

Moors and Christians. Between Identity and Renewed Heritage in Mallorca

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The island of Mallorca enjoys a hybrid tradition that is the result of the settlement of diverse peoples in the Mediterranean throughout history. This tradition is clear in many elements such as one of the most popular events on the island: the Moors and Christians Festival, held every 2 August in Sant Elm, near Andratx. This festival has evolved throughout the island's different historical eras and has been the object of several attempts at institutional ownership that, in all cases, have sought the participation of civil society. The ethnographic model proposed here enables us to understand how the diverse traditions and political interests that have dominated each historical era have been gradually combined in a small area.

History, legends and topography are elements that form part of the local or national memory of peoples, but, over time, this memory has been redesigned and interpreted differently according to events. Under what conditions are the objects and narrative practices constructed as current cultural property? For anthropology scholars, a dynamic vision helps us to read, listen to and interpret the factors that stimulate these practices.

In this article we will see how stories are constructed based on historical events and pre-eminence is given to one situation or another, to one place or another. The stories serve to introduce, in one moment, hagiographical or critical visions and to vindicate, in another, controversial figures that form part of the hybrid tradition of the island of Mallorca. To carry out this study I have consulted the diverse contributions of local history, compiled in early

20th century and current publications, weeklies from different periods such as *Andraitx*, which appeared between 1920 and 1971, and the Catalan-language magazine *N'Alí*, from 1986. I have also used local informants, some of whom hold political positions.

The Historical Context

From the early 10th century, Mallorca was under Muslim rule, specifically independent Berber kinglets. With the conquest of King Jaume I of Aragon in 1229, a new Christian order was established on the island. However, the geostrategic importance of the area in the Mediterranean and its closeness to Algiers meant, particularly in terms of the control of the Ottoman Empire of North Africa, that Turkish-Berber attacks increased. The

memory of these events is not only preserved in the defence towers on the coast but also in folklore. Piracy did not end in Mallorca until the conquest of Algiers by France in the second half of the 19th century. But with French colonisation, trade with the Balearic Islands and the peninsula, which had been carried out for centuries, sometimes with specific agreements even during the periods of privateer attacks, was restricted.

It is difficult to identify when the Moors and Christians Festival began on the Balearic Islands, but apart from the theatre performances, which are older, it seems that the mass events in open spaces as we know them today emerged in the 19th century and can be linked to the romantic movement of the Catalan Renaixença (J. Massanet Vives, 2003: 466). The festivals, in the towns where they are held today, commemorate real battles such as Soller or Pollensa, the latter when Turkish privateers commanded by Dragut attacked in 1550.

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This study will focus on Andratx, a town located at the end of the north-eastern coast of Mallorca, the first setting of the Christian landing on the islet of El Pantaleu in 1129. The *Llibre dels Feits* of King Jaume the Conqueror features the character Alí, the moor of La Palomera – Sant Elm, in the municipal area of Andratx –, who tells the monarch where the soldiers of wali Abu Yaiha, Almo-had governor of Madina Mayurca, are. In the legend, Alí is a youth who arrives by swimming – one of the festival events now is the

swimming race from the port of Sant Elm to El Pantaleu. Alí's mother, who is a clairvoyant, had dreamt that a Christian king would come and rule the island.

The publication of a study based on another medieval manuscript provided a counterpoint to the *Llibre dels feits*. The Algerian professor Muhammad Ben Mamar found a 13th century manuscript, the first Arab account of the conquest of Mallorca, the chronicle of Ibn Amira Al-Mahzumi, which was believed to have been lost and of which only a few quotations survive. The find was made in 2001, when Professor Ben Mamar was consulting a CD of microfilmed documents in a library in Tinduf, in Algerian Sahara. Ibn Amira, the Almohad chronicler of the conquest of Mallorca, is an al-Andalusian born in Alzira in 1184, who died in exile, perhaps in Tunis, between 1251 and 1259. He held high offices in the Almohad administration in Xàtiva, Seville, Murcia, Dénia, Valencia and Morocco and at the time of the Christian siege was in Madina Mayurca.

Professor Muhamad Ben Mamar offered the manuscript copy to his Mallorcan Arabist colleagues who, of course, were enthusiastic about the find. With the help of the Arabist Nicolau Roser, the historian and archaeologist Guillem Rosselló-Bordoy managed to translate *Kitab Ra'ih Mayurca*, the Arab chronicle of the conquest of Mallorca, finally published with the sponsorship of the Government of the Balearic Islands on the 800th anniversary of the birth of King Jaume I the Conqueror. The first edition appeared in November 2008 and at Christmas it became a bestseller on the island. This story is not about Alí de la Palomera but instead many others, and wali Abu Yaiha comes off quite badly.

After the arrival of the Almohads in the Iberian Peninsula and the consequent sudden removal of the Almoravids, Mayurca spent over twenty years ruled by the Almoravid family Banu Ganiya. Consequently, these Mallorcans



Moors and Christians performance in Sant Elm, Andratx (Lorenzo Gutiérrez).

attacked both Christian and Muslim ships, as they knew that both wanted to throw them into the sea. After the Almohad conquest of the island, Ibn Amira explains the poor relations in Mallorca between Almohads and Almoravids, which produced chaos and unease exploited by the Lord of Aragon and Barcelona, as Ibn Amira calls him, to conquer the island and commit many massacres.

Kitab Ra'ih Mayurca, a rather erudite work, has been commented on by the media and has been used to encourage Mallorcans to more effectively integrate historical cultural diversity and thereby show a certain recognition of interculturalism, at a time when religious festivals are losing their sense of identity.

The Religious Appropriation of Narration

The celebration of Moors and Christians on the beach of Sant Elm, an area that belongs to the town of Andratx, is very recent, as it dates to 1996. However, in Andratx there was a festival that goes back to the 1950s. This festival commemorated the attack of the Turkish-Berber privateers on 2 August 1578. The celebration included a mass and a sermon on the battle, a parade of carriages with people dressed in traditional costumes, and theatrical events.

The sermon given every year in the church comes from the version of the *Historia de la Baronia de los señores Obispos de Barcelona y*

Mallorca by Juan Bautista Ensenyat, who was parish priest in S'Arracó, published in 1919.

Under the epigraph "Invasion of Moors in Andratx on 2 August 1578" (Juan Bautista Ensenyat, 1919: 472), Ensenyat writes: "Among the several raids and invasions by Turks and Moors in the village of Andratx that we have had heard about and recorded, that of 2 August 1578 deserves special attention; not because it is the most important and transcendental, but because it is the only one the village remembers, thanks to the solicitude with which the Church from year to year has reminded the succeeding generations about it until today and to the care in conserving the monuments that still pay witness to it [...]. Therefore, in Andratx and in Soller or Pollensa they established a religious civic festival on the same day of the anniversary of one of its victories, holding the High Mass, attended by a large crowd and presided by the Civil Corporation and other authorities and ostentatiously adorning the church. They did not mind always listening to the same historic sermon and followed it with devotion and were pleased to hear about the main characters and their exploits [...]. In Andratx a painting was also made (unique in its category in Mallorca) that was exhibited every year to the public together with some weapons of the period as trophies, featuring the most notable events mentioned in the sermon. It also served as a lesson for simple and ignorant people" (Ensenyat, 1919: 473).

"In the afternoon there was a procession through the village streets carrying the figure of Our Lady of the Angels and also presided by the Council and all the authorities. For the children of the village it was the day they played for the first time their new clay whistles (*siurells*), in many different forms, and all without exception went with their particular and esteemed instrument forming two lines by the first flags, enacting the happiness of the

angels that courted their celestial Queen and Lady" (Ensenyat, 1919: 474).

"Although the festival with which all the earlier generations had celebrated the memory of the triumph achieved by their ancestors on 2 August 1578 has been suspended (we suppose temporarily), we hold the hope that it will be held again with even greater splendour and solemnity than before" (Ensenyat, 1919: 475).

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"There is no document that authentically bears the date when the village started to celebrate the festival of 2 August dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels in gratitude for the protection this Celestial Lady had dispensed on the same day of 1578. However, those who were there probably established it the following year 1579. This also appears in a copy of the sermon preached in 1773; and an authentic and official document states, albeit incidentally, that it was held by solemn vow by the village [...]. It also notes that, to carry out Pope Urban VII's *universa* bull, which abolished many festivals and, instead, ordered each village to name a patron saint [...], they met [...] and decided to hold their festival in honour of the patron saints of Our Lady of the Angels and the apostle Saint Bartholomew (minute book of the Council dated 8 January 1644" (Ensenyat, 1919: 483).

The historians Jaume Bover and Ramon Rosselló, the former also born in S'Arracó like Ensenyat, provide exhaustive information about the Turkish-Berber attacks that were constant and very dramatic in the 16th century in the

Balearic Islands. In the epigraph corresponding to the “Landing of Moors of 1578” they have a specific section (Bover and Rosselló, 1999: 161) on the commemorative painting of this heroic deed. They say: “In the parish church of Andratx there is a painting by an anonymous painter that portrays the Turkish landing of 1578 in Andratx. Dating back from the last 17th century, it is an oil on canvas of 1,545 by 1,41 metres, restored in 1984 by Björn Henrich Hallström, chair of restoration at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, and his wife Dorrit von Arronet Hallström. In 1988 it was exhibited after its magnificent restoration in the monographic exhibition dedicated to Our Lady Saint Mary. Colour photographic reproductions were made from it for the first time. The painting depicts a Mallorcan town, located on the coast, stormed by a Turkish squadron, whose troops are seen at the top and bottom of the composition. The invading squadrons, with flags unfurled, prepare for attack. Meanwhile, different groups of combatants are fighting in the village. Our attention is drawn to the defence of a tower and to that of the parish church, curiously fortified, as records show that many Mallorcan villages were at that time. It is worth noting the defence of the drawbridge and the skirmish by the Honourable Juan de Son Corso who appears on horseback” (Bover and Rosselló, 1999: 162).

Historians argue that, although for a time this painting was considered an *ex voto*, it is not. However, it is a unique painting in its genre in Mallorca that depicts historical events of great importance for the village. They add that the presence of a virgin surrounded by *putti* on a cloud, known as the “fried egg” in the slang of art historians, is a later addition from the 18th century, as can be seen.

“The historical documentation does not mention any celestial intervention when the events took place and there is no documentary record that the painting was a donation offered

to a religious image in compliance with a vow or as a reminder of a benefit received.” Moreover, the authors continue, “as for the ‘*Sermó dels moros*’ the first reliable news about its existence dates back to the 18th century, which curiously corresponds with the addition of the virgin and the angels in the painting” (Bover and Rosselló, 1999: 162).

Turkish-Berber pirates did not only disembark in the port of Andratx but also in Sant Elm. The Gran i General Consell de Palma de Mallorca seeks, on 9 January 1583, to place a piece of artillery on the tower of Sant Elm “with the aim of safeguarding this port where Moors often disembark to supply themselves with water and meat and to go to the village and from this port many boats take off with Christians” (Bover and Rosselló, 1999: 307). The document refers to the Christians they make prisoners. They were often taken to the island of La Dragonera and then asked for a ransom.

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The Mallorcan historian Pere Roig i Massanet says about the festival of Pollensa: “It commemorates publically and festively the battle of the Turkish-Berber privateers at the command of Dragut on the night of 30 May 1550. Historically, privateers benefitted handsomely, and for a long time 1550 has been cited as the year of misfortune in official documentation. The people have interpreted the events and turned them into a clamorous victory” (Roig Massanet, 2003: 164). The performance is documented from 1860, although it began some years earlier. In the theatre performance the heroic Joan Mas shouts: “*!Mare de Deu del Angels, assistiu-nos*” / *Pollencins açau-vos!*”

[Our Lady of the Angels, watch over us / People from Pollensa, rise up!] In the past, Dragut replied: “Saracens, don’t be afraid, with the sabre in your hands lash out against the Christians!” According to Más Vives (2003: 163), this use of Catalan and Spanish to characterise each of the factions links the performance with the *Renaixença* and with the recovery of Catalan culture that took place in the 19th century.

We see that in Pollensa the reinterpretation of the Moors and Christians Festival, which is the most important in Mallorca, has been adapted to the people’s interests in self-esteem and forms part of the patron saint’s festival

As for the Moors and Christians Festival in Soller, the *Gran Enciclopèdia de Mallorca* specifies that it is held on the second Monday of May, during the festivities. The event commemorates the attack of the privateers on 12 May 1561 led by Eulkd Ali (Oxiali) and repelled by the locals, led by Captain Angelats in collaboration with the residents of Bunyola and the highwaymen in the area of Alaró. It also emphasises the heroic defence of the Valentes Dones de can Tamany, an event recorded later in the staging of the episode of the simulacrum performed since 1855.

We see that in Pollensa the reinterpretation of the Moors and Christians Festival, which is the most important in Mallorca, has been adapted to the people’s interests in self-esteem and forms part of the patron saint’s festival. The patron saint of Pollensa is Our Lady of the Angels, but we do not know if she was in 1550 or the day when the festival was held. We do know that the attack was in September because we have several documents concerning this. However, in Andratx the 2 August festival does coincide with the date of the event. The festivals of Moors and Christian in Pollensa, Soller and Andratx were interrupted on several

occasions in the late 19th century and during the Civil War.

The Valencian anthropologists Antonio Ariño and Sergi Gómez assert that these festivities are spread through relatively heterogeneous geographical fields and with a highly diverse history in Europe, the United States and some Latin American countries. In Latin American countries where these celebrations are held, the dances of the conquest were introduced by Franciscans in the 16th century. Inspired by the Corpus mysteries and dances, they had had a clear catechist purpose since their origin, although they bring together many aesthetic elements and pre-Hispanic customs that have reached us. “The function of great theatricality and with the presence of different dances is structured around a story through which Moors and Christians dialectically fight against the goodness and benefits of both faiths. In the end, the angels and the cross of arms convince the ‘unbelievers’, who beg to be baptised when they fall at their feet” (Ariño and Gómez, 2012: 99). We can find references to the current Moors and Christians Festival in Mexico and Peru, recorded by Luis Diaz Viana (2017: 55-66).

A Republican Interpretation

We do not know for sure the years the Moors and Christians Festival in Andratx was held. Through *Ensenyat* we know that in the early 20th century it was not; however, it seems that both the speech in the church and the different plays continued until the 1950s and had a longer life, perhaps because they were not as expensive as bringing music bands and preparing carriages for the parade.

An interesting element is the appropriation of the story by the Andratx-born Jaume Roca “*es gerrer*” (1840-1912). Playwright, actor and theatre impresario, he worked in a

pottery shop and was a travelling pot-maker (*gerrer*). Roca is an outstanding character in the field of federal Republicanism in Andratx as he participated in the 1868 uprisings and held positions in the Council in 1873 and 1906. Self-taught and Volterian, from an early age he was interested in theatre as an educational tool and wrote several plays of a critical sociological nature, notably *Sa vinguda des moros a Andratx*, where he explains the raid of 1578, avoiding the romantic influences of the time (Massanet Vives, 2003: 162). The thought of the Republican freethinker gives way, in the second act, to an interesting controversy between Christian women captured by privateers and an apostate, their son and brother, who advocates the playwright's secular opinions (Jaume Roca, 1880: 25). The verses of the play are in Mallorcan, a Catalan dialect prior to the linguistic standardisation of the Catalan language. In his play, Jaume Roca also makes the Berber pirates speak in Spanish, while the locals speak in Mallorcan. The Moor is the apostate brother who speaks in Mallorcan as it is his mother tongue, because he was kidnapped by the Berbers when he was a child. He had been adopted in Berbery by a good man, as he tells his mother and sister Margalida. Here is an excerpt:

“Moor: *He taught me to speak Mallorcan / Every day he was very kind / A good man, loving, / honest and hard-working.*

Margalida: *He can't be from Algiers that man you speak of.*

Moor: *Yes he was, you jest / As you are from Mallorca.*

Margalida: *It seems to me a lie / what you're saying brother. And if they do not believe in God / how can this Moor you spoke of / be a good Christian?*

Moor: *God was his truth / and the Devil a lie.*

Margalida: *But to be Christian and converted is better.*

Moor: *Everybody says the same / that yours is the best.*

Margalida: *I want to continue with everything I've been told / I won't change / I will have the same faith / I had last year.*

Moor: *Everything is fine Margalida / if it's done in good faith / whether it's false or true / in the world everything sells well / everything in the square is sold. / Everyone can choose if they want. / Every day the sun goes up / and we are the same as when we are born / Wise up, we'll die. For that same reason / Moor, Christian, freemason / All are welcome.”*

From the weekly Andraitx (1920-1971) we extract three representative chronicles on the festival: two during the Republic and another after the Spanish Civil War. These chronicles depict how the festival developed at that time

The sister asks him to flee from the Moors but he does not want to. He says that he has sworn loyalty and neither for “*Déu ni per Mahoma deixaré de ser honrat*” [God or Muhammad will I stop being an honest man], meaning that he owes loyalty to the people who have trusted him.

From the weekly *Andraitx* (1920-1971) we extract three representative chronicles on the festival: two during the Republic and another after the Spanish Civil War. These chronicles depict how the festival developed at that time, which is broadly similar to that described by Ensenyat in the late 19th century, except in the procession, which was resumed in 1941. The chronicles are in Spanish, anonymous, and were probably written by Antoni Calafell himself, editor-in-chief and printer of the weekly.

In the 6 August 1933 edition he describes the festival in three stages.

- The theatre performance: “Last Sunday, on 30 August, in the church square, a theatre



Moors and Christians performance in Sant Elm, Andratx (Lorenzo Gutiérrez).

event was organised by the committee of festivities of Our Lady of the Angels with the aim of collecting funds to carry out the said festivities.” The performance began at the time announced with the beautiful poem entitled *Puig Cornador*. The recitation was by Margarita Enseñat. “Next, with the appropriate decors produced by the pencil of Mr Gabriel Calafell, *Moros i cristians*, the historical drama in four acts and final tableau in prose and in Mallorcan written by Mr Baltasar Piña, was performed.” The chronicler lingers by giving the names of the young actors from Andratx. “The soirée ended with a piece in verse and also in Mallorcan entitled *Ses Festes de N’Aina Maria*, performed by the three aforementioned Margaritas.”

- The eve: “On the eve of the festival the programme began with the graceful *madones* [he gives 6 names] wearing the typical Mallorcan costume on a donkey along Avinguda 14 April, followed by a crowd to receive the military band that should arrive from Palma. Indeed, at 6.30 pm the *madones*, the musicians and accompanying people met on the bridge, near the entrance to the town, and went to the historic Son Mas, where many boys and girls dressed in the classic garb of the land were waiting, from where they headed to the church to hold a mass attended by the whole village. Night of dancing and regional dances, until the early morning.”
- Day 2: “There was reveille on the morning of day 2 at six o’clock. At 9 people left from

the historical *Creu dels Ullastres* for the church, where the divine offices began [...]. The eloquent orator Mr Herrero delivered the well-known sermon concerning the deeds of our ancestors, being very celebrated. At noon the carriages that were to form part of the cavalcade began to arrive. [There was a wide] diversity of tastes and orientation in the design of the carriages occupied by many young ladies and children of both sexes, properly dressed according to the characters they impersonated, whether local or Moor, and there were as many as sixteen.” We notice that in the cavalcade there is mention of the representation of the two factions. This probably goes back to the 19th century, although it is not specified whether a dance of the conquest or fight is performed.

In 1935 the weekly is issued in Mallorcan, in contrast to those of 1933 and 1941, which are in Spanish. This time the chronicle is distributed as a programme specifying the events of each day. I will only refer to some aspects that, in my view, shed light on festivity. A theatre event is also held for fundraising; instead of the band it is enlivened by a group of *xeremies*¹. It is pointed out that on 2 August the *madones* and children are disguised; carrying in front of each group a statue that represents the honourable Rafel Juan de Son Corso and the Turkish General Barbarossa. All of them go up to the church for the offices; in the afternoon, carriages: coaches, chariots, charts enlivened with music. As that day falls on Friday, on Saturday the festival continues with bike races and regional dances. On Sunday, a football match, music and dance. The festival ends with Valencian fireworks.

In relation to the carriage cavalcade in the time of the Second Republic and later, Antònia

Ensenyat, councillor at Andratx Town Council, tells me that in the Municipal Library there were thematic exhibitions between 2004 and 2008 based on the negatives of the local photographer Rafael Ferrer, who between 1920 and 1970 took in his studio many individual and family portraits but also photographed the streets and landscapes during working days and festivities. “He took photos of different festivities, included those of 2 August in several years. In the 1935 parade there was the carriage of *L'Embut*, with a big funnel, made by Republicans disguised as tycoons, with a satirical message.” Antònia is moved to add: “Unfortunately, in 1936 this photo served to kill all those who were in it.” Since the start of the civil war Mallorca had been “national territory”, and the reprisals against Republicans in Andratx claimed the lives of 37 people, some for trivial reasons, such as participating in the funnel carriage.

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The photograph of the carriage was not shown in the exhibition and is not featured in the publication to avoid offending sensibilities but the coordinator of the exhibition, Mateu Ramon, sent it to me. It features some carriages decorated with lots of imagination, like one with a big snail, on which there are smiling young ladies with golden buttons on the regional costumes and with the typical seven-span gold string. Antònia points out that those who went on donkeys (*someres*) represented the historical sisters Bonaventura and

1. Typical instrument of the Balearic Islands, from the family of the cornamuse.

Margarita Coll, who raised the wooden bridge on the moat in front of the gate of the church to prevent the Moors from coming in. But here, as in Soller, they were not called *valentes dones* [brave women] but *madones* [owners], perhaps because they took care of the estates when their husbands emigrated to Cuba or France to work.

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Ariño and Gómez, in relation to the continuation of the Moors and Christians Festival in the different Valencian towns, note that it was also during the 19th century when a mass integration took place in the groups, which in many places served to include in their core different political options of the time (liberal, conservative, absolutist, Carlist, royalist); also to remember exploits and battles held in North Africa at that time (Ariño and Gómez, 2012: 96). From the 1960s these rituals were introduced in the Valencian villages and towns, particularly in the festivals of the local patron saints, to brighten the festivity. Anthropologists add that during the democratic transition there was a demand for popular festivals that, in some cases, involved the introduction of events that foster general participation. “Among the political parties that won municipal power there was a proclivity towards Moors and Christians, compared with other festive modalities that were considered conservative (Fallas or Corpus Christi). These festivals continued to grow in the 1980s and 1990s, favoured by a greater availability of money and the dynamic itself of the leisure society, together with the promoting capacity of television” (2012: 99). Let us look at the evolution of these festivities in Andratx between the dictatorship and democracy.

From the Associative Movement to the Municipal Festivals

Issue 1.083 of the local weekly *Andraitx* (Saturday 19 July 1941) reports that the Civil Governor grants authorisation to revive the former healthy traditions and congratulates the Organising Committee. The following week there is a column entitled “2 August Festival” previewing the programme for the 1, 2 and 3 August. The theatre performance from previous years continues but it highlights a novelty: the procession on 2 August, which had not been held for 45 years. With reference to this religious procession, it is pointed out that “typical countrymen on horseback will lead the march. They will be followed by other countrymen with torches. The boys will go behind the countrymen wearing the typical costume with *siurells*. After them, the girls with their *cadufes* (little jars). The young girls of the town who so wish, dressed in the regional costume, will accompany the Virgin of the Angels, who will be carried on a portable platform by several countrymen [...]” All the *madones* will attend so that this event is clothed in all its splendour.” He adds: “Note. The Committee informs the youths and children from the town that they can attend the festival regardless of being registered in any religious association.” This piece is attributed to the “Committee”. In the final chronicle, written on 9 August 1941, we discover that the organising committee of the festival is made up by members of the rising youths of Acció Católica in the town and the representative of the Catholic Church.

After the Spanish Civil War, the Church revived the festival with the consent of the civil governor of Palma and took the opportunity to include the religious procession mentioned by Ensenyat, which curiously had not been held since the late 19th century. However, something was going on, because soon the festival would decline.

On 6 August 1960, in the same local weekly, the then very young writer Baltasar Porcel, also born in Andratx, wrote under the pen-name Barbarroja – which he used from 1959 to 1965 – an article entitled “2 August”, in which he notes: “Another shipwreck of our *andrixol* spirit, another sad shipwreck of our traditions is the festival that years ago we celebrated with our joy and our faith on 2 August [...]. We all remember what that 2 August was until the 1940s: carriage parade, children with *siurells*, Mallorcan dance contest, typical costumes full of the best jewels bought with that gold won in the harsh and exotic work of emigration. [...] Yes, my friend, today we intone a kind of elegy. There is no choice. An elegy for all those who, because of their age, position and knowledge, would take the helm and prefer to have coffee in the sun of idleness. [...] Our only hope are the youths, those who have organised this hike club or others who do theatre, youths who can sing and walk and perform on a stage. They are the hope of an *andritxol* Renaissance” (Article included in Planas, Pujol and Ramon, 2010: 163).

The hope in young people that the Majorcan writer claimed and which at that time fell to the youth of Acció Católica would also take on a new direction in the 1980s, within the airs of progressive movements and democracy. The Mayoress of Andratx in 2011, Isabel Alemany, who in her adolescence began the period that the Mallorcan writer called for, exclaims with reference to the loss of traditional festivals in the 1950s and 1960s: “I think that we should bear in mind that in those years people were already intensively working in tourism. The months of July and August are the busiest in the season and it is when the 2 August festival and that of Saint Bartholomew, on 24 August, are held.”

Moreover, the Mayoress highlights the importance of the 1980s as a period of autonomous recovery and recalls how the Majorcan

nationalist days and the militancy in parties, especially the Partit Socialista de Mallorca (PSM) and Unió Mallorquina, began: “After Franco it was possible to recover our land and our culture step by step. For years, one of the initiatives was to *anar a Lluc a peu*, to go on foot from Palma to the sanctuary of Lluc, the highest mountain in Mallorca. With it, the importance of hiking to recognise and love our own land was recovered.” Also between the late 1970s and 1980s, environmentalist groups, youths and other people involved managed to stop the work on the island of La Dragonera, in which a property group wanted to develop a housing estate including a hotel and a casino. After a long legal process the project was definitively stopped. In 1987, the Consell Insular de Mallorca bought the island and on 26 January 1995 the Government of the Balearic Islands protected La Dragonera and the neighbouring small islands of Mediana and Pantaleu, opposite the coast of Sant Elm.

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The Mayoress continues: “In relation to Andratx, the arrival of Santiago Cortés as rector in the 1980s is important, due to his capacity to bring together youths aged between fifteen and almost forty. It was a heterogeneous group, because some were catechists, some hikers, some theatre people... There was a recovery of traditions, bolero dances, the cavalcade of the Three Kings, but also of social movements. The aforementioned painting of 2 August was restored. It is then when the idea emerged of recovering the name of *N’Alí* to launch a new

local magazine featuring not only news but also reviews. I think that it was Don Santiago who suggested the name, accepted by all of us enthusiastically. N'Alí was a traitor – for his people – who made possible our culture in Mallorca, giving rise to a new world.”

Sant Elm, despite the difficult road leading to it, one of the reasons why it is so unspoilt, was gradually filling with holidaymakers and foreigners. In the 1980s there were two important associations: the Associació Grup de Joves d'Es Pantaleu and Amics de Sant Elm. This is how the Moors and Christians Festival was created. The period, for holidaymakers, is excellent, because it is held on the last weekend of July or the first of August. In fact, the first Moors and Christians Festival in the area was held in August 1995 in Calvià, and the following year also in Sant Elm. Mateu Ramon and Jaume Bover argue that its promoter was clearly Mateu Alzina: he made a call in *N'Alí* (between April and May 1996) for people to participate.² Women made the dresses, people lent their own boats to re-enact the disembarking of the Moors. There was music and lights, because the festival takes place at dusk, led by a narrator, and of course there were fireworks, which on the beach are very attractive.

Isabel Alemany believes that the festival was created thanks to the combination of diverse actors: “The youths living in Palma but who came in summer to Sant Elm, some of them politicised, the French from S'Arracó who asked for a festival to recover their Mallorcan identity, and also people who owned property in Sant Elm. The *alma mater* of the festival, for some years, was a young actress who worked on the Majorcan TV Canal 4 and who promoted it extensively. But in 2007 a group of owners from

Sant Elm boycotted the new PSOE-PSM-Unió Mallorca Town Council, which at that time was responsible for organising the festival. They were conservative people, who did not lend the boats for the festival and told those who were willing to lend them that the festival would not be held that year. However, we did it, because the Council, which sponsored everything, even the costumes, immediately got in touch with those who were prepared to continue with the festival, although it was very complicated.”

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In the 2008 festival, coinciding with the 800th anniversary of the birth of the Conqueror, the Arts councillor in Andratx, Antònia Ensenyat, established the *N'Alí* race, a popular swimming race simulating that of Alí from La Palomera on the boat of King Jaume I, on the small island of Pantaleu. It is a “competition with canoes and awards that is still held. In 2010, horse races were introduced which on YouTube may seem very lively but there are few boats.” Antònia Ensenyat would have preferred to revive the former 2 August festival in Andratx because, although she works hard promoting Sant Elm, she considers that it is not traditional. “I’m afraid that, without the Council’s support, it will also disappear,” says the councillor.

Why not reinvent a tradition suited to the interests of new residents and tourists? In the

2. The call stated: “For this summer: Moors and Christians in Sant Elm. A group of enthusiasts from Sant Elm, who know the rich story of this country house, wanted to do something that would cause a stir, which would draw the attention of locals and strangers.” This is how the idea emerged of producing an event-performance at the Platja Gran of Sant Elm as a prelude to the patron saint festival of 1996, and with the intention of repeating it, with variations, every year.

historical part we have seen that in La Drag-
onera there were pirates who disembarked in
Sant Elm and today the defence tower is still
dominating among pine trees despite the tour-
ist apartments that have grown more in these
twenty years of speculation than in the previous
thirty. Although it is not like 2 August, the his-
tory of King Jaume I and N'Alí de la Palomera
continues. Who are arriving? Who are attacked?
In the Sant Elm Festival it has been established
that one year the Moors win and another the
Christians win because they all are the same,
regardless of the costume they choose.

Who are arriving? Who are attacked?

*In the Sant Elm Festival it has been
established that one year the Moors win
and another the Christians win because
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costume they choose*

In any case, I insist and ask the mayoress
why the 2 August festival in the village of
Andratx was not recovered while 2 August
formed part of the beach of Sant Elm as an
ex novo reinvention of the Moors and Christians
Festival. She replies: “You should bear in mind
that in Andratx, like in most villages in Mal-
lorca, until the 1990s, that is until very recently,
the festivals were organised by committees of
residents, members of diverse associations with
institutional support. 70-80% of the efforts
involved in organising these events fell to the
festival committees. From the 1990s, coinciding
with the ‘professionalisation’ of the municipal
political class the councils have gradually taken
on festivals previously organised by residents’
committees.”

The festivity with its ritual of Moors and
Christians continues to be held on Sant Elm
beach with the contribution of citizens. Despite
the municipal crises, tourists continue to arrive
and the festival is an attractive spectacle for all
as I saw for myself on 2 August 2017.

Conclusion

Over the different periods we have witnessed
the evolution and participation of the Moors
and Christians Festival in Andratx, and we
have provided an ethnographic development
model of a patron saint festival that might be
that of other towns. We see how at different
times there is an attempt at appropriation that
seeks institutional legitimacy. In all cases, the
necessary participation of people is acknowl-
edged because, without it, there is no festival.
The subsidies by the councils and political
parties, which seek to gain votes, have probably
weakened what was meant to be a committed
and participatory effort. Allocating a large part
of the money of the festivals to music bands
is beginning to take its toll, just as when the
Church ceased to be the exclusive protagonist
of the patron saint festivals. But the current
municipal pessimism is not necessarily well-
founded. Undoubtedly there will be good times
and bad times and the festivals of the past were
not always good for everyone.

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