

# THE NORTH AMERICAN CATALAN SOCIETY

AUGUST BOVER BARCELONA UNIVERSITY, NACS SPOKESMAN,  
ASSOCIATE/EDITOR OF THE "CATALAN REVIEW"

**A**n outstanding example of the spectacular international growth that Catalan language and literature studies have undergone in the last few years is the case of North America. With the pioneering work of Josephine de Boer, we can say that Catalan studies started in the USA in the thirties. In the fifties, Joan Coromines, through his language courses at the University of Chicago, started to form a small group of young specialists, thus opening the way for the creation of a Provençal-Catalan section within the annual congress of the Modern Language Association (MLA) in 1958. This initial nucleus was reinforced, during the sixties, by a group of European teachers—mainly Catalans—who settled in North America. Professorships at different North American universities alternated between them, and this gave rise to the expansion in Catalan studies mentioned above. The resultant increase in students and investigators of Catalan affairs made it possible for North American lovers of Catalonia to take on large scale projects during the seventies. In 1974, Joseph Gulsoy and Josep Maria Solà-Solà started work on *Catalan Studies, Volume in Memory of Josephine de Boer* (Barcelona, 1977), in which a score of researchers collaborated. Not long after this, Josep Roca-Pons and Albert Porqueras-Mayo planned a conference on Catalan studies which, amongst other things, was to serve as the basis for the foundation of an association. After intensive preparations, the I Conference of Catalan Studies in North America was held from 30 March to 1 April 1978 at the University of Illinois, Urbana, organized by A. Porqueras-Mayo, Spurgeon



Baldwin and Jaume Martí-Olivella, under the presidency of Antoni M. Badia i Margarit. The meeting was a great success, a hundred people took part and some forty papers were presented—see *Estudis de llengua, literatura i cultura catalanes. Actes del Primer Col·loqui d'Estudis Catalans a Nord-Amèrica. Urbana, 1978* (Montserrat, 1979)—and, as planned, at one of the sessions, the North American Catalan Society was founded. Better known as the NACS, the society's "principal objective is to encourage Catalan culture and promote the teaching of Catalan language and culture in the teaching establishments of North America", that is to say, the United States and Canada. A three-monthly newsletter keeps members informed and the organization holds a regular congress, normally every two years.

On 17-19 April 1979, the second of these meetings was held at the University of Yale, New Haven, Connecticut—see the *Actes del Segon Col·loqui d'Estudis Catalans a Nord-Amèrica. Yale, 1979* (Montserrat, 1982). As at Yale, continuing the tendency to expand and improve, the third conference was held at the University of Toronto, Ontario (Canada)

from 15 to 17 April 1982—*Actes del Tercer Col·loqui d'Estudis Catalans a Nord-Amèrica. Toronto, 1982. Estudis en honor de Josep Roca-Pons* (Montserrat, 1983). Later came the conference sponsored by the Catholic University of America, in Washington, from 31 May to 2 June 1984—*Actes del Quart Col·loqui d'Estudis Catalans a Nord-Amèrica. Washington D.C., 1984. Estudis en honor d'Antoni M. Badia i Margarit* (Montserrat, 1985)—, and the conference held from 18 to 21 March 1987 at the University of South Florida, in Tampa, with an extension in the city of St. Augustine, where an important Minorcan colony was established in the eighteenth century. The minutes of this fifth conference will appear shortly.

But the NACS, now firmly consolidated, has not stopped at this, but has taken on another great challenge: the publication of a magazine. After the necessary preparation, the *Catalan Review* was presented at the *Generalitat de Catalunya* in July 1986. The first number was a magnificent monographic volume (366 pages) of homage to the poet J. V. Foix. With the subtitle "International Journal of Catalan Culture", the *Catalan Review* is a bilingual publication—Catalan-English—which comes out twice a year. At the time of writing, the third number is being printed.

At present, with over three hundred members, the NACS—which can already boast an excellent record—is approaching its tenth anniversary, working on the consolidation of the *Catalan Review* and on the preparation of its sixth scientific conference, to be celebrated in 1989, probably in Canada again. ■