

ANTONI M. BADIA I MARGARIT / TILBERT DÍDAC STEGMANN

1907-2007: A century of German-Catalan philological relations

2007 marks two important events for Catalan culture: the centenary of the foundation of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC) (Institute for Catalan Studies), an academic body institution establishing the norms of Catalan; and the presentation of Catalan culture as the guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

The IEC was founded in 1907, shortly after the First International Congress on the Catalan Language (1906), which enjoyed broad public support as a vehicle for fostering modern Catalan culture and international recognition.

From then on, relations between German Romance philologists and Catalan philologists were particularly intense. Accordingly, the Editorial Board of *Transfer* considered it only fitting to chart this long and fruitful relationship in a conversation between two of the leading scholars in these fields.

We should like to thank both Dr. Badia and Dr. Stegmann for agreeing to hold this conversation on the past and future of Germanic Catalan Studies and shed new light on the nature of Catalan culture abroad.

Isidor Mari

DR. ANTONI M. BADIA I MARGARIT (Barcelona, 1920), "B" in the transcript below, is an eminent Catalan philologist and is one of the best known abroad. He was full professor and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Barcelona and President of the IEC's Philological Section. Among other distinctions, he received the Catalan Literature Award of Honour (2003). He currently directs the IEC's journal *Estudis Romànics* [Romance Studies].

DR. TILBERT DÍDAC STEGMANN (Barcelona, 1941), "S" in the transcript below, is currently most active Germanic Catalan philologist. He was full professor at Berlin University and is now professor at Frankfurt University. He fostered the creation of the *Deutsch-Katalanische Gesellschaft* [German-Catalan Society] (1983) and his long track record of disseminating Catalan culture earned him the Ramon Llull International Prize in 2006.

- B: While Catalan has not been the language of a sovereign State, it has long been of interest to philologists. Friedrich Diez is traditionally identified as the founder of “*romanische Philologie*”, given that in the 2nd edition of his *Grammatik der Romanischen Sprachen*, published in 1856, he stated that Catalan could be considered a **languages**. It was almost by chance some years ago that I discovered Friedrich Diez’s change of heart regarding Catalan from an article titled “Das Katalanische in den Werken von Friedrich Diez”. The article was by Eva Seifert and published in *Miscel·lània Rubió i Lluch* (Barcelona, 1936). I felt indebted to both Diez and Seifert for their work and I was fortunate enough to meet Seifert at a congress in Salamanca in 1955.

- S: The 5th edition (1882) contains exactly the same text but presented as a separate chapter, as was the case for other languages. This put Catalan on an equal footing with French, Italian, or Spanish. It is a pity that Meyer-Lübke subsequently abandoned this approach.

- B: The first German Romanists (of which W. Meyer-Lübke is a prime example) adopted a State-based approach and hence only considered Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Romanian to be fully-fledged Romance languages. A concession was made to Provençal (given that it was the language of the troubadours) and this helped Catalan to become better known. On the other hand, it also prejudiced Catalan because it was lumped together with Provençal as a dialect.

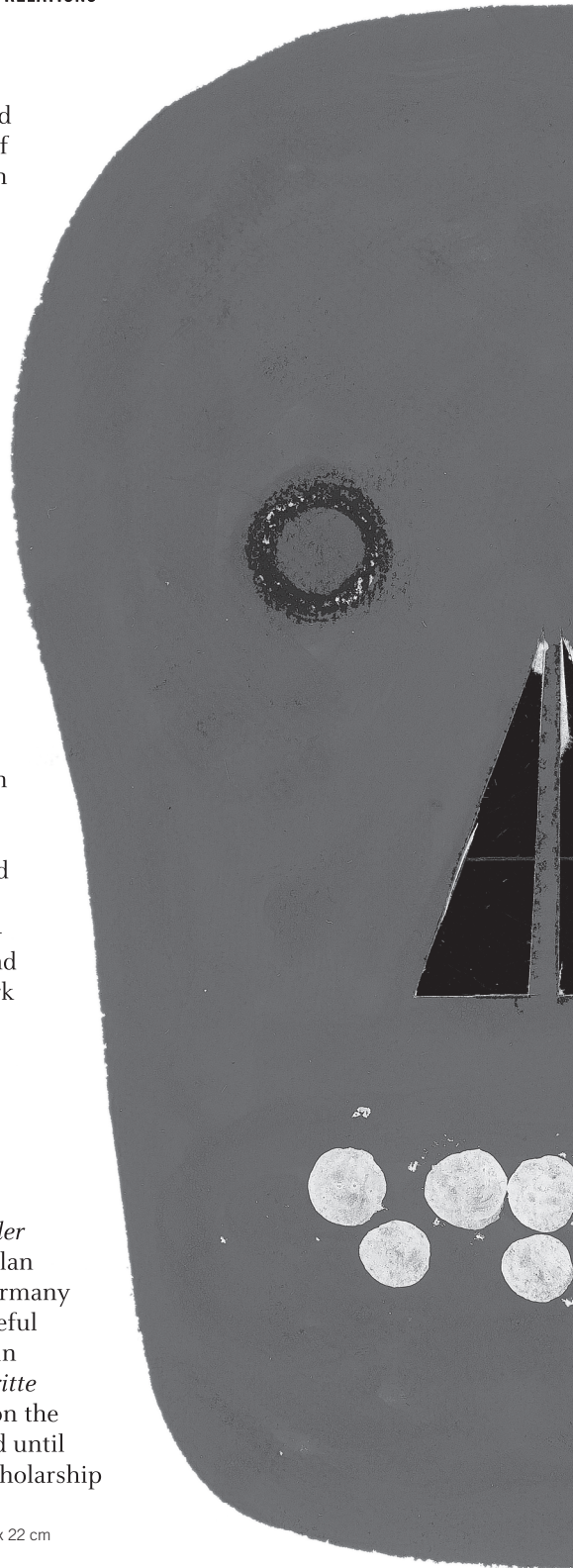
- S: You are right when you say that there is an almost Stalinist view of tongues as either languages or dialects. One should remember that it was only when Catalonia and Aragon formed a kingdom that it was treated as part of the European concert of nations. Hence the publication of that wonderful little dictionary — *Vocabulari català-alemany*— published by a German, Johann Rosenbach, in Perpignan in 1502. Everyone accepted that Catalan and German were both **languages**. The German troubadour Oswald von Wolkenstein, in his famous song of 1415, claimed he could speak ten languages including “*franzoisch, mörisch* (the old name for Arabic), *katlonisch und kastilian*”. Subsequent changes to State boundaries blinded linguists to Catalan’s true status. Consulting *Grundriß einer Geschichte der menschlichen Sprache nach allen bekannten Mund- und Schriftarten* (Sketch of the History of Mankind’s Language Based on Known Tongues and Writings) by J. C. C. Rüdiger, published in Leipzig in 1782 —a relatively little-known work— one reads: “*Von den Provincial-Mundarten weicht die aragonische wenig, die valencische etwas mehr, die catalonische aber am meisten ab*” (Of the provincial dialects, Aragonese differs least from standard speech, Valencian somewhat more, and Catalan the most); Rüdiger —70 years before Diez— noted that it was hard to place Catalan as a “dialect”.

- B: By contrast, the collaborators of *Gröbers Grundriss* of 1888 and of 1904-06 (2nd edition) were more realistic. While it is true that they distinguished between **languages** (*Die spanische Sprache*) and those they did not dare to term such (*Das Catalanische*), they gave exactly the same entry status to both (font, article structure, etc.). I have always thought that the comments on languages in *Gröbers Grundriss* are a paragon of finesse, for which we are all grateful.


- **S:** The designation used —“*Das Katalanische*”— did not mean that Catalan was not accorded the status of a language. This is shown two pages further on in an article on Catalan in the section titled “*Entwicklung der catalanischen Sprache*”. Furthermore, the following article clearly states that the “Catalan provinces” are not part of Castillian-speaking Spain.

- **B:** Catalan was fortunate in having a champion in Bernhard Schädel of Halle an der Saale University. As with other *Privatdozenten* (untenured lecturers), he had travelled to Italy and thence to Majorca and then perhaps on to Castile and Portugal. But he fell in love with Majorca and got on well with Father Alcover, a vitriolic clergyman. He took to the Majorcan temperament and landscape and—who knows?— maybe he even thought he could pick up some kind of work there. He was popular with Catalans even before the 1906 Congress due to the work he and Alcover had carried out on dialects throughout the Catalan Pyrenees some weeks before (from 31st July to 13th September 1906). A new edition of Alcover’s quirky diary (full of both anecdotic and scholarly notes) written during the trip had just been published. As far as the Congress itself was concerned (1st International Congress on the Catalan Language, held in October 1906), Schädel presented a fairly run-of-the-mill paper but he greatly encouraged people and institutions to shoulder their responsibilities and work harder in the field. Moreover, since he was German, Catalans took the message very much to heart.

- **S:** Yes, Schädel’s influence made itself felt through Alcover —of whom he was a loyal follower. It was apparent in the *Bolletí del Diccionari de la Llengua Catalana* (Catalan Dictionary Bulletin) even though he was unable to read his paper (“*Über die Zukunft der katalanischen Sprachstudien*” [On the Future of Catalan Philological Studies]) because he had to return to Germany for family reasons. Schädel had begun to publish useful work in the field of Catalan language and literature in 1903 in his *Kritischer Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der romanischen Philologie* (Critical Annual Report on the Progress of Romance Philology), which he continued until 1908. Then disagreements with Catalan Philology scholarship



students whom he had persuaded to come to Halle made him lose interest in Catalan studies. However, he still found time to publish a long article titled “*Die katalanischen Pyrenäendialekte*” [The Dialects of the Catalan Pyrenees] in his new journal *Revue de Dialectologie Romane*, in 1909, however there is only a single entry in the Eberhard Vogel’s Catalan-Germany dictionary of 1911, published by Langenscheidt. There is a big gap until 1921, when Alcover republished a proposal for organising the dictionary entries in the *Bulletin*. By the way, Eberhard Vogel was another very active specialist on Catalan at the beginning of the 20th Century and apart from producing the dictionary, also translated various novels of the period into German. We should also recall Hugo Schuchardt, who published an article titled “*Zur Verbreitung des Katalanischen*” (The Spread of the Catalan Language) in 1906 in the *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie*.

-  Schädel founded the Société de Dialectologie Romane, in which he gave Alcover an important role. The “Société” did not last long because of the outbreak of the First World War. After the war, Adolphe Terracher and Oscar Bloch founded the Société de Linguistique Romane (1924). Although the name was different, it was similar in nature to Schädel’s association, which existed between 1909 and 1914. Moreover, it followed the trail blazed by Bernhard Schädel.

“Schädel presented a fairly run-of-the-mill paper but he greatly encouraged people and institutions to shoulder their responsibilities and work harder in the field”

DR. ANTONI M. BADIA I MARGARIT

- S: As I said, Schädel faded into the background in the Catalan scene from 1911, when he was appointed Professor at Hamburg's Colonial Institute which, after the First World War, formed part of the new Hamburg University. In the Latin American Institute, Schädel had to cover the whole of Spain and Latin America. But you are right in saying that his co-workers, Fritz Krüger, Rudolf Grossmann, and Wilhelm Giese (the last two of whom I studied with) also followed the line of Catalan studies and made valuable contributions in the field. But the Hamburg line of studies came to an end after the Second World War. When I studied in the 1960s, there was only one Spanish lecturer, the Valencian Josep Maria Navarro, who gave me a small push in the direction of Catalan studies when he suggested I take part in the Colloquium on Catalan Language and Culture in Amsterdam in 1970, which is where I met you.

- B: I would like to pick up the thread again regarding W. Meyer-Lübke. If I can return to him for a moment, he was a great Romanist and remained true to his broad conception of Romance studies. Although he focused mainly on French and Italian, he did not ignore other Romance languages, for example Catalan, even though he continued to consider it a dialect of Provençal. He published the act consecrating the Urgell Cathedral (dating from 860), which includes the names of hundreds of parishes that reveal the pronunciation of Catalan in the 9th Century. Meyer-Lübke wrote an excellent article, which was published in *Butlletí de Dialectologia Catalana* (Bulletin of Catalan Dialect Studies, 1923). With hindsight, it foreshadowed the great change in the Romanist's work. Meyer-Lübke and his family stayed in Alforja (Baix Camp) in 1923 —the year of the German hyperinflation. He documented and wrote the book *Das Katalanische* (*The Catalan Language*, published in Heidelberg in 1925). As we know, Meyer-Lübke recognised Catalan as a Romance language in its own right even though it shared Gallo-Roman roots. He became a leading light in the field.

- **S:** We can say that 1925 finally put Catalan on the same footing as other Romance languages. German Romanists treated it as such up until the Second World War, when the output of published articles dropped off in the field, and that included Catalan.

- **B:** You are absolutely right there. Meyer-Lübke's publication of *Das Katalanische* overcame the discrimination against Catalan in the Romance languages camp. Odd though it may seem, the decade 1920-1930 marked the beginning of a fruitful, tranquil relationship between our two cultures, which seems to be reflected in two parallel activities: (1) on the German side, the monograph on the language spoken in Alguer, Sardinia, which was actually an excellent historical grammar of Catalan, written by Heinrich Kuen (Erlangen); and (2) on the Catalan side, the Catalan Supplement by Francesc de B. Moll in Meyer-Lübke's *Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, the third edition of which appeared in the 3rd edition of the *REW*, published in 1935. It is curious that both works were published in the same journal (*Anuari de l'Oficina Romànica de Lingüística i Literatura*) in Barcelona and more or less in the same years in the 1920s and 30s. This temporal coincidence between Kuen and Moll has often struck me.

“Fritz Krüger, Rudolf Grossmann, and Wilhelm Giese [...] also followed the line of Catalan studies and made valuable contributions in the field”

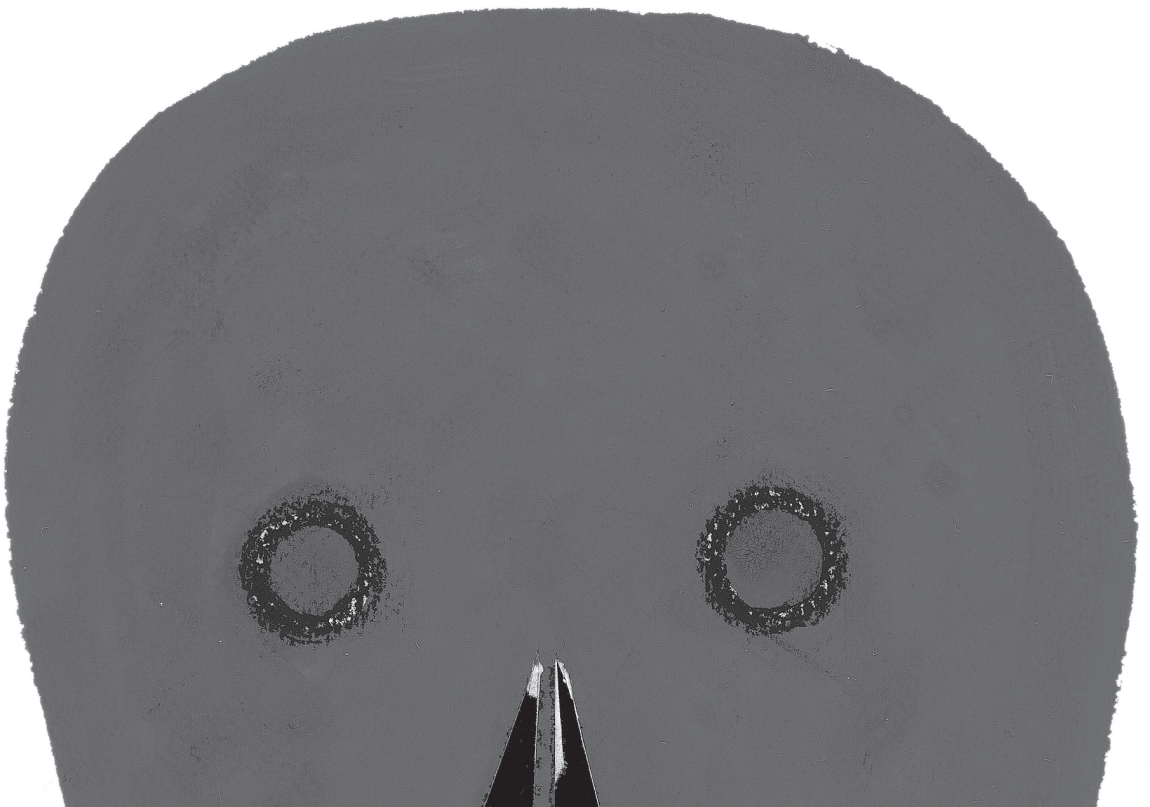
DR. TILBERT DÍDAC STEGMANN

- **S:** I am glad you mentioned Heinrich Kuen, who treated me very well when I arrived as an assistant lecturer at Erlangen-Nürnberg University and who appointed me President of Honour when the Deutsch-Katalanische Gesellschaft was founded. But that was a long time ago. What was your impression of the German contribution to Catalan language and culture during the long years of repression under the Franco dictatorship?

- **B:** The impression I got from contacts with German friends and colleagues is that they were very worried in the 1940s and 50s about the repression of Catalan culture and language. It made them feel powerless. Let me tell you what happened to me. Hans Rheinfelder (of Munich) asked me about my difficulties in Spain. He was so shocked at what I told him that he arranged for me to be appointed as Guest Lecturer at Munich University for three semesters between 1959 and 1960. He did so because the situation in Spain was unbearable. Despite working under such adverse circumstances, the period was a fruitful one from the academic point of view. That is borne out by the minutes of the Romanist Congresses and the bibliography of the time. It was also a period in which the bonds of friendship were strengthened. From 1968 onwards (the year of the Catalan Colloquium in Strasbourg), the International Association for Catalan Language and Literature and similar associations in other countries made great strides. Germany played a key role in this work.

- S: The most active new lines of German research on Catalan are being undertaken in Tübingen, where the lecturer Antoni Pous made many disciples of Catalan (Hösle, Schlieben-Lange, Jens Lüdtkke, etc.), and in Freiburg through the Raimundus-Lullus-Institut. Georg Kremnitz is full professor at Vienna University and a large number of students have graduated after majoring in Catalan. As I mentioned, I myself started at Erlangen-Nürnberg and then went on to Berlin, where I organised Catalan Weeks with a Colloquium on Catalan Socio-linguistics. In 1983, I organised Catalan Weeks in Karlsruhe in which you took part, and jointly founded the “Deutsch-Katalanische Gesellschaft” in 1983 with Ramon Aramon i Serra. The “Deutscher Katalanistenverband” is now an association that brings together German and Catalan scholars. I myself did everything I could from Frankfurt, and worked closely with the Biblioteca Catalana (Catalan Library Foundation) and the *Zeitschrift für Katalanistik* [Catalan Studies Journal] from 1981 to the present. This has borne fruit because in 2007 Catalan culture will be the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair. One can therefore say that the “German contribution” a hundred years after the 1906 International Congress on the Catalan Language Relations is thriving.

- B: That is an excellent point. We both work in the field of Catalan language and culture and thus recognise the importance of both the 1906 International Congress on the Catalan Language and the impending 2007 Frankfurt Book Fair, at which Catalan culture is the guest of honour. The 2007 Fair is of great importance for anyone interested in Catalan, particularly so for Catalan and German specialists. Moreover, it is all the more remarkable that the 1906 Congress should receive decisive contributions and guidance from a German philologist, while the 2007 Book Fair will be held in the German city of Frankfurt.



German Catalan studies are currently enjoying one of the brightest periods ever, and embrace teaching, research, and dissemination of the importance of Catalan. This year's commemoration of the 1906 Congress promises to have a much wider impact than we could ever have imagined. Today, relations between German and Catalan Romanists could not be better, thanks to university exchange programmes, colloquia, congresses, and a wealth of publications. This holds out excellent prospects for Catalan studies in both our countries.

Then there is the challenge of the Frankfurt Book Fair. We trust the German organisers will be as efficient as usual in preparing the event. With regard to the organisation in Catalonia, things are a little up in

the air at them moment. The current political situation is unstable, with changes of government, recent elections, lack of planning, and empty posts while we wait for the necessary appointments to be made. With regard to more specific aspects of the Fair, we are still waiting for a decision as to whether "Catalan culture" means "expressed in Catalan" (or whether it includes works in Spanish written by Catalan authors). A decision also needs to be made on whether publishers should be given more weight than authors. Those in charge (but who

still have to be appointed) have made enigmatic statements to the effect that "works in Catalan will receive due attention". Whatever the outcome, Catalonia hopes to write a glorious page in the history of Catalan literature at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Some day we shall speak of it again and I sincerely hope we will have cause for self-congratulation.

Before bringing this pleasant conversation to an end, I should like to recall that exactly 17 years ago to the day on 7th November 1990, we and our friend Til received the 1990 CIEMEN awards (CIEMEN-International Centre for Ethnic and National Minorities). You were introduced by Max Cahner and the prize was awarded by Aureli Argemí, CIEMEN's Secretary-General. Enric Casassas introduced me and the prize was awarded by Jaume Farriol, CIEMEN's President. May we continue to fight shoulder to shoulder for Catalan culture and the strengthening of the bonds between our two countries!||

“Today, relations between German and Catalan Romanists could not be better, thanks to university exchange programmes, colloquia, congresses, and a wealth of publications”

DR. ANTONI M. BADIA I MARGARIT