

Mercè Rodoreda, the most translated author in Catalan fiction

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ABSTRACT

Mercè Rodoreda is the most translated author in Catalan literature. *La Plaça del Diamant*, which has been translated into 37 languages in dozens of different translations, places her ahead of such internationally famous fiction writers as Jaume Cabré and Albert Sánchez Piñol. This symbolic novel of the human condition, hailed by critics and beloved by a diverse array of readers, is particularly representative of the author's literary talent and ambition and can be considered a major 20th-century classic thanks to its extraordinarily high quality.

KEYWORDS: Catalan literature, translation, fiction, Mercè Rodoreda, *La Plaça del Diamant*.

INTRODUCTION

Mercè Rodoreda (1908-1983) is one of the essential personalities in contemporary Catalan *belles-lettres* and a prominent name in Western literature.¹ Even though she excelled in novels and short stories, she cultivated practically all the other genres (poetry, theatre, prose, children's literature, journalism and essays), in addition to dabbling in painting for a brief period.² Her early works spanned from 1931 to 1938 in Barcelona, where the Generalitat de Catalunya had been reinstated within the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939). Her second period, which lasted until the author's death in 1983, primarily unfolded during the long, harsh post-war period imposed by the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975) after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) had ended.

As a result of the war, during this second period Rodoreda lived in exile in France and Switzerland for four decades: between 1939 and 1954 in Paris, Limoges, Bordeaux and back in Paris, and between 1954 and the early 1970s in Geneva, although she often made quick visits to Barcelona as soon as she was able. Finally living in Romanyà de la Selva, a little village in the Ampurdan after 1972, Rodoreda witnessed the death of the dictator and the Spanish Transition (1975-1982), when the monarchy (the current Bourbon monarchy) which had been disbanded in the Republic was reinstated. In 1983, under Spain's current dem-

ocratic regime, liver cancer took a writer who in 1980, a literary celebrity by then, had been the first female author to win the Premi d'Honor de les Lletres Catalanes, instituted by Òmnium Cultural in 1969 as part of the cultural revival that was flourishing despite the Franco regime.³

In the context of this revival, when Edicions 62 offered to publish her complete works, Mercè Rodoreda rejected all the titles from her youth except *Aloma* (1938), which had won her the most important distinction in Catalan literature in the 1920s and 1930s – the Premi Joan Crexells – and garnered her widespread recognition from both readers and critics.⁴ *Aloma* had been the last milestone novel in Rodoreda's literary quest in her early days; she had been searching for a voice of her own by simultaneously practising and parodying psychological narrative.⁵ Determined to revive *Aloma* because of the important role it had played in her early career (she considered it her first real novel),⁶ Rodoreda rewrote the text from start to finish, harnessing all the experience and skill she had demonstrated in *Vint-i-dos Contes* (1958), winner of the Víctor Català Prize; *La Plaça del Diamant* (1962); *El Carrer de les Camèlies* (1966), winner of the Serra d'Or Critics Prize, the Sant Jordi Prize and the Ramon Llull Prize; *Jardí vora el Mar* (1967); and *La meva Cristina i altres contes* (1967), winner of the Serra d'Or Critics Prize. All these titles dated from her prodigious decade – as the 1960s have been called in Rodoreda studies⁷ – when the second edition of *Aloma* (1969) was supposed to be completed. Yet at the same time, Rodoreda was also writing *La mort i la primavera* (published posthumously, as was *Isabel i Maria*) and *Mirall trencat* (1974), two novels which won the Serra d'Or Critics Prize and the Lletra d'Or

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Prize. They are also paradigmatic of the creative tack which characterises Rodoreda's post-war writing, namely symbolic narrative, formally leaning more towards either fantasy or realism. In this vein, the short stories, poetic prose or novels *Semblava de seda i altres contes* (1978); *Viatges i flors* (1980), winner of the Ciutat de Barcelona de Literatura Catalana Prize, the *Serra d'Or* Critics Prize for Prose and the *Serra d'Or* Critics Prize for short stories; and *Quanta, quanta Guerra...* (1980), winner of the *Serra d'Or* Critics Prize for novels, soon appeared.⁸

In 2015, one of the leading researchers of Mercè Rodoreda's oeuvre underscored the importance and timeliness of the author she described as the most prized novelist in Catalan literature and the one with the most translations into other languages.⁹ This is a statement which objective data confirm, but beyond quantifications, we should note that the writer's international reach is nothing more than the logical, predictable consequence of the extraordinary literary quality of her works, with which critics concur without exception.¹⁰ And it is especially the logical, predictable consequence of stories that are as universal as they are deeply rooted in the specifics of the milieu from which she came, a culture with which Rodoreda showed her profound commitment by writing in Catalan. She never considered any other possibility because she was convinced that choosing her mother tongue as her literary language, mastering it as a working instrument and effectively using it to concoct literature on par with the benchmark European literatures was the most

radical political choice that a writer could take in Republican Catalonia in the 1930s, in the Catalonia that was repressed and subjugated by the Franco regime, and the Catalonia that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s.

Mercè Rodoreda's objective was always to be a good writer and to contribute to her country's present and future with her works. Even during her darkest years of exile, when she had to take in shirts to sew as piecework just to survive, she reaffirmed her professional ambition in her choice of language, which she understood to express political commitment for a Catalan writer, and in the belief that one had to work individually, beyond any other political crusading or action, to contribute something of quality – literary quality, in her case – that could withstand the passage of time and historical conditions.¹¹ Rodoreda aspired to make a contribution that would cast Catalan culture beyond its borders and situate it where it sought to be: alongside the other global cultures. To achieve this, she bravely decided to roll up her sleeves and start working in her vocation in 1931. Three decades later, *La Plaça del Diamant* is clear proof that Mercè Rodoreda more than achieved her aims and became one of the great literary figures of the 20th century.

THE TRANSLATIONS OF RODOREDA'S WORKS

Mercè Rodoreda's works have always sparked interest in other linguistic and cultural settings soon after they were issued in Catalan. For example, *Aloma*, which dates from 1938, was immediately translated into Spanish by María Luz Morales, but it could not be published as a result of the Civil War; however, the Spanish version of her 1969 version was issued in 1971, soon after the release of the original in Catalan.¹² Likewise, the first novel that Rodoreda published after the war, *La Plaça del Diamant*, was quickly translated into Spanish, English, French, Italian and Polish. The first versions in languages in which the text would be reissued a second time came out between 1965 and 1970. The first Spanish translation of the novel was by Enrique Sordo with Edhasa publishing house in 1965, which was revived by Orbis and by Círculo de Lectores in the 1980s.¹³ The first English version was by Eda O'Shiel, which appeared in London in 1967, followed years later by the translation by David H. Rosenthal (issued by different publishers, initially in the United States); the translation by Peter Bush is considerably more recent.¹⁴ The first translation of the novel into French, just excerpts, was by Pierre Verdaguer, and it appeared in the magazine *Europe* in a 1967 monograph on Catalan literature; the second translation, a complete one which was reprinted several times over the years, was by Bernat Lesfargues in conjunction with Verdaguer in 1971, published by Gallimard.¹⁵ Among the Italian translations, the pioneering one was by Guiseppe Cintioli in 1970, followed by the translations by Anna Maria Saludes i Amat in 1990 and Giuseppe Tavani in 2008, the latter a bestseller.¹⁶ In Polish, the first transla-



FIG. 1. Mercè Rodoreda (1908 – 1983) is one of the most internationally renowned Catalan authors and the most influential contemporary Catalan-language woman writer, with translations of her work available in over thirty languages.

tion of the book by Zofia Chądzyńska came out in 1970; she was also behind the 2014 version.¹⁷

More than the question of the quickness with which these translations appeared, however, is the fact that by early 2020 we can assert that most of Mercè Rodoreda's oeuvre has been translated; all of her stories have been, along with some of her titles in other genres. Sometimes these translations were partial (only one or some of the stories in a collection, certain chapters in a novel, an excerpt from letters, a few poems, etc.), and the majority of the texts were translated into many fewer languages than the total number of languages in which her works can be read. In 2015, this encompassed 33 languages;¹⁸ however, today the results of crossing the data provided by the Fundació Mercè Rodoreda (FMR) and the Institut Ramon Llull (IRL) yields 38 languages, that is, five more languages in five years.

According to the information from the FMR, which includes only the first edition of the translations of Rodoreda's works, although it does include the versions by different translators, Spanish is the main language into which her texts have been translated, with a total of 30 titles. It is followed by Italian and English, with 17 each, the latter with 13 translations into US English and four into British English. Other languages with more than ten translations are French with 12 and German with 11. They are followed by Dutch with nine; Polish with seven; Portuguese with six, four in Portugal and two in Brazil; four each in Bulgarian, Rumanian and Swedish (12 in total); three each in Basque, Hebrew, Hindi, Norwegian, Czech and Chinese (18 in total); two each in Arabic, Croatian, Slovak, Slovenian, Hungarian and Russian (a total of 12); and finally one each in Aranese, Danish, Estonian, Finnish, Galician, Greek, Icelandic, Japanese, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Sardinian, Serbian, Turkish and Vietnamese (a total of 14).¹⁹

According to the figures from the IRL, these languages are now joined by Albanian, in which *La Plaça del Diamant* could finally be read in 2018.²⁰ In parallel, there are other translations which the *Translations* tab on the FMR website does not cite, such as the Hungarian version of *El Carrer de les Camèlies* issued in Budapest in November 2019.²¹ In fact, the IRL figures are considerably higher than the 166 translations which can be deduced from the information from the FMR, with a total tally of 205: 49 in Spanish; 23 in German; 19 in English; 17 in Italian; 14 in French; 10 in Dutch; eight in Portuguese; five in Hebrew, Hungarian and Swedish (15 in total); four in Bulgarian and Rumanian (eight in total); three in Hindi, Norwegian, Polish and Chinese (12 in total); two in Croatian, Slovenian, Greek, Basque, Russian, Serbian and Czech (14 in total); and one each in Albanian, Arabic, Aranese, Danish, Slovakian, Estonia, Finnish, Galician, Icelandic, Japanese, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Sardinian, Turkish and Vietnamese (15 in total).

As can be seen, there are divergences between the two institutions, specifically in the translations into Albanian, German, English, Arabic, Spanish, Slovakian, Basque,

French, Hebrew, Hungarian, Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Swedish and Czech. These divergences seem primarily due to two reasons: differences in criteria and differences in information. In addition to the discussion above about Albanian and Hungarian, the cases of Arabic, Polish and Serbian provide illustrative examples. The FMR assigns two translations to Arabic, one of which is unpublished yet cited, given the FMR's mission to serve as a repository of all the documentation on Mercè Rodoreda and her works, while logically, the IRL only counts published texts (one translation of *La Plaça del Diamant* into Arabic).²² In Polish, the FMR mentions four more translations than the IRL because those translated in a volume are joined by short stories and excerpts from novels or collections of letters which have appeared in magazines, which the IRL does not include. This is most likely because the IRL covers all Catalan authors, not just Rodoreda like the FMR, and it is more difficult for it to compile all of these materials.²³ In Serbian, however, in addition to the translation of *La Plaça del Diamant*, the IRL also mentions the translation of *El Carrer de les Camèlies*,²⁴ which, surprisingly, does not appear on the FMR website (a problem that should be rectified, regardless of its reason).²⁵ The IRL counts more volumes in Spanish, English and French because instead of using the FMR's criterion of limiting references to first editions and different translators, it includes different versions of the same translation, and this obviously occurs with more than one of the writer's titles, especially *La Plaça del Diamant*.²⁶

When the numbers do match in both organisations' tallies, they do not always refer to the same translations. In Bulgarian, for example, both the FMR and the IRL count four translations, but only three of the four match: the two of *La Plaça del Diamant* from 1986 and 2012, and the one of *Mirall Trençat* from 1993. While the FMR adds the joint translation of the stories "La Salamandra" and "La meva Cristina" in *Iberijska fantastika* from 1982, the IRL counts the translation of *El Carrer de les Camèlies* from 2013. Therefore, this means that all told, there are five translations of Mercè Rodoreda's works into Bulgarian, instead of four.²⁷

THE MOST TRANSLATED CATALAN FICTION WRITER OF ALL TIME

The discrepancies regarding the number of translations of Rodoreda's texts in the information on the FMR and IRL websites are a considerable obstacle to tallying them reliably, since the references have to be checked one by one. Nonetheless, merging them and making an overall comparison of the figures provided by both institutions does provide an approximation, at least for prose works, of the literary mode in which Mercè Rodoreda has been translated the most in terms of volume. The table below attempts this approximation with the goal of providing an overview of the scope of the author's international reach.²⁸

Table 1. Translations of Mercè Rodoreda's prose works

Title	Translations	Target languages
[<i>La Noieta Daurada i Altres Contes</i>] [short story]	1	1 (Spanish)
"Imatges d'Infantesa" [autobiographical prose]	1	1 (Spanish)
"Un cafè" [short story]	2	1 (Polish)
<i>Isabel i Maria</i> [novel]	2	2 (Italian, Spanish)
<i>Cartes a l'Anna Murià</i> [letter prose]	3 (2+1f)	3 (Italian, Polish, Spanish)
<i>Viatges i Flors</i> [poetic prose]	7 (4+3f)	6 (English, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish)
<i>Quanta, Quanta Guerra...</i> [novel]	8 (7+1f)	7 (English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish)
<i>Jardí Vora el Mar</i> [novel]	8	6 (Dutch, German, Hebrew, Italian, Slovakian, Spanish)
<i>Aloma</i> [novel]	10 (9+1f)	7 (Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish)
<i>Semblava de Seda</i> [short story]	11 (3+7f+1c)	8 (Basque, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Polish, Rumanian, Spanish)
<i>La Mort i la Primavera</i> [novel]	12 (10+2f)	8 (Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish)
<i>Vint-i-dos Contes</i> [short story]	16 (2+13f+1c)	10 (Basque, Chinese, Dutch, English, German, Hindi, Italian, Polish, Rumanian, Spanish)
<i>El Carrer de les Camèlies</i> [novel]	20	10 (Bulgarian, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish)
<i>La Meva Cristina i Altres Contes</i> [short story]	28 (7+20f+1c)	15 (Basque, Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Polish, Rumanian, Slovakian, Spanish)
<i>Mirall Trencat</i> [novel]	30 (29+1f)	18 (Basque, Bulgarian, Croatian, Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Rumanian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish)
<i>La Plaça del Diamant</i> [novel]	76 (73+3f)	37 (Albanian, Arabic, Aranese, Basque, Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Sardinian, Serbian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Vietnamese)
TOTAL:	235 (182+50f+3c)	38 (Albanian, Arabic, Aranese, Basque, Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Sardinian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Vietnamese)

Note: *f* means fragment; *c* means compilation

Sources: FMR and TRAC

(https://www.llull.cat/catala/recursos/trac_traduuccions_home.cfm; <http://www.mercerodoreda.cat/traduuccions>; retrieved: 9-I-2020)

Given the predictable reduction needed because repeated versions of the same translation are included, this tally, which does not even include poetry and theatre, makes Mercè Rodoreda far and away the most translated Catalan author of all times. According to the figures from the IRL, the writer stands above any other author whose works have been translated into other languages. The most prominent names other than Rodoreda include Sal-

vador Espriu, a fiction writer and playwright who was a contemporary of Rodoreda, though later he was primarily known as a poet, with 151 translations; Ramon Llull, the most world famous Catalan mediaeval author and the creator of Catalan prose, with 148; Jacint Verdaguer, the great Romantic poet, with 116; Josep Pla, a prominent prose writer and a contemporary of Rodoreda like Espriu, with 105; Jaume Cabré, one of the living Catalan

fiction writers with the greatest international popularity today, with 103; Andreu Martín, the author of noir novels and young-reader literature, among other genres, with 99; Quim Monzó, the popular Catalan fiction writer who has partnered with different media outlets, with 93; Patricia Geis, an illustrator and author of children's literature, with 82; Baltasar Porcel, a journalist and fiction writer; with 80; and ten other authors who each have between 72 and 49 works translated.²⁹ The table below ranks them and shows the number of translations, as well as the writers' dates of birth and death to help situate them temporally.³⁰

Table 2. The 20 most translated authors in Catalan literature

Ranking	Author	Translations
1	Mercè Rodoreda (Barcelona, 1908 - Girona, 1983)	205
2	Salvador Espriu (Santa Coloma de Farners 1913 - Barcelona 1985)	151
3	Ramon Llull (Palma de Mallorca, 1232-1315)	148
4	Jacint Verdaguer (Folgueroles 1845 - Vallvidrera 1902)	116
5	Josep Pla (Palafrugell, 1897-1981)	105
6	Jaume Cabré (Barcelona 1947-)	103
7	Andreu Martín (Barcelona 1949-)	99
8	Quim Monzó (Barcelona 1952-)	93
9	Patricia Geis (Barcelona 1966-)	82
10	Baltasar Porcel (Andratx, 1937 - Barcelona, 2009)	80
11	Joan Perucho (Barcelona, 1920-2003)	72
12	Àngel Guimerà (Santa Cruz de Tenerife, 1845 - Barcelona, 1924)	69
13-14	Carme Riera (Palma de Mallorca, 1948-)	64
13-14	Albert Sánchez Piñol (Barcelona, 1965-)	64
15	Àngels Navarro Simon (Barcelona, 1958-)	63
16	Llorenç Villalonga (Palma de Mallorca 1897-1980)	62
17-18	Manuel de Pedrolo (Tàrrrega, 1918 - Barcelona, 1990)	52
17-18	Jaume Copons (Barcelona, 1966-)	52
19	Teresa Sabaté Rodié (Alguaire, ?-)	51
20	Meritxell Martí (Sabadell, 1972-)	49

Source: TRAC (https://www.llull.cat/catala/recursos/trac_traduuccions_autors.cfm; retrieved: 15-I-2020)

Tellingly, the vast majority of the list is made up of contemporary writers, most of them male; in terms of literary genres, the balance clearly tips towards prose, and more specifically, fiction. Llull is the only one who does not come from the 19th, 20th or 21st centuries. Furthermore, only approximately one-third of the writers can be con-

sidered poets (Espriu and Verdaguer) and playwrights (Guimerà). Finally, only Llull and Pla write prose more than fiction or novels, at least from a traditional perspective. Even more notably in relation to the main topic of this article, Mercè Rodoreda, whose works wholly falls within the century that witnessed a man walking on the Moon, ranks first from all vantage points: she is the first among all the writers, both prose – including Llull – and fiction. There are four other female writers in the ranking who produce children's and young-reader literature (Geis, Navarro, Sabaté and Martí, in 9th, 14th, 18th and 19th place, respectively) and just a single female novelist for adults (Riera, ranked 13th). In terms of their global reach, Rodoreda's name stands far above all other Catalan poets, playwrights, prose writers and novelists who have garnered international fame with oeuvres meant for all types of audiences, with almost one-fourth more translations than the second-ranked author. And she far outstrips personalities with international reputations such as Espriu, Llull, Verdaguer and Pla, and Cabré, Martín and Monzó for novelists and short-story writers.

If we shift our focus from the authors to the titles that have been translated the most, Mercè Rodoreda also stands out as the author of the book that has been translated the most to other languages ever, even more than Albert Sánchez Piñol. The works of this latter author, who is extraordinarily well known outside Catalonia, even though there are only 64 translations of his works (the adverb “only” should be understood in contrast to the figures for Rodoreda's books), have appeared in almost as many languages as Rodoreda – and even in several in which no Rodoreda text is available, such as Korean – thanks to the success of his novel *La pell freda* (*Cold Skin*, 2002), which is accessible in 32 languages and has been translated 37 times.³¹ Yet not even this bestseller by a living author whose work was turned into a film in 2017 comes close to *La Plaça del Diamant*, whose spectacular figures are 37 languages and more than 50 translations.³² Even though this is one short of the 38 languages into which the author has been translated (only Slovakian is missing; *Jardí vora el Mar* and *Mirall Trençat* are available in that language, but not *La Plaça del Diamant*), it is unquestionable that regardless of whether we consider just the translations of Mercè Rodoreda's works or the translations of all the works from Catalan literature from its origins until today, *La Plaça del Diamant* still has to be crowned the indisputable queen of translations from Catalan into other languages.³³ The table below on the international dissemination of Catalan literature clearly illustrates this, and at the same time it shows the importance of novels, the only genre represented in the top twelve places.³⁴

Table 3. The dozen most translated works in Catalan literature

Ranking	Title	Author	Translations
1	<i>La Plaça del Diamant</i> (1962)	Mercè Rodoreda (1908-1983)	73
2	<i>La Pell Freda</i> (2002)	Albert Sánchez Piñol (1965-)	37
3	<i>Mirall Trencat</i> (1974)	Mercè Rodoreda	30
4	<i>Bearn o la Sala de les Nines</i> (1961)	Llorenç Villalonga (1987-1980)	28
5	<i>Jo Confesso</i> (2011)	Jaume Cabré (1947-)	26
6	<i>El Violí d'Auschwitz</i> (1994)	Maria Àngels Anglada (1930-1999)	25
7	<i>Les Veus del Pamano</i> (2004)	Jaume Cabré	23
8-9	<i>Camí de Sirga</i> (1988)	Jesús Moncada (1941-2005)	20
8-9	<i>Pandora al Congo</i> (2005)	Albert Sánchez Piñol	20
10	<i>Pedra de Tartera</i> (1985)	Maria Barbal (1949-)	18
11	<i>La Magnitud de la Tragèdia</i> (1989)	Quim Monzó (1952-)	16
12	<i>Tirant lo Blanc</i> (1490)	Joanot Martorell (1413?-1465)	7

Source: TRAC (https://www.llull.cat/catala/recursos/trac_traduuccions_llibres.cfm; retrieved: 15-I-2020)

Clearly, Rodoreda is one of only three names in this ranking that are repeated. The fact that she shares this honour with Albert Sánchez Piñol and Jaume Cabré is noteworthy, because the chances of promoting Rodoreda, who died in 1983, are much more limited: Sánchez Piñol and Cabré can – and often do – travel to deliver readings or launch books at international fairs and gatherings. This makes Mercè Rodoreda's presence in this ranking of the most translated works, with *La Plaça del Diamant* and *Mirall Trencat* in the first and third places, even more remarkable. In fact, the list should also contain *El Carrer de les Camèlies*, given that with 20 complete translations, this novel ranks among the top ten alongside *Camí de Sirga* and *Pandora al Congo* and above *Pedra de Tartera*, *La Magnitud de la Tragèdia* and *Tirant lo Blanc*.³⁵ The fact that novels are the genre of Mercè Rodoreda's works that have been translated in their entirety, just like the other top ten, is obviously market-driven, one of the reasons why Mercè Rodoreda chose to write novels from the very beginning of her career, although this in no way casts doubt on her worth; indeed quite the opposite.³⁶ But if this ranking of texts encompassed short stories in all their different forms of publication, then it would also include several stories from *Vint-i-dos Contes* and *La meva Cristina i Altres Contes* that have been translated dozens of times into many other languages, including Hindi and

Chinese. Even though the two compilations have been translated just a handful of times in their entirety, international awareness of Rodoreda's short stories, because of the ease of publishing them in magazines and anthologies which favour brevity, is not irrelevant. Yet even without this practical edge, *La Plaça del Diamant* still continues to far outstrip them.

Today, there is no mystery why the 1962 novel has and continues to resonate around the world, decades after it appeared, exponentially catapulting Mercè Rodoreda and Catalan literature to such physically and culturally distinct places as Iceland, Japan, Israel and Vietnam. Studies of Rodoreda and her oeuvre have painstakingly examined the value of a work which recounts the life of a girl in Barcelona's working-class neighbourhood of Gràcia from her youth, which can be dated in the 1920s, to her adulthood a little over a decade after the long post-war period imposed by the Franco regime had begun.³⁷ It is an extremely historically and geographically localised novel, so at first glance it might seem too local to be interesting. But nothing could be further from the truth. The story of young Natàlia, who is renamed Colometa (Pigeon Girl) through her relationship with Quimet and gradually regains her original identity through her second marriage with Antoni (the man who saves her from killing her children and herself), has such complex narrative levels and symbolic richness that an account on the life of a seemingly unextraordinary working-class girl turns into a story on the human condition. It is a story that touches the soul of whoever reads it because it bears a profound similarity to the works of William Faulker, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf,³⁸ or more specifically, perhaps it should be placed alongside novels from the same period like J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962) and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967).³⁹ Mercè Rodoreda never won the Nobel Prize for Literature, as these authors did, yet *La Plaça del Diamant* is unquestionably one of the great classics of Western literature from the second half of the 20th century.⁴⁰

LA PLAÇA DEL DIAMANT, A NOVEL ON THE HUMAN CONDITION

La Plaça del Diamant is a story of incomprehension, the incomprehension of a woman grappling with a world she does not understand, which causes her increasing suffering until she is able to cope with reality, with all its lights and shadows. Each of the elements in the novel points to the same crux: the painful, heightened bafflement of a character living a life which brings sorrows, exhaustion and ugliness until reaching the tragedy of war and its consequences. Survival can only happen by wearing armour (or being a cork with a heart of stone, in the main character's words) to avoid feeling and to be able to withstand whatever came her way. When it seems like death is

her only way out, the improvement in her material condition allows her to gradually pull herself out of the abyss and embark on the slow path back to herself (a kind of return home), but not without going through withdrawal, denial and fear. When she gains full awareness of what she has gone through, with the explosion of contained violence marking this reckoning, reconciliation is finally possible, restoring her ability to perceive the present and look forward to the future with infinite gratitude towards life in its multiple facets, shapes and dimensions. Awareness and gratitude – the profound understanding of existence – make it possible for her to gain a new voice of authority to explain herself and to recount the past that shaped the present. Thus, in her adulthood, Natàlia tells the story of Colometa, a story which is and is not her own.⁴¹

The main character in *La Plaça del Diamant* is a simple girl with nothing remarkable about her except her innocence. She is a young woman who, like so many others, is courted, marries, has children, works and most importantly lives through the drama of war and suffers during the ensuing post-war years. In the very first chapter of the novel, the young Natàlia meets her future husband at an outdoor dance in the Plaça del Diamant – the space symbolising Life in upper-case letters, which therefore also contains Death – and is renamed by him. This initial renaming of Natàlia as Colometa marks the start of her metamorphosis, and of the story and the character, because a name makes an identity (words generate, illuminate and determine reality). And the main character of the novel is thus reborn with this nickname, a masterful creation by Mercè Rodoreda which originally lent the book its title.⁴² Colometa has never ceased attracting readers as the epicentre of a universal story, a drama in the classical sense, a novel which is based on specific events yet transcends them and elevates them to archetypes to literarily examine such essential human issues as loss, violence, identity, sexuality, love, guilt, sorrow, joy, friendship and despair. For this reason, *La Plaça del Diamant* appeals to a wide range of readers. The prodigious intertwining of the referential and symbolic planes stems from the interweaving of different easily identifiable threads with political, geographic, demographic and religious realities, whose injection into fiction is imbued with a meaningful purpose that goes far beyond merely referring to factually identifiable events. For this reason, although *La Plaça del Diamant* can be read as a historical novel about the Second Republic, the Civil War and the post-war years under the Franco Regime; as a story about Gràcia and Barcelona; as a tableau of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood and the city within a certain time frame; as a mosaic of attitudes towards life; as a psychological narration; as an existentialist text; or as a *Bildungsroman*, among many other possibilities, it is actually none of these things. Or at least not exclusively, because each of these specific components branches off into a forest brimming with amplified and complementary mean-

ings that stretch beyond the boundaries of any of them and turn the work into a novel on the human condition. “A novel is words”, Mercè Rodoreda repeated twice in the prologue to *Mirall Trencat*.⁴³ The Verb is both the origin of the creation of the world and the matter of literature, capable of breathing life into the figures inhabiting it. Articulated in a unique, singular discourse which leads the reader into its depths in extraordinarily complex, subtle ways, dissimulated behind the appearance of simplicity, *La Plaça del Diamant* is a work about humanity and the fate that has knocked us humans down since the dawn of our existence in the Western literary tradition; it is a work made of words which, as the main character says at the end, say much more than they might seem at first, shaped by a language whose spheres of meaning exponentially expand.⁴⁴

La Plaça del Diamant can be divided into two clearly distinct parts. The first one covers 32 chapters and focuses on the relationship between Colometa and Quimet. It covers the ten and a half years ranging approximately from 1928 until the Spanish Civil War, and it is populated by all the characters in the book: the two main characters are joined by Julieta, Colometa’s friend; the owner of the pastry shop where Colometa works; Senyora Enriqueta, her second mother; Pere, her first boyfriend; Mateu, Quimet’s friend; Griselda, Mateu’s girlfriend; Cintet, another friend of Quimet; Quimet’s mother; Colometa’s father and his second wife; Quimet and Colometa’s children, Antoni and Rita; the shopkeeper whose shop is under their home; the wealthy couple (for whom she later works); another shopkeeper, also named Antoni; and especially the pigeons in the dovecote that Quimet builds on the terrace of the flat where they live, which they end up owning. The second part, in contrast, takes up only 17 chapters (slightly over half the first part) and focuses on Colometa’s survival after the war thanks to the shopkeeper Antoni. It covers twelve and a half years, which span from the early post-war years until approximately 1951, and many of the original characters disappear, primarily because of the war.⁴⁵

The relationship between historical time, the number of episodes and the number of characters formally reveals the importance of the first part within the story, which encompasses the courtship and marriage of Quimet and Colometa, including two major crises that accelerate the deterioration of a relationship and characters thematised by objects, trivial stories and political events laden with symbolism. When, as a mature adult, Natàlia unpacks this youth to an implicit listener with a formula that is clearly indebted to oral discourse, she tellingly chooses and partially remembers, through her own subjectivity and the fragmentariness and complementarity of the conscious and unconscious characteristic of 20th-century Western novels, the crucial times and elements of this youth, which comes to a definitive close as the war ends. The technical procedures are combined in a plot that always revolves around Colometa and her life;

this explains the cyclical nature of the story, the role of the narrator as the creator of the story (the what and how of the specific story), the language, the focus, the time, the space, the way the discourse is represented and the symbols. All these factors, perfectly woven together, lead to a narrative flow that has an instantaneous effect on the reader, who enters the web of the novel from the first page, fully convinced of its verisimilitude, its “truth”. This narrative flow is governed by the principle of literary economy (all the components of the work serve the theme; nothing is superfluous or excessive), and description predominates.⁴⁶ After all, finding the precise tone, one that is sober and free of sentimentalism, a *savoir faire* in which Rodoreda excelled – especially in a story which could easily become melodramatic because of the themes it encompasses – means showing instead of explaining and harnessing a solid mastery of the language to get the reader to see everything concealed behind the plot.⁴⁷ Like an iceberg, what remains concealed in *La Plaça del Diamant* is much greater than what appears on the surface; indeed, it reaches unfathomable levels.

In the first part, the narrative voice’s selection of events brilliantly recalls the burgeoning relationship between Quimet and Colometa, a relationship grounded on sexual attraction and therefore a guilty one which had to be expiated and required sacrifice.⁴⁸ Precisely because of its nature, this relationship is based on his dominance, authority, selfishness and consciousness, in contrast to her obedience, submissiveness, servitude and ingenuousness. Until the end of the book, after their daughter Rita marries Vicenç (who, taking after her father, will entrance her just as Quimet entranced her mother), the main character does not truly realise how she and her first husband loved each other, how much and how he loved her and how she reciprocated. This is a significant omission in the text. The word *love* does not appear even once in those chapters, in which either there is no happiness and mutual understanding between the characters or when there is, they are extremely ambiguous, such as in the sexual episode when Quimet made Colometa see stars – a refined, elegant irony in its polysemy.⁴⁹ Indeed, there is a gradual deterioration in their relationship that is externally manifested in Colometa’s physical appearance (in chapter 9, for example) and in her inner exhaustion, as well as in the increasing distance between the couple. Soon, this distance is even further aggravated by the political situation (he participates actively in it, while she shoulders burden of family responsibilities alone), and it culminates with the supreme sacrifice: Quimet’s death, which occurs at the same time as the death of the last pigeon. The novel follows both an upward and downward arc – the narrative tension rises until reaching the climax of the plot, which is also the symbolic climax, and then it “plunges” both thematically and metaphorically to the depths of Colometa’s despair – to represent Colometa’s descent into hell.⁵⁰ Form reflects meaning, two inextricable aspects in great literary works.

In the second part, the plot moves more quickly and the story’s process is structurally inverted: the historical events gradually become less dramatic, and therefore the narrative tension declines, while the core character gradually emerges from the abyss and therefore, the upward path towards figurative heaven begins. With her return to the origin of Colometa’s existence (the Plaça del Diamant), her final release from that past is possible thanks to her understanding, her “expulsion” of it (her cry) and her definitive loss of innocence (knowledge). Therefore, Natàlia’s final rebirth in the last lines of the story ends up being literal. Before this ending, before fully understanding the gift of existence, with the experiences of suffering and sorrow yet also love, “the pigeon lady”, as people call her, limited herself first to just surviving and then to mythifying her previous life, while refusing to accept her current reality (indeed, fleeing from it).⁵¹ Even though things start going well for her after the shopkeeper gives her a job, and she later becomes Senyora Natàlia with their subsequent wedding, she only superficially moults Colometa’s skin; but since Colometa’s life has truly ended, the children come to the foreground until their mother sheds her fear, faces the truth and comes to understand everything she has experienced, especially her relationships with Quimet and her current husband, Antoni. Rita’s wedding is the catalyst. The character’s real and inner journey that evening brings her into the spotlight and allows her to be reborn from the ashes of Colometa and truly start living her life again. The happy, emotional embrace she gives her husband in bed is followed by a deep sleep from which she awakens rejuvenated at midday with sunlight pouring in, which after the earlier rain and darkness bring light, blue skies and joy, both literally and symbolically. As Mercè Rodoreda underscored, it is no coincidence that the last word in the novel is *contented*.⁵²

THE IMPORTANCE OF *LA PLAÇA DEL DIAMANT* IN MERCÈ RODOREDA’S OEUVERE

La Plaça del Diamant is an important work within Mercè Rodoreda’s career for different reasons, including its representativeness, the time when it was written and published, and the critics’ and public’s responses.

This 1962 title epitomises the author’s oeuvre because it spotlights one of its prevailing maxims: the conviction that literature is no joke.⁵³ Nor was culture ever a joke to Rodoreda, who was profoundly committed to it through the exercise of her vocation and the way she approached it remarkably coherently over the course of many years.⁵⁴ The author’s virtues, talent and rigour, the steady work she kept up in order to find the most appropriate channels for her art and her goal of contributing important works to Catalonia (and therefore the world) – in short, the literary ambition that characterised Rodoreda – are echoed in *La Plaça del Diamant*, which demonstrates the

seriousness with which she took both literary creation and the cultural contribution it can become. This text is a spectacular display of Rodoreda's understanding of the arbitrary, conventional essence of the novel and its ability to present life in all its facets, even the intangible or invisible ones, which are often more important than their tangible counterparts. With its twofold seeds in Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) and "Tarda al cinema" from her short story collection *Vint-i-dos Contes*, over the backdrop of the Bible and the *Divine Comedy*,⁵⁵ *La Plaça del Diamant* also exemplifies the intertextuality characteristic of Mercè Rodoreda, the arteries that always connect her writing with the Catalan and global literary and cultural tradition to which the author always felt she belonged, which fed her and which she wanted to enrich with outstanding literature. Likewise, the novel radically proves the importance of language and its literary uses as ways to attain outstanding results in terms of expression, precision, breadth and plurality of meaning, to achieve effects nestled in the profound, authentic emotion generated by the truths of existence, both big and small.

In parallel, the 1962 book is the first novel that Mercè Rodoreda published in the post-war period. Even though she had gifted her readers with the short story collection in 1958, *La Plaça del Diamant* had a different dimension.⁵⁶ It was an heir of the novels of the 1930s and a harbinger of the great titles that would come after it. From the very start, Rodoreda wrote the story of Colometa with the goal of restoring the esteem for those who fought in the Civil War with the best intentions by recreating the kind, humane part through a rejection of reductionist Manicheism.⁵⁷ She wrote it virtually in a single sitting, a feverish process during which she always sensed she was writing a great book.⁵⁸ When it was finished, she submitted it to the Sant Jordi Prize, but – as has been repeated countless times – it did not win. Despite this (and is also common lore), the novel was published soon thereafter thanks to the writer, critic and essayist Joan Fuster, a jury member, who told Joan Sales from Club Editor publishers about it.⁵⁹

In the 1960s, just like with *Aloma* 30 years earlier, *La Plaça del Diamant* led critics to literarily ensconce Mercè Rodoreda at the pinnacle of Catalan novelists of the period. At least this was true when it was first released, but the reception of the novel was tarnished by a lack of understanding based on three essential problems: considering Colometa a bumpkin, equating her with the author and predominantly reading the work as a historical testimonial. Irritated and disappointed, Rodoreda defended Colometa by arguing that innocence is not synonymous with simple-mindedness, and that the ability to do what one has to do when needed is a sign of an intelligence superior to that displayed by other novel characters, like Anna Karenina. Furthermore, unlike Flaubert's claim that "*Madame Bovary, c'est moi*", she also explicitly stated that Colometa was not based on her, and that if she had primarily wanted to write about history, she would have chosen the



FIG. 2. The Catalan writer Mercè Rodoreda at the unveiling of a commemorative plaque during the tribute that she received in Plaça del Diamant square, which lends its name to the novel, in the district of Gràcia (Barcelona). Date: 6 April 1981

right documentary genre, not fiction.⁶⁰ As expected, time ended up settling the matter, and today these hermeneutic limitations on the interpretation of a text featuring a queen, as Obiol called the main character, are a distant memory.⁶¹ Colometa is a queen, but one that cannot be confused with Rodoreda, a queen who is much more than just one of the victims of the Civil War and whose life, precisely for that reason, has long been part of the Catalan literary canon.⁶²

In addition to scholarly recognition, *La Plaça del Diamant* has become a touchstone for a diverse array of readers. The novel was widely read in the 1960s, a somewhat unusual phenomenon which still stands today; the key to its popularity is the meaningful constellations in the text, and therefore the novel's ability to offer every person what they are seeking and what moves them.⁶³ The political situation in Spain put a damper on major sales of the story of Colometa,⁶⁴ yet when readers started discovering it, sales snowballed. A second edition was printed in April 1964, and the third and fourth followed in 1965 and 1966.⁶⁵ The 54th edition was released in 2000. The fact that it was also in the publisher's general collection did not stop Club Editor Jove, its series for youths, from publishing it for the 26th time in 2016. This success is partly due to the interest that *La Plaça del Diamant* has sparked in the worlds of cinema, television, theatre and culture in general. During Rodoreda's lifetime, Francesc Betriu directed the film (1982) and the series (1983) featuring Silvia Munt and Lluís Homar. Since her death, numerous theatre adaptations have been made, and the work has been cited in exhibitions, book clubs and popular lectures.⁶⁶

La Plaça del Diamant moves and inspires the admiration of the most lowbrow and highbrow readers, the most local and the most far-flung, because just like any classic, it never stops saying what it has to say.⁶⁷ Thinking about her works on the whole, Mercè Rodoreda had the sense that this serious novel would endure.⁶⁸ Many other of her texts are equally enduring, yet *La Plaça del Diamant* remains her most famous work both inside and outside

Catalonia. The author was proud of this international reach, as she was able to state before her passing: “I am pleased to think that among the thousands of readers it has had and continues to have, many of them had never read anything in Catalan, and by reading it they’ve discovered that ours is a civilised, cultivated, important language. I’m also pleased to think that this simple, human novel has carried the name of the Plaça del Diamant in the village of Gràcia to so many distant countries, and with it the name of Catalonia.”⁶⁹ How far it will go in the future thanks to the most translated, universal Catalan author is a question that only time will answer.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- [1] The literature on this topic is so extensive that it would be impossible to cite it in its entirety. Searches in the Collective Catalogue of the Universities of Catalonia (Catàleg Collectiu de les Universitats de Catalunya, CCUC) and in TRACES, the language and literature database of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, yield a total of 1,282 references, a figure that justifies the syntheses organising the materials published (Maria Isidra MENCOS, *Mercè Rodoreda: una bibliografia crítica (1963-2001)*. Fundació Mercè Rodoreda - Institut d’Estudis Catalans, Barcelona 2002, and Kathleen McNERNEY, *Mercè Rodoreda: una bibliografia crítica (2002-2011)*. Fundació Mercè Rodoreda - Institut d’Estudis Catalans, Barcelona 2017), and the fact that in 2019 the Fundació Mercè Rodoreda (FMR, <http://www.mercerodoreda.cat/la-fundacio>), the repository of the writer’s legacy housed within the Institut d’Estudis Catalans (IEC, <https://www.iec.cat/institucio/>), to which she bequeathed her rights, awarded a grant to Benjamí Heras Pino, *Mercè Rodoreda: bibliografia (2012-2018)* (<http://www.mercerodoreda.cat/premis-i-ajuts>). Kathleen McNERNEY, *Mercè Rodoreda...*, *op. cit.*, contains the outcome of doctoral research (Judith SÁNCHEZ GORDALIZA, *Recepción y difusión internacionales de Mercè Rodoreda: obra original, crítica y traducción*. Facultat de Ciències Humanes, Traducció i Documentació, Universitat de Vic 2008; <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/50523902.pdf>) which provides a great deal of information of interest but needs to be updated. In 2016, the FMR also awarded a grant to Amaranta Sbardella, *Mercè Rodoreda: El mirall trencat de la traducció*, unpublished.
- [2] For an overview of the writer’s career and activities: Carme ARNAU, *Introducció a la narrativa de Mercè Rodoreda*. Edicions 62, Barcelona 1979, and Maria CAMPILLO, “El tiempo histórico de Mercè Rodoreda”. In *Mercè Rodoreda, una poética de la memoria*. FMR - IEC, Barcelona 2002, pp. 18-37. For an overview of her literary and artistic work: <http://www.mercerodoreda.cat/obra>. For texts and paintings: Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Agonia de llum. La poesia secreta de Mercè Rodoreda*. Overseen by Abraham Mohino i Balet. Angle Editorial, Barcelona 2002; *Narrativa completa*. 2 vols. IEC - Edicions 62 - FMR, Barcelona 2008; *El torrent de les flors*. 3 and 4, Valencia 2012; *Obra de joventut. Novel·les, narracions, periodisme*. IEC - Edicions 62 - FMR, Barcelona 2015; *Cartes de guerra i d’exili (1934-1960)*. FMR - IEC, Barcelona 2015, and *Obra plàstica*. FMR - IEC, Barcelona 2016.
- [3] This entity was created in 1961 to defend Catalan rights and freedoms and to promote education and culture (<https://www.omnium.cat/ca/presentacio/>).
- [4] Maria CAMPILLO, *Escriptors catalans i compromís anti-feixista*. Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 1994, and Margarida CASACUBERTA, “Gènesi i primera adjudicació del Premi Crexells. Notes sobre cultura i novel·la en el tombant dels anys vint als trenta”. *Els Marges*, no. 52 (March 1995), pp. 19-42.
- [5] Neus REAL, *Mercè Rodoreda: l’obra de preguerra*. Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 2005; Roser PORTA, *Mercè Rodoreda i l’humor*. FMR - IEC, Barcelona 2007.
- [6] *Mercè Rodoreda. Entrevistes*. Overseen by Abraham Mohino i Balet. FMR - IEC, Barcelona 2013, p. 56.
- [7] Maria CAMPILLO, “Mercè Rodoreda: la construcció de la veu narrativa”. In *Actes del I Simposi Internacional de Narrativa Breu*. Overseen by V. Alonso, A. Bernal and C. Gregori. Institut Interuniversitari de Filologia Valenciana - Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 1998, pp. 323-354.
- [8] Carme ARNAU, “Mercè Rodoreda”. In Joaquim MOLAS (dir.), *Història de la literatura catalana*. Part Moderna, vol. XI. Ariel, Barcelona 1988, pp. 157-190.
- [9] Carme ARNAU, “Introducció”. In Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Cartes de guerra...*, *op. cit.*
- [10] See, for example, the dozen contributions in *Mercè Rodoreda i els clàssics*. Overseen by Jordi Pujol Pardell and Meritxell Talavera Muntané. Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona 2013.
- [11] The author stated these ideas quite a few of times (*La cultura catalana en el primer exili (1939-1940)*. *Cartes d’escriptors, intel·lectuals i científics*. Overseen by Maria Campillo and Francesc Vilanova. Fundació Carles Pi i Sunyer d’Estudis Autònomic i Locals, Barcelona 2000, p. 149; Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Cartes a l’Anna Murià 1939-1956*. Edicions de l’Eixample, Barcelona 1991, pp. 62, 80-81, 104-105, and *Cartes de guerra...*, *op. cit.*, p. 164).
- [12] *Mercè Rodoreda. Entrevistes, op. cit.*, p. 105, and Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Aloma*. Translated by J. F. Vidal Jové. Al-Borak, Madrid 1971.
- [13] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *La Plaza del Diamante*. Translated by Enrique Sordo Lamadrid. Edhasa, Barcelona 1965; *La Plaza del Diamante*. Translated by Enrique Sordo Lamadrid. Orbis, Barcelona 1987, and *La Plaza del Diamante*. Translated by Enrique Sordo Lamadrid. Prologue by Gabriel García Márquez. Illustrations by Albert Ràfols Casamada. Círculo de Lectores, Barcelona 1989. All the information in this article on the translations of the author’s works comes from the *Translation* tab on the FMR website (<http://www.mercerodoreda.cat/traduccionsi>) and the TRAC database on Catalan authors and transla-

- tions of their works (https://www.llull.cat/catala/recursos/trac_traduuccions_home.cfm), which belongs to the Institut Ramon Llull (IRL, <https://www.llull.cat/catala/quisom/quisom.cfm>), the organisation in charge of the international dissemination of Catalan culture. These websites were checked between April and December 2019, but they were rechecked in January 2020 to ensure that they are up to date. Occasionally, the catalogue of the Biblioteca de Catalunya (<https://cataleg.bnc.cat/>) was checked to provide exact references.
- [14] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *The Pigeon Girl*. Translated from Catalan by Eda O'Shiel. André Deutsch, London 1967; *The Time of the Doves*. Translated by David H. Rosenthal. Taplinger, New York 1981; Arrow, London 1986; Graywolf Press, Saint Paul 1986, and *In Diamond Square*. Translated from Catalan by Peter Bush. Virago, London 2013.
- [15] Mercè RODOREDÀ, "Littérature catalane. *La Place du Diamant*". Translated from Catalan by Pierre Verdager. *Europe. Revue mensuelle*, December 1967, pp. 127-132, and *La Place du Diamant*. Translated from Catalan by Bernard Lesfargues in conjunction with Pierre Verdager. Gallimard, Paris 1971, which was once again published in 1999 and 2006, albeit with a different cover.
- [16] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *La Piazza del Diamante*. Translated from the Catalan original by Guiseppa Cintioli. Arnoldo Mondadori, Milan 1970; *La piazza del Diamante*. Translated from Catalan by Anna Maria Saludes i Amat. Bollati Boringhieri, Turin 1990, and *La Piazza del Diamante*. Translation from Catalan and afterword by Giuseppe Tavani. La nuova Frontiera, Rome 2008. Regarding the success of this last translation, M. S., "La traducció italiana de *La plaça del Diamant*: 40.000 exemplars venuts en un any". *Vilaweb*, 19-XII-2009 (<https://www.vilaweb.cat/noticia/3669554/20091219/traduccio-italiana-placa-diamant-40000-exemplars-venuts-any.html>).
- [17] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Diamentowy plac*. Translated from Spanish by Zofia Chądzyńska. Czytelnik, Warsaw 1970, and Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Diamentowy Plac*. Translated by Zofia Chądzyńska. Wydawnictwo Pascal, Bielsko-Biala 2014.
- [18] Judith SÁNCHEZ GORDALIZA, "Obres de Mercè Rodoreda". In: Kathleen McNERNEY. *Mercè Rodoreda...*, op. cit., p. 153-172.
- [19] See the map and graphic on the first page of the *Translations* tab on the FMR website (<http://www.mercerodoreda.cat/traduuccions>).
- [20] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Shesi i Diamantit*. Translated by Bashkim Shehu. Botimet IDK, Tirana 2018.
- [21] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Kisgalamb és Cecília*. Translated by Dóra Bakucz. Harmattan Kiadó, Budapest 2019. The FMR has the authority to approve these translations, which is why it is surprising that these two translations do not appear. It may be due to technical issues (delays in updating the information or problems locating them when browsing the website?), but this situation should be rectified as quickly as possible.
- [22] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Sahat al-mas [La plaça del Diamant]*. Mirthi: Rudurida; taryama wa taqdi:m, Talaat Shahin. Al-Hai'a al-Misriyya al-'Amma li al-Kitab, Al-Qahira 1996, and *Al-ibra al-mandhuma* ["Fil a l'agulla"]. Taryamat Ramez Haddad. 2008 (unpublished document).
- [23] Alongside the two Polish translations of *La plaça del Diamant* (see note 16) and of Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Platek bi-alej pelargonii. Wybór opowiadań [Una fulla de gerani blanc. Selecció de contes]*. Z katalonskiego przelozyła Barbara Luczak. Księgarnia Akademicka, Krakow 2008 (which includes "Gallines de Guinea", "El mirall", "Carnaval", "Cop de lluna", "Mort de Lisa Sperling", "La gallina", "La sala de les nines", "El riu i la barca", "El senyor i la lluna", "La Salamandra", "Una fulla de gerani blanc", "La meva Cristina", "Nit i boira", "Paràlisi", "Semblava de seda" and "Un cafè"), the FMR adds "Wojna i milosc. Mercè Rodoreda: *Listy do Anny Murià [Cartes a l'Anna Murià]*" (fragment). Translated by Katarzyna Wilk. *Dekada Literacka*, no. 21, 1993, pp. 4-5; "Kawa [Un cafè]". Translated by Barbara Luczak. *Czas Kultury* (Poznan), no. 3, 1996; "Smierci wiosna [*La Mort i la primavera*]" (fragments). Przelozyła Barbara Luczak. *Literatura na swiecie*, no. 7-8, 2000, pp. 278-296 and ["La gallina", "La sala de les nines", "El riu i la barca", "El senyor i la lluna", "La Salamandra", "Una fulla de gerani blanc" and "La meva Cristina"]. Przelozyła Barbara Luczak. *Literatura na swiecie*, no. 5-6, 2003.
- [24] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Diamantski [La plaça del Diamant]*. Translated by Silvia Monros-Stojakovic. Alfa Narodna Knjiga, Belgrade 1998, and *Ulica Kamelija [El carrer de les Camèlies]*. Translated by Igor Marojevic. Laguna, Belgrade 2009.
- [25] See note 21.
- [26] In Spanish, just to cite an example, the translation by Enrique Sordo Lamadrid that Edhasa published (1965; 1980; 1983, 3rd reprint; 1984; 1990 and 1992) is counted three times. Perhaps the IRL made this choice because the volumes have different ISBNs and covers; there were probably no changes in the text, yet in a precise, exact study of the complete set of translations of Rodoreda's works, a single translation published in different collections or occasions would be advisable. This precision, accuracy and comprehensiveness far overstretches the objectives of this article, as it would entail a vast effort to locate texts, such as the poems and theatre adaptations made abroad (Joaquim MALLAFRÈ, "Les traduccions de l'obra de Mercè Rodoreda". In *Congrés internacional Mercè Rodoreda. Actes*. Overseen by Joaquim Molas. Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales - IEC - FMR, Barcelona 2010, pp. 69-81), as well as checking each of the references on the FMR and IRL one by one in order to determine, as stated above, which versions of the same translation should be counted and which should not.
- [27] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Iberijska fantastika*. Christo G. Danov, Plovdiv 1982. Translated by Maia Guenova Corbadzijska (includes "La Salamandra" and "La meva Cristina"); *Plostad Diamant [La plaça del Diamant]*. Prevela ot katal-

onski Maia Guenova Corbadzijska. Narodna Kultura, Sofia 1986; *Scupeno ogleдалo* [*Mirall trenca*]. Prevede ot katalonski Maia Guenova Corbadzijska. Gal-iko, Sophia 1993; *Ploshtad diamant: Roman* [*La plaça del Diamant*]. Translation from Catalan by Maia Guenova. Sofia: Ciela, 2012, and [*El carrer de les Camèlies*]. Translated by Maia Guenova. Ciela, Sofia 2013. The transcription of the translator's surname is not consistent on the FMR website, but this is unquestionably the same person.

- [28] The table does not provide a definitive total of even all translations of Rodoreda's prose works up to 2019 (a pending task) because, as mentioned above (see note 26), this would require much more in-depth research than what underpins this article. The first column includes the Rodoreda titles other than poetry or drama which have been translated, in order from least to most translated, each followed by their generic identification between brackets (only prose includes a sub-classification – letters, autobiography or poetry – to distinguish the degree of literariness of the texts, which is a significant factor); “Imatges d’infantesa” and “Un cafè”, along with the compilation of children’s stories (the first three titles) appear either separately or between brackets because they were not published in a volume during the author’s lifetime (Mercè RODOREDÀ, *Un cafè i altres narracions*. Overseen by Carme Arnau. FMR - IEC, Barcelona 1999, and *La noieta daurada i altres contes*. Illustrations by Aurora Altisern. Prologue by Marta Pessarrodona. RqueR Editorial, Barcelona 2005). The second column indicates the number of times each text has been translated, showing how many translations are the texts in their entirety (first figure) and underneath that how many are partial in parentheses (second figure, after the addition sign and followed by the letter *f* to indicate a fragment); in the tallies of short stories, a third figure is added followed by the letter *c* for *compilation* to indicate all the short stories from the work that have been translated in a book that is a compilation of a larger set of Rodoreda stories. The third column tallies the total number of target languages of each work, and those languages appear in parentheses in alphabetical order; if the number of translations and target languages is not consistent, this means that there is more than one translation into the same language. The last row in the table is a complete tally of the translations and indicates the languages in parentheses to show their diversity.
- [29] The IRL lists 205 translations of Rodoreda works instead of the 235 shown in Table 1, because even though it counts some which are not on the FMR website and different versions of the same translation, fragmentary translations are missing, as explained above. Given that the ranking is based on the information from TRAC, we chose not to change the figures in order to avoid distorting the results on the number of translations of all Catalan authors’ works provided by this source.
- [30] This information is public and easy to locate online; the sole exception is Teresa Sabaté, a living writer of children’s literature, whose date of birth I could not locate.
- [31] According to some sources, *La pell freda* has been translated into 37 languages (Jordi NOPCA, “Quina literatura catalana es llegeix al món?”. *Ara*, 20-IV-2014; https://www.ara.cat/cultura/Quina-literatura-Quatre-curiositats-conegudes_0_1123687682.html), an error most likely stemming from the fact that even though TRAC only attributes it 32 translations, a search on this database initially yielded 37 results corresponding to the 37 translations that appear on the IRL website within the different versions of the same translation into the same language. The information on Sánchez Piñol and *La pell freda* in VISAT, the online magazine of the Translation Committee of Catalan PEN (<http://www.visat.cat/traduccion-literatura-catalana/esp/llobres-traduits/200/0/-/albert-sanchez-pinol.html>), matches the information on the IRL.
- [32] Even though Table 1 lists 76, we should reiterate the need to tally them accurately in a study that is more than a general overview, as this one is.
- [33] There is a wide range of studies on the translations of this work. They include Marta MARÍN-DÒMINE, *El travessament significant a ‘La plaça del Diamant’: anàlisi de la recepció i de les traduccions angleses*. Facultat de Traducció i Interpretació, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona 1997; Sameer RAWAL, *Translating Mercè Rodoreda to Hindi*. Facultat de Traducció i Interpretació, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona 2005; Annamaria ANNICCHIARICO, “Da Colometa a Colombetta: ancora una traduzione de *La plaça del Diamant* di Mercè Rodoreda”. *Rivista italiana di studi catalani*, no. 1 (2011), pp. 91-101; and Xavier MONTOLIU PAULI, “Traduir a quatre mans o entre dues veus”. *XXIV Seminari sobre la Traducció a Catalunya. Tots per a un i un per a tots: les traduccions a quatre, sis o més mans*. Associació d’Escriptors en Llengua Catalana, Barcelona 2017, pp. 63-69. There are also compilations and studies on the reception of Rodoreda’s works in other countries, such as Katharina DOBLER, Magrit KLINGER-CLAVIJO, Beat MAZENAUER, Hans-Martin GAUGER and Maria BLOSUM (translator), “Ressenyes de Rodoreda a Alemanya”. *VISAT*, 3 (April 2007) (<http://www.visat.cat/traduccion-literatura-catalana/cat/ressenyes/71/10/0//merce-rodoreda.html>) and Kathleen McNERNEY, “La recepció de l’obra de Mercè Rodoreda als Estats Units”. In *Congrés internacional Mercè Rodoreda...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-22. Likewise, in 2018, the FMR awarded a grant to *Les comparacions fraseològiques en ‘La plaça del Diamant’ i les seves traduccions*, by Pedro Ivorra, which should be published soon.
- [34] We have respected the number of translations of *La Plaça del Diamant* among TRAC’s *Most Translated Books* for the same reasons we have respected the figure on Rodoreda translations in the authors’ ranking (note 29).
- [35] No clear reasons are given as to why this novel does not appear. One possibility is that because the IRL’s objective is to disseminate Catalan culture and Rodoreda already

appears enough times, they may have wanted to give visibility to other titles, such as *Pedra de tartera* (by a living writer whose oeuvre is still taking shape), and what may be considered the Catalan *Don Quixote*, before once again underscoring the importance of Rodoreda. However, the inclusion of the only novel by Monzó does not fit this explanation, unless they sought to promote him beyond his prominence as an author of short stories.

- [36] Neus REAL, *Mercè Rodoreda...*, *op. cit.*
- [37] The researcher who won an FMR grant in 2013 with *La plaça del Diamant: edició genètica. Escriptura i estil* is currently finishing a doctoral thesis consisting in a critical edition of the novel; some previews can be read in Meritxell TALAVERA I MUNTANÉ, "Variants d'estil en el procés d'escriptura de *La plaça del Diamant*". In *La filologia d'autor en els estudis literaris. Textos catalans dels segles XIX i XX*. Overseen by Joaquim Molas. Aula Màrius Torres-Pagès, Lleida 2013, pp. 165-189, and "Notícia de l'expedient de censura de *La plaça del Diamant*". In *La literatura catalana contemporània: intertextos, influències i relacions*. Societat Catalana de Llengua i Literatura - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona 2013, pp. 239-256. In addition to these studies and the ones cited, the diverse range of literature on the book includes Josep Miquel SOBRÉ, *L'artífici de 'La plaça del Diamant': un estudi lingüístic*. Ariel - Institut d'Estudis Hel·lènics. Departament de Filologia Catalana, Barcelona 1973; Loreto Busquets, "El mite de la culpa a *La plaça del Diamant*". In *Actes del quart Col·loqui d'Estudis Catalans a Nord-Amèrica*. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 1985, pp. 303-319; Maria A. ROCA, *Construzioni simboliche nel romanzo di Mercè Rodoreda, 'La plaça del Diamant'*. Università degli studi di Sassari, Sassari 1986; Jane White ALBERCH and Patricia V. LUNN "La plaça del Diamant i la narració de la consciència". In *Homenatge a Josep Roca Pons*. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat - Indiana University, Barcelona 1991, pp. 9-22; Colleen P. CULLETON, "Daedalus's Wings: The Effects of Temporal Distance in *La plaça del Diamant*". *Catalan Review*, vol. XVI, no. 1-2 (2002), pp. 103-119; Pere ROSSELLÓ BOVER, "Els anys de *La plaça del Diamant* (el context novel·lístic català de l'inici dels anys 60)". In Germà COLÓN, T. MARTÍNEZ ROMERO and Maria Pilar PEREA (eds.), *La cultura catalana en projecció de futur: homenatge a Josep Massot i Muntaner*. Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, Castelló de la Plana 2004, pp. 439-458; Marie-Claire ZIMMERMANN, *Écrire au féminin en Catalogne: 'La plaça del Diamant', de Mercè Rodoreda*. Publication du C.R.I.I.A. (Université Paris-X-Nanterre), Paris 2005; Carme ARNAU, "La plaça del Diamant de Mercè Rodoreda. La fosca i la llum: una poètica de la mirada". In *Congrés internacional Mercè Rodoreda. Actes...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-188; Maria BARBAL, "La plaça del Diamant, un univers xifrat". In *Una novel·la són paraules. Vint invitacions a la lectura en ocasió del centenari de Mercè Rodoreda 1908-2008*. Institució de les Lletres Catalanes - IEC - FMR, Barcelona 2010, pp. 149-160; Kathryn EVERLY, "Masculinity, War and Marriage in *La plaça del Diamant* by Mercè Rodoreda". *Anales de la literatura española contemporània*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2012), pp. 63-84; Carles MIRALLES, "'En el forat de la mort'. La catàbasi o baixada al món dels morts de la Colometa". In *Mites clàssics...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-188; Montserrat LUNATI, "El cos entre néixer, desnéixer i morir a Mercè Rodoreda, Maria-Mercè Marçal i Imma Monsó". *Catalan Review*, vol. XXX (2016), pp. 131-146; Maryellen BIEDER, "Living the War, Writing the War: Poetic Figuration in Mercè Rodoreda's *La plaça del Diamant*". In Maryellen BIEDER and Roberta JOHNSON, *Spanish Women Writers and Spain's Civil War*. Routledge, London 2017, pp. 35-51; and Carlos JÉREZ-FARRÁN, "La discreta apostasía religiosa en *La plaza del Diamante* de Mercè Rodoreda". *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, vol. 94, no. 10 (2017), pp. 1081-1100.
- [38] These three touchstones of the contemporary novel were Rodoreda's openly stated referents (*Mercè Rodoreda. Entrevistes, op. cit.*), and the author has been associated with them in studies which have earned grants from the FMR (Sílvia ALDAVERT and Sílvia FORNELLS, *Mercè Rodoreda i el viatge pel temps. Anàlisi comparativa amb les obres de Virginia Woolf i James Joyce*, 2007; and Jordi MARRUGAT DOMÈNECH, *Les relacions entre l'obra narrativa de Mercè Rodoreda i l'obra narrativa de William Faulkner*, 2013) and in the published literature (including Carme ARNAU, "La plaça del Diamant de Mercè Rodoreda: la creació d'un personatge". *Revista del Col·legi*, no. 130 (November 2008), pp. 11-21).
- [39] All three have been translated into Catalan: J. D. SALINGER, *El vigilant en el camp de sègol*. Translated by Ernest Riera Arbussà and Josep M. Fonalleras. Empúries, Barcelona 2001; Doris LESSING, *El quadern daurat*. Translated by Víctor Compta. Edicions 62, Barcelona 2001; and Gabriel GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ, *Cent anys de solitud*. Translated by Avel·lí Artís-Gener. Edhasa, Barcelona 1970.
- [40] Mercè RODOREDÀ, *La plaça del Diamant* (1962). 26th ed. Club Editor, Barcelona 1982. As we await the critical edition, readers can use any available edition of the novel.
- [41] Even though the main character's transformation is gradual (from Natàlia to Colometa and back to Natàlia), her different names are crucial in distinguishing the two separate periods in the discourse. This is the argument in an essential study which explores the layers of meaning in the work by pointing to the plurality of functions of the more pre-realistic elements: Maria CAMPILLO, "La plaça del Diamant. El substrat històric en una narració de vida". *Els Marges*, no. 70 (September 2002), pp. 5-23.
- [42] The assertion that Colometa is a wonderful piece of craftsmanship proliferates in the literature and is the crux of Carme ARNAU, "La plaça del Diamant de Mercè Rodoreda: la creació d'un personatge", *op. cit.*, which traces the construction and reception of the main character in relation to the themes of identity and metamorphosis. The original title, *Colometa*, appears in the letters from the writer and critic Armand Obiols (Armand OBIOLS, *Cartes a Mercè Rodoreda*. Prologue by Anna Maria

- Saludes i Amat. La Mirada, Sabadell 2010) and the editor Joan Sales (Mercè RODOREDA, Joan SALES, *Cartes completes (1960-1983)*. Overseen by Montserrat Casals. Club Editor, Barcelona 2008.). Even though Rodoreda was initially against changing the title after deciding on *Colometa* because she was convinced that the text required her name, she ultimately gave in to commercial demands.
- [43] Mercè RODOREDA, “Prologue”. In *Mirall trencat* (1974). Edicions 62, Barcelona 1984, pp. 13-33.
- [44] Maria CAMPILLO, “Fonts i usos bíblics en la narrativa de Mercè Rodoreda”. In *Congrés internacional Mercè Rodoreda. Actes...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-68.
- [45] They disappear via a repertoire of the different ways people died in the Civil War, as examined in detail by Maria CAMPILLO, “*La plaça del Diamant*. El substrat històric...”, *op. cit.*
- [46] B. TOMASEVSKIJ, “Temàtica”. In Enric SULLÀ (ed.), *Poètica de la narració*. Empúries, Barcelona 1985, pp. 11-46, and Marina GUSTÀ, “Els tons de la pell. Notes sobre els estils rodoredians”. In *Congrés internacional Mercè Rodoreda. Actes...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-94. Rodoreda explicitly stated that she did not write gratuitously but instead pondered and calculated everything (Mercè RODOREDA, Joan SALES, *Cartes...*, *op. cit.*, p. 576).
- [47] In the writer’s words: “I can’t say it without it ringing false: ‘Colometa was desperate because she couldn’t keep up with cleaning up after the pigeons’. But I also can’t have her say directly ‘I was desperate because I couldn’t keep up with cleaning up after the pigeons’. I have to find a richer, more detailed, more expressive formula; I shouldn’t tell the reader that Colometa was desperate but let them sense that she was. [...] That is, the character in the novel may know what they see and what’s happening to them, but the author doesn’t. This way the reader hears a truthful tone, or at least a more truthful one. All novels are conventional. The trick lies in not making them seem that way. I have never written anything as subtle as *La Plaça del Diamant*, nothing less real, less affected. The sense of it being a living thing comes from a naturalness, a clarity of style.” (Mercè RODOREDA, “Pròleg”. In *Mirall trencat*, *op. cit.*, p. 33).
- [48] Maria CAMPILLO, “Fonts i usos bíblics...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-57. Here and in the article on the novel’s historical substrate, Campillo provides more detailed considerations on key issues which have to be simplified here for reasons of space.
- [49] Maria CAMPILLO, “Fonts i usos bíblics...”, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
- [50] Carles MIRALLES, “En el forat de la mort’...”, *op. cit.*
- [51] Maria CAMPILLO, “*La plaça del Diamant*. El substrat històric...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8, note 9.
- [52] Mercè RODOREDA, “Pròleg”. In *La plaça del Diamant*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-12.
- [53] Mercè RODOREDA, Joan SALES, *Cartes...*, *op. cit.*, p. 575. The author is referring to the novel, but the statement can easily be extrapolated.
- [54] Maria CAMPILLO, “La Rodoreda que Rodoreda refusà”. *Avui*, 20-IV-1983, p. III.
- [55] Mercè RODOREDA, “Pròleg”. In *La plaça del Diamant*, *op. cit.*
- [56] Jaume AULET, “Mercè Rodoreda i els seus *Vint-i-dos contes*. Ni més ni menys”. In *Actes del I Simposi Internacional de Narrativa Breu*, *op. cit.*, pp. 457-471.
- [57] Mercè RODOREDA, Joan SALES, *Cartes...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.
- [58] In 1979, the author recalled: “It’s curious that when I wrote *Plaça* I always had the sense that I was doing something right. [...] I’ve never again had that feeling with any of my other novels” (Mercè RODOREDA, Joan SALES, *Cartes...*, *op. cit.*, p. 780). On the writing process, Meritxell TALAVERA, “Sobre la gènesi de *La plaça del Diamant*”. In Mercè RODOREDA, *La plaça del Diamant*. Club Editor Jove, Barcelona 2016, pp. 287-299; Carme ARNAU, “*La plaça del Diamant* de Mercè Rodoreda: la creació d’un personatge”, *op. cit.*; and Armand OBIOLS, *Cartes a...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-253, where one can read that the book is “a true masterpiece” (p. 223).
- [59] Rodoreda revised the manuscript between its submission for the prize in 1960 and its publication in 1962. The impressions from Obiols and Sales helped, but the literary mastery underlying *La plaça del diamant* can only be attributed to her (Meritxell TALAVERA, “Sobre la gènesi...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-294), which contradicts the literature insinuating that Obiols was a co-author of Rodoreda’s literature.
- [60] All of this is summarised and explained in Maria CAMPILLO, “*La plaça del Diamant*. El substrat històric...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6, and Carme ARNAU, “*La plaça del Diamant* de Mercè Rodoreda: la creació d’un personatge”, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15. In 2014, the FMR awarded a grant to Trinidad Escudero for *La recepció crítica i la divulgació de ‘La plaça del Diamant’ de Mercè Rodoreda*, a study that sought to explore the issue that does not appear to have been published.
- [61] Armand OBIOLS, *Cartes a...*, *op. cit.*, p. 360.
- [62] Which explains why it has become a must-read in secondary school, with the consequent boost in its dissemination and sales. Neus CARBONELL, “*La plaça del Diamant* de Mercè Rodoreda”. Empúries, Barcelona 1994, is one of the books meant to support teachers and students.
- [63] In Rodoreda’s words, “everyone finds what they want in it. As someone – perhaps Obiols – said, it is a novel that both a doorwoman and a PhD in philosophy can like” (Mercè RODOREDA, Joan SALES, *Cartes...*, *op. cit.*, p. 166).
- [64] Sales bemoaned this on the occasion of the positive epistolary criticisms by J. Ferrater Mora and J. Agelet i Garriga: “The press remains silent on Catalan books. [...] And the press’s silence is harmful. Ever since the newspaper strike in New York, [...] theatre ticket sales are said to have dropped steeply. We might think that Catalan literature has been experiencing a ‘newspaper strike’ since 1939. The miracle is that it has survived at all. [...] *La Plaça del Diamant* should have sold out in its first edition of 2,000 copies within a few months” (Mercè RODOREDA, Joan SALES, *Cartes...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167).

- [65] Meritxell TALAVERA, "Sobre la gènesi...", *op. cit.*, p. 298.
- [66] M. Montserrat CASTILLO, "La plaça del Diamant. Una conversa amb Francesc Betriu". *Serra d'Or*, no. 272 (May 1982), pp. 49-51; "Una exposició recrea l'atmosfera i l'olor a 4 novel·les de Mercè Rodoreda". *El Punt Avui*, 25 March 2008; <https://bibliotecadelescala.blogspot.com/2008/04/la-plaa-del-diamant-de-merc-rodoreda.html>; "Taula rodona. Les adaptacions de *La plaça del Diamant*". In *Congrés internacional Mercè Rodoreda. Actes...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-204; <http://www.bibgirona.cat/biblioteca/santa-cristina-aro/agenda/64396-cineforum-la-placa-del-diamant>; and https://hospici.cat/detall_curs/1800/els-7-magnifics-grans-escriptors-catalans-del-segle-xx-cicle.
- [67] Italo CALVINO, *Per què llegir els clàssics*. Translated by Teresa Muñoz Lloret. Edicions 62, Barcelona 1991.
- [68] Mercè RODOREDÀ, Joan SALES, *Cartes...*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
- [69] Mercè RODOREDÀ, "Pròleg". In *La plaça del Diamant*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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