

Archaeology and nationalism: The development of archaeology in Catalonia in the early twentieth century

Arqueologia y nacionalismo. El desarrollo de la arqueología en Cataluña a principios del siglo XX

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ABSTRACT

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the European states began to use archaeological research as a way to legitimize their political aspirations. In Catalonia, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the cultural movements of the Renaixença and Noucentisme called for a renaissance of Catalan culture that would underscore its distinctive nature vis-à-vis the Spanish state. This proposal was quickly followed by political demands for self-government and recognition of the Catalan language and its areas of influence. For instance, Enric Prat de la Riba, one of the main activists and ideologists of Catalan nationalism, used the results of the excavations of Empúries as the basis of his politics of difference. This paper explores the influence of nationalism on the organization of Catalan archaeology through an analysis of the political discourses of the leaders of the Regionalist League of Catalonia (Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya) and the archives of the History and Archaeology Section of the Institute of Catalan Studies (Institut d'Estudis Catalans).

KEY WORDS: Nationalism. Archaeology. Catalonia, Institute of Catalan Studies. Empúries.

RESUMEN

Después del Congreso de Viena (1815), los estados europeos comenzaron a utilizar la arqueología para legitimar sus derechos políticos. En este contexto, en la Cataluña de finales del siglo XIX, los movimientos culturales de la Renaixença y el Noucentisme promulgaron el renacimiento de la cultura catalana para crear y consolidar sus diferencias ideológicas con el estado español. Dicha propuesta se vió acompañada de una serie de exigencias políticas y de reconocimiento de la lengua catalana y de su área de influencia. Por ejemplo, Enric Prat de la Riba, uno de los principales activistas y pensadores del nacionalismo catalán, utilizó las investigaciones arqueológicas en la colonia griega de Empúries para fundamentar su política de la diferencia. Este artículo analiza la influencia del nacionalismo en la organización de la arqueología catalana a través de los discursos políticos de la Liga Regionalista Catalana y de los archivos de la sección de historia y arqueología del Instituto de Estudios Catalanes.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Nacionalismo. Arqueología. Cataluña. Instituto de Estudios Catalanes. Ampurias.

1. The influence of nationalism on the development of archaeology

For the Catalan nationalists of the end of the nineteenth century, the Cretan Revolt against Turkish occupation in 1897 and the subsequent granting of political autonomy under the protection of King George I of Greece was proof that within the framework of Europe it was possible to achieve greater levels of political sovereignty outside the jurisdiction of traditional states. On 10 March of that year, Antoni Rubió i Lluch and Enric Prat de la Riba, two leading intellectuals committed to the regeneration of Catalan nationalism, drafted a public letter of congratulation addressed to the Greek monarch, their *Message to H.M George I, King of the Hellenes*. Under the pretext of praising the king for his support for the Cretan cause against the domination of the Ottoman Empire, they made an impassioned defense of the Catalan national identity and the desire for self-government, while at the same time recalling the historical links between Greece and Catalonia.

The Catalan people received from the Greeks their introduction to culture; Empúries existed because of them, the earliest center of attraction of the Catalan race, powerful enough to spread its influence to the most far-flung regions of our national territory [...] today's Catalans will always send you testimony of their admiration for you and, with all our heart, we applaud your exceptionally just and heroic initiative in support of the Greeks of Crete [...] If Catalonia had a vote in any meeting of nations, now more than ever it would cast it alongside yours, since to our misfortune it has had knowledge enough of foreign domination for it to detest it whenever and wherever it may be encountered, whether by Turk or Christian". (Prat de la Riba 1987: 84-85)

This text reflects the ideology that took shape within the political and cultural movements of the *Renaixença* and *Noucentisme*. The *Renaixença*, which emerged in the 1830s and was fully consolidated by the 1870s, defended Catalan language and culture as a formula for the creation of a "national spirit". This project for the reassertion of Catalan identity called for the recovery of the nation's traditions, its archeology and its historical heritage. The movement lacked of a clear popular mandate, due to pressure from sectors of the bourgeoisie anxious to restrict it to the realm of culture and to halt its spread into the political sphere, but by the end of the nineteenth century Catalan society had for the most part adopted the aspirations of the nationalist

project. The start of the new century saw the birth of *Noucentisme*, a political and cultural movement seeking to provide Catalan people with symbols of identity that would serve as a basis for their political demands, including self-government. Language played an essential role in *Noucentisme's* political agenda: the revalorization of the catalan language was absolutely central to its definition of the catalan nation:

We wish for everyone what we would like for our own native land; we want the grand idea to triumph wherever people are suffering: we would like for all those peoples who speak Greek to live in freedom, just as we would like see a happy ending to our deeply-felt aspiration for all those who think and speak in the Catalan language to enjoy full autonomy (...) all those who make up a single nationality have a God-given right, a right that stands above the fanciful will of the legislators and princes of the land, to live together under the same political sovereignty (Prat de la Riba 1987: 90-91).

Catalan politicians, and especially Prat de la Riba (Figure 1), first looked to medieval times as a social and political ideal, a period of political independence, economic development, and social harmony. In the Middle Ages, the Crown of Aragon had managed to establish and maintain a position of economic and political predominance in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean and, even more significantly, it had expanded beyond its original geographical boundaries with the conquest of Majorca, Valencia and Murcia during the reign of Jaume I (1213-1276). The nineteenth-century Catalan nationalists idealized medieval times and used symbols from this period as sources of inspiration for the present. The restoration of the monastery at Ripoll towards the end of the century can illustrate this point. The monastery, built by the Count of Barcelona and national hero Wilfred the Hairy in 879, had enjoyed periods of splendor during the mandate of Abbot Oliba (1008-1046) as Catalonia's main center of worship but had been destroyed in 1835. In the same spirit, it was this search for the defining features of the nation that led Lluís Domènech i Montaner to publish *En busca d'una arquitectura nacional* (In Search of a National Architecture, *La Renaixença*, 31/10/1877), in which he wrote "only societies with no convictions, no definite ideas, which live by flitting between today's and yesterday's ways of thinking, with no faith in tomorrow, only these societies do not write their history in lasting monuments".

At the beginnings of the twentieth century, the references to Catalonia's medieval past were con-



Figure 1. Enric Prat de la Riba (1870-1917). Catalan politician. His proposals were the basis for the development of nationalism in Catalonia in the early twentieth century. President of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia (1914-1917).

sidered too recent to serve as proof of the distinctive nature of the country's origins. Catalan nationalists then sought to establish links with the Classical world, the cradle of European culture, as the basis for differentiating Catalonia culturally from Spain. The Greek narrative seemed to provide a Classical origin for Catalan culture and for a political identity far removed from the idea of a united mother country that the Bourbon restoration propounded as the basis of Spanish nationalism. The political support for the excavations at Numancia is an example of the nationalist agenda that Spain sought to restore following the military disaster of 1898 and the loss of Cuba and the Philippines. King Alfonso XIII's unveiling of the monument to the heroes of Numancia in 1905 exemplified this desire for unity and national cohesion. In response to this exaltation of Spanish virtues, many Catalan intellectuals and artists strove to capture the essence of their own culture in symbolic creations and literary texts. Aristides Maillol went to the *Salon d'Automne* in Paris (1905) to exhibit his sculpture *La Méditerranée*, which immediately became an icon of the *Noucentista* movement; Miquel Costa i Llobera recreated the era of Greek colonization in his poem *La deixa del geni grec* (The Legacy of Greek Genius, 1901); Eduardo Marquina composed the lyric drama *Emporion* (1906), which extolled the importance of Catalonia's Greek roots; Joan Maragall put the *Homeric Hymns* (1911) into Catalan

verse with the help of Pere Bosch Gimpera (Gracia Alonso 2010); Josep Puig i Cadafalch highlighted the Greek colonial presence in Catalonia in classes given as part of the *Estudis Universitaris Catalans* (1906); Joan Segalà produced the first translations into Catalan of Homer's *Iliad* (1908) and *Odyssey*, begun in 1908 but only published in 1927, and of Hesiod's *Theogony* (1910).

Practically all these works predated the excavations at the Greek colony of Emporion, which began in 1908. In a climate of recovery and promotion of literary and artistic Classicism, tangible proof was needed concerning the connection between Catalonia and Greece, and the Greek colony of Emporion (Empúries) – already well known, since it had been exploited throughout the nineteenth century to obtain archaeological materials – provided the perfect example of this connection.

All this suggests that the movement's initial philosophy was underpinned by a political interpretation of Classical sources rather than by a thorough knowledge of archaeology. Indeed, in his speech entitled *Hellenic Renaissance in Catalonia* marking the start of the 1916-17 academic year at the University of Barcelona, Joan Segalà drew a parallel between knowledge of Greek and the development of Catalan as a vehicle for scientific research and cultural expression:

We will see the prophecy made by Milá i Fontanals fulfilled, that Providence still has days of splendor and glory in store for the Catalan language. What Emilio Castelar used to say will then be true: that the Greek coasts of Catalonia still shine with the rays of the most beautiful of the ancient civilizations and that Barcelona is unequalled in uniting the work and trade of Tyre, the ingenuity and taste of Athens [...] Then Catalonia will have arrived at the fullness of time, since the cultivation of letters is the most obvious sign that a community linked by origin, language and territory has reached maturity. (Segalà 1916: 129-131).

Enric Prat de la Riba (1870-1917) was a politician and lawyer strongly committed to the Catalan cause. In 1891 he was named secretary of *Unió Catalanista*, and was a member of the commission that drew up the "Bases de Manresa" in 1892, the founding document of the movement for Catalan autonomy, and secretary of the *Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya* in 1901. In 1905 he wrote *La Nacionalitat Catalana* (1905), a project for self-government and the cornerstone of militant Catalan nationalism. The recognition and promotion of Catalan culture was a means of fighting Spanish centralism, which was intent on weakening the country's centrifugal

nationalist movements. Passed in 1906 by the Spanish government presided over by Segismundo Moret, the *Ley de Jurisdicciones* (the Jurisdictions Act) placed under military jurisdiction all public speeches or documents that could be considered as an attack to the symbols and the identity of Spain – including the unity of the nation, the flag, and the honor of the army. This legislation was a clear assault on the freedom of political expression in Catalonia at a time when social movements and political parties were uniting behind the banner of self-government. Years earlier, Prat had attacked the concept of state as represented by Spain, saying that “the Spanish state is an army of occupation living at a country’s expense: everyone takes what they can how they can” (Prat de la Riba 1987: 38). To define a historical discourse based in the Classical era, he turned to Iberian culture, equating the area it covered with the territories where Catalan was spoken in his time, and defining Iberians as one of the historic peoples of the Classical world, using the Greek colonization (obliging him to stress the importance of Empúries) as a link between the two as a decisive element in the creation of the national identity:

When, 500 years before Christ, the Phoenician traveller in whose steps Avienus followed, traced the coasts of the Sea of Sardinia, he encountered the Iberian ethnos, the Iberian nationality, stretching from Murcia to the Rhone, in other words from the Libyan-Phoenician peoples of eastern Andalucía to the Ligurians of Provence. Those people were our ancestors, that Iberian ethnos, the first link that History allows us to see of the chain of generations that have forged the Catalan soul. (Prat de la Riba 1993: 55).

Prat conceived of the Iberians as a social and cultural structure which had been able to endure successive occupations by the Carthaginian and Romans thanks to a deeply-rooted sense of identity characteristic of socially and culturally consolidated peoples. According to this thinking, an identity of this kind would always survive and reemerge stronger than ever once the forcibly imposed political superstructures had fallen. This interpretation served to explain the revival of Catalonia as a nation both after the fall of Rome and at the end of the Bourbon rule and it was used as a basis for nationalist theories by researchers like Pere Bosch Gimpera (Gracia Alonso, 2011), who developed it further in his mosaic-of-peoples model to explain the territorial structure in protohistory. To quote Prat:

But under the weight of Roman rule the spirit of the old nationalities remained strong, Roman unity existed only on the surface; deep down, all the different peoples lived on as they had always done [...] when Rome’s political power disappeared, these old forgotten peoples emerged into the light of History, each of them speaking their own language, with the old Iberian ethnos being the first, making the land ring to the sound of the Catalan language from Murcia to Provence, from the Mediterranean to the Sea of Aquitaine. The Ligurians, Gauls, Tartessians, Greeks, Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Romans had not gained even an inch of land from our people. The borders of the Catalan language were the same as those marked out for the Iberian ethnos by the earliest of the explorer-historians [...] the transformation of Latin civilization into Catalan civilization is a fact that in itself proves the existence of a Catalan national spirit. (Prat de la Riba 1993: 56).

Prat’s theories adapted the tenets of the *archeology of identity* developed in Europe after the Congress of Vienna. Gradually, the principles of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars replaced the concept of the absolute monarchy as the basis for political organization and gave rise to the idea of the nation-state. Under the premise ‘no past, no future’, states sought to legitimize their identity by studying the past and creating symbols of reference to enhance their social cohesion. Countries such as Sweden and Denmark, which did not appear in the Classical texts, looked at archaeological research as a way of validating their identity as countries. Elsewhere, in countries where written sources in Greek and Latin were available, references to heroic episodes from the past could be exploited in this search for legitimacy. In the nineteenth century, many national legends were used in this way: for example, Boudicca in Great Britain, the victory of Arminius and the Cherusci over the legions of Varus in Germany, and the resistance of the Gallic tribes led by Vercingetorix in Alesia in the France of Napoleon III. The process has been studied profusely in other regions of Europe (Díaz-Andreu & Champion 1996; Kohl & Fawcett 1995; Kohl, Kozelsky & Ben-Yehuda 2007; Díaz-Andreu 2007) though not in the Iberian Peninsula.

To give a historical dimension to his nation-building project, Prat turned to a work by Salvador Sanpere (1840-1915), written in 1878 and entitled *Orígens i fonts de la nació catalana* (Origins and Sources of the Catalan Nation). Sanpere, a Catalan politician and historian, had used references to Antiquity to define the roots of the Catalan identity,

people and race, and saw language as an indicator of racial purity.

If nationality reappears when the time and place are right, it must be said that this is due to the indigenous race not having died out: in this case nationality would not have been reborn but would have defined the element that makes it different. (Sanpere 1878: 46-47)

Prat also used the works of Josep Pella i Forgas (1852-1918), who, in his *Historia del Ampurdán. Estudio de la civilización de las comarcas del Nordeste de Cataluña* (History of the Empordà. A study of the civilization of the counties of north-east Catalonia), published in between 1881 and 1889, suggested a connection between native Catalan communities and groups of Sardinian seafarers. Pella defined the Catalan race on the basis of archaeological and ethnographic references, and at the same time defended both the territorial unity of the language and the existence of an immutable substrate that had endured despite immense social and political upheaval. Prat saw the relevance of these theories to his political ideas and drew on Pella's work to make the Greek-Phocaeen colony of Empúries a reference point for the collective past:

Although it may not have been a political unit, the town of Empúries, with the strength of attraction typical of great capitals, had become a center for various territories. Archeology has almost always located the traces of its influence within the borders of the Iberian ethnos, and the first treaty between Romans and Carthaginians set the southernmost limits for Rome and its allies, which included Empúries, in the region of Murcia, the southernmost limit of the Catalan language (Prat de la Riba, 1993: 57).

Prat's ideas fell on fertile ground. As the head of the *Diputació de Barcelona* (the Provincial Council) and the *Mancomunitat* (roughly, the Commonwealth) of Catalonia, his writings became the core texts of the nationalist political ideology and of the social and political resistance to the Spanish government and the State. Like-minded writers produced works for the general public, such as the novel *Ildaribal* (1915) by Adolf Maseras (1884-1939) and the tragedy *Indíbil i Mandoni* (1905) by Àngel Guimerà (1845-1924) a subject played again in a tragedy with the same title (1917), both of which glorified the Iberians' fight for freedom from Roman occupation. Guimerà's play was openly intended as a parallel to the modern-day political situation of the Catalans vis-à-vis Spanish political

power; it was an appeal to the people to join the struggle, as illustrated by the spirited speech that Mandonio's mother directs to the audience after her son has been executed:

What have you done, O race of many heroes?
/ Look! At what price did you sell yourself to
your executioners? / Awaken! Vengeance and
freedom! (Guimerà 1978: 1378-1379)

To help consolidate his ideas, Prat needed an institution that would oversee the historical research carried out and would present it to the world from the nationalist point of view; he also required material evidence in favor of the Classicist theories he supported. Prat was instrumental in three projects that would prove vital to the establishment of archaeology in Catalonia – the creation of the Barcelona Museums Board (1907), the foundation of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (the Institute of Catalan Studies, or IEC, 1907), and the organization of the archaeological excavations in Emporion (1908). In this context, archaeological research became a political matter.

2. Catalan archaeology in the second half of the nineteenth century

During the second half of the nineteenth century, archaeological investigations in Catalonia were run by the provincial Commissions for Historic and Artistic Monuments. Created in 1844, the commissions organized museums in each province and were managed by the Faculty Corps of Archivists, Librarians and Archeologists. Included within this system were the Provincial Museum of Antiquities of Barcelona in the Chapel of Saint Agatha of Sicily, established in 1867, run from 1879 onwards by Antonio Elías de Molins, and inaugurated in 1880; the Provincial Museum of Antiquities of Girona, created in 1870 and now home to large amounts of materials recovered from Empúries; and the Provincial Museum of Antiquities of Tarragona, established in 1874 and run by Buenaventura Hernández Sanahuja (1810-1891). Private scholars also contributed; for instance, Josep Serra i Campdelacreu (1848-1901) and the Vic Literary Circle, researchers of the Roman temple in the ancient city of Ausa (Vic), helped to set up the Episcopal Museum in 1891.

Hiking and mountaineering clubs were also helping to expand familiarity with the Catalan territory. Their visits and discoveries were reported in the journals of the *Associació Catalanista d'Excursions Científiques* (1876), the *Associació d'Excursions Catalana* (1878) and the *Centre Excursionista de*



Figure 2. Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867-1957). Catalan architect and politician. President of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia (1917-1924). Director of the excavations of Empúries (1908-1931).

Catalunya (CEC, 1890) and through the seasons of lectures held at the CEC's headquarters in the Roman quarter of the city, in a building which housed the temple of Augustus. These reports also appeared in hazte journals *La Renaixença* (1871-1898), the *Asociación Artístico Arqueológica Barcelonesa* (1891-1899), the *Revista Histórica Latina* (1874-1875) and the *Revista de Ciencias Históricas* (1887-1893) (Gracia Alonso & Cortadella 2007).

The success of the International Exhibition of Barcelona in 1888 encouraged the City Council to acquire a building that could be used for new exhibitions. Several projects were put forward led by the Commission for the Conservation of Park Buildings and the Promotion of Municipal Museums (1890) and the Special Committee for Libraries, Museums and Exhibitions (1891-1897), but it was the victory of Prat de la Riba's party, the *Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya*, in the municipal elections of 1901 that did most to promote the protection of Catalonia's historical and archaeological heritage. In March 1902 the City Council approved Francesc Cambó and Josep Puig i Cadafalch's proposal for the creation of a Museums and Fine Arts Board, and at the suggestion of Puig i Cadafalch, (figure 2) it was agreed in March 1906 that a joint organization

should be set up with the support of the Provincial Council. The Barcelona Museums Board officially came into being on 8 July 1907 and was given free rein to carry out archaeological excavations and scientific research and to purchase works of art.

3. The creation of the Institute of Catalan Studies (IEC) and the excavations at Empúries

Driven on by this interest in history and the influence of Greek culture, and by the nationalist ideology of Prat de la Riba, one of the Barcelona Museums Board's first decisions, taken on 1 October 1907, was to start excavations at Empúries. This settlement's scientific interest had already been demonstrated in studies by Josep Maranges i Marimón (1803), Francesc Jaubert de Passa (1823) and Joaquim Botet i Sisó (1879). In his maiden speech on entering the Royal Academy of Letters in Barcelona, in 1908, Botet i Sisó said: "rather than make conjectures or suppositions based on texts by ancient authors which say nothing specific about what I want to know (in reference to the founding date of Empúries) I believe it is more effective to turn to archaeology" (Botet 1908:15-16) Botet i Sisó strongly supported the excavations, though he distanced himself from Prat de la Riba's ideas. Additionally, Prat de la Riba's aim was not only scientific but political: throughout the study of Classical sources and materials obtained in unauthorized excavations he sought to support the ideological structure he had created. The results of this research, either displayed in museums or reported in journals, became the ideal vehicle for the construction of the Catalan identity:

In the Museums Board, when none of those men who so adored and delighted in archeology, when none of our friends except Puig i Cadafalch were willing to risk starting excavations because they doubted their success and feared the responsibility and possible ridicule, Prat de la Riba, a layman among the experts on the Board, did not hesitate for a moment, and with gentle insistence, which overcame all obstacles, he urged them determinedly, against clear opposition from the majority and against the personal convictions of almost everyone, to agree to have this work carried out, and they financed it and have continued to finance it as far as that is possible in our country. The results are clear. This man's truly extraordinary faith has been repaid. Once again it has been shown that love, when not blind, sees more clearly and augurs better than Science itself. This belief in the nationalist utility of history can also

be seen in the archaeological and historical character given in its early years to the Institute of Catalan Studies (Bofill 1910: 52-53).

In its founding charter of 1907, known as the Rules of Constitution, the Museums Board included the setting-up of a special committee for the excavations at Empúries. The choice of the site met with some opposition, due to the essentially national and non-scientific character of the work mentioned by Botet i Sisó, who rejected the supposed Greek influence on the cultural origins of Catalonia. The committee itself also hesitated; Josep Pijoan, keen to support research that had a certain scientific tradition, and a defender of the medievalist theory of the origins of Catalan art, advocated spending the available economic resources on studying the Romanesque murals. Puig i Cadafalch, who dismissed the importance of Greek colonization in the introduction to his *L'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya* (1907-1909), stressing in this same book the cultural backwardness of the native communities of the time and stating that the foundations of Catalan art should be dated to the Roman period, nonetheless supported Prat de la Riba and argued that excavations should be carried out to prove the veracity of the Classical texts, thereby becoming a propagandist for the importance of the Greek colony in his public speeches².

Prat de la Riba, Puig i Cadafalch and Jesús Pinilla comprised the committee for monitoring the fieldwork at Empúries. Manuel Cazorro Ruiz (1865-1935), a teacher at the provincial secondary school at Girona, led the excavation with the assistance of Emilio Gandía Ortega (1866-1939), curator at the Museum of Decorative Arts and Archeology. The sculptor Raimon Casellas i Dou (1855-1910) was commissioned by the Board and the IEC to study the fragments of a sculpture documented in 1909. Shortly afterwards, Casellas wrote:

Both those who like Señor Puig i Cadafalch had gone to Empúries driven by an idea as old as life itself, that of discovering the city described by ancient geographers and historians, and those who more than anything wanted items to be recovered that could fill the display cases at the Museum of Barcelona, were pleased when the excavations uncovered the first fragment of figurative sculpture on 19 August 1909 (Casellas 1911:285).

A few weeks after work began, the site was visited by Francesc Cambó i Batlle (1876-1947) one of the leaders of the Lliga Regionalista. The League's mouthpiece newspaper, *La Veu de Catalunya*, defined the main objective of the excavations as the

identification of the origins of the social and cultural structure of Catalonia during the Greek colonial presence. Abandoning (at least for the time being) the medieval era as the main point of reference, the newspaper recognized the success of the fieldwork, which it described as a "feast of walls"³.



Figure 3. Institut d'Estudis Catalans (1910). Its headquarters was located in today's Palau de la Generalitat (Barcelona).

On 5 July 1907, just three days before the Board was set up and as part of Prat de la Riba's project, the Institute of Catalan Studies (IEC) (figure 3) was founded in the *Palau de la Diputació*, the Palace of the Provincial Council. Its members initially comprised Prat himself, Jaume Massó i Torrents (1863-1943), Joaquim Miret i Sans (1858-1919), Miguel dels Sants Oliver i Tolrà (1864-1920), Guillem Maria de Brocá i de Montagut (1850-1918), Pere Corominas i Montanya (1870-1939), Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867-1956), Antoni Rubió i Lluch (1856-1937) and Josep Pijoan i Soteras (1881-1963). The aims of the IEC reflected the nationalist ideology that had reached its peak during the preceding decade. It was quite clear from its program that beneath the structure and organization of a cultural activity there lay the idea of disseminating the Catalan nationalist ideology by creating an "acad-

emy” in imitation of the institutions in European states which represented the highest expression of their national cultures:

The rebirth of Catalonia and public recognition of its personality, with new obligations arising that need to be dealt with by the Provincial Council, which has always tried to respond to the demands of public opinion according to its abilities. Today the public wants to see the reestablishment and reorganization of everything connected with truly Catalan culture. And it would be remiss of us, not only in the eyes of Catalonia but in the eyes of all nations, if we did not do everything in our power to strengthen the intensity of this culture, providing all possible means and organizing institutions so that they may comply with such an objective, giving them the material means they need and ensuring that the example of the Provincial Council will be followed by other organizations to help promote our initiative and make our efforts complete (...) the first question that has arisen concerns whether it would be a good idea to increase the staff and funding of one the scientific bodies involved, widening its area of action, or whether it would be better to create a new body which, precisely because it was new, would be under more of an obligation to prove itself and could carry out more fruitful initiatives. This question has been answered for us by the experiences of other countries which have found themselves in similar positions, deciding not to change the ways of the old organizations but creating alongside them new bodies that are more specialized and more appropriate for modern action. The French state has respected the École de France in Rome, founding the École Française d’Athènes to deal with everything that the older organization could not do. Instead of destroying its academies, France managed to increase their prestige, but at their side has put new living modern scientific centers such as the École des Hautes Études, the French Institute and so on. Italy too, without destroying its local Renaissance Academies, founded the Società di Storia Patria, whose beneficent actions have extended even to us, with the missions they frequently send to study our archives (...) today the interests of science call for more and more rigorous specialization and the means and freedom of action that the old organizations, while fulfilling their other Academy functions, are unable to provide. Therefore the time has arrived for the Provincial Council to take the initiative and set up centers here for specialized scientific study, not to fulfill

any yearning for the past, but to produce science and facilitate research in order to find out for ourselves what we have, and not to have to learn from foreigners what they have studied in our territory. The first thing that has to be done, because it is most needed, is to create a center for historical and social review where work will be carried out with scientific rigor. Our archives, renowned throughout Europe for the riches they contain but which we are unfamiliar with, need authorized research; our classical authors, almost completely unpublished, need such comments, critiques and comparisons as are possible with modern knowledge. There are periods of our history that are completely unknown, such as the attempts at reform and renaissance in Catalonia, and there are authors that nobody bothers about, such as those of our ecclesiastical Latin culture of Roman times, and this lack of knowledge is all the more regrettable because foreign authors reproach us for it, frequently sending us volumes that are the result of publications that should have been ours to produce⁴.

The aim of Prat de la Riba’s proposal was to create genuinely Catalan research structures. One of the institutions described as “backward” in the proposal was the University of Barcelona, considered by Catalan nationalists as an ideological hotbed of Spanish nationalism. To offer an alternative line of teaching, the *Estudis Universitaris Catalans* were set up, and institutions such as the Royal Academy of Letters, founded in Barcelona in 1729, and the Provincial Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1775, were now promoted as rivals to the Royal Academies in Madrid. The creation of the IEC was another attempt to put Catalonia on a level with European states that had their own scientific institutions and, like other nations, to carry out research whose main objective was the appraisal of its history so as to provide new ideological resources and arguments on which to base nationalist political demands.

To carry out its mission – “the scientific investigation of all elements of Catalan culture” (IEC ACTS 05/07/1907)– the IEC created four departments: History, Archeology, Literature and Law. The research carried out by its members was published, including “any historical, critical or archaeological studies or works that represent a notable advance and utility for our culture”. (IEC ACTS 05/07/1907) Antoni Rubió i Lluch was appointed president and Josep Pijoan secretary; they were joined by Jordi Rubió i Balaguer and Ramón d’Alós i de Dou as secretary-writers.

4. The institute of catalan studies and the construction of the catalan identity

Work began immediately after the IEC's foundation. Following Puig i Cadafalch's proposal in the constitutive session, it was decided to start intensive prospecting and investigations in the area of Noguera Ribagorzana, in the province of Lleida, considered one of the least known areas of Catalonia, which had so far escaped the attention of art enthusiasts and hikers⁵. As well as Puig and Brocà, the expedition comprised Josep Gudiol i Conill (1872-1931) as archeologist and paleographer, Josep Goday i Casals (1882-1936) as assistant architect for the study of monuments, and Adolf Mas Ginestà (1861-1936) as photographer⁶. The subjects under study were the Arán and Bohí valleys, the course of the Ribagorza river and a number of areas adjoining Aragon. Topographical plans were produced, drawings made and photographs taken of the sites; in fact, the methodological approach of these excavations became a model for future research.⁷ The IEC quickly became a cultural benchmark not only for Catalonia but also for other regions of Spain. As early as September 1907, Juan Cabré Aguiló (1882-1947) informed the IEC of the discovery of a pre-Roman necropolis in Calaceite in the province of Teruel (Gracia Alonso & Fullola, 2008), thereby initiating the institute's connection with the region, which would continue uninterrupted until 1923.

Puig i Cadafalch and Pijoan led the archeological investigations in Aragón and Catalonia. They proposed to compile information on the lesser-known areas and aspects of the archaeological past. This endeavor raised the question of the geographical and chronological limits of the IEC's activities, that is, whether the institute should carry out work beyond the strictly geographical and political borders of contemporary Catalonia. It was agreed that the IEC might operate anywhere within the *spiritual area* of Catalonia, a definition which, in acknowledgement of Prat de la Riba, effectively equated the Iberian culture with modern-day Catalan-speaking territories. Hence expeditions were made during the following months to Zaragoza and Valencia, areas where little work had been carried out until then, and in Roussillon, in the latter case to complete the archeological information available about the region⁸.

The creation of a National Library of Catalonia was another milestone in the construction of the Catalan identity. With the help of City Council and the Provincial Council of Barcelona, the Library of the IEC was inaugurated in 1907 in the *Palau de la Diputació*, today the Palace of the Catalan government⁹. Keen to further their international con-

tacts the members of the IEC launched a yearbook called the *Anuari de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, which was to be sent to the leading academies and centers of research in France, Italy, Germany and Austria along with other publications. Over a hundred exchanges were agreed upon, although in the end copies were sent only to the three Academies in Madrid and the Spanish Museum of Education¹⁰, also in the Spanish capital, mainly as a result of the personal contacts between members of the IEC and members of these institutions. At the same time an ambitious policy was developed to purchase foreign bibliographical collections containing references to Catalan culture, to speed up library donations and acquisitions from Catalan collectors and scholars destined for the future National Library, and to set up grants for foreign travel to study aspects of the history of Catalonia abroad¹¹.

Because of the personal interests and areas of specialization of its members, the IEC's research soon began to focus on the Middle Ages, but in the early stages the archeological investigations were of great importance. When news arrived of the discovery of rock paintings in Cogul (Lleida) by Ceferí Rocafort i Sansó (1872-1917), a member of the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya in 1908. Puig called for a mission of "competent people" to be sent to study them;¹² the work was carried out by Lluís Maria Vidal i Carreras (1842-1922), Ceferí Rocafort himself and Julio Soler¹³. A Roman ceramic oven was discovered in Sant Martí Sarroca during the excavations at Serinyà (Gerona)¹⁴ which were followed in 1909 by excavations at Capellades (Barcelona)¹⁵, and by the prospecting in Calaceite led by Pijoan¹⁶. The studies listed below were carried out under the auspices of the Archeology Section of the IEC and were put forward for publication in the institute's yearbook for 1908:

The catalogue of Greek vases found at Empúries, in the Barcelona Museums Board's possession, compiled by Dr August Frickenhaus; 16th-century ceilings decorated with painted ceramic by Josep Gudiol; the Catalan craftsmanship in precious metals at the Zaragoza Exhibition also by Josep Gudiol – both this record and the previous one are included in the report written by Father Gudiol resulting from the mission the Institute sent to Zaragoza and Valencia – the prehistoric dwellings of Cogul by Lluís M^a. Vidal, also resulting from the other mission the Institute sent to Cogul; the excavations at Empúries by the Barcelona Museums Board, 1st campaign (19 March - 31 October 1908) by Josep Puig i Cadafalch; Iberian ceramics in Aragon (Calatayud, La Zaida and Calaceite) by Josep Pijoan.¹⁷

Coinciding with the excavations at Empúries, the IEC's work in Aragón set the precedent for the institution's involvement in the area after the creation of the archaeological research service in 1915, as part of the historical and archaeological section chaired by Puig i Cadafalch. Pere Bosch Gimpera led the fieldwork around Calaceite between 1915 and 1923, and the results were fundamental to his interpretations of Iberian culture.

5. The IEC, The BMB and the excavations at Empúries

The IEC immediately received news of the start of excavations at Empúries, which were led by Puig i Cadafalch¹⁸. A few weeks after the work began, on 20 June 1908, Puig and Pijoan presented the IEC with the first progress report; this included the discovery of the gate to the Greek city, which they illustrated with a text from Livy, although it was actually an entrance through the Hellenistic wall from the second century BC.¹⁹ In agreement with the Museums Board, the German archaeologist Frickenhaus was commissioned to carry out a study of the Greek ceramics found at the excavations, thus making the Empúries project an international enterprise²⁰; Pierre Paris was invited to Barcelona to give a lecture on Iberian ceramics²¹, and shortly afterwards Puig informed the IEC of the discovery of the *Vaso Cazorro* in the excavations at Empúries²². The IEC made its work known in France and quickly arranged to exchange publications with the leading French journals such as the *Bulletin Hispanique*, founded in 1899 and the principal reference point for Spanish researchers of the time. Works by Émile Cartailhac and Henri Breuil, among others, were also sent to the IEC²³. Adolf Schulten visited the excavations at Empúries with Puig i Cadafalch, thereby ensuring that the early results of the work became known in Germany.

The work being carried out at Empúries was one of the pillars of the nationalist project. On 20 March 1908, before excavations even began, the Museums Board decided to purchase much of the surrounding land. Cambó's visit to the site gave a political stamp of approval to the project and, once the second work campaign had begun, Puig delivered a speech on 13 June 1909 at the *Palacio de Bellas Artes* in Barcelona, in the light of press reports that described Empúries as "one of the earliest traces of our history" and reasserted the importance of the excavations and the need to bring the findings to the attention of the public, although he had reservations about their lasting impact:

We have not lacked the favorable help of opinion, and the half-lie sometimes disguised and sometimes vented in full poisonous impotence. This is the work that Barcelona has carried out, unsuccessful with the general public, but positive work of great scientific value, because for archaeological science, and for solving the problems it faces when trying to study mankind's traces, finding a city is more useful than finding a statue. 24

Puig, however, was mistaken. The excavations caught the imagination of the general public and soon cultural associations with nationalist sympathies were organizing boat trips to the site from Barcelona. The excitement grew even more with the discovery, between 25 October and 5 November 1908, of a set of sculptures that included a head of Venus and a bust thought to be of Asklepios. Both these pieces were immediately considered as icons of *Noucentisme* and the Greek past of Catalonia. At this time Eugeni d'Ors described Empúries as:

A reflection of an ancestral Catalonia, open to the Mediterranean and heir to the great cultures of the past, it was the link with classical Greek culture, as a distinguishing element of its personality and national identity (Aquilué 2001: 12-13)

The idea of linking the past with a contemporary political perspective was expressed for the first time in the poem *Petita oració*²⁵, which conflated the ideal of the Classical past defended by the nationalists with the social unrest of 1909. The riots of the *Tragic Week* in Barcelona called into question the foundations of a certain idea of Catalonia – conservative and middle-class – which had been in crisis ever since the break-up of the politically united front formed in the 1906 elections by candidates of *Solidaridad Catalana*. The poet Josep Carner had this to say in 1918:

Empúries (...) represents the classical and medieval past that shows through the earth like a promised smile, testifying to a fundamental idea that is immaterial, inalienable, inextinguishable. (Carner 1918: 15)

The idea took hold of the collective imagination. On 19 February 1910 the Museums Board agreed to commission the sculptor Raimon Casellas²⁶ to make three life-sized copies of the sculpture of Asklepios, one of which was housed in the *Palau de la Diputació*, where it presided over the staircase leading to the premises of the IEC and the National Library of Catalonia – a potent symbol of the new concept the Catalan identity (figure 4).



Figure 4. Library of Catalonia (1910).

The IEC was reorganized in 1911, allowing the creation of the History and Archeology Section. In 1915, as mentioned above, this section set up the Archeological Investigation Service led by Pere Bosch Gimpera and under the ideological supervision of Puig i Cadafalch and Ferran Martorell i Trabal (Gracia Alonso, 2003). The service was fully operational throughout the Catalan-speaking territories until the start of Primo de Ribera's dictatorship in 1923; under the dictatorship its activities gradually decreased, but it revived after the proclamation of the Republic in 1931 and its work continued at a fair rate until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936. These activities, and especially the publications deriving from them, were imbued with a strong nationalist spirit – a position that would become highly suspect after Franco's victory in 1939.

Prat de la Riba died in 1917, but his ideas lived on in the historical and archeological mindset of the Catalan middle classes. Puig i Cadafalch planned to embody in stone many of the ideas of his predecessor as head of the *Mancomunitat* (the Catalan commonwealth) in his architectural design for the International Exhibition of 1929. The *tetragammaton*, the four Ionic columns crowned by four winged victories (Satal 2004) symbolized the four stripes

or bars of the Catalan flag: they were erected opposite the National Palace of Montjuic in Barcelona, but were demolished by order of the dictator Primo de Ribera. In the words of Antoni Rovira i Virgili (1968: 36-37) they were the expression of the Catalan identity:

Nationality, nationalism, are what we could call (...) strength words. These words striking the Catalan conscience have brought about a complete awakening. Prat de la Riba has finished the job of rebuilding the national columns of Catalonia, toppled in the era of denationalization.

6. Conclusions

In the late nineteenth century, Catalonia was in the midst of a political crisis. Broad sectors of the intellectual and economic *bourgeoisie* demanded improved financial support from the Spanish government and an increasing political self-government in order to stimulate growth in a highly industrialized region that was beginning to feel the social effects of increased immigration. The Spanish govern-



Figure 5. Earliest archaeological interventions in the Greek colony of Empúries (1908).

ment's response was to promote Spanish nationalism and to defend the unity of the Spanish nation. In these circumstances, the Catalan nationalists sought to reaffirm the identity of their country as an entity that was clearly differentiated from Spain. Rather than seeking the roots of the Catalan nation in its traditional context, the Middle Ages, the nationalists turned to Classical Greece and its sphere of influence, claiming that the origins of the Catalan culture and people not only predated the idea of a peninsular Spanish unit, but could be traced back considerably further – to the Greek world, the cradle of European culture.

To justify this argument, artists and writers evoked Classical Greece in their works, but tangible evidence of the special relationship between Catalonia and Greece was lacking. The excavations at the Greek colony of Empúries (figure 5) were the first step in the development of a nationalist archeology seeking to present the idea of a society with a separate, distinct past and an identity of its own that could be used to support a number of politi-

cal aims. In this way a nationalist archeology developed under the tutelage of the Institute of Catalan Studies, which funded a series of excavations in the Catalan-speaking territories with the aim of stressing Catalonia's distinctiveness vis-à-vis Spain. In so doing, it built an ideology and a discourse of its own that would be espoused by practically all Catalan nationalists, both conservative and progressive, until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Archaeological references quickly became part of the political language, but after the initial euphoria created by the spectacular results of the excavations in Empúries, the enthusiasm for Classicism began to wane and the study of medieval Catalonia gradually recovered its position as the key reference for the Catalan identity. But this did not mean the end of the political use of archeology. In fact, the link between ideology and research was now indissoluble, and scholars such as Pere Bosch Gimpera applied the ideas of identity deriving from the thought of Prat de la Riba to their analyses of pre-Roman settlements in the Iberian Peninsula.

NOTES

1. Catalan University Studies. *La Veu de Catalunya*. Issue dated 27/03/1906, p.4.
2. Reports from Madrid. *La Veu de Catalunya*. Issue dated 29/05/1908, p.1.
3. Regarding the excavations at Empúries. On the pleasure of discovery. *La Veu de Catalunya*. Issue dated 08/09/1908, p.1.
4. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 05/07/1907.
5. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 12/07/1907.
6. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meetings on 02/08/1907 and 28/09/1907.
7. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 04/10/1907.
8. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 05/11/1908.
9. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 05/11/1907.
10. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 20/01/1908.
11. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 09/05/1908.
12. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 28/03/1908.
12. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 04/04/1908.
14. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meetings on 08/03/1909 and 13/04/1909.
15. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 06/09/1909.
16. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meetings on 04/01/1909, 11/01/1909 and 18/01/1909.
17. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 09/11/1908.
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19. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 20/06/1908.
20. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 22/10/1908.
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22. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 06/09/1909.
23. AIEC (Archives of the IEC). Minutes of the meeting on 31/12/1908.
24. The excavations at Empúries. Speech given by Puig i Cadafalch at the Palacio de Bellas Artes. *La Veu de Catalunya*. Issue dated 14/06/1909, p. 2.
25. *La Veu de Catalunya*. Issue dated 12/09/1909.
26. Sculptures recovered from the excavations at Empúries. *La Veu de Catalunya*. Issues dated 04/08/1910, 11/08/1910, 18/08/1910, 25/08/1910, 01/09/1910, 08/09/1910 and 15/09/1910.

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