

el Periòdic News

INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR OF THE WORK «DEL CONSELL DE LA TERRA AL CONSELL GENERAL» (FROM THE COUNCIL OF THE EA

Jordi Guillamet

FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF ANDORRAN STUDIES AND HISTORIAN

«I have made the collection, now the next step is needed, which is to make the history of the General Council»

LAURA GÓMEZ RODRÍGUEZ
ESCALDES - ENGORDANY

We speak with Jordi Guillamet, the author of the work *Del Consell de la Terra al Consell General*, the former director of the Institute of Andorran Studies and historian, who takes us into an exhaustive analysis of the political history of Andorra, collecting the 900 years of history of the country's highest legislative body. Thus, Guillamet has managed not only to trace the evolution of the General Council, from its first steps to the present day, but also to unearth valuable anecdotes and changes that have marked the institution. One of the highlights of his work is the recovery of a lost book of facts, which contains more than 120 years of information on the functioning of this legislative chamber and the treasures hidden in

the Archive of the Seven Keys.

—How did the idea of creating «*Del consell de la Terra al Consell General*» arise?

—I have a degree in medieval history. Until my retirement, I was the director of the Institute of Andorran Studies. When I retired, I thought I couldn't sit in front of the TV. Then, I had the pleasure of collecting, in whatever way, the public positions in the history of Andorra. At the same time, a project called the National Story was launched and co-directed with the heritage director, Xavier Llovera and me, who had just retired. The National Report talked about the possibility of making the History Museum, which is badly needed here in Andorra.

To make the National Museum, it was necessary to find elements to put inside the museum,



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sexy elements that would attract attention. In order to be able to develop the project through the Ministry of Culture, we created a team of historians to update the history of Andorra and many other things. Among these many other things, I took it upon myself to prepare this list of authorities: trustees, councilors, consuls, notaries, etcetera.

The list that is published in the work «*Del Consell de la Terra al Consell General*» was built by looking for old documentation that we have in the country. We Andorrans are lucky that we have not suffered disasters or such things, or wars. Which means that most of it is preserved in the Seven Keys Archive.

—How do you explain this file to young people?

—The Archive of the Seven Keys is a cabinet with 7 locks and historically, when it was opened, a councilor from each of the seven parishes with the corresponding key opened it. Currently, what is there is a lot of information: scrolls, momentous documents of politics and administration, and the act books, which first began to be created in 1580 and reach the present day, until the typewriter, because what is now known as the Bulletin of the General Council is born.

—Returning to the data collection of the charges, how did you find them? Because we are talking about old, handwritten books.

—I found the positions because I was lucky that at the end of each minute book there are lists

ARTH TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL)

of those who were part of the General Council. Each book has its listing, for example: Councilors from the year 1680 and below, Consuls from the year 1680. Now these minute books are about 300 pages long and the handwriting is very bad, it is very badly written, and they do not put punctuation marks or accents. Of course, from time to time I found some news or some funny anecdote.

Then there is the whole list of names, which is very good, and then there is a line with lines to each one in 'lines'. And each 'line' means each of the meetings attended by the Council. When it came to the end of the year, they counted the 'lines' and with that they got paid. So these lists are great for counting.

The collection goes from 1133 to 2023. Why do I choose this date of 1133? Because the first fact that makes Andorra what it is today are the letter of 1278, which put an end to a fight that existed between Pere d'Urg, bishop of Urgell, and Roger Bernat III, the Count of Foix. A fact that gives Andorra its historical peculiarity is that it is a co-principality.

Before that date, in 1278, Andorra already existed, but it was not well delimited, but there was an early organization that made it so that when there was an important event that affected the country, a representative from



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each parish - at that time only six, because Escaldes-Engordany was not created until the 70s - attended this event.

From 1133 to 2023 there are almost 900 years of information. What I have done is take this document from 1133, I have told him that it is document number 1. And I have put whether it is a representative of each parish, etc., and I explain in two or three lines what the document is about. This is called a register, noting that this document can be consulted in the Archive of the Six Keys and is parchment number 34, for example. In addition, I put the names of the six people who come out here. So until reaching 2023. There are more than 1,000 of these appointments.

The second part is that all these names that come up I have indexed them. And this is where some difficulty arose. I have in-

dexed them for centuries. Because in Andorra there are names that last a lifetime and that are different and that there are maybe 50 pages of the surname Torres, for example.

—What difficulties?

—I have had difficulties because sometimes the same person comes out with three different names. How is this possible? Why did they change if they went from one house to another. What I have done is unify the names and unify the toponyms. Another problem. That there can be four or five different people with the same name.

—So, how did the Earth Council work?

—The Land Council, which was what the General Council was called at first, and which later, from the 19th century, came to be called that. They were not elected, the members who were part of it were what they called here pro homine, good people, who were close to being the richest in each parish, they were reproduced until eternity and the families. There are very long families of political positions. At first there were consuls and councilors mixed, but then there came a time when it was regulated in a certain way.

The consuls were elected every year, they were named in the

month of December. Therefore, if two consuls were appointed in December 1690, it means that these consuls would be consuls for the whole of 1691. And the consuls of the previous year who resigned were part of the Council. Consequently, the General Council of 24 members - four per parish, because there were still six - were two current consuls in office and the two consuls from the previous year. In other words, those who folded were consuls and, moreover, they were advisers. They went from local or municipal administrative management to national management. This was the case until 1866, when there was a new reform and the consuls disappeared from the map. Returning to my work, I have been collecting all the consuls and advisers, and basically, I have taken them out of the minutes. From 1600 to 1640. From 1640 to the year that continued. But I find that there is a gap. From 1744 to 1864. A record book is missing. It was historically missing...I realized it was 120 years old with no information. But I found it. ●

WWW.

You can read the second part of the interview tomorrow, Wednesday, or right now, in its entirety, on our website



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