venice will develop an itinerary based on the location for the departure and arrival of vessels bound east and west: the *San Marco basin*. This area includes the productive centre of Venice's maritime power (*Arsenal*), the commercial centre (*Salt Warehouses*), military centre (*Sant'Andrea Fort*) and seat of political power (*the Doge's Palace*).

The **three Greek** partners are ideally suited to take part in the pan-European project, representing important sea routes, including the *Ionian Islands* (Kerkyra-Corfù, Cephalonia-Cefalonia, Zakynthos-Zante, Lefkada-Santa Maura, Kithira-Cerigo), *Cyclad Islands and Paros*. These islands have many *Byzantine and Venetian fortresses and castles, and are of the utmost importance in historical, architectural and cultural terms*.

The first area of interest is the sea route connecting the largest Ionian islands –Corfù, Cefalonia and Zante– to Mediterranean centres and, in particular, Venice. An important civilisation was established in these islands between the Middle Ages and the modern era, based on economic and cultural exchange with Venice, the Byzantine world to the east and Europe to the west. The islands produced salt, olives and wine, these activities shaping the countryside. The ports were defended by fortresses and became important towns for their civil and religious architecture. The architectural heritage of the islands



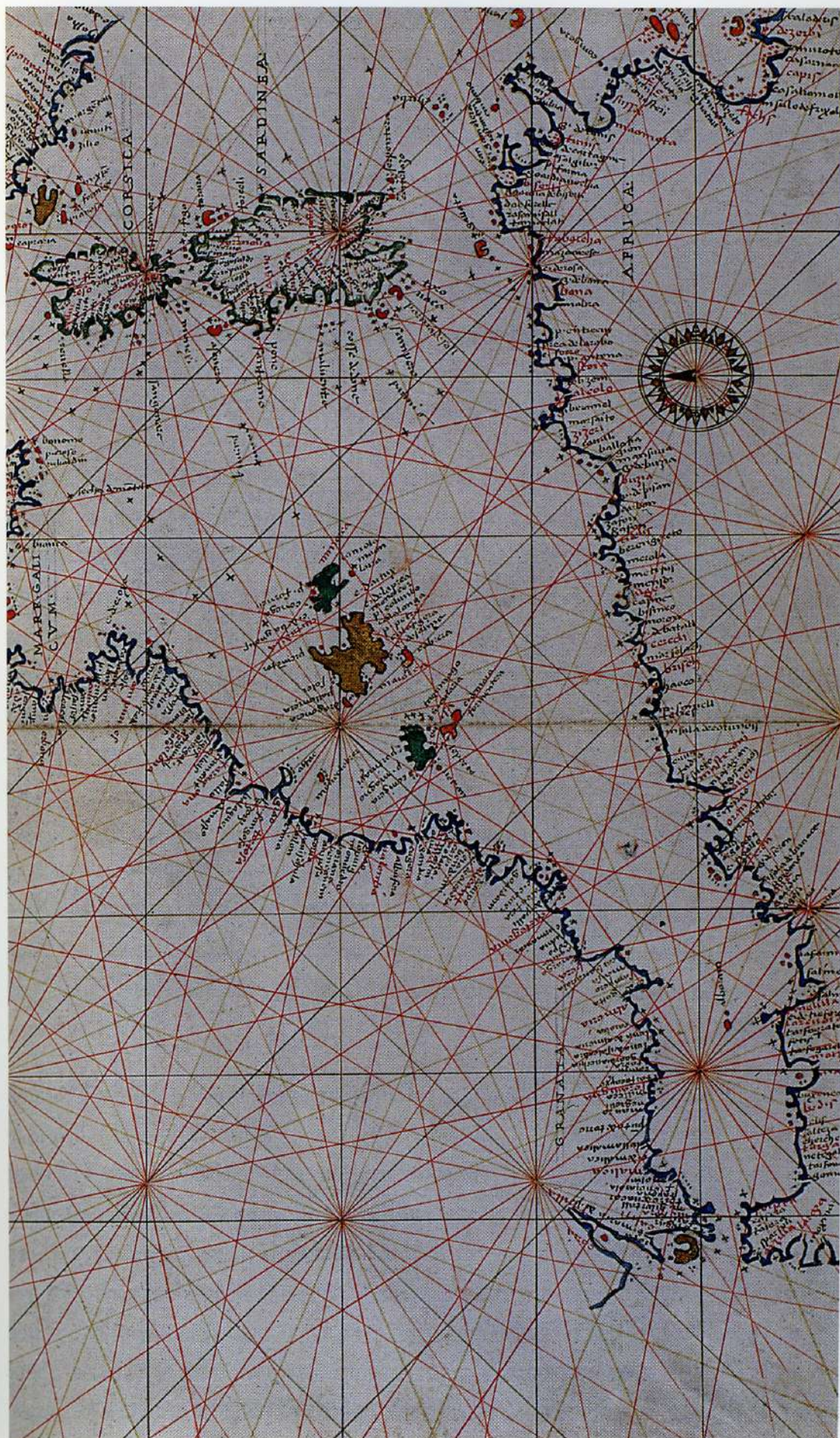
Marco Fassoi, *Mediterraneo (orientato con il sud verso l'alto)* 27 August 1669, Venezia, Museo Correr. (photo archives)

can be summarised as follows: **Corfù**, the *Old Fortress*, *New Fortress*, *Cassiopi Castle*, *Vlacherna Monastery* and *Church of S. Spiridione* among many other important buildings; **Cefalonia**, the *Castles of Saint George*, close to Argostoli, and *Asso*, in the north of the island; **Zante**, the important *fortress* dominating the island capital, and a number of churches and monasteries.

Another area in the region is the **island and mainland coastline** between the Ionian and Aegean seas, of strategic economic and military importance:

- 1) **Sagiada**, a coastal town in western Greece, opposite Corfù, between Butrinto and Igoumenitsa, on the trading route to Ioannina, capital of Epirus. At the mouth of the river Kalamas there was a salt mine, and to the south, on the small island of *Agioleni* (Aghia Eleni=Sant'Elena), a look-out *tower* was built. Today it is in ruins.
- 2) **Lefkada**, one of the main islands in the Ionian sea, whose salt mines were located in an area including the *Venetian fortress of Santa Maura*, built from 1717 to 1725 and declared a "historical monument" in 1932, the *Torretta*, or *Fort Alexander*, also Venetian, the *Fortino*, or *Fort Constantine*, a sixteenth century building at the southern end of the lagoon, today virtually destroyed, the *Bastione*, or *Fort Griva*, an ancient religious building later fortified during the Ottoman Empire; *The Lazzaletto*, built by the Venetians between the island of S. Nicola and the Santa Maura Fortress, the *aqueduct*, built by the Ottomans between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, two *port-canals*, or *Canali Stretti* (Drapano and S. Nicola).
- 3) **Kithira**, an island to the south of the Peloponnese, dominating the sea routes in the Ionian and Aegean seas. The Venetians called this island Cerigo. It contained a salt mine which supplied the local market, (Crete and mainland Greece). The gulf in front of the main port, Kapsali, is dominated by *Chora Castle*, a medieval Venetian fortress rebuilt a number of times and surrounded by numerous Byzantine churches. The *Castle of S. Francesco* has a small *lighthouse*, and was built to protect the port of S. Nicola, on the *Avlémonas* bay, in the Eastern part of the island.

France is taking part in the project with **Six-Fours-Les-Plages**, a coastal resort important for tourism and the environment, located in a region (Provence) which had a major role as link between sea and land routes in the Mediterranean and northern Europe. The town has a number of fortresses and lighthouses as well as many buildings of artistic and cultural interest. **Six-Fours-les-Plages** was a fortified town as far back as the eras of Ancient Greece and Rome, when it was called *Tauroeis* and subsequently *Tauroentum*. Remains of the ancient fortifications can be found in *Olbia* (Hyères). In the tenth century Six-

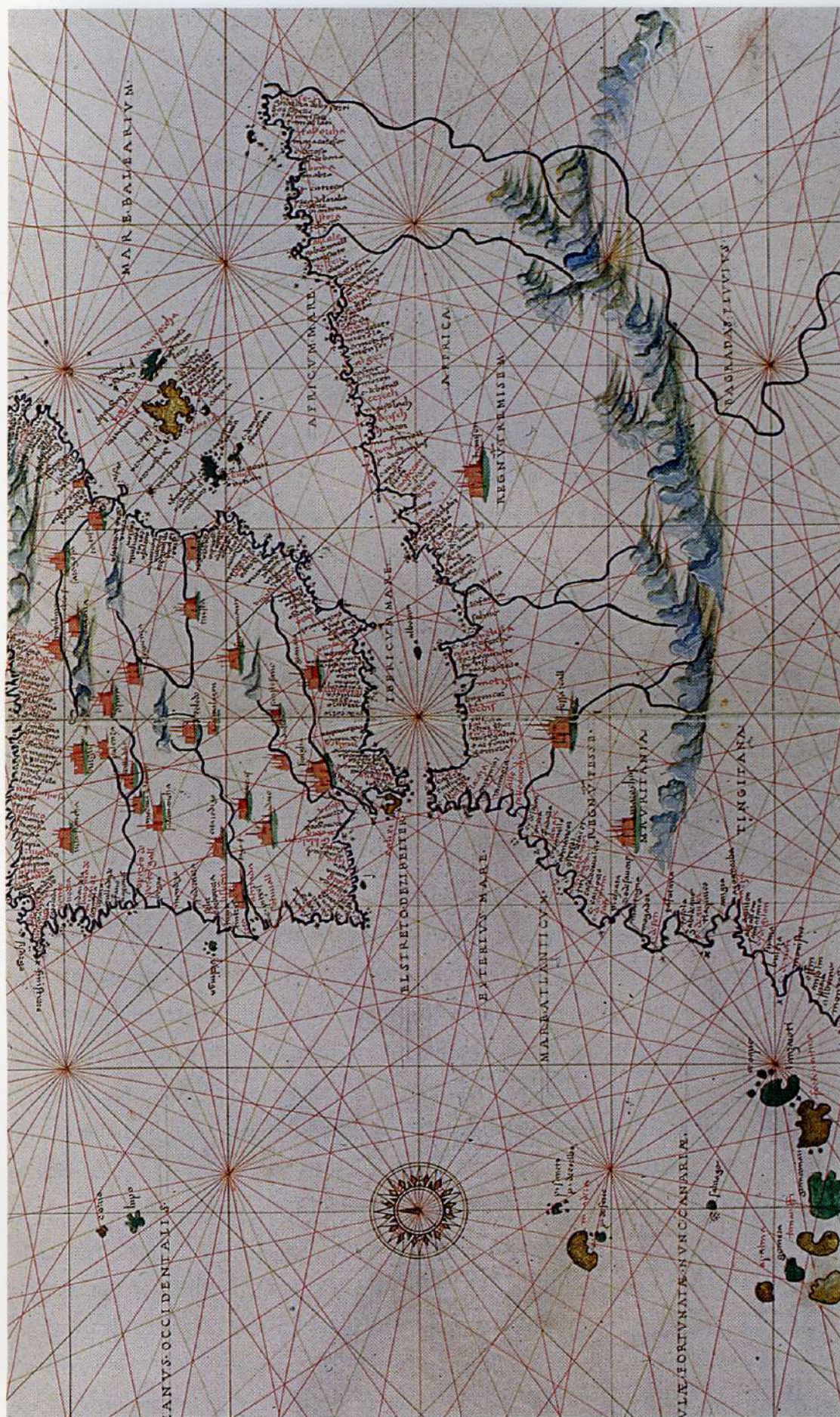


Battista Agnese, *Penisola iberica Baleari, Costa africana nord-occidentale*, 10 March 1536, Venezia, Museo Correr (photo archives).

Fours-Les-Plages was known as *Septem Fornos*, then *Sex-Fornos*. The territory included Hières and Tolone, close to the salt mines. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, between Nice and the Rhone, there were a number of lighthouses to assist vessels travelling along the coast. One of them was the "*farot*" of Sicié. In 1625, the chapel of Nôtre-Dame-de-Bonne-Garde was built and soon became a place of pilgrimage for sailors and the nearby population. Other buildings from this era include the chapel of Nôtre-Dame-de-Pépiole and the collegiate church of Old-Six-Fours, dedicated to Saint Pierre. This complex of buildings to help shipping (the *farot* of Scirié), for defence (**Peyras and Napoleonic fortresses, the battlements of Saint-Pierre and Cap Nègre**) and religious buildings (**the two chapels and collegiate church**) is part of an important architectural heritage related to important historical trading routes, capable of cultural and environmental development.

Spain is participating in the project through the city of **Valencia**. Aragon was the Spanish region where oriental spices were bought and sold, together with Venetian fabrics, German metals and cereals from Sicily, in exchange for Spanish raw materials such as wool, sugar, wine and nuts. Returning from Spain, Venetian ships stopped at Ibiza (Baleari) to load up salt for ballast and subsequent sale. The area was one of the *most flourishing markets dealing in the products transported along the trade routes of the Mediterranean, and here too there are numerous buildings of artistic, religious and cultural interest* connected with the **Borgia family**. In particular, the Spanish *partner* wishes to focus its part of the project on the Royal Monastery of **Santa Maria della Valdigna**, founded in 1298 on fertile coastal land, and made over by King Juan II of Aragon to the Cistercian order with all feudal rights. The architectural complex is the result of numerous rebuilding works carried out until the eighteenth century. The *Chapter House*, the most important building in the complex from the artistic point of view, was commissioned by Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, the abbot of the monastery from 1479 to 1491 and subsequently Pope Alexander VI.

Portugal is taking part in the project through **Arruda dos vinhos**, a town located in the Tago river basin within the Lisbon region, important for its links with European expansion towards Africa, India and South America. Although Portugal was more important for trading with West Africa than with Mediterranean or the North/Baltic Sea, there are nonetheless many important remains of Napoleonic fortresses along the so-called "**wine route**", all of cultural and tourist interest. The name **Arruda dos vinhos** derives from a medicinal plant (*ruta*) commonly found in Portugal and from the local production of vine. The area has many prestigious vineyards. The wine from Arruda dos vinhos was taken to Lisbon and then loaded on ships bound for Flanders and other countries. The countryside is extremely varied with mountains, hills and fertile valleys. There are remains of antiquity and, above all, important eighteenth century religious buildings



Battista Agnese, *Penisola iberica Baleari, Costa africana nord-occidentale*, 1550 approx. Venezia, Museo Correr. (photo archives)

such as the Parish Church and fountain. *Tourism, however, is mainly attracted by the area's vineyards and the local wine, classified as VQPRD, both the red and white versions being sold under the name Arruda.*

Norway traded with the cities of the Hanseatic League in the late Middle Ages, creating links with Flanders, the meeting point of the Mediterranean and Atlantic trade routes, and buyers of dried stockfish, a traditional Norwegian raw material. The "**stockfish route**" *created buildings, warehouses and port infrastructure in Bergen.* The fish was caught in the Lofoti islands by small farmers, whose incomes were so meagre they needed to add fishing to their other work. Hence the name "fishermen farmers". They used fishing boats with 5-7 men, who then cleaned and dried the fish on the shore. In August the fish was taken to *Bergen*, where it was exported to Great Britain and Continental Europe, particularly the Mediterranean, including the coastal cities of Genova, Livorno, Trieste and Ancona, duty-free ports in the eighteenth century, and Venice, Naples, Marseilles and Cadiz. Italy has a long tradition in the trading of stockfish which it maintains today. *In Norway cod has created an industry, culture and tradition.* Some fishing villages remain active on the Lofoti islands, many of them dating back to the end of the seventeenth century. The old wooden huts used by the fishermen can still be seen, together with the kilns, the warehouses and the distillery, added more recently, for the production of cod liver oil.

Finland, will be able to develop the historical, cultural and environmental aspects of the trade route between the Finnish forest and Continental Europe - the "**Oxen Road**" which includes a number of important religious, civil and military buildings, such as the Fortress of Hämeenlinna, and the environmental resources in general. The main route, called the "Häme Oxen Road" is mentioned for the first time in a document dated 1556 (found by the research of Jaakko Masonen). The road connected **Turku** and **Hämeenlinna** from the most ancient times, and became the main route across country, with many secondary roads leading off it. Recent archaeological studies have shown that the "Oxen Road" probably dates back to the late Iron Age, when it connected the Aurajoki river valley to Lake Vanaja. But it was until the Vikings that the route became a permanent road with a large commercial town called Birka. Subsequently, merchants moved their activities to Hämeenlinna, the location of *Häme Castle*. The "Oxen Road" connected Häme to the port of Halikko, at Turku. This southern route was the overland alternative to the sea route which was more difficult for long journeys. It linked all the towns inland and along the southern coastline, bringing them into the main trade route between the Baltic, Russia and Continental Europe. *Today, the "Häme Oxen Road" is still a main highway, crossing beautiful natural countryside with towns of architectural and historical interest.*

Ever since prehistoric times, goods have lent their names to roads, routes and other systems of communication. At one time or another there have been salt, wine, fish and other trade routes, whether over land or by sea, according to local conditions and political considerations. Inevitable these routes were not used only for goods, but for social and cultural purposes as well. Together they made up a regional, European and extra-European system of communications which, today, represents the origin of European unity. The aim of this project is to reassess and highlight these ancient trade routes ("Pan-European Corridors of Culture"), their townships, traditions, architecture, art and history in order to strengthen links between peoples and promote greater civil, cultural and political growth within the Old Continent, so this may be an example to for the rest of the world.

Massimo Costantini

**PAN-EUROPEAN
CULTURAL CORRIDORS:
ITINERARY THROUGH THE BORGHIAS
POSSESSIONS IN THE VALENCIA REGION**

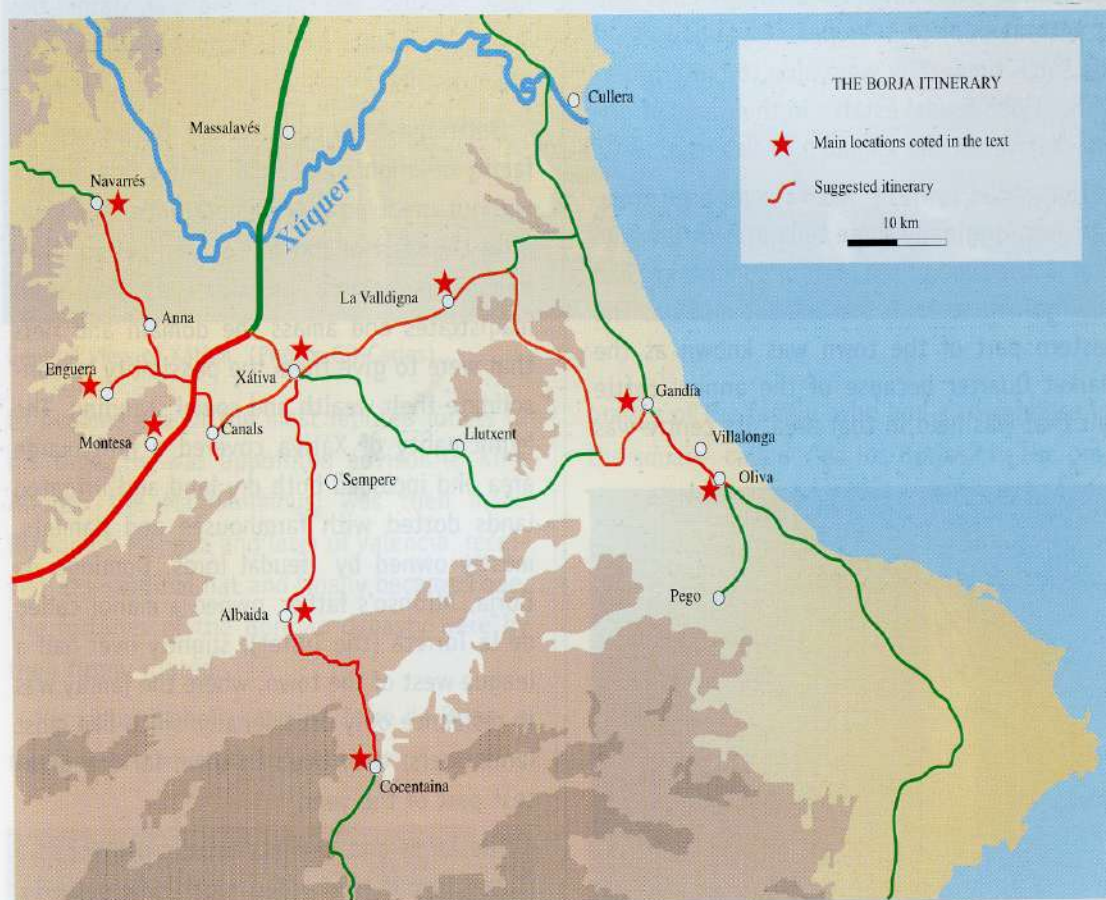
Generalitat Valenciana. Dirección General de
Promoción Cultural de Patrimonio Artístico

MARIANO GONZÁLEZ BALDOVÍ

ITINERARY THROUGH THE BORGÍAS POSSESSIONS IN THE VALENCIA REGION

Generalitat Valenciana. Dirección General de
Promoción Cultural de Patrimonio Artístico

MARIANO GONZÁLEZ BALDOVÍ



Map of The Main Borja places.

The election of Alfonso de Borja to the Holy See placed at the forefront of history the inextinguishable star of one of the families from the lesser aristocracy from Valencia, a name that was to rise to fame for having achieved the end of the Great Schism of the catholic Church, stopped the Turks in their thrust into continental Europe at Belgrade after the fall of Constantinople. The family was powerful enough to negotiate the partition of the New

World between Castille and Portugal, inspire Machiavelli, canonize Saint Vincent Ferrer, burn Savonarola at the stake, and give protection to Leonardo da Vinci. A family, the *Gens Borgia*, reputedly refined yet debauched enough to commit incest crimes and betrayals, even when compared with the less-than-lofty standards of the day.

In less than half a century, the Borjas, or Borgias as they came to be known in Italy,



View of Xàtiva in 1563. Anthoine Van der Wijngaerde. Austrian National Library. Vienna.

managed to establish alliances with many of the Italian noble families of the time, as well as with most of the European royal houses; at the same time, they were able to build a network of rich feudal estates in their area of origin, Xàtiva, in the kingdom of Valencia.

The walled town of Xàtiva comprised three parishes, originally three separate settlements that at the time of the Muslim domination had been joined to form the ancient medina. The eastern part of the town was known as the Market Quarter because of the annual cattle fair that was held in that area. Its centre was

the Church of St. Peter, whereas the area that grew around the main mosque, later the Collegiate church of St. Mary, was called the town district.

Until mid-14th century, the Borjas were a family of knights and small gentry from Xàtiva without great power or importance, but soon after the start of the War of Unification, they began to occupy positions as municipal magistrates and amass the domain and fiefs that were to give them the possibility to consolidate their wealth and social standing. The Municipality of Xàtiva covered a fairly large area and included both dry land and irrigated lands dotted with farmhouses and hamlets, mostly owned by feudal lords. Domingo de Borja, Alfonso's father, owned a manor called de la Torreta (the Turret), slightly over half a league west of the town, where the family was in residence only occasionally, since like most landowners, they lived in town for the greatest part of the year.

The farms and hamlets usually developed a closed layout for added night-time security, and some of the lordly mansions had defensive towers like the one at la Torreta, recently restored and now property of the Canals Municipality, which is the earliest extant vestige of the Borgian estates in the kingdom of Valencia.

Alfonso de Borja, the future Calixto III and the first Pope (1455-1458) of this dynasty, was the son of Domingo and Francina Martí, and was born in the parish of St. Mary (Santa Maria) in 1378. While still very young, he left his native Xàtiva, never to return. He was first in Lérida, where he studied law and went on



Tower of the ancient Palace of Torreta de Canals. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



General view of Xàtiva. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

to become one of the most reputed jurists of his time. He was appointed advisor to King Alfonso the Magnanimous, was then made Bishop of Majorca and later of Valencia, received the cardinal hat and finally became Pope. The fortunes of the Borgia dynasty were by then firmly rooted.

His sister Isabella married Jofré de Borja, a member of the most influential and wealthy

branch of the family, who had a townhouse in the square called "de los Borjas" in the precinct of the Market Quarter. The house was a medium-sized building with a stone voussoir archway and a patio in the second bay from which a two-flight stairway led to the upper floors. It was in a room of the mezzanine that Rodrigo Borja, the future Alexander VI, was born in 1432, just below the first-floor pro-



The coat of arms of the Cardinal Alfonso de Borja, on a corbel in his chapel. 1452. Almodí Museum in Xàtiva. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



Figure of Hermes on a corbel in the chapel of Alfonso de Borja. 1452. Almodí Museum in Xàtiva. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

jecting gallery that was typical of medieval Valencian buildings.

The ancestral home in Xàtiva house remained the property of the family for many generations. Part of the 16th century repairs are still visible today.

Like all noble families of the city, the wealthier branch of the Borjas erected their own funerary chapel in the church of the convent of St. Francis, at the beginning of the Moncada street. The convent rivalled the Collegiate church as the select burial place for the nobility of the town. The Franciscan church is a late 14th century building with a single aisle with transverse arches, and side chapels with cross vaults, in keeping with the models of the mendicant orders in the Corona de Aragon.

When he became Archbishop of Valencia, Alfonso Borja decided to have another chapel built for himself and his family inside the

Valencia cathedral, but he later changed his mind, and, once he was made cardinal, he ordered one built inside the Xàtiva collegiate church. Alfonso Borja's chapel was a free-standing structure, large enough to be used for centuries as the Chapter House and chapel for the Holy Communion. It was demolished in the 18th century when the new collegiate church was built. A keystone, three corbels and other highly ornate architectural elements in the flamboyant gothic style, some of them polychrome, are exhibited today at the Municipal Museum in Almodí.

However, the works of art more closely connected with the first Borgia pope are those that belong to the treasures of the collegiate church. A silver chalice with his name engraved on the knob that he himself commissioned is the work of a silversmith from Valencia, whereas the *Lignum Crucis* with the small image of the *Christus Patiens* in gold white-enamelled inside its reliquary is an exquisite



7. Triptych with Santa Ana. Pere Reixach. 1452. Collegiate church of Xàtiva Museum. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



.Santa Ana hermitage in Xàtiva. XV century. Inside view. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

piece originating from Burgundian or the Parisian workshop and datable around 1400. The most celebrated work is however the St. Anna altarpiece, or, to be more exact, the five panels still remaining from the magnificent altarpiece commissioned in 1452 to the painter Pere Reixach for Alfonso's funeral chapel and today one of the masterpieces of gothic painting in Spain.

Another building usually associated with the Borgias is the casa de l'Ardiaca or Archdeacon's House. The three Borgia coats of arms over the doorway were ostentatiously displayed to indicate that that ecclesiastical office in the Church of Santa Maria in Xativa was a prerogative of the family. Only a hall with a single nave supported by powerful transverse arches remain today. Of all the buildings that belonged to the Borgias, the one that best withstood the ravages of time is the hermitage of St. Anna in Xàtiva, to which Cardinal Alfonso had destined an annual income for services and organ music. The complex rises on the eponymous mountain, not far from the town, and was originally a fortified site that included, in addition to the shrine, the hermit's dwelling, stables, a baking oven, guest quarters, and a patio. Today only the hermitage remains. The semicircular portal has smooth voussoirs and is framed with an *alfiz* (a moulding protruding from the wall,



Santa Ana hermitage in Xàtiva. XV century. General view. (Photo: Gil-Carles)

intending to protect the door) and the interior consists of three cross vaults separated by main semicircular arches and a chancel with a false octagonal apse.

North-west of Xàtiva, in the dry lands, there are other Borgia enclaves. One of them, Anna, came into Borgia possession with the marriage of Tecla Borja, sister to Rodrigo, to Vidal de Vilanova, lord of Villanova. There was no offspring to the marriage, and the manor was inherited by Tecla's mother, Isabel, and, from her, passed on to her son Rodrigo who, being an ecclesiastic, donated it to his nephew Jofré. The latter's descendant was Galceran de Borja, a figure whose heterodox conduct was in the best Borgia tradition. He was the last grand master of the Montesa Order, viceroy of Catalonia and Marquis of Navarrés, a village not far from Anna. Neither Anna nor Navarrés today can boast any material connection to the family, but the landscape surrounding them is of great beauty.

The third place in this region that can claim a Borgia connection is Enguera, held by the Order of Santiago until it was sold to Miguel Borja by Philip II in 1584. The parish church of San Miguel was begun in 1585 on the initiative of Archbishop Patriarch Juan de Ribera. The interior still guards the Virgen de Gracia, (The Virgin of Grace), by Pablo de San

Leocadio, one of the finest late-gothic and early-renaissance panels in Valencia.

The convent of the Discalced Carmelite rises in the lower part of the town. It is a 17th c. building with a noble Herreran façade, whose walls enclose a base of glazed tiles (*azulejos*) in the baroque style.

Rodrigo Borgia interest and aims had little in common with Alfonso. Orphaned when still a child, he was welcomed into the household of his uncle, the Bishop of Valencia, together with his mother and siblings. His uncle took him under his wing, made him his ward and sent him to study at the University of Bologna. When he was elected to the papal see, Alfonso appointed him his vice-chancellor, a title that Rodrigo was to retain for over forty years until he himself was made Pope.

The huge income that Rodrigo Borgia derived for his numerous bishoprics and later as a Pope, gave him ample opportunity to provide for his children. Once the peace with Ferdinand the Catholic had been sealed, he purchased for his son Pere Lluís the Duchy of

Gandía, perhaps the most lucrative fief in the kingdom thanks to the sugarcane plantations. This latest acquisition consolidated the position of the Borgias as the wealthiest and most influential family in Valencia.

The Ducal Palace is a magnificent monument, originally built in the gothic style, as witnessed by its austere and fine façade and large patio. Nevertheless, it has been altered in the course of the 16th century and once again underwent substantial renovation in 1671 on the occasion of the canonization of Saint Francis Borgia, Rodrigo's great-grandson, when the Golden Gallery with its ceiling paintings by Gaspar de Huerta was added to the complex. Other outstanding features of the palace are some floorings of glazed tiles, as well as the Carroç-Centelles Hall and the Hall of the Crowns.

The second monument in Gandía closely connected to the Borgias is the Collegiate church, the ecclesiastical dignity granted to the parish by Alexander VI in 1499 when so petitioned by María Enriquez, the widowed wife of Juan Borja, the pope's second son who



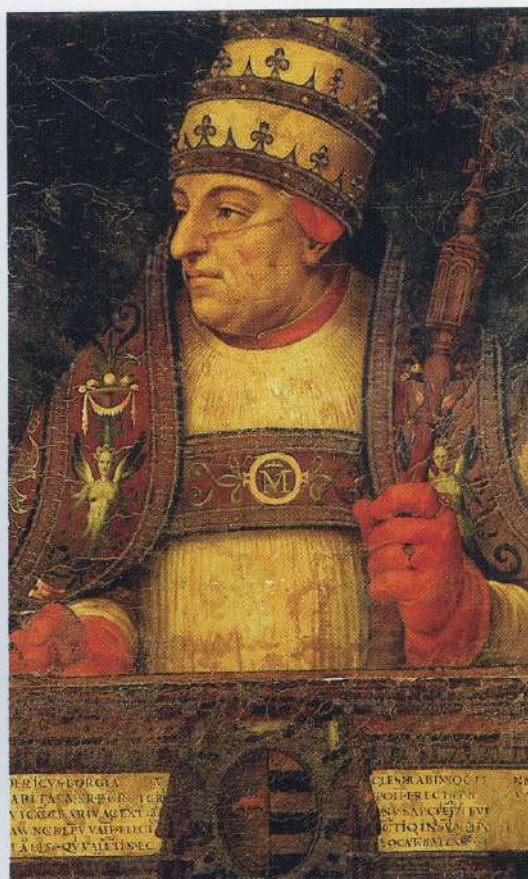
View of the Palace of Gandía Dukes. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



The Virgin of Grace, attributed to Pablo de San Leocadio. XV century - Parish church of San Miguel de Enguera. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



Calixtus III. Juan de Juanes. XVI century. Valencia Cathedral. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



Alexander VI. Juan de Juanes. XVI century. Valencia Cathedral. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

had inherited the duchy after the death of his brother Pere Lluís at the siege of Granada. Duchess María had the church enlarged in the late 14th or early 15th century. A single aisle building, the church has side chapels and two pointed archivolted doorways crowned with gables. The interior was adorned with an altarpiece by Pablo de San Leocadio, now lost.

The Dukes of Gandía also held the patronage of the Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de la Valldigna founded by King Jaime II at the close of the 13th century. The convent was an impressive medieval complex nestled in a mountain-girt valley north of Gandia, and included a cloister, the abbot's palace, and a chapter house created at the time Rodrigo and then Cesare Borgia were the abbots. Their coats of arms still decorate two of the keystones. The ducal family held the patronage of the monastery for a long time, and other family members eventually became abbots.

The original church was destroyed by an earthquake and was later replaced in the second half of the 17th century. The new building was a single nave church with a transept,

a dome and a presbytery richly ornamented with painted decorations and polychrome stuccoes. It is currently undergoing extensive restoration but it is nonetheless possible to visit it.

The family patrimony was further aggrandized with the acquisition of the Barony of Llobai, an area located west of the ducal lands, and later elevated to the rank of marquisate by Emperor Charles V on the occasion of the marriage of the fourth duke, Saint Francis de Borja. The new marquis established a Dominican convent consecrated to the Holy Cross that immediately became the parish church of the village. He also donated a splendid sculpture of the Virgin of the Rosary and a silver Lignum Crucis. Both the church and the adjoining cloisters were richly decorated with baroque sgraffiti of superb workmanship.

Remarkable are also the 18th c. reliquary in chased silver holding the relics of the founder saint, and a very quaint altarpiece in glazed tiles in the square named after St. Francis (plaza de San Francisco), in which the Duke is depicted in the moment when he decided to

take holy orders after seeing the decaying corpse of Empress Isabel.

Along the years, the Valencian Borgias continued to amass riches through marriages like the 1552 union between the duke's eldest son, Carlos, and Magdalena de Centelles, sister and heiress of Count de Oliva, thus joining the two families.

The de Oliva palace was undoubtedly one of the richest and most splendid buildings in the Kingdom of Valencia. Its elegant Valencian gothic architecture and refined Renaissance Italian marbles were torn down at the beginning of the century. Some of the ornamental and architectural elements were dispersed in several foreign collections, but some columns and other fragments that give testimony to the richness of the exuberant decoration can still be seen at the local municipal museum and parish church.

Sooner or later, all Valencian noblemen had a residence built in the capital, or acquired one, and divided their life between the town and their manor's palaces. The city of Valencia offered important incentives to the aspirations of nobles such as the General

Administration of the Kingdom, the ecclesiastic prebends, the Viceroy court and the possibility of relating their offspring with those of other noble families.

While Alfonso Borgia was still alive, his brother-in-law and father to Alejandro moved his main residence to the capital, without however, abandoning the Xàtiva house. Toward the end of the 15th century, the young duke Juan de Borja bought a palace in the San Lorenzo square and enlarged it. The building had mullioned windows, an imposing doorway with voussoirs, and an upper story gallery with ogee arches. At the extinction of the de Borja's male line in 1749, the dukedom passed to the Counts of Benavente, who had no connection in Valencia. The palace then was abandoned until it was acquired and transformed by a local industrialist in the 19th century. Today it has partly recovered its original aspect and is the seat of the regional Parliament.

The cathedral offers the second largest concentration of Borgia mementos. The museum has two fine gothic caskets sent by Calixto III from Rome, one called the Agate Casket (Arqueta de las Ágatas) and the other from



Ancient palace of The Borja family in Valencia. Nowadays seat of the Valencian Parliament. (Photo. Gil-Carles).



Casket from the venetian workshop of the Embriacchi. XV century - Valencia Cathedral. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

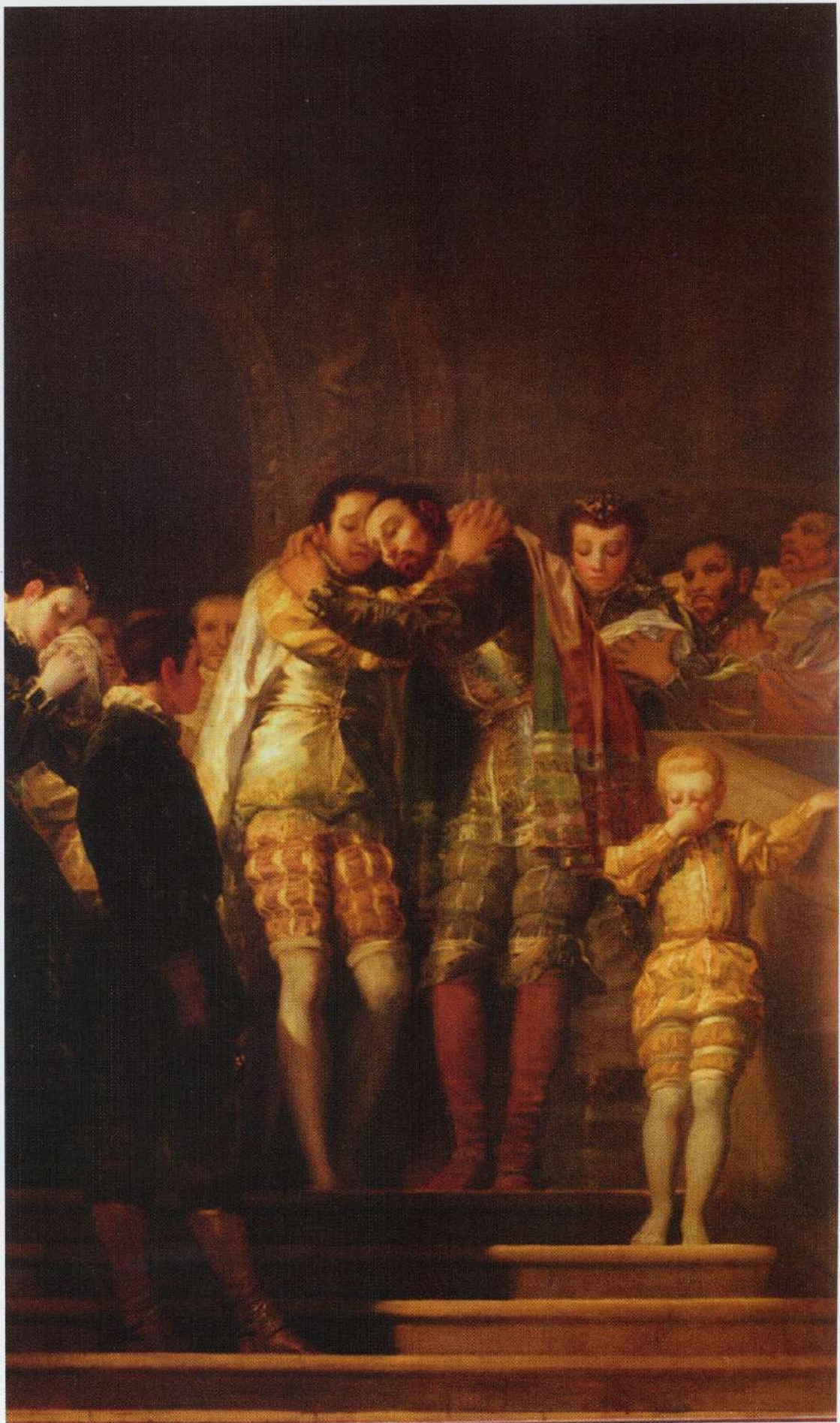
the Venetian workshop of the Embriacchi, decorated with love scenes carved in bone. The treasury also boasts two more magnificent examples of silver work: the reliquary of St. Peter, a full relief silver sculpture donated by the Pope, and the reliquary allegedly containing the Holy Virgin's veil, a polychrome gilt silver bust representing the Virgin. More recent, but no less interesting, are two paintings by Goya (1799) for the St. Francis Borgia Chapel: *The conversion of the Dying Man* and *The Farewell of St. Francis Borgia*, the latter depicting the saint as he renounces all titles and honours on entering the Jesuits.

The leafy trunk of the Borgia lineage also continued growing with the female line through prestigious marriages to some of the highest ranking families in the kingdom. Àngela Borja Castellvert was one such example. She was a close relative of Alexander VI and the wife of the fourth Count of Cocentaina, Rodrigue Roïç de Corella, whose

territories bordered on the southernmost manors held by the Borgias.

Fortunately, the fortress-like Cocentaina palace is still standing in fairly good conditions. The forbidding medieval complex has a square plan with massive towers at the four corners, and opens onto a Renaissance courtyard. One of the large stately rooms of the palace still has a 16th century frescoed ceiling representing the glory of the Roïç de Corella family.

If the house of the Dukes of Gandia, Oliva and Llombai descends directly from Alexander VI, as does the Cocentaina line, the Marquises of Albaida can claim descent from Calixto III through the marriage of his sister Catalina to Lluís del Milà, lord of Massalavés. Their son Lluís del Milà y Borja, cousin to Pope Alexander VI, was appointed bishop of Segorbe, and later cardinal-bishop of Lérida. Shunning the feverish pace of Vatican life and its intrigues, this clergyman preferred to



The farewell ceremony of Francisco de Borja, the fourth duke of Gandía. Oil on canvas by Francisco de Goya
Valencia Cathedral. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

retire to a village called Carrícola and in 1477 acquired the Albaida barony for his son Jaume, the first count of Albaida.

With Cristóbal Milá de Aragón, a descendant of Jaume del Milà and Leonor de Aragón, Juan II's illegitimate granddaughter, Albaida was elevated to the rank of marquessate.

The palace of the Marquis of Albaida is an imposing building with three towers in line that takes up most of the width of the town

square. Some of the saloons still show the original baroque wall paintings. The palace has been partly restored and now houses the International Museum of Puppets.

Not far from the palace, the parish church preserves an admirable 15th c. *Lignum Crucis* in gold, a reliquary of mature flamboyant gothic, donated by Cardinal Milà Borgia as well as an exceptional collection of baroque liturgical vestments bearing the Marquis' coat of arms emblazoned in silk and gold thread.

THE ROYAL MONASTERY OF SANTA MARIA DE LA VALLDIGNA



The Royal Monastery of Santa María de la Valldigna. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

The Royal Monastery of Santa Maria della Valldigna was commissioned in 1298 by Jaime II of Aragon as part of the Cistercian Monastery of Santes Creus, in Catalogna. Flat land – a little raised – was chosen for the site, close to a spring in a fertile valley opening eastwards to the sea and protected by mountains on three sides. In order to ensure its survival and maintenance, Jaime II appointed the monastery as ruler over both the Christian population and the more numerous "*mudéjares*" (Muslims under Christian rule). This gave the monastery control of the land, income, houses, mills, cattle, grazing countryside, and so on, turning it into an Ecclesiastical feudal state.

The original monastic complex was surrounded by a rectangular wall with tower at each corner and a central tower in the western wall to protect the Royal Gateway.

The lay-out of the monastery followed the general principles of the Cistercian order. The central portion consisted of a cloister, surrounded by a number of rooms. The church was built to the north. It was fairly small since it was not for the use of the population, only the monastery itself. The refectory was on the south side, and the chapter house to the east.

The history of the Monastery of Santa Maria de la Valldigna is one of unceasing construction work followed by natural calamities that



Face wall of the church. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

forced to rebuild what had been destroyed. The cloister, church and other areas contain the remains of many previous buildings constructed on the ruins of the old.

The first buildings were erected at the time of the very first abbot, Friar Ramón de San Climent (1299-1305), and included the refectory and kitchens to the south of the cloister. The main dormitory was added a little afterwards together with the old cloister and church, the latter destroyed by the earthqua-



Main gate of the monastery (Portal Nou). (Photo: Gil-Carles).

ke of 1330. A dormitory was also built for lay guests, but this too was destroyed.

Today's precinct is far larger than the original one. Access to the monastery is from the west, through *Portal Nou*, built on the orders of Abbot Arnau Arañó during his tenure from 1357 to 1387. The gateway has been conceived as a triumphal arch, with a square tower at each side, built in plastered masonry with carved ashlar corners and battlements added in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, replacing the previous rectangular formation. The frontispiece has a pointed arch, with smooth voussoirs, and three coats of arms on the upper section (the Royal Coat of Arms in the centre, and those of the abbot to the right and left). The entry has a stone vault in a cross pattern and keystones without sculptural ornamentation. The archway to the precinct is also a pointed arch. There was a moat and drawbridge. The everyday entrance was under the pointed arch of the right-hand tower.

Close by is the Chapel of *Nuestra Señora de Gracia* (Our Lady of Grace), begun in the late



Ruins of the Abbot Palace. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



The Abbot Palace: lower cloister. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



The refectory. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



Face wall of the Chapter house. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



Inside of the church. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



The Nartex. (Photo: Gil-Carles).



Detail of the Nartex. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

seventeenth century and finished in 1720. The façade of this church has highly vertical proportions, with a smooth Doric column at each side supporting the simple trabeation, a curved pediment with hydrias on each side and a central *espadaña* (single walled steeple) with divided pediment and pyramids crowned with stone balls. The lay-out is a greek cross with octogonal arms roofed with barrel vault and dome on polygonal tambour. Outside the dome is acute and covered with blue glazed tiles.

The Frontispiece of the chapel, open to worshippers from outside the monastery, is in marble and constitutes a beautiful example of the baroque, in the form of an altar-piece with pilasters, shaft with protruding arris and composite capital. On top of it, there is a trabeation with the monastery's coat of arms that can also be seen in some other places in the site, depicting a castle on water, and crowned with the abbot's crook. The dentil frieze under the cornice supports another structure with two tapering pilasters and two hydrias, a shell-shaped niche with the figure of the Virgin, two smooth pilasters and, again, a mixtilinear crowning trabeation.

Once inside the precinct, on the left, there is a low construction, recently renovated, that is the old oil press, built at the beginning of the eighteenth century under the tenure of

abbot Carlos Utrevo. To the front, the visitor will see a field planted with orange trees that has not been excavated yet.

Although mostly in ruins, the monastic complex is very imposing. The Royal Gateway – the bases of the jambs are still visible – led to the *Cloister of Silence*, built between the mid fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century, during the tenure of three abbots: Arañó, who ordered the construction of the eastern part, Escrivá, who continued the work in the south portion where the refectory is located, and Rull, who completed the work. Today, only the base of the internal perimeter is still intact, as well as some of the corbels and the starting point of the ribs of the vaults, six in each side of the cloister.

At the end of the south side there is a new refectory or dining room for the monks, built by the Abbott Joan d'Aragó in 1460-1475. It has a rectangular lay-out, thick masonry and adobe walls partially re-using older walls, probably built by the Muslims. It has four bays, with simple cross vaults and main traverse semicircular arches carved in stone, starting directly from the ashlar wall buttresses half way up, without support from imposts, or corbels.

Access is via the cloister and a side door with a semicircular, trumpet-shaped arch, with archivolt on two slender columns and

acute ogee arch; under the keystone there is a rather ruined coat of arms of Joan d'Aragó. Opposite, the fountain no longer exists, there remaining only the overall layout and the lower part of the small pavilion that covered it.

During the first two centuries in the life of the monastery, abbots remained in tenure until their death; they were elected by the monastic community and appointed by the abbot of Santes Creus, but the wealth of the monastery and the income it commanded began to attract the attention of the royal

family and influential noblemen, who saw the post as a substantial source of earnings. In 1460, Pope Pious II granted Joan II of Aragon a bull through which he appointed an illegitimate son to the position, Joan, Archbishop of Saragossa. From that moment on, abbots were appointed, and no longer lived in the monastery, simply collecting the income. This lasted for sixty nine years, when the monastery was under the control of the Borgia family.

The powerful cardinal of Valencia Rodrigo Borgia, abbot between 1479 and 1491 and subsequently Pope Alexander VI, began build-



False dome of the Nartex (Photo: Gil-Carles)

ding the chapter house, without doubt the most beautiful room and architecturally refined room in the monastery. His son, Cesare Borgia, abbot from 1491 to 1499, cardinal and archbishop of Valencia before renouncing ecclesiastic orders, continued the work, and abbot Pere Lluís Borgia, also archbishop of Valencia and nephew to Alexander VI, completed it. It is known that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the stone mason Pere Ferrando worked for two years on the completion of the room.

The cube-shaped Chapter House, with plastered masonry and battlement, is on the east side of the cloister. The entrance is under a semicircular arch, and jambs and archivolts have a trumpet-shaped structure on both sides of the wall. Since laymen watched proceedings in the chapter house from outside the precinct, there is a large window in each side, with jambs and segmental arches with the same shape as the entrance arch.

The lay-out is square, large, once with a ceiling of star-shaped vaults with stone ribbing supported half way up by corner corbels, and with eight keystones in the arches plus a central keystone, awaiting relocation to their original positions when the vault is restored. The four corbels carry the symbols of the evangelists, man, bull, eagle and lion. The central keystone represents the Virgin and Saint Bernard, the others royal coats of arms, two monastic coats of arms, Saint Benedict and Saint Bernard, and finally the coats of arms of cardinal Rodrigo Borgia and his son, cardinal Cesare Borgia, both Abbots at Valldigna.

The far-end wall is built with perfectly carved stone ashlar that reach the upper part of the windows lengthened to pointed arches; at the centre there is a high and rather deep niche with a segmental arch, decorated with acanthos leaves that sheltered the abbot's throne.

To the left of the Chapter House there is a room still to be dug. Its function is unknown. To the right was the small, rectangular Parlour with cross ceiling. This gives onto a space with rather uncertain limits, containing the Abbot's Palace, separated from the rest of the monastery as was the rule of the Cistercian order.



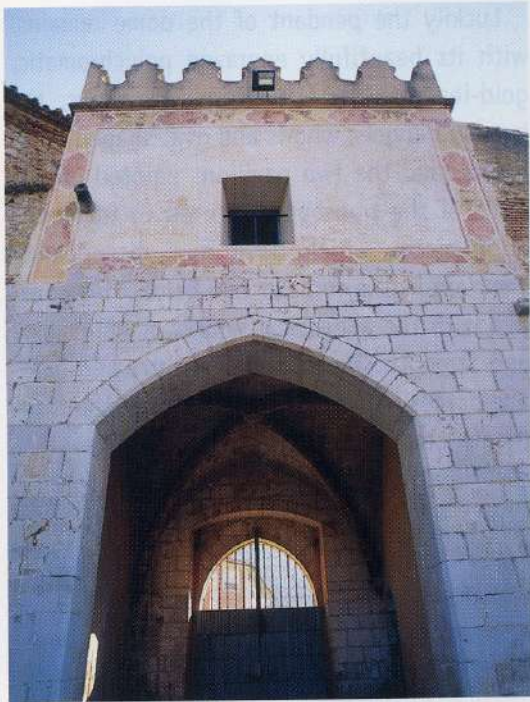
Tower of the early fortified wall. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

The main portion of the lodging was commissioned by abbot Arnau Arañó in the third quarter of the fourteenth century. The site contains many interesting remains, capable of future restoration.

The structure is complex and, given the current state, difficult to establish. It contains a small courtyard with ashlar walls and a central well, surrounded by a small cloister with large square columns, polygonal columns and pointed arches. Above, there was a higher cloister with three pointed arches along the shorter sides and four in the longer sides, on columns and capitals with plant motifs, heraldic symbols of the abbot and four-leafed rosettes. An oratory was added at the end of the sixteenth century.

During the twenties this upper cloister was dismantled and sold privately. It was rebuilt on private property near Madrid. Negotiations are under way to replace the original with a copy, and restore the original to its rightful place.

Turning away from the Abbott's Palace towards the monastic complex on the northern side, there is a square, defensive tower, part of the original complex and the only one remaining of the four. Today it flanks the church.



The main gate from inside. (Photo: Gil-Carles).

The church of Santa María lacks outside decoration and has a flat façade, since it was used only by the monks and not by the local parishioners. Instead, it includes a narthex or atrium with ceiling for access, very unusual for the area, which was built in 1697.

The atrium is the length of the façade and the depth of one bay. The roof has two domes on pendentives and a further false, central dome, not visible from the outside. Two false octagonal, shell-shaped apses finish off each end of the narthex. The austere Doric order used for the pilaster gives way to a profuse ornamentation in the trabeation with stuccoed plant motifs and lively polychromatic shapes. Two scenes are painted on the space inside false windows and a further scene on a circular plate.

The portal with marble pilasters supporting a curved split pediment with the monastic coat of arms at the centre, led to the church, the most modern building and best preserved in the complex. It is in the form of a Latin cross, with flat far end wall, polygonal, tambour dome in the transept, covered with bluish glazed tiles, three chapels on each side of the nave, and barrel vaults with lunettes, fascia arches and windows closed with alabaster, since the Cistercian order forbade the use of glass windows. This church was erected in

place of the second medieval church which collapsed on 26 June 1644, following an earthquake.

Building work was begun in 1648 and was continued through various periods. In the first phase, directed by master stone mason Joaquín Bernabeu from Carcaixent, who perhaps designed the church, only the far end wall and transept probably were built, given the length of the contract (sixteen months) and the bidding cost (1,400 valencian pounds). The bell tower was built between 1649 and 1652, using the base of old tower. Then the nave and side chapels were built, work costing 10,000 valencian pounds, from 1652 to 1665 when the work was halted for twenty years due to lack of funds. This is the period of the two mannerist façades in marble with smooth pilasters and split pediment with pyramids and balls at either end, on both sides of the cross.

In 1685 abbott Jeroni Espí decided to resume the work, appointing master builder, from Alzira, Gaspar Díaz and subsequently Gaspar Martínez, Bertomeu Díaz and Francesc Giménez, for a total sum of 14,300 valencian pounds.

At the end of the seventeenth century, work began on decorating the dome, painted by Vicent Ferrer, and the vault, painted by several artists as demonstrates the variety of dominating colours used in the different areas. The room located behind the presbytery, made by Josep Vilar, dates back to this time.

The half century required to finish the work saw a change of taste in church architecture visible in the interior of the sanctuary. The severe, smooth pilasters and walls of the last Classical phase gave way to the exuberance of the baroque, with decorations including robust and wavy stuccoed leaves covering imposts, lunettes, the intrados of fascia and chapel arches, pendentives -which also contain four royal coats of arms- the ribbing of the dome and the back wall of the presbytery and paintings, with, plant motifs, vases and *putti*, covering the dome, the nave and transept vaults and the inside the chapels. Despite the careless execution, the ornamen-

tation in the interior of the shrine gives the complex a chromatic vibration inexistant in other churches in the country.

When the work on the church was completed, abbot Plácido Saurina commissioned the altar to the valencian sculptor José Borgia, who engraved a marvellous detached baldachin under the dome, supported by four spiral columns with mixtilinear entablement crowned with eight stays and the image of the Virgin Mary. This exceptional baroque work disappeared at the beginning of the century.

Luckily the pendant of the dome remains, with its beautifully engraved polychromatic, gold-leafed wood, complete with stays, the heads of angels, whorls and oval-shaped ornaments, and the two pavilions painted on the walls of the transept that used to frame the altar pieces which have now disappeared. They are in the form of two baldachins crowned with the allegorical figures of Abundance and Strength. The strong symmetry and baroque drapes indicate the first third of the eighteenth century as origin.



Interior of the church, showing the baldachin (photo of 1982).

The church is a small, rectangular building, built in the first third of the eighteenth century. It is a simple, unadorned structure, with a single nave and a small apse. The interior is decorated with a large, ornate baldachin (canopy) supported by four spiral columns. The baldachin is decorated with intricate carvings and polychrome paint. The background shows the interior walls and other architectural details of the church.

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