

## Biographical sketch of the new member of the History-Archaeology Section



**Joan Ramon i Torres** (Eivissa [Ibiza], 1956) went to primary school at Sa Graduada and earned his baccalaureate at Institut Santa Maria d'Eivissa. His interest in studying the ancient world and prehistory was sparked at an early age, perhaps based on the conversations he heard at home in his family of seafarers, where mysteries were discussed like how old those

old amphorae often dredged up in the fishing nets from the bottom of the sea might be and who must have made them.

This led him to enroll in the Palma branch of the Universitat de Barcelona (UB) in 1975. However, he soon realised that the curriculum there was not enough for him to achieve the degree of specialisation he wanted, so in 1976 he transferred to the Barcelona branch of the UB, where he graduated in 1979.

At this university, he took classes taught by prominent figures in Catalan archaeology like J. Maluquer, P. Palol and especially M. Tarradell, whom he had met on Eivissa when he was writing *Eivissa cartaginesa* with his wife Matilde Font. He maintained and deepened his relationship with Tarradell over the years. He was the director of Joan Ramon's bachelor's report and later his doctoral thesis, yet apart from this academic relationship—Joan Ramon has always considered himself a disciple of Tarradell—they always maintained a cordial friendship.

While he was a student, he furthered his training with several stints of fieldwork in Catalonia, where he participated in excavations of Iberian settlements like Penya del Moro and Puig Castellet; in Tunisia, where he participated in the international programme in Carthage promoted by UNESCO; and also on Eivissa, where he conducted several emergency interventions, particularly in the Punic industrial zone on the outskirts of the city.

Joan Ramon was a precocious researcher who published articles even before he had finished his degree. His bachelor's report on the Punic amphorae on Eivissa was published in 1981 and soon became a referent for researchers in the western Mediterranean, who had solid guidelines for identifying and dating these materials for the first time. Virtually at the same time, he published another study which situated and clarified the same issues within the broader sphere of Punic amphora production. These studies were the essential instruments for research-

ers examining protohistoric trade on the Iberian Peninsula.

After the late 1980s, he joined the Consell Insular d'Eivissa i Formentera (CIEiF) as a senior technician, which involved a lot of administrative work. However, his status as a civil servant also enabled him to come in close, first-hand contact with all the archaeology on the two islands. As the outcome of this job, he published the volume entitled *Els monuments antics de les Illes Pitiüses* which is still a benchmark publication despite the years that have gone by since it appeared. Furthermore, he conducted prospecting and especially excavations in different sites around Eivissa, such as Ses Païsses in Cala d'Hort, a rural Punic and Roman habitat (the only one extensively excavated to date); Es Culleram sanctuary, which he reinterpreted; the sanctuary in Cap des Llibrell on the north-east side of the island; the archaic Phoenician settlement of Sa Caleta, the only one of its kind wholly excavated in the entire western Mediterranean; and works in the city of Eivissa, in both Dalt Vila and the industrial neighbourhood and the sectors of the necropolis conserved at the foot of Puig des Molins. All these projects have provided much more extensive information on the Eivissa's past, especially—but not only—from the Punic period.

All of this should not lead the reader to believe that Joan Ramon has limited his work to the small area Eivissa and Formentera. To the contrary, his prestige as a researcher has led him to be asked to partner on research projects in many sites, particularly in Andalusia (Cádiz, Málaga, Huelva), Ceuta, Tunisia (and he participated for ten years in the Catalan-Tunisian project in Althiburos with the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology of the UB, which with he has close ties) and more recently the Balearic Islands. This activity has led to the publication of more than 100 works in many different languages in world-class series and journals. All of this has given him a global understanding of the issues in the protohistory of the western Mediterranean, which have in turn given rise to the publication of several synthesis works.

Parallel to this activity, just a few years after finishing his degree and living on the island, where the resources and scientific environment were not overly favourable, he somehow found enough time to write his doctoral thesis entitled *Las ánforas fenicio-púnicas del Mediterráneo central y occidental*, a monumental work he did alone, without any kind of economic or institutional support, even though it entail long stays in Sardinia, Sicily and Tunisia. The outcome is the most cited archaeology book (issued by the Universitat de Barcelona) ever published in Spain,

a true classic in Mediterranean archaeology, as reported by Dr Joan Sanmartí, a member of the IEC, in his review published shortly after it was released.

Joan Ramon's scholarly work has received many diverse forms of recognition (he has been the member of national and international scientific committees, has been invited to deliver many lectures and has served as an evaluator for AGAUR, ICREA and numerous specialised scholarly series and journals). One prominent award was the 2004 Narcís Monturiol Medal for Scientific and Technological Merit from the Generalitat de Catalunya.

It is very important to highlight that this internationally prestigious scholar's entire body of work was produced without his ever having held a position as a researcher, even though he is authorised by Spain as a university professor, has participated in academic activities essentially as a guest professor and has had to spend much of his time on administration and management. All of this gives

yet further credit to an illustrious career that should be given its due. For this reason, Dr Joan Ramon has never been officially qualified as a researcher (much less director) of competitive research projects or of consolidated research groups recognised by AGAUR (although he has, paradoxically, evaluated them for AGAUR). It is truly regrettable that his administrative position has less clout in this bureaucratised system in which we live than his proven track record of publications and citations. Yet such are matters, though fortunately not within our institution.

Finally, I wish to highlight the fact that as a researcher, Dr Ramon has been faithful to the language and culture of the country and committed to their continuity. Back in 1978, he published one of his first studies in issue 1 of *Fonaments*, a journal founded by M. Tarradell, which was to be followed by many others.

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