

EDITORIAL

The situation of the Catalan language is without parallel. It is the most important European language with no corresponding state on the current political map of Europe, although it corresponded to an independent state from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. It is a Romance language which has evolved in a similar way to Castilian, Italian and French, and which is ordinarily used in family life, in universities and research centres, in commerce and business and in the parliament and government of Catalonia. The various periods of cultural repression it has suffered have not prevented its evolution as a vehicle of scientific or literary expression or its use as the everyday language in the countries of Catalan culture. It is a language with various dialects, though linguists agree that the variants found in Valencia, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands belong to a single common language. Catalan exists between two other languages: Castilian and French. The political, economic, cultural and even demographic pressure of these two languages has not substantially affected the vitality of Catalan. The new political situation in Spain now allows a move to consolidate this language which we Catalans see as one of the signs of our identity. Non-Catalans, because of all the characteristics of our cultural history, tend not to realize that Catalan is the normal medium of our philosophical or technical, professional or artistic, religious or leisure activity. They ask us confidentially if at home we always speak Catalan. *Catalònia-culture*, and especially the dossier published in this issue, hope to contribute to the understanding of the cultural identity of a European people who with complete normality speak a language which is little known outside of its own cultural space, although all the most important preoccupations of our time have been expressed in our language. In building the future, all languages will contribute elements of rationality. Languages of limited extension can contribute those elements of quality which correspond to the cultural experience of their people.

CATALÒNIA

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