

S

ebastià Trias Mercant (1933-2008)¹

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Sebastià Trias Mercant was born in Valldemossa (Mallorca) in 1933. Trias completed secondary school at the Ramon Llull Institute, where he studied philosophy under Professor Josep Font i Trias, a man he would later succeed in the post. Between 1953 and 1959, Trias took his degree in Philosophy and Letters at the University of Barcelona. There, among the teaching staff, Joaquim Carreras Artau and Pere Font i Puig were important influences on him. In 1968, he joined the Maioricensis Schola Lullistica as a teacher and subsequently served as the organisation's secretary (1978-1987), rector (1987-1993) and honorary rector (1984). In 1971, he defended his doctoral thesis on the philosophy of P. Raymundo Pasqual and the influence of Llullism on Pasqual's thought. The thesis, completed under the supervision of Emilio Lledó, bore the title *El neollulismo filosófico del P. Raymundo Pasqual*. According to Trias himself in an interview published in issue 854 of the journal *Lluc*, he came into contact with Llull thanks to Professor Sanfèlix, who suggested that he write a paper on Llull, and not on Unamuno, as he had done in the subject History of Spanish Philosophy. Although Trias kept an interest in Unamuno, papers on Unamuno appeared to attract little interest in Barcelona at that time, especially in the journal *Espíritu*. However, the editor of *Espíritu*, the elder Roig i Gironella, did encourage articles on Llull, which he was delighted to publish.

From 1972 to 1978, Trias took up a temporary cover position as professor of Fundamental Philosophy and Anthropology at the University of Barcelona. In

¹ The attached bibliography was made possible thanks to the help of the widow of Dr. Trias, Antònia Prats. She generously provided me with an electronic document prepared by Dr. Trias himself, which contained practically all of the material that appears in the bibliography. I would also like to express my gratitude for the inestimable assistance of Dr. Alexandre Font, Dr. Peter Ramis and his son, Dr. Rafael Ramis, who provided me with their obituary of Trias published in issue 42 of the journal *Revista de hispanismo filosófico*. These pieces of information have all gone into the writing of this biographical and bibliographical note.

addition, he was named to the Philosophy Chair at the Bernat Metge Institute, a secondary school, and he held this post until his return to the Ramon Llull Institute, in Mallorca. Trias could have taken a post in the new Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the University of the Balearic Islands, when the university became independent from the University of Barcelona in 1978. After all, the highly regarded joint courses in Philosophy and Letters at the *Estudi General Lul·lià* were the seed of the current faculty. At the time, however, ideological differences appear to have existed with the academic authorities in the Department of Philosophy. As a result, Trias remained outside the University of the Balearic Islands, although he continued to enjoy the respect and admiration of other members of that academic milieu. From 1983 to 2003, he took charge of Anthropology as a tutor and professor for the online university, UNED, based in Palma de Mallorca.

In addition to the Maioricensis Schola Lullistica, Trias belonged to several scientific associations. He was a founding member of the Catalan Institute of Anthropology (1974) and a member of the *Asociación de Hispanismo Filosófico*, the Royal Academy of Doctors of Catalonia (1995) and the Royal Academy of Genealogy, Heraldry and History of Mallorca (2000). He was an honorary member of the Philosophical Association of the Balearic Islands (2001) and sat on the governing body of the *Estudi General Lul·lià*.

The scientific interests of Trias could be grouped into three areas: philosophy, Llullism (the thought of Ramon Llull and his followers), and anthropology. In a sense, for Trias, the three areas fell on a single spectrum, which could be characterised by the famous quotation of Terence: *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*. Trias viewed the study of anthropology, particularly the world of our Mediterranean islands, as indispensable to an understanding of the great philosophical problems in the history of philosophy. His ambitious project ranged widely from anthropological questions of Mallorcan cuisine to linguistic studies undertaken from various standpoints, such as structuralism and Llullism. He was a man of great learning and avid curiosity. His extremely diverse work addressed the interplay between what is closest to hand and what is most universal. In the history of ideas, he wrote two volumes for the *Historia del pensament a Mallorca*, while in the field of Llullism, he penned the highly useful reference work *Diccionari d'escriptors lul·listes*, as well as a handful of specialist papers and works aimed at a more general readership. In the field of anthropology, he produced studies on the works of Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria and on Mallorcan cuisine. Of particular interest are his texts on the anthropology of the Balearic Islands: *Una historia de la antropologia balear* (1992) and *L'antropologia cultural a les Balears (segles XIX-XX)*.

A man of staunch religious faith, Trias died in Mallorca on 1 June 2008. He left behind a vast collection of works and writings, which appear in the bibliography that follows.