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**THE NAME OF THE ARCHITECT
OF THE CHURCH OF SANT MIQUEL
DE CUIXÀ CONSECRATED IN 975**

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Resum

El relato de la traslación de la reliquia de san Hilario de Carcasona, escrito hacia el año 978 y del que recientemente hemos realizado una nueva edición, menciona un maestro de obras, traído por el abad Garín del monasterio de San Miguel de Cuixá, que tiene un papel destacado en el descubrimiento de la reliquia. Se trata seguramente del arquitecto de la reconstrucción de la segunda iglesia de Cuixá, la de San Miguel, iniciada en el año 956 por el conde Seniofredo y el abad Ponce, que Garín culminó y cuya consagración, presidida por siete obispos, se celebró el 28 de septiembre del 975. Tras el estudio de la copia manuscrita y de las diversas ediciones que del original actualmente perdido se hicieron a partir de la segunda mitad del siglo XVII, concluimos que dicho arquitecto (*structor miri laboris*) se llamaba Ledo (*Letus*). El hecho de conocer el nombre de un arquitecto anterior al siglo XI es, sin duda, algo insólito y lo es aún más cuando este *artifex* ha sido considerado, a menudo, excepcional.

Palabras clave:

arquitecto; Edad Media; Cuixá; antropónimo

Abstract

The account of the transfer of the relics of Saint Hilary of Carcassonne, which was written around 978 and of which we have recently produced a new edition, mentions a master builder, brought by Abbot Garí of the monastery of Sant Miquel de Cuixà, who played a prominent role in the discovery of the remains. This builder was probably the architect of the reconstruction of the second church of Cuixà, dedicated to St. Michael, which had begun in 956 by the command of Count Sunifred and Abbot Ponç. It was completed under the rule of Abbot Garí and consecrated, with the presence of seven bishops, on 28 September 975. After studying the manuscript copy and the various editions of the now lost original, dating from the second half of the 17th century onwards, we conclude that the name of this architect (*structor miri laboris*) was Let (*Letus*). Knowing the name of an architect who predates the 11th century is certainly unusual, even more so when the *artifex* in question has often been considered of exceptional worth.

Keywords:

architect; Middle Ages; Cuixà; anthroponym

It is common knowledge that the critical study of the textual tradition of a work can provide valuable information on matters of *realia*. This is also the case of the new edition of the account of the transfer of the remains of Saint Hilary of Carcassonne, which we have recently published (PUIG, 2020). Indeed, the study of the readings presented in a specific passage of this narration provides information on the master builder of the church of Sant Miquel de Cuixà, consecrated in 975¹, and, concretely, regarding his name.

The anonymous account, which was written around 978 and is divided into four distinct parts, refers to the events that took place on 1 March at the Monastery of Saint-Hilaire in Carcassonne, where Count Roger I and his wife Adelaide, Bishop Francon and the two abbots of the monastery, Garí and Benedict gathered, together with a multitude of dignitaries and a large crowd of local people, in order to move the body of the saint from a humble burial place to a more dignified space befitting his reputation and to bury him with full honours. After this introduction (I), the *inuentio* of the holy body took place (II) and was successfully completed thanks to an architect that Garí had brought with him from Cuixà. Once the relic had been recovered, and while it worked miracles, various manifestations of religious piety took place and a solemn ceremony of *translatio* (III) was held. Finally, the text reports on the benefits and privileges that Count Roger granted the monastery as a result of all that had happened and the decision to keep the deed containing this history in the tomb of Saint Hilary (IV).

Thus, the account of the transfer of the remains of Saint Hilary of Carcassonne mentions a master builder, brought by Abbot Garí from the monastery of Sant Miquel de Cuixà, who plays a prominent role in the discovery of the remains (*inuentio*). In our edition, the passage reads as follows:

1. The dating clause of the diploma that records the consecration of the new church of Sant Miquel de Cuixà (published in PONSICH 2006: 414-416, doc. 485 and ORDEIG 2019: 106-108, doc. 10) presents real difficulties in comprehension: *Acta est igitur hec scriptura uel dedicatio retro kalendarum mensis octobris, elapsis dominice Trabeationis annis bis nouenis iubeleis lu[s]trisque trizenis, inditione terna, anno bis deno Leutario Franchorum rege presidente regno*. Mundó (PONSICH 2006: 20-21) demonstrated that the year of the consecration of this church must be 975: the year of the dedication, the year of the incarnation and the 20th year of King Lotarius, as calculated in line with new elements of chronological interpretation, would coincide. On the other hand, although the diploma was written on 30 September of that year, the dedication took place two days earlier, on 28 September, as we read in the sermon written by the monk Garsias, years later, to commemorate the anniversary of the consecration (*IIII^o kalendas octobris*, ORDEIG 2019: 82, doc. 4) and as is confirmed by the Cuixà calendar.

[II] [3] Adduxerat autem praefatus abbas secum a radicibus Pyrenaei montis ex-que arcisterio Coxiano, in honore agii stratiotis Vrani constructo, structorem miri laboris, Letum. Hic cum trepidare cerneret ad tangendum sancti uiri locellum non solum clericos sed etiam abbates atque pontificem, fideliter accessit et mausoleum cum calibe dissolutum patefecit. [4] Cumque ipse artifex et plurimi qui circumstantabant perspicacibus oculis beati uiri uellent uidere corpusculum, quia apertum erat uas, per unius fere horae spatium ita uacuum uiderunt sepulchrum ut nihil in eo nisi solum saxum inspicerent. Vnde maestificati omnes qui aderant cum magno gemitu flectentes genua coeperunt Dominum enixius exorare. [5] Vt autem saepius ipse artifex obtutus coepit reducere ad uas, illico sanctum conspexit corpus et Deo gratias clamauit addens et dicens: «Ecce sancti Hilarii corpus, hic habetur totum». Quod omnes audientes aspexerunt et ita, ut ipse clamabat, uiderunt.

which can be translated as:

II. [3] The abbot had brought with him, from the foot of the Pyrenees mountains and from the monastery of Cuixà, erected in honour of the holy celestial warrior, Let, a builder of an admirable work. Seeing that not only the clerics, but also the abbots and the pontiff, were trembling at the moment of touching the saint's humble tomb, he approached it with determination and opened the mausoleum, dislodging it with a chisel. [4] As this same architect and the many pious men, who surrounded him, tried to look at the corpse with an attentive eye, since the sarcophagus was open, for almost an hour they contemplated the tomb so empty that they could see nothing in it but stone. All those who were there, distraught, knelt down with great groaning and began to pray very earnestly to God. [5] Then, as the architect looked again and again at the sarcophagus, he suddenly saw the holy body and, giving thanks to God, exclaimed loudly: "Here is the body of Saint Hilary, here we have it completely whole". All those who heard him looked and saw that it was just as he claimed.

This *structor miri laboris*,² "builder of an admirable work" whom Abbot Garí brought with him from Cuixà, can be none other than the architect of the reconstruction of the second church of Cuixà, that of Saint Michael, begun in 956 by Count Sunifred and Abbot Ponç.³ Garí, who was the abbot not only of Sant Miquel de Cuixà from the year 964 but was also the head of a large monastic congregation composed, among others,⁴ of the monastery of Saint-Hilaire of Carcassonne, which

2. Regarding the terms *structor*, *artifex* and *architector* in medieval Latin documents in Catalan language territories, see PRIETO 2019: 265-266.

3. For information on this building, *uid.*, for example, PONSICH 1995.

4. The five monasteries governed by Garí are: the abbey of Lézat-sur-Lèze, Sant Miquel de Cuixà, Saint-Hilaire of Carcassonne, Saint-Pierre du Mas-Garnier, which is also located in the county of Toulouse, and the abbey of Saint Mary of Alet in the county of Razès.

was governed by two abbots, Garí and Benedict, completed the work whose consecration, presided over by seven bishops, took place on 28 September 975.⁵ Thus, in 978, this architect accompanied Abbot Garí to the solemn and official ceremony of the transfer of the remains of the patron saint of Saint-Hilaire of Carcassonne. The master builder played an important role in the ceremony, in which he stood out for his decisiveness and courage.

The edition we have compiled from the surviving sources also informs us of the name of this exceptional architect, who is called Let (Letus). In order to explain the origin of this information, which was not contained in previous editions, we must first briefly explain the path of transmission of the text.

According to the account itself, the manuscript was deposited inside the casket containing the remains of the saint. Whatever the case, the original, which was kept in the monastery of Saint-Hilaire in Carcassonne, was lost, probably between the last quarter of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Fortunately, from the second half of the 17th century onwards, several copies were made of the original, which have been preserved and which we list here, specifying the acronym that corresponds to them in our edition:

- A** Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF), Paris, Doat Collection, vol. 71, f. 280r-282v. The text, a copy by Gratian Capot made between 1667 and 1669, is among many other medieval Languedoc documents copied for Jean de Doat, president of the Chambre des Comptes de Navarre, consisting of a collection of 258 volumes.
- a** MABILLON 1685: 551-553. Claude Estiennot de la Serrée is stated to have made the copy from the original, «ex eius [Sancti Hilarii] coenobii monumentis in sacra theca repertis idem Stephanotius noster eruit eo modo, quo sequitur».
- b** HENSCHEN et al. (eds.), 1698: praef. pp. LXXXI-LXXXII. Bolandists point out that they do not take the text from the original but from a manuscript containing a history of the place, into which the narrative was incorporated: “ipsum translationis instrumentum hic accipe, non immediate ex originali, sed ex aliqua ms. Historia loci, cum ipsum insertum fuisse ostendit particula conjunctiva, autem, in principio, sic addita”. These words probably allude to the copy by Gratian Capot (**A**).
- c** DEVIC, VAISSETTE 1733 : *preuves*, cols. 120-122, n.º CV. The Benedictines, for their edition, based themselves on the original and Mabillon’s copy. (**a**): «Sur l’original dans l’abbaye de saint Hilaire. V. act. SS. ord. S. Ben. sac. V p. 552».

5. Regarding the date of the consecration of Sant Miquel de Cuixà, see note 3. In addition, the epistle-sermon by the monk Garsias of Cuixà contains valuable information about the reconstruction work carried out in the time of Abbot Garí. *Cf.*, for its publication, JUNYENT, MUNDÓ 1992: 369-386, doc. 28 and ORDEIG 2019: 81-92, doc. 4; for its translation, TRIAS 1985-1986.

- d* GALLIA CHRISTIANA 1739: cols. 426-427, No. XVI. Although the sources are not specified, the original and Mabillon's copy were probably taken as a starting point (*a*).
- e* DEVIC, VAISSETTE 1875 : *preuves*, cols. 262-264, n.º 119 - CV. Alexandre Du Mège, in his expanded reprint of the *Histoire générale de Languedoc avec des notes et les pièces justificatives of 1733*, reports that he edited the document based on the original and the copy by Gratian Capot, v. 61, fº 280». That being said, the version it conveys is almost identical to that of the first edition. (*c*).
- f* ABADAL 1954: 207-208, ap. 102. Text reproduced in PONSICH 2006: 428-430, doc. 506, together with some error corrections. Abadal based his edition on the copy by Gratian Capot (A), those published by Mabillon (*a*) and by the Benedictines in the second version of the *Histoire générale de Languedoc* (*e*).

Let (*Letus*), the name for the builder which we propose, can be found in the *Letum* manuscript (II, 3), which is not given by most sources. In effect, *A* reads *citum*, as does *b*, probably following *A*. The adjective *citum*, describing *structorem* as “fast, agile”, though it may be apt for the character of the master builder, seems to be an improvised solution by Capot due to his inability to understand the sense of the term *letum*, which we believe must have been in the original text. Mabillon (*a*), in contrast, opts for maintaining the reading *letum*, and, not taking it to be a proper name, adds the term *uirum* as side note, probably assuming that the adjective *letum* was supposed to describe the noun *uirum* meaning “man”. Based on this, the subsequent copies (*c*, *d*, *e* and *f*) replace the unintelligible but correct *letum* with *uirum*. We propose that *letum* should be understood as a proper noun. In fact, the anthroponym *Letus*, mention of which can be found in Ancient Rome,⁶ is also documented in the Middle Ages, either as a continuation of the Latin anthroponym *Laetus*⁷ or as a name of Germanic origin.⁸ It has also been documented in the variants *Leto*, *Ledus* and *Ledo*, at least, in the north of the Iberian Peninsula in the 9th and 11th centuries⁹ –mainly in diplomas in the Catalan counties¹⁰ and in

6. KAJANTO 1982²: 261 in testimonies by Seneca and in inscriptions.

7. KAJANTO 1982²: 69, 96, 261 and BECKER 2009: 620-621.

8. MORLET 1968: 161b, *s. uu.* *Leto* and *Letus* under the heading of the hypocoristics of compound nouns with *leud-*, *liud-*.

9. BECKER 2009: 620-621. This Hispanic anthroponymy encyclopaedia of Latin origin documented in the 6th-12th centuries in the Iberian Peninsula testifies to the cognomen *Letus*, *Leto* and *Ledo* in the northwest (the Kingdom of Galicia) and northeast (Catalan counties). Furthermore, it adds that it appears as the name of a Hispanic saint, together with *Vicentius*, in *Martyrologium Romanum: monasterios ... Sancti Vicenti et Leti* (year 864).

10. The anthroponymy *Letus* is also documented in form of the variants *Ledus* and *Ledo* in diplomas in the Catalan counties in the 10th century. BOLÒS, MORAN 1994: 370, *s. u.* *Letus*. Cf. In addition, the *CODOLCAT* lexical database (<http://gmlc.imf.csic.es/glossarium/codolcat/>) provides results regarding the presence of the anthroponym in the forms *Ledus* and *Ledo* in Latin documents written in Catalan language territories in the 10th and 11th centuries. In the internal database of the team responsible for the *Glossarium Mediae Latinitatis Cataloniae*, the anthroponymy can also be found as *Letus*.

those of the Kingdom of Galicia¹¹ – as well as in France¹² and central Europe.¹³

It should be highlighted that we hardly know any names of architects prior to the 11th century. Also in the Catalan counties, in a document from the cartulary of Sant Cugat del Vallès dating from the 11th century,¹⁴ there is an unusual reference to the name of a witness to a donation to the monastery, namely *Fedantius, architectus et magister edorum*.¹⁵ To this example can be added the name *Raimundus architector* (PRIETO 2019: 166) which can be found among the witnesses to a donation to the church of Santa Maria de Solsona in a diploma dating from 1090¹⁶ and regarding whom we have no further information.

Therefore, based on the study of the sources, we maintain that the “master of an admirable work” such as the second church of Sant Miquel de Cuixà was called Let (Letus), a fact which, given how unusual it is to know the name of the architects of this period, is highly remarkable, even more so when the *artifex* in question has often been considered of exceptional worth.

11. BOULLÓN 1999: 286, *s. u.* Leto. Furthermore, the *CODOLGA* (<https://corpus.cirp.es/codolga/>) lexical database provides evidence of the presence of the anthroponomy in the form of *Letus*, *Leto* and *Leto* in Latin language documents from the Kingdom of Galicia dating from the 10th and 11th centuries.

12. MORLET 1968: 161b, *s. uu.* *Leto* and *Letus* appear, dating from 921 and 973, respectively.

13. GEUENICH 2014: 230 bears witness to the name *Letus* in AUTENRIETH, GEUENICH SCHMID 1979, 23D3 and GEUENICH 2019: 30X1 y 62B4.

14. RIUS 1945-1947: II, 72, doc. 428. In 1006 he appears as a signatory (RIUS 1945-1947: II, 54, doc. 407) as *artificem petre*.

15. There is no agreement on the attribution of works to this architect. For example, MARTÍNEZ 2009: 133 states that no building known today can be attributed to this architect, while SÁNCHEZ MÁRQUEZ 2017: 153 links the name to the first phases of the construction of the church of Sant Cugat del Vallès (11th century).

16. BACH 1996-1997: 176, doc. 307: *Sig+num Raimundi architectoris*.

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