Lectura Lulli: The Book Of The Lover And The Beloved

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Lectura Lulli: Il libro dell'Amante e del'Amato

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Ramon Lull can produce conflicting impressions. On the one hand, the author seems to take an extremely intellectualistic viewpoint. His vast writings, which describe the movement of the mind as it opens itself to truth, contain analyses so subtle that it is hard for us to appreciate them. On the other hand, this amazingly subtle analysis does not lead to the proof of complicated truths, nor is it used as a tool in the cognitive domain of subject with respect to object. Rather it is an internal description of the act of consciousness in its understanding, that is, in its openness to the truth of being.

No one today would dare suggest that mathematical analysis is a waste of time just because of its obviously abstract nature. On the contrary, everyone knows the positive results that come from the application of mathematics to the study of physics. Lull's analysis is extraordinarily subtle. It may seem unbearably abstract.. But it is nothing else than a description of the spiritual act that opens itself to the all-pervading light of God's truth. Seen in this way, pages that might seem off-putting by reason of the abstract conceptual movement they describe, become a source of endless fascination.

Our enthusiasm is readily stirred by reading the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, since it is so easy for us all to find in them passages and thoughts from our own life. Likewise, we have no trouble seeing ourselves in certain aspects of Kierkegaard's characters. Through them the author meant to serve his fellow human beings by describing the possibilities of existence in such a way that, thanks to the reading, they might more easily become aware of themselves, their state and their destiny. But Lull carries out minute analyses of the movement of the intellect. Almost as if he were developing a kind of *ars combinatoria*, he does not hesitate to assign algebraic symbols to concepts in such a way that their mutual relationships can be shown by means of highly condensed formulas. He was called to accomplish this vast and subtle work while in mystical rapture. Because of the illumination he received, the Church in giving him the title of *Doctor* recognized him as *illuminatus*.

Lull is generally given credit for having constructed multiple *itineraria* of the mind in its ascent to God. Not enough note has been taken of how he anticipated the phenomenology of the mind. He regards every concept as a mode of being of the subject expressed by it; every concept is a *figure*, which means that it is posited as a particular stage in the expression of the finite mind within the infinite light of Truth.

Lull's thought is impossible to summarize because the passages and their connections sometimes have the essential brevity of formulas. Or else they are mentioned solely on the basis of various combinations of letters to which a particular conceptual meaning has been conventionally attributed. See, for example, Flowers of Love and Flowers of Understanding, a brief and schematic work which is nevertheless valuable as a reflection of the author's remarkable agility. The Prologue lists the principles of the art of loving: Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Will, Virtue, Truth and Glory; Difference, Concordance, Contrariety, Beginning, Middle, End, Majority, Equality and Minority. Next these principles are taken in pairs, each pair being symbolized by a letter of the alphabet: (B) Goodness and Difference; (C) Greatness and Concordance; (D) Eternity and Contrariety; (E) Power and Beginning; (F) Wisdom and Middle; (G) Will and End; (H) Virtue and Majority; (I) Truth and Equality; (K) Glory and Minority. As we can see, each letter stands for a pair of concepts in their relationship to each

¹ R. Lulli, *Flores amoris et intelligentiae*, in *Opera*, Mainz 1737, anastatic copy, Frankfurt/Main, 1965, Vol. VI, pp. 225ff.

other. If the author wishes to indicate just one of the concepts, he uses the letter (T). The understanding is that if the letter precedes the (T) it refers to the first member of the pair, and if it follows the (T) it refers to the second. For example, a (B) before the (T) indicates Goodness, whereas after the (T) it indicates Difference.

The resulting combinations are extremely numerous, and as we mentioned, obviously cannot be summarized. Here is an example: "B.G.T.F. So that the Friend may not flee from the Beloved, Goodness and Love bind the Friend to his Beloved with love." Or again: "B.G.T.G. The Friend was seeking the object of his love in the sea of Goodness and the sea of Love. He would have perished had it not been for his Beloved." And so forth. Rather than summarized, such schematic expressions perhaps need to be collected and their implications explained. Indeed, they are a kind of formulary, which if carefully preserved and appropriately used, can reopen the mind to the infinity of the light, in case the awful temptation to rest in an image or inadequate concept of God should return.

Lull has given us a huge work in which the various movements of conscience, understanding and affection are linked, creating a rich palette of colors which bring out the harmony among creatures. It can be read with considerable interest in our time when *deconstruction* is the current rage in philosophy. It is often said, in the context of today's nihilism, that universal truth is impossible and that the voices of those who still propound it are lying. Lull, for his part, has crossed the universe of spiritual, philosophical and theological understanding, combining and recombining in various ways that fulness of meaning which is the clearest mark of the divine Logos. Just as the purest, most transparent crystals take in all the colors of the light and are intimately conformed to it, so the mind of Lull moves in a constant play of refractions within the light of the spirit. In the infinite truth it shows a myriad of ways that are never repeated, yet always in harmony.

This is neither rationalism nor intellectualism. No rational criterion for recognizing the truth of Scripture is ever proposed. If such were the case, we would find ourselves faced with the absurd claim that the powers of created nature could judge things that come from the grace of God. On the contrary, the grace of revelation is received and explored by the mind in various ways, to show that in it are all fullness, all riches, all perfection of

² R. Lulli, Flores Amoris, p. 226.

thought and affection—as well as all possible harmony among the human faculties that God Himself has created and redeemed.

Lull was an extremely versatile genius. Besides works of rare intellectual rigor, he was also able to produce writings in which religious affection is expressed more freely and immediately. These works are particularly rich in symbols, the result no doubt of a lively imagination. But there is something else. Imagination, we must remember, is like dreams and can come from two distinct sources. On the one hand, there is the imagination that springs from life's deep emotions. All of us frequently create images that express our desires, the fears and powerful emotions we feel each day. But at other times the intellect may be drawn toward God in secret and nourished on truth and light in way too lofty for our philosophy and theology to understand. It is possible at such times for fantasy to be aroused and give rise to images, which like dreams sent by God hint at truths not yet understood in the context of theological doctrines. From the Old Testament patriarchs to the great seer of Patmos, images sent by God have always been recognized as gifts that enrich the understanding and lift it beyond concepts. We have already mentioned the illumination that changed the course of Lull's life. It seems that he, too, was at times guided by images that appeared suddenly from above—images he wished to explain through analysis that which lay hidden there in a vast and complex harmony.

Pythagoras used to experience a kind of mystical rapture while calculating numerical relationships or contemplating the mathematical harmonies of the cosmos. Lull, in a certain sense, is a Pythagorean spirit. But instead of the mathematical harmonies, he contemplates the relationships among the ideas in which the very truth of the spiritual universe is expressed.

The Book of the Lover and the Beloved, which is part of the long and basically autobiographical Blanquerna, lends itself especially well to a first reading of Lull. It has all the subtlety of investigation that characterizes the more strictly theoretical works of his Magna Ars. At the same time its 366 thoughts, each one a starting point for the day's meditation throughout the year, can be read and understood individually, even without trying to link them to the general constructive process of multiple dialectic combinations. The Lover is the human being who is seeking God; the Beloved is God, three in one: "From the depths of the abyss of goodness and merit comes three beings, alike in glory and merit. The Lover is equally inflamed by love

for all three. Yet his love is only one, for although the Beloved subsists as three, the Lover is only one in essence" (267).

The first path that leads to the knowledge of God must be sought in the world. According to Lull, the mind in its interior journeys cannot prescind from consideration of the great wisdom manifested by God in creation:

They asked the Lover, 'What is the world?' He answered, 'It is a book for those who can read in which is revealed my Beloved.' They asked him, 'Is your Beloved in the world then? He answered, 'Yes, just as the writer is in his book.' 'And in what does this book consist?' 'In my Beloved, since my Beloved contains all, and therefore the world is in my Beloved, rather than my Beloved in the world' (307).

The search for God and contemplation of Him through the wonders of nature is a necessary step. The psalm verse, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork," has an enduring literal sense, which in its immediacy is prior to the wonder of the spiritual heavens where the glory of the Lord is more deeply revealed. Ancient philosophers had also sought God beyond the gods, but had found only impersonal Order, Destiny, Idea, Thought, Unity. Whoever seeks God only in nature finds traces and magnificent analogies, but these are not as meaningful as those found within the mind. Lull, nourished for many years by the reading of Sacred Scripture, realized that God must also be sought in nature. But then he turned with greater energy to the traces found within the mind:

The Lover was praising his Beloved, and he said that he had transcended place because he is in a place where place does not exist. And so, when they

³ Raimondo Lullo, *Il libro dell'Amante e dell'amato*, Città armoniosa, Bologna 1974, no. 267. The work contains 366 short thoughts, one for each day of the year. According to the author's intention, these are to be the subject of prolonged and intense meditation, leading to progress in the love of God. Citations from this work are indicated hereafter simply by the number (in parentheses) with which the thoughts appear in the book. [Translator's Note: Whenever possible, I have used Kenneth Leech's revision of the English translation by E. Allison Peers. But I have kept Malaguti's numbering in all cases, even when it differs from that of Leech. In addition, Malaguti cites several passages that I was unable to find in Leech's edition; I have translated these myself from the Italian.]

⁴ Ps 19:2.

asked the Lover where his Beloved was, he replied, 'He is—but none knows where.' Yet he knew that his Beloved was in his remembrance" (219).

This is clearly Augustinian. God causes the soul He Himself created to love Him, and is He present there is such a mysterious way that the soul itself cannot stop seeking Him any longer without feeling the shame of dispersion and desperation. Dante is another who borrows from Christian metaphysics and theology the idea of creaturely remembrance:

...but your life is breathed forth immediately by the Chief Good, who so enamors it of His own Self that it desires Him always.⁵

What was it that led Lull to choose to seek God in the depths of his mind rather than in the great manifestations of the cosmos? It is easy to think of some of the main biblical passages in this regard. Elijah awaits the voice of the Lord, not in the whirlwind, earthquake or fire, but in the murmur of a gentle breeze. Jesus says to the Samaritan woman: "The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." But although Lull was powerfully inspired by the Gospel, he follows a unique route that does not include biblical citations but seeks the truth in another way. The illumination he received gave a special meaning to his life. In the spirit of Jonah, he felt himself sent to bear witness by his praise in those places where Christ was misunderstood or opposed, where Scripture was interpreted differently than in Christianity: "The Beloved said to his Lover, 'You shall praise and defend me in those places where people are most afraid to praise me" (135). And so he searched within his mind for the lofty dynamics of love through which to answer God's call. The highest love, that which is most deeply lived, becomes an encounter with pure truth and a criterion for the true understanding of Scripture. But all of this is rare in the world because love is not loved: "The Beloved left love and the other faculties free for all people to take at their pleasure. But love could find hardly anyone to welcome it into his heart. And so the Lover wept and felt sad, seeing the shame that causes us here in the world to accept love from false lovers and ungrateful souls" (253).

⁵ Dante, Paradiso VII, 142ff.

⁶ See 1 Kings 19:11-12.

⁷ Jn 4:23.

The image of a tree appears constantly in Lull's works. Was such a symbol perhaps present in the illumination he received? The roots of this tree lie buried in a lofty, bright cloud that shines in a mystical realm unattainable by human knowledge. The tree represents the high life of the intellect which is allowed to enter the temple of transcendent truth; its life depends on its foliage, and its roots transmit the light of the mind to the earth of shadows. This is no doubt related to the account in Genesis which says: "Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."8 The tree of life that lives by its foliage seems to symbolize a dimension of the mind that has become unattainable because of original sin. It is the metaphysical place in the person through which every good is given; there the very light of God is infused into our life. The Lover or person whose senses are immersed in the love of God may live in the shade of this tree and receive every good given by God in and through it: "The Lover was all alone in the shade of a fair tree. People passed by that place and they asked him why he was alone. And the Lover answered, 'I am alone now that I have seen you and heard you. Until now I was in the company of my Beloved" (46).

In Eden, Adam was able to freely enjoy life from that tree, hear the voice of God, and enjoy the light that gives light to all it encompasses. But disobedience caused him to lose that place of intense, high communion. The woman's heedlessness in listening to the serpent took place in painful solitude compared to the inner companionship granted by the Beloved. In the earthly paradise the water of life *naturally* flowed upwards; but now it is imprisoned by this world's gravity which draws it to every low place. That is why Lull complains:

When will the hour come in which water, which flows downwards, will change in nature and mount upwards? When will the innocent be more in number than the guilty? Ah! When will the Lover joyfully lay down his life for the Beloved? And when will the Beloved see the Lover grow faint for love of him? (4).

Now we can no longer return to that tree. We are no longer naturally open to the light from above to which the intellect ought to turn. But a new gift has been given to all. The tree of life has been transplanted, as it were, into this world of sadness and shadows, here among us where the

⁸ Gen 2:9.

mind's brightness does not reach, where we live in uncertainty. This new tree is the Cross: whoever approaches it lovingly will not be rejected. In the Cross we receive, not Eden again, but an even greater gift: "The Lover was disobedient to his Beloved, and the Lover wept. And the Beloved came in the vesture of his Lover and died, so that his Lover might regain what he had lost. So he gave him a gift which was greater than that which he had lost" (29). The tree of life once lost becomes the new gift, the tree of the Cross: "The Beloved bought a garden for the Lover in which to cultivate his love. The Lover watered it with sweat and with five rivers. These were sweeter than any other thing, so sweet they were. He made it very fertile, and in the midst of the garden he planted a beautiful tree, whose fruit would cure every sickness" (239). It is easy, I think, to take the five rivers as representing the five wounds. These, among the many other wounds of the passion, stand for prompt assistance (the pierced feet), the great work of our salvation (the pierced hands), the total gift of the heart (the pierced heart). These things were accepted even before human wickedness drove in the piercing nails, before the lance tore asunder the last veil, for as St. Francis knew, it was not human iniquity or the devil's savagery that crucified Jesus. Christ freely accepted His passion; His own love for us nailed Him to the cross." The tree of life has been transplanted into the garden the Beloved has acquired for his Lover: "They asked the Lover what sign his Beloved carried on his banner. He answered, 'The sign of a Man who was dead.' They asked him why he carried such a sign. He answered, 'Because he became Man and died on a Cross, and because those who glory in being his lovers must follow in his steps" (102). The Cross enables us to return to the way that leads to God, beginning from our rediscovered interiority. It is the door that opens the way to God and to true humanity: "The doors of Divinity and Humanity were opened, and the Lover went in to see his Beloved" (42).

The Lover can find a cure for his love by directing all his love toward Him who alone is deserving of love. When love is healed and free from false meaning, the Lover himself becomes ill, for he suffers too much from his own unworthiness and that of others and he is too embittered by the heedless indifference of so many with respect to love. And so the Beloved cares for the Lover (see 249). He does not let him perish under the weight of such great suffering; he explains to him that in matters of love joy and pain are indistinguishable: "The Lover was sick with love, and a doctor came in to see him, but he multiplied his sorrows and his thoughts. And in

⁹ See St. Francis, Admonition V.

that same hour the Lover was healed" (90). Cured by the Beloved, the Lover understands what love is; he understands it in all its incurable contradictions: "Death for him who lives and life for him who dies. It is delight and comfort in heaven, sadness and gloom on earth. It is longed-for absence and joyful presence without end" (330). Or again, it is "bitter sweetness and sweet bitterness" (331). The Cross, the new and more lofty tree of life, enables us to take all creaturely riches and use them to bear fruit. For this reason, the book that spurs us on to daily meditation presents a plan that seems to describe the internal act in all its complexity. The seemingly abstract nature of the discussion becomes easier to accept as soon as we realize that what Lull is explaining is the modalities of the conscience that arrives at love.

The language of *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved* owes much to the expressions of troubadour poetry. Its analysis of the sentiment of love falls within the framework of traditional mystical interpretations of the *Canticle of Canticles*. This is evident in many places, for example: "Tell us, Fool of Love! If your Beloved no longer cared for you, what would you do?' I should love him still,' he replied, 'or else I must die, because to cease to love is death, and love is life" (62). But there is an intensity of thought that certainly transcends analysis of sentiment. It is related to the understanding of the heart, which is the root of consciousness. Lull knows that if the soul refuses to enter into itself and be drawn beyond itself in contemplation, then it denies its very nature and the true essence of its existence:

For one hour only the Lover would gladly have forgotten his Beloved and not known him, so that his grief might have some rest. But such oblivion and ignorance had themselves made him suffer, and so he had patience in his suffering, and he lifted up his understanding, memory and will in contemplation of his Beloved (198).

St. Paul says that God "dwells in unapproachable light," which is the light of the spirit. Lull is referring to the highest dimension of interiority when he says: "The Lover was praising his Beloved, and he said that he had transcended place because he is in a place where place does not exist. And so when they asked the Lover where his Beloved was, He replied, 'He is—but none knows where'" (220). This reminds us of similar expressions later used by Dante to describe the Empyrean, a place where all that is "not in place" is understood, a place beyond which—that is, beyond space itself—shines

¹ Tim 6:16.

¹¹ Dante, Convivio, II, 4.

the unattainable light of God. The Lover's evocative statments, "He is in a place where place does not exist" and "He is—but none knows where," are followed by a remark of Augustinian intensity: "Yet he knew that his Beloved was in his remembrance" (220). Remembrance of God is the primary foundation of our very thinking. He is not an object of knowledge; rather He gives Himself *freely* as object: "And the Beloved revealed his Face to the memory and understanding of his Lover, and gave himself to his will as an Object" (108).

Not without reason does Lull say that God gives Himself to the will rather than to knowledge. When God is present to the intellect, the Lover forgets himself. The Beloved's presence is ignorance and oblivion. This is not a contradiction, for when the intellect is absorbed in the ecstasy of the divine presence it can no longer remember itself, its own experience, or its legacy: "The Beloved tested his Lover to see if his love for him were perfect. He asked him how the Beloved's presence differed from his absence. The Lover answered, 'As knowledge and remembrance differ from ignorance and oblivion'" (6). God is known more by His absence, for when we remember Him we retain the traces, the signs He has left us of His presence and His love. But when He is present, He floods the soul with light until it forgets, as it were, its own identity. When the Beloved is absent, then our search becomes more intense, our awareness of what we have lost becomes more vivid, and our consciousness of the need to find Him grows stronger.

The search for God demands work that may sometimes be very hard: "The Lover wanted to sleep for he had worked hard seeking his Beloved, and he was afraid that he might forget him. And he wept for fear that he might fall asleep and might not remember his Beloved" (27). It is this work, this weeping, that enhances the will's importance in choosing and in the strength of his love. He feels a strong urge to accept the pain that comes from recognition of his limited capacity to love, but complaint brings no satisfaction. A bird singing of love says to the Beloved: "If love did not make you bear trials, how could you show your love for him?" (34). The Beloved accepts the pain, and so the thorns and tribulations of love seem to be "flowers and a bed of love to him" (35). All this seems virile if we think only of the understanding running far ahead of the will. Yet it is only in the will, which is freedom, that the gold of fidelity is to be found. That is why, as we have seen, the Beloved gives Himself as object to the will rather than to the understanding. Lull writes: "The Lover inquired from Understanding and Will which of them was the nearer to his Beloved. The two ran, and Understanding came nearer to the Beloved than did the Will" (18). Too quick a reading might give the impression that this is a tribute to the intellect. In reality, the will takes more time because it must always proceed by way of free and conscious acts, whereas the intellect's nature is to let itself become absorbed in contemplation to the point that it forgets itself in ecstasy.

"There was a conflict between the eyes and the memory of the Lover. The eyes said that it was better to behold the Beloved than to remember him. But Memory said that remembrance brings tears to the eyes and makes the heart burn with love" (18). Lull knows through direct experience that contemplation involves the whole person, and he wants free will, which is able to love and suffer the pain of separation, to prove its fidelity. This is more important than the intellect's penetrating race to those regions of light hidden from our experience, where it is permitted by grace to visit. The Lover asks not for gifts of understanding, but for gifts that will increase his love. Thus he sings, "Ah, what great affliction love is!" (112), and again, "I was tormented by love, Beloved, until I cried that you were present in my torments. And then love eased my grief, you increased my love as a reward, and love doubled my torments" (110). There is an ascensional dialectic in this entire contemplation. It consists in the growth of desire, the consolation of presence, and the highest striving to reach the Beloved at an even deeper level. Lull's investigation, subtle as it is, does not describe presence in intellectual terms; rather it brings together the mind's modes of being, its intense reaching out in response to God's marvelous care for human beings...

How near is the Beloved to the Lover? Lull's images are very bold: "Whether Lover and Beloved are near or far is all the same, for their love mingles as water mingles with wine. They are joined as heat is with light. They agree and are as closely united as Essence and Being" (49). It is easy enough to speak of the unity that results from the mingling of two different substances such as water and wine. But Lull's reference to the agreement of being and essence is exceptionally bold. It shows how intense is the thought that lies hidden beneath these notes which seem to deal only with the dimension of feeling.

His reference to the indissolubility of heat and light is also important. These things seem obvious. But if we recall that our culture prefers to speak of light's mysterious origin in a night where there is supposedly neither thought, word, nor anything that can be heard, we are easily convinced that we need to meditate again on these themes. In reality,

light is seen not only in those bodies that obstruct or block it, according to the harsh sayings of Göthe's Mephistopheles; ¹² it is seen not only in the veil that is visible only insofar as its course is opposed. Light is also a resplendent ray that can lead the eye to turn toward its source. The Beloved is not seen in the light; he himself is the source of light, and so he is more properly called by the name light: "They asked the Lover, 'What is the greatest light?' And he answered, 'The presence of my Beloved'" (124).

For the Lover and Beloved to speak to one another obviously requires a degree of mutual understanding. No one has ever seen God; no one has ever been able to choose to enter into dialogue with God. But when God descended to earth, He freely placed Himself within the intelligibility of this world, thus making conversation possible. With respect to the divine light, this world is like a cloud blocking our sight. But the presence of the light illumines the cloud and makes it clear:

Love shone through the cloud which had come between the Lover and the Beloved, and made it to be as bright and splendid as the moon by night, as the day star at dawn, as the sun at midday, and as the understanding in the will. And through that bright cloud, the Lover and the Beloved held conversation (123).

The image of the cloud is surely meant to call to mind the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor, when Jesus opened His disciples' eyes to the dimension of paradise, and they were able to hear the Master conversing with Moses and Elijah. Enveloped in a brilliant cloud, they heard the voice of the Father. Lull's images become more intense: the moon in the night, the light at dawn, the sun in the day, and finally the understanding which casts light on the objects of the will. With difficulty modern philosophy has recaptured something similar in the notion of the *Lichtung* as an ideal open space where thought is able to question itself freely about the meaning of being. But the shining cloud that appears increasingly meaningful seems to link us to the choice made by the Source of light since the beginning, in order that we might participate in Truth and enjoy its presence.

All truth and glory are found in God to a degree beyond our ability to desire: "The Lover stated that everything in his Beloved was perfection, and that in him there was no fault at all. Which of these two, do you think, is the greater—whether that which was affirmed or that which was denied?" (206). And again: "Tell us, Fool! How can you be most like your Beloved?'

¹² See W. Göthe, Faust, vv. 1350-58.

He answered, 'By comprehending and loving with all my power the perfection and beauty of my Beloved'" (216).

All things tell the greatness of God, but Lull considers in particular the modalities of conscience, for by knowing and willing it is inevitably directed—if the heart is pure—toward the transcendent Beloved. The closer the sciences come to God, the more aware they become of the distance between creatures and God, a distance that cannot be overcome by created nature: "Theology and Philosophy, Medicine and Law met the Lover who inquired of them if they had seen his Beloved. The first wept, the second was doubtful, but the other two were glad. By this, each of them was telling the Lover to go and seek his Beloved" (346). This is an idea of great importance. The sciences that deal with the things of earth, not claiming to describe the Beloved but only to discern the effects of His will for creatures, eagerly speak of the Beloved. But Philosophy is already troubled, for it realizes how hard it is for reason to open itself toward the rays that come from God. Theology, which has received the gifts of Revelation, can only weep at the thought of the great distance between our knowledge and the fullness of God's light. This is true apophatism and not the sort of vague nihilism that presents the rejection of metaphysical thought as high wisdom. Only when we make an enormous effort to consider the mystery of truth as deeply as possible do we arrive at the true spiritual tears which are a measure of the extreme inadequacy of our knowledge before the Absolute: "The Beloved said, 'What are you measuring, Fool?' The Lover answered, 'I measure the lesser with the greater, defects with fullness, and beginning with infinity and eternity, so that humility, patience, charity and hope may be planted more firmly in my memory" (71). Beyond all measure, "the Lover is quality without qualities, for he is good and he is goodness, he is beautiful and he is beauty" (288). The question urges: How great is the Beloved? And the Lover replies: "He is great and small, high and low, simple and compound. For that reason he is everything, One without composition" (288).

Like all Christian writers, Lull is mindful of Jesus' words: "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent, you have revealed them to the little ones." It is not rejection of knowledge that makes us little, but rather that humility which forces us to recognize that created

¹³ Mt 11:26.

faculties cannot grasp the mystery of His love—He who has crossed unimaginable mountains and valleys, who has passed through the angelic heavens, and who offers Himself to us in our little dwellings: "Love said: 'I dwell above without forsaking what is beneath; I offer myself freely to all; therefore, whoever does not welcome me will have no excuse" (253). And again: "The Beloved is far above love. The Lover is far beneath it. And love, which lies between these two, makes the Beloved descend on the Lover, and makes the Lover rise towards the Beloved. This ascending and descending are the beginning and the life of love" (263).

It is important to note that although, according to the standards of his time, Lull was well versed in the stars and their special influence on people, he excludes astrology in its predictive aspects from the list of sciences that speak of God. The reason for his rejection of astrology and every kind of divination is singularly powerful and consoling. Prediction of the future would limit the ever new interventions of Providence in human affairs. The Lover says to the astrologer: "You are mistaken. It is not science but a scientific fraud, an intellectual obfuscation of magic and soothsaying, a science of false prophets and liars who defame the work of the divine Master. It is a portent of new evils that challenge and destroy the providence of my Beloved, who promises good in place of the evil that threatens it" (347). These words recall the mission of Jonah who unexpectedly obtained the conversion of Nineveh, while the people were saved from the destruction that seemed inevitable.

The true meaning of Lull's work still awaits discovery. It is a patient and peaceful work. There is only one truth; the converging ways seem irreconcilable to us. God alone, the center of all hearts and the light of all minds, can understand and appreciate the value of the search each of us is making. For we all come from the regions of indifference, ignorance and error; we are all tempted to resist the call, we are all seeking God by "groping for Him." Lull intended to receive no glory from his work; on the contrary, he sought martyrdom, which was granted to him in Tunis where he was savagely stoned to death.

¹⁴ Acts 17:27.