

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

«In 2026 we will have finished feeding the 1,000-page PDF that we have now»

LAURA GÓMEZ RODRÍGUEZ
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Jordi Guillamet's dedication to the history of Andorra goes far beyond a simple collection of data. His passion for the study of the General Council and the positions that have marked the institutional history of the country has resulted in a monumental work, but not without challenges.

After years of research, Guillamet has filled important gaps in Andorran documentation, despite facing obstacles such as the disappearance of minutes books and the lack of continued support for historical research. His personal history is full of anecdotes that reveal his persistence to recover lost documents and his struggle to keep the history of Andorra alive.

—Did you try to find this informa-

tion?

—Yes, and I found it. Since the consuls, who were in the General Council, came from the municipalities, I took the act books of the municipalities. My wife, who also has a degree in Medieval Studies and is also semi-retired, took these minute books and started making lists of consuls. She spent three months making lists. We pretty much filled that void that was there. But there is a problem. In 1937 there was a flood and they were taken to the Municipality of Encamp with the corresponding archive and documentation. Added to this fact was the fact that criminal justice at the time of the counts of Foix and the bishop of Urgell was in charge of the two co-prince authorities, but this lasted until the year 1993, until the Constitution. For this reason, I searched for information to fill the void in the



CONSELL GENERAL

courts of Veedoria.

While I was doing all the research, the proposal came to me to use the collection as a work, although I did not have the vision of a book. I originally wanted to make the list to give it to the Ministry of Culture, but for various reasons and some confusion in the middle, we didn't end up making the list, but the collection and the work.

—What happened to the missing book?

—I complained, bitterly and publicly, that this record book was missing. But maybe 80 years had been missing. And one day, the director of one of the country's media announced that this book was missing. After the publication, I got a call from the general administration and told me that the book had appeared. The book owner tells his lawyer that he has the book and wants it back. From this point, a whole process begins to be able to recover the record book, with a complaint filed with Interpol in the meantime, interventions by people from the administration, lawyers, etc. Un-

til we could go to La Seu d'Urgell to retrieve it.

—The work is finished, then?

—There are small inaccuracies that we will correct. At the same time, since you can already consult these minutes books that are printed on the internet, but the letters are hellish, we are transcribing them. In other words, we redo a record book and put in commas, periods, accents, with previously recognized rules.

—What will be the next step?

—When we have transcribed these minutes, which I estimate we will have finished in 2026, we will have to feed this 1,000-page PDF and, once we consider it closed, we will publish it on paper.

—Where does the interest in the legislative chamber as such come from?

—Well, history in the Council has never been made. I haven't done it either. I have made a collection of the people who participated in creating this story. Then, the next step is for the history of the General Council to be made, with this book, which will be very useful to historians.

—What are the most relevant positions that you have seen or that mark history?

—They are the trustees and councilors, the 24, now 28, and the one who presides over this. But this is not stable. It begins to be stable in the second half of the 17th century. Before, when the Council was very active, it had a lot of activity and this is reflected in the minutes. The trustees, who were the administrative representatives, stopped doing these types of acts from the 17th century. In the 19th century it was organized much better. There are boards, there are specific depart-

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ments that deal with issues, but they are always advisers. When they went to Puigcerdà, Paris or La Seu to claim the rights of Andorrans, they took official documents with them to say that we had a privilege that says we can trade with France and Spain even if they are at war. Then they had a box, also with six locks, which has not been preserved, and then they said that the notary would come tomorrow, that the councilors would come, open the box, and take what they needed. They took what they needed, went on a trip, showed it and returned it, and then the record book says: «Today those papers have returned».

—What was the purpose of this work?

— Because they say that the people who know their history can change it and can progress. Do you think that there is something that has changed now in the way of consuming culture, without knowing the culture and the history? In other words, today, the focus we put on history has changed. Here in Andorra we historically had a lack of historians. From the 80s there are already people, and before that people had come from outside until history. Now, fortunately, we are in good health, we have a good group of historians, and therefore history must be conti-



Jordi Guillaumet during the presentation of the work in the lobby of the General Council.



«[The trustees and councilors of what is now the General Council] are the most relevant positions that have marked history»

nually revised. Here in Andorra we need to review it because until now we have basically dedicated ourselves to making institutional history with the little we had. Now we will be able to complete it, which is institutional history, and it will also allow us to know many things about everyday life and political life. Yes, based on these studies, the view we have of history will change.

—From what perspective could attention be drawn so that people are interested in this?

— I don't know, the historians plan is a poorly paid job and they don't hire them. Then most historians end up teaching. The profession of historian as such, there are few people who have come out of it dedicating themselves only to history. So it's not an attractive career. If you like history, study history, but do economics or do law, because here you will earn money.

—Is history taken care of?

—Yes. The Ministry of Culture is interested. And the current AR+I, which is the Old Cervantes Institute, should in theory work. I created, when I was director, a historical research center, but I think that is not enough developed.

—Why do you say that?

— Because the historical studies group puts effort into other things. So here, while I was there the last two years, we had done a lot of things, because I was far above it, we had made history races. We had created scholarships, we had paid for research work, we had done doctoral theses, all with the idea of creating a breeding ground. When I folded this disappeared, because they have dedicated themselves to writing novels, and that's how it is.

—No one reclaim it?

—I do it from time to time, but it's not enough. No, and whenever I can, like now, I complain.

— Have you filed the complaint formally?

—Yes, of course, it's up to me. It makes me angry because it's a good opportunity to be able to do a good job for our history... At La Seu they work very well with luck. And here, that we have all the resources and someone destined to do it, he dedicates himself to other things. I am sorry because there is a possibility to activate the story and it is not done. ●

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