

POMPEU FABRA



Figura 1: Photo taken on March 4, 1933 of Pompeu Fabra during the Atenea cultural association of Figueres on a day trip to Port de la Selva in Alt Empordà, Catalonia.

Pompeu Fabra was born in 1868 in Gràcia, years back a separate town but now part of Barcelona. He was the youngest of thirteen siblings, ten of which died. He was a hard-working student and ended up taking a degree in industrial engineering.

However, his vocation turned out to be a different one: to study Catalan and standardise it. The meticulous engineer devoted himself passionately to studying Catalan, in order to retrieve it from the disuse into which it had fallen and bring it up-to-date.

At that time the Catalan language and its literature were going through a process of recovery - as they had been since the second half of the 19th century. Fabra contributed many works, all of them of great importance: *Normes ortogràfiques (Spelling Rules)* of 1913 and *Gramàtica catalana (Catalan Grammar)* of 1918. However, his most significant work was *Diccionari general de la llengua catalana (General Dictionary of the Catalan Language)*, published in 1932.

Pompeu Fabra's interests ranged from hiking and sport (he was chairman of the Tennis Association of Catalonia) to the opera season at the Liceu theatre in Barcelona. He was highly renowned and enjoyed great popularity among the Catalan public.

He was old when he left Catalonia in February 1939, at that time he was seventy years old. He had to go into the exile since the beginning of Franco's dictatorship, leaving behind his home, belongings, papers and books. It is said that a general threw his entire personal library from the balcony and then burned all his books. During months, he was moving from town to town, he stayed in Illa, Montpellier, Perpignan and finally he established in Prada where he lived for 6 years. He died on 25 December 1948 in Prada, in northern or French Catalonia.

Nowadays, there is a university in Barcelona named after this man who laid down the standards of the modern Catalan language. Also, there are streets and squares around Catalonia named after him.

Figura 1:

Fotografia de Carles Varela i Burch]. (Figueres. 1933). Wikipedia:
https://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pompeu_Fabra_i_Poch