

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 25 (1998)  
**Heft:** 4

**Vorwort:** Editorial  
**Autor:** Ballanti, Dario

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 01.05.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## CONTENTS

<b>Forum</b>	
Swiss literature: its situation	4-7
<b>Fonds-Info</b>	8
<b>Official News</b>	9/10
<b>Politics</b>	
Reform of the optional AHV/IV	11
<b>SRI-News</b>	11
<b>History</b>	
1939 Landi: the intellectual defense of the country	12
<b>Tourism</b>	
3300 km cycling country Switzerland	13
<b>Votes</b>	
Federal referendums of September 27th 1998	14/15
<b>Mosaic</b>	16/17
<b>Dialogue</b>	18
<b>SSA News</b>	19
<b>Cover</b>	
<b>How healthy is the Swiss literary scene? One thing we can certainly say: it is quadri-lingual and lively! (Photo: Jean-Jacques Ruchti)</b>	

## I M P R E S S U M

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 25th year of issue and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 20 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 320,000. Regional news appears four times a year.

**Editors:** René Lenzin (RL), Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad (Chairman); Alice Baumann (AB), Press Bureau Alice Baumann Conception, Berne; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Swiss Radio International, Berne; Dario Ballanti (DB), parliamentary correspondent of Corriere del Ticino; Editor of Official News: Robert Nyffeler (NYF), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH-3003 Berne. Translator: Ian Tickle.

Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising: Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16; Tel: 41 31 351 6100, Fax: 41 31 351 61 50, Postal Cheque Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. Printed by: Buri Druck AG, CH-3084 Wabern.

**Change of address:** please notify your new address to your local Embassy or Consulate – do not write to Berne. Thank you.

Internet: <http://www.revue.ch>

No. 4/98 (14.08.1998)



Does it make sense to talk of national literature in a country like Switzerland counting four official languages? The question is not the more simple but nevertheless the more necessary in the run-up to the Frankfurt Book Fair to be held on October 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> of this year: an international event in the framework of which Switzerland will have to present the main lines of its literary production. An approach, that of the national literary reality, that it is necessary by the nature of things to differentiate amongst each of the various cultures which make up the Swiss mosaic. That may appear pretentious, but in our country it is essential to consider a German, French, Italian and – though to a lesser degree – a Romansh literature. In spite of that it is possible to identify some common points.

One of these is that, with the exception of Romansh the different literary currents are affiliated to a cultural pole outside our national frontiers. Germany, France and Italy have left their mark on Swiss literary particularities, which always maintain a strong link with their respective area of linguistic belonging.

The existence of political frontiers has in fact not prevented writers of the calibre of Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt from affirming themselves first at the German language level and then also at the international level.

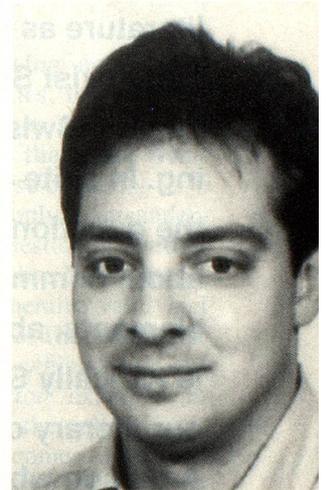
But those writers are not so numerous, who have the merit of seeing their works translated into the other national languages and even into English, which enables

them to gain access to the wider public.

On the other hand, for the majority of the volumes which are not translated, we may ask whether the national linguistic barriers do not run the risk of imprisoning the various cultures in a ghetto. All that naturally disadvantages the weaker – the Italian and particularly the Romansh minorities – : if we return to the consideration of literature, the linguistic minorities are already penalized in relation to German-speaking and French-speaking Switzerland, because they dispose of a much smaller market.

However, the Swiss federalist structure guarantees the survival of the different cultural identities: by coincidence each of the three most widely used official languages are in the majority in at least one canton, with autonomous schools, media and – at the end of the day – cultures. And they are under the wing of German, French or Italian. It is particularly Romansh which is threatened with extinction, since even in Grisons it is relegated to the rank of third language behind German and Italian.

The literary tradition within the linguistic minorities plays a fundamental role not only as a vehicle for spreading and defending the minority language, but also as irreplaceable testimony to the different Swiss realities, including those that are less known.



*Dario Ballanti*

Dario Ballanti