

It is well written and chock-full of interesting details, particularly in the three case studies in section 2. It is obviously a must read for those interested in the sociolinguistics of Catalan, but it has a more general appeal as well. For the tensions around authenticity, anonymity, and authority that Woolard documents in Catalonia can be found in all multilingual contexts, albeit in variegated ways.

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Badia, Lola, Joan Santanach, and Albert Soler. *Ramon Llull as a Vernacular Writer. Communicating a New Kind of Knowledge*. Colección Tàmesis. Serie A: Monografías, 354. Woodbridge, UK: Tamesis, 2016. 372 p.

It is a curious thing that the work of Ramon Llull still remains so relatively unknown and understudied in the English-speaking world. This is partly due to the fact that over the years, many readers have bought into the image of Llull as a “fool” or “phantasticus” — one of his own literary constructs and self-fashioned identities. Another reason for this oversight is the unwieldy size of Llull’s oeuvre and the variety of genres it contains. And yet another is the unusual nature of his primary intellectual project, the Art with its demonstrative elements and “algebraic” configurations. *Ramon Llull as a Vernacular Writer*, a collaborative effort by three leading Catalan scholars of Llull, contextualizes Llull and his apostolic and intellectual projects by focusing on his place in the history of medieval vernacularism (primarily in the Catalan realm). The careful attention paid by the authors to questions of language and literary expression (Chapter one), style and genre (Chapter two), composition and dissemination (Chapter three), and vernacular context (Chapter four) has the effect of revealing the true originality of Llull’s works while simultaneously diminishing the sense of their strangeness. The result is a book that makes an important contribution toward rendering Llull and his ambitious life’s work comprehensible to a wider audience. In this it stands in good company with the previous pioneers of English language studies of Llull produced by Jocelyn Hillgarth, Anthony Bonner, and Mark Johnston.

The authors of this book contend that Llull’s vernacular and literary works (the two categories do not completely overlap) have received less attention in the international arena than his Latin works and intend this book to be a remedy. As their substantial epilogue makes clear, the authors see the key to understanding Llull is to interpret him as a vernacular writer in the context of later medieval “vernacularization” which they define as a comprehensive process surrounding the ways in which knowledge is both acquired and disseminated. An essential element

of this claim is their argument that Llull's vernacular and Latin works should not be read in isolation from each other. In particular, they show how much additional insight can be gained by reading the vernacular works in the context of the version of the Art with which they are contemporary. An important benefit of this approach will be to bring Llull's work more fully into current scholarly conversations about medieval multilingualism, medieval translation studies, vernacular theology, the significance of the materiality of manuscripts, and much more. Many of these topics have been explored extensively in recent decades, especially with respect to later medieval English texts. This book is therefore a welcome addition in that it will help to broaden these conversations by bringing Catalan vernacularism into sharper relief at the very least as an important point of comparison.

In their discussion of one of Llull's earliest, lengthiest, and most structurally complex works, the *Llibre de Contemplació*, the authors perceptively argue that the possibility of reading the work in a discontinuous fashion does not imply that it lacks sequentiality from beginning to end. Much the same could be said about *Ramon Llull as a Vernacular Writer*. In its comprehensive introduction, four substantial chapters, a lengthy epilogue and two supporting appendices, all addressing a wide range of topics pertaining to the "composition, transmission, editing and interpretation of the works that Llull wrote and disseminated in Catalan and other vernacular languages," the book takes on the character of a handbook or guide. For example, the second chapter with its focus on style and genre offers a panoramic view of the variety of forms of expression used by Llull in his vernacular works. Its discussion ranges from Llull's earliest works to his narratives in the service of the Art, his works in verse, his use of dialogue, his distinctive short literary forms, and even, in a section on "love, true and false," his "implacable exclusion of eroticism." Similarly, the fourth chapter cleverly uses Llull's own organizing concepts of difference, concordance and contrariety to examine the character of Llull's vernacularity in juxtaposition with that of a diverse range of figures such as Raymond of Penyafort, Ramon Martí, Cerverí de Girona, Dante, James I of Aragon, Ramon Muntaner, Matfre Ermengaud and Arnau de Vilanova. The clear structure and organization of the book make it possible for the reader to focus on specific chapters or even individual subdivisions of single chapters and come away with useful insights into Llull's thought. However, as with the *Llibre de Contemplació*, the different sections and subsections of *Ramon Llull as a Vernacular Writer* both build upon and complement each other, rewarding those who read the book from start to finish with an even richer appreciation of the nuances and complexity of Llull's vernacular writing.

Through their perceptive presentation of Llull's oeuvre as an intercommunicating whole endowed with a life of its own, the authors of this study make it possible to appreciate fully Llull's true and significant contribution to the intellectual and

spiritual culture of his time. By not overstating the place of Lull's vernacular writing in the history of Catalan literature, the authors effectively open up Lull's work to explorations of its broader significance for the study of medieval vernacularity, problematizing the common binary assumptions that almost exclusively equate vernacular texts with lay audiences and Latin texts with scholarly ones. The authors' meticulous attention to the philological aspects of Lull's vernacular works and their transmission throughout history enables them to emphasize Lull's pragmatic attitude toward linguistic diversity, make convincing assessments of the areas in which Lull was most original, and provide a useful outline of the development and consistency of Lull's thought. Their observations are always supported by a generous deployment of examples from Lull's writings.

Like the production of Lull's own oeuvre, *Ramon Lull as a Vernacular Writer* is the result of extensive scholarly collaboration, as the authors point out in their acknowledgments. They themselves represent three academic generations whose work has benefited from the tremendous efforts towards collecting and organizing data about Lull's works and manuscripts perhaps best represented by Anthony Bonner and the LullDB website, as well as the work of the Raimundus-Lullus-Institut at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität in Freiburg im Breisgau. Specialists familiar with earlier iterations of the research presented in this book will recognize the scholarly emphasis and voice of each individual author. However, one of the strengths of this book is that it skillfully weaves these areas of expertise into an organic whole. Moreover, also appropriate for a study of a man who was obsessed with using various languages and translation strategies in order to reach a wide range of audiences, this book was originally drafted in Catalan then ably translated into English by Robert Hughes with the "final formal touches" provided by David Barnett, making the erudition of these Catalan scholars available to an English-speaking audience. The result of all these efforts is a book which provides an important companion to the survey of Lull's life and thought presented in the *Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina Supplementum Lullianum II* (2008). Moreover, the lines of inquiry delineated in this book should compel a wider audience of medievalists to consider the wealth of Lull's thought in their studies of the spiritual and intellectual culture of the later thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century laity.

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