

TOTES SCIENCIES SON PER THEOLOGÍA. RAMON LLULL'S CONCEPT OF THEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE

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Abstract

In the introductory sections of the Sentence commentaries and theological *Summae* written in the 13th and early 14th centuries, scholastic theologians dealt with a whole range of methodological issues concerning the Aristotelian theory of science and its applicability to theology. Two much-debated questions are examined in this study: a) Is theology a science? And if so, b) What are the principles of demonstration employed in this science? In the first part of the paper, examples are given of how academic theologians answered these questions, while in the second part Ramon Llull's solutions to the same problems are outlined.

While many of his contemporaries did not clearly distinguish between *theologia* as the Word of God in the Bible and *theologia* as an academic discipline using scientific methods, Llull had a very precise notion of theology as a science. In his eyes, the kind of theology that is based on faith and authorities (like Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church Fathers) is no science in the proper sense. Even though he never explicitly says so, there is no doubt that this verdict neatly applies to academic theology as it was taught in Paris. Theology as understood by Llull, on the other hand, meets the methodological requirements of a science in making use of rational argument and proof.

As regards the first principles of demonstration, Aristotle had postulated them to be self-evident, necessary, and universal. Most 13th century theologians maintained that in theology the Articles of Faith served as principles. These, however, could hardly be considered self-evident, since they were derived from revelation and grounded in faith. This was a fundamental problem faced by all scholastic authors. Llull tried to solve it by qualifying theology as a particular science (in the Aristotelian sense), governed by the Lullian Art as the general science, and with principles subalternate to the universal principles of the Art. In his concept of theology, the articles of faith are neither first principles nor indemonstrable, but subject to proof by the Lullian method of *demonstratio per aequiparantiam*.

1. THEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE IN THE 13TH CENTURY¹

In the second quarter of the 13th century, the theological masters in Paris and Oxford began to reflect on the nature of their own academic discipline, its subject, its methods, and its very right to exist. Questions were discussed that had never been asked before, and theologians felt the need to defend the place of theology in the curriculum of the newly established universities. Until then, theology had naturally been regarded as the queen of all disciplines, and its superiority over the “worldly” sciences seems to have been undisputed. But things changed with the so-called “recovery of Aristotle”. When the entire Aristotelian corpus and its Arabic commentators became known in the Latin West, scholars realized that there was a whole different world of secular knowledge outside the Christian sphere. Aristotelian philosophy offered a coherent world view that entered into competition with the Catholic faith, and some of the masters in the Paris Arts faculty began to question the traditional dominance of theology at the university. In their eyes, theology did not meet the requirements of a science because it was based on faith and grace. They blamed theologians for drawing on authorities rather than using deductive reasoning. Theology (so its adversaries said) was built on fables and falsities contained in Holy Scripture. It did not offer any solid knowledge that went beyond the secular sciences, and, what is worse, it even *impeded* philosophical learning. Accusations like these were among the 219 articles condemned by Bishop Etienne Tempier in 1277.²

In order to respond to this new skeptical position, theologians had to deal with a whole range of methodological questions connected to the Aristotelian theory of science. Was theology a science in the Aristotelian sense? And if so, was it a theoretical or a practical science? What was its subject-matter? How was it related to philosophy, especially to metaphysics? Did theology proceed by logical deduction? Did it draw its conclusions from first principles that were self-evident, necessary, and universal, as Aristotle had demanded? Issues like these appear in the introductory sections of the *Sentences* commentaries and theological *summae* written during the

1. For general information on the subject, vid., for instance Gilson (1947²); Chenu (1957³); Köpf (1974; esp. Section 6: Die Wissenschaftlichkeit der Theologie, 125-154); Leinsle (1995), English translation in Leinsle (2010); D’Onofrio (2008) and Fiorentino (2014).

2. Vid. Hissette (1977).

relevant period. In this paper, I will pick out and consider two frequently asked questions which later became crucial for Ramon Llull's concept of theology:

- a) Is theology a science?
- b) What are its principles?

In the first part I will give a few examples illustrating how these two questions were answered by theologians in Paris. In the second part, I will present Ramon Llull's solutions to the same questions.

1.1. Whether Theology is a Science? Sacred Scripture and Systematic Theology

Up to the 12th century, theology had mainly consisted in reading and commenting on the Bible. There was no such thing as "systematic" theology on a larger scale until Peter Lombard's *Sentences* rose to success. Alexander of Hales introduced them as the basic textbook for his "ordinary" lectures at the Sorbonne in the 1220s.³ From this time on, the *Sentences* with their "well-defined, thematic organization of the contents of the faith"⁴ served as a model for any systematic approach to theology, and *Sentences* commentaries became the standard literary genre in theological teaching.

Although academic theology was gradually turning into an organized system of doctrine, the terms "theology" and "sacred Scripture" were used as synonyms in much of the theological literature of the 13th century.⁵ Many authors did not—or not yet—properly distinguish between *theologia* as the Word of God in the Bible, and *theologia* as an academic discipline interpreting biblical revelation with scientific methods. This lack of conceptual precision led to results that may seem bizarre from a present-day point of view. Here are some examples, chosen at random:

3. Vid. Rosemann (2007: 60).
4. D'Onofrio (2008: 189).
5. Vid. Köpf (1974: 21-26, 262-267). Köpf, 262, refers to Denifle and Chenu who, among others, have called attention to this problem.

a) *Summa Halensis*

The very first question of the *Summa Halensis*, written between 1240 and 1256 by the Franciscans Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle, and others, deals with “the doctrine of theology” (*De doctrina theologiae*). The question consists of four chapters, exploring these issues:

1. “Whether the doctrine of theology is a science?” *Utrum doctrina Theologiae sit scientia*.
2. “About the distinction between sacred doctrine and the other sciences.” *De distinctione doctrinae sacrae ab aliis scientiis*.
3. “What is the science of sacred Scripture about?” *De quo sit scientia sacra Scripturae*.
4. “About the mode of imparting sacred Scripture.” *De modo traditionis sacrae Scripturae*.⁶

In the chapter headings just quoted, the terms *doctrina Theologiae*, *doctrina sacra*, *scientia sacrae Scripturae*, and *sacra Scriptura* appear to be interchangeable. A closer look at the text shows that they are indeed used synonymously. Strange as it may seem today, the first question of the *Summa* does *not* discuss the scientific character and methods of systematic theology as an academic discipline. It is all about the problem of whether *sacred Scripture* may be called a science in the Aristotelian sense.⁷

b) Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences*

When Thomas Aquinas deals with theology as a science, he generally avoids the term “theology” (*theologia*)⁸ and talks about “sacred doctrine” instead (*sacra doctrina* or simply *haec doctrina / haec scientia*). But what exactly does he mean by this term?

In question 1, article 5 of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Thomas discusses the *modus procedendi* of sacred doctrine, that is, its method.⁹ If it claims to be a science, we might expect it to proceed by rational argument

6. Alexander de Hales (1924: 1-13).

7. “on s’aperçoit que ‘doctrina theologiae’ veut dire en réalité [...] ‘sacra scriptura’. [...] Lors donc que le vocable aristotélicien *scientia* excite la réflexion critique, c’est en fait la matière scripturaire à laquelle on l’applique directement” (Chenu, 1957³: 38).

8. Vid. Köpf (1974: 24-25).

9. Thomas de Aquino (1929: 16-19).

alone. Thomas, however, points out that the method of a science must correspond to its subject-matter. And since sacred doctrine derives from principles made known by revelation, its method may vary according to the different modes in which revelation is presented in the Bible: it may be *narrative*, *metaphorical*, *symbolic*, *parabolic*, *argumentative* (in order to destroy error), *preceptive* (to provide moral instruction), as well as *warning* and *promising* (like in the books of the prophets). All these different modes of proceeding enumerated by Thomas refer to *sacred Scripture* as an integral part of *sacra doctrina*. Only one single method—the use of rational argument in discussing doctrinal questions—is assigned to systematic theology in particular, that is, to the writings of the Church Fathers and to the *Book of Sentences*.

In contrast to the authors of the *Summa Halensis* (in q. 1), Thomas Aquinas does not equate sacred doctrine with sacred Scripture. To him, sacred doctrine is a whole of which sacred Scripture is a part. But although in his concept systematic theology has its legitimate place and its own method, Scripture continues to play the dominant role. When Thomas reflects on the scientific method of theology in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, he focuses on an examination of the “scientific” procedures used in the Bible.

c) William de la Mare, *Commentary on the Sentences*

William de la Mare, a British Franciscan who taught in Paris in the 1270s, has become famous for his *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, a neo-Augustinian attack on Thomas Aquinas. But he also wrote a *Commentary on the Sentences*. As usual, its very first question is about the scientific nature of theology: “Whether theology is a science?” (*Utrum theologia sit scientia*).¹⁰ William admits that it is, but a bit reluctantly. In a more proper sense, he explains, theology is *law (lex)*. This is because the Bible is primarily a collection of precepts and prohibitions. It is obvious that in William’s eyes, theology and the Bible are virtually identical. So if the Bible is a book of religious law, theology is law as well—not science. However, William concedes that some theologians have regarded theology as a science because in spite of its legal character, the Bible contains scientific arguments as well:

10. Guillelmus de la Mare (1989: 12-14).

Others, though, want to say that <theology> is properly a science, proceeding in many things in a scientific, that is, ratiocinative mode. This is why the epistles of Paul are full of most efficacious reasons.¹¹

In some of its parts, William says, sacred Scripture is indeed a *demonstrative science*. He adds a paragraph with examples illustrating how the Bible uses demonstrative reasoning. Apart from Paul's "efficacious reasons", he mentions a demonstration *propter quid* from the book of Isaiah, and a demonstration by formal cause (*demonstratio per causam formalem*) taken from the Gospel of Matthew.¹² Those examples make it perfectly clear that William does not distinguish, from a methodological point of view, between biblical texts and systematic theology. When he asks about the scientific nature of theology, he is really talking about scientific methods applied in sacred Scripture.

When Ramon Llull developed his concept of theology as a science, he was certainly familiar with the academic discussions on that topic. These had grown more subtle and complex by the end of the 13th century. But there was still confusion about the scientific nature of sacred Scripture. Llull's Parisian colleague Jean Quidort († 1306),¹³ for instance, continued to label the Bible as *scientia* or *theologia* in the second question of his *Commentary on the Sentences*.¹⁴ This, of course, must have been completely unacceptable

11. "Alii tamen volunt dicere quod proprie est scientia et modo scientiali, id est ratiocinativo, in pluribus procedit, unde epistolae Pauli plenae sunt efficacissimis rationibus" (ibid., 13).

12. "Est etiam demonstrativa haec scientia in aliquibus suis partibus, verbi gratia Iesaja 53: 'Oblatus est quia ipse voluit', ipse, scilicet Deus incarnatus. Ecce subiectum. Oblatus est, scilicet in cruce. Ecce passio. Quia voluit, ecce causa propter quid. Voluntas enim Dei est prima et summa causa omnium corporalium specierum atque motionum secundum Augustinum [...]. Item Mat. 5: 'Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum.' Cum enim regnum caelorum sit beatitudo eo quod est status omnium bonorum aggregatione perfectus, quando ostenduntur pauperes esse beatos per hoc quod ipsorum est regnum caelorum, fit demonstratio per causam formalem, quemadmodum si ostendatur hominem esse animal quia inest ei animalitas" (ibid.).

13. 1292-1296, *Baccalaureus Sententiarum* in Paris; 1304, *Magister actu regens*.

14. Jean de Paris [Quidort] (1961: 8-10). *Quaestio 2* deals with the fourfold sense of Scripture, with Quidort referring to Scripture as "ista scientia" or "theologia": "Si enim loquamur de modo accipiendi istam scientiam, dico quod est unus solus modus, scilicet revelativus" (8); "Et ideo, cum in omnibus scientiis voces significant, hoc habet proprium ista scientia, quod ipsae res significatae per voces etiam significant aliquid" (9); "in theologia aliquando cum sensu litterali exprimitur sensus spiritualis, et tunc non est quaerendus alius sensus" (10).

in Llull's eyes. He had a precise notion of what constituted scientific procedure. And he was convinced that *neither* the Bible itself *nor* conventional theology with its focus on Scripture and exegesis could ever meet the methodological requirements of a science.

1.2. *The Principles of Theology. Evident in Themselves or Known Through Revelation?*¹⁵

According to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, one of the basic features of a science was its dependence on first principles or axioms. All syllogistic demonstration had to be grounded on such principles. They had to be either evident in themselves—and thus indemonstrable¹⁶—or demonstrated by a superior science.¹⁷

Therefore, if theology claimed to be a science, it was crucial to determine its first principles of demonstration. Starting with William of Auxerre (†1231) in his *Summa aurea*, most 13th century theologians maintained that the principles of theology were the Articles of Faith, that is, the 14 articles of the Apostolic creed.¹⁸ These, however, could hardly be considered self-evident, since they were derived from revelation and grounded in faith. This was a fundamental problem faced by all scholastic authors. Some of them dared to solve it by concluding that theology was simply *not* a science. The great majority of authors, on the other hand, took enormous efforts to save the scientific nature of theology in explaining that the “evidence” of its principles was somehow bolstered and supported by divine inspiration. They argued that even if the Articles of Faith were inaccessible to natural reason, they were evident in the light of faith and grace. Theology was in fact *superior* to all other sciences because its syllogistic conclusions were based on *superior wisdom*.

15. Vid. Lang (1964), especially section III, “Die theologische Prinzipienlehre der Hochscholastik unter dem Einfluß der aristotelischen Wissenschaftstheorie”, 106-166.

16. *Analytica posteriora* A 2, 71b20-33: “demonstrative understanding in particular must proceed from items which are true and primitive and immediate and more familiar than and prior to and explanatory of the conclusions [...] They must proceed from items which are primitive and indemonstrable because otherwise you will not understand unless you possess a demonstration of these items” (Aristotle 1994²: 2-3).

17. *Analytica posteriora* A 7, 75b12-20; A 13, 78b32-79a16; vid. Köpf (1974: 145-146).

18. Vid. Lang (1964: 113) and Köpf (1974: 140).

It is easy to imagine that many scholars, especially philosophers, were dissatisfied with such attempts to defend the evidence of the Articles of Faith. Anyone who appreciated Aristotle's theory of science must have felt uncomfortable with religious doctrines used as principles of demonstration. Thomas Aquinas proposed an idiosyncratic solution to the problem which has remained famous until today. He described theology as a *subalternate* science (*scientia subalternata*), receiving its principles from the so-called "science of God and the Blessed". In his conception, the Articles of Faith did not need to be evident in the natural light of reason because theology belonged to that class of sciences which proceeded from principles proved in a superior science. Just as optics borrows its principles from geometry, or music from arithmetic, sacred doctrine draws on principles derived from divine science.¹⁹

Thomas's approach to solve the problem of principles was genial and elegant in its way. But it met with substantial opposition right away, and for good reason. In a nutshell, his opponents argued that neither God nor the Blessed in Heaven acquire knowledge by way of logical deduction. Their knowledge is immediate and intuitive. Even if it may be called "science" in a very general sense, it is certainly *not* a demonstrative science proceeding by syllogistic reasoning. Consequently, the "science of God and the Blessed" is incompatible with the Aristotelian conception of science.²⁰ And if this applies to the superior science, it applies in the same way to the subalternate science, that is, theology. Ultimately, even Saint Thomas failed in trying to save the Articles of Faith as principles of demonstration.

Another solution to the problem of first principles was suggested by one of Thomas Aquinas's Dominican confreres, Ulrich of Strasbourg. In the first book of his main work *De summo bono*, written between 1265 and 1274, he discusses the Articles of Faith as principles of theology.²¹ In Ulrich's view, the Articles indeed serve as principles of demonstration, although they are *not* evident in themselves. As a matter of fact, they are second-order principles, *principia secundi generis*, and before they can be used in the process of demonstration, they must be proved with the help of four *principia prima et universalissima*. The relevant paragraph from *De summo bono* illustrates how Ulrich introduces these four new principles which are supposed to be self-evident and acceptable to everyone, *even to those without faith*:

19. Vid. *Summa theologiae* I, q. 1, a. 2 (Thomas de Aquino 1888: 8-9).

20. Vid. Leinsle (1995: 158, 165).

21. Ulrich von Strassburg (1989: 33-35), lib. I, tractatus 2, cap. 3.

in theology there are certain things that precede the articles, and they are the most universal and first principles of this science, and through them all the articles and all other things in this science are proved. And these are known to us by themselves, even without faith. And indeed, these are

- that God is the highest truth and the cause of all truth;
- likewise, that this first truth cannot be deceived nor deceive, and thus everything it testifies to is true and to be believed;
- likewise, that those through whom God speaks are to be believed in all they say, and he proves to us that he does so in “confirming the word with signs following”;²²
- likewise, “that scripture is true”²³ because it was handed down to us by God in this way [...].²⁴

Ulrich’s attempt to establish first principles of demonstration that were acceptable even to unbelievers doesn’t seem to have met with much success. It was certainly a good idea to try to find axioms that did not depend on revelation. In fact, this is precisely what Ramon Llull had in mind around the same time in history. But it is hard to see how Ulrich’s four *principia prima* could possibly be considered as “known to us by themselves even without faith”. Even if pagans or Muslims, for example, *might* have agreed to the first three principles, they would definitely have questioned the fourth, that is, the truth of Christian Scripture and its divine origin.

The principles of theology were to remain one of the most challenging problems that theologians had to deal with in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. We will now see how Ramon Llull proposed to solve it and, first of all, how he conceived theology as a science.

22. Reference to Mark 16:20; vid. Ulrich von Strassburg (1989: 34).

23. Reference to Albert the Great, *Summa theol.* I 1 5 3; vid. Ulrich von Strassburg (1989: 34).

24. “in theologia sunt quaedam antecedentia articulos, quae sunt universalissima principia et prima huius scientiae, per quae omnes articuli et omnia alia in hac scientia probantur, et illa sunt nobis per se nota etiam sine fide. Sunt autem haec, [1] quod Deus est summa veritas et causa omnis veritatis, item, [2] quod haec prima veritas nec falli potest nec fallere et ideo verum est omne, quod ipsa testatur, et credendum est, item, [3] quod illis credendum est in omnibus dictis suis, per quos se loqui nobis probat Deus ‘sermonem confirmando sequentibus signis’, item, [4] ‘quod scriptura vera’ est, cum hoc modo nobis a Deo sit tradita, et huiusmodi. Haec enim quisque probat audita” (Ulrich von Strassburg 1989: 33-34). Vid. also Gilson (1947²: 517).

2. RAMON LLULL'S CONCEPT OF THEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE

The question about the scientific nature of theology recurs throughout Llull's oeuvre, although not too frequently. Especially when he considers the rank of his *Art* in the hierarchy of arts and sciences, he touches on the issue of how the *Art* and theology are related to each other, and what makes each of them a science.²⁵

For Llull, theology is a science, but not simply so. As a matter of fact, it is *the noblest of all sciences*. This is obvious in all his works that refer to the subject. As early as in his *Doctrina pueril* (op. 8; II.A.6) Llull asserts: "This science of theology [...] is a nobler science than all the others".²⁶ About twenty years later, in his *Proverbis de Ramon*,²⁷ we find him pointing out that all sciences culminate in theology in that they exist because of theology. To him, this implies that theology itself is a science. If it wasn't, the other sciences wouldn't exist because of it.²⁸

Theology not only ranks above all other sciences, but also above Llull's *Art*, since the *Art* was conceived for the sake of theology. This is manifest from the first chapter of the *Introductoria Artis demonstrativae* (op. 29; Bo II.B.5), probably written in Montpellier in the 1280s:

even though this *Art* is necessary in every matter, it has principally been invented because of theology, for theology is the goal of all other sciences, inasmuch as it is concerned with the final goal, and it is the impression of supreme wisdom [...].²⁹

25. My exposition of the subject is indebted to the extensive treatment by Josep M. Ruiz Simon (1999), Jordi Gayà (2008), Anthony Bonner (2007), and others. Vid. also section III. "Die Ars und die Theologie" in the introduction to my critical edition of Llull's *Tabula generalis* (ROL XXVII: 43*-52*).

26. "aquesta sciencia de theologia [...] es pus noble sciencia que totes les altres" (*Doctrina pueril*, cap. 75, De la sciencia de teologia, NEORL VII: 195).

27. Or *Liber proverbiorum*, probably written in Rome in 1296.

28. "4. Totes sciencies son per theologia. 5. Si theologia no fos sciencia, no foren per ella [les altres] sciencies" (*Proverbis de Ramon*, cap. CCLXXVI, De teologia, ORL XIV: 301). "4. Omnes Scientiae sunt propter Theologiam. 5. Si Theologia non esset Scientia, aliae Scientiae non essent propter illam" (*Liber proverbiorum*, MOG VI, int. vi, 121: 403).

29. "licet haec Ars in omni materia sit necessaria, tamen propter Theologiam principaliter sit inventa, quia Theologia est finis omnium aliarum Scientiarum, utpote tractans de

We will later see that the relationship between the *Art* and theology is more complex than this, despite the supremacy of the latter. But for the time being, we may sum up that according to Ramon Llull, theology is the noblest of all sciences, including his own *Art*, and also their final cause. But what does he mean by the term “theology”? Does he have a precise idea of theology as an academic discipline using Aristotelian methods? And how does he integrate sacred Scripture into his theory? If so many theologians did not clearly distinguish between Scripture on the one hand and the science expounding it on the other, how does Llull deal with the problem?

2.1. *Whether Theology is a Science? Two Kinds of Theology*

When Llull tackles the issue of theological science at greater length, he usually points out that there are two kinds of theology: one that is a science in the strict sense of the term, and one that is not. A well-known example can be found in his *Disputatio eremitae et Raimundi* (op. 76; Bo III.31), written in Paris in 1298. While being surrounded by theologians at the Sorbonne during his second stay in Paris, Llull apparently felt induced to write something like a *Sentence commentary*, dealing with a large number of topics borrowed from contemporary theological literature. And indeed, his *Disputatio* starts out with the familiar question of whether theology is a science:

Whether theology is a science in the proper sense? Raymundus answered by saying that theology is a science in two senses, namely, appropriate and proper. *In the appropriate sense* according to faith given by God, as a Catholic through faith believes the Articles of Faith and Holy Scripture which he does not understand by arguments. And it is a science *in the proper sense* since it is not the proper function of the intellect to believe but to understand [...].³⁰

ultimo fine, et est impressio summae sapientiae [...]" (*Introductoria Artis demonstrativae*, MOG III, int. ii, 3: 57).

30. "Utrum Theologia proprie sit Scientia? Respondit Raymundus dicens: quod Theologia sit Scientia duobus modis, scilicet appropriate et proprie; appropriate, secundum Fidem a Deo datam, ut Catholicus per Fidem credat Articulos Fidei et Sacram Scripturam, quae non intelligit per argumenta; et est Scientia proprie, quia intellectui non est proprium credere, sed intelligere [...]" (*Disputatio eremitae et Raimundi* [MOG IV, int. iv, 2-5: 226-229], esp. 226). Vid. also Bonner (2007: 281).

Here we have Llull distinguish between scientific theology *proprie* and *appropriate*. A few years later, in his *Lectura Artis, quae intitulata est Brevis practica Tabulae generalis* (op. 112; Bo III.64bis [Genoa, 1304]), he talks about a kind of theology that is *argumentabilis* and one that is *credibilis*:

People ask: Whether theology is a science? And the answer is that theology is twofold, namely, theology that is a science and theology that is not. The kind that is a science is argumentable (*argumentabilis*), and the kind that is not a science is credible (*credibilis*) [...] And indeed we say that it is credible with respect to the authorities of the saints.³¹

In the Prologue of his *Liber de modo naturali intelligendi* (op. 161; Bo IV.26 [Paris, 1310]), Llull makes a difference between two *parts* of theology, one of which is *probative* and the other *positive*.³² And in his *Liber de ente absoluto* (op. 217; Bo IV.76 [Messina, 1313]), he chooses the terms “*intellective or argumentative*” as opposed to “*positive or creditive*” in order to describe two different *species* of theology.³³

The four texts agree in that they associate scientific theology with the intellect, rational argument and proof. In contrast, the kind of theology that relies on authorities (like Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church Fathers) is associated with faith and believing. This is why it is no science, at least not in the proper sense. The consequences of this verdict can hardly be overestimated. For Llull, academic theology—like it was taught in Paris—is *not a science* because it is based on Scripture and the Articles of Faith as first principles. In the epilogue of his *Declaratio Raimundi* (op. 74; Bo III.30), another Parisian work written in 1298, we can read between the lines how little he appreciates the methods of the theological masters at the university:

31. “Quaeritur: Vtrum theologia sit scientia? Et dicendum est, quod duplex est theologia, scilicet theologia, quae est scientia, et theologia, quae non est scientia. Illa, quae est scientia, est argumentabilis, et illa, quae non est scientia, est credibilis [...] Dicimus autem, quod quantum ad auctoritates sanctorum credibilis est” (*Lectura Artis, quae intitulata est Brevis practica Tabulae generalis*, ROL XX: 393).

32. “Theologia partim est positiva, partim uero est probativa. Positiva quidem est per habitum fidei, probativa autem per intellectum attingentem obiectum tale cum habitum fidei” (*Liber de modo naturali intelligendi*; ROL VI: 209-210).

33. “Quoniam theologia per duas species praedicari potest, quarum una est positiva sive creditiva, alia est intellectiva sive argumentativa [...]” (*Liber de ente absoluto*; ROL I: 153).

Says Socrates: I ask you, Raimundus, whether the theologians believe as you said in the preceding chapters? Says Raimundus: Whatever I said, I proved, therefore I told the truth. And my venerable masters or doctors in theology, who are the columns of the Holy Christian faith, truly believe, and I believe that they love the aforesaid truth.³⁴

Unmistakably, there is a sarcastic undertone in this paragraph. While Llull sees himself able to *prove* the Christian doctrines, the theologians in Paris merely *believe*. But in his eyes, belief alone is not sufficient when it comes to expounding and defending the Christian truth. This is why we must conclude that for Llull only his own kind of theology is a science in the proper Aristotelian sense. Conventional academic theology—be it biblical or systematic—is not.

2.2. *The Principles of Theology and the Principles of the Art*

According to Ramon Llull, it is possible to prove the contents of the Christian faith with the help of his *Art* and his new technique of *demonstratio per aequiparantiam*. This conviction lies at the heart of all his thinking. One of the reasons why he maintains that his *Art* is a demonstrative tool in line with Aristotle's theory of science is its dependence on first principles which are self-evident, necessary, and universal. In the *Declaratio Raimundi* he says about the principles of the *Art*:

... these principles are general and common to all sciences and all conclusions, and they are known by themselves, and without them neither philosophy nor any other science can exist.³⁵

34. "Ait Socrates: Quaero a te, Raimunde, si theologi credunt, sicut tu dixisti in capitulis praedictis? Ait Raimundus: *Quicquid dixi, probavi, ergo uerum dixi*. Et uenerabiles domini mei theologi siue doctores in theologia, qui sunt columnae sanctae fidei christianae, *uere credunt*, et credo, quod praedictam ueritatem diligunt" (*Declaratio Raimundi*; ROL XVII: 400; italics mine).

35. "illa principia generalia sunt et communia ad omnes scientias et ad omnes conclusiones et per se sunt cognita, et sine illis philosophia nec aliqua alia scientia potest esse" (*Declaratio Raimundi*; ROL XVII: 257).

In other words, all sciences depend (or rather: should depend) upon the principles of the *Art*, even the noblest of them all, that is, theology. One of the most important texts dealing with this issue can be found in the *Lectura Artis, quae intitulata est Brevis practica Tabulae generalis*. Here the *Art* is conceived as a general science governing all the particular sciences, including theology.³⁶ This implies that the principles of theology are *subalter-nate* to the principles of the *Art* and derived from them:

And we want to show how this science is applicable to theology, namely, apply the principles and rules of this science, which are general, to the principles of theology, which are subalternate to these general principles and proper to theology.³⁷

It is to be noted that the subalternation of its principles does *not* make theology a science subalternate to the Lullian *Art*—or at least Lull never says so. As far as I can tell, he *never* calls theology a *scientia subalternata*, supposedly because this would impair its superiority over the other sciences.³⁸ In fact, the term *subalternate* is only used for the *principles* of theology.

According to the *Lectura Artis*, the principles of theology are divine goodness, divine greatness, divine eternity, and so on. This means that they correspond to the principles of the *Art* as applied to God—except for contrariety, majority and minority, which cannot exist in the divine essence.³⁹ Just like the principles of the *Art*, the principles of theology are self-evident, necessary, and universal, and this is a guarantee of their demonstrative capacity.⁴⁰

36. Vid. the section “De applicatione huius scientiae, quae generalis est, ad alias scientias particulares” in the *Lectura Artis* (ROL XX: 388-420).

37. “Volumus autem ostendere, quo modo haec scientia est applicabilis ad theologiam, scilicet, principia et regulas huius scientiae, quae generalia sunt, applicare ad principia theologiae, quae subalternata sunt his generalibus principiis, ac propria ipsius theologiae” (*Lectura Artis*, ROL XX: 388); vid. also Bonner (2007: 282).

38. Ruiz Simon (1999: 330) is imprecise in stating “Com hem vist, l’Art regeix la teologia (ja que aquesta és respecte a ella una ciència subalternada)”. The same holds true for Bonner (2007: 280), who talks about an “open statement of theology as a *scientia subalternata* to his *Art*”. I could not find the term “*scientia subalternata*” used for theology in any of Lull’s works, although he frequently speaks about “*principia subalternata*”, etc.

39. *Lectura Artis* (ROL XX: 389).

40. Gayà (2008: 483) has pointed to *De quadratura et triangulatura circuli* (op. 82; Bo III.37) where Lull talks about the Articles of Faith as principles of theology. This is correct,

With this radically new conception Llull intends to propose a solution for a major academic problem of his time. Instead of the Articles of Faith, he promotes the principles of his *Art* as first principles of theological demonstration. Like Ulrich of Strasbourg, Llull strives to set forth new principles which are truly self-evident and thus acceptable to everyone. They are conceived as elements of an alternative kind of theology which is supposed to be a demonstrative science in the strict Aristotelian sense.

But how about the Articles of Faith? Given that they are at the heart of Christian doctrine, what is their proper place in Llull's theology? And how about the Bible? If scriptural authorities cannot be used as axioms in scientific reasoning, should Scripture be excluded from theological science? This, of course, is completely out of the question.⁴¹ From Llull's point of view, the Articles of Faith are neither first principles nor indemonstrable, but subject to proof by his new demonstrative method. Once they have been proved, they may be employed as premises from which conclusions are derived in further arguments.⁴² So in a way they serve as second-order principles like in Ulrich's concept of theology—although Llull never uses this term. As to scriptural authorities, Llull developed a method to “reduce” them “to the necessity of reasons or arguments”.⁴³ Both procedures, which will be briefly presented in the following final section of this paper, may be considered as attempts to integrate the traditional subject matter of Christian doctrine into his peculiar concept of theology as a science.

but it does not mean that Llull considers them to be *first* principles. In fact, the text continues: “Et ista principia et etiam alia uolumus cognoscere secundum cognitionem, quam habere poterimus cum principiis generalis Artis” (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 1278, f. 133^{vb} [130^{vb}]; vid. also München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 10510, f. 8^{vb}). It seems that Llull – like many theologians of his time—is inconsistent in his use of the term “principle” because it is sometimes used for first principles of demonstration in the strict sense and sometimes not. In *De quadratura* he presents a broad range of theological principles and maxims from which scientific conclusions can be drawn, but they are all subject to explanation through the principles of the *Art*.

41. For the importance of the Bible in Ramon Llull's theology, vid. Reinhardt (1995).

42. In the *Declaratio Raimundi*, Socrates and Raimundus agree to base their discussion on “aliquibus ueris principiis et utrique parti communibus”. Raimundus suggests the Articles of Faith which he has proved in his *Liber de articulis fidei*. Although Socrates refuses and they later resort to the principles of the *Tabula generalis*, it is obvious that Llull regards the Articles of Faith as adequate principles of rational argument once they have been proved with the help of his *Art* (ROL XVII: 255-257; vid. Bonner 2007: 282).

43. Vid. below, n. 47.

2.3. The Use of “Authorities” in Lull’s Theology

2.3.1. How to Prove the Articles of Faith

The significance of the Articles of Faith for Lull’s theology is evident from several of his theological works where the Articles appear in the very title:

- *Liber de quattuordecim articulis fidei* (op. 28; Bo II.B.2);
- *Llibre dels articles de la fe / Liber de articulis fidei [et Apostrophe ad summum pontificem]* (op. 66; Bo III.24b);
- *Compendiosus tractatus de articulis fidei catholicae* (op. 91; Bo III.41c);
- *Liber ad probandum aliquos articulos fidei catholicae per syllogisticas rationes* (op. 113; Bo III.64ter).

In all these works Lull intends to provide proofs for the major tenets of the Christian creed. I would like to quote a paragraph from the Latin version of op. 66⁴⁴ in order to illustrate how he does this, taking as an example his demonstration of the necessity of the virgin birth.

After having offered rational arguments for the existence of God, his unity and trinity, creation, recreation, the incarnation of the Son of God and his conception through the Holy Spirit, Lull turns to proving Christ’s birth from a virgin in three steps:

first we will prove that he had to be born, *second*, from a woman, *third*, from a virgin woman.⁴⁵

Step three is developed as follows:

Every supernatural and most noble offspring, conceived in a supernatural and most noble manner, requires a supernatural and most noble beginning and a most noble mother giving birth in a supernatural manner; or else, the more the offspring would approach the perfect being, the more it would approach ignobility. But this one, of whom we proved that he must have been con-

44. MOG IV, int. ix, 27-57: 531-561.

45. “Probavimus, quod Persona Filii Dei debuerit incarnari, et quod illius Incarnatio sive Conceptio debuerit fieri de Sancto Spiritu sive per Sanctum Spiritum; nunc intendimus probare, quod debuerit nasci ex Virgine, et *primo* probabimus, quod debuerit nasci; *secundo*, quod ex Foemina; *tertio*, quod ex Foemina Virgine” (MOG IV, int. ix, 47: 551).

ceived by the Holy Spirit, is a most noble and supernatural offspring because he is God and man, and he is supernaturally and most nobly conceived because <this was done> through the Holy Spirit: therefore his beginning and birth must have been most noble.

However, no birth is most noble unless it is without corruption, nor is it supernatural unless it is of a virgin, nor does the mother give birth in a supernatural manner nor is she most noble unless she is and gives birth without corruption: therefore such an offspring, as we said, had to be born by a virgin and without corruption, so that the purity and the singularity of the Mother would correspond to the purity and the singularity of the Son in the highest degree of purity that could be found in a woman; or else the relation between the most noble Son and his mother would be uneven, although it is suitable that their relation should be truer than any other relation that can be found among creatures.⁴⁶

The question of whether “proofs” like this one are cogent or not, widely discussed throughout the centuries, will not be taken up again here. Indeed, Llull’s demonstration of the virgin birth would have been no more than an argument of convenience for most theologians of his times. While he himself was absolutely convinced of the necessity of his arguments, most of his readers and listeners were not.

2.3.2. How to “Reduce” Scriptural Authorities to Necessary Reasons

In his *Lectura Artis, quae intititata est Brevis practica Tabulae generalis*, Llull provides four examples for his procedure of “reducing authorities to the ne-

46. “Omnis Proles supernaturalis et nobilissima, supernaturaliter et nobilissime concepta requirit Ortum supernaturalem et nobilissimum et Matrem supernaturaliter parientem et nobilissimam; alias quanto magis proles accederet ad perfectum esse, tanto magis accederet ad ignobilitatem; sed iste, quem probavimus, quod debuerit concipi de Sancto Spiritu, est Proles nobilissima et supernaturalis, quia Deus et Homo, et supernaturaliter et nobilissime concepta, quia per Sanctum Spiritum: ergo ejus Ortus et Nativitas debuit esse nobilissima; nulla autem nativitas est nobilissima, nisi sit sine corruptione, nec supernaturalis, nisi sit ex Virgine, nec Mater parit supernaturaliter, nec est nobilissima, nisi pariat et sit sine corruptione: ergo talis Conceptus, ut diximus, debuit nasci de Virgine et sine corruptione, ut puritati et singularitati Filii responderet puritas et singularitas Matris in altiori gradu puritatis, qui potuit inveniri in Foemina; alias relatio inter nobilissimum Filium et Matrem ejus claudicaret; cum tamen conveniat, quod illa sit verior relatio, quam omnis alia relatio, quae possit reperiri in creaturis” (MOG IV, int. ix, 47: 551).

cessity of reasons or arguments”.⁴⁷ These examples give interesting insight into his method of employing Holy Scripture in the context of his new theological system.

We read in Genesis that God said: *Let us make man in our image and likeness*. And here it is asked: Whether God said this in order to signify plurality in himself or not? And we say that the answer is yes; like the rule of BCE and the definitions of goodness, greatness and power demand [...].

Isaiah said: *If you do not believe, you will not understand*. Therefore it is asked: Whether we can understand what we believe of God? And we say that the answer is yes, in a certain respect, not absolutely [...].

Saint John says in his Gospel: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word*. It is asked: How is this authority to be understood? Solution: EFK [...].

Likewise, John says in the same Gospel: *All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made*. Whence it is asked if this authority is true; and we say that it is. And this is demanded by the definition of goodness, greatness, duration and truth [...].⁴⁸

47. *Lectura Artis* (ROL XX: 395): “Diximus de applicatione Artis ad theologiam soluendo aliquas quaestiones per rationes. Nunc uolumus facere applicationem soluendo quaestiones per auctoritates, reducendo auctoritates ad necessitatem rationum uel argumentorum. Et hoc facimus ad dandam doctrinam, qualiter per hanc Artem reducuntur auctoritates ad demonstrationes”. The paragraph is translated in Bonner (2007: 280-281): “We have explained the application of this Art to theology by solving some questions by means of reasons. Now we would like to apply it by solving questions based on authorities, by reducing authorities to the necessity of reasons or arguments. And this we do to give a doctrine how by means of this Art authorities can be reduced to demonstrations.” Vid. also *Liber de fine* (ROL IX: 259): “et quod illas auctoritates reducant ad necessarias rationes”.

48. “11. Legitur in Genesi, quod Deus dixit: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*. Et hic quaeritur: Vtrum Deus hoc dixit ad significandum in se pluralitatem aut non? Et dicimus, quod sic; ut uult regula de BCE et definitiones bonitatis, magnitudinis et potestatis [...]

12. Dixit Isaias: *Si non credideritis, non intelligetis*. Quaeritur ergo: Vtrum illud, quod credimus de Deo, possimus intelligere? Et dicimus, quod sic, secundum quid, non simpliciter [...]

13. Beatus Iohannes dicit in Euangelio suo: *In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum*. Quaeritur: Quo modo ista auctoritas intelligenda est. Solutio: EFK [...]

14. Item dicit beatus Iohannes in eodem Euangelio: *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil*. Vnde quaeritur, si ista auctoritas est uera; et dicimus, quod sic. Et hoc uult

We see that all four “authorities” adduced by Llull are but brief phrases, isolated from their literary background and stripped of any narrative context. Every biblical quote is *immediately* converted into a question, and this question is being solved with the usual techniques of the *Art*. The lines of reasoning leading to the solutions are identical to those developed by Llull in other works that make use of the Artistic method.⁴⁹ Although in the text quoted from the *Lectura Artis* Llull claims to solve questions with the help of authorities (“nunc uolumus facere applicationem soluendo quaestiones per auctoritates”), he is actually only applying a slight variation of his demonstration *per necessarias rationes*. This unusual method of employing the Bible in scientific argument has been assessed by Klaus Reinhardt as follows:

Thus, the exegesis of Holy Scripture is more and more determined by the dogmatic and moral positions of the *Art*. This has its benefits, of course. The exegete is thus pointed to the proper “object” of Holy Scripture, to God, Christ, man, his virtues and vices etc. But on the other hand, this also means that Holy Scripture ceases to be the theologian’s starting point and steady companion. In any case, the contemplation of Holy Scripture is reduced to the exegesis of selected texts and terms. It can’t be overlooked that Llull reduces the richness of biblical revelation to a few basic texts (*Pater, Ave, Credo*) and to the articles of the Creed and the main doctrines of the Church. The narrative moments of Holy Scripture and its historical context are being blanked out; the diversity of persons acting in the history of salvation and in the Church is reduced to a small number, especially Christ and Mary.⁵⁰

definitio bonitatis, magnitudinis, durationis et ueritatis [...]” (ROL XX: 395-396). Vid. also Tenge-Wolf (2002: 47*-48*).

49. For the sake of brevity, the solutions to the questions have not been quoted here.

50. “Die Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift wird so immer mehr von den dogmatischen und moralischen Positionen der *Ars* her bestimmt. Das hat sicherlich Vorteile. Der Exeget wird so hingewiesen auf die eigentliche ‘Sache’ der Heiligen Schrift, auf Gott, Christus, den Menschen, dessen Tugenden und Laster etc. Auf der anderen Seite aber bedeutet das auch, daß die Heilige Schrift nicht mehr der Ausgangspunkt und das bleibende Gegenüber des Theologen ist. Zumindest wird die Betrachtung der Heiligen Schrift reduziert auf die Exegese ausgewählter Texte und Wörter. Es ist nicht zu übersehen, wie Llull die Fülle der biblischen Offenbarung zurückführt auf einige Grundtexte (*Pater, Ave, Credo*) sowie auf die Artikel des Glaubensbekenntnisses und die Hauptdogmen der Kirche. Die erzählenden Momente der Heiligen Schrift und ihr geschichtlicher Kontext werden ausgeblendet; die Vielfalt der in der Heilsgeschichte und in der Kirche handelnden Personen wird auf einige wenige, vor allem Christus und Maria, reduziert.” (Reinhardt 1995: 330-331).

Ramon Llull was well aware of the importance of sacred Scripture in academic theology. Although in his own concept of theology as a science, the Bible played a subordinate role, he tried hard not to appear oblivious to the authoritative texts of Christian revelation. However, in the university milieu of Paris, where Scriptural exegesis and systematic theology were inextricably intertwined, his abstinence from exegetical verbosity—and from elaborate biblical narration altogether—must have seemed odd in the eyes of the theological masters. Not only did the man pretend to be able to prove the articles of the Christian creed—he also conceived theology as a science that could nearly do without the Bible! It is little wonder that the two different concepts of theology outlined in this paper remained incompatible.

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