
The english word 'paper' comes from the catalan 'paper'

Autor:

Data de publicació: 05-09-2022

The British Encyclopaedia does not doubt it: Although paper is a Chinese invention. The first paper mill in Europe was built in Xàtiva in 1150. Al-Edrisi in the narrative of his visit to Xàtiva (in the work "Journey through Islam"), describes, among other things, the high quality of this paper that was exported both to the West and to the East (Damascus).

The British Encyclopaedia does not doubt it: Although paper is a Chinese invention. The first paper mill in Europe was built in Xàtiva in 1150. Al-Edrisi in the narrative of his visit to Xàtiva (in the work "Journey through Islam"), describes, among other things, the high quality of this paper that was exported both to the West and to the East (Damascus).

MAP ATTRIBUTED TO AL-EDRISI

Although in the Al-Edrisi trip in the narration of his visit to Xàtiva in 1150 they were in the middle of the Moorish era of the kingdoms of Taifes, James I only 88 years later (in 1238), when he conquered Valencia he assimilated this industry and was the first Christian king to use paper in official documents, (the other kingdoms considered it something impure typical of Saracens).

This fact gave Catalonia a hegemony in the manufacture of paper that lasted 300 years (and let's not forget that it is the catalan paper that allows the expansion of another Chinese invention: the printing press -it is not practical to print on parchment-), and that the 1st book -that is preserved- printed in Spain was the "Gramàtica de Mates" -Barcelona 1468-. Researching more on this subject we can get some pleasant surprises, since Catalonia has a great relationship, with almost everything brought from China: gunpowder, alchemy, clock, compass, cartography, paper, printing (and it's not because my wife is Chinese..., but as you know, because of what the Chinese from Ripoll mean).

When the first paper mill was built in Holland (1340?) the craftsman was called John the Spanish (with o!) – today we speak of the "Dutch quatrain".

So much for the small article born of intuitions derived from articles on the Internet.

The fly began to "have a bee in my bonnet" when I went to the Basque Country and I saw that the bins had marked "papera"... because a neologism of the fourteenth century had not taken the "L" of the Spanish (López de Haro, lord of Biscay, was a subject of the king of Castile). (as happened with gunpowder in Castile and Portugal) the Basques copied the word of the person who had brought them the paper: the Catalans. The spark advanced until he sensed that the same thing had happened with the rest of European countries.

With the Spanish and Portuguese "paper", although it was quite obvious (helmsman-helmsman, planter-plant, orchard-orchard, Reinier-Reinel...), even though I knew that it could not come from Arabic -since in Arabic it is called "waraqun"-, I lacked philological knowledge to firmly affirm that it came from "paper" with the "r" changed.

But let's continue:

Coromines in the case of gunpowder only dared to say that the word is documented two centuries earlier in Catalonia, and that in Spanish it only has the meaning of explosive gunpowder.

In the case of arcabús closes ranks with European philologists saying that it comes from the German hakenbush ?I do not agree, the arcabús is a Catalan invention (the British says: invented in Spain in the middle of the fifteenth century) so the word must also be, could it come from: arc-a-burs (burs = shake, save)? there were two different arms: in a payroll of

the army of Louis XIV there are differentiated payments for the "arquebussiers" and for the "haquebussiers", with different salaries, thus demonstrating that they were not the same thing.

In fact, there are many cases of Lambdacism when passing words from Catalan to Spanish, especially in nautical terms:

Proer - proel
Timoner - timonel
Verger - vergel

On the other hand, Corominas, in the case of the paper he leaves it embroidered, read, it is almost a doctoral thesis – and that he was unaware of the reference of Al-Edrisi and only mentions Xàtiva in the thirteenth century:

PAPER, a word taken from the b. ll. papyrus, adapted by semi-cultured way to a Catalan ending when we unraveled the manufacture of paper learned from the Arabs and Moors: word and industry that our nation later transmitted to all the other languages and nations of Europe, dl. doc: 1249.

.....

The InvLC extracts a doc. ross. of 1284 that bears the word paper twice and about 10 more later, from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. There were, therefore, already many mentions, which imply an active trade in this article by the Catalans.

In fact, in the South of France, in the fourteenth century, mentions of imported paper abounded, and were divided between Catalan paper and llombart (PSW vi, 52º, 53º), which then meant 'Italian'; but since in Italian it has never been said anything other than letter, it is certain that all the languages of the West that have that word received it from Catalan.

The Castilian papel appears much later, as it appears for the first time in 1330, in the Archpriest of Hita, rhyming with three words in -er; and, for the second time, paper in an Aragonese glossary of c. 1400 and paper in one of c. on the same date and also with Aragonese linguistic features. I don't know any more Castilian data until 1490: these are almost the first properly from Castile, because the Archpriest's text has almost as much Moorish as Castilian. Since the change of -er into -el is a normal phenomenon in Catalanisms of Spanish, and in Spanish we must expect that the result of the phonetic change of -yrus will be different, (in fact "papyrus" has become "papyrus") it seems certain that they also received the word Catalonia; The same happened with the port. paper [S. xv, and a mention in Galicia in 1327].

In Oc. it often appears as early as the fourteenth century, but we have already seen that under the name of papier catalan; therefore it is logical that the French of the North (where it is already attested in the thirteenth century) also came from Catalonia: it is recorded that in France it was not manufactured until 1318 (FEW vn, 593a, note 27), and that the first European manufacture was in Valencian land, around Xàtiva, in mj. S. xiii; in any case after the capture of Valencia, 1238; where the Moors and Arabs were already making them, with the knowledge acquired in Sogdiana, after the capture of Samarkand in 751.

From Catalonia must also come, therefore, the al. paper [S. xiv], the Engl. paper [S. xiv], and the corresponding Dutch and Scandinavian forms (these dating from the late period of Old Icelandic), as well as the pol. papier, Czech papyrus and Croatian papyrus; Other European languages, such as Bumaga Russian, use terms of another origin (properly 'cotton', from Greek). The word, in short, comes from the Egyptian Greek ???????, ll. papyrus, the name of the papyrus shrub of the banks of the Nile, cy-perus papyrus L., which already in Antiquity was used as papyrus, of purely vegetable elaboration and quite different; a few centuries later, the Chinese began to manufacture cloth and similar material (vegetable fibres), which had prevailed since the early Middle Ages, and which they transmitted to Iran, where the Arabs learned it from the eighth and ninth centuries, and began to sell it in small quantities in the West. No specimen has been preserved here except in an isolated Rioja missal from c. 1030, of Moorish manufacture. All this was already specified in my article on the DCEC, later enriched with some clarifications here, and by G. Colon, Enciclo. Ling. Hisp. n, 326-7, and the FEW, 1. c.

Literature also shows us the word paper, from its origins, in the foreground, in the world of Catalan concepts: "it happened that Ramon the fool, the minstrel of courage, brought ink and paper before the Apostle, and said that they wanted to send writing to the Agalifa of Baldac so that they could see if they had such noble subjects as the Apostle - to return value in the world", Lull (Blanq., NCl. n, 153.8).

Manel Capdevila