

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



*T*his book is based on the personal experience I have shared with the people of Deià, Mallorca over the past thirty-five years. Fieldwork at home when one has made her or his home in another place presents problems and advantages. The most difficult problem I had was in trying to separate myself from the people and activities I was describing. My particular relationships with the various people and groups I have tried to describe undoubtedly affect my presentation of their lives, but I hope the variety of perspectives I bring to view enriches rather than detracts from the insights offered.

My interpretation is socially situated in a variety of changing circumstances and derives from observation, participation, and experience. My life and work overlap with much of local life and the shared activities, discussions, joys and pain, agreements and arguments, different perceptions and interpretations of events are what have made this book possible. My research involved neighbours and friends, trying to understand the manner by which each was making some sense of earthly existence. From the beginning it was clear that I was dealing with various conflicting and often incongruous aspects of Deià life and would have great difficulty in making a coherent presentation.

The last few lines of a poem by Robert Graves called 'The Devil's Advice to Story-Tellers' gave me the confidence to keep trying:

Sigh then, or frown, but leave (as in despair)
Motive and end and moral in the air;
Nice contradiction between fact and fact
Will make the whole read human and exact. (1972:59)

I hope that those who consider themselves Deianencs, long-term Deià residents, seasonal visitors, and tourists gain some additional understanding of one another through these pages. They are the people who made this work possible, whose similarities and differences have shaped the village as it is today. I am especially grateful to my daughters, whose experiences of growing up in Deià are reflected throughout this book and to Magdalena 'de Son Bauça',¹ Margarita and Magdalena 'Burota', Tomeo and Antonio 'Trona' who never tired of my endless questions and seemed to derive great joy from sharing the details of their lives and that of their families, friends and neighbours with me. Many of those who helped me most are no longer alive to share the outcome of their generous hours spent teaching, explaining, advising, and opening their worlds to me. Many Deianencs, Maria 'de Ca'n Blau', 'Mestre' Toni, and Toni 'Ferrer' will live on in these pages. Peter and Godfrey Lienhardt, my teachers and friends, who taught me to listen as much to silence as to words and to understand the richness of everyday social life, will always be remembered.

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NOTE

1. De Son Bauça, Burota, Trona are not surnames. They are descriptive names used to identify individuals in terms of their House of birth or other family characteristics. See Chapter 3.