

# Costume studies as a method of approaching the Middle Ages: the case of Josep Puiggarí i Llobet (1821-1903) and his *Estudios de Indumentaria Española*<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** This paper reflects on the recovery of the medieval heritage that took place in Catalonia in the 19th century and its relationship with the emergence of a national consciousness. To do so, we are going to examine the case of Josep Puiggarí i Llobet (1821-1903), a scholar devoted to the study of costume, born and raised in the nineteenth-century bourgeois Barcelona. In Puiggarí's work, art and costume are two inseparable elements: he used the figurative arts to deepen his knowledge of costume and, at the same time, costume was an essential tool for the study of art, since it allowed him to study its transformation over time and, on occasions, to precisely date artistic pieces.

Overshadowed by the scholars of a later generation, who were directly linked to the rise of political Catalanism at the end of the century, we aim to make Josep Puiggarí's graphic and intellectual work known, through the analysis of one of his most outstanding pieces entitled *Estudios de Indumentaria Española concreta y comparada. Cuadro histórico de los siglos XIII y XIV* (1889). This work allows us to question how this type of study is the result of the growing concern for heritage and interest in national history in nineteenth-century European industrial societies. It also invites us to reflect on the romantic conception of medieval history in this period.

**Keywords.** Puiggarí, historiography, Costume studies, medievalism, Catalan medieval art.

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En el traje, además del interés artístico, compenétranse varios factores de innegable índole social y moral, á la vez que industrial y suntuaria [...]. Encierra, además, un interés peculiar suyo, de evoluciones curiosísimas, digno de la atención de filósofos, historiadores y artistas<sup>3</sup> (PUIGGARÍ 1886: 5).

In the new reality of nineteenth century industrial Europe, the references, traditions and values of the people were blurred by the phenomenon of the rural exodus. Consequently, there was a longing to search for origins, which promoted a return to traditional models of work and to the ideal of creation in community. This search, impregnated with nationalism, took place practically simultaneously in the great European cities and converged in the same inspiration: the Middle Ages. In the case of Catalonia, the region developed an awareness of its own language and culture as distinct from the Spanish tradition, although not alien to it, a movement known as “cultural Catalanism”. However, the concept of a distinct nation emerged at the beginning of the 20th century with “political Catalanism”, by which time the historiography of Catalan art took shape as a modern academic field.

This nostalgia brought about by the monotony caused by Industrialisation resulted in the recurrent appearance of historical themes in different artistic manifestations, such as painting, theatre and novels. This led to the need for historical accuracy, which includes the representation of costume. Thus, whilst there is a long tradition of illustrated books on costume, the 19th century stands out for the proliferation of publications on clothing.

This chapter presents the figure of Josep Puiggarí i Llobet (1821-1903) and analyses the only published volume of his work *Estudios de Indumentaria Española* (*Studies on Spanish Costume*) (PUIGGARÍ 1890), devoted precisely to the centuries of the late Middle Ages. It begins with an appreciation of the historical and cultural context of Barcelona at the time, analysing the links between the restoration and protection of medieval heritage and the emergence of a national consciousness. This is the environment of Puiggarí i Llobet, whose contributions on historical costume are relevant both for the study of Catalan medieval art today and for the study of nineteenth-century medievalism.

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<sup>3</sup> “In costume, besides the artistic interest, there are several factors of undeniable social and moral nature, as well as industrial and sumptuary [...]. It also carries a peculiar appeal in itself, of very curious developments, worthy of the attention of philosophers, historians and artists”.



## 1. The return to Gothic in Barcelona

The history of Spain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is dominated by political and social instability caused by the constant struggles between absolutism and liberalism. A significant point was the death of King Ferdinand VII in 1833, which led to the outbreak of the Carlist Wars, coinciding with the development of industry and trade, the expansion of cities, economic growth and the emergence of the bourgeoisie as a new social class. This ongoing political struggle also led to the destruction, during the 1930s, of historical and artistic heritage, through, for example, the burning of convents or the *desamortizaciones* (disentailment of Church property). The difference from previous times of war in Spain is that on this occasion an awareness of heritage was awakened, which translated into citizen-led and institutional actions in favour of its safeguarding<sup>4</sup>. Thus, looking to the future and a concern for the past came together in the ideas of progress and identity and were the origin of 19th century Spanish medievalism.

In Catalonia, as in other European countries, the interest in recovering the arts of the past coexisted with the need for modernity and adaptation to new industrial methods, giving rise to the Art/Industry debate<sup>5</sup>. This combination resulted in the emergence, towards the end of the century, of artistic movements such as Art Nouveau, which took root in Catalonia under the designation of *Modernisme*, especially thanks to the positive reception from the bourgeoisie. International exhibitions became the venues where industrial innovations were revealed and where the results of this Art-Industry fusion were displayed<sup>6</sup>. From the outset, the Middle Ages became the point of reference to dignify the industrial arts, since it was believed that precisely in this period that which had been lost with industrialisation could be found: an ideal way of production based on craftwork and cooperation, where the pleasure of work was essential for creation and where the beauty of objects was as important as their usefulness<sup>7</sup>. Besides the field of art, the Middle Ages became a religious and moral model for European nations, who looked to the period for their own myths and origins. For this reason, it may be said that the

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<sup>4</sup> On this matter, see VÉLEZ 2003A AND VÉLEZ 2009.

<sup>5</sup> The debate emerges especially after the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, although in Catalunya the issue was already present at the end of the 18th century (PITARCH; DALMASES BALANÀ 1982). For a recent study of the matter, see VÉLEZ 2010. One of the most prominent contemporary works, which compiles the main points of the debate in Catalunya is SANPERE I MIQUEL 1881.

<sup>6</sup> The first one taking place in Barcelona was the 1888 Universal Exhibition.

<sup>7</sup> Note the connection between these ideas and those of William Morris and the Arts & Crafts movement. Morris' artistic thought was adopted in Catalonia in the *Modernisme* and *Noucentisme* periods (CALVERA 2002).



most glorious time of the Middle Ages was the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as an idealised image of the period was created, in a process of *mythologisation*, which has partly survived to the present day<sup>8</sup>.

The national significance acquired by the mythification of the Middle Ages can be seen in the emergence of cultural movements like Romanticism, which arrived in Catalonia at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the movement's most prominent agents in the field of historiography was Pau Piferrer (1818-1848), whose writings were influenced by French Romantic authors such as Victor Hugo (1802-1885). The figure of Piferrer, and especially his work *Recuerdos y Bellezas de España*<sup>9</sup> (Memories and Beauties of Spain) (1839), are essential for the Spanish historiography of art because they mark the starting point for the study of medieval archaeology, praised from both a nationalistic and Catholic standpoint<sup>10</sup>. Piferrer was also one of the champions of Catalan Nazarenism, which not only embraced the aesthetic values of Gothic art but also its moral values, in a similar manner to the English Pre-Raphaelites (MAESTRE 1979). Independent of Romanticism, but at the same time linked to it, the *Renaixença* (the Catalan Cultural Renaissance) was a literary movement for the recovery of Catalan culture and language that emerged in the heart of the region's bourgeoisie by the middle of the century. The *Renaixença* argued that Catalan had had its zenith in the Middle Ages and that, since language was the unitary axis from which the concept of nation was created, the period was necessarily a time of glory and should thus be the reference point for modern Catalan society.

In addition to these intellectual movements, a key event in understanding the interest in medieval heritage in Spain in general and Catalonia in particular was the *desamortización*, or disentanglement, enacted by Mendizábal in 1835, by means of which the Church's assets passed into the hands of the state. Subsequently, auctions were held of this heritage, which contributed to the appreciation of medieval art and encouraged the first collections among the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie. Moreover, the disentanglements also gave rise to public collection through the creation of public bodies such as the *Comisiones*

<sup>8</sup> According to Peter Burke the task of "mythologizing" never ends and is done constantly in order to justify aspects of the present. Myth is opposed to history in that the former is a stereotype of the past. However, myth always contains some history, just as history inevitably contains some myth (BURKE 2019).

<sup>9</sup> The reference is only for the first volume of this work, begun by Pau Piferrer, who wrote the first two, devoted to Catalonia and Mallorca, and of part of the third, also dedicated to Catalonia and completed by the Catalan historian Francesc Pi y Margall (1824-1901). However, in its entirety the work comprises ten volumes published up to 1865, with texts written by different authors and always accompanied by lithographs by Francesc Xavier Parcerisa (1803-1876).

<sup>10</sup> On the origins of the historiography of art, see FONTBONA 2003, FONTBONA 2004 AND TARRAGÓ VALVERDE 2018.



*Provinciales de Monumentos de España* (Provincial Commissions of Monuments of Spain) – created in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, one per province – which were responsible for safeguarding, collecting and inventorying ecclesiastical property. This desire to protect and conserve artistic heritage led to the need to make it public, which materialised in the creation of public art museums and the organisation of exhibitions of ancient art, with such spaces becoming disseminators of the Gothic aesthetics (VÉLEZ 2003b).

The first exhibition of ancient art in Catalonia was the *Exposición Retrospectiva* (Retrospective Exhibition) of 1867<sup>11</sup>, organised by the Acadèmia de Belles Arts de Barcelona (Academy of Fine Arts of Barcelona) on the initiative of Catalan academics such as Josep de Manjarrés (1816-1880). He was also responsible for drawing up a report analysing the works, arranging it into five sections: painting, sculpture, architecture, “sumptuary arts”<sup>12</sup> and curiosities (BARCELONA 1868). The text, of great interest for the history of art, is accompanied by thirty-five lithographic plates, seven of which are pictorial works, including six Gothic paintings. Furthermore, the catalogue of the exhibition survives (BARCELONA 1867). Firstly, this contains a list of lenders and works loaned, which provides a glimpse into the profile of the first collectors of Gothic art in Catalonia – these were eclectic collections, however, and it is not possible to gauge the importance of the medieval pieces within each collection. Secondly, the catalogue has a brief description of the works, which, despite generally not assisting identification, helps confirm the weight these held in the exhibition.

Among these early exhibitions of ancient art in Barcelona, the *Exposición de Artes Suntuarias* (Exhibition of Sumptuary Arts) of 1877 is also worth noting, since the section dedicated to ancient art (understood as art prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century) was led by Josep Puiggarí and marked the starting point for the creation of the Asociación Artístico-Arqueológica Barcelonesa (Artistic-Archaeological Association of Barcelona), a private entity whose main task was to disseminate the historical and artistic heritage through the organisation of this type of exhibition<sup>13</sup>. The exhibition was accompanied by the *Álbum heliográfico de la exposición de artes suntuarias* (Heliographic Album of the Exhibition of Sumptuary Arts) (1878) which, with its seventy-nine photographic plates, is considered to be the first art catalogue with photographs published in Spain (BASSEGODA 2014: 44). As with the catalogue of the 1867 exhibition, many of the pieces are medieval or early Renaissance works,

<sup>11</sup> On the *Exposición Retrospectiva* of 1867 see VELASCO 2011 AND BASSEGODA 2014.

<sup>12</sup> *Artes suntuarias* (“sumptuary arts”) is the term used to refer to decorative arts made with luxurious materials.

<sup>13</sup> On the exhibitions organised by the Asociación, see BASSEGODA 2007.



especially in the painting section, which comprises thirteen plates. These two exhibitions, which were to be followed by others devoted to clothing, the decorative arts, engraving and drawing, among others, were a turning point for the collection and dissemination of cultural heritage at the time and are, even today, the basis for the study of collecting of medieval art and Catalan Gothic painting<sup>14</sup>.

In short, the relationship between industrialisation, national consciousness and 19<sup>th</sup>-century medievalism is clear. These connections will now be analysed focusing on a specific case: the costume studies of Josep Puiggari and his method of approaching historical costume through archival documentation and documentary drawing.

## 2. Josep Puiggari and the study of historical costume

Josep Puiggari i Llobet was a Catalan scholar born in the heart of bourgeois, industrial Barcelona in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>. He was a lawyer by profession, but dedicated his entire life to the study of historical clothing, also taking an interest in local history and Catalan art. He published the first text of historical-artistic dissemination written in Catalan: the work *Garlanda de joyells*, (Garland of Jewels) which was published in 1879 and presented as a guide dedicated to the artistic scene of Barcelona (PUIGGARÍ 1879). One of the novelties of Puiggari's historical work is his frequent use of archival documentation, which sets him apart from the literary character of the writings of his time. In this respect, it is worth highlighting the relationship between Puiggari and the Archivo Municipal de Barcelona (Municipal Archive of Barcelona) – where he worked as sub-archivist from 1867 and rose to head archivist in 1896 – as well as with the Archivo de la Audiencia<sup>16</sup> (the Court Archive), where he held office. In addition, the Archivo de la Audiencia was then in the palace that had been the historical seat of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia), allowing him to see first-hand the pieces of medieval art held there – and where some are still found nowadays. Apart from the archives, Puiggari was always in contact with Catalan government and cultural institutions: between 1860 and 1870 he was appointed mem-

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<sup>14</sup> On the collecting of medieval art in 19th century Catalonia see BASSEGODA 2010; BASSEGODA 2013; BASSEGODA 2015; and VELASCO 2017.

<sup>15</sup> For the first study on the figure of Josep Puiggari see BASSEGODA 2012.

<sup>16</sup> The “Audiencias provinciales” (Provincial Courts) are the courts of justice of the provinces of Spain. The Provincial Court of Barcelona is currently located in the Palacio de Justicia de Barcelona.



ber of the Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona (Royal Academy of Letters of Barcelona), the Real Academia de la Historia (Royal Academy of History) and the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando), in Madrid.

Puiggarí's role in the Catalan heritage undertaking is evident in the number of articles he published, dealing not only with artistic issues but also with a variety of topics, often related to popular festivals or local customs and traditions, amongst others. These articles came out in magazines published in Madrid, such as *El Museo Universal* or *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, and in Catalonia, among which *Memorias de la Academia de Buenas Letras*, *La Renaixensa*, and *L'Avenç*. Therein can be found some of Puiggarí's most interesting contributions to the historiography of medieval Catalan art: he made known the names of Catalan Gothic painters such as Bernat Martorell (1390-1452) (PUIGGARÍ 1880), unveiled unpublished documents and attributed a piece of work to the painter Lluís Borrassà (ca. 1360- ca. 1425) (PUIGGARÍ 1860), and published the contract of the iconic work *La Verge dels Consellers* (the Virgin of the "Consellers") (1443-1445) by Lluís Dalmau (ca. 1400 - ca. 1461) (PUIGGARÍ 1870).

In addition to his work as an author, Josep Puiggarí took part in campaigns for the protection and dissemination of heritage – for instance, he was a member and secretary of the Comisión Provincial de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Barcelona (Provincial Commission of Historical and Artistic Monuments of Barcelona). As such, one of the most important positions he held was that of founder and president of the Asociación Artística-Arqueológica Barcelonesa. Besides organising exhibitions, this institution oversaw the publishing of the *Boletín de la Asociación Artístico-Arqueológica Barcelonesa*, a magazine dedicated to art and archaeology, and which is nowadays essential for the study of the historiography of art in Catalonia, given its pioneering nature as a magazine specialised in art history<sup>17</sup>.

In this intellectual environment of heritage dissemination, a marked interest for costume in general – and historical costume in particular – arose. The study of garments was not a novelty of this age, however, as the first books addressing matters of clothing and tailoring can be traced back to the Renaissance. These "costume books", also called *Trachtenbücher*, have a similar structure to the garment books of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in that, when describing the clothing, organisation is based on social class, the country or region, gender,

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<sup>17</sup> The first publication of the *Bulletin* appeared in April 1891. Five years later the name was changed to *Revista de la Asociación Artístico-Arqueológica Barcelonesa*, which would remain until its last issue, in 1913.



and others<sup>18</sup>. However, it is from the Enlightenment, and especially throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that a proliferation of studies on costume can be found. They were publicised through specialised periodicals or luxurious publications with lithographs, some of which – mainly French works – reached Spain and were known to Puiggarí, as shall be seen. This was due, firstly, to the emergence of the bourgeoisie as a consumer class, which resulted in a special interest in clothing, linked to progress and the idea of civilisation<sup>19</sup>; and secondly, to the romantic movement, which fostered the need for faithful knowledge of the clothing of the past. The passion for history, within the quest for national identity, led to plays, novels, operas, paintings, and other artistic productions being set in past times, which required a solid knowledge of clothing for greater credibility. As such, 19<sup>th</sup> century costume studies emphasised geographical differences, as clothing is a social and cultural phenomenon inextricable from identity.

This background provides the context for the work *Estudios de Indumentaria Española concreta y comparada. Cuadro histórico de los siglos XIII y XIV* (Studies on specific and compared Spanish costume. A historical framework of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries) by Josep Puiggarí, published in 1889 by the Asociación Artístico-Arqueológica Barcelonesa. The volume on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries presented in this chapter had to be part of a greater work composed – as the author himself says in the preface – by “four or five volumes” that would see the light of day annually, “skipping their publication according to the interest and importance of each historical period” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: VI). Therefore, despite the intention to cover all periods of history, the decision to publish the volume corresponding to the late Middle Ages first instead of following, for example, a chronological order, appears to be a clear indication of the importance this historical period had in intellectual Barcelona at the end of the century. However, this project was ultimately cut short due to the economic difficulties it entailed, something the author himself criticises in the prologue of the book when he points out that several publishers had rejected the proposal for being expensive and for its illustrations being “reproductions of archaic models” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: IV). Thus, the late medieval volume was the only one edited and published, leaving another

<sup>18</sup> Among these first books dedicated to costume, were the *Trachtenbuch* (c. 1530) by Christoph Weiditz (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg, Hs. 22474) or the printed work *De gli habiti antichi e moderni di tutto il mondo* (1590) by Cesare Vecellio.

<sup>19</sup> This interest materialised in the appearance of fashion magazines, such as *L'Élégant: Journal des Tailleurs*, *Le Moniteur de la Mode* and *La Mode Illustrée*. In Spain there was *El Correo de la moda*, *El Salón de la moda* and *La moda elegante*, among others. For a historiography of costume in Catalonia, see CARBONELL BASTÉ 2016: 53-71.



nine unpublished volumes of manuscript text, now kept in the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (RABASF), in Madrid. These works were acquired by the institution in 1907, through a testamentary bequest by the author himself<sup>20</sup>.

The text is accompanied by five graphic albums containing originals and tracings that totally or partially copy figurative artistic pieces from Antiquity to the beginning of the 19th century, so that the first (RABASF, Biblioteca, A-1852) contains drawings of works of art from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries; the second (A-1853), 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries; the third (A-1854), 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries; the fourth (A-1855), 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the fifth and last (A-1856), 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>21</sup>. Although it is not the aim of this chapter to study the graphic albums in detail, it is worth mentioning that they are heterogeneous in terms of the number of drawings as well as their arrangement, which is often chaotic and irregular, since there are appendices that contain drawings from other centuries and, in addition, modern page numbering is combined with a division by segments and sheets made by the author himself. Finally, it should be noted that these five graphic albums are a continuation of two others (numbers A1850 and A1851) that Josep Puiggarí had sent, in 1867, to the Madrid institution, as part of a *Diccionario de indumentaria y mobiliario* (Dictionary of clothing and furniture) that the Academia was interested in acquiring<sup>22</sup>. Apparently, in the end, the payment was not completed and part of this material –possibly the written part – was returned to the author, while the Academia retained the graphic part, of which Puiggarí was able to make copies<sup>23</sup>. This is probably why, in the five graphic albums the scholar bequeathed to the Real Academia de San Fernando, many tracings can be found that were made from the original drawings included in the first two.

Returning to the volume of the *Estudios de Indumentaria Española* that was published, the *Cuadro histórico de los siglos XIII i XIV* consists of 370 pages divided into two parts, one dedicated to each of the centuries. The note to the reader that opens the volume is a clear declaration of the author's intentions, claiming the importance of his work and its novelty in the Spanish context which had been lagging behind other European countries. It seems

<sup>20</sup> RABASF, Archivo. Legajos 4-27-2. Libros de Actas: 23 de septiembre de 1907, p. 225.

<sup>21</sup> These albums were discovered by Bonaventura Bassegoda in the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid (BASSEGODA 2012). After that, this graphic treasure has been studied by some Catalan art historians, especially in reference to medieval art (MACÍAS 2012; MACÍAS; CORNUDELLA 2015; FAVÀ 2016; VELASCO 2017; VELASCO 2022; PIÑOL 2022; RUÍZ QUESADA 2023). Recently, it has been the main subject of our doctoral thesis (PIÑOL 2024).

<sup>22</sup> RABASF, Archivo. Legajos 1-24-1. Libros de Actas: 27 de mayo de 1867, p. 131v y 17 de junio de 1867, p. 136.

<sup>23</sup> RABASF, Archivo. Legajos 1-24-1. Libro de Actas: 27 de noviembre de 1876, p. 516.



evident, then, that the intention of this Catalan scholar was to produce a work similar to that of his European counterparts, such as Auguste Racinet, Friedrich Hottenroth, Paul Lacroix or Joseph Strutt, among others. However, he wanted to go further, since, as he stated, no one until then had made use of artistic sources, which are a portrait of their time and therefore contain an undeniable degree of truthfulness (PUIGGARÍ 1890: VIII).

Due to the expensive price of the illustrations, the medieval volume had only forty-six plates with heliographic reproductions of the originals by Puiggarí; very few considering the number of drawings he made throughout his life. Besides the financial constraints and the lack of institutional interest, the author points to the indifference of the public, which “does not know the value and importance of so many ethnogenic, aesthetic, moral, social and even political questions, as are contained in those amateurish, even if graphic, art displays” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: IV). In essence, a public – obviously bourgeois – that does not know how to appreciate art that is “almost millenary [...], that managed to unfold into its own full character and with all the pride of its national genius” illustrations (PUIGGARÍ 1890: IV), asserts the author, intent on claiming the individuality and particularity of Catalan Gothic art. Despite these two adversarial points, Puiggarí emphasises the interest the work holds for “authors of works of imagination” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: IX), that is, artists and writers who, inspired by subjects from the past, need these studies on historical costume.

It is therefore not surprising that Puiggarí begins the first chapter, dedicated to 13<sup>th</sup> century clothing, recalling – or mythologising – the great figures of that century in Europe, ranging from saints and monarchs to writers and artists, due to whom “this century certainly deserves a very honourable place in history” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: 3)<sup>24</sup>. Puiggarí refers to the Middle Ages using expressions such as “an age of genius” or “of collective wonder” and says it was a time built under the threefold unity of faith, feeling and action (PUIGGARÍ 1890: 4). The use of such qualifiers is not by chance, nor is it unique to the Catalan author. It is rather part of a utopian optimism that idealised medieval civilisation, seeing it as a society that lived in harmony and whose splendour was due to

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<sup>24</sup> In this respect, he cites, for example, Jaime I, King of the Crown of Aragon, and his famous chronicle “*El llibre dels feits del rei en Jaume*”.



the influence of Christian morality<sup>25</sup>. Thus, in these lines Puiggarí joined in the mythologisation of the European Middle Ages, which resulted from the dissatisfaction with their own age. In the text that follows, specifically devoted to art, the author, imbued with Romantic ideas, links the ethical qualities he saw in medieval times with the aesthetic qualities of its artistic production. Thus, he asserts that the art of the 13<sup>th</sup> century had the same “virility and strength, the same feeling and fervour, the same picturesque and original verve that marks that civilisation in progress” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: 5)<sup>26</sup>. This notion comes up again in the second part of the volume: when referring to the Gothic art of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Puiggarí exalts the faith of society as the main motor for artistic creation and states that “the art of that time, more than procedure, became dogma; because it lived in the conscience of the peoples, it constituted a social necessity” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: 203). Such points are reminiscent of the ideas of Nazarene purism, by relating artistic quality to Christian inspiration which in itself is inseparable from the idea of collectivity.

In the volume of the *Estudios de Indumentaria Española* dedicated to the Gothic centuries, the author cites a remarkable number of sources throughout the text. This is precious for reconstructing his personality as a historian, allowing the reader to delve into his references – especially as far as the studies of his time are concerned – as well as finding out to what type of documentation he had access to. As already mentioned, Puiggarí had a solid knowledge of medieval archival documentary sources: he used a variety of them, among which can be found ordinances, privileges, inventories, and wills. His work reveals a broad knowledge not only of documentary sources, but also of medieval literature. It should be noted that Puiggarí systematically quotes his literary and documentary sources in the original language: French, Italian, Catalan, Spanish, and sometimes, in the case of archival documents, Latin. Take, for example, the comparison he makes between some verses from canto XV of “Paradise” from Dante’s (1265-1321) *Divine Comedy* and the writings

<sup>25</sup> At the beginning of the 19th century, the writer François-René Chateaubriand (1768-1848) said that the Christian religion was “la plus poetique, la plus humaine, la plus favorable à la liberté, aux arts et aux lettres” (“the most poetic, the most humane, the most favourable to freedom, arts and literature”) (CHATEAUBRIAND 1802, vol. I: 9). On Christianity and art, see vol. III, “Livre premier”. The spiritual characteristics of Gothic art are also present in Ruskinian thought, formulated in *The Nature of Gothic* forty years before the writings of our Catalan author.

<sup>26</sup> It is interesting to note that the vocabulary the author to describe and, especially, praise the Middle Ages is markedly masculine. History has been written from the male point of view, studied by men and, consequently, having men as the main actors. As Georges Duby puts it, the Middle Ages are masculine. Women’s visibility in history has been obscured, which suggests that the sources often mirror ideology more than reality (DUBY 1988: 124-125). From this, it can be said that medievalism is also masculine, as it was built from a patriarchal ideology expressed through language.



of Giovanni Villani (1275-1348) to approach Italian costume of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in relation to Catalan clothing (PUIGGARÍ 1890: 22). Similarly, when analysing French costume, he repeatedly quotes the French medieval chronicler Jean de Joinville (1224-1317), as well as the *Roman de la Rose*. This shows that not only he had read these literary sources – by then already well known – but he had done so in the original language.

Puiggarí's knowledge of medieval Catalan and Hispanic literary sources was yet more comprehensive, since, for his costume descriptions, he even resorted to poetic texts, such as the *Poema de Yuçuf* (written in Aragonese in Arabic script, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century), or the *Poema de Fernán Gonzalez* (ca. 1250-70), the compilations of miracles of the Virgin (ca. 1250) by Gonzalo de Berceo (1198-1264) and those (1270-82) written by King Alfonso X (1221-1284), as well as the monumental Aragonese chronicles or the great encyclopaedic work *Lo Crestià* (1379-92) by Francesc Eiximenis (c. 1330-1409). Through all of these, the author analysed the entire 14<sup>th</sup> century from the point of view of religion, customs, and social relations (Puiggarí 1890: 176 ff.). Puiggarí very likely had access to these medieval works thanks to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century literary collections that compiled the great works of Spanish literature, making them known to Spanish readers. The author himself cites José Amador de los Ríos (1816-1878) and his *Historia crítica de la literatura española* (Critical History of Spanish Literature) (1861-65), when analysing works such as the poem by Fernán González or *Lo Crestià*. Moreover, despite not being directly mentioned in the text, Puiggarí must have known other series, such as the famous collection of classics *Biblioteca de autores españoles* (Library of Spanish Authors) (1846-80) edited by Manuel Rivadeneyra, the *Historia de la literatura española* (History of Spanish Literature) (1851-56) by George Ticknor (1791-1871), translated and augmented by Pascual de Gayangos (1809-1897) – where, for the first time, a translation of the *Poema de Yuçuf* was published – or even the anthology begun by Tomás Antonio Sánchez (1723-1802) and continued by Pedro José Pidal (1799-1865) with illustrations by Florencio Janer (1831-1877), *Poetas castellanos anteriores al siglo XV* (Castilian Poets Before the 15<sup>th</sup> Century) (1864), which compiles the most relevant poetic texts of medieval Castile. Similarly, Puiggarí often refers to other contemporary works on art, history, and archaeology. Among the Hispanic references, the *Historia general de España* (General History of Spain) (1850-67) by Modesto Lafuente (1806-1866) should be emphasised. This was the first great work on the history of Spain after that of Juan de Mar-



iana, from the beginning of the 18th century, also mentioned by the author<sup>27</sup>.

As would be expected, Puiggarí also made use of artistic volumes that were key in the revaluation of Gothic art in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the *Viage literario a las iglesias de España* (Literary Journey to the Churches of Spain) (1803-1852) by the Villanueva brothers, from which he gathered information on ecclesiastical clothing, or the work *Recuerdos y Bellezas de España* (Memories and Beauties of Spain). Of the latter, he especially uses the volumes written by José María Quadrado (1819-1896), about the provinces of Castile (1850, vols. 9, 11 and 12). Quadrado's volumes contain descriptions of monuments that the author probably only knew through these books, but which were essential for the study of the historical clothing of that region. Puiggarí's list of literary, artistic and historical references is much wider, but practical reasons prevent that all be listed here. Still, one last mention seems pertinent: the French illustrated magazines for the general reader, such as *Magasin Pittoresque* and *Le Musée des Familles* served as a model for Puiggarí to learn, especially through engravings of monuments, about French historical dress and, therefore, the European context in which to situate his studies.

Well versed in the work of his Spanish and European colleagues, Puiggarí cites in his own work numerous costume studies that served as a model for the development of his project. An analytical reading of the text reveals that one of his main referents was Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) and his *Dictionnaire du mobilier français* (1858-1875), a vast encyclopaedic project in six volumes that aimed to reconstruct and describe French medieval civilisation based on its daily product, including clothing, to which the third and fourth volumes are dedicated. The text is accompanied by a large number of xylographic illustrations and some chromolithographs that reproduce medieval works or recreate new compositions based on them, creating an entire iconographic repertoire close to the one Puiggarí would produce. Besides Viollet-le-Duc, Puiggarí briefly cites the illustrated work *Le Costume historique* (1876) by Auguste Racinet (1825-1893), which, although having a broad approach and focusing mostly on the last centuries of the Middle Ages, addresses costume beyond the geographical limits of Europe. There are also repeated references to the work of Spanish scholars who studied costume before him, notably the *Discurso histórico sobre el traje de los españoles desde los tiempos más remotos hasta el reinado de los Reyes Católicos* (Historical notes on the clothing of the Spanish people from ancient times to the kingdom of the Catholic Monarchs) (1879) by Serafin María de Soto, Count of Clonard (1759-1823),

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<sup>27</sup> Puiggarí probably used the edition published in 1867, completed by Eduardo de Palacio. See MARIANA 1867.



which Puiggarí used to study Castilian medieval sources, as well as for the specific terminology related to clothing, especially that of the Arab world. Finally, the work that most inspired him was *Iconografía Española* (1855-64) by the Spanish artist and scholar, Valentín Carderera (1796-1880)<sup>28</sup>. The work, published in two volumes, is one of the first repertoires of effigies of illustrious characters, which were copied by Carderera himself from ancient artistic works. These lithographic and chromolithographic prints, which were accompanied by the biography and description of the person represented, were an essential model for Puiggarí. They allowed him to discover and copy those artistic works, most of which were sculptures, that were not geographically within his reach but completed his research on Spanish clothing, as shall be seen below.

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<sup>28</sup> Puiggarí and Carderera also maintained a personal relationship based on common artistic interest.





1380 90 DE UNAS TABLAS DE S. JORGE.

LÁMINA 40.

**Fig. 1.** Josep Puiggarí. Scene of the martyrdom of Saint George (heliograph). *Estudios de Indumentaria Española*. Lamina 40. Photography: author's archive.





**Fig. 2.** Josep Puiggari. Scene of the martyrdom of Saint George (tracing). RABASF Biblioteca, A-1853, "Siglo 14º", num. 28. Photography: author's archive.





**Fig. 3.** Josep Puiggarí. Scene of the martyrdom of Saint George (original). Inscription: “Martirio de un santo N.º 1. En casa Rocabrúna” (Martyrdom of a saint No. 1. House of Rocabrúna). RABASF Biblioteca, A-1850, fol. 50v. Photography: author’s archive.

By defending art as a fundamental tool for learning about historical costume, Puiggarí ended up making an important contribution to the History of Art. He studied artistic sources through documentary drawing, using pencil and watercolour, and often complemented it with notes with relevant information. Specifically, the volume under analysis was accompanied by forty-six plates with heliographic reproductions of Puiggarí’s drawings preserved in the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando<sup>29</sup>. The plates were sold separately as a complement to the book, which is why most of the copies

<sup>29</sup> In fact, the heliographs are not from the originals that Puiggarí sent to the Academy in 1867, but from the copies that he made of them.



found in Catalan public institutions do not include them<sup>30</sup>. Puiggari's drawings are copies – complete or partial – of Catalan works of art, while the reproductions of Castilian works – especially manuscripts and tombs – were, according to the author, copied or traced from facsimiles and works by other scholars, such as Carderera. This offers an interesting detail about the profile of this art historian: despite his knowledge of languages and his rich library, he seems not to fit the pattern of the traveller-historian typical of the Romantic period.

The heliographs are organised chronologically, following a detailed list containing the plate number, the work represented, a brief description and the dating proposed by Puiggari. All the plates are faithful drawings of the original works, which are perfectly recognisable in their entirety. For example, plate 40 corresponds to the panel of the martyrdom of Saint George from the Saint George Altarpiece (ca. 1435) by Bernat Martorell (Musée du Louvre, inv. RF 1571) (fig. 1, 2 and 3)<sup>31</sup>. The description of this heliograph specified that the panel was part of an old altarpiece of Saint George –doubtless painted for the chapel of Saint George in the Palau de la Generalitat – and that it belonged to the “house of Rocabuna” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: 380). Thus, Puiggari was able to see and study this and other panels of the altarpiece that belonged to the collection of Francesc de Rocabruna (1811-1874), baron of Albi, which, furthermore, had been exhibited at the Exposición Retrospectiva of 1867 (BARCELONA 1867: 94; cat. 2139-2144). Interestingly, while in the exhibition's catalogue they are dated from the beginning of the 16th century, Puiggari suggested a closer date: 1380-90. It should be noted that Puiggari uses the past tense to place the panel in the Rocabruna collection, which indicates that, by 1890, when the book was published, it was no longer in the hands of the family<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> So far, two copies with the full 46 plates have been located: one in the library of the Real Acadèmia de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi and another in the Servicio de Documentación y Acceso al Conocimiento (SEDAC), both in Barcelona, as donations from individuals. In these complete copies it is indicated that the price of the volume without illustrations was 10 pesetas, the volume with the heliographs and percaline binding amounted to 15 pesetas, or 25, if it had a fine binding in red percaline.

<sup>31</sup> Here is shown the heliograph that appears in the publication, together with the tracing, and the original from which the first two were made.

<sup>32</sup> At some point, the different panels of the altarpiece were dispersed: the main panel, depicting Saint George killing the dragon, became part of the collection of Charles Deering and after his death was deposited in the Art Institute of Chicago, where it remains (Inv. 1933.786). The panel on which this article focuses, along with three others, ended up in the hands of the Catalan antique dealer Celestí Dupont, who sold them in 1900 to Théophile Belin, who in turn sold them five years later to the Société des Amis du Louvre. For more information on the origin and trail of the altarpiece, see CORNUDELLA; MACÍAS 2011.





**Fig. 4.** Josep Puiggarí. Scene from the Pedralbes' altarpiece (original). Inscription: "Retablo de Pedralbes, N.º 2" (Altarpiece of Pedralbes No. 2). RABASF Biblioteca, A-1850, fol. 41v. Photography: author's archive.



**Fig. 5.** Josep Puiggarí. Scene from the Pedralbes' altarpiece (original). Inscription: "Retablo de Pedralbes, N.º 3" (Altarpiece of Pedralbes No. 3). RABASF Biblioteca, A-1850, fol. 41v. Photography: author's archive.



Another interesting case is plate 25, which reproduces some panels from the predella of a lost altarpiece from the Pedralbes Monastery in Barcelona (fig. 4 and 5)<sup>33</sup>. Puiggari – who, based on the clothing of the figures, dated the work to 1330 – states that the predella was “left in a corner of the sacristy for a long time, [and is] nowadays in the hands of a diligent collector” (PUIGGARÍ 1890: 378; lamina 25). Puiggari’s drawings thus became a source of interest for current art historians: in this case, they provide the means to approach a medieval work now lost and which is known only through these drawings and others made by contemporaneous scholars<sup>34</sup>. However, it should be borne in mind that Puiggari’s copies are not always a reliable source for speculating about iconography or style, since the faces, the size of the figures and other details are in his hand and not faithful copies that respect that of the medieval painter. In the same way, he often reorganised the compositions, eliminating characters, placing them in different spots or mixing various elements of the same altarpiece to create a completely new composition. Examples of this are plates 37 and 39, made from the selection of female (fig. 6) and male characters (fig. 7) of the Altarpiece of Saint Elizabeth and Saint Bartholomew (1401), attributed to the painter Guerau Gener (1369-ca.1410) and currently held in the Cathedral of Barcelona. The strategy is understandable, since the main objective was the study of the clothing and not the artistic piece itself. For this reason, and in this case, he placed the characters in line, side by side – as other costume scholars did before him – to better make comparisons between them. The characters are taken from different parts of the altarpiece: for example, the female character on the far left of the drawing is a copy of Saint Elizabeth from the central panel of the Gothic altarpiece, while the others are maidens, nuns or Elizabeth herself, but collected from various scenes in the side panels. A similar approach was undertaken with the copy of the male characters, largely taken from the scene of the apostle’s martyrdom, where Puiggari also made up those parts that cannot be fully seen in the original panel – for example, when part of a character is covered by an object – and changes the posture of the figures to show their clothing in a more suitable way. Thus, the textual and graphic analysis of this work shows that the study of costume was the way our author had to approach the history of a society and that his method of work allowed him, in fact, to create an artistic knowledge that can still be useful for art historians today.

<sup>33</sup> From here on, only original drawings will be presented, instead of heliographs from tracing or the tracings themselves, since only the first fully show the details, colour, and handwritten notes.

<sup>34</sup> Francesca Español made a detailed comparative analysis of these drawings with those of Pau Milà i Fontanals and those of Macari Golferichs, leading her to attribute the lost altarpiece to the Italian Gothic-style Catalan painter Pere Serra (ESPAÑOL 1999).





**Fig. 6.** Josep Puiggarí. Female figures from the altarpiece of Saint Elizabeth and Saint Bartholomew by Guerau Gener in Barcelona Cathedral (original). RABASF Biblioteca, A-1854, “Siglo 15º”, num. 13. Photography: author’s archive.



**Fig. 7.** Josep Puiggarí. Male figures from the altarpiece of Saint Elizabeth and Saint Bartholomew by Guerau Gener in Barcelona Cathedral (original). Inscription: “Retablo de S. Bartolomé en la Catedral de Barcelona” (Altarpiece of St. Bartholomew in the Cathedral of Barcelona). RABASF Biblioteca, A-1854, “Siglo 15º”, num. 13. Photography: author’s archive.



## Conclusions

This article has endeavoured to show how Josep Puiggarí, through his studies on costume, was also an agent for the promulgation of heritage and an example of the desire to restore the national origins so common in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe. However, the author's work does not demonstrate a political nationalistic sentiment, as occurs with scholars of later generations, such as Josep Gudiol i Cunill (1872-1931) and Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867-1956). By this time, Catalonia as a nation does not yet claim to be recognised as a state. The incipient Catalan nationalism is a cultural demand that is understood within its Spanish context. Thus, the figure of Puiggarí can be linked to cultural movements such as the *Renaixença* or the first Romanticism, but not to the political-cultural movements of the end of the century, for example, Modernism.

Beyond the interest of the texts and the artistic value of his drawings, Josep Puiggarí's studies are important because they demonstrate that History as a subject is in a state of constant constructive flux, and the ideologies and policies of each moment influence the choice of referents and the creation of certain discourses that favour the established narratives. The Catalanist but not nationalist (in the modern sense) position of Puiggarí – fully in line with the ideas of the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie of the time –, has meant that, despite the relevance of his contributions to the study of Catalan heritage, his standing did not fit into contemporary discourses on Catalan nationalism. For this reason, his works were not appreciated by those later scholars, who did not feel represented by Spanish Unitarianism. Just as the strength of mythologisation means that the current image of the Middle Ages derives from 19<sup>th</sup>-century European medievalism, it can also be said that the historiography of art in Catalonia has equally been mythologised, valuing the work of the historians of the end of the century, considered the founders of that field, and those authors who preceded them were practically forgotten. Recovering the work of Josep Puiggarí nowadays, implies reviewing the origins of the History of Art in Catalonia and making them known internationally.

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