

# A question of names

Catalonia  
1962



# Cataloguing data

**Title (English)**

A question of names

**Title (original language)**

Qüestió de noms

**Author(s) (Person(s))**

Joan Fuster i Ortells

**Date and place**

1962, Barcelona

**Region(s)**

Catalonia

**Language(s)**

Catalan

**Type of document**

Policy proposal

**Reference Code**

CAT0004

**Keywords**

Catalan countries, Països Catalans, catalan language, nation, nationalism

## Context

During the 1950s, Franco's Spain gradually abandoned its autarchy thanks to a technocratic elite who favoured economic development and integration of the Spanish economy into the international capitalist market. The economic growth which the country experienced during the 1960s accentuated a progressive social transformation whose protagonists were the new generations who had not been around at the time of the Civil War and who would, over time, embrace the struggle for democracy.

## Abstract

Joan Fuster was one of the most important Catalan intellectuals of the 20th Century. "A Question of Names" defended the idea that the Valencia region, the Principality of Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and Northern Catalonia all form part of the same nation, since they share the same history, culture and language. He proposed adopting "The Catalan Countries" as a name which would express this national unity.

*The article “Valencia in the Integration of Catalonia”, published in 1950 in La Nova Revista (during exile in Mexico) was the seed for a political project that Joan Fuster cultivated throughout the decade. In the article, Fuster reflected on our peculiarities and the things we have in common, while rebuking a view of Catalan self-determination that, up to that moment, had disregarded the totality of the nation. This seminal proposal matured for a dozen years, until, in 1962, he published A Question of Names, which contained the quintessence of Fuster’s thinking, encapsulated in the phrase: why we are a people known as the Catalan Countries.*

## I

The problem, essentially, arises in relation to the Balearic Islands and the Valencia Region, the two distinct “realms” created by command of James I (the conqueror). It is evident that, in principle, both the “Valencians” and the “Mallorcans” should find it totally natural to call themselves “Catalans”. An ardent reality, of a primarily ethnic variety, demonstrates this: both of these peoples, at the time of the founding of their respective “realms”, were indeed “Catalans”. They were people from the Principality exported into the new territories. The Saracen population having been subdued or displaced, it was necessary to implant a Christian society to substitute them. This was carried out through massive immigration largely from Catalonia. As far as the Balearic Islands are concerned, there is no doubt whatsoever. The conquest of the archipelago was a Catalan enterprise and the islands were repopulated (in basic statistical terms) exclusively by Catalans.

In the case of the Valencia Region, there was ample participation by people from Aragon, but it was the Catalans who fundamentally contributed to the successful Christian repopulation of the region. The coastal counties and some of the interior counties, along with the capital of the “realm”, were unquestionably Catalanised. These people, hegemonic in all aspects (cultural, demographic, political and economic), assured the essential Catalan nature of life in the Valencia area. “They are true Catalans, and we converse in the most beautiful Catalan speech in the world”, wrote Ramon Muntaner of the inhabitants of the South, on the border with Murcia.

Undoubtedly, James I had powerful reasons for making the Balearics and the Valencia Region into autonomous “states”; although it is not my intention to discuss them in detail here. If the King had acted differently, the Balearics might have become an integral part of the Principality, but perhaps Aragon would then have absorbed the Valencia Region. Nevertheless, the dividing of the area into distinct “realms”, in no way alters the “ethnic reality” to which we are alluding. The process of Christian repopulation was slow. In fact, in the Valencia Region, it could not be said to have concluded until the end of the 15th century. A constant, or nearly constant, immigration of people from the Principality built the new Valencian society, as it had the Mallorcan. So, the “Catalan” origins of the Valencians and Mallorcans was not a simple remote statistic linked to the

origin of the “realms” within the, let us say, epic episodes of the Conquest and the resulting settlements when the land was shared out. There was, in addition, the recurring incorporation of men and women from Catalonia who consolidated the Catalan structure of these regions. The feeble political frontiers separating the Principality from its two filial “realms” did not interrupt the continuity of the common human background: a continuity (or unity) of language, collective aims, culture and ways of life; and everyone was aware of this.

At the same time, people from the Principality, the Balearics and the Valencia Region were known throughout Mediaeval and Renaissance Europe as “Catalans”. They formed a socially and linguistically compact block and a foreigner would not have been able to distinguish our variations among the “realms”. When all is said and done, any variations were evened out by the all-embracing sovereignty of the Kings of Aragon. Neither the Valencians, nor the Mallorcans were recognised internationally as anything other than “Catalans”. They were known as “Catalans” and would introduce themselves as such. We could cite the famous example of the Borgia family from Xativa. “O Dio, la Chiesa Romana in mani dei catalani!” (Oh God, the Roman Church in the hands of Catalans) exclaimed the Italians on observing how that tribe of cunning Valencians successfully infiltrated the Papacy and other high offices of the Church. Pope Calixtus III himself claimed to be “Papa catalanus”, one more indication, among others, of a glorious moment for the “Catalan Nation”: “Magna profecto est gloria nationis catalanae diebus nostris...” (Great indeed are these days of glory for our Catalan nation...) There were even times, when the expression “Catalan” was applied to all of the subjects of the Aragon crown, including the Aragonese. However, it was the identity implied by a common language and lineage which made Mallorcans, Valencians and Catalans appear to be a single people. As a single people they appeared in the eyes of other nations and as a single people they felt themselves when contrasted with neighbouring peoples: in short, they were “Catalans”.

This was true not only when comparing themselves with neighbouring peoples. There was a time when all Catalan speakers (or if you prefer all Catalanophones) were happy to call themselves, and be called, “Catalans” at home. An expert would have a useful and benevolent assignment researching exactly how long and under what conditions there was unanimity under the name. It was logical that, given the juridical and administrative division of the “realms” (the “realms” of Mallorca and Valencia, apart from the “Principality of Catalonia”) more specific names would start to be used alongside that of “Catalans”. It was logical and necessary that the “subjects” of the “Kingdom of Valencia” would call themselves “Valencians” and those of the “Kingdom of Mallorca” would refer to themselves as “Mallorcans”. It was inevitable in the circumstances. However, they were nominations that were primarily “political” and which, at first, were not in contradiction with the national generic name. They could not be avoided. The existence of “realms” brought with it the inevitability of local designations. While to foreigners we were all “Catalans”, within the borders of the Crown’s jurisdiction it was necessary to make discriminations. The unity of the Catalans could be broken down then into three “citizenries” (if I may be permitted to use this modern term) and each “citizenry” received a special name.

From this perspective, therefore, there arose “Valencians”, “Mallorcans” and “Catalans”. In fact, there would be some Catalans who would be more “Catalans” than others; because those born in the Principality of Catalonia (the original Catalans) conserved the name “Catalans”. Obviously, this led to the hazardous beginnings of later confusion. The word “Catalan” became ambiguous: it could be used to refer either to the whole, or to one of the parts. This was an ambiguity loaded with uncomfortable consequences. The “one sole people” that the Catalan speakers of the early Middle-Ages felt and knew themselves to be ran the risk of becoming unsatisfactorily “nameless”. One form or another of distinctiveness would soon arise as a hindrance; and the risk got worse. In Valencia and Mallorca a regional patriotism began to develop, as it did in the Principality itself. The different “state” organisations encouraged it. In addition, within the “realms”, situations that were favourable to the growth of such sentiments began to be produced thanks to an obvious mechanism: the need to contrast themselves with the Principality. Mallorca even experimented with the adventure of its own independent dynasty thanks to the testament of James I (which would be brought to an end by the military might of Peter the Ceremonious). In the fourteenth century, the Valencia Region experienced a notable economic and social lenitude, which was strengthened in the fifteenth century and which was partly due to the incipient decadence of the Principality. Calling oneself “Mallorcan” or “Valencian”, after all that, implied a certain pride. Its repercussions were predictable.

It was not the unity, but the consciousness of the unity of Catalan speakers that became compromised. By identifying more with the regions, the generic name lost its power to innervate. It would be a man from Girona, Brother Francesc Eiximenis, who would precisely formulate the first expression (very early on indeed - in 1383) of Valencian distinctiveness. Eiximenis says of the “Valencian people” that “...they had come or hailed from Catalonia, for the most part, or the adjoining lands, but they were not known as Catalans, but rather, by special privilege they had their own name and were called Valencians”. This is the earliest example of a differentiation between “Valencians”, “Mallorcans” and “Catalans”; all previous instances of nomenclature maintained the three regional branches united. From the moment that the inhabitants of the Principality were known, by antonomasia, as “Catalans”, it became easy to counterpoise the old denomination with “Valencians” and “Mallorcans”. The road to intra-national dissidence was now open. An uber-name (not derived from “Catalonia” or “Catalans”) might have stopped the dispersion. Unfortunately, no such name or names were coined. Nor was the era mature enough to face the difficulty, or appreciate its long-term consequences. It would be anachronistic of us to regret this lack. When all is said and done, if the common name was not devalued or avoided and no other proposed to substitute it, this was because the people of the time felt no necessity to do so. Some chronological details would illuminate the evolution of the problem.

Despite everything, “Valencians” and “Mallorcans” continued to refer to themselves as Catalans. With a little bit of patience, one could draw up an abundant anthology of historical and literary texts that demonstrate this. It would be worth trying. I will limit myself here to just a few examples, which

are particularly significant for their dates. In 1417, in writing his “Dispute with the Ass”, Brother Anselm Turmeda said of himself (here I quote the passage in the French version of the work, since the original is lost) that he “est de nation cathalaine et nay de la cité de Mallorques” (is of the Catalan nation and was born in the city of the Mallorcans). During the war between “citizens” and “outsiders” in the reign of Alfons the Magnanimous, and also in Mallorca, Jaume Cadell, a leader of the “citizens” party, said: “Think that we are all Catalans, renowned all over the world for being loyal vassals of our Lord and King...” The words of Calixtus III, previously quoted, are undeniably an important reference from the Valencia Region. Even in 1539, when the first edition of the poems of Ausiàs March (with a translation by Baltasar de Romani) was published in Valencia, the cover of the book claimed “that most famous philosopher and poet” was “a Valencian Gentlemen of the Catalan nation”. Nor was this elemental link forgotten in the Principality. The Councillors of Barcelona, in 1456, celebrated the canonisation of the Valencian Friar Vicent Ferrer, noting that the new saint was “of our nation”. I insist that all of these examples, and a lot more that could be added, should be laid out with painstaking chronological precision, in order to trace the trajectory of the duration of the use of the term “Catalan” in its general, inclusive application. However, I believe it will be relevant to remember here what Gaspar Escolano wrote in 1610. This virtuous Valencian chronicler states: “As it was populated, since its conquest, almost wholly by the Catalan nation and took its language from that source, and the two provinces have been adjacent and together, for more than three hundred years, those from this kingdom (Valencia) have been known as Catalans, without foreign nations making any distinction whatsoever between Catalans and Valencians”. And he adds that this lasted: “until a hundred years, or a little more after the Catholic King Ferdinand of Aragon had united his crown with that of Castile, when each of these nations (“Valencians” and “Catalans”) drifted apart as if feeling the loss of their joint head and started going their separate ways”.

There is no doubt that Escolano was right. After the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic, “Catalans”, “Valencians” and “Mallorcans” started going their separate ways. Previously, the difference in names had not affected the unity of the Catalan speaking people. Although the term “Catalan” was ambivalent, it was not undervalued. We have just seen this. After Ferdinand the Catholic, things changed; the prestige of the Monarchy introduced supra-regional concepts and denominations that were no longer strictly based on our collective identity. For us Catalans, this led to a period of “decadence” in which “each of these nations” did, effectively, “drift apart”. A distance grew between “Valencians”, “Mallorcans” and “Catalans”. The name “Catalans” started to seem inappropriate to Valencians and Mallorcans. Our common language underwent a marked dialectal separation, which, by directly affecting our most “invisible” unifying element, led to the appearance of idiomatic “differentiating facets” capable of being interpreted as national discrepancies. But naturally, the memory of this previous unity did not simply go up in smoke, not by a long chalk. We can still find affirmations such as the following, made by Bishop Josep Climent in 1766, when he took up the mitre of Barcelona: “In fact, Valencia could be called a colony of Catalonia; almost all of us Valencians are of Catalan origin, and, although there are some small differences, the same customs and the same language are

shared by the inhabitants of both provinces”. However, in reality, it was a sense of dispersion that came to dominate. Now that “Catalans”, “Mallorcans” and “Valencians” were no longer united, they ceased to recognise themselves as “one sole people” (whether with one or three names) but rather as three “fraternal peoples” with rather more distant links, especially in the case of Valencians and Mallorcans with respect to the “Catalans”.

This regional individualism slowly fossilised between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this respect, it is illuminating to examine opinions held by experts from those centuries with regard to the language spoken there. Accentuating dialectal variations in each region, they attempted to justify categorising them as different languages. Although, in the fourteen-hundreds, writers in Valencia had tended to call the Catalan language “Valencian”, this had never been with the intention of proclaiming the existence of a distinct local variant, much less a variant that was independent of that in the Principality and the Balearics. However, after 1500, this intention can be seen. Valencians start making claims about a “Valencian language” and the Mallorcans a “Mallorcan language” that is separate from the “Catalan language”. One piece of evidence, though, remains intact: the ancient language, used in mediaeval documents and manuscripts, which had been the sole common language of “Valencians”, “Catalans” and “Mallorcans”. Due to an aberrant philological confusion, the men of the “Decadence” believed (at least many of them) that old Catalan was “Limousin” (North Occitan), the language of the troubadours. The use of the term “Limousin” to describe Mediaeval Catalan came to be a convenient expedient for avoiding local susceptibilities. The “regionalisation” of the name “Catalan” was substituted by the false use of “Limousin” to refer to the language. Essentially, this was still a way of affirming the unity of Catalan speakers: a retrospective unity, but one which still carried weight in the cultural tradition of each of our regions. The three modern “languages” (“Catalan”, “Mallorcan” and “Valencian”) were seen as direct descendants of “Limousin”, and this relegated them to having a diaphanous parentage. However, the quotes above from Escolano and Bishop Climent clearly demonstrate that an awareness of the unity of the language plainly continued.

During the Catalan Renaissance, a more radical and restrictive review of the criteria emerged. The revival of the more cultured status of the vernacular led, simultaneously in all the regions where Catalan is spoken, to the overcoming of the different dialects notion and consequently to a return to the unitary idea of our historical beginnings. Or at least this applied to the more literary aspects. Over time, it would not only be the unity of the language that would spread among the “Valencians”, “Mallorcans” and “Catalans” continuing these efforts at a Catalan Renaissance, a deeper and more widespread unity, which had been eclipsed up until then, resurfaced amongst the civic reflections of our people. It was the fact of being and feeling “one sole people” that was put forward as a presupposition and a project for the future. It does not matter, now, that this project be shared by more or less extensive nucleuses throughout the Principality, the Balearics and the Valencia Region. What is important is that there are “Mallorcans”, “Valencians” and “Catalans” who have taken on this vision and this responsibility. It is beyond the remit of this article to analyse

the political and social causes that have determined the emergence of this idea. It is enough to know that it exists. The question of names now emerges with renewed acuity. Localised nomenclature was, for a start, an obstacle to cultural considerations: the indigenous language and literature should share a common denomination. The amusing mirage of “Limousin” was dispersed by philologists and historians: the standard terms became “Catalan language” and “Catalan literature”. Although regional designations had to be maintained, because they corresponded to evident sociological realities, the time had come to restore a common appellation that could embrace the whole of the Catalan speaking peoples. The obvious answer was to restore the name “Catalan”, which had initially borne that sense. However, it was not easy to get rid of a situation in four days that had become entrenched over four centuries. Particular distinctions represent prejudices that are difficult to dispose of. Nor can we forget (naïveté apart) that these are not accidental: there are particularisms because there are particularities. It is with this point that our task today begins.

## II

Prejudices, it has been stated. All of these revolve around the word “Catalan”. From the fifteenth century onwards, “Catalan” meant exclusively a person or thing from the Principality. The common assignation (I repeat) became regionalised and lost the general character demonstrated by the pen of Ramon Munatner, accepted by Brother Amselm Turmeda and which had given such pride to Pope Callixtus III. And these localisms were held onto. On the one hand, in the Valencia Region and the Balearics, Majorcans and Valencians seem reluctant to embrace a denomination such as “Catalans”, which no longer has the generic value of its origins for them, but has taken on a specific regional application to an area that is not part of their lands. On the other hand, in the Principality, the term “Catalan” has also acquired a more restrictive currency. In the best case scenario, and always in the Principality, it is common to see the term “Catalan” being employed with exactitude when speaking of the language and literature. However, when referring to economic, social or political history, and even to some other facets of culture, it is seldom used in the Balearics or the Valencia Region and only in the Principality is it used to refer to the nation and its people. Particularism then, exists everywhere. It has become a kind of automatic bias or mental block for all parties concerned.

Indeed, the truth is that, as far as the Balearics and the Valencia Region are concerned, it would seem that soon the attitude will be nothing less than what I have insinuated: a repugnance towards the name. The name, but not the unity. In 1875, Constantí Llobart, one of the most tenacious members of the Valencian Renaissance, in a discussion with Careta i Vidal wrote: “So as not to offer opportunities for rivalries between the peoples who speak our language, we have always believed it more convenient to apply the word Limousin to the different branches which grew from the ancient tree planted in the Provençal of Limoges, before taking root in Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands”. Llobart was still being seduced by the Limousin theory about the origin of the

language. However, what is most interesting in his text is the possibility he offers of opting for an apparently supra-regional term “Limousin”, so as not to “offer opportunities for rivalries between the peoples who speak our language”. These presumed “rivalries” (particularisms) then, only really surface when it comes to “nomenclature”. In another attempt to get around the denomination “Catalan”, another Valencian, Nicolau Primitiu, invented the curious terms “Bacavès” to refer to our common language and Bacàvia to refer to the whole of the territory in which the language is spoken. All of these proposals obviously start from a preconception of our unity and only make sense as part of a unitary affirmation.

It is worth noting some other comments by Constantí Lombart, following on from the one I have quoted. “There is nothing strange,” he says, “in the language spoken throughout Spain being known as Castilian, because its origins lie in Castile. Thus, that which we speak today in the Limousin Lands, as Senyor Balaguer has called them, i.e. Catalonia, Valencia and Mallorca, should take the name of where it was born: Limousin, in imitation of what the Spanish have done with Castilian”. The parallel with the Spanish-Castilian case was not a bad one, but it flew in the face of the reticent localism of Valencians and Mallorcans. Lombart’s argument also fell down from a philological standpoint, since the language “which we speak today in the Limousin Lands” does not have its origin in “the Provençal of Limoges”, but rather in Catalonia. But the basic argument is sound and those presenting regionalist resistance to the denomination Catalan for our common language should remember that there is indeed a similar case already existing amongst us, that of Castilian, a language which conserves the name of the region in which it originated. Those who study romance languages throughout the world, who take no notice of our little local squabbles, still use the term Catalan to describe the language of Valencians, Mallorcans and “Catalans”. Beyond the philological field, the old international name for our people is regaining ground.

In the longer run, within the Catalan speaking areas, the revival of this name for our language will be bound to happen. When Father Antoni Maria Alcover changed the title of his dictionary from “... of the Catalan Language” to “Catalan-Valencian-Balearic”, he was probably bowing to background pressures that no longer exist today. Besides, “Catalan-Valencian-Balearic” was too stodgy a term to be viable outside of the title of a book. The words “Bacavès” or “Bacava” to refer to the language attempted to correct this defect and were constructed from the initial syllables of the words describing our regions. Obviously, these were artificial and the initiative had little chance of success. Coined in the Valencia Region, today they appear useless. It was amongst the valencians that they achieved any level of recognition (and for antiquated reasons). Resistance to calling the language “Catalan” has now abated and almost disappeared in recent years. It is surprising, therefore, that now, when the difficulty seemed to be surpassed, we are seeing a revival, and not only in Barcelona, of a similar effort. “Cabarovès” is the picturesque label that a propaganda pamphlet of “Criterion” has stuck onto the Catalan language (an extra syllable having been added so as not to exclude the Roussillon area). Salvador Espriu had already satirised these terminological follies by coining the word Rosalbacavès (adding yet another syllable to include the Catalan speaking Alguer region of Sardinia in the geographical-linguistic references).

So it is “Catalan language” and “Catalan literature” whether you like it or not. The whole “Bacavès” and “Cabarovès” debacle now seems nothing more than the last stand of dialectal particularism. From now on, the new generations of intellectuals from the Balearics and the Valencia Region should no longer be influenced by localist temptations. Looking at the current panorama of these regions, one thing is clear: there exists an emphatic rebuff to differential prejudices. We can see this in the vocabulary of new publications, in the attitude that the majority adopt when facing cultural and civic problems and in the determined concern to correct the wrong turns and lack of confidence displayed in a hundred years of indecisive Renaissance. Even beyond these activist groups, the majority of people no longer find it “shocking” to see the language designated “Catalan”. It did not take a lot of effort to achieve this. It has been enough that, in the newspapers, from public platforms, in books written by local authors, the expression “Catalan language” has been used quite naturally to refer to the local language. Regular use has ratified it. I am not saying that idiomatic particularism is now completely dead. But rather that today, it is often nothing more than a sad reminiscence that we can now place in quaint glass cabinets along with other evocative folklore.

However, apart from the name of the language, there is still the problem of a name for the peoples who speak it. “Limousin Country” was the proposal of Victor Balaguer. As we have seen, Constantí Lombart did not find the formula unacceptable. However, this formed part of the game of clichés and misunderstandings of the Renaissance. When the arguments backing the qualification of the language of Catalan speakers as “Limousin” became unsustainable, then “Limousin Lands” became, ipso facto, an unwelcome absurdity and the need to resignedly accept the term “Limousin Lands” disappeared. It is worth noting that it was symptomatic that, when seeking to give a “name” to the “nation”, the men of the Catalan Renaissance chose terms related to the language. No one could have objected; it was the logical choice, given that the language constituted the link which this romantic, cultured elite could experience more vividly first-hand. Forced to abandon the “Limousin” option, it was inevitable that they would turn to the precarious word: “Catalan”. In fact, from the first decade of the twentieth century there were already, in the Balearics and the Valencia Region, groups who put forward what soon became known as “Pancatalanism”. In the Principality, among some sectors of Catalan political leaders, the idea arose of an integral reconstitution of our collective personality. As far as the nomenclature was concerned, the most popular option was also the most natural: use the term “Catalonia” to describe all of the Catalan speaking people.

Obviously, the word “Catalonia” would currently beget specious difficulties. But it does not lack illustrious historical precedents in the acceptance that many now wish to revitalise. When Ramon Muntaner, in his Chronicle, described his return to Valencian lands, to get married with a local woman, he did not say he was going to “Valencia” or “the Kingdom of Valencia”, but rather to Catalonia. St Vincent Ferrer, addressing the people of the Valencian hinterland (the “Serrans”), reminded them that they lived “between Castile and Catalonia”. However, these precedents are sporadic and remote. If the name Catalans had achieved wide acceptance over centuries, the denomination “Catalonia” would never have had to compete with those of “the Kingdom of Valencia” or “the Kingdom of Mallorca”. There lacked

tradition therefore, with regard to the reintroduction of the name Catalonia with the wider implication of scope to which we refer. The amphibology was here even more vexing. "Catalonia" is, essentially, the Principality. One option to avoid this would have been to use "Greater Catalonia" to jointly describe the territories where Catalan is spoken. "Catalonia" would be the Principality; while "Greater Catalonia" would imply the totality of Catalan peoples.

This option was still premature. Perhaps (although it is not a viewpoint I necessarily share) the ideal option would not be to adopt the use of "Greater Catalonia", but simply to use Catalonia to designate our lands.

However, this aspiration must be adjourned sine die. Although, we should prepare the material and moral conditions in which one day this option might be feasible. That is why, at certain times, it is worth recommending using caution in the use of the word "Catalonia". We should make the greatest effort to reserve this wider and more integral use of the word for the future. That is why it is convenient to systematically employ the denomination "the Principality" when referring strictly to Catalonia. The Principality or, if preferred, simply "Catalonia, strictly speaking". In the end, this whole problem boils down to re-establishing an appropriated collective terminology. This implies that a victory over anachronous particularist prejudices has to be won by reiterating the chosen formulas and procedures, as well as by accustoming ourselves and others to using them methodically. We should not fool ourselves - it is simply a question of routine. To counter the routine created in the time of our disintegration as a people, we must create another routine which sums up our desire for reintegration. I am not saying the procedure will be quick, nor cosy. Nor must it ever be an artificial manoeuvre driven by minorities. The new routine, or habit, I propose, has to correlate with a large scale social evolution and will only be successful to the extent that this evolution comes about. What we can do, for the moment, is to foresee and facilitate the appropriate resources, so that this can all be accomplished synchronically and rigorously efficiently.

More apt than the option "Greater Catalonia" is that of "Catalan speaking countries". Or better still, "Catalan Countries", which has become widespread in the last ten years, a fact which, in itself, proves its viability. Catalan countries has, firstly, the advantage of concision and "normality". It also has the advantage that it provisionally maintains and embraces persistent traditional particularisms: and it is a plural. As I have said above, particularisms exist because there are particularities. Denying that within our deep-seated "unity as a people" there are no deeply felt regional nuances, would be stupid and suicidal. Right up to the present, history (and socio-economic structures) has marked us with a slightly distinct local "character". The "unity" that we represent incorporates and tolerates a perceptible diversity. It is logical that the name that we wish to be known by reflects this plurality, at the same time as it affirms our unity. That is why Catalan Countries is the most opportune term we can find. I am convinced it is not only the most opportune; I believe it is the only one which, in our current circumstances, could be used.

"Catalan Countries". Then, "Principality", "the Valencia Region", "the Balearic

Islands”, “Roussillon” and “Andorra”. It is probable though that there will be a few purists who, in the name of history and their personal nostalgia, will view some of these nominations with disgust. Why “Islands” and not “Kingdom of Mallorca”? Why “Valencia Region” and not “the Kingdom of Valencia” or “Valencia”? Why “Roussillon”, if the “veritable” Roussillon is nothing but a part of so-called “French Catalonia”? And why maintain “Principality” if we are leaving to one side the royal connections of other regions? I will not waste time justifying these solutions one by one (solutions which have entered into common written use and even into the everyday speech of many people); all I will say is this: that they are, when all is said and done, the most useful solutions from both a local perspective and from a community angle. Within the topic we are focusing on, the primary demand we need to satisfy is clarity. We should prefer unequivocal terms that get over a mass of confusions. Today, for example, saying “Valencia” to refer to the whole of the Valencia area risks rubbing up the wrong way the particularist sensibilities that provincialism has aroused in the people of the Alacant or Castelló areas; because particularism is inexhaustible and is not limited to regions. There is no doubt that we have to move within the space that existing historical and social determinants have left us. However, within them, we must ensure that we maintain and reinforce a feeling of integration. I believe that in order to achieve this, the most natural and suitable approach is that which I am about to underscore.

However, there will always be an ambiguous extreme. When we say “Principality” instead of “Catalonia” how will we distinguish the “Catalans” of the Principality from the “Catalans” in the rest of the Catalan Countries? This would appear to be the most intractable problem; the one which has raised, and is raising, the greatest scruples. Vicens Vives hinted at this on one occasion and, in fact, there is no reasonable way of avoiding it. From the start, it is worth ruling out any attempt to “invent” a new name for the people of the Principality; let us not be ridiculous. We must also reject the option of the artificial “Bacavès”, “Cabarovès” or “Rosalbacavès”. We have no choice, it seems, than to resign ourselves to the problem. While it is indispensable to speak of “Catalans” to distinguish them from the “Valencians”, or “Mallorcans”, or from the people of the Roussillon, the difficulty will persist. Historians, economists, politicians and geographers, however fond they are of the idea of Catalan Countries, must confront this reality every day. If one wishes to avoid the “regionalisation” of the term “Catalan”, then circumlocutions have to be employed or the word “strict” has to be added. “Strict Catalan” or “from the Principality” is all that can be said. This is a fact. However, in the final analysis, it is not too distressing an option.

We have the right to hope (however far off that hope now seems) that one day it will be enough to say Catalan to allude to our condition as one sole people, adding, when needed, the county of origin to localise a thing or person being talked about. We can dispel with the current “regions” and then only the county of origin and the general detail of the language and civil community will be important. Meanwhile, however, we must work with the conditions we have inherited and assist in their transformation through our efforts. There are more and more “Catalans” who have decided to do this and are working to achieve it. This authentic reconstruction that has begun is dependent on the will of all “Catalans”. It is perhaps the most ambitious attempt in our history as a people and also the frailest in terms of

the means at its disposal. Its success, in terms of the wide-ranging possibilities it encompasses, will depend on the resolve of all “Catalans” to make it work. We are confident that we are equal to the task and that we are capable of taking responsibility for it.

## Noteworthy points

Both the “Valencians” and the “Mallorcans”, at the time of the founding of their respective “realms” were nothing other than “Catalans” – people from the Principality exported into the new territories.

The political frontiers separating the Principality from its two filial “realms” did not interrupt the continuity of language, collective aims, culture and ways of life.

Valencians and Mallorcans began to develop a regional patriotism, as also happened in the Principality.

By identifying more with the regions, the generic name lost its power to innervate. An ubername (not derived from “Catalonia” or “Catalans”) might have stopped the dispersion.

Now “Catalans”, “Mallorcans” and “Valencians” would not wish to recognise themselves as “one sole people”, but rather see themselves as “three fraternal peoples”.

Mallorcans and Valencians seem reluctant to embrace a denomination such as “Catalans”, which no longer has the generic value of its origins for them, but has taken on a specific regional application.

More apt than the option “Greater Catalonia” is that of “Catalan speaking countries” and better still, simply “*Catalan Countries*”.

Catalan Countries has the advantage of concision and “normality”. It also has the advantage that it provisionally maintains and embraces persistent traditional particularisms and it is a plural.

There are particularisms because there are particularities. Denying that within our deep seated “unity as a people” there are no deeply felt regional nuances, would be stupid and suicidal.

It is simply a question of routine. To counter the routine created in the time of our disintegration as a people, we must create another routine which sums up our desire for reintegration.

The authentic reconstruction that has begun, in terms of the wide-ranging possibilities it encompasses, will depend on the resolve of all “Catalans” to make it work.

Diliname is a digital library dedicated to preserving, disseminating, and providing access to historical documents that shaped key moments of the XIX and XX century. It aims to offer historical context for contemporary political and institutional developments.

Discover new docs at [www.diliname.eu](http://www.diliname.eu)