

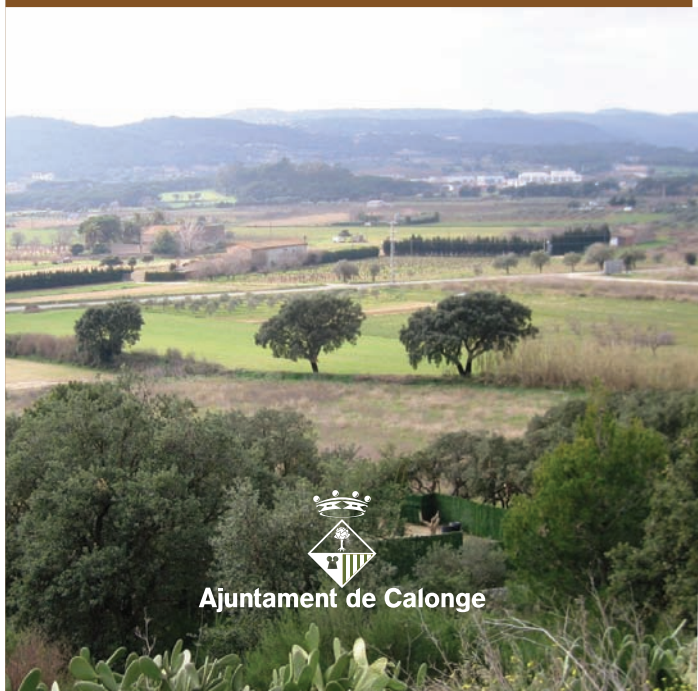


5th edition

# Discover Calonge and Sant Antoni...

## The Collet, Puigsesforques and the plain of de Calonge

*"Between history and nature"*



Ajuntament de Calonge



# Presentation

The route we propose is an initial introduction to the cultures that colonized the area since ancient times: the legacy left to us by the Romans in the Collet –close to the Es Monestri beach in Sant Antoni- to the remains of the megalithic ruins in Puigsesforques; Sant Daniel with its secular typical houses and a peaceful walk through the fields in the plain of de Calonge, until we return to our starting point.

The fertile plain that stretches before us is irrigated by several channels and streams; the channel Madral (main channel) to the east, and the main source, the Monells stream and the Basses stream that separates Puigsesforques from Sant Daniel.

The presence of man in this area can be traced back to remote times. It is said that the Rec Madral channel dates back to Roman times, when it was all marshland. Today, it consists of plots of arable land, and the fields grow mainly corn and olive trees.



The natural diversity found in the area is closely related to the rural atmosphere and man's transformation of the environment.

The small birds that populate the fields take advantage of the sown fields and insects to feed. The panoramic view of the plain offers breathtaking scenery. Slippery lizards can be seen on the houses and stone walls. The animals's farm, always present in Sant Daniel, increase the pleasure of a walk in this area.

The ideal moment for this route is either in the morning or in the evening, taking advantage of the early morning or late evening sunlight. Any season is good for it! The fields take on different forms and colours captivating our senses.





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- ⋯ Proposed itinerary
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Church/ hermitage



Dolmen or menhir



Tower



Exit

CALONGE

C-31

9

Municipal slaughterhouse

Plain of Calonge

8

Rec Madral  
(Main Channel)



The Roura tower

10



Madral channel

11

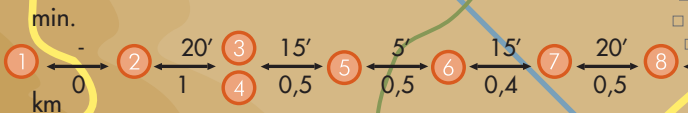
Calonge river

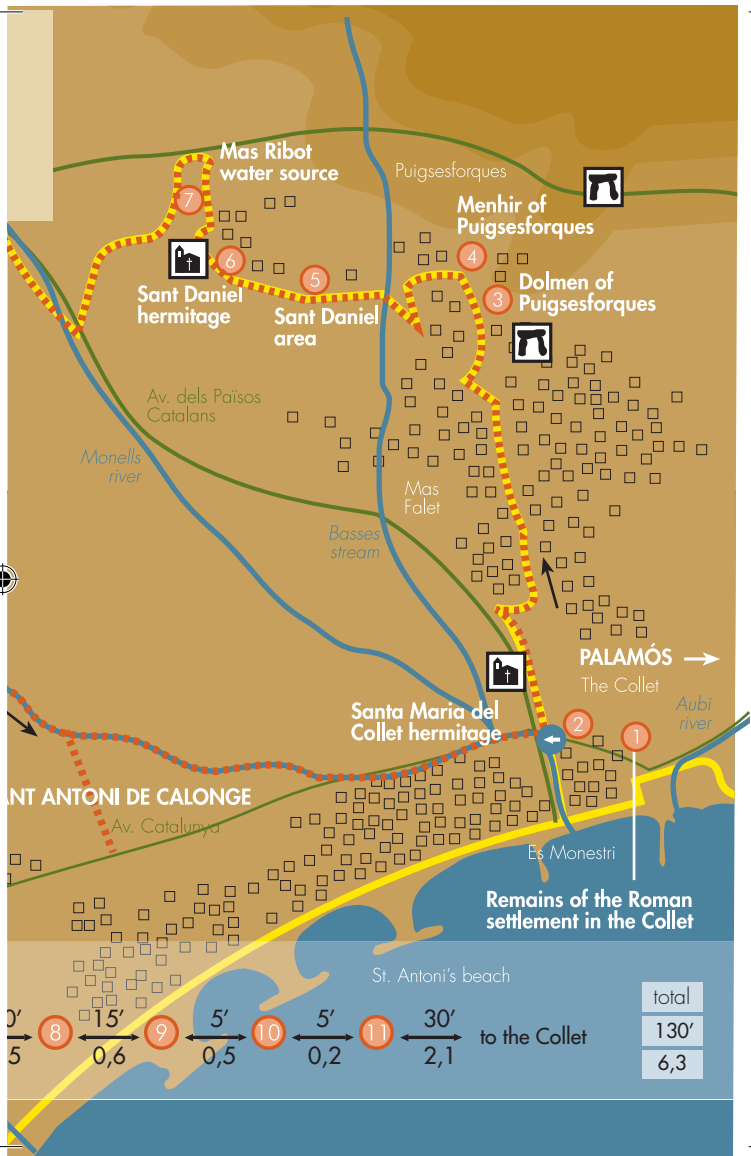
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# The Collet, Puigsesforques and the plain of Calonge

Time and distance of the route





# Technical information

- **Approximate total itinerary time:** 2 hours and 10 min.
- **Real walking time:** About 1 hour, 40 min.
- **Distance:** 6,3 km. Departure and arrival at the same point St. Antoni (the Collet).
- **Effort and difficulty:** low.
- **Gradient:** The part between Sant Daniel and Puigsesforques has a slight slope until we reach the dolmen and menhir. The rest of the walk is very flat.
- **Point of departure and arrival:** the Collet and arrival at Sant Antoni, with the possibility of returning to the same point or any other place in the town.
- **Signposts:** We will follow a local track-SL- (white and green stripes) to get from the Collet to the Roura tower. The stretch leading to Sant Antoni is not indicated.
- **Comments:** Be very careful when crossing the old cemetery road (about 200 metres) as there is heavy motor traffic.





## Description of the route

The route starts in the area known as the Collet, at the point where avenue dels Països Catalans and avenue de Catalunya in Sant Antoni cross. The Roman ruins ① and the Santa Maria hermitage ②, the two points of interest at the start of the route, are currently not open to the public, but are due to be conditioned and accesible in the future; until such a time, we will walk pass them.

This first lap, unfortunately, takes us through built areas. It takes us through the streets of the Collet, Puigsesforques and Sant Daniel residential estates. However, the prints we discover in the midst of modernization will give us a clear picture of how the early inhabitants of the area lived.

We will follow the avenue dels Països Catalans, towards Calonge. We will then turn into the street of Verge de Núria and then take the first road to the left (Galícia street) until we reach the end of it, to once again go up to the left, until we reach Collet street. We will continue until we reach Menhir street. About a 150 metres from there is the beginning of a small forest path. A wooden signpost will lead us to the dolmen ③ and the menhir ④ of Puigsesforques. The location is not coincidental; in early times, tombs and landmarks of this type used to be placed in the highest points of the region.

We will walk downhill and once again we find ourselves in the midst of houses. On the other side of the street is a steep passage





that leads us to a lower level street. A few metres farther away, to the right, is a cross road leading to a pine wood. It is a shortcut to get to the Sant Daniel neighbourhood ⑤, along the top part of the Basses stream.

The first houses of the hamlet have a clearly rural appearance. Once we get to the country house known as Mas Rosselló, we must turn left and go up to Sant Daniel street. The hermitage ⑥ dedicated to this saint is at the top and is currently quite damaged.

The marks along the path lead us to the Mas Ribot water source ⑦, along the new streets of the Sant Daniel residential estate. This place is a green oasis, mainly due to the abundant current of water that oozes out of the subsoil and forms an anvil-shaped pond.

We walk along Gírgola street towards the old cemetery road. Be careful! This crossroad is very dangerous as there is a lot of traffic. Go on about 200 metres on the right. We will pass by the typical houses Mas Escapa and Mas Domènec.

Before crossing the bridge over the main road, we will take the tarred road that leads us to the slaughter house building. This is the first contact with the plain of Calonge ⑧. On the way we will pass some carob trees. Their fruits release a smell that revive old times.





At the slaughterhouse 9 we will take the path towards Sant Antoni. From this point it is easy to reach the Calonge town centre, just 10 minutes away in the opposite direction. In the distance we can see the silhouette of the Roura tower 10, top to a wooded hill.

We will leave the S.L (Local path). marks when we get to a hundred-year-old cork oak on the side of the path. At this point we turn right and follow the signals that lead us to the Fondils stone and the Ronquillo cave. Though more difficult, this itinerary is also highly recommended.

Once we have crossed the Madral stream 11 the path becomes very stony. From this point onwards, the irrigation channel turns into a path. From here to Sant Antoni there are no signs on the path. Walking straight till the seaside, there are many different itineraries. When we get to the Orsa building, we can take Puigsapera street or follow the path till the IES Puig Cargol (secondary school) and further along until we get to the starting point and end of our itinerary. At this point there are about two kilometers left to be done.



## Points of interest

# The remains of the Roman settlement in the Collet

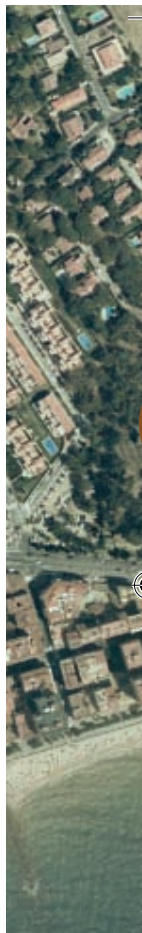
Located in a privileged spot, the Collet settlement (according to historians and archeologists) served as a trading post for the Carthaginians or Phoenicians. There is documented proof of this occupation during Roman times. Today, the Collet area has been declared a Protected Archeological Site in recognition of its historic interest.

The activities carried out in the settlement between the 2nd century BC and the 7th century AD are evident through the floors, walls, mosaics, remains of houses and other daily utensils.

The large kilns we see were used to bake pottery and other utensils employed to making limestone. All earthenware that could not be used was dumped in a certain area. This has allowed us to determine that the main industry was dedicated to make amphorae for transporting wine, as well as other household items.

The location of the Collet settlement, close to the sea, with vineyards in the background, made it the ideal place for exporting wine to the entire Mediterranean area. As a matter of fact, the coastline, that was probably deeper inland, also appears as an ancient commercial harbour.

Once the pottery industry was abandoned, the area was put to use as a necropolis for the Collet settlement.





Santa Maria del Mar  
hermitage

Remains of the Roman  
settlement in the Collet



Items of daily use



Lamp



## Santa Maria del Collet hermitage

At the top of the hill, before us is the Santa Maria del Collet monastery built by Benedictine nuns and dating back to the 12th century. In the 14th century its name was changed to Santa Maria del Mar, as shown in some maps.

The monastery together with the surrounding lands, that were slowly acquired through donations or simply bought, was administered by the religious community, under the guidance of the Prioress. According to documents found, it was never a large extension. Life in the monastery was limited to retreats, prayer and work. It was surely a resting place for pilgrims in the area.

This religious community occupied the place for many centuries during which they were exposed to all type of disasters and hardships caused by pirate attacks, plagues and failing crops. There was a time when the monastery was occupied by just one nun. The buildings gradually deteriorated due to lack of maintenance, before the place was finally rented out for cultivation, even though the order retained its ownership.

The place was finally turned into a farmhouse but today it is used as a masia (country house).

The property was recently purchased by the Town Council with the idea of restoring it and using it as a centre for study of the Roman ruins of the Collet.





Details of the hermitage



## The dolmen and menhir of Puigsesforques

As in other towns in the area, the name Puigsesforques (gallows hill) comes from an act that was quite common in the Middle ages: the execution of criminals. Gallows were put up in the highest landpoints in the area, from which, as an example for the rest of the population, political detractors were hanged and their bodies left out in the open to be devoured by the crows.

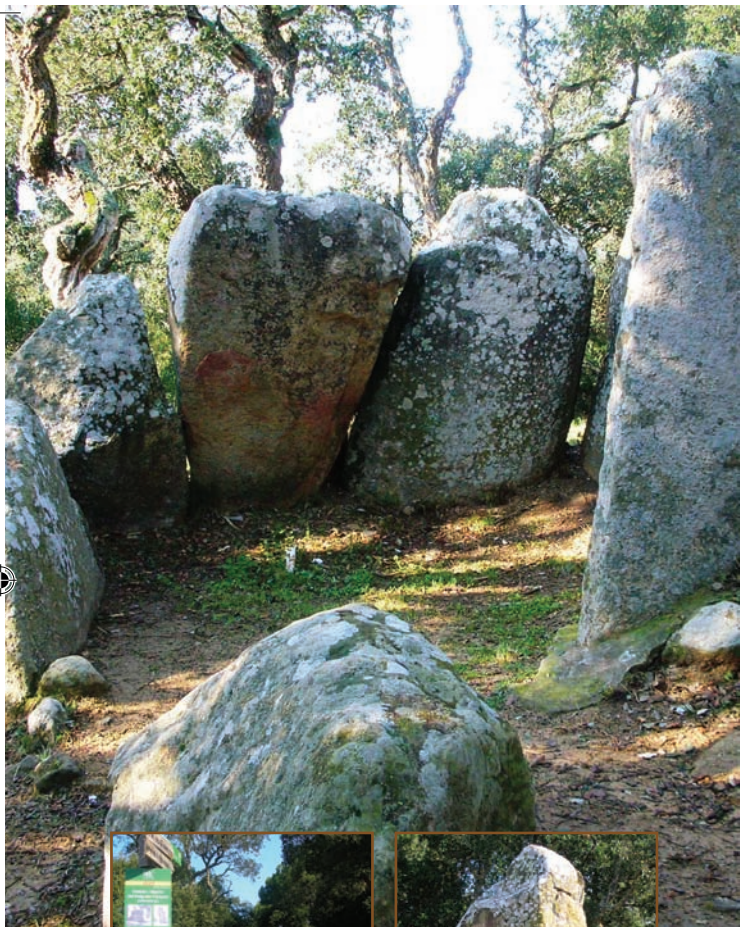
The dolmen and menhir at the top of the hill are a testimony of prehistoric man in the area. Both monuments probably date back to 3400-3000 BC. Different remains of prehistoric communities, such as bones, pottery, silex, etc, have been discovered in the neighbourhood.

Dolmens are collective funerary monuments built with large blocks of stone, vertical for the walls and horizontal for the roof. They used to form chambers and outline corridors. The menhir, or monolith, was a large stone placed vertically and its function might have been to mark the boundaries of a territory.

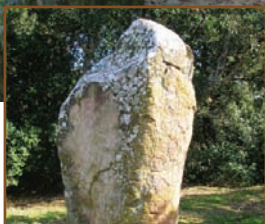
The menhir, damaged in the course of time, was put up again around 1958 and is considered to be the largest in the Gavarres mountain range.







Path to the dolmen



Menhir

## The Sant Daniel neighbourhood and the hermitage

The Sant Daniel neighbourhood is one of the historical sites in the Calonge municipality. It was built around several country houses and still maintains a great part of the rural architecture and way of life. It is composed of a network of small, narrow and steep streets presided by the small church dedicated to Sant Daniel.

Some of the most traditional country houses are: Mas Fonalleras, Mas Escapa, Can Tonillo, Can Crònics, Mas Pere, Can Friu, Can Llongo, Can Falet, and others which are less relevant. Most of them are devoted to dry agriculture, vineyards or cereal fields. Walking through the neighbourhood, the noises of the farm animals, hens, ducks, geese or peacocks, mix and form a small tumult.

The hermitage has an annex building. The ensemble has been quite damaged in the course of time. The chapel probably dates back to the 16th or 17th centuries and has always had a humble appearance. It may have been abandoned at the beginning of the 20th century.

The top of the hill offers a breathtaking view over Sant Antoni, the plain, the Calonge old town and the first foothills of the Gavarres mountain range.





The Sant Daniel hermitage



Chickens

## The Mas Ribot water source

Sheltered between the new Sant Daniel residential estate and the northern side of the road, is a green and luxuriant area known as the Mas Ribot water source. This is a group of water mines that form a large artificial pond.

The level of water in the subsoil is very high at this point. It has been documented that during the Romans in the Collet built an aquaduct to channel the precious resource to the village. There are still remains of Roman clay as it passed around Mas Falet. In modern times, this aquaduct provided water to some plant nurseries just below.

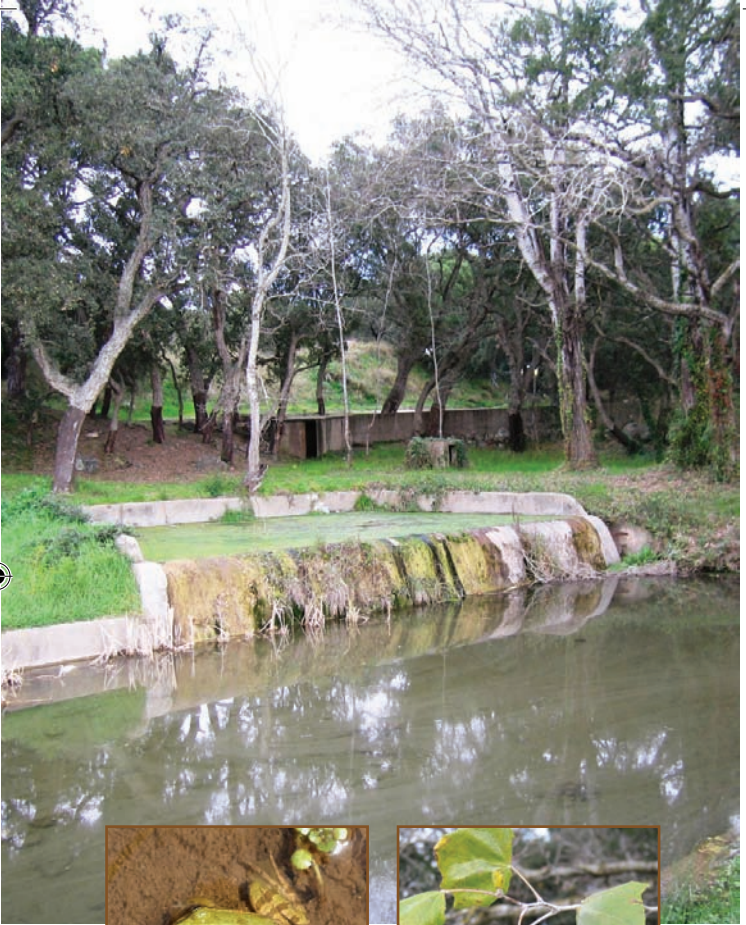
The vegetation is luxuriant. Some well-rooted cork oaks that are stripped every 12 years once they have achieved the age of 30 years, teach us that these valleys were once populated by different types of cork trees, with a thick and thorny undergrowth composed of heather, sarsaparilla or strawberry trees.

Hard-bark white poplars were planted next to the irrigation channel. Today they have reached considerable sizes.

We can also see reed mace and many other algae covering the bottom of the ponds. It is a good place for the proliferation of many types of amphibians, such as frogs, toads and tadpoles.







Frog



Poplar



## Plain of Calonge

The stretch of land that forms the space limited by the Calonge stream and the Sant Daniel irrigation channel, or Basses stream, is known as plain of Calonge. The mild gradient that gradually descends to the sea allows the water to run softly.

Water is abundant in the plain. Many vegetable groves have their own well. Part of the water used in the town currently comes from several aquifers located in the plain. The abundance of water promoted the creation of many farmhouses of proven tradition, such as Cal Federal or Mas Colomer, Mas Cremat, Can Coia, Can Domènec and Can Escapa. Some of them currently uninhabited. In recent times, the construction of small cabins or huts devoted to agriculture has proliferated.

The ecosystem forming the open plain is full of vineyards, olive groves and corn fields. The colours in the fields keep changing according to the time of the year, from green in spring, dotted with red poppies, to pale yellow in summer. In autumn and at the beginning of winter, the fields look barren as they prepare for the following crop and then the earth is tilled and aired.

Many open-space birds can be observed: species of chaffinches, goldfinch, redpolls, robins, pipits with their characteristic chirp, different species of larks, and many more. Worth of mention are also the starlings, always standing in line on the electric cables.





Pipit



Carob

## The municipal slaughterhouse

The building known as slaughterhouse is located by the main road linking Calonge and Sant Antoni. It was planned for the essential function of providing food to both villages thus promoting their potential growth. It was also a way of ensuring that the animals were sacrificed following healthy and sanitary measures.

The architect was Joan Roca Pinet (Girona 1885-1973), creator of several buildings of Modernist influence such as Casa Norat in Girona, of Novecentist influence such as Casa Masllorens in Olot, following with an evolution towards formal rationalism. Before the onset of the Spanish Civil War, he planned many industrial premises, such as power stations –over the Ter river in Bescanó–, factories and schools. From the beginning of the 20th century, around 1911, the building of the Calonge slaughterhouse was undertaken.

A distinctive characteristic of this building is its windmill located on the tower. The current windmill replaces an old system, using eolic force to raise the water from the wells under the slaughterhouse, accumulate it in a reservoir and provide running water through the gravity inertial force.







Detail of the windmill



Old drawing of the front

## The Roura tower

The Roura tower, of Modernist style, is located at the top of the hill overlooking the plain at its foot. This hill is known as Puig de les Aixades or Torre del Baró. Originally there was an old country house with a defence tower which was demolished and the new manor was built in its place.

It dates back to the 19th century and coincides with the golden age of the cork industry in the area. Its first owner and builder, Enric Lluís Roura, was a prominent entrepreneur in the cork sector. Inside the manor the original noble pieces of furniture are still on display.

It is surrounded by different species of trees which were planted many years ago. The course of time and the experiences lived made them very robust, some of them reaching monumental sizes. Worth of mention is a eucalyptus whose trunk measures 6.50 metres. It is said to have survived the 1956 frost when most of the plants died. Other nice specimens are a type of cork oak, locally called *suroli*, a hybrid between a cork oak and an *ilex*, some common cork oaks and a magnificent *ilex*. We can also find robust strawberry trees and a cedar, among other ornamental vegetation.





Monumental eucalyptus

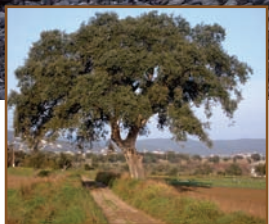
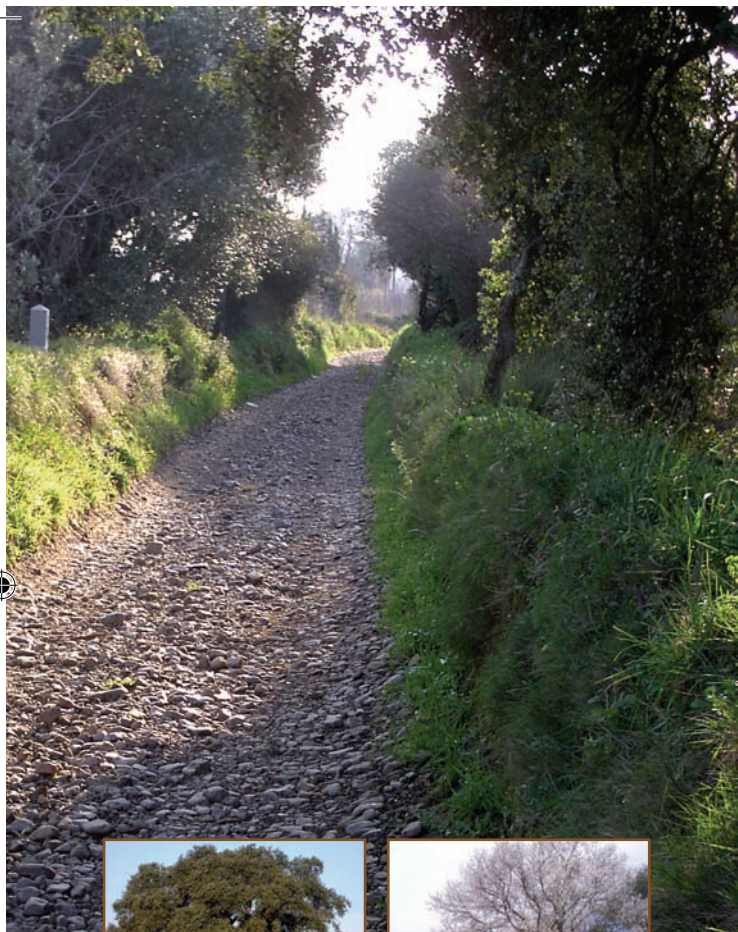
## The Madral channel

The Madral irrigation channel, drains the water from the plain of Calonge. Originally though, its purpose was the artificial canalization promoted by the Romans. At a certain point in the plain, the channel itself becomes a stony path due to the sediment that is dragged along. For this reason the area around the new cemetery is known as Pedregalar (rocky ground).

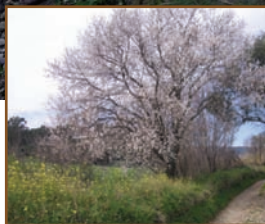
In some parts, the Madral channel is higher than the fields, and in others it is quite shallow, for which reason it tends to overflow when it rains heavily.

On the sandy banks of the path, pomegranate grow and their fruits are eaten by frugivore birds in times of abundance. During winter, the pomegranate hang dry and open from the bush. There are some century-old olive trees near the irrigation channel, and the almond trees, in bloom in winter, form pink and white passages. There are also rows of tamarisks showing the temporary water course.



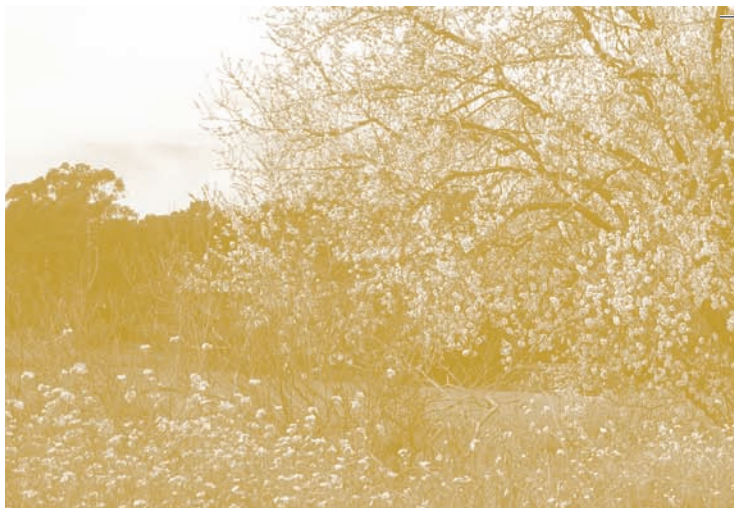


Cork oak



Almond tree





## Notebook:

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