

In Memoriam

Manuel Ardit (1941-2013)*



On the 8th of December 2013, a highly esteemed colleague left us forever: Manuel Ardit, a notable Valencian historian and full member of the History-Archaeology Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans since 1992. Born in Valencia in 1941, he earned his PhD at the Universitat de València in 1974 with a thesis supervised by Joan Reglà. Ardit first worked as a

middle school teacher. In 1987, he became a full professor of modern history at the Universitat de València. He was the director of such an important publishing house as the Servei de Publicacions of the Universitat de València, and since 1987 he was the director of the essential, emblematic journal, *Afers*. His oversight of the journal began with issue 5 after the death of its founder, Sebastià Garcia Martínez. Manuel Ardit always had an extraordinary deputy editor at *Afers*, Vicent Olmos, a key figure in the publishing house which bears the same name as the journal.

Lately, he was also a member of the Board of Directors of the *Catalan Historical Review*, and he published an overview of studies on the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609 and its consequences in the second edition of this journal. He was always an enthusiastic member of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, so much so that even when he was gravely ill last November he still sent in his vote for the latest election of candidates to become new members of the History-Archaeology Section.

There was no synthesis of the end of the old regime in the region of Valencia until Ardit published his book *Revolución liberal y revuelta campesina: un ensayo sobre la desintegración del régimen feudal en el País Valenciano, 1793-1840* in 1977. He bravely chose a sweeping chronological timeframe: from the grassroots anti-French revolt in 1793, the prelude to the one in 1808, to the end of the First Carlist War in 1840, with mention the uprisings in 1794 and 1801. He proved that the revolt against Napoleonic domination was anti-seigniorial and potentially revolutionary in Valencia, and that the occupiers tried to restore the seigniorial fees, which had not been paid since 1808. In this

work, he also examined such a complex issue as the social bases of the anti-liberal revolt of 1822, the prelude to what would become the Carlist insurrection of 1833.

One of Manuel Ardit's merits was his willingness and capacity to revise his theses in light of his own subsequent research and that of his colleagues, which were largely the pathways that he paved. This can be seen in his great book *Els homes i la terra del País Valencià, segles XVI-XVIII* (1993). Ardit went beyond the thesis that the harshness of the seigniorial regime in Valencia, strengthened by the expulsion of the Moriscos and the repopulation, would explain the regional backwardness and even the failure of early industrialisation in the region. However, he also confirmed the exceptionalism of Valencia's irrigated farming system without mythologizing it, indicating that similar examples in the Mediterranean can only be found in the agriculture of Murcia and the Po Valley.

His 2004 monograph on the social evolution of the Marquisate of Llombai (Ribera Alta, province of Valencia) from the 13th to the 19th centuries is an example of the usefulness of micro-history, which over a long period of time can answer the major questions of history in general. The reader does not lose the thread that leads to the conclusions through the complex evolution of the seigniorial censuses, marriage and fertility records, birth and death rates and social conflicts. The research encompasses everything from the establishment of the fiefdom after the conquest to the dissolution of the seigniorial regime. Ardit shows the might of seigniorial power as a taxation system during the Mudejar period, with smallholder subsistence farming. He reports on the shift after the expulsion of the Moriscos towards commercial agriculture – vineyards and mulberries – on the basis of emphyteusis and more adequate farm sizes. It cannot be considered refeudalisation despite the Second Revolt of the Brotherhoods in 1693, the anti-seigniorial bent of the War of the Spanish Succession in the region and the revival of seigniorial incomes in the 18th century before their decline in the last quarter of this century until the revolts just prior to the war against Napoleon's domination.

Other issues in Valencia's history which Ardit examined were Erasmism, the outcroppings of Protestantism, the Inquisition and the expulsion of the Moriscos, as indicated above. In 2001, he issued the book in which he squeezes the most possible from the 1768 census of Aranda, mining it for information on the region of Valencia in a period of transformation: the 18th century.

However, Manuel Ardit, who had announced that he was returning to the topic of the last crisis of the Old Re-

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gime and the dawn of political liberalism, handled himself with the same aplomb in sweeping syntheses as in his archival work. He is an example of a historian with an equal capacity for research as for divulgation, with comparable efficiency in a local monograph and a synthesis that encompasses an entire country (his), a state (Spain) or even all of Western Europe. Proof of this is his contribution to the *Història dels Països Catalans* (1980), in which he wrote everything on the region of Valencia from the 18th to 20th centuries, and through this project I am personally able to attest to how gratifying it was to work with him.

Other subsequent examples of sweeping syntheses were his book *Agricultura y crecimiento económico en la Europa occidental moderna* (1992) and the one entitled *El Siglo de las Luces* (2007), an outstanding social history of the culture where he examines the culture of both the elites and the lower classes in the Enlightenment and

18th-century superstitious in Spain. His most remarkable recent contributions were to the history of the population of the city of Valencia and its outlying area, the Horta, in the history of this city, which he published in 2009.

Manuel Ardit was a translator of classical texts, including several by James Casey and Robert Darnton, as well as the biography of the historian Marc Bloch written by Carole Fink. Regarding tributes to the masters of the previous generation, we should recall that in 2002 he compiled a variety of works by Emili Giralt under the title of *Empresaris, propietaris i vinyaters: 50 anys de recerca històrica*.

Faithful to the language that unites Catalonia and the region of Valencia, a historian bowing to an open concept of the Catalan-speaking lands, and influenced in his earliest works by Joan Fuster, Manuel Ardit was a figure respected by all, a researcher who remained active and published until the end, shortly before a cruel illness deprived us of his aid and his friendship.

Gregori M. Estrada (1918-2015)*



The 18th of March 2015 marked the death of Father Gregori M. Estrada i Gamisans, who was born in Manresa on the 28th of April 1918. During his early years, he lived in Mas Rossinyol in the town of Monistrol de Calders, and he continued to spend his summers there until his parents decided to send him to the Boys' Choir of Montserrat, where he

spent six years, from September 1926 until September 1932. That was the era of Abbot Antoni M. Marcet, when there were serious conflicts between the monastery and the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, which accused the Abbot of being a Catalanist. The dictatorship wanted to remove him from the monastery, but a new era dawned with the proclamation of the Second Republic in April 1931, which ended tragically in July 1936 with the outbreak of the Civil War. The war could have had much more serious consequences for Montserrat had it not kept up such outstanding relations with the authorities of the Generalitat, which protected the monastery and helped the monks escape, some of them seeking refuge abroad.

Francesc Estrada – this was his given name – had two outstanding teachers in the Boys' Choir who cultivated his musical talent and set him on a pathway which he would never abandon. They were Father Àngel Roda-

milans, then the prefect of the Boys' Choir, who would later be assassinated in Sabadell in 1936, and Father Anselm Ferrer, the director of the school, with whom Father Gregori would be close with until the former's death in 1969. He also received musical training from other monks who worked with the Boys' Choir, including Father Maur Fàbregas (musical theory), Father Isidor Civil (violin), Father Isidor Fonoll (prefect after Àngel Rodamilians) and Father Plàcid Feliu (also the prefect during the last few weeks of Estrada's stint in the Boys' Choir).

In 1932, when he stopped being an acolyte, Francesc Estrada entered the school for aspiring monks in Montserrat, and in July 1933 he went from being a student to a novice at the monastery, where he took the monastic name of Gregori Maria. On the 6th of August the following year, he took his vows as a monk on Montserrat, and he immediately began to further his music studies, which he had never abandoned. In 1935 and 1936, he embarked upon organ studies at the Conservatory of Barcelona's Liceu Opera House under the direction of Father Josep Muset.

In early July 1936, he was temporarily sent for health reasons to the residence that Montserrat had in Andorra at that time, and there he was taken by surprise by the military uprising on the 17th to 19th of the same month and the revolution which sprang up all over Catalonia. He and other Catalans immediately travelled to Turin, from which, through Genoa and Roma, he joined Abbot Marcet and a group of monks from Montserrat at the monastery of Subiaco. The entourage from Montserrat had had to abandon Barcelona, and along with other young monks – accompanied by Emilià Riu, the prefect of the juniors of Montserrat – they took refuge in the

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German Beuron Archabbey (Hohenzollern), where they were fraternally welcomed. In academic year 1936-1937, he studied philosophy at Maria Llach Abbey (Rhineland), which was also Benedictine, where all the monks from the Beuron congregation gathered, and he returned to Beuron during academic years 1937-1939 to study theology. When World War II broke out, he moved to Rome, and from 1939 to 1940 he took a theology course at the Benedictine university of Saint Anselm. In the meantime, in November 1939 he returned to the monastery of Subiaco, where Abbot Marcet welcomed him into the official monastic profession on the 13th of November and conferred on him four minor orders which prepared him for the priesthood. In 1940, while still in Rome, he was ordained the deputy deacon of the archbasilica of Saint John Lateran.

In 1941, when the academic year ended early because of Italy's entry into the war, Estrada went from Rome to Barcelona in hydroplane and rejoined Montserrat. There he was immediately ordained presbyter and began to serve as the organist, an activity that he kept up until early this century, when his progressive deafness started to compromise his ability. Meanwhile, he continued his music studies: along with his peer, Father Ireneu Segarra – with whom he worked hard, even though they often had quite disparate opinions on musical issues – he studied harmony and counterpoint in Barcelona with the masters Josep Barberà (1941-1947) and Cristòfor Taltabull (1947-1950). Without ever ceasing to hold positions of responsibility within the community, in 1947 he spent a month in France's Solesmes Abbey, along with Father David Pujol, to work on the Gregorian music texts from Montserrat, and in 1950 he spent a few months in Paris and Hendaye, where he studied the fugue with Charles Koechlin and organ with André Marchal. From 1968 to 2002, he was also the director of the monks' choir at Montserrat and offered a class on Gregorian chant to the clerics of Montserrat to train the young monks, myself among them for several years.

He always worked intensely as an organist, as a promoter of organ-building and bell smelting – in Montserrat and elsewhere as well – and as a composer of religious music. Particularly worth highlighting is his important contribution to Catalan liturgical song after Vatican II, when Latin was replaced by the vernacular languages in both mass and divine office, which is so important to Benedictine monasteries and convents. This contribution was not limited to the composition of new melodies; in-

stead, it has repercussions around the entire country through the *Trobades d'Animadors de Cant per a la Litúrgia* (Gatherings of Promoters of Songs for the Liturgy) which he started in 1970 and are still held today, following the spirit of the man who founded them.

Along with these intense religious and pastoral activities, he also performed a study of the ancient musicians of the Boys' Choir of Montserrat, the most important result of which was the publication of the works of Father Miquel López and Father Joan Cererols in the "Mestres de l'Escolania de Montserrat" collection. For many years, he tried to find a new interpretation of the 14th-century songs and dances in the *Llibre Vermell* of Montserrat, from which he published some advances and promoted performances in conjunction with the Boys' Choir of Montserrat and other groups in 1978 and 1979, in Montserrat, Barcelona, France, Germany and Rubí. Shortly before his death, he had put the finishing touches on the definitive text of the book he was preparing on this topic, which will no doubt spark controversies among musicologists.

Given this background, it should come as no surprise that on the 17th of January 1974 he participated in the founding session of the *Societat Catalana de Musicologia* (Catalan Musicology Society), a branch of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans of which he became the second president, a position he occupied until 1991. During those years, he published an article and several obituaries in the society's newsletter, which were joined by other studies he had published in Catalonia and abroad, mostly briefs written in a lay style. On the 18th of December 1992, he was elected a full member of the History-Archaeology Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans with the profession of musicologist, but a year later he became an emeritus member and never played a prominent role in the Institute's undertakings, although he did keenly follow its activities and always scrupulously voted by post whenever needed.

Serious by nature and somewhat rigid in his convictions, he was at once affable and helpful, a fervent patriot and indefatigable worker. Late in his life he was gravely diminished, not only because of his deafness, as mentioned above, but also because his health problems required him to use a wheelchair and kept him away from community life. However, he never lost his good humour and worked until the last day of his life. He will always remain in the memories of those of us who have known him well and esteemed him.

Joaquim Molas (1930-2015)*



Joaquim Molas died in Barcelona on the 16th of March. He was a member of the History-Archaeology Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans since 1978 and a promoter and steadfast leader of the Fundació Mercè Rodoreda, created within the Institut in 1992. He had turned 85 years old on the 5th of September: an entire life devoted to the humanities with

methodical rigour, a capacity for innovation and recognised repercussions and mastery.

He studied philosophy and humanities at the Universitat de Barcelona, where as a disciple of Martí de Riquer he earned his Bachelor's degree in Romance Philology in 1953 and his doctorate in 1958 with a thesis on the poet Lluís Icart, who spanned the 14th and 15th centuries. He also attended courses on Catalan literature and the history of Catalonia offered in secret by Jordi Rubió i Balaguer and Ferran Soldevila, respectively, at the Estudis Universitaris Catalans. More informally, he benefitted from constant contact with Josep M. de Casacuberta, Jaume Vicens Vives, J. V. Foix, Salvador Espriu and especially Carles Riba, who inspired the shift of his scholarly interests towards the modern centuries, as opposed to the Middle Ages, to which he almost exclusively devoted his attention at the beginning of his career. This early stage came to a practical close with his two volumes of *Literatura catalana antiga* from the "Popular Barcino" collection (1961 and 1963). Prior to that, he had been the assistant to the chair in Mediaeval Romance Literatures (1953-1955) and in charge of the course on the critical text editing methodology (1955-1959) at the Universitat de Barcelona. In academic years 1959-1960 and 1960-1961, he served as a lecturer at Liverpool University, but when he returned to Barcelona in 1961, he was unable to rejoin the university faculty until he was hired by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in 1969, where he was the chair of Catalan Literature until 1984, when he joined the Universitat de Barcelona. In 2000, he became an emeritus professor.

His influence over the newer generations of scholars of Catalan literature was truly felt after 1961 through his twofold activity as a militant critic and professor of the history of literature, even if he did not have a steady, prominent platform and had to teach in the Estudis Universitaris Catalans, which was still semi-clandestine at that time. Viewed as a natural consequence of the taste for reading and the need to understand and assess texts, his

exercise of literary criticism and research into literary history was grounded first upon the solidity of the theoretical body which he built, in constant revision, his knowledge of the topics and authors studied and the current context and historical referents (which allowed him to properly justify his value judgements and the hierarchical response that derived therefrom), and secondly upon his insight into the selection of the relevant aspects and his capacity for synthesis.

The resulting working method is the outcome of his dissatisfaction with the positivism of the school that emerged around Manuel Milà i Fontanals, which Molas himself studied ("Els estudis de literatura: l'escola històrica", 1981; "Sobre la periodització en les històries generals de la literatura catalana", 1984). This had led him to take an interest in stylistics and similar propositions postulated by Leo Spitzer, Erich Auerbach, Dámaso Alonso and Amado Alonso, and later, after his Liverpool years, to become deeply familiar with Marxist-leaning literary sociology. Thus, in England he became familiar with the works of Lukács, and either there or upon his return he delved into the works of Arnold Hauser, Antonio Gramsci, Bertold Brecht, Jean-Paul Sartre, Edmund Wilson, Raymond Williams, Cesare Pavese and Lucien Goldmann, which he wanted to join with the works of the theoreticians and promoters of comparativism and literary theory and history from the spheres of the New Criticism and formalism in general. His natural interest in new critical currents, comparativism and literary theory and history as academic disciplines was stimulated by his stringency with his own involvement in university teaching and research, which led him to constantly include readings by Northrop Frye, Wayne C. Booth, Viktor Sklovski, René Wellek and William Empson, and later Hans-Robert Jauss, among others.

Both criticism and historical-literary research take an interest in all expressions that coexist within the same society and evolve in that society, that is, in the cultivated literature of both celebrated authors and not-so-well-known authors, both popular and marginal literature. His study on "La cultura catalana i la seva estratificació" (1983) was the culmination of a long process of reflection which included the compilation of brief articles from the 1971 entitled *Una cultura en crisi*. In it, Molas inventoried the deficits of Catalan literary research, questioned some of the more traditional approaches and proposed suggestive and often bold working hypotheses for tackling literary history through general or more monographic studies in an effort to revise – given the impoverishing cliché of "decline" – everything related to the major European movements of the day, from the Renaissance to Romanticism and to the more modern movements which drew procedures from comparativism.

In 1979, he published an innovative chapter in an unfinished synthesis of the history of modern and contemporary literature dating from 1970 entitled "La decadència: del Renaixement al Pre-romanticisme". Its correlate

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was a coeval study on popular poetry (“Esquema i evolució de la poesia popular catalana”, 1972-1973), a subject expanded in a chapter from the modern part of *Història de la literatura catalana* entitled “La nova literatura popular: tradició i modernitat” (1986, in conjunction), specific aspects of which he revisited in “La novel·la popular: del fulletó a la novel·la de quiosc” (1987) in the prologue to the facsimile edition of *La Llumanera de Nova York* from the same year, and more recently in the brief monograph on his grandfather, *Emili Molas i Bergés 1870-1918* (2014), an artisan stained glass window, militant cooperativist, cultural activist, poet and dramaturge. In the latter publication, he once again used a specific case to emphasise the importance of popular culture in the culture of modern Catalanism. He spearheaded a reinterpretation of authors from the Baroque and participated in the revision of the period with “Francesc Vicenç Garcia vs. Rector de Vallfogona” (1976), the prologue to the publication on the theatre of Francesc Fontanella (1988) and “La literatura catalana del Barroc” (1989).

In his part of the two volumes of *Un segle de vida catalana*, he first addressed the literary currents from the age of the Enlightenment, which he would revisit in *Poesia neoclàssica i pre-romàntica* (1968), “Erudició, polèmica i creació en la poesia neoclàssica catalana” (1977), “Poesia barroca i poesia neoclàssica el 1802” (1981) and “Literatura ‘provincial’ i literatura ‘nacional’: introducció a la literatura catalana del tombant dels segles XVIII i XIX” (1991). Likewise, he sketched some of the avenues of study of the literary currents from the Romantic century in a sweeping overview that ignored the traditional, deformed concept of the *Renaixença*, which was revisited with new significance in subsequent studies. Indeed, while he refused to apply the term ‘*Renaixença*’ in a socially and culturally indiscriminate way to all the literary, cultural and political phenomena that arose in Catalonia throughout the 19th century, he did apply it, based on Rafael Tasis’ *La Renaixença catalana* (1967), to a movement that emerged “under the aegis of the major transformations caused by the Industrial Revolution”, in a vein he would further refine in *La cultura catalana durant el segle XIX* (1979), in *Milà i la Renaixença* (1984), in the prologues to *Il·lustració i Renaixença* by Jordi Rubió i Balaguer (1989) and to *Índexs* of the journal “L’Avenç” (1989) and in “Josep Franquesa i Gomis, poeta i activista oblidat” (1996), among other studies. As a whole, Molas suggested establishing the historical causes of the movement, not only at its start but also the ones that led to changes and a diversification of its objectives and strategies throughout the 19th century, which were complementary and even at times contradictory, and its social base. To do so, he reconsidered the significance of the role attributed to Frederic Soler and other reluctantly or openly critical personalities, with certain public repercussions especially after 1865, with the conservative, religious orientation of the majority of personalities and platforms that were the most deeply involved in the movement.

The consolidation, survival and crisis of Romanticism are the issues initially addressed in *Poesia catalana romàntica* (1965) and *Poesia catalana de la Restauració* (1966), which he would later revise and unify in *Antologia de la poesia romàntica* (1994) and expand in the corresponding chapter of the aforementioned *Història de la literatura catalana* (“La crisi del Romanticisme: la poesia”). There he would also spotlight Apelles Mestres, who had featured previously in two rigorous popular-style monographs (in the prologue to the anthology *Apelles Mestres, 1984*, and in the collaboration entitled “*El poeta*” in *Apelles Mestres (1854-1936)*, 1985). In particular, he also spotlighted Jacint Verdaguer in an extensive chapter and later continued to focus on him in an innovative way in benchmark studies which culminated in the publication of *Totes les obres of Verdaguer* (2003-2006, with Isidor Cònsul) and the extensive compilation of his own studies entitled *Llegir Verdaguer* (2014). Both poets, Mestres and Verdaguer, are considered representative of literary modernism from the turn of the century in “La poesia catalana i els inicis de la modernitat” (1999). This study confirms his shift years earlier towards studies of Modernism after “El Modernisme i les seves tensions” (1970), which was part of the programme involved in “historical realism”, whose most prominent historical-critical expressions came with *Poesia catalana del segle XX* (1963), written in conjunction with Josep M. Castellet. This was one of the early books of Edicions 62, which, according to, Enric Sullà, “offered [...] a rigorous and politically (progressive) historical schema in line with the age, and a generous anthology which also had ideological leanings (emancipatory, combative), yet which were not too bothersome”. This was most likely because, as also seen in *Literatura de postguerra* (1966), which includes an essay on “Vint-i-cinc anys de teatre”, and as Josep Murgades has written, “even in the most programmatic era of historical realism, Molas continued to draw from analytical and evaluative procedures other than the ones strictly stemming from the Marxist-leaning sociologism”.

The drive to study contemporary literature and the literature of his day could be seen in his teaching and criticism, which he contributed occasionally in *Serra d’Or* and *Destino*, and in a few magazines, as an activity involving analysis, guidance and the creation of states of opinion, and likewise as an antidote to the widespread conformity and self-complacency in some echelons of Catalan society which tended to forgive quality and rigour in some literature which was supposedly justified by patriotism and voluntarism. It also came in the literary collections and publishing projects that Molas envisioned or on which he consulted, such as “*Antologia Catalana*”, started in 1964 and made up of 100 titles from all times, which he co-supervised with Jordi Castellanos starting with number 73. This collection shifted the Noucentista literary hierarchy with the inclusion of authors like Robert, Mestres, Pin i Soler, Brossa and Zanné in literature, and Pi i Margall and Marià Cubí in the realm of ideas. Other examples include

the *Diccionari de la literatura catalana* (1979), which started in around 1965 with a team of direct partners who were basically and necessarily devoted to contemporary literature because it had a briefer tradition of studies; “Clàssics Catalans del Segle xx”, started in 1965 and featuring works by Riba, Villalonga and Arbó; and “Les Mil·lors Obres de la Literatura Catalana”, launched in 1978 following a much earlier project, and closed in 1996 with 125 volumes, which provided access to many works that had disappeared from the market and from everyday reading habits. In 1974, he founded the magazine *Els Marges*, which he directed until 1990. It was academic in inspiration but not exclusively university-focused, and it served as a much-awaited platform to spread the studies primarily by the new language professionals and, more regularly, literature professionals.

The movements and authors of the 20th century which he treated with special interest were the avant-gardes in general, visual poetry and Salvat-Papasseit, Dalí and Foix in particular, in studies like *La poesia catalana d'avantguarda. 1916-1936* (1983), *La crisi de la paraula. Antologia de la poesia visual* (2003, with Enric Bou) and *Les avantguardes literàries a Catalunya* (2005). And regarding many other authors, he kept publishing monographic studies on Riba, Pla, Espriu, Fuster, Rodoreda and Villalonga, which were included, along with many other stud-

ies, in the far-reaching systematisations of *Lectures crítiques* (1975), the two volumes of *Obra crítica* (1995 and 1999), *Sobre la construcció de la literatura catalana* (2010) and *Aproximació a la literatura catalana del segle xx* (2010). Literary reflection, critical notes and historical evocations, in extensive paragraphs or brief writings, often resembling aphorisms, appeared in “Fulls de dietari”, which he published occasionally in numerous brief extracts after 1976 and more extensively in *Fragments de memòria* (1997) and *El secret de la literatura* (2009).

He was a member of the Acadèmia de Bones Lletres since 1993. In 1998, he won the Prize of Honour in Catalan Letters, in 1999 he received the Cross of Saint George from the Generalitat, in 2002 the Medal of Cultural Merit from the Barcelona Town Hall and in 2003 the Gold Medal from the Generalitat.

On his own initiative, based on the trove of books and documents he had managed to amass, which he organised and worked on over the course of his lifetime and bequeathed to the Biblioteca Museu Balaguer, in 2012 the Aula Joaquim Molas was created through a partnership agreement between the Vilanova i la Geltrú Town Hall, the Universitat de Barcelona and the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona with the goal of stimulating academic research and the training of new researchers, particularly in 19th and 20th century literature.