

*Martina Braun*



# *Chat* to your Cat

Lessons in cat conversation



**CADMOS**



## Chat to your Cat

# Lessons in Cat Conversation

By Martina Braun



 CADMOS

# Imprint

Copyright of original edition © 2008 by Cadmos Verlag  
GmbH,

Schwarzenbek, Germany

Copyright of this edition © 2009 by Cadmos Books, Great  
Britain

Translation: Andrea Höfling

Cover design and layout OF THE PRINT EDITION: Ravenstein  
+ Partner

Cover and all other photos: Fotonatur.de, Urs Preisig, Ulrike  
Schanz

Editorial: Anneke Bosse and Christopher Long

E-Book conversion: Satzweiss.com Print Web Software  
GmbH

All rights reserved: No part of this book may be reprinted or  
reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic,  
mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter  
invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any  
information storage or retrieval system, without permission  
in writing from the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British  
Library.

ISBN 978-3-86127-966-2

eISBN 978-0-85788-656-9

[www.cadmos.co.uk](http://www.cadmos.co.uk)

# Inhalt

Foreword

Introduction

The sounds

Whimpering

Purring

Cooing and chatting

Mouse and rat call

Hissing

Spitting

Growling

Rumbling

Chattering

Miaowing

The senses

Screaming

Body language: facial expression and gestures

Neutral mood

Anger

Defensive posture

Fear

Depression

Threatening behaviour

Tom cat fights

Lack of socialisation

Idiopathic aggression

Maternal aggression

The transport bite

Eye contact

Further means of communication

Scratching and sharpening claws

Secretion from the anal glands

Rubbing and cuddling up

Rolling and wallowing

Social structures

Territory of outdoor cats

Territory of indoor cats

Territory when moving house

Territory and toilet training

Who will get on with whom?

Play and matters of consequence

Why cats play

Play is meant to be fun!

Is the cat a bird-killer?

Final words from Sala

Further reading

# Foreword



With her book *Chat to your Cat - Lessons in Cat Conversation*, Martina Braun has made an informative and entertaining contribution to further our understanding of cats, and also the understanding between cats and humans. In order to build and sustain a harmonious relationship - between two species or within the same species - every potential cat owner has to develop an understanding of the behaviour and the nature of these predators, who share their lives with us to a large degree of their own free will. This understanding is a prerequisite for dealing with these pets in a responsible, trustworthy manner. Equally, ethologists and animal psychologists have the responsibility

to further the dissemination among cat owners of science-based new findings – and ensure a layperson can understand them. This, too, Martina Braun has succeeded in doing in her book.

**Dr Dennis C. Turner PhD**

Director of the Institute of Practical Ethology and Animal Psychology (Institut für angewandte Ethologie und Tierpsychologie, I.E.T.), Hirzel/Schweiz.



# Introduction



**Hello. My name is Sala!**

*(Photo: Preisig)*

May I introduce myself? I am Sala, the recurring thread on four paws who will accompany you throughout this book. I'm sure my human co-author will do her best to acquaint you with cat behaviour and our other idiosyncrasies. However, she's only human, and not a cat, after all! Therefore it is absolutely essential that I supervise the whole project in my capacity as a genuine tom cat to ensure that things aren't

lost in translation. There have already been so many misunderstandings throughout the history of my species! A long time ago (in about 2600 BC), for a period of 1,300 years, humans thought of we cats as divine beings. From the cats' perspective it was purely a symbiotic relationship from which both sides were able to benefit. In no way had we ever given up our freedom and independence! We cats kept the grain stores free from those pesky rodents that were causing a lot of damage. The humans kept their grain, while we cats developed comfortably plump tummies due to the rich pickings of rats and mice. Bastet, the goddess of cats, was regarded as the goddess of fertility, joy, dance and festivities, as well as the protectress of pregnant women. As a result, cats, too, came to be adored and revered as divine beings. But this privilege came at a very high price. The priests of Bastet bred and then sold us to all and sundry. Destined to serve as sacrifices, our smaller brethren had their necks wrung, while larger and stronger specimens had their skulls smashed. Then, their bodies were mummified and sacrificed to Bastet. Many years later, thousands of my fellow cats were found in the Valley of the Kings in a mummified state. I ask you: was this really necessary? Of course, we are divine beings! Who could ever doubt that?! But honestly, that's no reason to kill and mummify anyone!

As humans became explorers and traders, we cats too conquered the whole world, and this is how we arrived in Europe. My ancestors were in raptures! But human stupidity soon caught up with us. When Christianity established itself as a religion between the 11th and 14th Centuries, we were unfortunate enough to be caught up in its machinations.

Even before that time, there was an old Celtic belief that cats had once been human, and had been changed into felines to punish them for their wicked ways. Later, Catholic culture latched on to those old pagan superstitions, and the cat became thought of as the witch's familiar.

The Inquisition came down upon cats and witches with a vengeance, and from the 13th Century onwards, horrible atrocities were committed against felines and humans alike. Black cats in particular were believed to be agents of the devil, especially if owned by elderly women.

Cats and witches have had a long association with Hallowe'en. Because we cats are nocturnal creatures, we came to be seen as the evil servants of the witches, out to do their bidding under cover of darkness. Some humans even believed that witches had the power to change into cats in order to carry out their wicked deeds more easily and escape detection.

Because we cats were accused of being in cahoots with Satan and witchcraft, my ancestors were shunned, and right up to the middle of the 18th Century, many tens of thousands of us were burned all over Europe. Honestly, I ask you: who was the villain of this deplorable episode in history? To me, it looks suspiciously like whoever it was, it wasn't the cat.

Fortunately, nowadays we cats are well-loved as pets, but we still evoke overwhelming feelings of either love or hatred in humans. Many humans still aren't able to interpret our behaviour correctly.

So in order that we may understand each other even better in future, this book is going to attempt to teach the reader a little bit of our cat 'lingo'. I will teach you humans yet!

Enjoy!

Yours, Sala