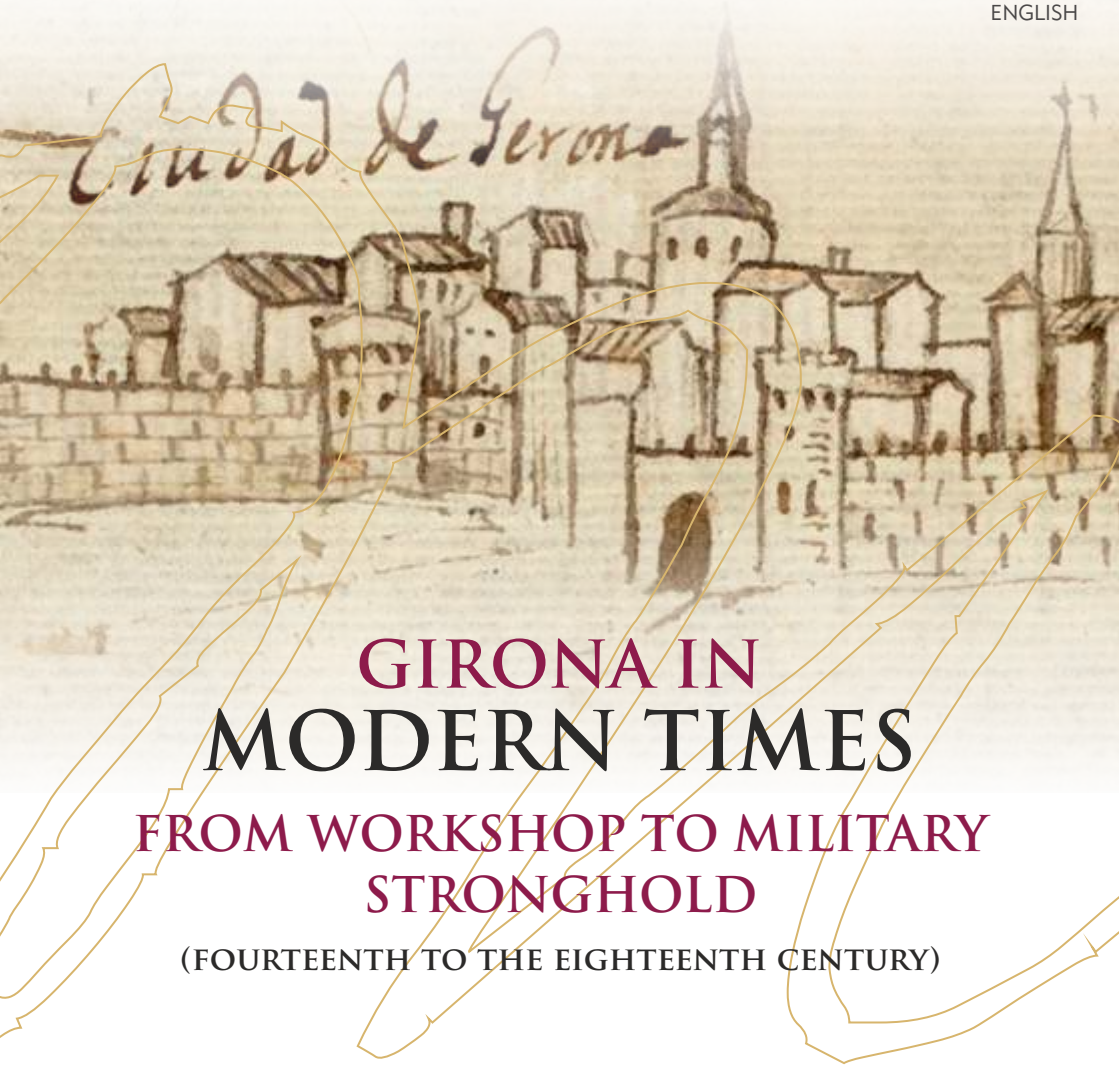




ENGLISH

*Ciudad de Gerona*

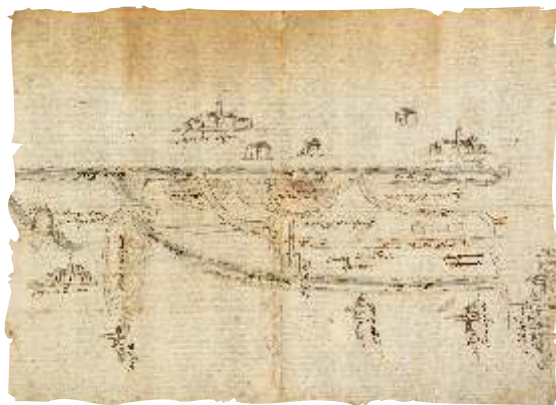


**GIRONA IN  
MODERN TIMES**  
**FROM WORKSHOP TO MILITARY  
STRONGHOLD**  
(FOURTEENTH TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)



The Girona of modern times was always one of the capitals of the Principality of Catalonia, despite the fact that during the course of this period it diminished in relative importance, at least in terms of population. From the second half of the 17th century onwards the city also became a strategic stronghold, mainly as a result of periodic wars with France. Thus, the bustling city of the 16th century, specializing in the production of woollen fabrics, had by the second half of the 18th century turned into a military capital.

## From workshop to military stronghold, below we trace this history.



**View of Girona**, anonymous  
*Manuscript map of the River Ter between Bescanó, Saint Gregori and Girona, 1750*  
**Detail of walled Girona**  
(Cartographic Institute of Catalonia)

Although an idealized depiction, the author of this view of Girona, from around 1750, defines the most characteristic features of the city's profile in simple terms: the wall, with its succession of gates and bastions asymmetrically distributed along the walled perimeter, the needle tip of the steeple of Sant Feliu Church and the cylindrical shape of the cathedral's bell tower.

### **The same city as always...**

The size of modern Girona barely increased over three hundred years, and its urban morphology remained more or less the same as it had always been. The city's axes remained its rivers: the Onyar, which separated the sandy area of Mercadal from the higher Old Town around the cathedral; the Galligants, which crossed the old district of Sant Pere in a perpendicular direction; and the Ter, which met the Onyar on the outskirts of the city towards Pedret and Pont Major.

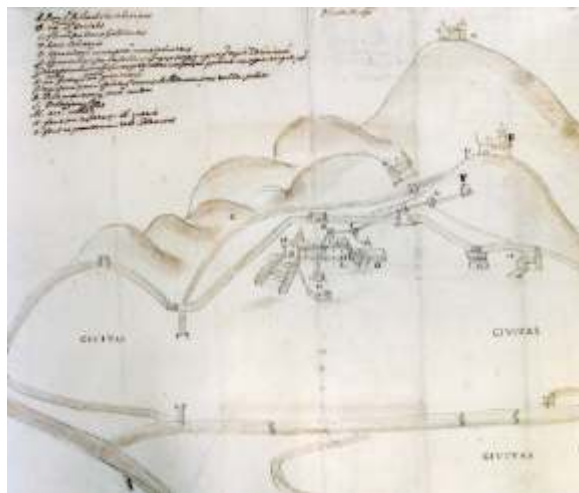
The distribution of the population did not change much, either. In the mid-17th century two of every three Gironins (Girona natives) lived in the Old Town.



dessin de J. Sagrera

The geography of commercial activities also followed the medieval pattern. Commercial traffic had always been concentrated in the southern squares and streets of the Old Town. The names could not be more eloquent in this respect: Plaça de l'Oli (Oil Square), Plaça del Vi (Wine Square), Plaça de les Cols (Cabbage Square) at the bottom of the Rambla, and streets such as Argenteria (Silversmith's), Ferreries (Ironsmith's) and Mercaders (Merchant's). Artisans and workshops were higher up, towards the outskirts: stonemasons in Pedret; tanners in Sant Feliu Square and Sant Pere Church. Weavers and wool carders were scattered everywhere around the city.

Finally, the political centre still oscillated between the cathedral – the see of the diocese and chapter – and City Hall in Vi Square, passing through Força and Ciutadans streets, where the powerful and ennobled people had always lived.



**Map by Joan Cisterna  
(16th century)**

**Girona Cathedral Chapter Archive (ACG)**

*The water supply was one of the most common concerns in cities from ancient times onwards.*

*The map by Joan Cisterna stored in the Girona Cathedral Chapter Archive reveals close detail of the pipes carrying water to the higher areas of the city.*

*Despite the rough nature of the drawing, we can make out the well in Apòstols Square, the fountain in Lledoners Square, and the profile of the cathedral before its last and definitive Baroque refurbishing.*

**The population (16th-18th centuries)**

Despite a wave of immigration from France in the second half of the 16th century, the population of Girona, decimated by the calamities of the medieval period, took some time to significantly increase in size. The roughly eight thousand inhabitants in the second half of the 14th century were not reached again until the early decades of the 17th century, and then only for a short time after the ravages of the 1651 plague and consecutive wars with France in the second half of the century. In the early 18th century the number of Gironins, around five thousand at the time, was more or less the same as two hundred years previously. In the second half of the 18th century, however, it would all but double (up to 8,000 or maybe even 10,000, according to some estimates), thanks to immigration, but this time from outlying areas

## WORK

### Girona, capital of drapery

In early modern times, textile manufacturing and leather and metal work were the city's main activities. In the second half of the 16th century, the three sectors together accounted for more than half of the employed population on the census. Meanwhile, the proportion of merchants, shopkeepers, master builders and carpenters ranged from 20% to 25% of the total. The Girona of the time was, however, a capital of drapery, that is, a city specializing in the manufacture of woollen fabrics of varying quality and consistency.

This specialization increased towards the mid-16th century. Two of every three workers in the textile sector were then wool fullers, carders or weavers, a proportion that seems to have diminished (to only one out of every two) with the passage of time. The rest were in more mercantile trades, such as cloth shopkeepers, tailors and hosiers, all with their own guilds.



### *Taula de Canvi (Table of change)*

*The large and dense books of the city's Taula de Canvi, a financial institution founded in 1568, are a compendium of the city's activities and exchanges. Besides "balancets" (little balancets) and dispersed accounts, the series of documents includes the Taula Manuals, to which daily operations were consigned, and the Llibres Majors (General Ledgers), containing the relevant accounts.*

### Foreign trade

Map of the city of Girona's foreign trade, according to the 1587 Taula Manuals and some 16th-century notarial manuals. "Sugars" came from Brazil, leather from Tunisia, tuna from Cadiz, and quality wool from Aragon, while woad, a vegetable dye from plant sources, came from around the area of Toulouse de Languedoc. As for exports, Girona fabrics were exported to the central (Palermo, Alghero) and eastern (Alexandria) Mediterranean.

### A city of guilds

However, like other Catalan cities of the period, Girona "deindustrialized" rapidly from the early 17th century onwards. In part due to competition from the "Atlantic fabrics": the so-called new draperies of England and the Netherlands. But also because Catalan textile manufacturing became more rural and concentrated in areas regionally far from Girona (towards Anoia, Osona, Olot and the surrounding area).



**Cobbler, Early 19th century**  
Ceramic, produced in Barcelona. // MofA 251916

The urban employment structure is revealing: not only did the number of textile workers fall, but the jobs that disappeared were precisely those related to manufacturing, while shopkeepers, tailors and milliners grew in correlation. In the meantime, other trades also increased, such as those related to construction, while others, such as the food industry, diversified significantly (with the first appearance of “fideuers” – or noodle makers – towards the end of the 17th century).

## ARISTOCRATIZATION

### Stones and documents

Urban and municipal aristocratization was the result of a simultaneous dual process. On the one hand, the lords of nearby manors swiftly settling in the city; and secondly, social climbing and a desire for noble status among the more successful local mercantile bourgeoisie, who had become rich through long-distance trade and did not underestimate – quite the opposite, in fact - land rent, as evidenced in their ongoing purchases of outlying rural estates. The subsequent fusion of the elite resulted in a local urban oligarchy, comprising knights-merchants and merchants-knights who wished to leave a record of their preeminence in stones and documents. Heraldic houses and coats of arms, titles of nobility or honourable citizen, corporate books of Minutes, or, if we refer to the Church, no less aristocratic than the rest, tombstones of canons and letters of profession comprise their legacy.



**Letter of profession, Emmanuela de Cruilles, 1709**  
Archives of Sant Pere de les Puel·les Monastery

The Rule of Saint Benedict dictated that the novice, a week before professing, could begin to decorate her letter of profession with drawings. That of the Gironina Manuela de Cruilles i Sarriera (1709), a nun from the monastery of Sant Pere de les Puel·les in Barcelona, is one of the most beautiful to have been preserved.

## Local government

Governance of the city was regulated for some time (under a Royal privilege granted in 1345) by means of a system of sortition and registration of honourable citizens divided into three “classes” (higher, middle and lower), and the weighted (that is, in favour of the higher class) annual appointment of a certain number of councillors (six at the beginning, and four following the municipal reform of 1576).

However, as a result of combined pressure from the urbanized nobility and their ilk, the local patricians or *cives*, the municipal government in 1601 ended up admitting noblemen or “military men” (as they were also known), always from the higher class, of course, who also had the guarantee from then on of one of the two places on the council reserved for higher class citizens (while the middle and lower classes had to settle for one place each).

Thus, the aristocratization of the city had arrived. On the streets, meanwhile, knights of ancient lineage and the new ennobled rich joined together to celebrate jousting and festivals in Plaça del Vi, organized by the noble brotherhood of Sant Jordi.



### **Girona City Council Register of councillors, 1616**

*Paper and leather-lined cardboard covers  
AMGi (Girona Municipal Archive),  
Register of councillors (1144-modern day)*

## AREA II: GIRONA, INSIDE AND OUT

### **The city's appearance. Changes and continuities**

The morphology of the Girona of modern times has changed little from the dense medieval urban grid, perfectly enclosed within the perimeter of the walls erected by Peter III of Aragon in the mid-14th century. The few changes that had taken place were concentrated on the defensive structures, which were expanded and strengthened as weapons technology required it, and on the huge buildings that ended up transforming the skyline of the city. If in the early 16th century the groin of the Sant Feliu bell tower eclipsed the unfinished Gothic nave, in the late 18th century the Baroque façade of the cathedral, flanked by its brand new bell and the majestic steps, sported a recently finished modernity above the old medieval mansions

## The Baroque transformation

Aside from those introduced for military reasons, the major architectural transformations of the city arose from the initiatives of bishops and priors of Girona's convents and monasteries. These included the Bishops Pijoan and Fageda, who oversaw the completion of the cathedral's Gothic nave and the erection of the imposing Baroque façade; the canons Agullana and Cassart - patron behind the Jesuit presence in Sant Martí Sacosta and promoter of the construction of the new Santa Caterina Hospital Church, respectively – and the “beneficiaries of the cathedral”, who built Sant Lluc chapel on the outskirts of the city, rivalling the constant initiatives of lay brotherhoods and those of the City Council itself. The best-remembered figure is Bishop Miquel Pontich, however, who promoted works throughout the diocese and was responsible for completion of the cathedral steps by the contractor from Vic Pere Cases.

## 18th-century Girona

Municipal bylaws on the restoration of buildings from 1720 onwards brought order to the city's town planning, often affected by the growing need to build barracks to house regular troops or reinforce and repair the damaged defence structures. In addition, the economic boost following the War of Succession allowed renovations to houses, churches and convents, and the extension of some larger houses. A great amount of this fervent construction activity was assumed by the lineage of master builders and masons Soriano and Cisterna. It was Bishop Tomàs de Lorenzana, however, who culminated the Baroque style of the city with the construction of Sant Narcís Chapel and erection of the Hospice building, both projects linked to the academic ideology of architect Ventura Rodríguez.



*Delices de la nez,  
17th century  
Ramón Mascort Collection*

## Behind closed doors

The grand houses of the lower and mid-nobility and landowners who slowly came to settle in the city were transformed and expanded. Few, however, have preserved the decorations and objects of their luxurious interiors, in the form of tapestries, mural paintings with iconographic biblical or mythological cycles, furnishings and decorative household items, etc.

In fact, the rich enumerations of objects in postmortem inventories or descriptions from diaries, travel chronicles, memoirs and various documentary sources can only be

evoked from prints of the age and objects scattered in a thousand and one collections. If the physical memory of these objects has almost vanished, however, even fewer sensory details remain: the passage of time has erased the everyday music, sounds, smells, tastes, etc. that filled life inside houses and the city.

## AREA III: WAR AND FORTIFICATION

### Girona, military stronghold

The mid-17th century Reapers' War or War of Secession (1640-1659) and its outcome had immediate consequences for the city of Girona. The signing of the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) between the monarchies of France and Spain, and the subsequent transfer of Perpignan and the county of Roussillon to the French crown, moved the political and military border between those two monarchies closer to Girona. From that time onwards, systematic fortification work began on both Girona's city and its mountain (Montjuïc). First, with the immediate construction (1654-1655) of the Mercadal urban bastions: those of Santa Clara, Sant Francesc and Areny; and on the south side, Mercè. And then with the erection of Montjuïc Castle (completed after 1675) and its surrounding towers (Sant Joan, Sant Narcís, Sant Daniel and Sant Lluís) and Fort Condestable, which was equally or more decisive, strategically speaking.



### *Figuerola Gate from inside*

**Jaume Pons Martí, 1873-1905**

Oil on canvas

Md'A – Art Museum of Girona 250.209

*The demolition of most of the walls, bastions and gates of Girona throughout the 19th century persisted into the early decades of the 20th century and erased one of the most defining eras of modern Girona forever. The two works in the exhibition by Jaume Pons Martí are a depiction – although not without a certain Costumbrista air – of Figuerola Gate, which closed off the city in the Mercadal sector, near the site of the current Post Office.*

### Sant Narcís and the flies

The famous miracle of Sant Narcís and the flies, which would have happened in the summer of 1285 amid the siege of the city of Girona by troops of the French King Philip III the Bold, gradually lost its original meaning – the divine alliance of King Peter against Papal and Francophone interests – and took on a new one, that of condemning the



sacrilegious action of invading troops who desecrated the tomb of the saint. It should come as no surprise, in this respect, that the miraculous power of the saint was recalled in the French troops' siege of the city in the summer of 1653. Aside from the effect of heat on the lifeless bodies of soldiers fallen in battle, an affidavit by French soldiers in Sant Feliu de Guíxols insisted on the extraordinary action of the flies and, of course, of their defeat. This act, disseminated in writing by Gironins to several Spanish cities, served to raise recognition of the holy martyr of Girona. From the late 16th and throughout the 17th centuries, initiatives were therefore introduced to promote and extend his worship across the peninsula.

Thus, Bishop Jaume Caçador commissioned a hagiography of the saint in Latin and nobles such as Dídac de Rocabertí and Francesc de Cartellà took an interest in the miraculous action of horseflies in the late 16th century. The saint was canonized in 1638 and by 1680 he was worshipped throughout the territories of the Spanish monarchy.

### **The War of Succession**

In the early 18th century, the War of the Spanish Succession between the Austrians and their allies (Britain, Holland, Portugal) and the French Bourbons (1705-1714) ended up as a fight to defend Catalan institutions and freedoms. In Girona, as in other Catalan towns and cities, there does not seem to have been much initial "pro-Austrian feeling" or supporters of Archduke Charles of Austria. In 1705, the city was rather given over to pragmatism. However, over time, and with the installation of the archiducal court in Barcelona, this changed. Proof of this is the solemn visit of Charles III of Spain to Girona, specifically to Solterra House, in 1710 (including an excursion to Els Àngels shrine).

However, during the second phase of the conflict, the city and its fortifications were unable to withstand the onslaught of the Bourbon armies (18,000 men) led by the Duke of Noailles, which besieged and conquered Girona in early 1711 following a month of resistance (by only 2,000 men). Montjuïc Castle had capitulated at the end of the previous year, and the French had also been able to install a battery of twenty cannons at Puig d'en Roca hill. The pro-Austrian counterseige or blockade of the following year, which began in April, came to nothing, defeated at the end of that year by the Duke of Berwick, who arrived in Girona with an army of 20,000 men.



*Reliquary of Sant Narcís,  
18th century  
MHG - Girona City History Museum  
02389*

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR

Chronology	THE WAR OF SUCCESSION IN GIRONA
<b>1705</b>	
September	The city's military governor bemoans a lack of soldiers to defend Girona against the allies.
October (12)	Girona is handed over to the troops of Archduke Charles of Austria. Persecution of pro-Philip supporters in the city
<b>1710</b>	
January (14)	Archduke Charles of Austria visits Girona.
December (14)	The Duke of Noailles, Bourbon military leader, prepares the siege of Girona from Cervià. He has 18,000 men against 2,000 defenders
December (29)	Capitulation of Montjuic Castle.
<b>1711</b>	
January (9-12)	The swelling of the River Onyar temporarily immobilizes the Bourbon troops.
January (25)	Girona capitulates to the Bourbon armies.
<b>1712</b>	
April-December	Pro-Austrian troops besiege the city.
December (15)	Marshall Stahremberg is about to conquer the city, but French reinforcements, arriving quickly, force him to lift the siege.
<b>1716</b>	Promulgation of the "Nueva Planta" decree
<b>1718</b>	Royal Decree on the city's new municipal government.

## A city with a “Nueva Planta”

The *Nueva Planta* decree (1716) promulgated by Philip V put an end to the traditional model of urban government - the sortition of urban classes - and meant the delivery of governance - now, the city council – into the hands of a few councillors appointed for life or directly by the monarch or his representative, the Captain General, and selected from among the local oligarchy of proven loyalty to the Bourbons. Philip's victory also meant the introduction of a new taxation system levied on property and people: the hated and initially very onerous “catastre” or poll tax, which added to the traditional fiscal burden.

At the same time, the city filled up with soldiers. In 1723, according to some sources, there were no fewer than 3,000, and that among a local population of perhaps 5,000 at most. Military dwellings, then, posed the city's main problem for decades. Attempts were made to alleviate the situation by building more barracks (those of Santa Clara and Els Estudis in 1723), and later, Sant Agustí (1727) and Sant Pere (1729). Finally, the military authorities opted to grant money for domestic accommodation.

## CARE

One of the most significant spaces in the urban fabric of modern Girona, aside from convents and barracks, was that destined to hospital and charity care. Distributed between the medieval Pia Almoina building in the Cathedral Square, Santa Caterina Hospital and the Royal Hospice, medical care was a constant need of Gironins, especially as the turbulent 17th century knocked on the doors of their homes in the form of famine and plagues



**Plague of 1651:  
morberies  
(quarantine stations)  
and shelters**

## AREA IV: HEAVEN AND EARTH

### WORSHIP

#### **Religion: two sides...**

Religion was all but ubiquitous in modern Girona. The city was the diocesan capital, and the Church had also for some time been the largest owner of leased urban land.

Its influence increased, however, following the so-called Counter-Reformation or Catholic Reformation during the second half of the 16th century, which, in Girona like everywhere else, sooner or later meant the arrival in the city of the most important religious orders, starting with the Jesuits (1581), with the support of the Agullana family, and followed by the Capuchins (1581), Augustines (1584), Barefoot Carmelites (1591) and the Minims of Saint Francis of Paola (1611), receiving more or less support from a local aristocracy that did not neglect its obligations to the Church.

#### **...of the same coin**

However, religion was at the same time the context - or even the excuse, one might say - for urban, aristocratic or popular sociability and civic festivals, with their intentional mixing of classes, despite the inevitable hierarchy of rank. Devotional confraternities of laymen, under ecclesiastical guidance but formally independent, united knights, merchants and artisans under one religious devotion, encouraging charity among brothers; they always appeared at the front (or slightly behind, depending on the established rank) of all local processions, a sign of the importance of religion as a form of civic socialization, blessed by the municipal government as well as the Churches.

### BAROQUE DEATH

Following the Tridentine reform, the Church looked to bring order to some aspects it saw as being far distant from the new orthodoxy it sought to establish, including complaints it had received from the reformist movements - the sale of indulgences, for example - and traditional forms of popular religiosity - the worship and trade of relics, idolatry, etc. One aspect where it placed more emphasis was on the question of salvation; that is, the role the Church should have as mediator and guarantor of redemption of the human soul.

In this transition, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) ratified the necessary existence of purgatory for those souls who, despite achieving salvation, had committed minor unforgiven sins or sins not yet paid for in the form of penance. This Church control over life and death was often effected through the evocative power of images.



## 18th-century fragments of a Novena for the Souls

### Manresa Regional Museum

One of the dates on the liturgical calendar when the meaning and value of purgatory was made most clear was the Day of the Dead. For the nine nights following that day in the first week of November, churches displayed the Novenas for the Souls, ephemeral structures by means of which they attempted to visually represent the conceptual space of purgatory. In reality, however, it highlighted two concepts: death and redemption.

The former, usually illustrated with skeletons or allegories of the passing of time - a reminder of "vanitas", so characteristic of Barroque religiosity - underlined the certainty of life's temporary nature; death, after all, did not distinguish between rich and poor and served as a great "equalizer" in a society of strict ranks.

The latter was evoked through the pain of the suffering, surrounded by flames. It was a message for the living and also a reminder that there was a way of staying less time in purgatory, namely praying for the dead or practicing charity and almsgiving. However, eternal life could also be achieved by attaining plenary indulgence - total forgiveness - through prayer, communion and forgiveness, always administered by the Church.



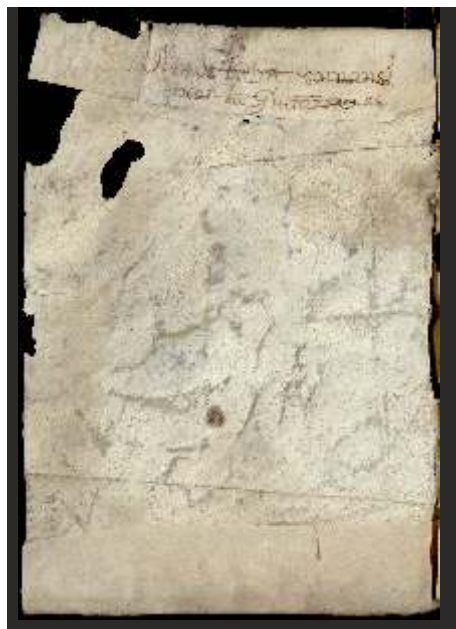
### Woman (allegory of beauty), Late 18th century-Early 19th century depiction from a Novena for the Souls Anonymous (Pere Pau Muntanya Circle)

Tempera painting on canvas  
Manresa Regional Museum 10038

## AREA V: WRITTEN TESTIMONIALS

In the modern era of Girona, not many people were literate. Some, however, learned to read and write (and count) by will or by obligation. Ecclesiastical figures and lawyers or notaries, of course. But also merchants who set up a store or commercial company. Artisans and farmers also had to do their accounts or have them done by others; even if only to know and meet their tax obligations on their assets and family work, advise their heirs on handling the estate and the business, or perhaps to take note of some prayers currently in fashion or more or less effective home remedies. Despite the essentially

pragmatic nature of such writing, some of those who wrote also felt the need to express the events and tribulations of the times, in imitation of chroniclers or memoirists, or even articulate their own intimate thoughts.



**Amateur guitarist**  
Accounts ledger, annotation  
on the inside cover

AMGi – Girona Municipal Archive  
reg. 62629 UI 12664



**The nun Teresa Mir writing her  
spiritual autobiography ,  
First half 18th century**

UB (University of Barcelona), CRAI (Learning and  
Research Resource Centre), Biblioteca de Reserva  
(Archive Library), MS.6, p.23



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*Drawings:* Jordi Sagrera

*Graphic Design:* Babooh! Disseny i comunicació

*Spelling:* CNL-Girona

*Translations:* Esther Rico


*In collaboration with:* Centre de Restauració i de Béns Mobles (CRBM) de Valldoreix

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