

Editing Texts with a Multilingual Tradition The Case of Ramon Llull

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The existence of a vast multilingual tradition of manuscripts of many of the works written by the multi-faceted Majorcan writer Ramon Llull (1232-1316) is a specific, unusual phenomenon in medieval European culture.¹

Llull was a layman lacking any kind of formal academic education,² who during the second half of the 13th century developed a spiritual and intellectual interests. This led him to educate himself and to write an ambitious body of work, both regarding size (265 titles) and scope (on the most varied topics, and in all genres and shapes), and, in view of his goals (converting infidels and training believers) he wrote his originals in Latin, Catalan and Arabic. Llull's was, therefore, an early example of one of the most relevant late medieval advances in the world of knowledge: that of giving lay people access to a cultural sphere which hitherto had been reserved to the clergy.

The fact that a layman like Llull had access to high written culture is an effect of these changes; however, a case like Llull's is not only a consequence, but also a factor leading to innovation in production modes and in the way knowledge was disseminated. These developments account for the fact that some of his works have been preserved in various languages. This paper shall attempt to explain, firstly, how and in which

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² He said it himself on several occasions: "Confiteor, quod ego Raimundus sum illitteratus, et per *Artem generalem* multos libros feci, forte plus quam centum, Dei semper gratia ministrante." (Ramon Llull, *Liber de experientia realitatis Artis generalis*, 1308). There is no evidence that Llull was ever received into any religious order, nor even of his being a Franciscan tertiary; see Albert Soler, "Espiritualitat i cultura: Els laics i l'accés al saber a final del segle XIII a la corona d'Aragó", *Studia Lulliana* 38 (1998), pp. 3-26; n. 1.