

English version of UPF's
Espai Pompeu Fabra texts



Pompeu Fabra, the engineer of the Catalan language

“The ideal we pursue is not the resurrection of a mediaeval language, but the shaping of the modern language that would have emerged from our ancient language were it not for the long centuries of literary decline and subordination to a foreign tongue.”

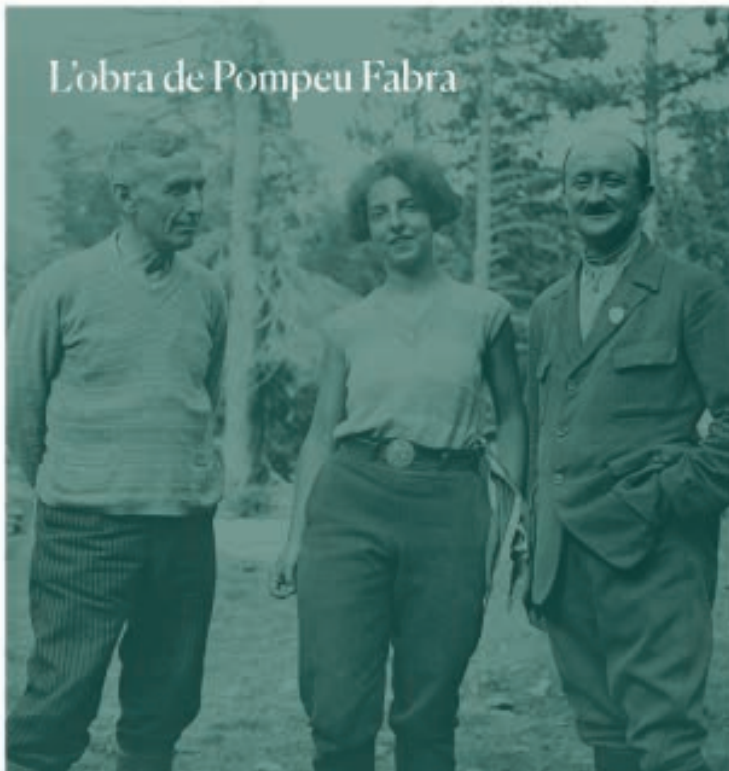
Pompeu Fabra

Pompeu Fabra i Poch was born on 20 February 1868 in the village of Gràcia – annexed by Barcelona in 1897 – and died on 25 December 1948 in Prada, in the Conflent region (French Catalonia), where he had lived in exile since 1939.

An engineer by training, he was drawn to the study of language from a very young age and was self-taught

in the study of Catalan. Through his research and publications, Pompeu Fabra helped – brilliantly and decisively – to standardize, establish rules for and refine modern Catalan. With clear and systematic criteria, taking into account both the mediaeval language and the different geographical variants, he laid the foundations for the national and cultural language that is Catalan today.

In recognition of the figure and his work, our university is proud to bear Pompeu Fabra's name. A man of culture, true to his language and country, he was a paragon of civic virtue, rigour, and generosity, a model of integrity and coherence, a polyglot and a sportsman, who was ahead of his time.



Pompeu Fabra's work

“From a very young age, I was keenly aware of the great poverty of contemporary literary Catalan and the need to remedy it.”

Pompeu Fabra

“Fabra is a model and pillar not only of the 20th century, but of our entire history. The body of work he managed to produce was well thought-out, structured and executed in exemplary fashion.”

Joan Solà

Pompeu Fabra, considered the father of modern Catalan, quickly grasped the need to codify the Catalan language, so that it could become a genuine, unified language,

suitable for all uses and areas of Catalan society, a language that could be used for everything and by everyone. He understood that having a modern, standardized language was key to Catalonia's cultural, political and national progress.

He began work on what would become his first grammar book in 1907, the same year the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC) was founded. In 1911, when the IEC's Philological Section was created, Fabra continued his efforts to codify the language there. In 1913, the IEC published its *Normes ortogràfiques* [Spelling Rules], an endeavour that Fabra had spearheaded and co-authored with the other Philological Section members. In 1917, Pompeu Fabra wrote the *Diccionari ortogràfic* [Spelling Dictionary] and, in 1918, the *Gramàtica catalana* [Catalan Grammar]. In 1932, he culminated his work with the *Diccionari general de la llengua catalana* [General Dictionary of the Catalan Language].

Through his efforts, Fabra not only established a robust linguistic and grammatical foundation, but also contributed decisively to the standardization and subsequent normalization of the Catalan language, which has been endowed ever since with a coherent, modern linguistic model appropriate for all areas of public life, education and culture. Thanks to Pompeu Fabra, a symbol of Catalonia's linguistic and cultural renaissance, Catalan was able to regain its status as a language of prestige and culture.



A cultured and European Catalonia

“Fabra is a paragon of intelligent and effective patriotism.”

Antoni Rovira i Virgili

Pompeu Fabra, his work and his thought were strongly aligned with the values and ideals of *Noucentisme*, a cultural and ideological movement from the first third of the 20th century that sought the modernization and cultural and national normalization of Catalonia. Fabra had a deep love for his country and its language, and he laid the foundations for the modern Catalan language to be an indispensable tool in the pursuit of a modern, cultured and European Catalonia.

El català, llengua romànica



El català és una llengua romànica. Les llengües romàniques són les que deriven del llatí, que són les llengües que parlemos avui en dia, i que es desenvolupen per tota part d'Europa entre els segles I i VII.

El llatí que es parlava als territoris ocupats pels Romans, però, al llarg del temps, anava canviant. Amb el temps, al sud s'origina el desenvolupament de noves formes en contacte amb les llengües que s'hi trobaven (grec, hebreu, etc.). És així com s'origina el català, però les altres llengües romàniques també s'originen en contacte amb llengües que hi havia a la zona.

El català va començar a desenvolupar-se del llatí al voltant dels segles III i IV, i a partir del segle V ja es noten fortes diferències amb el llatí. El català, però, té moltes similituds amb altres llengües romàniques, almenys en la morfologia que té en comú amb elles. És una llengua de transició entre les llengües d'occità i gal·lo-romàniques i les llengües gal·lo-romàniques, molt propera al francès, amb el qual comparteix moltes paraules.



Les llengües romàniques que se parlen actualment són: el català, l'occità, el francès, el portuguès, el gal·lès, l'espanyol, l'italià, el romanès, el portuguès i el romanès.

"[...] si agrupàvem aquestes [les llengües novellanes] tenint en compte llurs analogies i diferències, el català no entraria pas en el mateix grup que el castellà, del qual, per certs trets fonètics i morfològics importants, difereix més que cap altra llengua romànica."

Pompeu Fabra

Catalan, a Romance language

"[...] if we were to group them [‘the neo-Latin languages’] based on their similarities and differences, Catalan would not be in the same group as Spanish, from which it differs more than from any other Romance language due to certain crucial phonetic and morphological features."

Pompeu Fabra

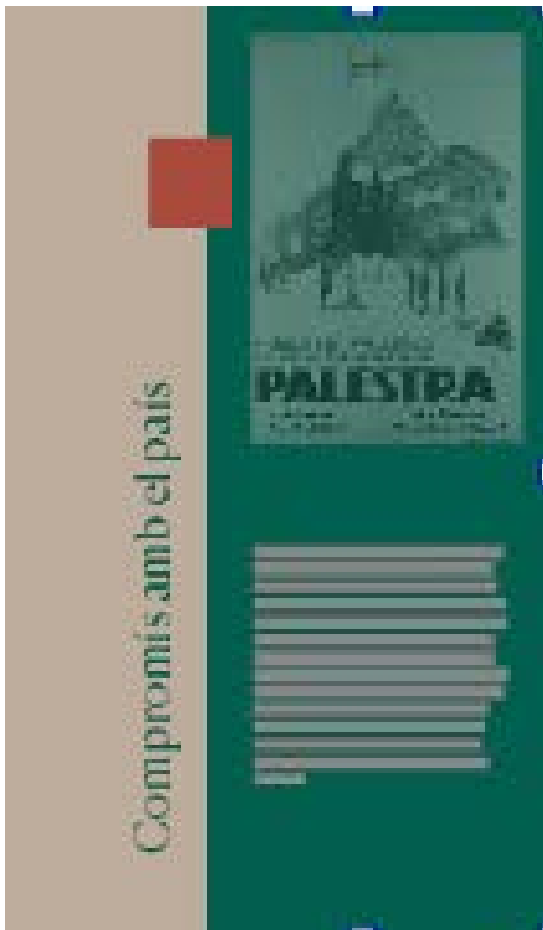
Catalan is a Romance language. Romance languages are those descended from Latin, the language spoken by the Romans, which spread across much of Europe between the 3rd century B.C. and the 5th century A.D.

However, the Latin that reached the territories conquered by Rome was Vulgar Latin, which differed from classical Latin. Over time, Vulgar Latin evolved differently in each of the Empire's territories, giving rise to the Romance, or Neo-Latin, languages. Thus, whilst all these languages share Latin as their common origin, the different languages previously spoken in each place and subsequent contact with other languages led each one to evolve differently.

Catalan began to diverge from Latin around the 8th and 9th centuries A.D., and Catalan-language texts have been found dating from the 12th century. Although it shares many features with other Romance languages, Catalan has its own characteristics that make it unique.

It is a transitional language between the Iberian Romance and Gallo-Romance languages, very close to Occitan, with which it shares origins and group.

The Romance languages still spoken today are Catalan, Occitan, French, Portuguese, Galician, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Sardinian, and Romansh or Rhaeto-Romance.



Commitment to the country

Pompeu Fabra had an unwavering sense of duty and a strong civic and national commitment. He was a founding member and president of Palestra, a Catalanist organization created in 1930 to promote values such as discipline, self-improvement, physical education, civic-mindedness and service to the country amongst Catalan youth with the aim of building a modern, cultured, advanced and civilized nation. The country had to be defended and rebuilt, and it had to be done with the modern, cultured, advanced and inclusive patriotism championed by Pompeu Fabra and Palestra, which encompassed “the whole of Greater Catalonia, the sister lands of the Catalan language”.



Historical and national vision

Fabra understood that without a national language – with a unified spelling and a well-established lexicon and grammar – Catalonia could not prosper as a nation, nor would Catalan survive. So, he worked to codify and standardize the language with the broader and more general goal of restoring dignity to the Catalan people and ensuring the language's survival. He did so drawing on history, using both mediaeval Catalan and the living spoken language as references; taking a broad-minded approach, considering the evolution of other languages in our environment; and from a national perspective, taking all Catalan-speaking territories into account.

La llengua catalana. Una mica d'història



El català és la llengua que es parla a Catalunya, a la Catalunya Nord, al País Valencià, a les Illes Balears, al Principat d'Andorra, a la Franja de Ponent, a la zona nord de l'Aragó i a la ciutat d'Alghero a Sardenya. És també la llengua catalana el creientu idioma de parlar. En els segles **X** i **XI** comencen a aparèixer les primeres expressions en català en textos escrits en llatí. Fer els segles **XII** i **XIII** comencen a aparèixer les primeres obres escrites en català.

El català té dos grans variants o dialectes: català nord i català sud. El català nord, que pertanyent als Països Catalans, s'expressa en dos grans dialectes: el català nord i el català sud. El català sud s'expressa a Catalunya, a País Valencià i a les Illes Balears, de llengua oficial a Andorra. El català nord s'expressa a la zona de la Franja de Ponent.



Després de segles d'oblit i de prohibició, amb la llengua catalana, el català es parlava a partir de mitjan segle **XIII** a l'interior del territori de Catalunya Nord, i des del començament del segle **XIV** a la majoria de l'espai de la zona del País Valencià. Al segle **XIII**, a més, es comença el desenvolupament de la llengua catalana a la Península, que coincideix amb el desenvolupament de la llengua catalana a la Península. Aquesta llengua es desenvolupa a partir de mitjan segle **XIII** a l'interior del territori de Catalunya Nord, i des del començament del segle **XIV** a la majoria de l'espai de la zona del País Valencià. Aquesta llengua es desenvolupa a partir de mitjan segle **XIII** a l'interior del territori de Catalunya Nord, i des del començament del segle **XIV** a la majoria de l'espai de la zona del País Valencià. Aquesta llengua es desenvolupa a partir de mitjan segle **XIII** a l'interior del territori de Catalunya Nord, i des del començament del segle **XIV** a la majoria de l'espai de la zona del País Valencià.

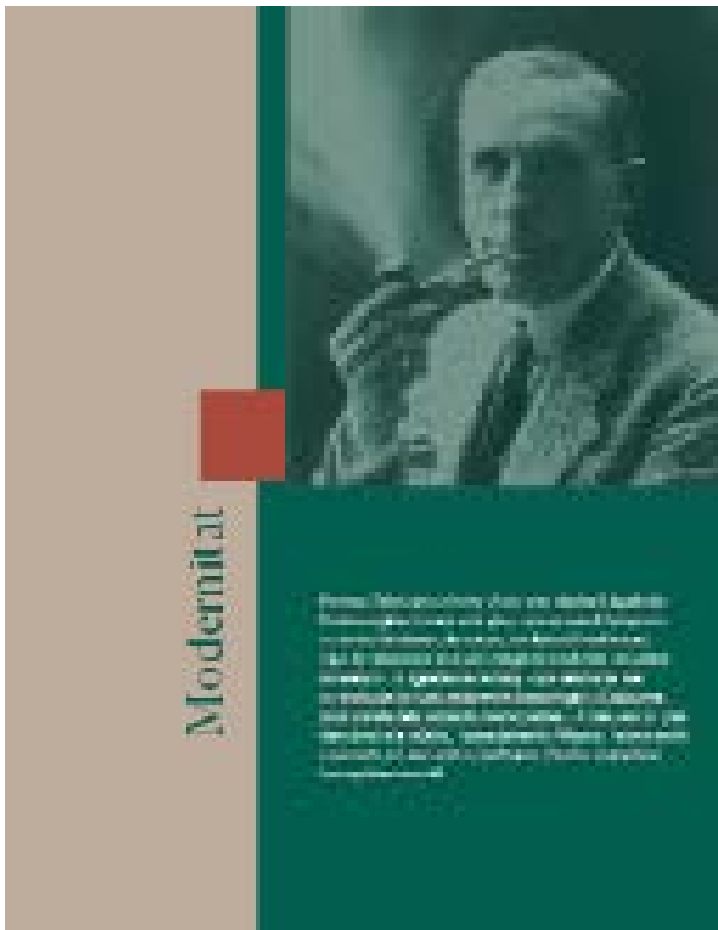
The Catalan language: a brief history

Catalan is the language spoken in Catalonia, Northern or French Catalonia, Valencia, the Balearic Islands, the Principality of Andorra, the Franja de Ponent strip in Aragon, the Sardinian city of Alghero, and the Carxe area of Murcia. In total, it has around ten million speakers. By the 9th and 10th centuries, Catalan words and expressions had begun to appear in Latin texts, and the earliest known texts written in Catalan date from the 11th and 12th centuries.

There are five main variants or dialects of Catalan – Valencian, North-Western, Central, Balearic, and Roussillonese – which, together with the Algherese

dialect, are grouped into two main blocks: Western Catalan and Eastern Catalan. Catalan is a co-official language in Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands and the official language of Andorra, but has no official status in the other regions where it is spoken.

After expanding and thriving for centuries as a state language, from the mid-17th century onwards, Catalan suffered from the imposition of French in Northern Catalonia and, from the turn of the 18th century, the imposition of Spanish in the rest of the linguistic domain. However, the 19th century saw the start of a cultural and linguistic revival known as the *Renaixença* or Catalan Renaissance, which championed Catalan as a literary and cultural language. The Catalan *Modernisme* movement linked this revival to a focus on modernization and increasing the Catalan presence in Europe. In the early 20th century, the Mancomunitat de Catalunya, or Commonwealth of Catalonia (1914–1925), sought to institutionalize this revival by promoting education and cultural infrastructure. This period also saw the creation of the Institute for Catalan Studies (1907), which, thanks to Pompeu Fabra's efforts, systematized the language and established its rules.



Modernity

Pompeu Fabra was a man of great dignity and elegance. He spoke English, smoked a pipe (in his day, a symbol of class, culture, and intellectual distinction, with connotations of maturity and prosperity), and enjoyed whisky (a luxury product at the time, still largely unknown in Catalonia, generally found only in cosmopolitan circles). He was also a great music lover, especially fond of Wagner, and often went to concerts at the Liceu concert hall with a small group of friends who shared both his passion for the composer and his Europeanist outlook.

La reconstrucció d'una llengua nacional



La llengua de Pompeu Fabra és la reconstrucció de la llengua catalana en una llengua moderna per adaptar-la en una llengua moderna, adaptada a l'ús que a tots els terrenys de la vida pública. Fabra no volia un català modern i popular, però volia un català que servís a totes les necessitats d'una llengua nacional, en un moment en què el català es trobava fragmentat, ja s'entendien Girona i altres una mica més.

Fabra va definir la seva idea a moltes lletres, tractant-la i adaptant-la a la llengua catalana, amb l'ajuda de alguns dels seus deixebles i d'altres homes de coneixement lingüístic, de construir una llengua nacional de cultura.

Així va aconseguir crear, simplificada i normal, l'ortografia catalana i la gramàtica. El català català és en una gran part.

- La llengua catalana - el català català dels segles XVIII, que per a Fabra representava la llengua pura, era gairebé incomprensible perquè no era més que un dialecte, amb una manera de sentir la realitat, marca del temps.
- Les altres llengües catalanes: Fabra va comparar el català amb llengües com el francès, l'italià i l'alemany, i va veure que podien servir d'inspiració i d'ajuda per a la llengua catalana, però sense perdre la seva essència.
- Els dialectes: Fabra va veure que hi havia molts dialectes catalans, però que tots ells tenien una base comuna, la llengua catalana del nord. Va veure que tots ells podien servir d'inspiració i d'ajuda per a la llengua catalana.

Aquesta combinació de tots aquests elements i la seva llengua catalana és el català català i la seva ortografia.

"A l'un els satisfa una llengua provincial, un idioma que vindria a ésser, amb mots i formes catalans, una variant dialectal de la llengua espanyola; Fabra aspira que Catalunya possessi una veritable llengua nacional, la llengua moderna que hauria sortit de la nostra gloriosa llengua medieval sense l'acció perturbadora de l'espanyol."

Pompeu Fabra

The reconstruction of a national language

"For some, it is enough to have a provincial tongue, a language that would be a dialectal variant of Spanish seasoned with Catalan words and expressions; others aspire for Catalonia to have a true national language, the modern language that would have emerged from our glorious mediaeval language had it not been for the disruptive influence of Spanish."

Pompeu Fabra

Pompeu Fabra's work in reconstructing the Catalan language was essential to making it a standardized, modern language suitable for all areas of public life. Fabra not only

reformed the spelling and grammar, but he also undertook a genuine reconstruction of a national language at a time when Catalan was fragmented, rife with foreign influences and lacking a clear standard.

Fabra devoted his life to modernizing, establishing rules for and normalizing the Catalan language with the aim of purging modern Catalan of interferences, standardizing its spelling and building a national language of culture.

Taking a scientific, simplifying and rational approach, Fabra codified the grammar and spelling based on three main criteria:

- The mediaeval language – classical Catalan from the 13th to 15th centuries – which, for Fabra, was the pure, rich and true language, although he looked to it not with a view to locking in archaisms, but as a way of restoring Catalan's internal coherence.
- Other Romance languages: Fabra compared Catalan with languages such as French, Occitan and Italian in order to identify and avoid excessive influences from Spanish, which distorted Catalan's Romance nature, rendering it less genuine and authentic.
- Living and popular usage: despite his commitment to using the past and other languages as references, Fabra always bore in mind the language spoken by the people. He wanted a language that was cultured, but also functional, clear and comprehensible.

It was this blend of scientific rigour and linguistic sensitivity that gave his reform its strength and staying power.



Instructive and pedagogical

“Fabra was not only a great grammarian, but also an open and generous spirit like few others, a man whose heart was as noble as his intelligence was keen.”

Francesc de Borja Moll

As part of his work to bring order to and modernize Catalan and rebuild a national language, Pompeu Fabra wrote not only manuals and informative works, but also some 900 articles for the press – including his famous “Converses filològiques” [Philological Conversations], published in the newspaper daily *La Publicitat* – to propagate and disseminate his work to normalize the language. For the same purpose, he also gave a total of 92 public lectures and talks, which he used to convey and clearly explain the linguistic rules he proposed.

Pompeu Fabra, home de llengües i de cultura



Pompeu Fabra representa el paradigma de l'individu compromès amb la cultura i amb el país: un home erudit, cosmòpolita, políglot, esportista, que des de la nit i l'ordre va contribuir decisivament a dignificar i modernitzar la llengua catalana. Vella que el català ha viscut les dues cultures europees, i ha lluitat fins a

Pompeu Fabra, esportista, guàrdia, granista i filòleg, va involucrar-se de ben jove en la gran batalla per la llengua i per la cultura. Era un home de gran cultura i mentalitat àgil, que dominava diverses llengües –molt el francès, l'alemany, l'anglès i el llatí–, les quals el permetien accedir de gran manera a l'últim avantatge de les llengües i a la cultura de l'època. Aquesta formació cosmopolita i l'aportava i el seu treball constant i dedicat el van convertir en un referent i un model del seu temps.

Més enllà dels seus esforços d'impulsar de la seva praxi i de la seva fecció per la llengua, Fabra volia una gran cultura per la cultura catalana en general i per l'europea en particular, i aquesta fecció a l'ordre. També es troba espècies de la llengua i es troba pensat en termes d'artífexes en català. Fabra és com un home erudit i esportista, amb una personalitat nobilitada i humanista i a gran altura d'alt.



"Fabra ens va ensenyar a estimar la llengua no només amb el cor, sinó amb el cap."

Joan Coromines

Pompeu Fabra, a man of languages and culture

"Fabra taught us to love the language not only with our hearts, but also with our minds."

Joan Coromines

Pompeu Fabra was the paradigmatic intellectual committed to culture and the country; an educated, cosmopolitan, polyglot sportsman who, through reason and order, contributed decisively to dignifying and modernizing the Catalan language. He wanted Catalan to be a living language of European culture, and he wanted it to have a future.

A chemical engineer, grammarian and philologist, Pompeu Fabra showed a great passion for languages and culture from a very young age. He was a man of refined tastes with an artistic sensibility, whose strong command of several languages, including French, German, English and Latin, gave him access to the great European philological currents, affording him with a broad, comparative perspective when it came to codifying and refining Catalan. This rigorous, cosmopolitan background, coupled with his broad-minded, receptive character, made him a leading intellectual of his time.

In addition to his engineering studies, and his passion and work for the language, Fabra was a great admirer of classical music in general and Wagner in particular, and he often attended concerts. He also translated several plays and wrote nearly a thousand magazine and newspaper articles. In short, Fabra was a cultured, elegant man, with a methodical and harmonious personality and boundless public spirit.



A sportsman

Pompeu Fabra practiced and loved sport as a physical activity, but also as a means of personal enrichment and discipline and a form of civic and patriotic engagement. He enjoyed tennis, swimming, walking and hiking. His desire to promote sport and commitment to the country led him to join some clubs and serve as president of others. As president of the Catalan Union of Sport Federations, he was the driving force and political leader behind the First Catalan Sport Week (1935).

A mountain lover, Pompeu Fabra regarded hiking as not only a physical activity, but one with a scientific dimension, as it allowed him to link language and culture with the land. He was a keen walker and hiked throughout his life, taking long walks and making several treks through the Pyrenees.



Steadfast, humble and discreet

"If you want to do it, go ahead, but be warned: I am an ordinary man, with no great achievements, with an unremarkable life."

Fabra to Josep Miracle when he told him he wanted to write his biography

Pompeu Fabra always displayed great intellectual and moral steadfastness. Despite the pressure, challenges and attacks he endured, he always remained true to his principles, unwaveringly defending his work and the rules he proposed. But he was also a humble, unassuming man, approachable and ever willing to collaborate, who eschewed the limelight. These virtues were key to ensuring that his work was not only a technical success, but also socially accepted and valued.

“Només tindrem el que nosaltres sapiguem guanyar. Cal reconèixer tots els nostres recursos i estudiar llurs possibilitats. [...] Vivim de cara al món, i si volem la plena sobirania per al nostre poble és per a millorar la qualitat dels nostres conciutadans i per a obtenir que Catalunya, intensament civilitzada, pugui oferir una efectiva col·laboració en l’obra de millorament i progrés de la humanitat.”

Boniforn Fabra

Acte inaugural de l’associació Palestra
Palau de la Música Catalana, 30 de novembre de 1930

“We will only have what we manage to earn. We must identify all our resources and study their potential. [...] We live in the wider world, and if we want full sovereignty for our people, it is to improve the quality of our fellow citizens and to ensure that a strongly civilized Catalonia can contribute effectively to the betterment and advancement of humankind.”

Inauguration of the Palestra association
Palau de la Música Catalana, 30 November 1930



Cultured and polyglot

An engineer by training, Pompeu Fabra had broad knowledge of a wide range of subjects and was interested in not only languages and linguistics, but also science, astronomy, music, food and sport, amongst other things.

His solid grounding in philology and linguistics – he knew English, French, Italian, Romanian and Spanish well and could read Galician, German, Greek, Latin, Norwegian, Portuguese and Russian – allowed him to compare Catalan with other languages, affording him a robust, broad-based perspective when it came to standardizing a genuine Catalan language, free from interference from other languages. His dedication to Catalan also had a deep-rooted cultural, civic and national dimension, as

for Fabra the language was a tool for social cohesion and an essential vehicle for the Catalan people's intellectual and collective development.



Civic-minded and engaged

Deeply committed to institutions and the country, Pompeu Fabra applied his knowledge and authority to a cultural and national project involving both institutions and civil society. As a result of this commitment, he chaired the IEC's Philological Section, was president of the Catalan Union of Sport Federations and Palestra association and was a member of organizations and institutions such as Ateneu Barcelonès, the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya [Hiking Club of Catalonia], the Associació Protectora de l'Ensenyança Catalana [Association for the Protection of Catalan Education] and the Autonomous University of Barcelona Board of Trustees, amongst others. Between 1945 and 1948, he was also a member of the Catalan government in exile.

Pompeu Fabra, compromís cívic i servei al país



Pompeu Fabra va ser un exemple de compromís cívic i de servei a Catalunya, per la seva tasca inassolible en la codificació i la normalització de la llengua catalana. Conscient que una llengua normalitzada era essencial per al progrés cultural, polític i nacional de Catalunya, va posar els seus coneixements i la seva obra al servei de la llengua i del país.

Per col·laborar amb el seu compromís amb la llengua catalana i amb el seu projecte de normalització lingüística, va dirigir les seues de l'Acadèmia de la llengua catalana, perquè acceptés la seva veu com una autoritat cultural i l'estal majoritari i com una garantia simbòlica a la independència lingüística que el defensava per al país.

Més enllà de la tasca lingüística, Fabra, home de coneixement i d'èxit, va assumir responsabilitats públiques com a professor del Patronat de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona i més tard a la Universitat de Barcelona va aconseguir entre 1933 i 1934, de Mestre de la Unió Catalana de Federacions Esportives, del PEN Club de Catalunya, de l'Ateneu Barcelonès, de la Institució de les Lletres Catalanes, de la Fundació Ramon Llull... Abans dels fets del dia d'Octubre de 1934 i de la repressió generalitzada contra les institucions catalanes que se'n va derivar, va ser engrescat pel Síndic cívica que vivia i com a figura clau de la mobilitat i del catalanisme cultural i institucional.

Fabra es va mantenir sempre fidel als seus ideals: de un símbol del servei desinteressat al país, de fermesa en la defensa dels valors culturals i lingüístics i d'un actitud cívica exempta d'interès.



"Només tindrem el que nosaltres sapiguem guanyar. Cal reconèixer tots els nostres recursos i estudiar llurs possibilitats. [...] Vivim de cara al món, i si volem la plena sobirania per al nostre poble és per a millorar la qualitat dels nostres conciutadans i per a obtenir que Catalunya, intensament civilitzada, pugui oferir una efectiva col·laboració en l'obra de millorament i progrés de la humanitat."

Pompeu Fabra

Pompeu Fabra, civic engagement and service to the country

"We will only have what we manage to earn. We must identify all our resources and study their potential. [...] We live in the wider world, and if we want full sovereignty for our people, it is to improve the quality of our fellow citizens and to ensure that a strongly civilized Catalonia can contribute effectively to the betterment and advancement of humankind."

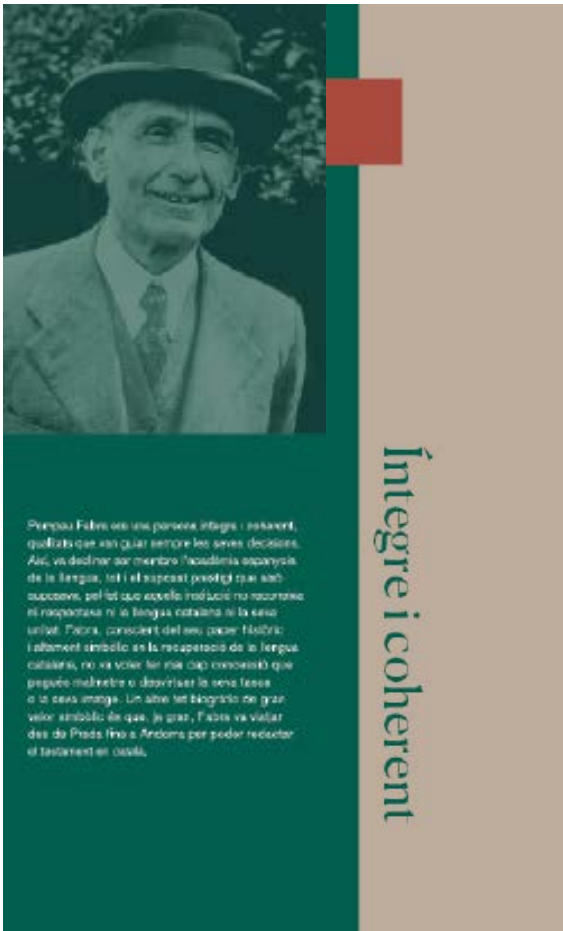
Pompeu Fabra

Pompeu Fabra was a model of civic engagement and service to Catalonia, due to his tireless work to codify and standardize Catalan. Convinced that a standardized language was essential to Catalonia's cultural, political and national progress, he placed his knowledge and work at the service of the language and the country.

In keeping with his commitment to Catalan and his goal of linguistic normalization, he declined membership in the Spanish language academy, as accepting it would have been seen as cultural submission to Spain and a symbolic renunciation of the linguistic independence he advocated for Catalan.

In addition to his linguistic work, Fabra was a man of consensus and unity. As such, he took on a number of public roles, such as president of the Board of Trustees of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (as the University of Barcelona was called between 1933 and 1939), as well as president of the Palestra association, the Catalan Union of Sport Federations, the PEN Club of Catalonia, Ateneu Barcelonès, the Institute of Catalan Letters, and the Ramon Llull Foundation, amongst others. In the wake of the events of 6 October 1934 (culminating in the declaration, by then president of the Catalanian government Lluís Companys, of a Catalan state within a Spanish federal republic) and the ensuing widespread crackdown on Catalan institutions, he was imprisoned, both for the various positions he held and as a symbolic figure closely linked to cultural and institutional Catalanism.

Fabra always remained true to his ideals. He is a symbol of selfless service to the country, steadfast defence of cultural and linguistic values and an exemplary civic attitude in the face of adversity.



Pompeu Fabra era una persona íntegra i coherent, qualitats que van guiar sempre les seves decisions. Així, va declinar ser membre l'Acadèmia espanyola de la llengua, tot i el prestigi prestigi que això suposava, perquè aquell institució no reconeixia ni respectava ni la llengua catalana ni la seva unitat. Fabra, president del seu país i històric i símbol en la recuperació de la llengua catalana, no va voler fer mai cap concessió que pogués malmetre o distorsionar la seva feina o la seva imatge. Un altre fet biogràfic de gran valor simbòlic és que, ja gran, Fabra va viatjar des de Prada fins a Andorra per poder redactar el testament en català.

Íntegre i coherent

Integrity and coherence

Pompeu Fabra was a person of integrity and coherence, qualities that always guided his decisions. Accordingly, he declined membership in the Spanish language academy, despite the supposed prestige it entailed, as that institution neither recognized nor respected the Catalan language or its linguistic unity. Aware of his historical and highly symbolic role in restoring the Catalan language, Fabra scrupulously avoided making any concession that might damage or distort his work or image. Another highly symbolic biographical fact is that, late in life, Fabra travelled from Prada to Andorra to be able to write his will in Catalan.

Pompeu Fabra i l'esport



Pompeu Fabra també va tenir una fecció desinfectada com a esportista i com a regulador de l'esport a Catalunya. La seva vinculació amb l'activitat física va ser constant al llarg de la seva vida, respectant-se en disciplines com l'excursionisme, la raiatada i el tennis.

Fabra considerava així el rigor intel·lectual amb una vida activa i saludable. Més vell de l'any 1911, la relació de Fabra amb l'esport representa una manera de viure, una expressió de llibertat i de civisme i un compromís amb el país.

Gran conegut, va ser un entusiasta de l'excursionisme, que practicava amb regularitat i que li permetia conèixer l'història per la natura amb la companyia, la cultura i l'observació lingüística. Va ser membre del Centre Excursionista de Catalunya, entitat clau en la promoció de l'excursionisme científic i cultural.

Com a esportista també va destacar en disciplines com el tennis i la raiatada. Va formar part del Club Natació Barcelonès, que va arribar a perdre. Disciplinat i austre, solia nedar cada dia a mar oberta, fins i tot quan ja era gran.

Fabra es va relacionar estretament amb el món de la raiatada de tennis del Futbol Club Barcelonès. Va ser un dels fundadors del Club Natació Llevant, que també va arribar a perdre. El president de l'Associació de Lluita contra el Cançó, que a l'època de començament de la seva vida, va aconseguir de presidir la Unió Catalana de Natació Esportiva. Fabra apostava així a reforçar el bon exercici de natació i a promoure valors com l'esforç, la disciplina i la cohesió social.



"Ni la pràctica de l'excursionisme ni l'estudi de la llengua no m'han donat mai cap disgust. [...] Tothom, i especialment els qui estem sotmesos a les disciplines intel·lectuals, hauríem de practicar un esport o un altre."

Pompeu Fabra

Pompeu Fabra and sport

"Neither hiking nor studying the language has ever caused me any displeasure. [...] Everyone – especially those of us involved in intellectual disciplines – should engage in some form of sport."

Pompeu Fabra

Pompeu Fabra was also a distinguished athlete and promoter of sport in Catalonia. He maintained a lifelong interest in physical activity, especially hiking, swimming and tennis.

Fabra thus combined intellectual rigour with an active and healthy lifestyle. Beyond physical exercise, Fabra's relationship with sport was a way of life, an expression of freedom and public spirit, and a commitment to his country.

A keen walker, he was passionate about hiking, which he did regularly and which allowed him to combine his interest in nature with camaraderie, culture and linguistic observation. He was a member of the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya [Hiking Club of Catalonia], a pivotal organization in the promotion of scientific and cultural hiking.

As an athlete, he also excelled at tennis and swimming and was a member and, later, president of the Badalona Swimming Club. Disciplined and austere, he went for daily swims in the open sea, even once he was older.

Fabra began playing tennis as a member of the Futbol Club Barcelona tennis section. He co-founded and later served as president of the Badalona Lawn-Tennis club and was president of the Catalonia Lawn Tennis Association. As a consensus figure, and out of a desire to serve his country, he also agreed to serve as president of the Catalan Union of Sport Federations. Fabra thus helped to strengthen the network of Catalan associations and promote values such as hard work, discipline and social cohesion.



Master and symbol

"In memory of Pompeu Fabra, Master to all those who speak and write in Catalan."

Salvador Espriu, 'My People and I'

Pompeu Pompeu Fabra is considered a symbol of Catalonia's linguistic, cultural and national revival, renowned as much for his scientific rigour as for his patriotic drive, his unflappable, humble and meticulous character, and his unimpeachable honesty. His work to codify and standardize Catalan made him an indisputable intellectual authority, earning him the admiration and appreciation of all. Fabra was the Master who turned Catalan into a national language of culture, making him a true symbol of the dignification and persistence of the Catalan language and nation.



Methodical and systematic

"Pompeu Fabra was common sense made grammar."

Josep Carner

Pompeu Fabra valued reason, clarity and order and applied these principles to his work to codify the Catalan language. His thoughtful, meticulous and systematic nature, his extensive preparation in the field of linguistics, and his knowledge of both medieval Catalan and other languages in our environment lent his work to refine, codify and standardize Catalan great robustness, on which modern Catalan has been built.

Pompeu Fabra a l'exili



Pompeu Fabra es va veure obligat a fugir a la fi de la guerra de 1936-1939. Quan les tropes franquistes van ocupar Catalunya es va iniciar una dura repressió contra la llengua i la cultura catalanes. Fabra llavors abraçà la reconstrucció de la llengua catalana i de la seva elevació a llengua nacional i de cultura i per això s'associava amb el projecte cultural i polític catalanista, encara en el punt de mira del règim. Davant l'amenaça de represàlies, es va veure obligat a exiliar-se.

En va establir a la Catalunya Nord, els primers mesos, la seva residència a Perpinyà, a l'illa de Prada, i (després de pocs mesos de durança a Montpeller, el 1943) es va instal·lar definitivament a Prada, on va viure fins a la seva mort, el 1948. Malgrat les difícils condicions materials i l'incertesa d'estabilitat de l'exil, Fabra era en terra catalana, i va rebre l'assot fort dels seus compromisos del costat com de la gestió del país, que el necessitava i amb qui portava la mateixa llengua.



Fabra no va abandonar mai el seu compromís amb la llengua i amb el país, i el seu exil no va representar una ruptura amb la seva llengua. No va deixar mai de treballar per la llengua i la cultura catalanes, i va continuar sentint una feroç sensació de resistència.

Fidel a la seva llengua i a les seves conviccions, per poder fer legítimament el seu treballament en català, el novembre de 1947 es va desplaçar fins a Andorra, l'únic lloc on això era possible. Aquel viatge «convencional» per l'Àfrica, i que Fabra va fer quan tenia 70 anys, marca fins a quin punt la llengua formava part essencial de la seva identitat, del seu compromís i de la seva consciència personal.

“Cal no abandonar mai ni la tasca ni l'esperança.”

Pompeu Fabra. Prada (Conflent), 13 d'abril de 1947

Pompeu Fabra in exile

“We must abandon neither our task nor hope.”

Pompeu Fabra. Prada (Conflent, French Catalonia), 13 April 1947

Pompeu Fabra was forced into exile at the end of the 1936–1939 war. The Francoist troops' occupation of Catalonia marked the start of a harsh repression of the Catalan language and culture. As both a key figure in the standardization of Catalan and its elevation to the status of a national and cultural language and a staunch advocate of the Catalanist cultural and political project, Fabra was targeted by the regime. Faced with the threat of reprisals, he had no choice but to flee the country.

He settled in French Catalonia. The first few months, he lived briefly in Perpignan, Illa and Prada. Subsequently, after just over two years in Montpellier, in 1943 he settled permanently in Prada, where he lived until his death in 1948. Despite the challenging material conditions and instability of exile, Fabra was on Catalan soil and received the warm support of both his compatriots from the south and the people of the town, who respected him and spoke the same language.

Fabra never abandoned his commitment to the language and the country; his exile was merely a continuation of his task. He never stopped working on behalf of the Catalan language and culture, and he remained a prominent figure within it.

True to his language and his convictions, in order to draw up his will in Catalan, in November 1947 he travelled to Andorra, the only place where it was possible to do so. That journey – considered epic for the time, and which Fabra undertook at the age of 79 – bears witness to the extent to which the language was an essential part of his identity, his commitment and his personal coherence.



Good-natured and selfless

Pompeu Fabra had a calm, open-minded and conciliatory temperament. A thoughtful person, he approached any decision regarding the linguistic rules he proposed rigorously and meticulously. Thanks to his affable nature – warm, friendly and approachable – and sense of humour, his friends and collaborators held him in high esteem, and he was easy to work and collaborate with.

Pompeu Fabra was also generous – he had no interest in money or power – and worked selflessly for the cause of the Catalan language and nation, always foregoing any potential personal benefits or privileges.



Father of modern Catalan

"Fabra is the true legislator of our language."

Francesc Cambó

Pompeu Fabra is considered the father of modern Catalan, the voice of reason who brought order to the Catalan language, because he was the key figure who codified, unified, systematized, refined and modernized Catalan, which, at the time, suffered from a state of dispersion and lacked a consolidated normative model. With clear, modern and functional rules, Fabra rebuilt the national language, turning it into a modern language suitable for everything and everyone. In short, Fabra was the right person at the right time, who, through his work, laid the foundations for Catalan to be – and remain – a living, modern, socially prestigious language.

Vigència de l'obra de Pompeu Fabra



L'obra de Pompeu Fabra és el pilar fonamental de la normalització lingüística de la llengua catalana. I només, entre d'altres, una vigència indefinida. La seva tasca de codificació ortogràfica i gramatical –amb el *Diccionari ortogràfic* (1917), la *Gramàtica catalana* (1919) i el *Diccionari general de la llengua catalana* (1932) com a obra cabdal– va permetre fer un model estàndard clar, gensal, funcional i coherent, capaç de respondre a les necessitats comunicatives d'una societat moderna.

L'objectiu de Fabra era clar: el català havia de recuperar el seu estatut com a llengua racional i de cultura, genèrica i amb plenitud funcional en tots els àmbits. En aquest sentit, la seva obra suposa clarament la completa codificació lingüística, i esdevé per tant un projecte clau de reconstrucció nacional a través de la llengua.

L'obra de codificació de Fabra va arribar en el moment just –poter en va ser la clau oportuna i decisiva per garantir la supervivència i la visibilitat futura del català com a llengua de cultura i de comunicació moderna. Sense la providencial contribució del Mossos, la mantenció i la recuperació de la llengua després de la dictadura haurien estat molt més difícils –i si no ens, potser simplement impossibles–, i molt probablement el català hauria quedat relegat a un ús folclòric o dialectal.

Tot i les transformacions socials, tecnològiques i lingüístiques del segle XXI, els codis i les normes que Fabra va establir continuen sent la base del català estàndard actual i garanteixen la cohesió, la unitat i la qualitat lingüística de la llengua catalana.

"Pompeu Fabra és l'únic català a qui tots els catalans han obeït plenament. Ell és l'únic que ha vist realitzada la noble ambició de tota la seva vida, l'únic que a l'hora suprema haurà pogut dir: 'Del meu treball, res no ha estat debades'."

Josep Pla

The enduring importance of Pompeu Fabra's work

"Pompeu Fabra is the only Catalan whom all Catalans have fully obeyed. He is the only one who has seen his noble lifelong ambition realized, the only one who, at the supreme hour, will have been able to say: 'None of my work has been in vain'."

Josep Pla

Pompeu Fabra's work is the cornerstone of the linguistic normalization of the Catalan language, and it remains undeniably important to this day. His work on the

codification of its spelling and grammar – including the benchmark *Diccionari ortogràfic* [Spelling Dictionary] (1917), the *Gramàtica catalana* [Catalan Grammar] (1918) and the *Diccionari general de la llengua catalana* (1932) [General Dictionary of the Catalan Language] – enabled the establishment of a clear, genuine, functional and consistent standard model, capable of meeting the communicative needs of a modern society.

Fabra's aim was clear: Catalan had to regain its status as a national and cultural language that was both genuine and fully functional in all areas. In this sense, his work went beyond mere linguistic codification to become a civic-minded project of national reconstruction through language.

Fabra's codification work came not a moment too soon – it was perhaps the last historical opportunity – to ensure Catalan's survival and future viability as a language of culture and modern communication. Without the Master's providential contribution, the language's resilience and recovery after the dictatorship would have been much more difficult – and consensus, quite possibly out of reach – and Catalan would most likely have been relegated to folkloric or dialectal usage.

Despite the social, technological and linguistic transformations of the 21st century, the criteria and rules that Fabra established continue to serve as the basis for today's standard Catalan, ensuring the linguistic consistency, unity and quality of the Catalan language.



Pragmatic and decisive

Pompeu Fabra was keenly aware that his work had to have a real application. It was not a matter of reconstructing the ideal Catalan of the past, nor of imposing inaccessibly erudite forms, but of standardizing the language as it was spoken and written by the educated Catalan speakers of his time. Pragmatic and decisive, he knew how to strike a balance between scientific rigour and practicality, between authenticity and functionality. To this end, he established clear, consistent, applicable and acceptable rules with a view to securing a national, living and useful language suitable for modern culture, intended to be an appropriate communication tool for all uses, embraced by all speakers of the language.



Tenacious and persevering

"We will only have what we manage to earn."

"Work hard, and do it every day, for the cultivation of a language can never be abandoned."

"We must abandon neither our task nor hope."

Pompeu Fabra

Pompeu Fabra dedicated his life to the study, reform and standardization of Catalan and the reconstruction and modernization of Catalonia, and he had to overcome all kinds of political, personal, financial and professional challenges to do so. Yet he never faltered or stopped working for the language and the country, remaining steadfast and true to his principles.

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POMPEU FABRA AREA – THE COLLECTION

You will find all the works by and about Pompeu Fabra from the UPF Library's collection at the entrance to the Dipòsit de les Aigües Library.



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