

THE FOSSIL REGISTER OF THE GENERA *TESTUDO*, *EMYS* AND *MAUREMYS* OF THE QUATERNARY IN CATALONIA

Jenar Fèlix, Joan Budó, Xavier Capalleras & Ramon Mascort

Centre de Reproducció de Tortugues de l'Albera
Santuari del Camp. 17780 Garriguella (Catalunya)
crt@tortugues.cat

Key words: Fossils, Quaternary, Testudo, Emys, Mauremys, Catalonia.

Abstract:

In the territory of Catalonia (Iberian Peninsula) three species of tortoise currently live, Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), Spanish terrapin (*Mauremys leprosa*) and European terrapin (*Emys orbicularis*).

From the palaeontological and archaeological excavations initiated in the first half of the 20th century and reaching to today fossil and sub-fossil remains of these three species have occasionally appeared.

In this paper the diverse information, including notes and publications and oral information, as well as the review of material deposited in museums, collections, universities and those that have currently appeared in excavations have been grouped. A description of unpublished material has been made and that described has been reviewed, while incentivising research in excavations.

This has enabled an inventory of all the material grouping it chronologically and in this manner leading to the conclusion that in the case of *Testudo hermanni*, the species has been present in Catalonia from the Lower Pleistocene until today. In the case of *Emys orbicularis*, its presence goes back to the end of the Late Pleistocene and in *Mauremys leprosa*, it appears in the Holocene

All together the tortoise remains appearing at 34 sites have been studied.

Introduction

The appearance and subsequent study of the fossils studies of Chelonia, at paleontological as will as archaeological sites, in Catalonia date from the beginning of the 20th century (Almeria and Bofill, 1903). From then and up to the present publications and notes have appeared by various authors that referred to the fauna material found in excavations and which in many cases were very imprecise descriptions.

Another inconvenience has been trying to find the material since much of it was disseminated in major museums or in small local museums, in university collections and even in private collections.

The objective of this work is to bring together all the dispersed information such as publications, notes, oral history and inventory the material found in museums, university and collections.

The other objective has been the review and description of the material already described in previous notes and publications, while incentivising research at new sites and which have enabled bringing to light new findings.

Finally, the inventory of all the material discovered, its description and chronological ordering, enable obtaining a better look at the knowledge of the population of tortoises of genre *Testudo*, *Emys* and *Mauremys*, in the territory of Catalonia during the Quaternary.

This work would also like to contribute to the knowledge existing of the presence of *Testudo hermanni* during the Quaternary on the Iberian Peninsula (Bailón, 2001 and Garcia-Porta, 2001) and in the south of France (Cheylan, 1973, 1981 and Hervet, 200).

Materials and method

In order to obtain a review of all the material extracted from the excavations an intense bibliographic search has been carried out, both of brief notes and of articles that appeared in scientific bulletins of museums, universities or research groups. This has enabled locating many pieces that remained deposited, some unpublished, in private collections, museums and universities. However, it has been impossible to locate some of the remains that appeared mentioned in publications.

We have also addressed ourselves to the heads of current excavations in course at archaeological and paleontological sites in order to prioritise the study of possible remains of Chelonia that might be found. This has enabled discovering new fossil material at sites being currently excavated.

Once this material has been catalogued, a chronological classification was made and was reviewed, employing as a comparison reference the osseous remains deposited in the collection of the *Centre de Reproducció de Tortugues de l'Albera*.

For specific determination the tables of osteological comparative criteria established by Marc Cheylan (1981) and by Sophie Hervet (2000) have been followed.

A list has also been drawn up on which appear all the bibliographical references that contribute information on Chelonia fossils from the Quaternary in Catalonia.

Results

Chronological classification of sites, municipality, species, location of deposit of material and bibliography.

LOWER PLEISTOCENE (1,800,000 – 800,000 BP.)

Illes Medes	Torroella de Montgrí	Testudo sp.	(bibliographical citation)	(Villalta, 1962)
Bòbila d'Ordí	Porqueres	Emydini	Museu Arquelògic de Banyoles	(Galobart et al. 1996) (Fèlix, 2002)
Incarcal	Crespià	Testudo cf. hermanni	CRT de l'Albera	(Galobart et al. 1996) (Fèlix, 2002) (Fèlix, 2003)

MIDDLE PLEISTOCENE (800,000 – 350,000 BP.)

Can Jan	Maià de Montcal	Testudo sp.	Museu Arqueològic de Banyoles	(Ros & Maroto, 1996) (Fèlix, 2002)
Montjuïc	Girona	Testudo cf. hermanni	Laboratori Univ. Aut. Barcelona CRT de l'Albera	(Fèlix, 2002)
Can Larrà (Parc Güell)	Barcelona	Testudo cf. hermanni	Museu de Geologia de Barcelona	(Almera & Bofill, 1903) (Gómez-Alba, 1997)
Pedreres de Llers	Llers	Testudo cf. hermanni	CRT de l'Albera	(Fèlix, 2002)
Cau del Duc d'Ullà	Ullà	Testudo sp. Emys orbicularis	(bibliographical citation)	(Estévez, 1979) (Pons, 1984)
Can Pal	Caldes de Malavella	Testudo sp.	Museu Geològic del Seminari (Barcelona)	-

UPPER PLEISTOCENE (350,000 – 10,000 BP)

Indeterminate Períod

Can Rubau	Girona	Testudo hermanni	Serveis Arqueològics de Girona	(Fèlix, 2002)
Cova del Rinoceront	Castelldefels	Testudo hermanni	Seminari Recer. Prehist. Univ. Bar.	(Daura & Sanz, 2002)

Lower Paleolític

Cova de l'Aragó	Taltauill	Testudo hermanni	Museu de Taltauill	(Hervet, 2000)
-----------------	-----------	-------------------------	--------------------	----------------

Middle Paleolític

Cau del Duc	Torroella de Montgrí	Emys caspica	(bibliographical citation)	(Estèvez, 1979)
Roca dels Bous	St. Llorenç de Montgai	Testudo hermanni	Laboratori d'Arqueologia. U.A. Barcelona	-

Upper Paleolític

Cova del Muscle	Sitges	Testudo sp.	(bibliographical citation)	(Mora, 1988)
Cova del Gegant	Sitges	Testudo hermanni	Laboratori d'Arqueologia. U.A. Barcelona.	(Mora, 1988) (Viñas, 1972) (Viñas & Villalta, 1975)

NEOLITHIC (10,000 – 4,000 BP)

Cova del Teixò	Torrelles de Foix	Mauremys leprosa	CRT l'Albera	(Nadal et al. 1996) (Budó et al. 2003)
Can Sadurní	Begues	Emys orbicularis	Museu Municipal de Gavà	(Millán & Blanch, 1989) (Budó et al. 2003)
La Draga	Banyoles	Emys orbicularis	Museu Arqueològic de Banyoles	(Bosch et al. 2000) (Budó et al. 2003) (Fèlix, 2002)
El Filador	Margalef de Montsant	Testudo sp.	CRT l'Albera	(Cebrià et al. 1981). (Fullola et al. 1987) (Budó et al. 2003)
Pont de Sadernes	Montagut	Emys orbicularis	CRT l'Albera	-
El Pastoral	La Cellera de Ter	Emys orbicularis	CRT l'Albera	(Fèlix, 2002) (Budó et al. 2003)
Cal Tintorer	Gavà	Mauremys leprosa	Museu Municipal de Gavà.	(Bosch et al. 1999.) (Bosch et al. 2000) (Budó et al. 2003)
Bòbila Madurell	Sant Quirze del Vallès	Mauremys leprosa	Museu d'Història de Sabadell	(Serra-Ràfols, 1947) (Ripoll & Llongueras, 1963) (Budó et al. 2003)

RECENT HOLOCENE (4,000 BP – 15th cent.)

Iberian

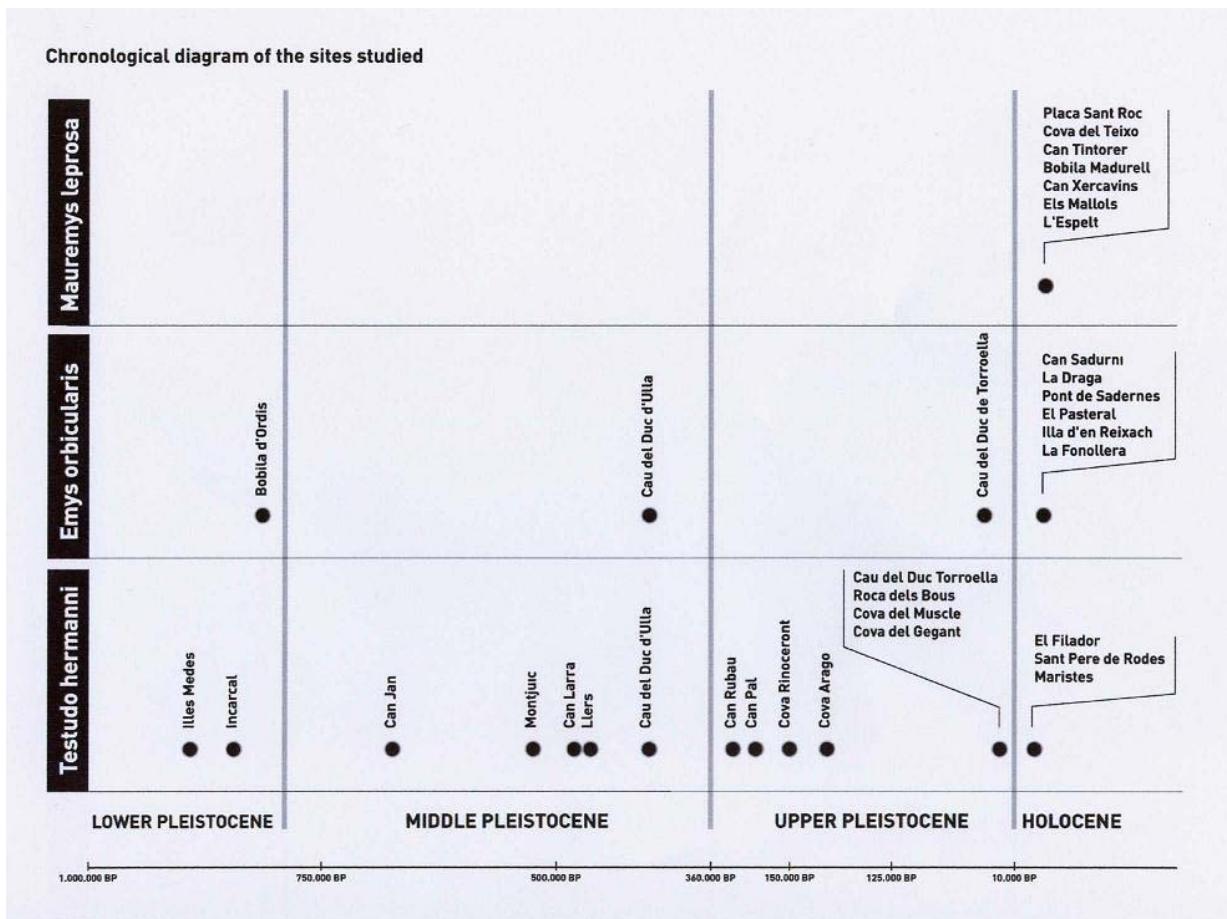
Can Xercavins	Cerdanyola del Vallès	Mauremys leprosa	CRT l'Albera	-
Illa d'en Reixach	Ullastret	Emys orbicularis	CRT l'Albera	(Martín et al. 1999) (Fèlix, 2002) (Fèlix, 1999)
La Fonollera	Torroella de Montgrí	Emys orbicularis	Serveis Arqueològics de Girona.	(Pons, 1977) (Fèlix, 2002)

Roman Period

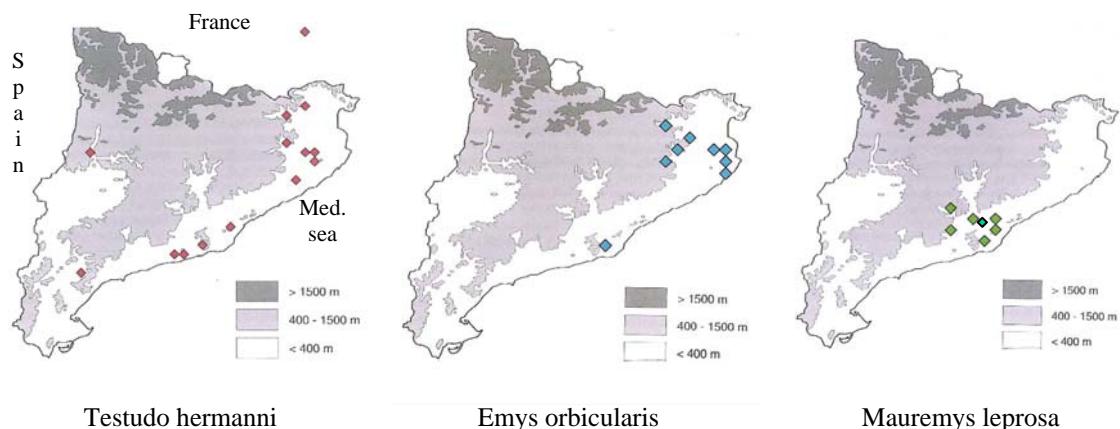
Els Mallols	Cerdanyola del Vallès	Mauremys leprosa	CRT l'Albera	-
Vila romana d'Espelt	Òdena	Mauremys leprosa	Museu de la Pell d'Igualada.	(Nadal, 1999)

Medieval

Sant Pere de Rodes	El Port de la Selva	Testudo hermanni	Serveis Arqueològics de Girona	-
Maristes	Girona	Testudo hermanni	CRT l'Albera	-
Plaça Sant Roc	Sabadell	Mauremys leprosa	Museu d'Història de Sabadell	(Roig & Melo, 2003)



Map of the location of the sites studied in Catalonia



Conclusions

In the case *Testudo hermanni* there is a chronological continuity in all the period studied. It is worth noting the few finds from the last 10,000 years in Catalonia. However, in this same period, remains of *Testudo hermanni* have been found at six sites in the south of France and less than 200 km. from the area studied (Hervet, 2000).

The continuity in the presence of *Testudo hermanni* throughout all the periods studied indicates to us that the current natural populations of this species in the Albera range, in northeastern Catalonia, are the relic continuity of ancient populations on both sides of the Pyrenees and that have persisted to our day.

The *Testudo* of the Middle Pleistocene we classify as *Testudo cf. hermanni*. They would be specimens of a larger size and more ossified with a radial measurement of the pectoral width that would correspond to the western form of the current *Testudo hermanni*.

In *Testudo hermanni* we can confirm the gathering of specimens by man at the Roca dels Bous site (Neanderthal, 38,000 BP), as well as at two sites from the Middle Ages inside human habitats.

Of the material preserved at the Lower Pleistocene site of the Bòbila d'Ordis the water turtle is classified as an *Emydini*.

Water turtles are found mostly in the Holocene. All appear related to human sites. This is due to the types of prospection that is applied at these sites, specific and often linked to watercourses, compared with prospections in natural habitats.

There is a tendency for *Emys orbicularis* to appear in colder periods and *Mauremys leprosa* in warmer periods. There is, therefore, a direct relationship between the warming of the climate as of the last glaciation that provokes an important presence of *Mauremys leprosa* in the Holocene.

We find at human sites a relationship with water turtles used as food, as a utensil (plate), at the La Draga site, or as a ritual element in burials at the El Pasteral and Bòbila Madurell sites.

Acknowledgements

To Julià Maroto, (Universitat de Girona), to the Servei d'Arqueologia de Girona of the Generalitat de Catalunya, to the Museu de Geologia de Barcelona, at Pare Calzada (Museu Geològic del Seminari, Barcelona), to the Museu de Paleontologia "Miquel Crusafont" in Sabadell, to Jorge Martínez (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), to Joan Daura and Montse Sanz (Universitat de Barcelona), to Jordi Nadal (Universitat de Barcelona), to the Museu Arqueològic de Banyoles, to Toni Roviras (Museu del Montgrí), at the Museu Arqueològic de Gavà, to Gabriel Alcalde, to Jordi Enric (Museu de la Pell d'Igualada i Comarcal de l'Anoia), to Salvador Bailón, to Jordi Roig (Museu d'Història de Sabadell), and to James C. Townsend for the translation.

Bibliography

- Almera, J. & Bofill, A.** (1903). Consideraciones sobre los restos fosiles cuaternarios de la cueva de Gràcia. *Memorias de la Real Academia de Ciencias y Artes de Barcelona. 3ª época, IV, 33.* 454p.
- Bailón, S.** (2001). Revisión de la asignación de Testudo cf. graeca del yacimiento del Pleistoceno superior de Cueva Horà (Darro, España). *Revista Española de Herpetología.* Vol. 15. pp.61-65.
- Bosch, A.** (1986). La cova del Pasteral. Un jaciment neolític a la vall mitjana del Ter. *Quaderns del Centre d'Estudis comarcals de Banyoles. 1985.* Homenatge al Dr. Josep Maria Corominas. Vol. II. pp.29-56.
- Bosch, J.; Estrada, A. & Juan-Muns, N.** (1999). L'aprofitament de recursos faunístics aquàtics, marins i litorals, durant el neolític a Gavà (Baix Llobregat). *Saguntum- PLAV, Extra-2.* pp.77-83.
- Bosch, J.; Chinchilla, J. & Tarrús, J.** (2000). El poblat lacustre neolític de la Draga. Excavacions de 1990 a 1998. *Monografies del CASC 2.* Generalitat de Catalunya. Girona.
- Budó, J.; Fèlix, J.; Nadal, J. & Soler, J.** (2003). La presencia de quelonios en yacimientos neolíticos en Cataluña. Interpretaciones paleoculturales y paleobiográficas. *III Congreso del Neolítico de la Península Ibérica.* Libro guía de la excursión. Preactas. Servicio de publicaciones. Universidad de Cantabria. Santander.
- Cebrià, A., Fullola, J.M., Gracia-Argüelles, P., Gracia, V. & Millán, M.** (1981) Avance al Estudio de los asentamientos con cerámica del Filador (Margalef de Montsant, Priorat, Tarragona). *Saguntum 16.* pp.37-61.
- Cheylan, M.** (1973). Les tortues préhistoriques de Boucoiran (Gard). Preuves de l'indigénat de la tortue terrestre dans le sud de la France. *Société Herpétologique de France.* Ed.: 191 p.
- Cheylan, M.** (1981). Biologie et écologie de la tortue d'Hermann *Testudo hermanni* Gmelin,1789. Contribution de l'espèce à la connaissance des climats quaternaires de la France. *E.P.H.E., Mém. Trav. Inst. Montpellier,* 13 : 1-383.
- Daura, J. & Sanz, M.** (2002) . El jaciment de can Aymerich a Castelldefels. *IV trobada d'estudiosos del Garraf.* (En premsa). Vilanova i la Geltrú. Barcelona.
- Estévez, J.** (1979). La fauna del Pleistoceno en Cataluña. *Unpublished doctoral thesis.* Universitat de Barcelona.
- Estévez, J.** (1980). El aprovechamiento de los recursos faunísticos: aproximación a la economía en el Paleolítico catalán. *Cypsela 3.* pp.9-30.
- Fèlix, J.** (1999). "Els micromamífers, els amfibis i els rèptils" en: *Excavacions arqueològiques a l'Illa d'en Reixach (1987-1992).* Monografies d'Ullastret, 1. Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya. Ullastret.
- Fèlix, J.** (2002). Els anfibis i rèptils del Quaternari. En Els vertebrats fòssils del Pla de l'Estany (Maroto, Ramió & Galobart, Ed.). *Quaderns, 23.* C.E.C.B. Banyoles. Pp.71-86.
- Fèlix, J.** (2003). Los anfibios y los reptiles del yacimiento del Peistoceno inferior de Incarcal (Girona, NE de la Península Ibérica). *Paleontología i Evolución, t.34.* pp. 47-49. Sabadell.
- Fullola, J.M., García-Argüelles, P. & Cebrià, A.** (1987). El abrigo del Filador y el proceso de neolitización en el valle del Montsant (Tarragona, Cataluña, España). En Premières Communautés Paysannes en Méditerranée occidentale. *Colloque International du C.N.R.S.* Paris. Pp.599-606.
- Galobart, A., Maroto, J. & Ros, X.** (1996). Las faunas cuaternarias de mamíferos de la cuenca de Banyoles-Besalú (Girona). *Revista Española de Paleontología.nº extraordinario.* Madrid. pp.248-255.
- Garcia-Porta, J.** (2001). Testudo hermanni en el plistocé inferior de Cueva Victoria (Murcia) : El registre més antic de l'espècie a la Península Ibèrica. *Llibre de Resums de les IV Jornades Catalanes d'Herpetologia.* Societat Catalana d'Herpetologia. Barcelona.
- Gómez-Alba, J.** (1997) . Catálogo razonado de los vertebrados fosiles de España del Museo de Geología de Barcelona. *Treballs Museu de Geología de Barcelona.* 296 p.
- Hervet, S.** (2000). Tortues du Quaternaire de France: critères de détermination, répartitions chronologique et géographique. *Mésogée.* Vol. 58 . pp.3-47.
- Martín, A., Buxó, R., López, J.B. & Maroto, J.** (ed) (1999). Excavacions arqueològiques a l'Illa d'en Reixach (1987-1992). *Monografies d'Ullastret, 1.* Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya-Ullastret. Girona.
- Millán, M. & Blanch, M.** (1989). Reconstrucció del paleoambiente de la vall de Begues a partir de l'estudi de la meso-microfauna de cordats de la cova de Can Sadurní, Begues. *I Jornades arqueològiques del Baix Llobregat.* Vol. I. comunicacions. p. 80-86.
- Mora, R.** (1988). El Paleolítico medio en Cataluña. *Unpublished doctoral thesis.* Universitat de Barcelona.
- Nadal, J., Cebrià, A. & Mestres, J.** (1996). Cova del Toixó (Torrelles de Foix, Alt Penedès). *Memòria de l'excavació.* Unpublished. Departament de Cultura. Generalitat de Catalunya.

- Nadal, J.** (1999). Estudi de les restes faunístiques recuperades a l'abocador de la Vil·la Romana de l'Espelt (Ódena, Anoia). A : *Memòria inèdita de la campanya d'excavació. 1986 de la Vil·la Romana de l'Espelt* (Jordi Enric Hoja, Teresa Carreras i Josep M^a Nuix.) 21-10-1999. Igualada.
- Pons, E.** (ed.) (1977). La Fonollera (Torroella de Montgrí, Girona). Un poblado al aire libre del Bonce Final. *Serie monográfica*, 1. Servicio Técnico de Investigaciones Arqueológicas, Girona.
- Pons, E.** (1984). L'Empordà, de l'edat del Bronze a l'edat del Ferro. 366p. *Centre d'Investigacions Arqueològiques de Girona*. Generalitat de Catalunya i Diputació de Girona.
- Ros, X. & Maroto, J.** (1996). Les excavacions d'urgència als jaciments paleontològics de Can Marifont i de Can Jan (Maià de Montcal, Garrotxa). *III Jornades d'Arqueologia de les Comarques de Girona*. Santa Coloma de Farners, pp.420-427.
- Ripoll, E. & Llongueras, M.** (1963). La cultura neolítica de los sepulcros de fosa en Cataluña..*Diputación Provincial d Barcelona. Instituto de prehistòria y Arqueología*.XXI. Barcelona.
- Roig, J & Melo, J.** (2003) La intervenció arqueològica a la Plaça de Sant Roc (Sabadell, Vallès Occidental) 1999-2000. *Actes II Congrés d'Arqueologia Medieval i Moderna de Catalunya*. Assoc. Cat. Rec. Arque. Medieval (ACRAM). Barcelona
- Serra-Ràfols, J. de.C.** (1947). La exploración de la necrópolis neolítica de la Bóvila Madurell en Sant Quirze de Galliners. *Anuario del Museo de Sabadell III*. Pp.57-75.
- Villalta, J.F. de** (1962). Un nuevo yacimiento Villafranquiense en las Islas Medas (prov. de Gerona), *Actes du Quatrième Congrès International d'Études Pyrénéennes*, pp. 129-131.
- Viñas, R.** (1972). Observaciones sobre depósitos cuaternarios de la Cova del Gegant. Sitges (Barcelona). *Speleon 19*. pp.115-126.
- Viñas,R. & Villalta,J.** (1975) . El depósito cuaternario de la Cova del Gegant. *Speleon I (monogràfico cuaternario)* : 19-35.