

In memoriam

Josep Massot i Muntaner (1941-2022)*



Just as the editing of this issue of *Catalan Historical Review* was closing, we learned of the passing of our colleague Josep Massot i Muntaner, the associate editor of the journal since its inception. Born in Palma de Mallorca in 1941, Josep Massot died at the infirmary of the monastery of Montserrat on 24 April 2022, where he had been a monk since 1962. He was the

eldest of four siblings. His father was a doctor and his grandfather was a folklorist and collector of Mallorcan fables. As a member of a family who loved books and music, he had identified with culture in his local language since his childhood. He earned a degree in Romance philology from the Universitat de Barcelona in 1963. He was a disciple of Ramon Aramon and Joaquim Molas at *Estudis Universitaris Catalans*. He directed the *Diccionari de Literatura Catalana* from 1977 to 1979. He founded the magazine *Randa* in 1975. He served as the secondary of the *Associació Internacional de Llengua i Literatura Catalana* from 1973 to 1993 and was the founding president of the *Societat Catalana de Llengua i Literatura* of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans from 1985 until 1991, while also serving as the director of its journal *Llengua i Literatura*. He had been a member of the editorial board of the journal *Estudis Romànics* since 2000. Josep Massot was able to read a dozen languages.

He was the director of the journal *Serra d'Or* since 1971, the same year he took over the directorship of *Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat*. Without his decisiveness and drive, many research-based and informational books would not have been published in the past few decades. He always kept a global view of the cultural unity of the Catalan-speaking lands. He had been a member of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans since 1999 and served as president of the History-Archaeology Section from 2014 to 2018 after having been its treasurer, secretary and vice-president. He had been a member of the technical committee of the *Fundació Mercè Rodoreda* since 2015. He was also the secretary of the directorate of the *Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona* since 2006 and a member since 2000.

The curator and editor of the *Cançoners Populars de Catalunya*, his specialities were Catalan literature and the contemporary history of Mallorca, in addition to the history of the Church, viewed in its internal diversity and its relationship with the country. His curiosity led him to work on such varied topics and figures as the Italian fascist Comte Rossi, the republican politician Antoni Maria Sbert, the musicologist Baltasar Samper, the philologist Antoni Maria Alcover, the complex and multifaceted Joan Estelrich, the patron Rafael Patxot and the abbots of Montserrat in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, all studied with objectivity and exceptional documentation in relationship to the context in each period.

Some of the most noteworthy of his 70 books include: *Els mallorquins i la llengua autòctona* (1972), *Aproximació a la història religiosa de la Catalunya contemporània* (1973), *L'Església catalana al segle XX* (1975), *La Guerra Civil a Mallorca* (1976), *Església i societat a la Mallorca del segle XX* (1977), *Cultura i vida a Mallorca entre la guerra i la postguerra* (1978), *L'Església catalana entre la guerra i la postguerra* (1978), *Els creadors del Montserrat modern* (1979), *Antoni Maria Alcover i la llengua catalana* (1985), *Georges Bernanos i la Guerra Civil* (1989), *Els escriptors i la Guerra Civil a les Illes Balears* (1990), *El cònsol Alan Hillgarth i les Balears* (1995) *Tres escriptors davant la guerra civil: Georges Bernanos, Joan Estelrich i Llorenç Vilallonga* (1998), *Antoni Maria Sbert, agitador, polític i promotor cultural* (2000) and *Caçadors de cançons. Les missions de l'Obra del Cançoners Populars de Catalunya* (2021). These monographs and syntheses were joined by two series of compilations of his articles: *A la ciutat dels llibres* in three instalments issued in 2015, 2016 and 2020, and *Escriptors i erudits contemporanis* in a dozen volumes from 1994 to 2013.

And indefatigable worker and cultural promoter of others' works, his efforts garnered him multiple recognitions, such as the Francisc de Borja Moll Award from *Obra Cultural Balear* in 1989, the Cross of Saint George from the Generalitat de Catalunya in 1996, the National Folk Culture Award from the Generalitat de Catalunya in 1997, an honorary doctoral degree from the Universitat de les Illes Balears in 1998 and another from the Universitat de València in 2017, the Gold Medal of the Balearic Islands in 2009, the Honorary Award in Catalan Letters from *Òmnium Cultural* in 2012 and the Medal of Honour of the *Xarxa Vives d'Universitats* in 2018.

In 2021, much to his surprise, the miscellany *Homentage a Josep Massot i Muntaner. El monjo, l'historiador i l'editor* was devoted to him, a book in which 60 people

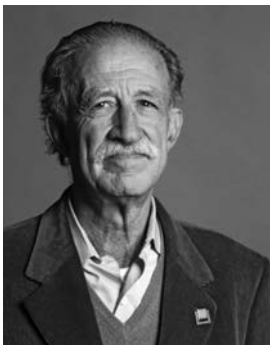
* Text prepared by Albert Balcells (Institut d'Estudis Catalans)

contributed under the coordination of Jordi Manent. And then in 2021, the book *Josep Massot i Muntaner, el combat per la història* by David Ginard i Féron, was issued. It starts with a prologue by Paul Preston, who stresses the importance of the Foreign Office documentation that Massot located in the British National Archive, which is of keen interest in revealing the international dimension of the Spanish Civil War around Mallorca and Menorca due to the Italian intervention and the failure of Captain Alberto Bayo's expedition from Barcelona. Ginard's book is organised as a dialogue with Josep Massot, where his life is associated with the history of the country at all

times, and with a great deal of information, such as the historian-monk's collaboration with the shut-in of intellectuals at Montserrat in 1970, the immediate forerunner to the establishment of the Assemblea de Catalunya, a unitary, democratic, anti-Franco movement.

Josep Massot believed that history should explain events, but that the events had to be interpreted, and he did so in accordance with his conception of the world and of life. He managed to pair vivid storytelling with solid erudition. The fragility of his personal appearance concealed the steadfastness of his character and the perseverance of his determination.

Santiago Riera i Tuèbols (1935 - 2021)*



His scientific and academic career was marked by his early studies in engineering, which culminated with a doctorate (1973), and by his teaching activity as a professor of thermodynamics and physiochemistry at the Escola Tècnica Superior d'Enginyers Industrials. To the surprise of many, his personal curiosity and inclination led him to study history, in the

specialisation of contemporary history, at the Universitat de Barcelona with extraordinary personal effort: he earned his Bachelor's in 1981 at the age of 46. By 1983 he was working as a teaching assistant, and in 1986 he became a tenured professor specialised in the Department of the History of Science and Technology (a field in which he had already published a synthesis on Catalonia in 1983). Ultimately, the engineers also accepted this shift as a source of enrichment and asked him to work on many collaborations in this field within the Col·legi d'Enginyers. He taught, researched and directed many theses in the Department of Contemporary History until he retired in 2006. On that occasion, the journal *Cercles d'Història Cultural* devoted a monographic tribute edition to him. His maturity and reputation as a great lecturer led him to stand out among professors and students over all those years. In terms of his field of specialisation, his first focus of interest led him to study the Enlightenment in Catalonia, with general contextualisations, institutional studies and analyses of the major personalities; these issues have actually occupied him his entire life. An early study that stemmed from his doctoral thesis was on Francesc Salvà i

Campillo (1985). Another of his areas of interest was a study of Narcís Monturiol and his *Ictineu* submarine, to which he devoted numerous articles and a book, as well as curating an exhibition at the Museu Marítim (1986), taking advantage of the revived interest in this figure on the centennial of his death. Yet another main focal point was his study of the scientific and technical aspects of the Romantic period, with studies on Catalonia during the Renaixença and Europe, such as his research on Goethe, which became one of his main passions, and on the utopian implications of the grand scientific conceptions of that period, as well as the repercussions and controversial impact of Darwinism in Catalonia. Another front that caught Riera's interest was industrial archaeology and the recovery of Catalonia's industrial heritage, activities in which he was a pioneer. In the midst of the euphoria over the Olympics, he promoted a group bent of preserving the heritage in Poble Nou which was being threatened with the construction of the Olympic Village (1991); the Town Hall denounced them as conservatives and reactionaries, but it ended up sponsoring a team to catalogue what was being destroyed and awarded Riera the City Medal. He also devoted quite a few studies to the industrial colonies of Catalonia, with particular attention to the Catalan forge. Between 2001 and 2005, he was the lead researcher in the project 'L'home i el ferro a Catalunya'. Among many other topics of interest to Riera, we can highlight his studies on the railway and steamships, as well as the Catalan historical biography of the leading scientists, institutional managers and intellectuals in the fields of science and technology. Santiago Riera was a member of the advisory board of the Museu Nacional de la Ciència i de la Tècnica de Catalunya in Terrassa virtually from its inception in 1984. His later work, in addition to syntheses meant for a wide readership, included reflections on political, ethical and national aspects of the evolution of his areas of interest in relation to Catalonia and the world at large: he was a member of the Advisory Board of the Institut de Tecnoètica. With regard to his institutional commitment, his work at the Ateneu Barcelonès is worth highlighting, where he twice served as president and was a

* Text prepared by Jordi Casassas Ymbert (Institut d'Estudis Catalans). Photo: Archive of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans. Photographer: Jordi Pareto.

member of the advisory board of its important library until last March. Santiago Riera was an indefatigable worker, published an average of one book every two years and even cultivated historical novels and travel literature, most prominently several books devoted to studying the major European cities that played an important role in the cultural evolution of the continent. He entitled what he claimed was going to be his last book *Jo i la meva circumstància. Consideracions sobre el determinisme* (2019), and after that he spent his time writing his memoirs, which were unfortunately left unfinished upon his death.

Between 1979 and 1983, he was the president of the Engineering Section of the Societat Catalana de Ciències Fí-

siques, Químiques i Matemàtiques, and from 1990 to 1991 he was the president of the Societat Catalana d'Estudis Històrics. With a candidacy supported in the plenary by Albert Balcells, on 17 June 2002 he joined the Institut d'Estudis Catalans as a member affiliated with the History-Archaeology Section, to which he regularly contributed. On 30 October 2003, he read his inaugural address entitled 'Una visió de la Il·lustració catalana'.

A kind, cordial man of extraordinary delicacy coupled with strong convictions and incredible intellectual rigour, with the physical disappearance of Santiago Riera i Tuèbols we have lost a referent and a great colleague and friend.