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# *Vicenç Maria Rosselló, geògraf. Als seus noranta anys*

**(Geographer Vicenç Maria Rosselló at 90 Years Old)**

**Antoni Furió and Joan Mateu Bellés (eds.)**

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As its title indicates, the book reviewed here is a heartfelt tribute to Dr Vicenç Maria Rosselló i Verger published by the University of Valencia's Publications Service and edited by Antoni Furió and Joan Mateu. It is an extensive work which contains more than 30 contributions across almost 500 pages written not only by his disciples but also by a number of experts who have worked with him throughout his academic career. It is not easy to talk about a book that combines scholarly articles, reviews of Dr Rosselló's work and notes of gratitude, but this mix can be explained by his long and fruitful career.

Vicenç Maria Rosselló i Verger was born in Mallorca in 1931 and moved to Barcelona to study science. However, he ultimately earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy and humanities in Valencia, where he wrote his doctoral thesis and began to work until he secured the geography chair in Murcia. He went back to Valencia after several years, where he developed a geography department that was incipient at the time. Because everything remained to be done—in his words—and because of his intellectual capacity, he has worked in almost all fields within geography, both physical and human, throughout his career and has made incursions into other disciplines that are related—or not—to geography. However, his grand passion has always been littoral geomorphology, with doses of toponymy and (historical) cartography. From a geographical standpoint, he is extremely well-rounded, and in the words of the book's editors, "not only is he a prestigious, respected professor who continues to research with the same enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity as always, but he is also a recognised, esteemed man both inside and outside academia because of his wisdom and love for the language and the country, his civic values and his efforts to defend Valencia's heritage".

This introduction helps explain why the book contains 30 articles, in addition to an introduction and an analysis of Dr Rosselló's written corpus in the years following his retirement at the age of 70. The topics of the articles vary greatly: it is a miscellany, the outcome of the interdisciplinarity he always preached and practised throughout his academic career. For example, the

human geography studies (four chapters) provide an overview of the port of Valencia in the nineteenth century, Humbolt's visits to Catalonia and the Region of Valencia in the eighteenth century, reflections on the very nature of geography and a study of the digitalisation of Andalusian companies today. Some of his colleagues provide an analysis of the landscape changes in the Montseny mountains north of Barcelona and the Campo de Cartagena area of Murcia, exploring and underscoring the interface between the physical environment and society. In this vein, there is also a chapter on traditional water use of the *ouadis* in Tunisia. Physical geography, a discipline in which he served as chair, is amply represented with contributions from littoral geomorphology that encompass such different places and topics as the Pleistocene aeolianites in Mallorca, the dunes in the restinga in Albufera Natural Park near Valencia in the first half of the twentieth century and, more recently, the effects of Storm Gloria on the restinga itself, as well as the consequences of storms and tsunamis on the Balearic coastlines.

Historical cartography is also represented by a study of a fifteenth-century map which shows the conquests of Alfonso the Magnanimous in Italy, an analysis of the cartography of Jeroni Munyós and a study on the urban grid in a seventeenth-century map of Catalonia. Several authors also discuss toponymy, examining the recognition of toponyms in the county of Els Ports and the Moorish roots of the place names in the Guadalest valley, and, going further back in time, the toponyms located along the Roman routes in the Region of Valencia.

Two of the contributions focus on the fields of archaeology and prehistory: one is on the importance of the Valencian Neolithic and the other on the rock paintings in Parpalló cave. A palaeographic analysis of the incunabula of Saint Vincent's sermons in the Region of Valencia and a study of fifteenth-century Benimaclet are yet another piece in the puzzle of reconstructing the mediaeval history of Valencia. The study of Catalan during the Franco regime is approached via the *ad limina* lists sent to Rome by different bishops from the Balearic Islands. Throughout his career, Dr Rosselló frequently delved into the world of archives, which can be seen in this tome by way of a study of two unknown collections: the royal collection after the Peninsular War and the lost archive of the Counts of Albalat.

The book also dedicates several chapters to analysing Dr Rosselló's work on a number of topics, such as the coves of the Mediterranean, his many contributions to historical cartography, his studies on the Albufera National Park in Valencia and the first geomorphological map he made of the Segura River floodplain, all recurring topics in his extensive output.

The analysis of Dr Rosselló's university administration earned two chapters in the book: first his time spent in the geography department in Murcia, and later as Vice-Rector of Culture at the University of Valencia, where he took the first steps to establishing a closer connection between the university and society, and later as the director of the Publications Service at the same university, where he promoted numerous collections and prestigious works.

The book features a further two articles penned by his disciples acknowledging his influence on their academic careers. The article introducing the volume, written by the two editors,

surveys his academic career, spotlights his contributions to the University of Valencia and explains the main lines of research and administrative work undertaken throughout his university career. The book concludes with a chapter that brings us up to date with Dr Rosselló's activity since he retired in 2001; he has capitalised on the past two decades to produce more than 150 works. The countless publications he wrote before then are referenced in an issue in his honour of the journal *Cuadernos de Geografía* (2003), which he founded, and in a book published in 2006 entitled *Geomorfologia litoral i quaternari: homenatge al professor Vicenç M. Rosselló i Verger*, bringing his total number of publications to more than 400, in addition to his oversight of a plethora of doctoral and master's theses.

In short, this book is a tribute to a great scholar from the Region of Valencia who practised geography in a way that was so comprehensive that it verged more on encyclopaedic knowledge than the specialisation that is so common today, who managed to create a school of geography that is well-regarded far and wide and who left his mark on countless disciples working in many locations, but especially in the Region of Valencia and the Balearic Islands. Thus, it is a paean to a kind of interdisciplinarity which encompasses related (or not so related) disciplines in pursuit of the study of similar topics. Yet most importantly, it is a volume in which each chapter reveals the recognition, gratitude, friendship and admiration shown towards Dr Rosselló for a job well done that boasts extraordinary scholarly and social value.