

# Llull's *A Contemporary Life: Narratio vera* or Auto-hagiographic Account?

Antonio Cortijo Ocaña (Santa Barbara)

**Summary:** The *Vita coetanea* is a mesmerizing autobiographical account of Ramon Llull's life dictated by himself to a monk at the monastery of Vauvert in Paris in 1311. The philosopher was then 79 years old and was making preparations to attend the Council of Vienne that same year. Throughout the *Vita* Llull imagines himself as a combination of sinner, pilgrim, hermit, teacher, preacher and spiritual knight (*miles Christi*). The *Vita* closely follows the model of hagiographic accounts and has as its point of departure Llull's so-called conversion to penitence. Llull's ulterior life is understood by him as an act of self-effacement and love for Christ and his neighbor. In a previous book, the *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, written decades before, Llull had defended a new moral definition of knights as embodiments of man's effort in his attempt to achieve everlasting rest with his Creator, a mission that has spiritual as well as temporal connotations. The two works, separated by some thirty-five years, insist on the need to reach the Muslim population through a crusading effort which is both military and spiritual. The *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* gives way in the *Vita* to an autobiography conceived of as an exemplum of the chivalric endeavors which the first book extolls and calls for.

**Keywords:** Ramon Llull, *Vita coetanea*, autobiography, *Miles Christi*, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* ■

