



Quia nolunt dimittere credere pro credere, sed credere per intelligere:
Ramon Llull and his Jewish Contemporaries

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Abstract: Unlike most of his contemporaries, Ramon Llull understood the need of actually engaging with the beliefs of his Jewish and Muslim contemporaries, rather than just with their texts, if he wanted to attain their conversion to Christianity. Coming from the Iberian peninsula where new theologies like Kabbalah were gaining ground among the Jews, Llull harnessed its central tenets in order to convince the Jews, by "necessary reason", of the inherent truth of Christianity. This article discusses the intellectual milieu in which Llull developed his Art, shows how he intended it to be used, and brings a Jewish response by Solomon ibn Adret, leader of the Jewish community in Catalonia to the challenge posed by Llull.

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In a number of places in his large *corpus*, Ramon Llull tells the story about what happened to a certain Dominican friar when on a conversion mission. The friar goes to Tunis where he debates with Sultan al-Mustansir (Longpre, 1933: 270; Abun-Nasr, 1975: 140-43).

This very capable friar was able to prove to the Sultan the falsehood of Islam; however, he was unable to prove the tenets of the Christian faith, saying 'the faith of the Christians cannot be proven'. The friar handed the Sultan a list of Christian doctrines in Arabic telling him that he should read and believe them. The Sultan was very annoyed with the friar because he had destroyed his belief in the precepts of Islam without providing him with an alternative.

As a result the Sultan expelled the friar and his companions. Llull continues: 'I myself saw this friar and his colleagues. Later on this friar learned to speak Hebrew and, among others, used to dispute rather frequently in Barcelona with a certain Jew, very learned in Hebrew and a Rabbi. This Jew told me on many occasions that if he [i.e. Martí] could definitively demonstrate by reason the truth of the faith in which he believed [i.e. Christianity], then he [the Rabbi] would become a Christian' (*De acquisitione Terrae Sanctae*, 3.1)

It has been suggested that the friar was the renowned Ramon Martí, author of the monumental polemical tract *Pugio fidei*. The Jewish Rabbi in the account had been previously identified with Nahmanides; however if the said friar is Ramón Martí, then the Jewish disputant must be Solomon ibn Adret, Nahmanides' disciple and leader of the community in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (Longpre, 1933: 198-200, who identifies the friar as Ramón Martí and suggests 1268-69 as a possible timeframe; Baron, 1983: vol. 9, 281 and Cohen, 1980-81: 51-5. See also Bonner, 1989: 179-80).

In a small work written in 1309 which discussed the conformity or harmony that should exist between faith and reason, Llull wrote that 'one should not be willing to renounce one belief for another, but (to renounce) a belief for the sake of understanding', in other words, one should abandon one's faith only if totally convinced of the truth of the other faith (*Liber de convenientia fidei et intellectus in obiecto*, in Raymundi Lulli Opera omnia, [henceforth MOG], Salzinger, Mainz 1721-42, vol. 4, xii, 2: *quia nolunt dimittere credere pro credere, sed credere pro intelligere*).

In another work in which Faith disputes Intellect written in Montpellier in 1303, Intellect persuades Faith of the importance of being able to prove via

necessary reason the truth of the Christian faith (*Disputatio fidei et intellectus*, MOG 4, viii, 2-7. The aforementioned story about the missionary [probably Ramon Martí] who manages to convince a Muslim ruler of the errors in Islam but is unable to prove the Christian truths and thus earns the scorn of the ruler who feels that he has lost everything and gained nothing, is told here by Intellect).

For Llull, if one wanted to persuade a Jew or Muslim to convert to Christianity, it would not be enough to ridicule that persons faith and show it to be utterly false, but one would have to be able to definitely prove to the satisfaction of one's opponent, the truth of Christianity. Interestingly enough, Llull's sentiments are echoed in a Jewish rebuttal of Christian argumentation composed by the aforementioned Solomon ibn Adret. He wrote:

...and someone seeking to separate and convert someone from his faith to another faith with which he [the one converting] is unfamiliar, will need, in any case, to present many strong arguments and much investigation till he can overcome [beliefs] to which he is accustomed through his own investigation. He should be taught these [arguments] and he should study and interiorise them in his heart [the soul] many times over and test them faithfully as to whether they are the truth, and that they are not refutable.

For without this, it would be lacking in integrity for a person to exchange his God through weak arguments, and not even strong arguments should [bring] him [to convert] until he has investigated them, and finds that there is no more room for doubt (*Teshubot ha-Rashba - The Responsa of Solomon ibn Adret*, Dimitrovski, Jerusalem, 1990, vol. 1, 215. It is interesting to note that in his *Commentary on the Legends in the Talmud*, Feldman, Jerusalem, 1991, 103, ibn Adret seems to infer the opposite saying, 'Anything received or accepted via prophecy will not be contradicted by reason, because reason is inferior to prophecy', and on p. 105 he says, that 'received lore even if philosophical reasoning shows it to be wrong, should not be abandoned').

For ibn Adret, the idea that someone should be forced to convert, or that someone would convert without having fully investigated the other faith and come to the irrefutable conclusion that the other faith was true, was abhorrent. While for Llull, conversion of the unbelievers was something to be desired and worked towards, and for ibn Adret, something to be fought against, both agreed that if someone decided to convert, it should be out of complete conviction, and not coercion.

The incident in Tunis, followed up by the discussions in Barcelona between Martí, the Rabbi, ibn Adret and Llull sums up the different approaches to the issue of religious conversion in the late thirteenth-century. Martí was a product of the university world and adopted scholastic methodology for conversion, whereby Llull was an autodidactic maverick, who developed his own unique approach to this issue. For Martí, while the doctrines of other faiths could be disproved the Christian doctrines were unprovable by reason, but must be believed, while for Llull, it was possible, indeed necessary to prove the tenets of Christianity. If Ibn Adret was able to hold Martí at bay because he could not ‘definitively demonstrate by reason the truth of the faith in which he believed’, he would be unable to do the same with Llull.

However, in order to understand the contrast between Martí and Llull, it is necessary to first give a brief overview of intellectual developments within the Jewish world and illuminate some of the many points of contact with Christianity. As the renaissance of the twelfth century had done for the Christian world, the transmission of knowledge into Western Europe raised important issues within the Jewish community as well (Haskins, 1927; Benson & Constable, 1979, Constable, 1996. See also Marcus, 2001: 27-45).

The increased study of Aristotle combined with the towering presence of Maimonides (d. 1204), meant that Rabbis and intellectuals were trying to rationalise their faith, re-examining central existential questions such as the relationship between the Creator and creation, God and man, and the reasoning behind the performance of the commandments (Sirat, 1985).

While the growing influence of the works of Maimonides contributed to this, it was the more radical Aristotelianism, mainly in the form of Averroism, which Maimonides himself rejected, which was to cause the most consternation as the century progressed. The Rabbis in southern Europe, like their Christian contemporaries in the north, were re-discovering nature and the self, and this caused them to read and interpret the Torah and its precepts in new and provocative ways (Chenu, 1968).

These developments caused a “conservative” backlash, which was, in reality, radical and innovative. Concerned by what they saw as a distancing between man and God, and a philosophical position which undermined the daily concerns and practices of many Jews, some of the exponents of an esoteric mystical Judaism whose roots are unclear, saw its potential in redressing the

balance, and restoring the vitality of Judaism (Scholem, 1961 and 1987; Idel, 1988; Wolfson, 1995).

The exponents of these mystical teachings, known as Kabbalah, held that their theosophical teachings were not innovations, but that they were revealing ancient teachings that had been passed orally from master to disciple. The Kabbalists' claim was conservative, in that everything had been revealed to Moses at Sinai, and had been transmitted from generation to generation.

They were just imparting theosophical teachings that had been hidden for generations, but which were part of the long chain of transmission going back to the divine theophany (Nahmanides, 1959-60, vol. 1: 9, '[and this matter] will not be known in its entirety but from the received tradition [*hakabbalah*] back to Moses from the mouth of the Almighty...' or 'One cannot achieve knowledge of the full truth of these matters and others like them but from received tradition [*kabbalah*] ... and that is receiving from someone who has received [*mekabel mi-pi mekabel*] all the way back to Moses from the mouth of the Almighty'. Nahmanides, Jerusalem 1963-64, vol. 1: 190. See also p. 170 where he talks about the Rabbis of the Talmud as possessing 'all the received tradition' [*mekubalim ba-kol*]. For Nahmanides as for other Kabbalists in the thirteenth century, the use of the term 'Kabbalah' does not just imply the meaning given it today, but rather, as suggested here, refers to the traditional chain of transmission from Moses till the present day, and implies the mystical meaning as well. For some examples of this, see Wolfson, 1989: 163).

The esoteric and mystical implications of these teachings, especially those dealing with the sefirot, came to be seen as important for redressing the issues of the immanent relationship between man and God, creation, and the importance of performing the commandments.

Thus, the emergence of Kabbalah in the thirteenth-century was a reaction, not only to the increased danger of apostasy, but as a viable alternative to explain and imbue Jewish life with new vitality and content. The Kabbalistic movement was not just an esoteric doctrine restricted to an elite, but an alternative religious system that sought to engage with the wider community providing the Jewish teachings with new content. The - erroneously named - Maimonidean controversy of the thirteenth century was really the struggle of conservatism against more modernist tendencies, or the struggle of the

traditionalist Kabbalists against both mainstream and radical philosophising. It was a conflict between a new and essentially rational approach to Judaism, and the needs of a community in exile, requiring a more tangible and immanent Deity with whom to share the harshness of daily reality.

However, while Kabbalah presented itself as a reinterpretation rather than an innovation, the very introduction at this moment in time of such a theosophy into mainstream Judaism was innovative. The transference of these teachings from the private domain of a very small and select elite into the public domain, and the interpretation given them in light of social circumstances was a radical step which was not taken lightly, and was not without opposition from within. Similar to developments in Christian thought during this century, there were those who were prepared to apply the newly discovered philosophical methods to claims of religious truth in order to clarify them in light of contemporary knowledge, while others attempted to resist this trend as both dangerous and unnecessary in light of a revealed truth which was self-contained (From Bernard of Clairvaux who opposed scholars like Abelard all the way to St. Bonaventura and Peter John Olivi who opposed radical philosophy as tearing the Church apart from within).

Thus, the thirteenth century was primarily an attempt to find the right balance between two supposedly opposing ideologies, one innovative and forward looking, the other traditional and conservative in appearance, however, in reality, the latter was just as innovative and radical as the former (that the Kabbalists themselves were aware of innovation becomes clear in their claim that early Kabbalists such as Abraham ben David and Isaac the Blind received *giluy Eliyahu* - the appearance of Elijah, who revealed hidden teachings to them. The need to justify the teachings in terms of revelation surely indicates an awareness of potential opposition to some of these teachings. See my 'Elijah and a Shepherd: The Authority of Revelation', 1994: 93-102).

Yet a Judaism which was examining itself anew from within, was also facing serious challenges from without. The toleration and acceptance of the Jewish presence in Christian society, which for many centuries had been determined, in the main, by St Augustine's teaching of the Jews as a *testimonium veritatis*, was undergoing serious review. Jeremy Cohen has suggested that the attitude towards the Jews changed during the twelfth century because they lost their uniqueness as the only "other" within Christian society (his analysis fits in well with what has been written by other regarding significant changes that were occurring in the twelfth century, which made the Augustinian

understanding of the position of Jews in Christian society untenable for many. See Moore, 1987; Funkenstein, 1968-9: 125-44, 1971: 374-381 and 1992: 93-114; Abulafia, 1995).

The need to deal rationally with the Muslims also changed the status of the Jews, as their post-biblical texts, as did the Islamic texts, came under the microscope. It was the broadening of Christian horizons coupled with “new” texts and ways of thinking about the world and their own place in it, which made Christians more critical of those who were not *intra ecclesia* (Cohen, 1999: 147-66 and 1986: 592-613).

In addition, the challenges of philosophical reasoning to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity set scholars to examining Jewish post-biblical texts in order to discover within them support for the truth of Christianity. Hence, the polemical writings should not be analysed as a separate or unique phenomenon, but must be seen as an integrated part of what was going on in Christian intellectual circles in this period (for a similar remark, see Stroumsa: 176-77).

As such, they are a reflection of Christian self-doubt and the need to substantiate religious truth under siege from other quarters, by showing that the Jewish texts affirm Christianity, and by achieving Jewish conversion, giving confirmation of the true faith.

It is, therefore, not surprising that although instigated in Rome, the opening salvo in this concerted effort to convert the Jews was fired in Paris in 1240, where the Talmud was put on trial, subjected to close scrutiny, declared blasphemous, and even burned. A long list of errors and blasphemies contained the Talmud was compiled by Eudes de Chateauroux, much in the same manner as philosophical errors would also be condemned. For the theologians of Paris, anything which could undermine the truth of Christianity was suspect and needed to be purged, thus, if the Talmud was blasphemous, it could cause injury to the faith, and it prevented Jews from realising the truth (Cohen, 1982: 51-76; Chazan, 1989; Maccoby, 1993: 153-67).

The path leading from Paris to Barcelona in 1263 and from there to Ramon Marti's *Pugio fidei* is a direct one, though the Christian theologians realised that aside from the blasphemies, there was plenty in Rabbinic literature which indicated that the Jewish sages had realised the truth of Christianity. The

famous disputation in 1263 between the Jewish apostate turned Dominican, Friar Paul, and the undisputed leader of the Jewish community in Spain, Nahmanides, is a good example of the application of scholastic methodology to conversion work, the close reading of post-biblical literature, as well as an expression of Christian self-doubt allayed by proofs found in the Jewish texts. Ramon Martí's *Pugio fidei* is the most potent example of this new and intense Christian approach to Jewish texts, both for confirming Christian truths and for achieving conversion. The methodology used is that of a scholastic commentary, implying a close and very careful analysis of the texts pertaining to the specific problem in order to arrive at a measured and reasoned conclusion. In the second part of the *Pugio*, Martí seeks support from the Jewish sources that the Messiah has already come, and in the third part he deals with the Trinity. Here, Martí wished to prove that there is a Trinity, and to elaborate the process of salvation from the creation of man and original sin, till redemption through the incarnation of Christ. The method used is a careful reading and translation of the relevant texts, the use of Jewish medieval commentators such as Rashi and Rabbi David Kimhi (Radak) as authorities on the literal meaning, and showing how the chosen texts illustrate the principle being discussed.

The increased pressure on the Jews in Spain is also evident from the many requests by the mendicant orders for licenses to preach to the infidel. Pope Innocent IV in a letter of 1245, which includes part of an earlier missive of the Catalan-Aragonese count-king, James I, concludes: 'In addition, we wish and decree that, whenever the archbishops, bishops, or Dominicans and Franciscans arrive at a town or place where Muslims or Jews are to be found, and they wish to preach the word of God to those Jews or Muslims, they must gather at their invitation, and patiently listen to their preaching, and if they do not want to come of their own free wills, putting all excuses aside, our officials should compel them to attend' (Simonsohn, 1988: 184).

James I had already given permission for this type of preaching in 1243 in which he himself participated in the aftermath of the Barcelona disputation. The Dominicans in particular were very active in this endeavor, and while at first the Jews had to go to the Church to hear their preaching, because of ensuing violence, these activities were moved to the Jewish quarter (*call*) and the number of people allowed to accompany the mendicants was limited (For the statute of 1243, see *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de Aragón y de Valencia y Principado de Cataluña*, vol. 1, Madrid, 1896: 217-18. On this issue, see Riera i Sans, 1987: 113-19; Régné, 1978: 69, n. 386 (25/10/1268);

see also p. 131 n. 723 - in 1263, the King had already indicated that the Jews did not have to leave the confines of the call to hear the preaching. See Régné, 1978: 42, n. 217. See also Riera i Sans: 117-18. Peter III legislated on this issue a number of times confining the number of people allowed to accompany the friars to between fourteen and eighteen and eventually to just four).

In addition, religious polemic was carried out even by laymen as is exemplified by the Majorca disputation of 1268, which involved a Genoese merchant and one of the local Jewish scholars (Limor, 1984).

Thus, the Jewish community, while attempting to sort out its internal disagreements discussed above, also had to come to terms with the increased Christian polemical activity, which it could ill afford to ignore. The intense application of reason to faith and the increased openness to new ideas, meant that apostasy was a real danger which had to be combated. Here, it is possible to see how intellectual currents cross religious boundaries and effect and change cultural sensibilities. *Milhamot ha-Shem*, a late twelfth-century Jewish reply to Christian claims written by Jacob ben Reuven reflects the utmost confidence in the Christian world in reason as the *ancilla theologia*. In the first chapter, Rueven's Christian adversary says: 'and I will bring you proofs from the creation so that through them you will come to understand the greatness of the Creator...', and he proceeds to prove the articles of faith using reason (Reuven, 1963: 8).

Jacob answers with his own philosophical argumentation in order to undermine the Christian claims. The other chapters of the work return to the age-old pattern of searching the authoritative sources, in this case only the Bible, for proofs of the truth of Christianity. In the last couple of chapters, Jacob takes the Christian's method and applies it himself to the Gospel of Matthew.

The Jewish responses in the thirteenth century reflect the winds of change in the Christian camp wherein the limitations of philosophical reasoning for theological matters was continually being exposed and challenged. The Jewish polemical works concentrate on rebutting the Christian interpretations of biblical and rabbinic texts. In other words, what occurs is a scholastic exchange over the meaning of Jewish authoritative texts which seem to imply Christian truths, rather than attempts to definitively prove the articles of faith.

In this regard, one can cite Nahmanides' *Vikuah*, which is his literary reworking of the Barcelona disputation (Nahmanides, vol. 1: 302-20).

Another good example is the *Nizzahon Vetus* written at the end of the thirteenth century, which peruses the Jewish sources commonly used by Christian polemicists and refutes their claims. The author also extensively cites from the New Testament in order to ridicule Christian beliefs (Berger, 1979). The aforementioned Solomon ibn Adret wrote his long and detailed refutations of Ramon Martí's claims along the same lines (Dimitrovsky, vol. 1: 159-221).

The Jewish polemicists did not need to engage with their own belief systems because their Christian interlocutors were only interested in what the texts revealed about Christianity. As long as they could provide reasonable and alternative readings, their Jewish identities and beliefs were not in too much danger of being compromised.

Given common intellectual interests, it is not surprising that the ongoing controversies within the Jewish camp between the Kabbalists and the rationalists were also intimately connected with Jewish-Christian polemic. For example, Meir ben Simon of Narbonne in his polemical work *Milhemet Mitzvah* which incorporates discussions that he had with the Bishop and other dignitaries, also writes against the Kabbalists. He claims that he is writing "to contradict those who speak evil about God, and about the wise men who walk in the path of the pure Torah and who are God fearing. And they [the Kabbalists] consider themselves wise and they invent things and come close to heresy, and think to bring proof for their teachings from the *Aggadot* which they interpret incorrectly" (Scholem, 1934: 146).

Both Kabbalists and Christians are using *Aggadot* – Midrash to further their own purposes, and both are just as dangerous for Jews. David Kimhi who was a supporter of the study of philosophy, wrote a response to Christianity, and was also active in trying to combat the spread of Kabbalah. Even within the ranks of the Kabbalists there was dissent and controversy which comes to the fore in the comment made by the ecstatic Kabbalist, Abraham Abulafia, who disliking the theosophical sefirotic teachings of his colleagues said: 'and thus I will tell you that the sefirotic Kabbalists thinking to unify the Name [of God] and to flee from all ideas of trinity have made God into ten, and as the Christians say that it is three and the three are one, hence some of the

Kabbalists believe and say that the Godhead is ten sefirot and the ten are one' (*Ve-zot li-Yehudah*, in Jellinek, 1853: 19).

Solomon ibn Adret, leader of the Catalan community and a Kabbalist, was active in trying to mitigate the evils of radical philosophical speculation, and the dangers it held for the well-being of the community, as well as answering Christian polemic. In a letter against Levi ben Abraham of Villafranche he wrote: "And he and his companions' decree is worse than that of the nations. If the gentiles [meaning the Christians] argue and interpret two or three verses according to their hermeneutic, he and his companions leave not even one letter in the Torah [unturned]... Is there a stranger or a gentile... who will undermine the whole Torah saying that Abraham and Sarah are matter and form... and a person like this is causing devastation to the plants (*kotsetz bane'ti'ot*)... and God knows, that it is better in my opinion to hear this from a Christian or Muslim than to hear it from a man like him". And in the continuation of the letter he writes: 'And now see oh see the greatest of the greatest who has written a book and made the names of the four kings into the four elements... and what will he do with the commandments of the Torah?... And these people are heretics in any faith, and their excommunication is engraved in the books of all nations' (Dimitrovsky, vol. 1: 381-83. For a discussion of the limitations of philosophical enquiry and the relationship between revelation and reason, see ibn Adret: 102-10).

In an open letter to the community in Montpellier, Solomon ibn Adret referred to what the Christians would have done (and had done) to people who came out with such remarks: '...see how the Christians punish their heretics, even for a single one of such heresies as these men expressed in their books. Why, if anyone would dare to say that Abraham and Sarah represent matter and form, they would wrap him up in twigs and burn him to cinders. All the nations trace their lineage to them; and these say that they are nothing but symbols!' (Dimitrovsky, *Teshubot ha-Rashba*, vol. 2: 412-13).

It is also important in this context, that like his teacher and mentor, Nahmanides, Solomon ibn Adret states that not all Midrashim are sacrosanct and that they should not all be taken at face value (*The Writings of Nahmanides*, vol. 1: 306, 308; Dimitrovsky, *Teshubot ha-Rashba*, vol. 1: 194 and *Commentary on the Legends in the Talmud*: 48. On this issue, see Lieberman, 1970: 82-3; Septimus, 1983: 12-14, 17-22; Fox, 1989: 95-109; Wolfson: 153-78 among others).

He was well aware that both Kabbalists and Christians to further their own causes were using the Aggadic texts, and he wanted to return any doubters to the Jewish fold (ibn Adret: 27).

It is only in this fluctuating and dynamic context that Ramon Llull can be appreciated, for while he was aware of the intellectual currents within the northern Christian world, he was fully immersed in the social, political and religious context of the Crown of Aragon and its environs. His Art can only really be understood if seen as part of this intellectual milieu, and while his first encounter with the university in Paris (1287-89) caused him to make major changes to the structure of the Art, its underlying precepts and method are a product of the Mediterranean world.

Stated simply, the combination of the rational and mystical along with the willingness to debate and prove the mysteries of the Christian faith distances Llull from the scholastic methodology of someone like Thomas Aquinas or Ramon Martí. The development of an Art which sets aside authoritative texts, suggests a framework based on principles which could be acceptable to the three faiths, and is dependant on knowledge and utilisation of contemporary religious trends, firmly places Llull in the context of the thirteenth-century Crown of Aragon. Llull's concentration on themes such as the divine dignities, the internal structure of the Godhead, and the relationship between God and creation show his awareness of the very issues being contemplated and debated in contemporary Jewish (and Muslim) circles, and his understanding of the obstacles needed to be surmounted for conversion to be achieved.

Llull knew that Jews and Muslims were being challenged by similar intellectual stimuli as were Christians, and therefore, if presented convincingly, there was enough common ground for engaging in debate and proving the superiority of Christianity. And it was the utilisation of this knowledge of contemporary Judaism and Islam for the purpose of conversion, which made the challenge, posed by Llull far more potent than that of the mendicants.

Llull differed from many of his contemporaries involved in conversion work in that he was an autodidact and his formative learning was mainly from the book of life rather than the books of the theologians and universities. Born in Majorca ca. 1232, recently reconquered from the Muslims by James I, and part of the nobility, he grew up in an important port city with a multi-cultured and multi-religious population. Jews, Christians and Muslims mingled in the streets

and marketplaces, and someone with Llull's acute sense of observation could not have helped learning much about the belief and habits of members of the other faiths (Lourie, 1990: VII, 1-77; Baer, vol. 1, 1992: 189-242 and Abulafia, 1994: 75-99. On the Jewish community in Majorca, see Pons, 1984, and Hillgarth, 1995: 334-41).

Llull's conversion to the religious life from one of licentiousness and worldliness was a result of recurrent visions of Christ on the cross in the corner of his room, and his creation of a 'new' framework for religious debate was again the result of another divine revelation some nine years later. Llull himself often used the adjective 'new' to describe what he was doing. For instance his *Lògica nova* and other works such as the *Tractatus novus de astronomia* and *Rhetorica nova* (see Bonner's 1998: xxi-xxiii). Llull was aware that he was setting out something new which may have been the reason why from 1295 onwards, and in hindsight in the *Vita coetanea* (1311) he claimed that the Art was divinely revealed (Bonner, 1998: 46-7).

The visions, which occurred when he was over thirty, led him to understand that he was to devote his life to three things: the conversion of the unbelievers for which he was prepared to lay down his life, the establishment of monasteries where the necessary languages could be taught, and the writing of a book against the errors of the unbelievers (Llull dictated a very selective biography just before he set off for the Council of Vienne in 1311. For another summary of Llull's life, see Hillgarth: 1998).

This book was the framework of the Art, divinely revealed to Llull, with which he was certain would convince the unbelievers of the truth of Christianity (*Vita coetanea*, 1). Llull's claim for divine revelation is very similar to that of the Kabbalists also spreading new and revolutionary, although they portrayed them as traditional and ancient, ideas in the communities of southern France and the Crown of Aragon at the same time (Hames, 1994: 93-102 and 2000: 31-82).

This 'common tongue' was also the basis for excursions into almost all the medieval fields of knowledge to show how everything was reducible to the most simple and general principle - God. In other words, the Art was a language whose grammar and syntax were the dynamic structure of creation, true knowledge of which revealed the internal and eternal structure of the divine. Using general principles, conditions and rules acceptable to all three

monotheistic faiths, the Artist would discover the inherent nature of the supreme being.

According to Llull, the religion revealed to be truly compatible with this divinely inspired Art was Christianity. In other words, it is not that the other faiths are based on false premises, but that they do not understand totally the language of reality. The disputation based on the framework of the Art will allow members of each faith to explore their own religious doctrines and those of the other faiths and by asking the right questions, reaching the necessary conclusions.

Hence, in effect, Llull was trying to create a framework whereby religious disputation could take place, and where the disputants would have to engage with each other rather than with an authoritative text (Bonner, 1993: 15-32).

By agreeing to dispute according to the principles, rules and conditions of the Art with which they could have little reason to disagree, the interlocutors were forced to question and prove central doctrines of their faiths rather than engage in hermeneutical sophistry. They were also asked to examine their conceptions and understanding of the essence of God and the divine nature and the relationship between God and creation. At least in his early works, Llull envisioned a more participatory aspect to the debate, for as the sides progressed towards (Christian) truth, they would transcend both sense and rational knowledge and the truth would be comprehended through mystical cognition (Hames, 1999: 181-200).

Thus, according to Llull, correct use of the Art, would lead to knowledge and recognition of the triune structure of the divine essence.

The first exposition of the 'form and method' of the Art was the *Ars compendiosa inveniendi veritatem* (*Brief Art of Finding Truth*) probably in 1274. Prior to this, Llull had written the *Libre de contemplació en Deu*, a mammoth encyclopaedic work in which he surveys the whole of being, sensible and intelligible, human and divine, visible and invisible, and where logical exposition is intermingled with ecstatic outcries of joy and happiness. In this work are to be found the seeds of all his later thought, but without the organisation and terminology which will provide the framework for disputation (on this mammoth work, see Rubio: 1997).

The divine revelation on Mount Randa provided Llull with the tools for organising his broad-ranging ideas into a coherent structure. This structure would be continually redacted, refined and improved upon over the next thirty years with the last redaction being the *Ars generalis ultima* written 1305-8, along with its shorter and popular companion, the *Ars brevis*.

As mentioned previously, Llull was well aware that questions regarding the nature of the divine and God's relation with creation were taxing the minds of his religious contemporaries. He felt certain that if Muslims and Jews could be convinced that the divine essence must be internally and eternally triune, and that the incarnation was necessary, then they would have to admit the truth of Christianity and convert. Thus, Llull based his Art on the fundamental belief of all three monotheistic faiths that there exists one God who is the cause of all things, and who created the world. The Art revolves around the figure A, a circle with a series of letters equally spaced around the circumference representing in the quaternary phase of the Art, the divine attributes, and in the ternary phase, together with figure T, the principles of the Art which lead to God as their most perfect expression (The quaternary phase of the Art runs from ca. 1274-1289, and the ternary phase from 1290-1308. See Bonner, SWRL 1: 55-56).

Whether called *Dignitates*, *Sefirot* or *Hadras*, Llull proposed that all discussion start from these most general principles believed by all to exist in God in concordance and without any contrariety. Given that the world is created in the image of God, and playing on the Neoplatonic maxim: *Bonum est diffusivum sui* (the Goodness that necessarily diffuses itself), Llull suggested that creation is a likeness of these perfect divine dignities. As Anthony Bonner puts it, for Llull: 'each of the dignities has its effect in the world in accordance with the individual creature's capacity to receive the likeness of God, and the degree of the creature's concordance with the dignities' (Bonner, SWRL 1: 60). Hence, all of being reflects the divine structure, and by demonstrating the structure of being, one will have knowledge of the divine.

Using what Llull refers to as 'necessary reason' which is the form of the Art; it is possible to descend from the most general principle, God to the most particular, or to ascend from the most particular to that most general principle. Thus, nature or creation becomes a '*scala*', a ladder of being, by which man can ascend from sense to rational knowledge, and from rational

knowledge to the discovery of "the supreme being in whom all the divine names coincide or fall together" (Lohr, 1988: 541).

The other figures of the Art, and particularly figure T, allow the intellect to examine multifarious propositions, affirming or negating them using the different elements of creation as metaphors or analogies. What emerges is that the intellect realises that the dynamic activity of the dignities in creation can only be understood in a triune structure, and what is true of creation must be true of God. The mature form of this thought is referred to as the theory of the correlatives of action (on the *theory of the correlatives*, see J. Gaya, 1979).

The latter is best explained by quoting a passage from Llull's very selective biography recounted to 'certain monks who were friends of his', which exemplifies Llull's use of the Art for conversion purposes. The dialogue described here took place in Tunis 1292, after Llull had recovered from a serious psychological crisis in Genoa which almost led him to abandon his mission altogether. Finally arriving in Tunis, Llull, according to his account of events, proclaimed his willingness to convert to Islam if the Muslim scholars were able to prove conclusively the foundations of their faith. Over the course of the next few days, numerous scholars tried their luck, but Llull was able to overcome them saying:

It is proper for every wise man to hold to that faith which attributes to the eternal God, in whom all the wise men of the world believe, the greatest goodness, wisdom, virtue, truth, glory, perfection etc., and all these things in the greatest equality and concordance. And most praiseworthy is that faith in God which places the greatest concordance or agreement between God, who is the highest and first cause, and His effect.

However, as a result of what you have set before me, I see that all you Saracens who belong to the religion of Mohammed do not understand that in the above and other similar Divine Dignities there are proper, intrinsic and eternal acts, without which the dignities would be idle, and this from all eternity. The acts of goodness, I call bonificative (*bonificativum*), bonifiable (*bonificabile*), and bonifying (*bonificar*), while those of greatness are magnificative, magnifiable, and magnifying, and so on for the other aforesaid dignities.

But since, as I already see, you attribute those acts only to two divine dignities or reasons, that is to wisdom and will, it is thus clear that you leave the other

above-mentioned dignities in a state of idleness, consequently placing inequality as well as discord between them, which is not right. For by means of the substantial, intrinsic, and eternal acts of the Dignities, Reasons or Attributes, taken equally and concordantly, as they should be, Christians clearly prove that in one complete simple Divine essence and nature, there exists a Trinity of persons, namely the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Translated by Bonner, SWRL 1: 34-35).

Llull was lucky to escape this encounter with his life, as there were important Muslims who called for his execution. Finally he was shipped out of Tunis with express orders never to return. However, what is immediately apparent from this dispute is Llull's willingness to engage with the mysteries of the Christian faith and prove them conclusively. He starts from what is common to all the faiths, the divine dignities, and is able to show the Muslims, in this instance, that their own understanding of the existence of dignities in God must imply a trinitarian structure. For if one wants to avoid change in the Godhead, then there is no alternative but to admit the existence of a triad of agent-patient-action within the dignities, which is the divine essence.

These correlatives of action are imperative in order to explain how creation could take place without implying change at a particular moment in the Godhead. In other words, for creation to come about without change in the Godhead, the dignities would have had to be active eternally, and this action can only exist without implying plurality if it is triune.

Although the former passage is cited in a context related to his mission to the Muslims, it contains all the elements that would make his approach to the Jews so potent as well. Aware of the theosophical teachings regarding the Sefirot as the revealed and creating aspect of the Godhead, held by many of the leaders of the Jewish community with whom he came into contact, Llull sought to prove to them that they only needed to take one little step more, in order to realise the essential truth and necessity of the Trinity. And if the existence of a trinitarian structure within the Godhead was proven to be necessary, then the rest of the Christian teachings would also have to be recognised as true, and conversion would follow.

Though not specifically directed towards the Jews, the *Liber de Déu* seems to be a faithful reflection of Llull's approach to them. The work was written in 1300, just after Llull had been given his license to preach in the synagogues of

the Crown of Aragon from his patron, James II. It was not written in the form of a dialogue, but is divided into two main sections, the first dealing with God according to His essence, properties, dignities and their acts, and the second part concerning Christ and the Incarnation. Llull wrote in the introduction:

This book is very useful for [acquiring] knowledge, and it is possible to study it in a very brief period... and moreover, with it, one can dispute with the non-believers, demolishing the errors and objections they have against the Christian faith, against which, using this book, one can formulate (counter) objections and proofs, which they will not be able to demolish using reason.

(*Liber de Déu, Obras 2*: 273: Aquest libre es molt útil a saber, e pot esser sabut en breu de temps... E encara ab eyl pot hom contrastar ab infaels, destruent a eyls les errors e objeccions que fan contra le fe catholica, als quals pot hom fer per aquest libre objeccions e probacions, les quals eyls per raho no poran destruir).

Llull starts out, as in other works, by proving that there must be a God who is at the greatest distance from contrariety and evil, and is the most perfect infinite goodness, greatness and all the other dignities (*Libre de Déu*: 275-77). This proof is very Anselmian in character as Llull is looking from the 'being, that a greater being than that being there cannot be'. See St. Anselm, *Proslogion*, (trans. and intro.) J. M. Charlesworth, Notre Dame and London 1979, ch. 2-4: 116-21).

All the dignities must be equal in essence and nature, otherwise they would be accidents: in other words, unable to exist in themselves, by themselves, and therefore imperfect. Hence, each dignity is essentially identified with and includes all the other dignities. Llull then goes on to talk about the acts of the dignities, 'without which none of the dignities can be sovereign, for instance goodness, which, without *bonificar* [its act] would have an idle nature, which idleness would be evil, and as a result, it [good] could not be sovereign', and similarly for all the other dignities (*Libre de Déu*: 278-79: Sens aquests actes neguna dignitat no pot esser soberina, axi con bonea, qui sens bonificar hauria natura ociosa, la qual ociositat li seria mal, ab lo qual no poria esser sobirana...).

Llull goes on to say that God is the substance which is natural goodness, greatness etc., and gives a list of ten divine dignities, instead of the usual nine in his works, being equal, of course, to the number of Sefirot (*Libre de Déu*:

289: Deus es aquella substancia qui es natural bonea, granea, eternitat, poder, saviesa, volentat, virtut, veritat, gloria e compliment).

In the following passage, Llull explains how the unity of God can only be a unity in trinity. When thought about in the context of disputation with the Jews, the latter would then have to think about, and explain very carefully, their own conception of the unity of God. Llull's Kabbalist contemporaries were unequivocal about God having eternal wisdom or will; the question then arises, how can these attributes exist without contradicting the perfect and simple unity of the Godhead? Llull's correlatives seem to provide a comprehensive explanation that will allow for these attributes without, seemingly, contradicting the divine unity:

God understands that His unity is whole, and He could not understand that His unity is whole without having the nature of *unient*, *unit* and *unir*, because without them His nature would not have natural power, or natural concordance, equality, virtue, glory or goodness. The divine has, therefore, unity, which is whole nature of *unient*, *unit*, and *unir*, in that one is of one, like light of light, in other words, that the *unit* (patient) is of the unient (agent), and the *unir* (act of unity) is of them both. And the *unir* by way of generation is the Father and Son, and it is the Father and Son because in that generation (*engenrar*) and unification (*unir*) the Son is of the Father, the Father generating the Son of Himself and not of any other; and each [of the persons] is an individual personal property and together, they are one common property from which proceeds an individual personal property named passive spiration (*espiració*) through [the act] of unifying (*unir*) and spiration (*espirar*), which *unir* and *espirar* are the Father and Son through common spiration. And thus, the *espirar* and the *unir* are one according to common property, and are different in individual property.

(*Libre de Déu*. 294: Deus enten que sa unitat es complida, e no poria entendre que sa unitat fos complida sens natura de unient, unit e unir, sens los quals sa natura no hauria poder natural, ni natural concordança, ni igualtat, virtut, gloria e bontat. Ha, donchs, la divina unitat, qui es compleda natura de unient, unit, e unir, per la qual u es de u, axi con lum de lum, ço es a saber, que l unit es del unient, e l unir es d amdos. E l unir per via de generacio es lo pare e l fill, e es lo pare e l fill, car en aquell engenrar e unir es lo fill del pare, engenrant lo pare lo fill de si mateix e no de altre; e cascuna singular propietat personal e ensemps son una propietat communa, d on ix singular propietat personal, appeylada passiva espiracio per unir e espirar; lo qual unir e espirar son lo pare e lo fill per communa espiracio. E enaxi lo espirar e l unir, segons communa propietat, es un, e segons singular propietat es altre).

Thus, the very unity of God is dependent on this trinity, without which, it would be impossible to predicate of God any attributes without contradicting that unity. Therefore, when further on in the work Llull asks 'of what quantity is God?', he can reply:

God is a substance with no accidents. And since quantity is an accident, God cannot be a number through quantity. And moreover, because God is infinite and eternal substance, there is no place in Him for quantity, neither according to extent, virtue or time. And because God is not consistent with quantity, God the Father, without quantity, produces and generates God the Son eternally and infinitely; and the Father and Son, without quantity, breath (*espiren*) the Holy Spirit through [the acts of] *infinir* and *eternar*.

(*Libre de Déu*. 302. Deus es substancia sens negun accident. E car quantitat es accident, Deus no pot esser quant per quantitat. E encara, car Deu es substancia infinida e eternal, quantitat en eyla no ha loch, ni segons extensitat ni vertut, ni segons temps. E car en Deu no cau quantitat, Deu pare, sens quantitat, produu e engendra Deu fill eternalment e infinida; e l pare e l fill, sens quantitat, espiren lo sanct esprit per infinir e eternar).

In other words, if for God to be a unity He must be a trinity of eternal operation, then the persons of the Trinity are not quantity in the divinity because they are the essential structure and unity of God.

One could almost imagine the dialogue between Llull and his Jewish opponent going something like this:

Ramon: "... I have now conclusively demonstrated the necessary existence of a Trinity in the divine dignities which are the whole essence of God, and hence, the truth of the Christian faith".

Solomon: "Ah, but what you have shown is that God is not a simple perfect being, in that there is a plurality of persons in the dignities (sefirot). We believe that God is one simple eternal being with His dignities (sefirot)".

Ramon: "Listen carefully, the trinity is not a plurality, because it is the very essence of God's oneness and simplicity. Without this trinitarian relationship, God could not be one in perfect simplicity, and this eternal and internal relationship is what we Christians call the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

Solomon: "Hmm, give me a moment to think about that one..."

Llull can then explain the nature of creation in a way very conducive to the Kabbalistic approach as well:

God has a particular way and order in creating the world, with the manner and order of His dignities, which calls for activity (*obra*) and order in creatures... And because God's activity and order is great and good, he has created good and great creatures, who are good and great by nature. And if this is so, then

God has created for this reason, and has ordained to create the world in the order and manner of His dignities and their operation.

(*Libre de Déu*. 323. Deus ha manera e orde en crear lo mon ab la manera e orde de ses dignitats, qui requeren obra e orde en les creatures;... E car la obra e orde de Deu es gran e bo, ha creades creatures bones e grans, qui son bones e grans per natura. On con ayço sia enaxi, es, donchs, Deus per aytal fi creador e ordonat a crear lo mon per orde e manera de ses dignitats e de lurs actes).

In other words, creation itself is a mirror of the divine structure and is the outflowing of the eternal operation of the dignities (or sefirot) into creation. This very well thought out attack on contemporary Jewish teachings could not go without a reply. What Llull had done was to take Jewish theosophical teachings about the Sefirot as the revealed and creative face of the Godhead, and show how by necessity, in order for God to be a unity, there had to be a trinitarian relationship within them.

Psychologically, this was very potent because Llull was not negating the Jewish teachings, just augmenting them and taking them to their logical conclusion. This could be enough to move the doubting Jew in the direction of Christianity. Therefore, it was behoven on one of Llull's Jewish interlocutors, the aforementioned Solomon ibn Adret, to return the potential apostate to a Jewish framework. In other words, what Solomon ibn Adret did was to undermine Llull's conclusions by showing that they were not the only possible explanation.

By doing so, he would raise doubt in the truth of Llull's claims and cause the Jew to re-examine the arguments, and as ibn Adret wrote in the passage cited at the start of this paper: "He should be taught these [arguments] and he should study and interiorise them in his heart [the soul] many times over and test them faithfully as to whether they are the truth, and that they are not refutable. For without this, it would be lacking in integrity for a person to exchange his God through weak arguments, and not even strong arguments should [bring] him [to convert] until he has investigated them, and finds that there is no more room for doubt". In other words, a good argument should not be the basis for conversion, only certainty, and, according to ibn Adret, one cannot be certain about the veracity of Llull's claims.

Ibn Adret bases his reply to Llull's claims on two well known sources of Christian polemic against Judaism, texts that Llull would have known and could have used as the starting point for explaining his ideas: "The Christian

scholar asks Solomon ibn Adret: 'In the prayers, the name of God is mentioned three times in the *Shema* which would seem to imply the opposite of your contention. For the Trinity is signified when it says there "the Lord our God the Lord" and then complete unity is implied when it says "One".

Moreover in the Midrash [Psalms 50:1] it says "El Elohim Yahweh spoke and called it earth". Why were these three names mentioned here? To imply that with three attributes (midot) God created His world" (Dimitrovski, *Teshubot ha-Rashba*, vol. 1: 214). This Midrash is also quoted in *Pugio fidei*, however, there again is no correlation between Martí's discussion and the answer given by Adret, suggesting that Martí was unaware of the more mystical line taken by Adret in his answer here. Martí takes the *proprietas* of *sapientia scientia atque intelligentia* at face value as representing the Trinity (see *Pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Judaeos*, Leipzig, 1687: 494). The Christian scholar is suggesting that within each sefirah, there are the three correlative attributes, i.e. the Trinity - which allow the Godhead to be active in creation.

To this claim, Solomon ibn Adret replied:

And of what the Rabbis said in the Midrash, that with those three attributes (*midot*) God created the world, with the attributes *El, Elohim* and *Yahweh*, know, that there are three attributes; judgement, mercy and a third being a total conjunction (*mezugah*) of both judgement and mercy. And know, that it is impossible for the world to stand perfected, and for the purpose for which it was created, with only the first two attributes alone. For if the world had been created with the attribute of Judgement alone, it could not have existed for a moment, since there is no righteous man in the world who can always do good and never sin.

And if he sinned, the attribute of Judgement would have acted instantly and destroyed it [the world], its trees, its stones and the world would be deserted...And if the world was created with the attribute of total Mercy alone, everything would be equal, good and sin, and there would be no difference between one who worshipped and one who transgressed, and there would be no judgement because the attribute of Mercy would forgive every transgression, and that would negate the reason for creation, because creatures were created in order to worship God, choosing good and hating evil.

Hence, it is impossible for anyone to have any conception of the true intention in the creation [of the world] until [he understands that] it was created from an attribute incorporating the two other attributes, to extend His

mercy to the sinner, perhaps he will repent and will be healed. And if he still does not repent, the punishment will be in this and the next [world], and this is the Truth and it is correct.

And the name *Elohim* represents the attribute of complete Judgement. And the name *Yahweh*, the attribute of complete Mercy. And the name *El* is the attribute of total conjunction (*mezugah*) of both (Dimitrovski, *Teshubot ha-Rashba*, vol. 1: 218. See also *Commentary on the Legends in the Talmud*, p. 50 where ibn Adret brings this teaching again starting with: 'And there is in this a secret...', i.e. he is revealing Kabbalah. However, here the terminology is different. Ibn Adret does not talk about the third attribute as being a conjunction of the other two, but as 'including' the other two. This would indicate the importance of the terminology in the answer to the Christian scholar, further supporting the supposition that it is Llull, as ibn Adret is using the former's terminology. See also Llull's *Libre d' amic e amat*, Princeton, 1993, versicle 42: [t]he keys to the gates of love are guiled with cares, sighs and tears...And the gates are guarded by justice and mercy). Solomon ibn Adret's choice of terminology should not be viewed as accidental and should be seen in the whole context of his answer and the way the Midrashic text is dealt with. The use of the Hebrew root *mzg* (conjunction) to describe the relationship between the two opposing attributes and the third one is an adaptation by Solomon ibn Adret of Lullian terminology in order to refute Llull. For Llull, the idea of *conjunció* or *composta* is of great import as it helps explain the relationship between the different persons of the Trinity and their eternal *obra* in the dignities, and it was a refutation of his suggestion that the three names of God accorded with his intrinsic trinitarian structure of the dignities that Solomon ibn Adret wanted to achieve.

Solomon ibn Adret, understanding the dangers inherent in Llull's teachings, explained that the three names do not represent the internal operations of the dignities which allows creation to take place, but refers to three different sefirot, without which creation would have been impossible and the world could not have come into existence. While this does not seem to directly refute Llull, it returned any doubting Jew to a framework which he understood and within the parameters of which he could envision the unity of God without a trinitarian structure.

This is clarified in the continuation of the passage where Solomon ibn Adret seems to take issue with Llull's trinitarian structure. He writes:

And what will be further revealed to you is, what is written at the beginning of the Torah, "On the day **Yahweh**, our God made heaven and earth" (Genesis 2:4), it would have been possible to write the one name [of God] and as it is well known, it includes everything, as for example when you say [the word] "man" by saying which you have included all that is in the definition of man... but if you intend to mention all the parts of which man is composed, you have no choice but to mention all the different parts of which he is composed.

Hence when speaking about the particulars of the attributes with which the world was created, according to your theory, it would be impossible to mention just two and leave out the third. But, according to what I have explained, it is right and proper to do so. Is it possible to have the two attributes, i.e. the attribute of Justice and that of Mercy, come together and from necessity will they not bring forth this third conjunction containing the other two by necessity? So sometimes, He [God] will mention each one by name, as in "**El, Yahweh, Elohim** spoke and called earth" as I have explained, and sometimes He [God] will enumerate two attributes, which implies by necessity, the conjunction of the third from the other two, as is written, "On the day **Yahweh**, our God made heaven and earth" (Ms. Oxford Bodl. 1587, ff. 93b-94a).

Solomon ibn Adret is saying that if the three names **El, Elohim, and Yahweh** represent the internal trinitarian operation of the dignities which allow creation to take place as Llull claims, then every time that the Bible speaks about God creating and one of these names appears, all three of the names should be there. If the three names do not appear, then Llull's theory of the correlatives breaks down, because one (or two) of the elements of this eternal activity within the dignities, allowing creation to occur, is missing.

For Llull, all three of the persons are essential, whereas, says Solomon ibn Adret, according to our understanding, these divine names refer to three different sefirot which are important for the act of creation, and whether or not the third name is mentioned, it is still inferred that it necessarily comes forth from the other two. Hence, the three names do not imply an internal and eternal trinitarian structure within the sefirot, but refer to three of the ten sefirot which balance the act of creation, and thus, there is no Trinity, but a unity in the Godhead.

Compare this with how Solomon ibn Adret deals with the same issue of the divine names in his *Commentary on the Legends in the Talmud*, a work meant for internal consumption. 'And in this matter there is a secret [i.e. a

Kabbalistic teaching]. And you already know what our Rabbis received, that in every place where it says *Elohim*, it refers to the attribute of Judgement, and *Yud Vav Heh*, to the attribute of Mercy, and they contain everything. For it is impossible for this world to exist without these two attributes, however, not with Judgement alone or Mercy alone. And, therefore, these two names were not mentioned in the Torah in relation to the creation of the world, till the heavens and earth and all they contain were created, as it says: "On the day Yahweh, our God made heaven and earth", and our Rabbis explained that He said the whole name when the world was whole. And to those whom the Lord has granted knowledge, will know and intellectualise the truth of what is in the potential of the human intellect to achieve knowledge about His essence and attributes' (see *Commentary on the Legends in the Talmud*, p. 50).

Thus, by providing a plausible alternative explanation, ibn Adret hoped to raise enough doubt in the Christian claims for them not to be acceptable, and the basis for conversion.

When, in Florence in 1486, the famous count of Mirandola linked between the Lullian Art and Abulafian Kabbalah, he was not entirely mistaken. Pico connected between the two phenomena for the wrong reasons, based more on external similarities such as the use of letter notation and figures than on content (Pico della Mirandola, *Apologia in Opera omnia*, vol. 1, Bâle 1572: 180. Unam quae dicitur *hohmat ha-zeruf* id est ars combinandi et est modus quidam procedendi in scientiis et est simile quid sicut apud nostros dicitur ars Raymundi, licet forte diverso modo procedant that which is called *hohmat ha-zeruf* [revolution or combination of letters] is a combinatory Art and it is a method for gaining knowledge, and it is similar to that which we refer to as the *ars Raymundi*, although it proceeds in a very different manner).

However, as we have seen, there was indeed a close link between the Art and sefirotic Kabbalah in that, in his attempts to convert the Jews, Llull tried to show how the structure of the Godhead and the sefirot must necessitate an internal trinitarian relationship, and therefore demonstrate the truth of Christianity.

In Paris, where Llull tried numerous times to have his Art propagated and taught, post-biblical Jewish texts were being used in a different way and for novel purposes: as a bastion for the Christian faith. There was little interest in

contemporary Jewish teachings, and therefore, no knowledge of Kabbalah and its potential for conversion. Thus, the ivory towers of the university failed to appreciate the works and method of a Mediterranean autodidact, and at least in the area of conversion, the approach of the mendicants, rather than Llull's Art, held the position of authority.

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