

About...

Literature in Luxembourg

Luxembourg hardly appears on the literary map of Europe. It is a white area, a vacuum and outside the Grand Duchy only a few interested individuals can populate it with authors' names and the titles of works. Beyond Luxembourg's borders, people are frequently ignorant of which languages are actually spoken and written in the smallest of the EU Member States, let alone the traditions upon which Luxembourg's modern literature relies, the themes dealt with by Luxembourg authors, and the trends and tendencies that can be traced back. However, if you take a closer look, you will soon discover that this smallest of regions is dominated by a vast thematic and generic diversity.

There are good reasons for the lack of awareness among the reading public of Western Europe and beyond. These are related to the language situation which comes as a result of the geographic location and history of a country which for centuries has been the point where the Romance and Germanic cultures meet, and which has been influenced by both in its folklore, its cultural and linguistic habits and customs and which, at the same time, has always endeavoured to maintain a certain level of autonomy.



Grand Duchy
of Luxembourg

Regime:
Constitutional
Monarchy

Neighbouring
countries:
Germany,
Belgium,
France

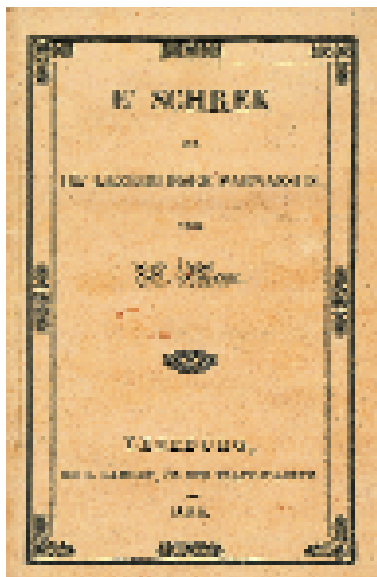
Area:
2,586 km²

Population:
448,300
of which
170,700
are foreigners

Population density:
170 inhabitants/
km² (2000)

Unemployment
rate: 4,1 %
(December 2003)

These particular circumstances enabled a linguistic environment to evolve over the centuries which is unique, at least in Europe, and which is characterised by the intermingling and coexistence of three languages: *Lëtzebuergesch*, German and French, all used in everyday life, across all classes of society and throughout the entire country.



1829 marks the year of publication of the first work of literature in *Lëtzebuergesch*: *E' Schrek ob de' Lezeburger Parnassus* by Anton Meyer

This complex multilingual component has also influenced Luxembourg literature and has marked the development of its authors – although it may be said that the concept of “literature” with respect to Luxembourg is not altogether unequivocal. Considered purely in linguistic terms, there is actually no single Luxembourg literature. Instead there is a literature written in three languages, or four if you include those authors writing in English. Taken as a whole, this polyphonic production can be summed up by the collective term *Luxembourgiana*, an expression which stands for everything written, printed or composed by Luxembourg nationals, in Luxembourg or about Luxembourg, regardless of the language used.

A young literature

Compared with the rich traditions of its neighbours France and Germany, Luxembourg literature looks back on a relatively brief history. There is one piece of literature, originating from the Middle Ages, which is a biographical verse epic about the abbess Yolanda von Vianden, written by the Benedictine monk, Hermann von Veldenz (d. 1308) at around 1290. Yet the first half of the 19th century is generally regarded as the time from which the national literature of Luxembourg dates.

The key date is the year 1839 which marks an obvious turning point in Luxembourg's history. The Treaty of London signed by the major European powers in London on 19 April of that year establishes the borders of the now autonomous Grand Duchy and makes it a monolingual territory in which the local population speaks only *Lëtzebuergesch*. Luxembourg's national pride is finally awakened.

Ten years previously, in 1829, the very first work of literature in *Lëtzebuergesch* appeared: this was a volume of verse entitled *E' Schrek op de' Lezeburger Parnassus*, which was compiled by the mathematics professor Anton Meyer (1801-1857). During the second half of the 19th century, a Luxembourg vernacular literature developed from this foundation.

Classic triumvirate

Members of this first generation after 1839, which wrote mostly in the vernacular, were also those three authors whose works are now regarded as the classics of Luxembourg literature: Michel Lentz (1820-1893), who composed the lyrics to the Luxembourg national anthem *Hemecht* in 1859 and many of whose poems (*De Feierwon*, *Wéi meng Mamm nach huet*

Anton Meyer



Michel Lentz



Renert Eische Gesank

Et war esou p'm Päschen,
't stung Alles an der Blai,
an d' Villercher di songen
hir Lieder spët a fréi.

Du rifft de Léiu, de Kinnek,
all Déier op e Fest
am Gréngewald zesummen,
an 't koumen all seng Best.

Di Räich als uéi di Lrom,
an Hirsch an d' Päerd an
d' Réi,
se waren all geruff ginn,
a Mitock, Mäsch a Kréi.



In 1872 Michel Rodange composed *Renert. De Fuuss am Frack an a Maansgréisst*, a fable in verse and in Lëtzebuergesch about the cunning fox Renert, which was to become the national epic par excellence

gesponnen) have frequently been reworked into chansons, in which the patriotic feelings of his compatriots find expression; Edmond de la Fontaine (1823-1891), better known by his pseudonym *Dicks*, who is regarded as the founder of the theatre in Lëtzebuergesch; and finally Michel Rodange (1827-1876), who with the grand verse epic *Renert. De Fuuss am Frack an a Maansgréisst*, based on Goethe's *Reineke Fuchs*, created the Luxembourg national epic par excellence in 1872. The monument dedicated in 1903 on the Place d'Armes in Luxembourg city, the first of its kind in Luxembourg, commemorates the first two authors.

With this popular triumvirate, literature in the national language flourished at its peak towards the end of the 19th century. Literature written in French and German also bloomed alongside, but it played a far lesser role in the consciousness of the reading public. Nevertheless, several writers should be mentioned, including at the very least Félix Thyes (1830-1855), who is regarded as the first Luxembourg author to have written in French and whose novel *Marc Bruno, profil d'artiste* appeared posthumously in the year of his death.

By contrast, no literature of any artistic merit was written in standard German in Luxembourg until the turn of the century. Its most important proponent was Nikolaus Welter (1871-1951), who wrote about Luxembourg issues in German, for instance, as a dramatist with *Die Söhne des Öslings* (1904) and as a poet in *Hochofen* (1913). At the same time, Nikolaus Welter is regarded as the first Luxembourg literary historian. Some of his books were published in Germany, and the author has gained a certain amount of literary fame beyond national borders. Alongside him there is Batty Weber (1860-1940), who made his name as a novelist (*Fenn Kass*, 1913) and who was an uncommonly productive feature writer: the pages of his *Tear-off Calendar* appeared almost daily in the *Luxemburger Zeitung* between 1913 and 1940.

Dicks



Michel Rodange



Félix Thyes



Nikolaus Welter



In German exile

In this context, mention should be made of two further Luxembourg authors who sought their literary fortune abroad and chose exile in Germany. Norbert Jacques (1880-1954) studied in Bonn and worked as a journalist in Hamburg and Berlin before travelling the world from 1906 onwards. He used the experiences he gained to write adventure and travel novels which were very well received by the German public and appeared in numerous editions. Norbert Jacques became famous in 1921 with his novel *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*, which was made into a film by Fritz Lang the following year. In his home country, however, Norbert Jacques was ostracised as a persona non grata for decades. His compatriots blamed him for allying himself with Nazi Germany after Hitler

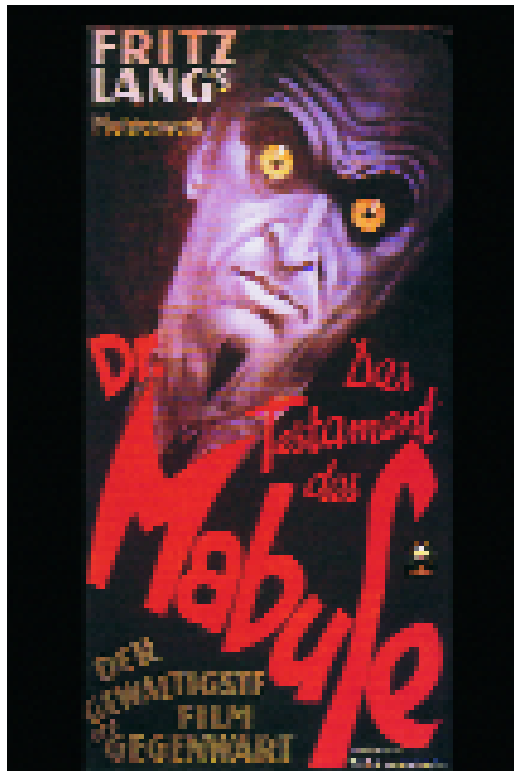
came to power and for vehemently calling his fatherland to account in several of his works. Critics accused him of satirical tactlessness, stretching even to contempt for his own country, largely based on his novel *Der Hafen* (1910, in which he wrote that his abhorrence for the small, accursed country seemed great enough for him to strangle it with his own hands – (“*Es ist mir oft, als hätte ich einen Hass, mächtig genug, das ganze kleine verfluchte Land zwischen den Händen zu erwürgen*”) and on *Die Limburger Flöte*. “*Bericht über Pierre Nocké, den berühmten Musikus aus Limburg, der auf einer Flöte blasen konnte, die er sich nicht erst zu kaufen brauchte*” from 1929, (new edition 1985).

Substantially shorter, but less plagued by scandal was the literary career of Alex Weicker (1893-1983), who was one of the so-called Munich Bohemians after World War I and who, in 1921, had a single, highly regarded novel published by a local publishing house with the title *Fetzen. Aus der abenteuerlichen Chronika eines Überflüssigen*.

Contemporaries of Welter, Weber and others who wrote in French include the journalist, poet and committed francophone Marcel Noppeney (1877-1966), the lyric poet Paul Palgen (1883-1966) and the essayist Nicolas Ries (1876-1941).

Boom in lyric poetry between the wars

Although during the 1920s and 1930s there was a real boom in poetry written in German following the literary currents of symbolism, surrealism and expressionism in Germany, with poets such as Albert Hoefler (1899-1950) and Paul Henkes (1898-1984), the first half of the 20th century is not regarded as a fertile period in Luxembourg literature. The rapid progress of industrialisation in the country, its economic, technical and intellectual dependence on foreign countries and, last but



In 1922 Norbert Jacques' novel *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* was adapted into a film by Fritz Lang

Norbert Jacques

“My bowels yearn for Luxembourg... Maybe the genius loci inspires me particularly in Luxembourg”



August Liesch (1875-1948), the author of *Maus Ketti*, is among the most popular writers in the Luxembourg vernacular. His folksy fable about the country mouse and the city mouse is a strong component of the country's national literature and is taught at most of Luxembourg's schools

not least, the two world wars made it difficult for authors to find a voice of their own. In many instances, authors of that era tended to concentrate on themes close to their own country, combined with an often excessive love thereof and an idealistic portrayal of the rural farming community. This situation created a literature that was rather introspective.

Moreover, there was hardly any stimulus to form a post-war literary movement in Luxembourg, unlike, for instance, Germany's *Gruppe 47*. As in all such cases, and down through the centuries, Luxembourg literature had no truck with new fashions and trends. Until very recently, Luxembourg authors have principally been individualists and, while taking foreign models and adapting them to fit Luxembourg's circumstances, albeit with some delay, they have not initiated schools of thought or literary movements. One of the reasons for this may, of course, be the rather modest number of those working at a challenging level of literary activity in Luxembourg.

Radical change in several phases

Following World War II a radical change occurred in several phases. At first, and rather hesitantly during the 1950s and early 1960s, authors such as Anise Koltz (b. 1929), Lex Jacoby (b. 1930), Roger Manderscheid (b. 1933) and Jean-Paul Jacobs (b. 1941) came into the public eye, countering the conservatism of their predecessors with their own creative potential, which was to evolve more fully during the decades that followed.

Luxembourg literature underwent a further phase of development in the late 1960s, when the crude patriotism and the linguistically often outmoded closeness to nature in the works of a younger generation of writers switched to a critical discussion of the fatherland.

Influenced by the social changes during that period (the student movement in 1968 and its consequences), the homeland and western civilisation were among the most important themes for authors such as Pol Greisch (b. 1930), Josy Braun (b. 1938), Rolph Jetter (b. 1938), Cornel Meder (b. 1938), Guy Wagner (b. 1938), Guy Rewenig (b. 1947) and René Welter (b. 1952). Elements of satirical parody, ecology and pacifism were also present in the works of Léopold Hoffmann (b. 1915), who already featured as a literary critic and academic during the 1950s, while feminism found a voice among new female authors (such as Josiane Kartheiser, b. 1950). Since then a trilingual or even quadrilingual literary continuum has been guaranteed.

Pol Greisch



Josy Braun



Josiane Kartheiser



An end to self-effacement

During the 1970s, critical appreciation of the prevailing situation featured increasingly as the central driving force behind the work of Luxembourg authors. In parallel, a kind of literary self-assurance was developing, which Roger Manderscheid noted in 1978 in his collection *Leerläufe* as being the “end of self-effacement, unity of individuals, formulation of our current conception of ourselves as Luxembourg authors writing in *Lëtzebuergesch*, German or French”.

From left to right three Luxembourg authors: Albert Mambourg, Roger Manderscheid and Lambert Schlechter



In addition, this indirectly addresses the question of the boundaries and opportunities presented by multilingualism which is a frequent theme among Luxembourg authors. In general, problems are seen in the lack of contact with the colloquial languages of France and Germany and the necessity to opt for one or more written languages that the author has fundamentally had to learn. Only gradually does it become apparent that the particular brand of remoteness

maintained by these written languages can also yield positive results in the sense that, as the German radio editor Dieter Hasselblatt once said in connection with Roger Manderscheid's radio plays, “Someone has said in German what a German could never actually have said in German”.

At the beginning of the 1980s, there was a fresh turning point at a time often considered to be the actual birth date of contemporary literature in Luxembourg. New, and also younger, voices now came to be heard, with authors such as Lambert Schlechter (b. 1941), Jean Portante (b. 1950), Michèle Thoma (b. 1951), Nico Helminger (b. 1953) and Georges Hausemer (b. 1957), whilst established authors were seeking alternative forms of expression. Man and his social environment feature at the centre of the literary output of this period.

Reviving the novel in *Lëtzebuergesch*

The year 1985 represented a milestone in Luxembourg's recent literary history. 1985 is the year when Guy Rewenig's first novel (in *Lëtzebuergesch*) *Hannert dem Atlantik* appeared. This book, which was followed by a number of substantial novels in *Lëtzebuergesch* written by this author, was described by Jul Christophory as being “a fully mature novel with a deeper psychological and social content, representing an achievement for which Luxembourg literature had had to wait for a long time”.

In Rewenig's wake after 1988 came a large-scale trilogy with an autographical basis by Roger Manderscheid, comprising the novels *schacko klak*, *de papagei um käschtebam* and *feier a flam*. Both authors received great public acclaim for these books, reaching unusually high sales for the limited size of the market in Luxembourg, some of which were followed by several re-editions.

Lambert Schlechter



Georges Hausemer



Dieter Hasselblatt

“Someone has said in German what a German could never actually have said in German.”

During the following decade, further epic works in *Lëtzebuergesch* were published that would hardly have been conceivable without Rewenig's and Manderscheid's pioneering works. These include *Frascht* (1990) by Nico Helminger, *Angscht virum Groussen Tunn* (1992), stories by Jean-Michel Treinen (b. 1954), *Perl oder Pica* (1998), a novel by Jhemp Hoscheit (b. 1951), *lwwer Waasser* (1998), a novel by Georges Hausemer, and a number of novels written in *Lëtzebuergesch* by Josy Braun (e.g. *Porto fir d'Affekoten*, 1997, and *Kréiwénkel*, 1998).

Competition within the country

During this phase, there was a renaissance of franco-phone literature in Luxembourg. Jean Portante played a significant part in this with his novel about immigrants, entitled *Mrs Haroy ou La mémoire de la baleine* (1993). Suddenly beside and after the authors who had already been writing in French for some time, such as Edmond Dune (1914-1988), Anise Koltz, who had meanwhile switched from writing in German to writing in French, Lambert Schlechter, Rosemarie Kieffer (1932-1994) and José Ensich (b. 1942), younger colleagues appeared like Félix Molitor (b. 1958) and Danielle Hoffelt (b. 1963), experimenting with new contents and forms.

The same goes for the new German-speaking literature of Luxembourg which had overcome competition from other languages in its own country during the 1990s, and was seeking closer involvement with trends in the greater German-speaking world. Names such as Jean Krier (b. 1949), Roland Harsch (b. 1951), Pit Hoerold (b. 1954) and Guy Helminger (b. 1963) vouch for high literary quality, many having already found publishers abroad.

Deux poèmes

*Ecoute grincer mon poème
je le mélange
au sang et aux pierres*

*J'apprends à crier
aux rapaces
ensemble
nous secouons la mort*

*

*Le matin se lève
dans une solitude
sans nom*

*L'amant
porte
sa maîtresse
comme une barque fendue
sur le rivage*

Anise Koltz:
Chants de refus.
Poèmes, 1993
(in French)

Anise Koltz

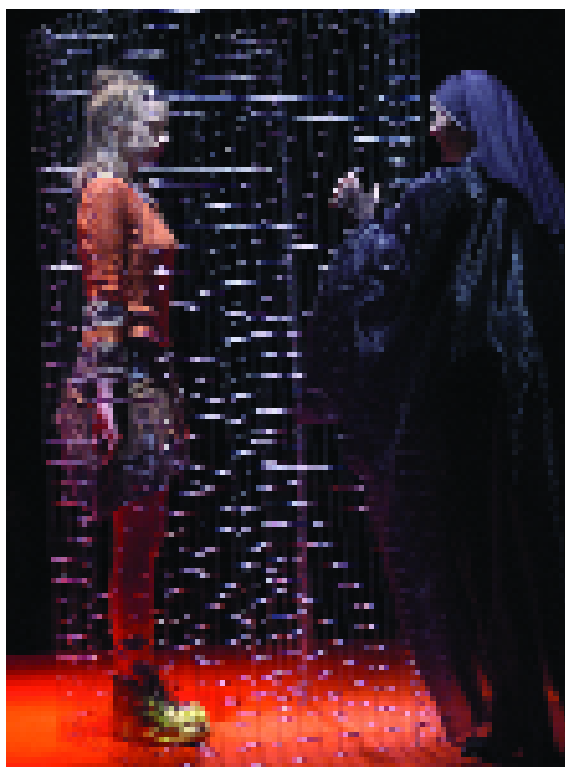


Nico Helminger



Jean Portante





Scene from the premiere of Claudine Muno's first play *Speck*, november 2003 at the Kulturfabrik in Esch/Alzette

In addition, the promising new generation of authors in Luxembourg includes writers such as Linda Graf (b. 1967) and, above all, Claudine Muno (b. 1979), who despite her tender years has already published several significant works in various languages and the most wide-ranging genres.

Mention must also be made of those Luxembourg authors who left their own country years and, in some cases, decades ago and now write in English without quite having abandoned their own country or having eliminated the theme of uprooting. Here, we can primarily cite the poets Liliane Welch (b. 1937) and Pierre Joris (b. 1946). Jean-Paul Jacobs, who has lived in Berlin since 1966, Michèle Thoma, who has

lived and worked in Vienna since the mid-1980s, and Guy Helminger, who has found his second home in Cologne, all write in German.

As well as those who have emigrated, newcomers should also be acknowledged, such as Margret Steckel (b. 1934), the storyteller born in the German Democratic Republic, and also the children of immigrants, and the travellers and commuters who enrich the latest literature from Luxembourg with their personal, foreign viewpoints and remind us of the arbitrariness of any insistence on national characteristics.

Guy Rewenig has also done pioneering work for children's literature in *Lëtzebuergesch*, which has enjoyed a fruitful decade. Since his collection of stories (*Muschkilusch* which appeared in 1990), Rewenig has published numerous further volumes written in this genre. Other famous authors, such as Manderscheid and Hoscheit, have emerged as authors of books for children and adolescents, resulting in some astonishing sales figures. Furthermore, various new authors have brought out books for children and teenagers, including Nicole Paulus (b. 1955) and Chantal Schenten-Keller (b. 1959).

Literature with contours

At the start of the third millennium, Luxembourg literature proves to be vastly diverse, in three or even four languages and in terms of form and theme. All literary genres are represented, with prose (short stories, novellas, tales) predominating among German-writing authors, with their francophone colleagues frequently preferring poetry. Epic poetry, lyric poetry and drama are represented in roughly equal measures in *Lëtzebuergesch*. By virtue of increased translation activity and numerous cross-border contacts, literature from Luxembourg has recently also been gaining a certain reputation abroad. The publications by

Guy Rewenig



José Ensch



Claudine Muno



Luxembourg authors in foreign publishing houses, anthologies and literary journals, invitations to international writers' conventions, co-editions with foreign publishers, individual film adaptations of novels and the awarding of prestigious literature prizes to authors from Luxembourg give grounds for hope that the Grand Duchy will no longer be viewed as a white area on the European literary landscape.

Eng geféierlech Wett

Ech kommen aus der Schoul, a wat gesinn ech?

Um Dësch as alles op der Kopp. Et läit eng Ficelle an der Zopp.

Am Püree stécht eng Héngerplomm. Am Kabes rullt eng Eisebomm.

D'Zalot as voller Spéngelskäpp. De Bifdeck schmaacht no Boxeknäpp.

Am Gulasch schwëmmt en Tennisball. Wéi as deen dann do dragefall?

Mäi Papp huet nees gekacht!

Well hien nët kache kann, fänkt hien iwwert dem Kachen un ze schweessen.

Duerno gët hien ëmmer méi rout am Gesiicht. Duerno ziddere seng

Fangeren. Da mécht hien alles falsch, wat een nëmme falsch maache kann.

"Wat deng Mamm konnt, kann ech scho laang!" brëllt hien da schwéier rosen.

Awer dat as nët wouer. Zanter meng Mamm fort as, gët bei eis am Haus nët méi uerdentlech gekacht ...

Guy Rewenig: *Muschkilusch. Geschichte fir Kanner*, 1990
(in Lëtzebuergesch)

Literary institutions

Various public and private institutions devote themselves to nurturing and promoting the literature of Luxembourg.

The principal institution is the literary archive in Luxembourg (Centre national de littérature, CNL). The archives, catalogues, exhibition rooms and conference rooms as well as the library of the documentation and research centre, which opened in Mersch in 1995, are available not just to researchers and scientists, but also to members of the public. The CNL also publishes exhibition catalogues and an annual bibliography of Luxembourg literature. Furthermore, the CNL has become well known for its new editions of classic works.

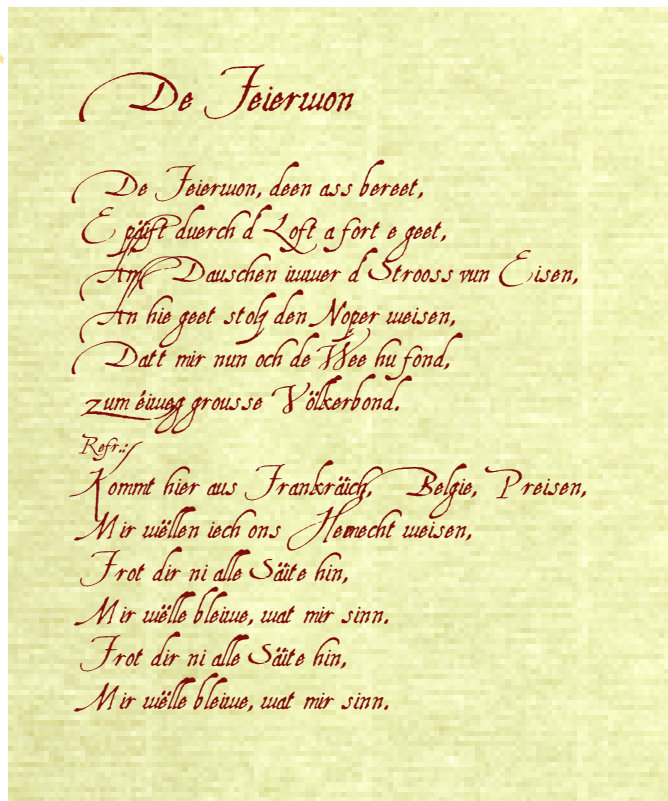


Since 1995 the National Literature Centre has been based in the Maison Servais in Mersch. This institution nurtures and promotes the literature of Luxembourg

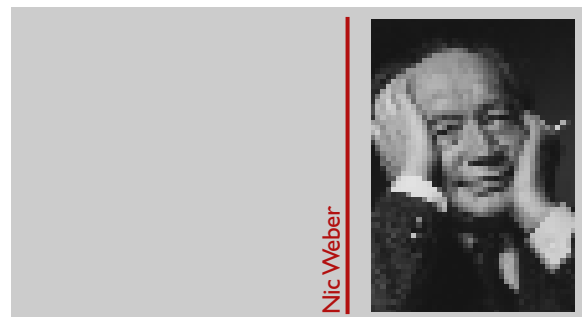
In addition, the national archive, national library and municipal and district libraries throughout the country play an important role in the promotion of Luxembourg literature. By organising readings and conferences, these institutions enable direct contact between contemporary authors and the public. As far back as 1868, the Grand Ducal Institute was founded with a department of art and literature that was once responsible for publishing the journal *Arts et Lettres*. More recently, however, there has been greater focus on publishing anthologies of the various genres.

Launched by Anise Koltz and Nic Weber in 1962, the 'Mondorf Literature Days' is one of Luxembourg's most prestigious literary events. Until 1974, local writers used to meet at this thermal spa every two years with colleagues from the German and French-speaking regions for lectures, discussions and readings. In 1995, when Luxembourg was the European City of Culture, the 'Mondorf Literature Days' were reinstated under the influence of Anise Koltz and Jean Portante and have since then been held every two years.

Two associations of authors are involved in promoting literature and helping authors. However, the activities of the older *Société des écrivains luxembourgeois de*



Michel Lentz: De Feierwon, 1859 (in Lëtzebuergesch)



langue française (S.E.L.F.), set up by Marcel Noppeney in 1934, have diminished substantially since 1989. Its once-famous journal *Pages de la S.E.L.F.*, later renamed *Nouvelles Pages de la S.E.L.F.*, has not appeared since 1989.

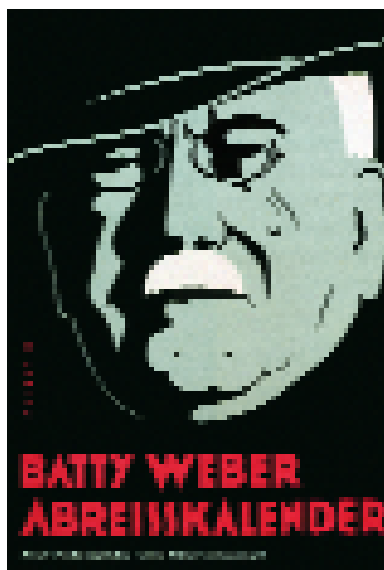
Formed in 1986, the *Lëtzebuurger Schrëftstellerverband* (LSV) is far more committed. This interest group, currently counting almost 100 members, is principally involved in the professional, social, legal and cultural issues of authors and organises readings on a regular basis.

In addition, there are private organisations, such as the *Freed um Liesen* initiative, which aim to promote Luxembourg literature and encourage reading. Since 1999, this association has annually published a themed collection, with texts written by Luxembourg authors or writers living in Luxembourg, which is launched every year on the 23 April, on the World Book and Copyright Day.

Literary prizes and scholarships

Promoting literature in the form of prizes and scholarships is a relatively new phenomenon in Luxembourg, which is probably due to the fact that only few freelance writers have endeavoured to live with and from their literary work since the 1980s. In addition, the worthiness of promoting literature, in contrast to the other arts, was only recognised in the Grand Duchy around twenty-five years ago.

The Ministry of Culture took the first step in this direction at the end of the 1970s, when it set up the National Literary Competition. Since then, this competition to promote literary creativity has been held yearly, and each time it is devoted to a certain theme



The 'Batty Weber Prize', awarded every three years by the Ministry of Culture, functions as the national literature prize and is named after the popular author of the *Tear-off Calendar*

or literary genre (novel, short story, essay, literature for children and adolescents, and so on). Texts may be entered in any of the three national languages and are submitted anonymously to the jury.

The Ministry of Culture and the National Culture Fund (*Fonds cultural national*) also offer grants to publishing houses and award scholarships to authors on a regular basis, enabling selected literary projects to receive financial support.

Established in 1989, the *Fondation Servais pour la littérature luxembourgeoise* has since 1992 been awarding the 'Prix Servais' for the best belletristic work of the previous year.

Roger Manderscheid



Jean Sorrente



Jhemp Hoscheit



Those who have won so far are:

Roger Manderscheid, Pol Greisch, Jean Portante, Joseph Kohnen, Lex Jacoby, Margret Steckel, José Ensich, Jhemp Hoscheit, Pol Schmoetten, Roland Harsch, Guy Helminger and Jean Sorrente.

The *Prix d'encouragement de la Fondation Servais* was created in 2000. It is granted for a manuscript by a new author. The Batty Weber Prize, which the Ministry of Culture has granted every three years since 1987, is awarded to an author for his oeuvre. Those who have won so far are: Edmond Dune (1987), Roger Manderscheid (1990), Léopold Hoffmann (1993), Anise Koltz (1996), Nic Weber (1999) and Pol Greisch (2002).

The *Prix Tony Bourg* has been bestowed twice and is dedicated to promoting francophone literature in Luxembourg. In 1993, the prize went to both Jean Portante and Jean Sorrente and in 1998 to Félix Molitor. Since 2000, the *Liberté de Conscience* association has awarded its literary prize to Maryse Krier (b. 1953) and Jhemp Hoscheit.

Founded by Marcel Noppeney, Frantz Clement and Eugène Forman, it purported to be the first purely literary and intellectually independent bilingual journal. However, the modest print run, the lack of financial security and a lack of staying power on the part of its staff meant the journal folded after only twelve issues.

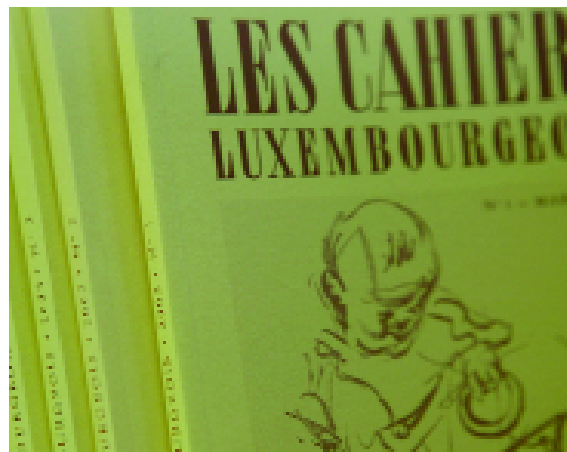
In 1923, Nicolas Ries brought out today's most influential Luxembourg literary journal, entitled *Cahiers Luxembourgeois*. The *Cahiers* tended towards the left in terms of philosophy and politics and appeared until 1965, before being relaunched in 1988 with the *nouvelle série* that has since been edited by Nic Weber.

During the 1960s, there was movement on the market for literary journals in Luxembourg. One of the most energetic operators in the field was Cornel Meder, who edited the *impuls* series in 1965. From 1968 to 1969, he published the *doppelpunkt* journal, a forum for domestic and foreign authors which was devoted to the latest literary movements of the time in Europe.

Literary and cultural journals

The literary and cultural journals of Luxembourg can boast a long history. To understand this history better, we have to be aware that until 1900 Luxembourg did not have much of a reading public. Publishing, freelance authors, literary criticism, all represented something negative, the intellectuals of the day choosing to ignore them. One way to spread the art and literature of Luxembourg was, as also in later decades, to establish journals, enabling authors to reach their public.

In this context, the challenging literary journal *Floréal* appeared between April 1907 and February 1908.



Floréal 1907

"...it purported to be the first purely literary and intellectually independent bilingual journal"

In the early 1970s the authors' publishing house *lochness* started up, for a short while offering Luxembourg authors an opportunity to publish their works in the *lochnessheften*.

The quarterly journal *Galerie. Revue culturelle et pédagogique* was launched in October 1982, also by Cornel Meder, and deals with literature and other themes. Further titles include *Arts et Lettres, nos cahiers* and *eis sprooch*, as well as *Estuaires* which ceased publication only recently.

Founded by an EU official who was particularly fond of literature, the Spanish-language journal *abril* merits particular attention; it has appeared twice a year since January 1991 and regularly prints texts by Luxembourg authors, as well as entire dossiers on contemporary Luxembourg literature translated into Spanish. Wide public distribution of local literature is also ensured by the regular book and literature supplements published with the daily papers *Tageblatt* and *Luxemburger Wort*, as well as the weeklies *Woxx* and *D'Lëtzebuerger Land*.

In 1988 Nic Weber relaunched the *nouvelle série* of the *Cahiers Luxembourgeois*

Liliane Welch from:
Fire to the Looms Below, 1990

Once Upon a Time

*When Spring mornings give
their gift of ancient voices, the streets
in Luxembourg smile with open markets,
roses stitched on windows: Siegfried, Mélusine.
I meet them in museums, side-walk cafés.
Legends playing hide-and-go-seek.
I untie a love-knot, and free
the nymph from that water dance,
the dark well where she stamps.
Saturdays she slipped away to her chamber's
stillness, to rebirth. My Muse
she glides through half a century of
days I want to write alone in my room.
Siegfried forever jails his wife
peeping through the keyhole
to live the wet heartbeat.
His eyes fixed, briefly, on her supple limbs.
Our mouths meet once upon a time.*





Publishing environment

The first publishing houses in Luxembourg really to merit the name were founded in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when a new generation of writers attracted attention. Francis van Maele (*Editions Phi*) and Guy Binsfeld (*Editions Guy Binsfeld*) enhanced the professionalism of the literary business in Luxembourg with the establishment of editorial teams, and marketing and sales departments. During the 1960s and 1970s, the authors themselves made several attempts in a similar direction. Their success, however, proved short-lived. Here, we might also mention the *lochness-autorenverlag* referred to above and the MOL series edited by Cornel Meder.

Several publishing houses were established during the 1990s in the wake of *Phi* and Guy Binsfeld, some of which became very successful as a result of the increased output of local authors. Among these are the publishers *Op der Lay*, *Editions Schortgen*, *ultimo-mondo* and the *Groupe Saint Paul* publishing house which also publishes belletristic works.

Roger Manderscheid from:
schacko klak. childhood pictures
1935-1945, 1988 (in *Lëtzebuergesch*)

e glungent duerf

wat war dat fir e glungent duerf, dat duerf do — d'duerf mam fuusselach — d'duerf vun den izeger zigeiner, och nach "itzig-kleinasien" genannt? eleng hätt ech nët gär dra gewunnt. vu klengem u war all schiet mer onheemlech, huet all geräisch mech erfëiert, hun ech an all däischteren eck, an all stëbsege scheierfong dem däiwe seng binett gesinn. hun ech nët an engem bëisen, verfluchtenen, verduerwenen duerf gewunnt — all ablack konnt dee mam päerdsfouss hannert enger heck eraus op dech duersprangen, fir der deng seil ofzegotzelen, wéi en em klautche seng seil ofgegotzelt hat fir e grapp voll huffeisenneel aus gold.

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Useful Addresses

Archives nationales

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www.literatour.lu
www.luxemburgensia.lu

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