



RESSENYA A VICENTE LLEDÓ-GUILLEM, *THE MAKING OF CATALAN LINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN TIMES*. CHAM, SWITZERLAND, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2018, 250 pp. ISBN: 978-3-319-72079-1.

REVIEW TO VICENTE LLEDÓ-GUILLEM, *THE MAKING OF CATALAN LINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN TIMES*. CHAM, SWITZERLAND, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2018, 250 pp. ISBN: 978-3-319-72079-1.

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Through an innovative combination of glottopolitical, post-philological, and anthropological approaches to the analysis of texts, Lledó-Guillem painstakingly takes the reader on a linguistic journey to explain the ideological and political making of Catalan linguistic identity *vis-à-vis* other Romance «languages», especially Occitan. Besides the introduction and the conclusion, the book is strategically divided into two parts: «The Political Use of the Occitan Language by the Catalan-Aragonese Monarchy» (part 1) and «The Interpretation of the Catalan-Occitan Relationship in the Construction of the Spanish Empire» (part 2).

In the introduction Lledó-Guillem provides a masterful explanation of the originality of his study. Starting with the idea that the linguistic division of the Romance world is not the result of a natural evolution of the Latin language but the product of a specific ideological and political context, the author argues that the study of the Catalan-Occitan linguistic area is particularly relevant. Lledó-Guillem indicates that the originality of the book lies in two main aspects: first, the selection of five metalinguistic texts that have never been analyzed from a linguistic-ideological point of view. Second, the cutting-edge glottopolitical and post-philological approaches to these texts in which special attention is paid to examples of historical linguistic discontinuity and rupture with the use of important concepts such as «iconization», «fractal recursivity», «erasure», «authenticity», and «anonymity», which have been defined by North-American linguistic anthropologists.

Chapter 2 analyzes Bernat Desclot's description of the Battle of Castellammare (1284) between the Catalan-Aragonese and the French navies in his *Crònica* (ca.1288). Lledó-Guillem argues that this is the first known instance in which the existence of Catalan as an independent language is naturalized. The French lose the battle because they are unable to understand a warning in Catalan: «*Aquesta galea és esfondradal*» (This galley is sinking!). This event supports the independence of Catalan *vis-à-vis* the *langue d'oïl* (French) and the *lenga d'oc* (Occitan). As far as the Occitan language is concerned, the main difference between Catalan and Occitan lies in the fact that Catalan represents a unique political power, the monarchy of the Crown of Aragon, whereas Occitan is politically neutral, since it may support both the Catalan-Aragonese and the French monarchies. According to Lledó-Guillem, Desclot's description of the Battle of Castellammare was a response in Catalan to the poem «*Nostre reys, qu'es d'onor ses par*» («Our King, who is the epitome of honor») written in Occitan by Bernat d'Auriac in support of the King of France during the French invasion of the Crown of Aragon in 1285.

In chapter 3, Lledó-Guillem focuses on the *Sermó* in Occitan that appears in Ramon Muntaner's *Crònica* (ca. 1328). While the existence of this poem in Occitan in a chronicle written in Catalan could be explained by the traditional use of Occitan for courtly poetry in the Catalan-speaking lands until the fifteenth century, Lledó-Guillem demonstrates very convincingly that the use of Occitan had important political and ideological connotations. On the one hand, the Occitan language was used in this poem to exalt all the political identities that supported the Catalan-Aragonese invasion of Sardinia in 1323. On the other hand, the use of Occitan in the *Sermó* highlights the political neutrality of the Occitan language and emphasizes the historical and political continuity of the Catalan language, which always supports the Catalan-Aragonese monarchy without exception.

Chapter 4 describes the poetic ceremony that took place after the coronation of the Catalan-Aragonese King Alfonso the Benign (r. 1327-1336) in Zaragoza in 1328. In this poetic celebration Catalan and Occitan are considered to be two varieties of the same language in a diglossic relationship. In this ceremony, Occitan is the High Variety that is used to exalt the King and the Catalan-Aragonese monarchy, whereas Catalan is the Low Variety used to describe and provide the

stage directions of the celebration. Lledó-Guillem explains that the description is important from a linguistic and political point of view for two reasons: first, it represents an episode of linguistic discontinuity in the historical description of the Catalan and Occitan languages because, contrary to the previous two texts analyzed in the book, Catalan and Occitan are not two different languages but two varieties of the same language. Second, Ramon Muntaner supports a diglossic linguistic ideology versus standardization, which goes against other passages of his chronicle. Lledó-Guillem argues that the reason for this ideological change lies in the rivalry between the Catalan-Aragonese monarchy and the Aragonese nobility and citizens, who wished to limit the power of the King.

In chapter 5, Lledó-Guillem starts the second part of the book with the translation of the work of the fifteenth-century Valencian poet Ausiàs March (1400-1459) carried out by the Portuguese poet Jorge de Montemayor in 1560. Lledó-Guillem explains how the editions, translations, and commentaries of the work of the Valencian poet during the Early Modern Period could either support the linguistic continuity of the Catalan language since the Middle Ages or underscore that in the Middle Ages Catalan and Occitan were the same language: Limousin. This Limousin language would have given rise to two different languages in the Early Modern Period: Catalan and Occitan. Supporting the linguistic discontinuity of the Catalan language implied accepting the need to consider Castilian the legitimate Hispanic language of the Spanish Empire. In contrast, emphasizing the historical continuity of the Catalan language since the Middle Ages supported the project of a multilingual and less centralist Spanish Empire.

Chapter 6 focuses on a poem by Jaume Orts entitled «Soneto en una lengua que es juntamente valenciana y castellana» («Sonnet in a language that is both Valencian and Spanish») (1600). Lledó-Guillem explains how the Valencian variety was described in the Iberian Peninsula during this period of time. Some writers argued that the Valencian variety had been a different language from Catalan since the sixteenth century. Others considered it a Catalan variety that had been corrupted by Castilian, and was less pure than the varieties used in the Principality of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. However, Lledó-Guillem provides a very sophisticated alternative by demonstrating that the existence of the so-called *Apitxat* Valencian, could be interpreted as proof that Catalan and Occitan were the same language and that linguistic mixture was positive. Furthermore, *Apitxat* Valencian represented the best opportunity that this Catalan-Occitan language had to become an anonymous language that could integrate different identities.

In his conclusion, Lledó-Guillem argues that the discipline of Philology can benefit from the two methodological approaches that have been used in this book: Glottopolitics and Post-Philology. The study of how linguistic ideologies are undoubtedly political and the focus on episodes of discontinuity and rupture in the study of the history of language are extremely relevant to understand not only the cultures of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, but also the present day. For example, the author shows how the issue of linguistic discontinuity in the Catalan-speaking lands studied in chapter 6 had political implications in the twenty-first century when the European

Constitution was translated into the different official languages of Spain in 2004. Finally, Lledó-Guillem shows how the independence referendum that took place in Catalonia on October 1, 2017, invites us «to question the relevance of the study of the Catalan and Iberian linguistic past» (218).

In short, I find Lledó-Guillem's monograph to be brilliant, innovative, and groundbreaking. His novel approach has given insight and has further sparked the on-going debate into how one should view the naming and classification of the so-called Romance languages. Moreover, because of its clarity, depth, and interdisciplinary approach, this book is a must-have to both students and scholars in Medieval and Early Modern political, cultural, and intellectual history, European studies, Romance languages, historical sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology. It is a work that will be referenced and cited for years to come.