

Graphology First Impressions

(...)

I am pleased to report that I visited Barcelona in July 2004 for the first time in my life. My first impressions were excellent. The city is modern, well organised, easy to navigate and really quite splendid.

I had agreed to meet three graphologists at the University of Barcelona (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona –UAB-), so I was excited about the whole trip. Before that meeting, I had two days to explore the town. Apparently Barcelona has seen an amazing transformation in the last ten years. My taxi driver informed me that after the 1992 Olympic Games, hosted by the city, there was a major rejuvenation.

One essential for visitors is a walk from the department store 'El Corte Ingles' down the street called Las Ramblas to the harbour. This harbour has been revamped. It now has an Aquarium, a multi-screen cinema, shopping precinct and you guessed it, a McDonald's fast food outlet. Please bear with me; this has much to do with graphology!

The point is that thousands of people pass this harbour every day during the peak season. So you can like it or hate it, at the centre of this massive pedestrian through-route is a Graphology stand. For just two Euros (one pound fifty pence), you can sign your name and it will be analysed. That's what they say, and a massive façade in the guise of a 'graphology machine' suggests big things are behind the 30-second analysis, which provides 67 "datos".

Augusto Vels is one of the best-known Spanish graphologists. He was founder of the Professional Association in 1984, and he saw the value of using computers in conjunction with graphology, but I'm certain that he had nothing like this in mind. If anyone could be in their grave, I'm sure it would be Augusto Vels, not least since the whole area is called Port Vell!

I have seen similar sales kiosks in Milan, Marseilles, Bournemouth and even in Doncaster, not the best-known place for turismo. What sort of impression does this give for graphology? Whilst your answer is likely to be a negative one, I take a different view.

Regardless of the number of people who hand over two Euros in Barcelona or two pounds in Bournemouth, the banner is visible to all who pass by. These opportunities-to-see communicate the word 'graphology' and the fact that interpretations can be made from handwriting. This is free promotion for serious professionals and it goes to thousands of people.

It was time to move to the other extreme of the world in Barcelona. My visit took me to a massive building complex called 'Casa Convalescencia' which is part of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. This is near the Sagrada Família, so already one is struck by a change in tone. No fast food, no fast graphology. Considered consumption and serious study.

My meeting was with two co-authors of a recently published book: Francisco Viñals and Mariluz Puente. Jaime Tutusaus and his wife came to provide valuable language translation.

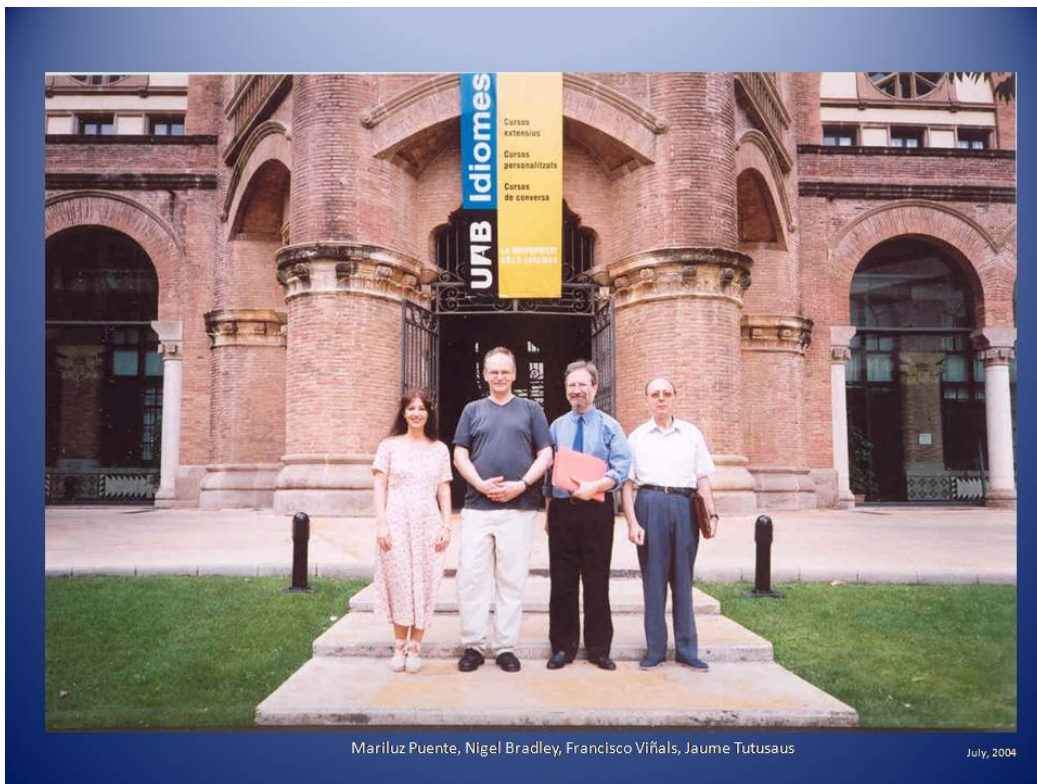
I met Jaime in August 1999; he very kindly came to visit me at my hotel an hour away from Barcelona. He is one of those precious people who read every page of my Multi-lingual Dictionary of Graphology and provided pages of comments and suggestions. He is also precious to Spanish graphology. He teaches on the University course, he is a past editor of the Journal of the Agrupación de Grafoanalistas Consultivos de España (AGC) and has produced numerous articles and works. He told me he has three books in progress. His wife Rosa has an enviable command of English, so I think we will hear more of Spanish graphology through them.

Francisco and Mariluz collaborated to produce a handbook with over 600 pages, published by Herder in 2003. It is called "Análisis de escritos y documentos en los servicios secretos", which might be translated as "Document and Handwriting Analysis for the Secret Services". This title might seem like a sales gimmick for the general public, but in

fact it is an honest reflection of the content and the expected readership. Living outside Spain it is easy to forget that the country had its own version of the September 11 attack. It was on March 11, 2004 when a coordinated set of rucksack bombs exploded on commuter trains in Madrid, whilst the British media refer to 9/11, the Spanish press describe it as S-1 and the March bombings M-11. In these times of terrorism, the secret services are busy, so the book takes on a special position.

This book is used in the graphology classes taught at the University Autonomous of Barcelona and most specifically to those which form part of the Criminology courses. There are two self-standing Graphology Courses: general graphology and forensic graphology. Each course has around 30 students and they are taught by some 30 lecturers from January to October for four hours per week. The student numbers have built progressively over the years and the book is testimony to the professional nature of the courses. You are urged to see the web site www.grafologiauniversitaria.com

My visit to the teaching facility and the Hall where diploma presentation ceremonies take leave me in awe of the work achieved by our Spanish colleagues.



Mariluz Puente, Nigel Bradley, Francisco Viñals, Jaume Tutusaus

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