Returning from an excursion to the south of France, I arrived at Barcelona on the night of July 17, 193[6], accompanying Professor Chandler R. Post, of Harvard University. On the morning of the next day, with Dr. Walter S. Cook, Director of the Institute of Fine Arts, we visited the Museu d’Art de Catalunya, deciding on a very interesting investigative archeological journey through the north of Spain that we had planned for months, agreeing to begin it on the following Monday, July 20. I left them at the Hotel Colón, and I went to Torrellas de Llobregat, to spend the weekend with my family. Torrellas is a little town 20 kilometers from Barcelona.

The first rumors had quickly arrived there over the radio about the events, notices and surprising and contradictory proclamations. They talked about battles, fires and crimes, without saying anything definitive yet. The commentaries, transmitted from town to town, asserted that not even the greatest historic-artistic jewels had escaped the flames, that the famous churches of Belén, El Pino and Santa María del Mar, Santa Ana and many other marvels of old Barcelona were burning and that the same thing was happening to churches all over our country. We went up to the top of a nearby hill, from which we could see the city of Barcelona, and in effect, a numberless series of black columns of smoke confirming the dramatic notices.

Returning from such a dramatic spectacle, we found that the church in the little town of Torrellas was on fire. A group of armed men had set fire to the parish house and to the benches, piled up in the center of the church. They arrived in a truck, shooting their hunting rifles and left immediately after doing their incendiary deed. The people of Torrellas threw themselves into extinguishing the fire; luckily, the damage was not considerable. And so we stayed a day longer, waiting for news, out of communication with the everyone and listening among groups of friends and neighbors to the proclamations, decrees and notices given over the radio from Barcelona and from Seville. Finally our nerves couldn’t endure it a moment longer. Against the opinion of our
respective families, a group of friends decided to go on foot to Barcelona. We left at four in the morning on July 22, having passed through Sant Boi de Llobregat and Cornellá. We soon found barricades and evidence of struggles. Groups of armed men controlled the entry and exit of every town. The road to Barcelona was a true problem, because the famous safe-conducts were already in circulation, full of seals and improvised stamps. Finally, at eleven in the morning, we arrived at Barcelona’s Plaza de España.

I went immediately to Santa Maria del Mar. The marvelous church showed, through its broken doors, the black and still-hot vaults and its pilasters chipped by the fire. On the exterior, mountains of burned paper, twisted ironwork, broken stained glass and fragments of gilded retablos filled streets and sidewalks. I began to gather fragments of a well-known gothic stained-glass window, and was detained by some armed men, who fortunately took me for a curious foreigner, and freed me after a few minutes.

It seemed like a surreal nightmare to me, to see a monument destroyed that I believed to be one of the jewels of everyone’s soul. Continuing my dramatic pilgrimage, I went towards the church of Santa María del Pi, crossing the Plaça de Sant Jaume. The Generalitat was an anthill. Tieless functionaries and militiamen with four-day beards pushed at the entry and overflowed at the windows. By chance I bumped into my friend Gibert, an official of the Barcelona Museum, who told me to come with him to the office of Ventura Gassol, Councilor of Culture of the Generalitat, because something had to be done to avoid more destruction. We opened a passage through the surging mob, a horribly picturesque conglomerate, which filled patios, passages and dependencies. The office of Gassol boiled with people. At that moment a group of men threw pieces of precious metalwork on the ground, found inside a strongbox in the sacristy of Santa María del Pi, opened with a blowtorch, and the reliquaries and monstrances of the church of Sant Just; plus mountains of valuables and some packets of banknotes. Joaquim Folch i Torres, Bosch Gimpera, the president of the Circol Artistic and others well known in art circles were there, commenting on the terrible events. They spoke of the most inconceivable destructions: they thought the Vic Museum had been burned; the Cathedral of Manresa, with all of its marvelous collection of primitives; the Museum of Solsona; they didn’t know anything concrete about Lleida, nor Girona, nor Tarragona, Seu d’Urgell, etc. They showed me the retablos of the Diocesan Museum of Barcelona piled up on a ground floor, saved from the flames and the sacking of the Seminary by a group of artists led by the sculptor Otero, who, with some trucks borrowed by Melchior Font, Gassol’s secretary, were able to rescue a big part of the said Museum from the flames. Some objects clearly showed the effects of fire; others perished when one of the trucks was set on fire in the middle of the street by an unidentified group, who viewed it as a
transport of “saints.” They told me that the Cathedral was intact and guarded by the police and in addition they had saved the churches of Sant Just, Sant Sever and Santa Clara from being set on fire, thanks to their locations near the Ajuntament and Generalitat. The Convent of Pedralbes, also intact, was guarded by a group of Catalan Police. Nothing bad had happened at the museums of Art and Archeology, or at the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón.

A group of volunteers and employees of the of the museum departed to reinforce the doors of the churches and houses containing things of artistic value in surrounding towns; and some big posters made it known that the Generalitat de Catalunya had seized the building and its contents.

Folch i Torres, director of the Art Museum and Bosch i Gimpera, director of the Archeological Museum, began feverishly organizing the work, making arrangements to avoid more losses and to put the endangered objects in a safe place. I, who was only the Archeological museum architect, offered myself unconditionally and asked if they could put me in the group who, driven solely by their love of art, presented themselves at the Culture Council office.

Our activity began immediately. With Gibert, one of those who worked most intensely and whose conduct was providential, especially in the first days, we began our itinerary of burned churches, and our first visit was to Santa Ana, which was still smoking. We were able to recover intact two gothic Virgins; the magnificent gothic panels of Serra and Bermejo perished in the fire. Santa Maria del Pi was empty of its stone embroidery in the rose window; the altars were almost entirely spared by the fire, which had completely destroyed the baroque chapel of the Holy Blood and calcinated the precious sculptures on the bosses of the vaulting. The admirable gothic Virgin that presided over the main doorway was in her place, only blackened by smoke. The interior of the Church of Belén had completely perished, with its baroque retablos, its paintings by Viladomat and its marbles and stuccowork. Its magnificent stone facades still stood, hiding the terrible emptiness of its interior.

Tired to both mental and spiritual exhaustion by this drama and long pilgrimage of July 22, I went to the house at Passeig de Gràcia 41 the next day (the 23rd), the home of Mme. Teresa Amatller, who had one of the best art collections in Barcelona. One of the first columns of voluntary militia was lined up in front. Luckily we arrived in time to save the private collections. The churches, as was later seen as contact was established with the towns, suffered enormously because of the general order to burn them. Those that were not burned had their contents completely destroyed, whether of artistic value or not. Sometimes though, a miracle of inexplicable casual conservation of a series of works of art occurred.
The next morning I went directly to the Generalitat. Furniture, books and papers were violently flying out of windows of one of the houses on the Plaça de Sant Jaume. They were sacking the apartment of Milà i Camps. I recovered a 15th century manuscript from among the books falling into the gutter; it was a treatise on horses with magnificent drawings; I gave it to Mr. Jordi Rubió. Other houses also suffered violent sacking, and a store selling religious objects was emptied out in a few minutes: thousands of little prints covered the plaza, mixed with furniture, clothing and books. I went up to Gassol’s office, who, with tears in his eyes, telephoned the Government councilor to avoid these terrible searches [or “registrations”] that, after this sinister beginning, right in front of the helpless authorities of Barcelona, quickly spread over the whole city like a powdering of dust. Mestres, Minister of Government, answered that he had no forces at his disposal; that it was impossible to avoid the madness that always ended with the burning of smashed furniture in front of the sacked house. And thus began the looting and “registering”, a term frequently applied as a euphemism for opportune robbery.

In some cases, the protective posters nailed up the day before didn’t prevent either the sacking or “registering.” The “registering” groups automatically carried part of their booty to the Generalitat, and the departments were filled with boxes of property, stocks and bonds, statutes, paintings, silver objects, radios, typewriters, etc. Folch put me to work classifying groups of more or less artistic elements, and with a group of volunteers I began to make an inventory and pack up pieces to be given to the Museum. Silver objects of scarce artistic or archeological value passed to the control of a special Commission. This work was carried out in the Librarian’s School. And in this way I began to set up a rudimentary group for the saving of our artistic patrimony. But something more was required: to act very rapidly, because the most unforeseen disorganization and most overrunning anarchy invaded everything. Groups of artists went out, saving artistic patrimony on their own, and elements from the burned churches and private collections rapidly formed uncontrollable deposits. Immediately the diverse groups of spontaneous rescuers began to battle with the group from the Generalitat. In the middle of rescuing the Gothic panels from the Retailer’s Guild, a disgraceful discussion broke in the middle of the Plaça del Pi between the group of artists that had seized the paintings and delegates of the Generalitat. Some of these struggles were reported in Solidaridad Obrera, accusing a Generalitat group of protecting private interests. My first job was to coordinate all of these spontaneous, sometimes counterproductive art rescue groups, and try to centralize all of them at the Generalitat.
But this was a crazy and very difficult task: there was neither law, order not authority; it was difficult to obtain trucks and gasoline for the groups. We didn’t have control. We continued without being to confirm anything from the majority of other districts of Catalonia.

The disorder increased and the “registering” groups got bigger. By this time, the posters put up by the Generalitat to respect property were totally ignored. Hoping for some results, many people of Barcelona got copies of this poster and put it on their doors even though they had not even one object of artistic interest. This ended with the total discrediting of the posters, and morphed instead into a real danger and acted to incite “registers.” The only secure refuge was the municipal museums, and the only solution was to set up a seizure of artworks. A series of orders of seizure were set up that included the Amatller, Rocamora, Marsana, Macaya, Cambó, Guell, Muntadas and other collections just to protect them.

The first four were offered up by their own owners or by their authorized representatives. Other less important collectors not included in the decrees went to the Generalitat and asked me personally to include them. Among these I remember the Capmany, Martí, Simó, Vallín, Vilella collections and many others who had only one painting or a little artistic nucleus that they voluntarily offered the museum. Along with them came an avalanche of petitions offering paintings and sculpture that in the majority of cases were objects of little interest, insistently offered up in fear of the terrible religious persecution and the iconoclastic mania unfolding in Catalunya.

In other cases, collections were not seized because their respective proprietors or authorized representatives assured us that they could guarantee their integrity. This was the case with the Mateu family, whose representative was Mr. Clausells, who was assassinated a few weeks after the revolution exploded. Their collections were in the warehouse at on the Calle de los Ángeles, in the private house of L. Miguel Mateu on the Paseo de Gràcia and in that of D. Damian Mateu on the Diagonal. One day we received casual notice that the latter two had been sacked. I went personally to both apartments and I was still able to rescue a large number of paintings, the majority of them smashed, and some of the cameos of the famous Mateu Collection. The part of the Mateu Collection located at the warehouse on the Carrer dels Angels, suffered no damage at all and was handed over spontaneously to the Generalitat by the Committee that directed the Society. The collection of the Widow Bosch was one of those not taken in the belief that it had been burned. I think it was the house servants who informed us that a railway workers’ committee had installed themselves in the apartment, smashing doors, looking for hidden treasures and carrying away objects from the collection. The sculptor Durán, one of most active of the group of artistic retrievers, presented himself at the door of the Bosch house
and was received by a man with a pistol in hand. Only after long discussions was he able to rescue some of the collection. It goes without saying that all the gold and silver objects had disappeared. Mr. Soler i March, the architect, possessor of some Gothic retablos of great importance, begged us not to take them to the Museum, since he had, according to what he said, a secure way of protecting them. After a few months he came to the Generalitat requesting that we look for these retablos, which had been stolen from the French Chapel where he kept them.

Another lamentable case, the most perilous of all, was that of the collection of Mr. Cambó, whose house had been occupied from the beginning by the F.A.I. Thanks to the laborious and able negotiations by Mr. Gibert, part of the famous paintings of the collection was handed over to the Museum. But unfortunately, some of them were shot full of holes, ripped or cut.

I oversaw this seizure of collections. First thing in the morning, I gave a list of one or various collections to carry out to the volunteers gathered at the “Canons’ House,” continuing to sort through the infinite reports and notices that arrived to us from all directions. I worked many hours on classifying the objects brought to the Generalitat, which, carefully packed, were transported to the museum. There, they were handed over along with a receipt of the inventory that accompanied them. From the beginning, Mr. Pujol acted as general secretary of this improvised service of gathering art objects, and continued in this role throughout the entire war.

The packing and inventory of each collection was carried out by specialized personnel from the Museum, directed in each case by some of the volunteers from the group. The Amatller Collection was inventoried and supervised by Robert i Llompart, who was intimately acquainted with it. The same group inventoried and packed up the Macaya Collection with the aid of some of the Macaya family members. Marco and Sarsanedas inventoried and put together the enormous Masana Collection. Bardolet, among others, directed the packing of the Güell Collection, Colominas, that of García Faria, etc.

I suppose that the Monuments Section of Barcelona still [in 1941] preserves a copy of the infinite written communications, orders and receipts that were issued and that show the quantity of work realized in the space of just a few days. With no expectation of remuneration, all of this work was carried out by those who made up the group of volunteers. On the initiative of Folch and Bosch I was in charge from the first moment, with no title but with an authorization signed by Gassol to be able to circulate freely; this constituted my collaboration in the work of protection of the artistic patrimony, and various municipal and military governments who helped me can corroborate this.
After a few days Mr. Jerónimo Martorell, Chief Architect of the Monuments Section presented himself before the *Generalitat* and took over direction of this work. On the afternoon of the 24th, I was able to get a group of soldiers, who had brought the treasure of the church of El Pi to the *Generalitat*, to take me to Vic in a car that they had requisitioned. The trip was an ordeal of detentions and explanations at the entry and exit point of each town; except for these obstacles, and a large number of wrecked cars on the highway, we arrived in Vic. The vaulting of the Cathedral continued to burn slowly, and the lower windows of the Episcopal Palace, whose second floor housed the museum, belched thick smoke. I went to the *Ajuntament* and spoke with the Mayor, who told me that he had no authority, and that I should make an agreement with the Revolutionary Committee. The latter was meeting, and after a long wait, they received me. I showed the President the document signed by Gassol, certifying my mission. They told me that it had no value for them, since neither the Central Committee nor the Militias had issued it. The promised me to protect the Museum, if it were truly a purely cultural institution, and that they would authorize the firemen to put out the fire that burned on the ground floor of the Episcopal Palace.

In the Cathedral the fire had spared the High Altar and the majority of the other altars. The archive was the only place where the doors remained closed. The sacristy and the rooms of the Treasury were full of ecclesiastical garments and broken furniture. Of Sert’s paintings, mostly burned, the compositions of the Capilla Mayor remained intact and also for the most part those of the interior surface of the façade. The silver sarcophagus of Sant Bernard Calvó was on the ground, but relatively well preserved. In the Cathedral plaza, children played with vestments. On my return to Barcelona I begged Gassol to send forces to protect what remained of the Cathedral and he asked the militias to send reserves to guard the site.

On the afternoon of the next day, the *Generalitat* gave me a car driven by a policeman, and after obtaining a document with all the necessary seals, I returned to Vic. There, the militiamen, sent by Gassol to protect the Cathedral, were continuing its sacking, opening tombs and smashing everything. The fact of having found the valuables of the ecclesiastic collection of the Vic Bishopric inspired the militiamen to look for more money, and they didn’t respect anything. The Committee was resenting the sending of a troop of militia without first consulting them, and taking advantage of this resentment, proposed that, given the artistic value of the Museum, it was necessary to establish a guard of people they trusted. Josep Mialet, because he was the janitor of the Vic Society of Tourism, was elected chief of the guards of the Museum. I promised them that I would take care of the payment to the six museum guards and Mialet at 10 pesetas a day. I used the reduced store of cash which, as treasurer of the Vic Museum, I had
custody. Later, these guards were paid by the Generalitat, since they were consigned by them to Vic. The Cathedral, Episcopal Palace and the Museum were all closed. Mialet acquitted himself well, and thwarted the Committee’s idea to carry out seizing a selection of Museum objects thought too religious. Only the Museum furniture was lost.

Until the day of my mobilization I continued to make at least a weekly visit to the Museum of Vic. On one of them a committee, at the insistence of Mialet, showed the treasures of the Cathedral scattered over the floor of the meeting room of the Ajuntament, in preparation for melting them down. I insisted that they hand over to me at least the pieces of most artistic value. It was useless, everything was melted down with the Generalitat not being able to do anything about it. The committees were the absolute rulers of lives and fortunes and everyone remembers vividly how they used this infinite power. I could never find out who saved the big 14th century silver crucifix that turned up at the museum two years later.

Meanwhile the Barcelona group continued working without rest. Folch i Torres succeeded in being conceded control of the Cathedral, the convent of Santa Clara and other religious buildings around the Generalitat. These were guarded by police, whose first act was to rob all the collection boxes from the altars, the money from which allowed them to keep an animated game going in a reserve established at the San Ivo portal of the Cathedral. The technical personnel of the museum dismantled the big gothic retablos and the big baroque structures in the Cathedral and Santa Clara and Sant Felip and they were taken to the Museum. The dismantled modern retablos were also, according to the demands of the syndicates, burned on Montjuïc by the corps of firemen. But Folch was quickly obliged to cover up his deed. The Soledad Obrera group began a campaign against keeping him as director of the Museum, and everyone knows how these campaigns usually turned out.

Finally, after many days the Commission of the Artistic, Historic and Scientific patrimony of the Generalitat met and agreed to divide the work of rescue in three groups, each one under a completely autonomous director with full powers to resolve matters without a previous full meeting. The archives remained under Agostí Durán, the libraries under Jordi Rubió, and the monuments and material patrimony under Jeróni Martorell and gave me the mission to coordinate, under the latter, all of the efforts that were being realized by the service elements in different localities in Catalonia. They printed identity cards for everyone in these sections of protection of the Patrimony.

I immediately tried to organize and set up relations with other cities. Notices and objects of art came to us from everywhere. One of the first contributions came from Seu d’Urgell. Mr. Canturri with the aid of a group of assault guards, was able to prevent the burning of the
Cathedral, which suffered in any case an intense destruction of its furniture, and the sack of its canonical dependencies. Canturri deposited the archive in a secure place, and brought to Barcelona part of the Cathedral’s gems, including the cross and 16th century reliquary and the famous 11th century Beatus manuscript. But the 15th century chalice and the very rich illuminated 14th century missal had disappeared, as well as the majority of the Cathedral’s manuscripts.

Some town committees came to offer what they had saved from the sack of the Cathedral of objects they thought to be of artistic interest. It was therefore necessary to visit each small town, establish contacts and delegations, and then immediately to make an inventory of objects saved from the disaster and avoid their being destroyed.

The spontaneous groups formed in different towns were legalized as quickly as contact with them was made. In Gerona, the Cathedral and Museums remained under a delegation the most active of whom was Mr. Tobias [Sobias?]. In Tarragona, the artists Mallol and Rebull were those chosen to guard the Cathedral and the Museums, and to inventory and protect the region. I sent a car to them that was voluntarily donated by its owner, L. Bosch. In Manresa Mr. Rubiralta, aided by some fellow citizens, concentrated the artworks in the Jesuit Convent, thus saving them from destruction. In La Garriga, Mr. Llongueras brought the objects he could rescue in the region to the house of Mr. Plandiura. In Granollers, a group of volunteers reunited an enormous collection collected from everywhere in an old jailhouse. In Lérida, the work of rescue began with the spontaneous actions of the painters Lamolla and Creus, who brought the larger part of the objects of the Seminary Museum to the municipal museum, which was controlled by Mr. Bergós and Mr. sRoca. The monastery of Poblet, which was not harmed, always remained under the direction of Mr. Toda, who also collected some artistic objects from neighboring towns.

Throughout Catalonia centers of conservation were formed for recuperated objects. The inventory that accompanies this memoir gives a complementary list of these infinite number of collection points.

After the initial visit to Vic, the first expedition I made, once the activities of the Barcelona group was established, was to Igualada, where they were destroying the high altar of the parish church, a very important Baroque work. I was able to have the majority of its elements guarded. The church was later converted into a market. From there I went to Anglesola, where I convinced the Committee to let us take away the two famous Romanesque reliefs, the marvelous statue of St. Saturnino and various works of metalwork and embroidery that had been saved in the sacking. A few days later these objects were in the Barcelona Museum.

The third station on this first trip was Cubells, where some interesting objects were kept, which were collected a few days later by the Lleida Group. On the same journey I was able to
examine the deterioration suffered in the town of Bellpuig where the church was set on fire, of the
grandiose tomb of Folch, an Italian work in marble of the 16th century, and the disappearance,
possibly by fire, of a magnificent 14th century painting. In the town of Castelló de Farfaña I
found boys destroying some 14th century sculpted stone retablos. I proposed to the Ajuntament
that, through payments of wages from the Generalitat, these retablos instead be dismantled and
taken to the Lleida Museum, and this was done. On another journey I organized some urgent
repairs to the Monastery of Ripoll, but I arrived too late to prevent the destruction of the apse of
Sant Pau, in the neighboring village of Sant Joan de las Abadesas. At any rate, the objects from
the monastery of this village were successfully removed to Barcelona; they constituted a veritable
museum in danger. Elsewhere, we were able to send to Barcelona the Romanesque Christ in
Majesty of Sant Joan les Fonts.

In this way I visited over many months many of the towns of Catalunya, directing
collection, trying to help the tireless and self-sacrificing volunteers, who were sometimes truly
martyrs, who came out in various villages. In the majority of cases, these poor art-lovers suffered
the distrust of those who saw them as “camouflaged” protectors of the Church, and on the other
hand because of the necessary contact with the revolutionary committees, they were criticized by
the majority of their fellow citizens who, in spite of their profound religiosity, paralyzed by fear,
limited themselves to contemplating with forced smiles on their lips how their churches burned,
and frequently themselves helped to destroy venerated images from their houses, that had been
there for generations.

In some cases the spontaneous “saviors” got there ahead of us. In Cardona, for example,
a group of the F.A.I. carried off the silver objects and it was only possible to gather up the gothic
retablos. In La Bisbal the F.A.I. also took possession of a painting by El Greco and many silver
objects. In spite of all our negotiations these objects could never be recovered. In Seo de Urgel
the committee was made up of miners who had nothing to do with the town. They were
convinced that there still remained objects of value in the Cathedral and they let us move the
mountains of wood accumulated in the interior from the destruction of the altars. They saw that
we were perfectly familiar with the interior, and, that below such a big pile some objects of
artistic value still remained, and from this they concluded that I was a curate in disguise. They
couldn’t understand that a layperson would know in such detail about the treasures in a church. I
had enormous of difficulty escaping from them. At any rate, the 14th century painted tombs were
saved, as well as a marvelous marble sculpture.

But very quickly the destructive offensive against religious buildings began again. Some
churches of great interest were lost to fire in the first days; those that still stood after a month of
revolution suffered the second attack, less quickly than the first, but just as terrible. The Committees, thanks to fines, extraordinary contributions and confiscations, had their hands full of money. The paralyzing of a large number of industries added enormously to the number of people out of work. The consequence of both of these factors was to spend money in making work for the unemployed workers and to this end they began the demolition of many churches and convents. In Manresa, within a few weeks, they had already destroyed the church of the Carmen, and were ready to demolish the Cathedral, one of the best Gothic buildings in Spain. Rubiralta telephoned me immediately and I spoke with Gassol, who communicated with the Council of Government, but there was no way to prevent this destruction. As a last resort I went to talk with García Oliver. I tried with all my might to persuade him of the artistic importance of this building in Manresa, including the idea that it would be an absurd waste to demolish a building whose land had no value or possible utility. He answered me that he understood this, but he couldn’t use his influence for the preservation of a church. In desperation I went to Manresa. I spoke to the Committee and proposed them a plan to convert the church into a big political meeting hall. I pointed out that this was the way that the church of Notre Dame was used during the French Revolution. This idea saved the marvelous structure. Unfortunately, a group of militiamen guarded it, and after a few months, they set fire to the organ, which was still intact. In Solsona, they were also talking about tearing down the Cathedral, which had already been turned into a garage and depository for the unions, as happened to so many churches in Catalonia. My tactic, in this case, was to direct the demolition, in the sense making them spend money taking down the structures that had been added later and having no artistic value, had deformed it and covered up the great 12th century structure. During this work we discovered some very notable sculptures.

In Puigcerdá, the demolition was very advanced when it became possible to visit the town. Remember the famous Committee of Puigcerdá. It was one of the most dangerous, that kept the city incommunicado for months. We succeeded in saving the tower and the Gothic portal of the parish church. On this trip we discovered some extraordinarily important paintings unknown until then in the old Monastery of Santo Domingo, which had been converted into a jail.

The big baroque church of Mataró was not only intact, but it still had its big High Altar Retablo. I had the news that its demolition was planned, and I immediately visited the Committee immediately. Continuing the project that had had such good results on other previous occasions, I proposed to convert the church into an enormous concert hall. For that they could use the organ and the baroque decoration of the altar, which would not be unworthy in a concert hall. As always, I promised to personally direct the work, but I was then so busy that the it would be
necessary to wait some time; I asked them that, for the moment, they close up the church. That
did this, and they even published in the daily papers the notice of my visit and the idea of my project.

After a few days, I ran into an old friend of mine, the architect Mr. Rafols who was high up in the administration of the Barcelona Museum, who told me: “Gudiol, one day you will pay dearly for this mania you have of transforming all our best churches into Red meeting places.” The poor man didn’t understand the real purpose of my actions, and that thanks to them, irreplaceable losses were avoided. I should make clear that Mr. Rafols always refused to participate in our rescue missions. The mentality of Mr. Rafols, a relatively cultured gentleman and author of various art books, made me understand the reason for a series of objections to our efforts on behalf of the artistic patrimony.

The Monuments Section, once the avalanche of petitions of rescue had died down, and when the important works of private collections were conveniently situated in the Museum, began to recover works of decorative value: furniture, lamps, paintings from the eras of Isabel II and the Romantics. Thanks to the personal initiative and active intervention of Mr. Carbonell, who until that time had been one of the anonymous collaborators in the rescue work, a storage area was set up first in an old hospital on the Carrer de la Palla and later enlarged by taking over the palace of the Duke of Solferino from the hands of a neglectful group. Mr. Carbonell did not rest a second during the three years of conflict; he was able to collect and unite an enormous quantity of pieces of great interest. For each, he made a strict inventory of their provenance. Mr. Martorell tried to impede this work, but he finally left Mr. Carbonell complete freedom of movement.

In the work of adapting the hospital on the Carrer de la Palla, important pieces of alabaster were discovered, probably from the 15th-century sculptor Pere Oller. When the Cathedral passed under the auspices of the Monuments Section, and once all of the retablos had been removed by museum personnel, its control was entrusted to Josep Bardolet, one of the volunteers who had worked most in the transfer of the collections to the Museum. We were able to substitute police for the City Militia. The archives were carefully gathered by a group of volunteers who worked under the direction of Mr. Durán and brought to the Convent dels Àngels, the building adapted for the storage of documents. A small brigade of museum personnel continued removal from the Cathedral of the wood that might have inspired fires. During this work a magnificent retablo was found, the work of Jaume Huguet (1470), which had appropriated as liners for benches in some of the chapels. I think that it was during the transfer of the archives that the beautiful sword of the Constable of Portugal was found. During this time the order arrived to open all of the tombs. We were able to delay this order, which had already been
carried out in the Cathedrals of Tarragona and Gerona, in the latter city under Folch i Torres. The opening of tombs in the Cathedral of Barcelona was carried out with great care by personnel from the Archeological Museum. The tomb of St. Eulalia contained a little wooden urn, which was photographed, the interior of which contained a few carbonized bones and bits of decayed pieces of a gothic brocaded cloth, embroidered in gold with fleurs de lis. In the tombs of two bishops, in the ambulatory, some gothic wooden crosiers were found. In that of the 14th-century Bishop Escales, the body was found with a chasuble and crosier of archeological interest. All of these objects were carefully collected and deposited in the Chapter Room.

Still intact was the Treasury, which had resisted being broken into by the syndicates. After many months, an order arrived to give this treasury to the treasurer of the Generalitat. An inventory was made. I took photographs of the display cases that contained the pieces of the treasury before they were opened. A specialized worker removed all the jewels from the monstrance that had accumulated on it by donation from numerous devotees it over the centuries. The jewels were photographed one by one, not only those of artistic or archeological value, but those whose value was purely material. The Treasury of the Generalitat took possession of everything after signing a detailed receipt, which remained in the hands of Mr. Martorell.

The other religious edifices of Barcelona remained under the control of a group of architects of the Ajuntament. They took charge of closing up the entrances of the said buildings so that people could not continue the destructive acts of arson. These municipal architects were those who oversaw the reconstruction of the big gothic hall of the old Royal Palace of Barcelona, hidden under a series of modern additions in the interior of the convent of Santa Clara.

The architect Mr. Martorell didn’t even show the most minimal interest in saving the artistic patrimony. His work consisted simply in putting up difficulties and slowing down the work of the collecting of objects that still remained abandoned in the towns. His only zeal was to impede that the quantities included in the regular budget of the Generalitat, which were the only resources that the Section of Saving the Patrimony could count on, be used to defray expenses of this work. He spent the greater part of the budget in restoring the walls of Tarragona. The Arch of Barà, the ancient ruins of Roda and other restorations were slowed down. On the other hand, he left the Capilla de la Sang of Alcover and other monuments to be destroyed; all could have been saved with a little effort on the part of Mr. Martorell. The groups of volunteers in the region continued to work for nothing, making real sacrifices to pay for trips and transport, taking advantage of any means and circumstances to bring to official bodies the abandoned objects that remained from the villages. After a lot of insistence, Mr. Martorell proposed to the Culture Council extraordinary funds, but the money only started to arrive when it was too late, and even
when it was given, it was used for absurd wartime restorations. In those days in which there were so many urgent necessities, thousands and thousands of pesetas were spent on work in the monasteries of Santes Creus, San Cugat de Vallés and other sites that weren’t under the least danger. On each of my trips I had to advance my own sums for the price of gas and lodgings and it was always a very difficult job to get reimbursements. The change of councilors on the Culture committee was fatal for the artistic patrimony. In the first period, Gassol had Mr. Pont as his secretary, and the latter did everything he could to help us. This aid dropped to nothing or was counterproductive under the Councilors Isbert and Pi Suñer, who only bothered to mention artistic patrimony when it proved useful for propaganda.

Some regional groups secured funding from the Ajuntamentss. In Girona they were especially generous. The one in Tarragona gave them many facilities but no money. However, the group from the latter city secured various direct funds from the Generalitat, without Mr. Martorell’s intervention. The group in Lleida was the poorest but the most active. I still don’t understand how, without even the smallest economic aid, they were able to collect in a few months a series of countless works of art of great interest. Within a few days of receiving news of the existence of a piece in the district, it would appear safe and sound in the Lleida Museum. This activity was interrupted with the mobilization of Lamolla and Crous, active members of the group.

But it wasn’t only Catalonia that suffered the rapid loss of its artworks. Aragon was in still worse condition. One day some boxes full or religious metalwork, for the most part chopped up, arrived at the Generalitat. These boxes had been sent from Aragon. They confirmed the terrible news that arrived from time to time mentioning fires and destructions. Inquiries were made from the militiamen returning from the Aragonese front, but it was only made clear that, as in Catalonia, the majority of the churches had been burnt or utilized as warehouses by the syndicates after their altars and furnishings had been destroyed. The sculptor Fenosa showed up one day at the Generalitat with a truck borrowed from the U.G.T that was filled with retablos. Among them was the enormous retablo from Grañén and part of the one from Pallaruelo de Monegros, and some panels, showing evidence of being partially burnt, of the famous retablo of Lanaja. They told us that because of the lack of adequate transport, rain had damaged some retablos recovered from Castejón de Monegros. Fenosa gave us detailed news and begged us for help in his work in saving Aragonese art.

The Culture Council authorized a visit for me to Aragon, and I departed in the direction of Lleida, accompanied by the photographer Robert. In Lleida, Lamolla joined the expedition. In Tamarite de Litera, I got confirmation that the gothic retablos of the Collegiate Church, the
Patrocinio and the churches of San Miguel and Santa Catalina had been burnt. The Romanesque
chapel of San Miguel had been demolished and its magnificent 14th century crucifix with it. In
addition the gothic retablos of Algayón, Ontineña, Villanueva de Sijena, Onteñiente and Lanaja
had all been burned. These irreparable losses culminated at Sijena. The famous Aragonese
monastery, the royal mausoleum of Aragon, was a mountain of burned ruins. The patio doors,
open wide, revealed the magnificent Romanesque portal with its arches blackened and its doors
ripped off. Both the choir of the church, as well as the altars were all consumed by fire or
reduced to splinters. The half mummified bodies of the convent’s founders, Lady Sancha of
Aragon and her daughter Dulce appeared in the choir, surrounded by the bones of the Knights of
Muret. By a miracle, the fire had spared the wooden polychromed coffins that contained the
bodies of some noble abbesses of the 15th century, whose skeletons appeared among the
tombstones of the church. Almost not stopping to examine all of this destruction, I ran across the
ruins of the old cloister towards the famous 13th-century chapter room. I couldn’t contain my tears
in front of the ashes of one of the best monuments in the world. The very beautiful Arab
artesonado that had covered the room’s ceiling was reduced to a coating of ashes, covered by the
fragments of scattered roof tiles. The arches, previously brilliant with polychromy, were now a
gray and black ruin that stood out against the sky. The fire had transformed the marvelous
compositions, which only a few months before had seemed recently completed, into almost
invisible monochromatic figures. The greater part of them had disappeared with the collapse of
the plaster, leaving the stone walls denuded and blackened. After the shock I felt seeing Santa
Maria del Mar burned, this ruin of Sijena was my greatest memory of these three years of
destruction.

I went to speak with the committee of Villanueva de Sijena, who handed over to us some
gothic panels that had been collected from the monastery. They assured us that the arsonists were
unknown people who were passing through the town, perhaps the F.A.I. column of “Eaglets,”
[Aguiluchos de la Fe] authors of the burning of the Cathedral of Lleida. They told me that they
were ready to help me to save something of the paintings in the chapter room. I promised them
that I would return soon, ready to do everything possible to avoid that what little remained would
not be permanently lost. I told them to remove the polychromed gothic coffins, which were sent
to the museum of Lleida together with the gothic retablos.

From there we went to Alcañiz. The religious buildings were intact, but their contents
were totally smashed. In the castle, revolutionary frenzy resulted in the violent opening of the
tomb of Lanuza, and it remained half destroyed. By chance, the chamber in the keep, decorated
with magnificent 13th-century paintings, was intact. In any case, it was necessary to close it to
avoid people taking refuge inside it, a dangerous thing for the paintings. I went to speak with the military commander of the plaza, and succeeded in having the entrance closed up.

There was news that in Barbastro the military authorities, together with the revolutionary junta of Aragon, tried to organize a group to save artistic patrimony, and had already collected some things. I therefore went to Barbastro.

This city was converted into a military center of the Aragon front. The churches were being used as warehouses and nothing remained of the church furnishings, among them some gothic retablos. I tried to examine the site of the antique pieces, which was said to be in one of the rooms of the Ayuntamiento, but I couldn’t find the man with the key. During these inquiries I met an ex-professor of the Huesca Institute who said that he was one of those who was trying to organize, in cooperation with the military authorities in this sector, a group to save the artistic patrimony. I worked that day and later on other trips and also from Barcelona to carry out this idea. But it was impossible. Aragon had no one who took care of artistic patrimony, and what had survived from the destructive avalanche of the fires during the first days was destroyed slowly over the next three years.

The only two hotels in Barbastro requisitioned by the committee by the Town Committee and the military authorities, were completely full. For this reason we decided to go to Alquezar, where we arrived at nightfall. We went directly to the Committee, presented our papers that were examined with suspicion. I couldn’t figure out if the artistic treasures of the famous Collegiate Church were intact or not. They put up all sorts of obstacles until we finally worked out a meeting the next morning. We went to the inn. Lamolla and I shared a room. At three in the morning we were violently awakened by a group of men armed with rifles. It was a horrific moment. They looked at us without saying anything. They made us dress quickly and come with them. Was this the classic “walk?” They took us to the Ayuntamiento. The whole Committee was there, and a group of militia was at the doorway. Fortunately, the ex-professor from Huesca was there, whom we had met that morning, and everything was explained. The committee had thought that we were a group of antiquity robbers, and urgently sent to Barbastro for a militia company. Luckily, the professor was with them as a technical advisor. Maybe this saved our lives. Without him, would we have shared the fate of a group of painters who had been shot two months earlier in Huesca? The next morning we went to the Collegiate Church with the whole committee. Everything was there, the best objects hidden under apparent destruction, under a theatrical disorder of mountains of chairs, paintings off the walls, and saints laid out on the ground. I realized immediately that all of the latter was camouflage, and that the Committee was a group of good people who were afraid to show us their church that hadn’t been burnt. We made
friends, we understood each other without speaking and all the treasures of Alquezar were revealed and photographed: the two retablos, the cloister capitals, the silver crosses and chalices, the Romanesque crosier of Umfal. I advised them to continue to guard everything and not let anyone enter the church. I had no opportunity to return to Alquezar, where one of the most frightening events of my life was compensated by the great joy of finally finding a practically intact monument.

The town of Benabarre was our destination the following day. It was under the absolute authority of an ex-miner from Suria, who told us about the execution of the curate and the ten lawyers who, according to him, kept the town in perpetual struggle. He put at our disposal everything that had been saved for artistic value; among them were the magnificent 16th century silver casket, various important pieces of metalwork, and the marvelous 15th-century retablo by Jaume Ferrer.

It was necessary for me to return to Barcelona, but I couldn’t leave Aragon without knowing the fate of the famous treasure of Roda de Isábena. I left Lamolla with a list of what Roda possessed to assess what had been preserved, and I went to Barcelona. I would be surprised, on returning to Lleida after a few days, to find all the Roda treasure in the museum. Logrollo succeeded in convincing the Roda Committee, responsible and knowledgeable about the treasure that was among them, that to avoid the danger of destruction, they should send it to Lleida. A commission of Roda citizens accompanied the treasure to the museum, and Mr. Roca, as director, signed a receipt for all the pieces deposited into his care. I have a letter that the Marqués de Lozoya wrote to me, in which he told me that the treasure of Roda had arrived safe and sound in the hands of those who now are reorganizing the Artistic Patrimony.

Once in Barcelona, I gave a full accounting of my activities in Aragon to Mr. Martorell, asking him at the same time to give 4,000 pesetas to immediately send a technician to Sijena, to remove and carry to a safe place what remained of the wall paintings. I showed him photographs taken which indicated exactly what could be saved and the dangers threatened by the winter rains to the remaining paintings at the mercy of the elements. Each passing day damaged more of the consistency of the polychromy, already weakened by the fire. I didn’t succeed in grabbing his interest. I then went to speak with Gassol’s secretary, showing him the photographs. He was impressed by my description and gave instructions to the treasurer of the Generalitat to release the necessary funds. I immediately left for Sijena accompanied by Robert and Llopart, who worked with great care and perfection of skill in the removal of the paintings in the chapter room. They were assisted by people from the town of Villanueva de Sijena. I instructed them not to remove the wall paintings in the apse because I didn’t believe that they were threatened. More
than a year later I had the opportunity to visit the ruins of Sijena that had been converted into a stable, and the said paintings in the apse were still intact.

The success of the work carried out in Sijena inspired us to continue the work of removing mural paintings found in bad condition. The first was the notable 14th-century decoration that appeared beneath the modern construction over one of the altars of the parish church of Cardona. This removal was carried out by Llopart. Immediately following were the wall paintings of Osomort, which had been heavily damaged by the burning of the building; those of Sant Martí Sescorts and Folgaroles, work carried out by my brother Ramón. Afterwards, he and Llopart removed the very famous paintings from the monastery of Pedret, and right after that, those of Sant Pere de Casserras. The only paintings removed were those considered endangered. In this way, for example, we limited ourselves to cleaning and erecting a protective partition wall around those that were discovered in the old monastery of Puigcerdá.

But then my brother and Llopart were mobilized. They tried to cross into France (?), but were taken and sent to a concentration camp, where they remained almost until the end of the war. This and my own mobilization cut off all the work of removing wall paintings. Those of Sant Martí Sescorts, Folgaroles and Osomart were deposited in the Vic Museum. The others, along with those from Sijena, were taken to the house of Madame Teresa Amatller, at 41, Passeig de Gràcia. She, on leaving Barcelona, had given me her apartment to use in the work of saving the Artistic Patrimony, and this is what was done. A workshop was improvised in this house, and the restorer, Mr. Navarro, under my direction, began the transfer of the paintings of Pedret, Sijena and Cardona. The latter, upon completion, were installed in the offices of the Monuments Section. It must be noted, and it’s easy to understand, that if these paintings had not been removed, they would have been extremely damaged, or would have completely disappeared, like those of the Esglesia de la Sangre, of Alcover, where the building was demolished, or those of the church of the Carmen, in Manresa because of rain damage. For that reason, the most urgent case was that of Sijena. If they hadn’t been taken down immediately, being as how the weather was from the time of the collapse of the roof, and the flaking of the plaster after the fire, it would have completely disappeared during the winter of 1936. The restorations were technically perfect. Perhaps during transport some elements from Pedret were damaged for lack of material during the last year of the war and also perhaps because I was mobilized, as my visits to Barcelona were quick and seldom. But I have to say that in spite of the fact that the cited collaborators were unpaid or worked for very little money, they performed their work with an enthusiasm for which they must be highly praised.
This work of the removal of mural paintings made Museum personnel jealous. Folch i Torres advised me that there was gossip that I had removed the wall paintings myself. Later, I found out that he told various friends of mine that the saving of the Artistic Patrimony was simply in my personal interest, and that some day, they would see the Sijena paintings on the foreign art market. Grau, the restorer of the Museum, according to those who wrote to me from Spain, said that the paintings had been removed by people not familiar with the proper technique. The same people who carried this out now work as technicians of the Committee for the National Artistic Patrimony, having had great success in the difficult removal of some 14th-century paintings in Valladolid—paintings that Mr. Grau declared impossible to remove.

Another task that fell under my responsibilities was the preparation of the moving [the contents] of the Museum of Barcelona. Nobody thought it was necessary. This idea was purely that of Folch i Torres, who didn’t consider it very secure in Barcelona; after the campaign of the “Workers’ Solidarity,” he insisted until he obtained an order from the Council to move everything to the Museum at Olot. He put me in charge with the direction of the difficult task of cutting the enormous Romanesque apses into moveable sections. This occupied precious days of my time for the saving of many things that still remained abandoned.

Every day, unknown objects were found in the most unexpected places. For example, after a few months, in a little abandoned convent in Barcelona, Camilo Bas, one of our collaborators discovered a magnificent alabaster head, a 14th century piece, and a Gothic iron grille. At the same time, some of the spontaneous rescuers began to hand over works of art to the Generalitat. The painters’ syndicate of the Carrels dels Arcs handed over some statues and a grille from Santa Ana, and a magnificent Aragonese retablo to us. A syndicate installed in the house of Mr. Milà on the Passeig de Gràcia, gave us some gothic retablos that were a part of Milà’s collection. Another committee, installed in the Casa de la Virreina, contributed the magnificent retablo by Pau Vergós. In the same way, the retablos of the Marquis de Robert were collected; others were found in the country house of the Conde family in Prat de Llobregat, and others in the houses of Joaquín Carreras, Fontana, Dr. Soler, Vidal, Rusiñol, etc.

In the middle of the month of September it was possible to establish the first inventory of the state of monuments and works of art that remained more or less under the control of the Generalitat. At any rate, there still remained an infinite number of little towns about which we didn’t even have the slightest information. I generated an inventory of absolutely securely documented works. The Culture Council proposed to publish it in a pamphlet to recognize the role of the Generalitat in the protection of the
Artistic Patrimony. A small memorandum was edited, but its publication remained in the air. After a few months the Propaganda Commission took the manuscript from the Culture Council, and with modifications of its preliminary text, published a pamphlet in English and French entitled *The Salvage of Catalonia's Historical and Artistic Patrimony*, whose publication coincided with the inauguration of the exhibition of Catalan art in Paris. This pamphlet includes the inventory that I edited, with clear indication of lost and burned objects, and the list of artistically important churches that had been burned or trashed. This pamphlet has been badly understood by everyone. I think it was a newspaper in Brussels in which an extensive article was published against this pamphlet, intimating that people who could read between the lines would see proof in it of the irreparable destructions in Catalonia. Within the revolutionary circles in Barcelona this latter point of view was taken into consideration; I was accused of being a “shameful Fascist.” Some friends advised me that the accusation came from the same Propaganda Commission; I had to hide myself until the danger of the fateful “walk” abated.

I have also been violently accused for my collaboration in the book that *Cahiers d’Art* published in Paris in 1937 with the title *L’art de la Catalogne*. In effect, I am the author of the book in question, I had already prepared the greater part of it before the war. On a visit that Christian Zervos, editor of *Cahiers d’Art* made to Barcelona, he asked me for something to publish and I offered him the book, which is actually a summary notice about the evolution of art in Catalonia, from its origin until the formation of a United Spain. More than anything, it is a book of discovery with a very short text and a large quantity of good photographic reproductions. With this material in his hands, Zervos offered the Commissary of Propaganda the publication in French of a sensational book in defense of the Republic, and obtained important economic aid. Once in Paris, Zervos did nothing more than publish my whole book, prefacing it with a prologue signed by him, and dedicating the work to the political directors of Barcelona. This prologue is a string of falsehoods and exaggerations that constituted the basis of the accusations against the book. They printed three editions of it, one in French, the second I English and the third in German. The first two contain the cited dedication and prologue. The German edition is completely my book, just as I gave it to Zervos. I beg that the latter be the one judged.
I am not responsible for the additions incorporated to obtain an official subvention. 2,000 examples of the German edition were sold during the war in Germany. It seems that more should be added to demonstrate the absolute scientific spirit of my book.

It is important to realize, for the defense of my collaboration in the pamphlet The Salvage of Catalonia's Historical and Artistic Patrimony, that the list in it included in state of monuments and museums, was copied by the Marqués de Lozoya and sent by him in his capacity as General Sub-commissioner of the Defense of the National Artistic Patrimony to Dr. Walter W.S. Cook, President of the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University, of which I submit a photocopy.

Among the accusations that were published against me during the Spanish Tragedy with respect to my actions, was my participation in the visit of the Dean of Canterbury to Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid. One day I was called to the office of the Council of Culture, who ordered me to accompany the said Dean on a visit to the Cathedral, Pedralbes, museums, and other artistic monuments in Barcelona. During an entire day I went around Barcelona with the Dean, trying to show, in every way possible, the truth of what had occurred during the period of absolute anarchy. I took him not only to visit the work carried out to save the monuments and artworks, but also see the irreparable destruction caused by the fires. He gave me the impression that he deeply understood the truths hidden under those burnt-out naves of Santa Maria del Mar, and the thousands of paintings and furniture on deposit at the museums.

The next day, the Dean left for Valencia accompanied by one of the members of the Commission of Propaganda. For quite awhile I had wanted to find an opportunity that would permit me, without losing too much time, to see what our counterparts were doing in Valencia to rescue the artistic patrimony of the region. Also, rumors were that part of the treasures from the Prado Museum had been taken to Valencia. So I asked permission to incorporate me into this voyage, which was leaving by car from Barcelona. I thus had the chance to visit the city of Castellón on the way, where they were demolishing a gothic church—a deed I denounced in Valencia. Once there, I had the chance to see the stockpile of artworks in the Colegio de la Patriarca, and the work they were doing on the Serrano Gate to make it into a storage facility for paintings from the Prado. After saying goodbye to the Dean to go back to Barcelona, and taking advantage of the departure of
the car of the Propaganda Commission, the Commissioner proposed the idea of continuing on the expedition to Madrid. The prospect of visiting Madrid was an irresistible temptation. I accepted and I rejoined the expedition, which was made in a car under the direction of an employee of the Minister of Propaganda who was fluent in English. We were in Madrid for a little more than 24 hours, during which I was only able to visit the Royal Palace and the gathered artworks in the church of San Francisco el Grande. The Dean undertook a series of visits arranged by the Ministry of Propaganda. Returning to Valencia, he caught a plane to France, and I took a train to Barcelona.

After the visit of the Dean of Canterbury, I was called many times to serve as a guide for visiting foreigners. I tried to avoid these missions whenever possible, but in the end I realized that the praises of the visitors made about the organization of saving works of art resulted in benefits for the organization, and by extension to the works of art. In this way, thanks to being one of the few things being done in Barcelona that everyone could talk about, even if they had to hide their true sentiments and not force imagination, we began to receive more effective support from the authorities.

On another occasion I accompanied a mission of archeologists to Catalonia, sent by the English government to see the damage suffered by our artistic treasures. I took them to Montserrat, which was practically intact, and to Vic, where they saw the burned Cathedral. At Olot, I took them to see the biggest collection of art existing in Catalonia. In Girona, we visited the Cathedral and the museums. At Poblet, we were received by Mr. Toda. Tarragona was the last stop, after which they went on to Valencia. As a commentary on that visit, I beg you to read the article that Sir Frederick Kenyon, the head of that commission, published in the Times of London.

Folch y Torres showed up one day in Barcelona and put me in charge of collecting some works of art in Lleida, Tarragona, Vic and Girona, which were to be part of the exhibition that, in agreement with the Generalitat, he was organizing in Paris. A few days later, I received a letter from Dr. Walter W.S. Cook, Chairman of the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University, announcing his visit to Europe and asking if it were possible for me to come to Paris to speak with him. After a long process, and thanks to the Exhibition of Catalan Art at the Jeu de Paume Museum, I was given a passport. I spoke with Dr. Cook, who tried to convince me not to return to Barcelona. He offered to
cover my expenses to conduct a photographic campaign covering French Romanesque art, sponsored by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Frick Art Reference Library, and Harvard and Princeton Universities. Unfortunately I couldn’t accept. My wife and children were effectively hostages in Barcelona guaranteeing my return from France. I asked him to postpone the expedition until after the war. As I will recount later, Cook kept his word. I returned to Barcelona after a few days. Waiting me was a new role in the Spanish Drama. I was mobilized. My mobilization might have been able to be avoided with simple action by Mr. Martorell by making my service necessary at the Section of Monuments of the Generalitat. Before leaving for the front, I made my last expedition. With Josep Bardolet, we made a quick trip to see all the churches in the Taüll and Boi valleys, to verify that the great Romanesque churches were well preserved and that only the furniture had disappeared. In the end, part of the latter was found already stored in Lleida. To complete my service at the Monuments Section, I edited a Memoir of which I have the original, with annotations by Mr. Martorell, advising the Culture Council of the state of the collections of artworks existing in Catalonia.

I completed my military service with the draft of 1925 in the Topographical Brigade of Engineers, and completed my active service with the rank of Sergeant. Within the first months of the war, all the officers and classes were called up. I did not present myself and continued working with the group saving the Artistic Patrimony. A few months later, the order for my presentation arrived at the Culture Council, advising the Council that they had opened up a charge of desertion for me. I was obligated to present myself at the barracks, and thanks to a letter about the work I had been doing, I was saved from having to enter a disciplinary battalion. But in the end, I couldn’t avoid my mobilization. After much negotiation, effectively aided by the College of Architects, in place of joining the regular army I was able to obtain a position as fortifications architect. They sent me to Lleida and my final destination was the subsector of Gandesa, where I arrived in the beginning of October, 1937. My mission consisted in raising, with the aid of three soldiers, the detailed plans of the fortification works of the segment that would cover the municipal entities of Gandesa, Bot, Horta, Bates, Villala and Pobla de Masaluca. After a few months they ordered me, with the aid of civilians, to clean the existing fortifications that had been built at the beginning of the revolution, and to finish
others that had been started. It was hard to find men willing to work on the fortifications, and the work progressed at an extraordinary slow rate. This long period of calm enabled me to work on art studies. In Gandesa I wrote a book on 14th-century painting. My continuous trips to Lleida permitted me to direct the installations in the museum of the latter city, the reconstruction of big gothic images broken during the first days of the revolution whose pieces were heroically salvaged, and the cleaning of the stone retablos of Castello de Farfanya and others. Un addition, I took advantage of the ease I had to travel from one part to another within my zone and neighboring ones to continue with the inventory of the losses suffered by the artistic monuments.

In this task I was aided by Mr. Burgal who, like myself had been mobilized and put in charge of the Fraga section. With him, I visited the major part of the Aragonese towns. But unfortunately, the loss of the Artistic Patrimony in the Cinca region was almost total. In my excursions, I discovered unknown Romanesque wall paintings in the town of Yeso (Huesca). On another trip, some 16th century panel paintings, part of the huge retablo of the marvelous church of Valderrobles Castle. In the same church I recognized, torn into a great number of pieces, some big compositions, in oil on canvas, some in color and others in grisaille, that surely decorated the doors of the retablo mayor. All of these objects were deposited in the Paladella house in Gandesa, which had been ceded to the army to lodge the fortification engineers. I wrote at various times to Barcelona to come and collect this improvised cache of rescued art, which was left in Gandesa when the army famously retreated to Aragon. Before leaving Gandesa, I left all the paintings carefully placed and wrapped up in the Paladella house, with a big poster explaining the artistic character of such pictures.

Immediately after crossing the Ebro, I was transferred to the General Command of the Army Engineers of the East, situated in the town of Sant Guim (Lleida). From there I was sent to Solsona, where, put in charge of the carpentry and hardware, I remained until the autumn of 1938. The time in Solsona permitted me to intervene in the installation being made at the Episcopal Museum. Then I proposed to Mr. Martorell, the General Commander of Engineers, that, utilizing the army working brigades, I could be permitted to protect the Romanesque portals in the region. In spite of the opposition of the commissars, Col. Martorell gave me this authorization and all kinds of facilities to
carry out this work. In this way, we protected with costly abutting constructions, the
Romanesque portals of Agramunt, one of the jewels of Romanesque Spanish sculpture
and that of Cubells, an important 13th-century work. These protections, realized by the
army and reported to the Monuments Section by me, inspired the latter to occupy
themselves with carrying out some protections as, for example, the tomb of St. Eulalia of
Barcelona Cathedral, the retablo mayor of Vic Cathedral, the portal at Ripoll and some
sculptures of the Catalan Generalitat.

Although I could seldom go to Barcelona, I made sure never to lose contact with
the Generalitat. At any rate, I always had control of the work of transport and restoration
of the paintings of Sijena, Cardona, etc, that were continuing at Passeig de Gràcia, 41. I
also directed the removal of the paintings of Santa Maria of Terrassa, carried out by
Robert, and the cleaning of the 11th-century paintings that were discovered in this church.
I visited the museums of Vic and Manresa as often as possible, where objects were still
being collected. The museum in Vic had been under the control of Josep Bardolet for
quite some time, and very well protected by a municipal employee, who guarded them
jealously.

During all this time, the Artistic Patrimony had become a dependency of the
Subsecretary of Culture, which had moved from Madrid to Valencia and from there to
Barcelona, bringing with them an enormous artistic treasure, principally integrated into
the Prado Museum. The new director was a completely disoriented man, and with only
poor Martorell to advise him, he didn’t know what to do, in spite of his good intentions.
Under the influence of the ostentatious personnel sent by the National Commission, it
occurred to him to modify the various collections of art. The museums were rapidly
taken apart, they gave orders to wrap them up piece by piece, and the crates taken to new
collection venues, near the French border. Though I was the effective director of the Vic
Museum, they told me nothing about this, or the locations where the works had been
taken. I later learned that they were divided up among some big farmhouses in the
foothills of the Pyrenees, in the province of Girona.

Named the head of workshops of the Engineers Commandary, I was sent to
Manresa, where by military order, some carpentry and hardware workshops had been
requisitioned. There we began the construction of barricades for the army, particularly
destined for hospitals. In Manresa, I did everything I could to reorganize workshops that had been collectivized or sacked. I returned each one to its respective owner, and these now became the army’s employees. If you believe it is convenient, you can ask for information from the carpenters and toolmakers of Manresa about how I handled them, during the last four months of the Battle of Catalonia.

A few days before the surrender of Manresa, I organized the moving of the shops to Sant Feliu de Codinas, and from there to Ripoll, and later to Olot, where we only remained for two days. I then received the order to go with the workshop soldiers towards Molló, from which they imprisoned me in France.

I crossed the French Frontier on 7 February, 1939, arriving at Prat de Molló, where I telephoned Mr. Marcel Robin, Director of Archives of the Eastern Pyrenees, who came to look for me. He put me up at his house in Perpignan, waiting for a telegram that I had sent to Dr. Walter W.S. Cook, concerning the conversation we had had many months before in Paris. [Cook, in collaboration with Henri Focillon, was able to arrange for Gudiol to photograph French Romanesque monuments, and by December, Gudiol was able to go on to New York, to the Institute of Fine Arts, to offer art history classes there, and later also in Toledo, Ohio; he was able to return to Spain in 1941, where after proper “purification,” he was able to go to work for Teresa Amatller, who had begun an art history foundation in her house at Paseo de Gracia, 41].