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LLULL'S *BLANQUERNA* AND THE ART
OF PREACHING: THE EVOLUTION
TOWARDS THE NOVEL-SERMON

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This article will examine the relationship between the missionary projects and literary works of Ramon Llull (1232-1316). In this Majorcan writer, medieval arts of preaching and didactic forms of narrative interact in such a way as to give rise to a masterpiece of Romance fiction and the first novel in Catalan: *Blanquerna* (1283-85). But this is first of all a religious narrative. As such, it must be read in the context of the author's missionary teaching and propaganda, of the Church's efforts at reform after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, and of the far-reaching effects of the new urban and university preaching of Franciscans and Dominicans.¹

My purpose is to show that Llull's own needs as a missionary determine the evolution of his arts of preaching towards the composition of an exemplary novel-sermon in *Blanquerna*. This Christian romance represents a unique achievement in the development of medieval fiction as homiletics, hagiography and utopia. It also serves as an autobiography and idealized history that documents a golden age of the Catholic missions in the cities and to the infidels: it reflects and projects the author's own apostolic work, in the company of the new preachers, educators, reformers,

¹ The principal study on this theme to date is Wolfgang Schleicher, *Ramon Lulls Libre de Evast e Blanquerna: Eine Untersuchung über den Einfluss der Franziskanisch-Dominikanischen Predigt auf die Prosawerke des Katalanischen Dichters* (Genève, Librairie E. Droz, 1958). Schleicher concentrates on formal influences, but does not address questions of homiletic, hagiographic, and narratological poetics, nor does he relate the novel to the development of the author's works as missionary *arts* or methods of formation.

mystics, and missionaries who flourished in the thirteenth century.

In Section 1, Lull's writings on preaching are discussed from the following points of view: his own for formation as a missionary and author; the dialectic of faith and reason as it influences the choice of scholastic *ars* or evangelical *parabola*; and the significance of the various homiletic models and exemplars. In Section 2, the forms and functions of *Blanquerna* as novel-sermon are examined in relation to the preaching of the friars and to the creation of a new type of urban saint: the hagiographic and homiletic structures of the novel are seen to embody, in a more effective and «exemplary» way, the paradigms for social reform and patterns of spiritual renewal advocated by Lull in his non-fictional works. By way of conclusion, Section 3 reviews the religious and literary implications of *Blanquerna's* exemplarity as a fictional sermon, as a practical art for Christian education, and as a guide for the formation of preachers and missionaries in contemporary society.

I. LLULL'S EXEMPLARY ART OF PREACHING: FORM AND FORMATION

When Ramon Lull dedicated himself, at the time of his conversion around 1263,² to a lifetime's work as missionary writer and teacher, he saw the need for a double preparation as preacher to the infidels: on the one hand, he had to master the theological dialectic of faith and reason that would serve the intellectual crusade against Islam; on the other hand, he wished to exemplify the mystical dialogue of the Christian in contemplation of the Cross. Both scholastic studies and spiritual exercises would prove indispensable to him in his missionary formation. Likewise, both the imitation of the best preachers of his day and the observation

² Cf. Lull's *Vida coetània*, sects. 1-8, in *Obres essencials* (Barcelona, Selecta, 1957-60), I, 34-36.

of the society around him would stimulate his elaboration of an efficacious and responsible method of preaching.³

I. I. MISSIONARY AND LITERARY VOCATION

Llull's apostolate consisted of preaching by means of books that would serve to form missionaries. As a result of his conversion at age thirty from wordly vanities to the love of Christ, he resolved that «ell faria llibres, uns bons e altre millors, successivament, contra les errors dels infeels».⁴ It is necessary to relate this literary activity to the evolution of Llull's understanding of the missions during his long career as Apostle to Islam.⁵ There are seven facts that must be noted: (1) Llull is born on Majorca around 1232, only three years after its reconquest from the Moors; during his childhood, the Muslims constitute the majority of the population and many local preachers try to convert them to Christianity.⁶ (2) After Llull's conversion, he spends nine years studying Arabic and Islamic theology, with an unconverted Moorish slave as teacher.⁷ (3) The new missionary's first works, the *Llibre del Gentil* and *Llibre de contemplació*, are written first in

³ See Derek W. Lomax, «The Lateran Reforms and Spanish Literature», *Iberoromania I* (1969), 299-309; and Francisco Rico, *Predicación y literatura en la España medieval* (Cádiz, UNED, 1977).

⁴ *Vida coetània*, sect. 6 (ed. cit. [note 2]), 36.

⁵ See Sebastián Garcías Palou, *Ramón Llull y el Islam* (Madrid, Gráficas Planisi, 1981); and Dominique Urvoy, *Penser l'Islam: Les présupposés islamiques de l'Art de Lull* (Paris, J. Vrin, 1980).

⁶ See Miquel Batllori, «Introducción» to Llull's *Obra escogida* (Madrid, Alfaguara, 1981); and J.N. Hilgarth, *Ramon Llull and Lullism in Fourteenth-Century France* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971), 1-45.

⁷ *Vida coetània*, sects. 11-13 (ed. cit. [note 2]), 37-38; the slave is reported to have committed suicide after a religious quarrel with his master. The entire episode of the Moor may be an apocryphal one elaborated later on by Lullists in order to obscure Llull's debt to the Muslim scholars and teachers in Majorca. I am indebted to Prof. Francisco Márquez Villanueva for the suggestion that Llull may have engaged in formal studies at Islamic schools of theology on the island.

Arabic and then in Catalan; they are, in effect, addressed to the Christian preachers who go to Moorish lands and to any wise Muslims who may read them. (4) Llull undertakes missionary journeys to North Africa and the Middle East⁸ only after writing a *summa* for preaching (the *Ars magna*) and two novel-parables (*Blanquerna* and *Fèlix*),⁹ and only after teaching his Art in the missionary school at Miramar, at the universities of Montpellier and Paris, and at the papal court in Rome.¹⁰ (5) Llull's first missionary journey follows a psychological/spiritual crisis in Genoa (1294), which leads to a second conversion¹¹ and a renewed literary apostolate (the *Arbre de Sciència* in 1295). (6) Thereafter Llull dedicates more time and energy to combatting Islam with new versions of his Art, to promoting the missions within Christendom,¹² and to refuting the Averroists in the universities,¹³ than to preaching directly to Moors in Christian or Muslim cities. (7) Llull's desire to die as a martyr among the infidels,¹⁴ in spite of the legend, was not to be fulfilled;¹⁵ rather, his true

⁸ Tunis in 1294, Bougia in 1307, and again Tunis in 1314-15; Cyprus and Asia Minor in 1300-1302.

⁹ The *Art abrenjada d'atrobar veritat* is from around 1273; *Blanquerna* dates from 1283-85 and *Fèlix* from 1288-89.

¹⁰ Llull founds Miramar in 1276 and teaches there and at Montpellier between 1276-87; he teaches in Paris in 1288-89, 1297-99, 1305-6, and 1309-11; and he teaches in Rome in 1290-92 and 1295-96. See Miquel Batllori's «Cronologia» in Llull's *Obra escogida* (ed. cit. note 6), xcix-civ.

¹¹ *Vida coetània* sects. 20-25 (ed. cit. [note 2]): 42-44.

¹² Llull engages in missionary propaganda before popes, chapter generals of the friars, and Church councils. Cf. his series of *Petitiones* from 1290-1311. See Batllori and Hillgarth, *op. cit.* (note 6), *passim*.

¹³ Llull's major campaign against the Averroists took place in 1309-11 at the University of Paris.

¹⁴ Cf. *Vida coetània*, sects. 5 and 8 (ed. cit. [note 2]), 35 and 36.

¹⁵ The legend reports Llull's eventual death due to stoning at the hands of a mob in Bougia, but he died of natural causes in Majorca at age 84. Cf. E.A. Peers, *Ramon Llull* (London, SPCK, 1929), 371-72; and Batllori, *op. cit.* (note 6), liii-lv.

«martyrdom», in the sense of a witness to Christ, is exemplified in his literary works of devotion, preaching, and formation. His best sermons are to be found in the *Llibre de contemplació*, in *Blanquerna* (along with its mystical insert the *Llibre d'Amic e Amat*), and in the «Fulles d'Amor» in the *Arbre de filosofia d'amor*. These works project Llull's own evolution as a missionary and serve as exemplary guides to encourage others to become apostolic preachers.

1.2. DIALECTIC OF FAITH AND REASON

In order to trace Llull's career as a missionary writer, it is necessary to follow the evolving relationship of faith to reason in his art of preaching to the infidels. These successive phases emerge: the rational optimism of the *Llibre del Gentil e los tres savis* (1269-70); the critical and exemplary utopias of *Blanquerna* (1283-85), *Fèlix* (1288-89), and the various *Petitiones* (1290-1311); the exemplifying method of the *Arbre exemplifical* in the *Arbre de sciència* (1295); the signifying language or the *Retòrica nova* (1301); and the combinatory logic of the *Art abrenjada de predicació* (1313). From the ideal of tolerance of the *Gentil* to the example of mediation in *Blanquerna*, one can trace the ascending movement of missionary confidence in Llull; from the urgent exhortation of the *Petitiones* to the automatic system of the last version of the *Art*, one can recognize the descending movement of Llull's disillusionment and apostolic reevaluation. Towards the end of his life, his faith in reason remains intact, but the examples of the rightness of the faith appear to deteriorate. This becomes manifest when at last Llull changes tactics and calls for a military crusade alongside the intellectual one.¹⁶ Behind this change are to be seen both the ideological vehemence of the

¹⁶ Cf. Llull's *Libre del passatge* (or *De modo convertiendi infideles*) of 1292 and the *Petitio Raimundi pro conversione infidelium et acquirendam Terram Sanctam and Bonifacium VIII papam* of 1295.

debates against the Averroists in Paris and the not very fruitful outcome of his journeys of propaganda to the papal court and missions of preaching to North Africa.

During his first missionary period, when the fervor of the military crusades is still kept alive, in the very year of St. Louis IX's last crusade (1270), Llull writes the *Llibre del Gentil*. Just as Roger Bacon has done shortly before in the *Opus maius* (1265-68), Llull now proposes the conversion of the infidel, not by arms, but by persuasion.¹⁷ Given the conflict of authority among the three «religions of the book», the truth of the Catholic faith is to be preached on the basis of universal reason and good example. Although both Llull and Bacon promote the teaching of the infidels tongues, what is curious is that in this work the common language is that of scholastic theology: logic and dialectic. The three wise men understand and tolerate one another because all speak the language of reason. In fact, Llull here begins to use a literary device of Arabic and Oriental origin, which later he will frequently employ: the sapiential debate with a conversion to wisdom. For it is precisely in these terms of reason — and truth — as the image of God, that is raised the question of which is the religion that will lead the Gentile to the happiness of salvation and eternal life. The prologue consists of a symbolic allegory and an emblematic encounter: the trees that have leaves with writing on them represent the divine and human virtues which bring happiness; the wise men share a common belief in God the Creator. That is why, although each wise man professes his particular theology (the Christian one is distinguished from the others by the dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation), the point of departure of the debate is a theodicy which is based on natural philosophy and human ethics. Since it is a question of persuading the Gentile, for this is clearly a case of proselitizing, the ending of the work surprises the reader: the wise men conclude their dis-

¹⁷ See E. Randolph Daniel, *The Franciscan Concept of Mission in the High Middle Ages* (Lexington, KY; Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1975), 55-75.

cussion with courtesy and take their leave in order to continue their dialogue, without waiting to learn of the Gentile's choice of a «law» or religion. This, Lull's first missionary writing, turns out to be a utopia (just as later *Blanquerna* will be, but of a different type). The three wise men are in the service of Lady Intelligence: they profess the «religion of reason», just as the knights and troubadours of courtly literature profess the «religion of love». What is lacking is the force of affective devotion (which the almost contemporary *Llibre de contemplació* provides); all of the work's motivation rests, then, on the rational deism and professional courtesy of the teachers of philosophy. It is not so much a religious controversy as a model disputation: it is a dialogue of tolerance that serves as a preliminary encounter to conversion.

1.3. MODELS AND EXAMPLES OF PREACHING

The importance of the model of conversion always greatly concerned Lull. In his works he seemed to alternate — and at times, as in *Blanquerna*, to mediate — between the utopia of the philosophers (the Oriental model of wisdom) and the utopia of the apostles (the Christian model of charity). In the first case, he strove to find the «necessary and efficacious reasons» for the conversion of the infidels and schismatics, just as the systematizer St. Thomas Aquinas had done in the *Summa contra gentiles* (1259-61) and the polemicist Ramón Martí in the *Pugio fidei* (1263). The exemplarity of the method is what characterizes this model, as much as the exemplarity of life characterizes the other. If the Gentile did not convert, it was not the fault of the preacher but of the system which he employed: it was then necessary to perfect the art of preaching as a rational system, rather than to perfect the preacher as a practicing Christian (as would be the case in *Blanquerna* and *Fèlix*). This was the common theme of a series of books similar to the *Gentil* that presented encounters

among wise men and their rival systems: the *Liber de Sancto Spiritu* (1275) with a Latin, Greek, and Saracen; the *Liber de quinque sapientibus* (1295) with a Latin, Greek, Nestorian, Jacobite, and Saracen; the *Liber super Psalmum «Quicumque vult»* (circa 1295) with a Tartar and a wise hermit named Blanquerna, and the *Liber de fine* (1302) which argues in favor of disputes with Saracens, Jews, schismatics, Tartars and pagans. In *Blanquerna* itself¹⁸ is found a disputation between two wise men, a Greek and a Latin, before a Saracen king; likewise there appears «un crestià, qui anava enfre ls sserrahins e ls jueus demanar lo gentil qual de les III ligs havia presa, segons que és recomptat en lo *Libre del gentil e dels III savis*». ¹⁹ In this way, the disputation serves not only to persuade the infidels to convert, but also to reinforce the Christians' own understanding of their faith: by means of dialogue one achieves communication with the other and edifies one's own conscience.

As for the rational method of these disputations and polemics of an academic nature, Lull employed exemplary forms and techniques without projecting an exemplarity of belief or life: the *exempla* of the preaching did not come, as they would in *Blanquerna* and *Fèlix*, accompanied by the *similitudo Christi* of the preachers themselves. After all, they were meant to be demonstrative arts, and not evangelical parables. Lull showed, without a doubt, the utility for the art of preaching of his series of exemplifying systems and aphoristic compendia: the *Arbre exemplifical* (1295), the *Proverbis de Ramon* (1296), the *Llibre del mil proverbis* (1302), and the *Proverbis d'ensenyament* (1309). What he did not show in them were models of Christian lives preached through apostolic works and through the fruits of mystical love. Nevertheless, in *Blanquerna* and *Fèlix*, the examples, tales, metaphors and likenesses (*eximplis, recontaments, metàfores* and *semblançes*)

¹⁸ *Blanquerna*, eds. S. Galmés, A. Caimari and R. Guilleumas (Barcelona, Els Nostres Clàssics, 1935-54; 4 vols.), Bk IV, c 86; II, 203.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 203-4.

serve to stimulate meditation, conversion, and reform among Christians and infidels: the difference is that in these works can be seen the process and the effect of mediation which the means of preaching facilitate, while in the arts and compendia are only presented the *fabulae* and *sententiae*; in the latter works there is missing the model of the preacher who exemplifies faith to his audience. It is worth remembering that in the Gospel itself are narrated episodes in which one can see and hear Christ — the Teacher and Preacher *par excellence* — in the very act of preaching, together with the effect which His preaching has on His disciples and on the crowds. In *Blanquerna*, it is the living examples and fruits of the Gospel's and Church's teachings that serve the Christian as models of devotion.

Turning from the preacher's exemplary method to his use of language itself, what stands out is Lull's achievement in forging a true missionary rhetoric. In a period in which the Franciscans and Dominicans are preaching with great advantage and efficacy in the vernacular tongues,²⁰ the Apostle to Islam and teacher of missionaries is able to create a language for preaching in a Catalan idiom which is capable of articulating the most elevated doctrines of theology, as well as of communicating the most intimate devotions of the penitent.²¹ For Lull, language must signify the ideas of the work and cause the emotions of narrator and characters to be felt, without any interference from the literary medium: one should only think of the message contained in the words and of the example provided by the person speaking them. In contrast with the troubadours, who make the medium the center of their art and turn the words into the very substance of poetry, the

²⁰ See Michel Zink, *La Prédication en langue romane avant 1300* (Paris, Honoré Champion, 1976).

²¹ See Antoni Badia Margarit and Francesc de B. Moll, «La llengua de Ramon Lull», in Lull's *Obres essencials* (ed. cit. [note 2]), II: 1299-1358; and Jordi Rubió Balaguer, «L'expressió literària en l'obra lul·liana in *Ramon Lull i el lul·lisme* (Montserrat, Publicacions de l'Abadia, 1985), 300-14.

Minstrel of God proclaims the Gospel of Christ through lessons of truth and examples of life.²² This concept Lull puts into practice explicitly and implicitly throughout his work.

In various books Lull mentions his criteria for preaching. Thus, in the *Llibre de contemplació* (1270-72), he not only speaks of what the true minstrel must be,²³ but also recommends that one have *art e manera* in speaking and writing,²⁴ by which he means a rational and a spiritual order. In the *Doctrina pueril* (1275), he instructs his son in the importance for the knight of «parlar bellament e ordenada»,²⁵ that is, in a reasonable and rational way. At the same time, in the *Arbre de sciència* (1295), he warns of the danger of authors who tend to «moure a pietat e caritat ab falses paraules».²⁶ In *Blanquerna* itself, there are many examples of preachers who know how to instruct and move their audience «segons exemplis e costumes, per metàfores e per semblances» that serve to elevate the *sensualitats* to the level of *entel·lectuïtat*, as well as to recall Christ's Passion.²⁷ Lull even praises the example of the Muslim Sufis: «tan devotes paraules preycaven que quaix tots aquells qui los scoltaven se ploraven»; indeed, in an original *Llibre d'Amic e Amat*, supposedly written in Arabic, is shown the way in which «per devoció de paraules fossen los sermons pus agradables a les gents».²⁸ Again he develops a missionary rhetoric with reference to the Islamic model of preaching in *Los cent noms de Déu* (1285); the very «names» or attributes of God can communicate the truth of the faith in Christ; for what is important in preaching is not «paraules ornar», as the

²² Cf. the false and true *juglars* in Lull's *Llibre de contemplació*, c 118, and *Blanquerna*, cc 48, 78 and 115. See also note 66 below.

²³ See c 118, sects. 3, 6 and 21, in *Obres essencials*, (ed. cit. [note 2]), II, 355 and 357.

²⁴ Chapter 359, sect. 1, *ibid.*, II, 1214.

²⁵ Chapter 73 (Barcelona, *Els Nostres Clàssics*, 1972), 170.

²⁶ Part XVI, sect. 5, quest. 174, 178 and 184.

²⁷ Bk IV, c 88; *Obres essencials* (ed. cit. [note 2]), II, 216 and 218.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 216-17.

false minstrels do, but to show «veritat en amar».²⁹ In *Fèlix* (1288-89), however, one of the wise hermits prefers to preach by means of difficult examples and metaphors that will cause the listener to meditate upon the sense in which he is to interpret the doctrines they contain: «scientment vos fas aytals semblançes per ço vostro enteniment exalçets a entendre; car hon pus scura és la semblança, pus altament entén l'enteniment qui aquella semblança entén».³⁰ Towards the end of Lull's life, in the *Ars generalis ultima* (1305-8), he continues to insist on the necessity of *ornare cum voce significativa*.³¹

In these passages can be noted a certain tension between the rational order (the truth of doctrine) and the emotional effect (the act of converting the heart to greater devotion), as well as between the exemplary mediation (the spiritual ascent through incarnated grace) and the educational means (the psychological process of elevating the powers of the soul). Lull resolves the tension by rationalizing the activity of the individual consciousness/conscience according to the Augustinian trinity of powers: the order which the words are to manifest corresponds to the memory, their meaning to the understanding, and their effect to the will. The memory remembers and recognizes the spiritual end of what is preached: the hierarchy of intentions must be reflected in the logic of the words according to an exemplary metaphysics. The understanding illumines and explains the truth of the words: the *virtus* of the reality being described requires a *scientia* — a functional and not decorative knowledge — that will be capable of grasping it. The will, when it is moved by the substantial and not ornamental beauty of the discourse and of the doctrine which it communicates, ascends in an inspired state and comes to motivate the soul to contemplation or action for the

²⁹ Sec. 26, v. 7.

³⁰ Bk II, c 14 (Barcelona, Els Nostres Clàssics, 1931), I, 142.

³¹ Chapter 100. See Rubió Balaguer, «La *Rhetorica nova* de Ramon Llull», in *Ramon Llull i el lul·lisme* (ed. cit. [note 21]), 202-33.

love of God. What mediates among the three powers is the example which is conveyed by the signifying language: the literary example of the metaphor that connects one image to another reality, the moral example of the model which points towards another and better order, the psychological example of the interior relationship that are illustrated by the actions, and the mystical example of the friendship with Christ which is manifested by the grace and force of love. In this way, Llull unites, in his rhetoric of preaching, the rational method to the way of the heart.

So important for Llull is the signifying and exemplifying process of language, that he creates in his *Art abreujada de predicació* (1313) a homiletic machine, which is based on the spiritual senses of the *Llibre de contemplació* and the combinatory logic of the *Ars magna*.³² He thus systematizes, in a practical manual for missionary preachers, the objective described thirty years before in *Blanquerna*:

Dix I cardenal, qui era gran [filòsof] natural, que a preycar era útil cosa provar per rahons naturals la manera segons la qual vertuts e vicis són contraris, ni com una virtut se concorda ab altra e un vici ab altre, ni per qual natura pot hom mortificar un vici ab una virtut o ab dues, ni com una virtut pot hom vivificar ab altra; e aquesta manera és en la *Art abreujada d'atrotar veritat*.³³

In the new missionary book, the *Art abreujada de predicació*, Llull places at the disposal of the preacher a logical technique and a symbolic set of themes: this *Art* constitutes a manual of scholastic theology full of figures, alphabets, definitions, and combinations (*mesclaments*); it also includes a homiletic encyclopedia in which are catalogued both model sermons and general topics; it serves, at the same time, as a contemplative exercise on the divine attributes and sacred discourses, as well as a moral guide

³² See Curt Wittlin, «Introducció» to Llull's *Art abreujada de predicació* (Barcelona, Mall, 1982).

³³ *Blanquerna* (ed. cit. [note 18]), Bk IV, c 93; II, 241.

on virtues and vices; and all of it is based on a pedagogical method which combines the Aristotelian ideology of distinctions (substantial and formal) with the Augustinian psychology of the trinity of the powers of the soul.

At the end of Llull's career as a missionary writer, he completes the only task still remaining to be modelled: by means of the mechanical system of the *Art abrenjada de predicació*, he hopes to leave in a fixed state his own practice of the art of proclaiming through reason the Catholic faith to the infidels. Already, not only in the fictional *Blanquerna* and *Fèlix*, but also in the autobiographical *Desconhort* (1295), *Cant de Ramon* (1299), and *Vida coetània* (1311), he had exemplified the formation of the preacher himself, together with the devotional and apostolic effects of his preaching. It is to these truly exemplary works, and not to the last conventional model of an *ars praedicandi*, that one must turn in order to grasp Llull's achievement, both as a writer and as a teacher of the Christian missions.³⁴

2. BLANQUERNA: HAGIOGRAPHIC FICTION AND THE PREACHING OF THE FRIARS

A critical examination of *Blanquerna*, written by Llull around 1283-85 in Montpellier, will show how the close relationship between new *artes praedicandi* and traditional wisdom literature gives rise to the novel-sermon,³⁵ which constitutes a form of hagiographic fiction.³⁶ This development reflects the Church's

³⁴ See Juan Tusquets, *Ramón Llull: Pedagogo de la cristiandad* (Madrid, Instituto San José de Calasanz del CSIC, 1954).

³⁵ On the relation of preaching to literature in the thirteenth century, see: D.L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985); Alan Deyermond, «The Sermon and its Uses in Medieval Castilian Literature», *La Coronica*, VIII, n. 2 (spring 1980), 127-45; Lomax, *op. cit.* (note 3); Rico, *op. cit.* (note 3); and Zink, *op. cit.* (note 20).

³⁶ On the development of popular hagiography by the Franciscans and

renewal in the thirteenth century under Pope Innocent III and his successors, and the foundation of new preaching orders by Sts. Dominic and Francis.³⁷ It takes place amidst the cultural renaissance in both Spanish kingdoms, Castile and Aragon, that results from the dialogue and polemic of the three «religions of the book».³⁸

In *Blanquerna*, Lull combines various religious and secular literary genres of his day into a unique Christian novel-sermon that is part exemplary biography, part symbolic quest, part social

Dominicans, see Hans Bekker-Nielsen (ed.), *Hagiography and Medieval Literature* (Odense, Odense Univ. Press, 1981); Stanislao da Campagnola, *Francesco d'Assisi nei suoi scritti e nelle sue biografie dei secoli XIII-XIV* (Assisi, Porziuncola, 1981); John Wayland Coakley, *The Representation of Sanctity in Late Medieval Hagiography* (Diss. Harvard Divinity School [Th. D.], 1980); John V. Fleming, *An Introduction to the Franciscan Literature of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977); and Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Stuttgart, A. Hiersemann, 1982).

³⁷ This period witnessed significant attempts among popes, religious, and laity at the renewal of the Church and the reform of Christendom. See Daniel, *op. cit.* (note 17); Alexander Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978), 282-313 and 383-402; Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250-1550* (New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1980), 73-181; and André Vauchez, *Religion et société dans l'Occident médiéval* (Torino, Bottega d'Erasmus, 1980).

³⁸ In Spain the religious renaissance of the thirteenth century developed against a background of military crusades, theological disputes, and social controversies. See Américo Castro, *España en su historia: Cristianos, moros y judíos* (Barcelona, Crítica, 1984; 3^a ed.), 267-331; Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1989), 25-37 and 115-36; Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, Cornell Univ. Press, 1982), 103-69 and 199-225; J. N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms, 1250-1516* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976), I, 155-214; Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1982; 85-96 and 189-98); Joseph O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, Cornell Univ. Press, 1975), 487-520; and W. Montgomery Watt and Pierre Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1965), 150-54 and 169-72.

mirror, part religious utopia, and part mystical allegory.³⁹ Many traditions underlie the composition of this hagiographic romance: Latin and Hispano-Arabic didactic narratives, Catalan and Castilian compilations of traditional wisdom, French allegories of courtly love, and Italian popular preaching by the Franciscans.⁴⁰ But Llull's achievement was (a) to transform these traditions in the light of his own religious experience and mission, (b) to convert his fiction-parable into an instrument for spiritual restoration and social reform, and (c) ultimately to transcend the limitations of literature and society by way of mystical love. Llull creates a complete novel that functions effectively as a sermon, for all the conventional forms are employed to

³⁹ On the underlying unity of Llull's theological, missionary, pedagogical, and literary achievements, see Eusebi Colomer, «Las artes liberales en la concepción científica y pedagógica de Ramón Llull» in *De la Edad Media al Renacimiento* (Barcelona: Herder, 1975), 44-55; Miguel Cruz Hernández, «El sentido de la sabiduría luliana», «La praxis luliana como utopía», and «La mística luliana» in *El pensamiento de Ramón Llull* (Valencia: Castalia, 1977): 145-66, 205-52, and 253-300; Hillgarth, *Ramon Llull and Lullism* (ed. cit. [note 7]), 1-45; Mark D. Johnston, *The Spiritual Logic of Ramon Llull* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987); Armand Llinarès, «Les constants d'un caractère» and «La unitat orgànica del pensament lul·lià» in *Ramon Llull* (Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1968), 95-118 and 291-96; and Rubió Balaguer, «Alguns aspectes de l'obra literària de Ramon Llull» and «L'expressió literària en l'obra lul·liana» in *Ramon Llull i el lul·lisme* (ed. cit. [note 21]), 248-99 and 300-14.

⁴⁰ On the interaction of traditional forms of didactic literature and contemporary arts of preaching, see Claude Bremond, Jacques Le Golf, and Jean-Claude Schmitt, «L'Exemplum dans le sermon» in *L'Exemplum* (Turnhout, Brepols, 1982), 147-64; Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Docere verbo et exemplo* (Missoula, Scholars Press, 1979); Ernst Robert Curtius, «Sententiae and Exempla» in *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Tr. W.R. Trask) (Princeton, NJ Princeton Univ. Press/Bollingen, 1973), 57-61; María Jesús Lacarra, *Cuentística medieval en España: Los orígenes* (Zaragoza, Univ. de Zaragoza, 1979); James J. Murphy, «Ars praedicandi: The Art of Preaching» in *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1974), 269-355; Rameline E. Marsan, sections on vices and virtues in *Itinéraire espagnol du conte médiéval* (Paris, Klincksieck, 1974), 430-64 and 468-504; and Mark Silk, *Scientia Rerum: The Place of Example in Later Medieval Thought* (Diss. Harvard Univ., 1982).

educate the lay urban Christian. In *Blanquerna*, this ideal reader/listener sees: traditional literature transformed into personal witness and mission, profane literature converted into exercises of devotion, and didactic literature transcended by revelations of compassion and charity. The exemplary history and teachings of the fictional saint Blanquerna constitute a modern Christian novel. In it Llull describes the prototype of the new middle-class saint, gives a practical demonstration of urban preaching, and represents the City of God into which Christendom is to be transformed *hic et nunc*. By attempting to translate for his day the Gospel of Christ and the Acts of the Apostles, Llull offers a model hagiography for the formation of new saints in contemporary society.

2. I. THE HAGIOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE OF *BLANQUERNA*

It is important to note that Llull begins *Blanquerna* as if it were a sermon: he addresses a prayer directly to God and states in the prologue the theme of his preaching and purpose of the romance: for this work «és fet per intenció que los hòmens agen de amar, entendre, recordar e servir a vós com a ver Déu, senyor y creador que sóu de totes coses».⁴¹ The whole novel, then, is to serve as an objective meditation and extended sermon on the imitation of Christ, in terms both of the interior life (the contemplation of the five wounds) and of social experience (the observation of the five «estaments de gents»).

In the *Llibre d'Evast e Blanquerna* itself, Llull narrates the religious adventures and spiritual experiences of the protagonist Blanquerna, of his parents Evast and Aloma, and of Natana (or Tana), the young woman who would have become his wife. The novel, therefore, follows the linear structure of the fictional hagiography or exemplary legend, which in this case turns out to be

⁴¹ *Blanquerna* (ed. cit. [note 18]), Pròleg; I, 17-18.

a mixture of archetypal quest and authentic *Bildung*. However, this romance, as it reinterprets the message of the Gospels and thus develops into a modern evangelical parable, seeks to offer to the reader/listener emblems of the Christian vocation and models for the imitation of Christ that constitute cyclical motifs. These transcend the horizontal lines of the history of a holy life in contemporary Catholic society and ultimately come to represent the spiral stages in the soul's ascent towards and fulfillment in God.

The two formal characteristics of linearity and circularity reflect the basic duality of the work: (1) There exists the novel as exemplary life, which the author divides into five books with the homiletic purpose (Prologue) of recalling the five wounds of Christ and of reviewing all of the *estaments* (or orders) of the society and church of the period. (2) At the same time, there is also the novel as symbolic parable, which the author represents in three complementary parts: Blanquerna's hagiographic legend itself (chapters 1-99 and 115), his mystical confessions (the 366 «moral verses» of the *Llibre d'Amic e Amat* contained in chapter 100), and his guide for ascetics (the *Art de contemplació* in chapters 101-114). These three different compositions that make up the novel reflect, in Lull's Trinitarian system,⁴² man's pilgrimage as a creature made in God's image, the devotion centered on the likeness of Christ, and the illumination by the Spirit. But the duality of form and structure is transcended by the thematic and ideological unity of the novel, since, by means of a character who is pseudohistorical, semiautobiographical, and prototypical, are recapitulated and exemplified all of the religious lessons and experiences of the author himself. In this sense, it is necessary to incorporate the five books and three parts into a grand Trinitarian scheme of the Christian life (at the same time linear and cyclical, mutable and constant): (a) the evangelical vocation in

⁴² See R.D.F. Pring-Mill, «The Trinitarian World-Picture of Ramon Lull», *Romanistisches Jahrbuch*, VII (1955-56), 229-56.

the world and in «religion» (i.e. monasticism) (Books I, IIA and IIB); (b) the apostolic mission in the church and in its hierarchy (Books III, IV and V); and (c) the spiritual way in the devotions of the ascetic and mystic (the *Libre d'Amic e Amat* and the *Art de contemplació*).

2.2. THE VOCATION OF THE SAINT

The novel starts with the narration of the vocational fortunes of Evast, Aloma, Blanquerna and Natana. A debate arises between the states of matrimony and «religion» (monasticism), in which Llull goes beyond the conventional topics by means of vivid and emotional scenes (the interviews between the protagonist and his parents and between the two young persons),⁴³ which stand out for their psychological realism and social drama. The Christian vocation is here revealed through narrative monologues and dialogues, realized through pious practices and charitable deeds, and confirmed through a series of tests and self-trials. When Llull comes to treat the religious vocation, in the strict sense in which he here understands it, he shows that it requires a complete formation of the individual, as temporal and spiritual subject, which in the best of cases, as with Blanquerna, leads to a teaching role and apostolic ministry based on those of the divine Teacher and Servant of the Gospel. On reaching adulthood, Blanquerna, like Saint Francis before him, rejects the plans his parents have made for him (the life of a Christian as merchant and spouse); he chooses instead to lead the ascetic and solitary life of a hermit according to the example of Elijah and John the Baptist.⁴⁴ In this resolve, he follows the fruit of his meditations on the Cross, which serve as the basis of his Franciscan-like imitation of Christ: Blanquerna «començà a considerar e guardar en la creu, e remembrà la santa passió de nostre senyor Jesu Crist, e con era estat

⁴³ *Blanquerna*, Bk I, cc 5 and 6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Bk I, c 5; I, 56.

pobre en lo món, ell e sos apòstols, ni con hac menyspreats los béns temporals». ⁴⁵ At eighteen, he thus decides to renounce the world «per ço que puscha pus perfetament contemplar, amar lo Fill de Déu, qui vench en est món per nosaltres peccadors». ⁴⁶

In Blanquerna's quest for a hermitage, he encounters the allegorical figures of Faith, Truth, Understanding and Devotion, ⁴⁷ which represent the very balance of scholastic learning and affective piety that characterize the preaching of the friars. As he discovers, what is needed by the Church is a missionary apostolate that will «convert» not only the minds and souls of the infidels, but also the schools and clergy of the Christians (symbolized by the philosophy and theology students at the feet of Understanding). ⁴⁸ The new apostolate must be equally based on teaching the «art» of theology (Llull's own *Ars magna*) and on exemplifying the life and Passion of Christ. ⁴⁹

It is significant that Evast sends Blanquerna to an urban center of learning, probably one of the new universities (such as that of Montpellier where the novel is written) with a curriculum based on the teaching of the friars, where he studies the liberal arts, medicine and scholastic theology. ⁵⁰ Later, when Blanquerna enters a monastery, it is his learning and wisdom, as well as his devotion, that serve to renew the spiritual life of the monks: as he explains the Scriptures to them, they recognize the importance for their community of the liberal and scholastic studies mastered by Blanquerna (and the friars). ⁵¹ As the Abbot argues, «injúria fem a l'ànima con no li satisfem de viandes sperituals, per sermons e per paraules de Déu». ⁵²

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk II, cc 43-45.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Bk II, c 44; I, 220.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 221 and 222.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Bk I, c 2; I, 33.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Bk II, c 53; I, 276.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 277.

The renovation of monastic learning and preaching by the scholasticism of the friars in the urban universities is thus manifested in Blanquerna's reforms as the new master of studies at the monastery.⁵³

2.3. THE SAINT AS REFORMER

From the contemplation and imitation of Christ, Lull and Blanquerna pass on the emulation and interpretation of the mission of the Apostles. For the Christian living in the thirteenth century who desires to return to the original fervor and commitment of the Gospel, this means the reform of society through the reform of the Church. It is for this reason that Blanquerna's «religious» and «ecclesial» trajectory (in the strict sense) is so significant: his original vocation to be a hermit providentially evolves into service as a monk, teacher, sacristan, abbot, bishop and pope, before it can bear the inward fruit of the hermit and mystic.

As abbot, Blanquerna develops his reforms of the monastery and the surrounding countryside according to a rule of preaching that is based on the *Ave María*.⁵⁴ This systematization of popular forms of prayer, as symbolic pattern for the transformation of institutions and for the conversion of the heart, reflects the new spirituality of the friars: in particular, it recalls the Franciscans appeal to the common people through simple examples of piety and the Dominicans cultivation, among the clergy and populace, of devotions to the Virgin Mary. This Marian spirituality serves to focus on the human compassion and mediation of Christ Himself. As Blanquerna explains to his monks, «Tot lo major honrament que creatura aja pugut reebre de son creador, fo fet en lo

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Bk II, c 56; I, 288-292.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Bk I, cc 61-66.

ventre de nostra Dona com lo Fill de Déu hi pres natura humana». ⁵⁵

When Abbot Blanquerna is elected bishop, he undertakes a renewal of his clergy and a reform of his city that is predicated on the return to the Gospel teachings of Christ. As a «modern» pastor and urban preacher, inspired by the new devotion and apostolate of the friars, he models his role on the evangelical example of the Beatitudes. ⁵⁶ After singing the passage from the Sermon on the Mount during Mass, Bishop Blanquerna convokes the canons so as to reorder the diocese:

Entès havets, senyors, con nostre senyor Déus Jesu Crist promet en l'avengeli VIII benauyanças. Ab consell e ab volentat de vosaltres, vulria ordenar aquest bisbat a tal regla e ordenament que les VIII benauyanças poguésem aver. ⁵⁷

Moreover, Blanquerna divides the canons themselves into three groups: those who serve the cathedral church, those who study theology and canon law, and those who preach by word and deed the Beatitudes (and by extension the whole Gospel itself) in the city streets and marketplaces. ⁵⁸ To the clerical offices and functions of the Church are thus restored, with equal weight, the scholastic preparation and evangelical responsibility of the priests as ministers of Christ's Word among His people. In this way, as one of the canons tells a group of pilgrim-preachers, the original order of Christ's disciples would be reestablished:

Si ells volien ésser en l'orde dels Apòstols, covenia que en les ciutats e en les viles e ls castells per on passarien preycasen la paraula de Déu, e que reprehenen los hòmens dels pecats que ls veurien fer, e que no duptasen mort ni trebaylls, e que

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk II, c 61; II, 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Bk III, cc 68-76.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk III, c 68; II, 75-76.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

la fe catòlica anassen preycar als infeels per ço que mills fossen semblants als apòstols.⁵⁹

By means of Blanquerna's episcopate, Llull unleashes a criticism of society that embraces all the sins and abuses of his age. He also engages in a clerical debate that examines, from theoretical (theological) and institutional (ecclesiological) points of view, all of the urgent problems confronting contemporary Christianity. For both author and protagonist, as reformers, the preaching by the bishop should include moral denunciations and challenges, as well as scholastic questions and disputations. It is Bishop Blanquerna's concern with the renovation of theology, renewal of the clergy, and reform of the Church that leads him to draw up ten Questions to be debated among the Pope and Cardinals in Rome, «per ço que ...ells les solvessen e les determenassen, e que feesen les obres qui's convenia ab la solució e determinació».⁶⁰ Once in the court of Rome, the pope dies and Bishop Blanquerna is elected to succeed him. As «Apostle», he sees his role in the evangelical terms of pastor and teacher of the Church. He now undertakes the renewal of Catholic spirituality and the reform of Christian society on the basis of the rule of the *Gloria in excelsis*:⁶¹ that is, he applies the rule of prayer as adoration of God and action on behalf of one's neighbor. The hierarchy must thus mirror both the divine order and ecclesial responsibility.

By means of Blanquerna's papacy, Llull establishes a vertical order which is to serve as a guarantee of church discipline and universal harmony; he thus projects a model of authority (doctrinal and moral) and responsibility (homiletic and pastoral) which is to promote not only the renewal of the clergy and people, but also the unification and pacification of the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Bk III, c 76; II, 124.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Bk II, c 77; II, 127.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Bk III, cc 79-95.

world under the Kingdom of Christ. As pope, Blanquerna undertakes to fulfill, in the light of the Gospel, the apostolic mission of the Church by preaching the reconversion of Christians in the cities of Europe and the conversion of infidels in foreign lands. To accomplish this double crusade of the word, he enlists not only the cardinals and their clerical assistants, but also a host of lay people as street criers, storytellers, theological disputants, and devout witnesses (*loadors, recon-tadors, comparadors* and *consideradors*).⁶² In effect, he revitalizes and recommissions the Church as the people of God engaged in the evangelization of the whole contemporary world. He is even willing to adopt the methods of preaching of the Muslim Sufis, whose affective way of devotion and broad popular appeal recalls that of the Franciscan friars who preach sermons in the vernacular to the urban masses: for «era recomtat com los devots hòmens fahien cançons de Déu e d'amor, e com per amor de Déu lexaven lo món e anaven per lo món, pobretat sustinent».⁶³

Once the temporal mission of the apostles to go throughout the world proclaiming, instructing and baptizing in the Holy Name has been achieved, there remains the spiritual task of the Christian's self-fulfillment by divine grace and human effort. By means of Blanquerna's hermitage, Lull returns to the original inspiration of the protagonist, when he undertook his symbolic quest and exemplary pilgrimage. His success in reforming the Church now allows him to dedicate himself entirely to the adoration of God and the salvation of his soul. As a result, he resigns from the papacy and becomes a hermit.⁶⁴

Although Blanquerna finds a retreat in the country, where he can meditate in the midst of nature, he cannot escape the needs of the urban Church. His hermitage is sought out by

⁶² *Ibid.*, Bk IV, cc 83, 85, 86, 88, 93.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Bk IV, cc 88; II, 216-17.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Bk V, c 96; II, 252.

the hermits of Rome, minstrels from noble courts, a bishop who is a theologian, and the Emperor himself, who has abdicated and now wishes to join Blanquerna in praying to God, conversing about God, and writing verses and guidebooks for those who seek God.⁶⁵ Just like the Franciscan and Dominican friars who combine mystical devotion with theological education and moral preaching, Blanquerna now discovers that his vocation consists of a balance between the inward withdrawal of the contemplative and the outward commitment of the active reformer and missionary. This balance is symbolized by the image of the minstrel of God,⁶⁶ who sings of the love of Christ, Mary, and the saints with the fervor of the true mystic, but in the words of the popular poet of the palace courts and city squares: «l'ufiçí de juglaria fo atrobat per bona entenció, ço és a saber, per loar Déu e per donar solaç e consolació a aquells qui són treballats e turmentats en servir Déu».⁶⁷ Like Saint Francis of Assisi, Blanquerna sees himself as God's minstrel. For in the examples of his life story, as it is to be recited in the city squares, palace courts, and monastery cloisters,⁶⁸ as well in the devout verses composed by the Emperor for the edification of the papal court of Rome, are to be found the mirror of «la vida dels Apòstols, en lo temps del quals santedat de vida e devoció e valor vivien».⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk V, cc 99, 100, 115.

⁶⁶ See my article «The Writer and Preacher as *Juglar de Déu*: Literary Conversion in Ramon Llull», *Romance Languages Annual* (Purdue Univ.) (to be published in Fall 1989).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk V, c 115; III, 179.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 182.

2.4. THE SAINT AS AUTHOR

Blanquerna's reform of the rule of the hermits of Rome in turn leads him to transform his own spiritual experience into forms of literature: a mystic's confession and a theologian's manual. Blanquerna, a character who acts out the life of a saint, is transformed into an author (of the *Llibre d'Amic e Amat* and the *Art de contemplació*) who shows others how to become holy. The outer hagiography in the world of action is turned inside out to reveal the very process of sanctification in the saint's heart and mind; the exemplary legend of pious and charitable deeds is converted into autobiographical examples of the inward workings of grace and faith.

These two short works supposedly «written» by the saint constitute autonomous compositions, not only because they were in fact drafted by Llull years earlier (around 1275-76), but also because they are different in content and form. Nevertheless, Llull manages to integrate them, in an organic and convincing way, into the overall structure of the novel and into the exemplarity of his hagiographic preaching. The *metàfores morals* of the *Llibre d'Amic e Amat* and the divine *virtuts* of the *Art* show the author's lively interest in assimilating the most apt and efficacious forms of devotional and doctrinal sermons, which in his day included both Christian (Dominican and Franciscan) and Muslim (Sufi) models.⁷⁰ At the same time, they illustrate, in dramatic and discursive ways, the concerns of his era for orthodoxy (the contemplative's praise of all the divine attributes) and for orthopraxis (the Friend of Christ's parables of good love). Finally, they reflect the tradition of Augustinian contemplation preserv-

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Bk V, c 99; III, 10.

ed and renewed by the Franciscans,⁷¹ as well as Llull's own experience as ascetic and mystic.⁷²

Through the hagiographic fiction of Blanquerna the character and the author, Llull orders and coordinates a series of exemplary sermons: the novelistic ones of a practical nature (*Blanquerna* proper, Books I-V); the poetic ones of an affective mode (*Llibre d'Amic e Amat*), and the theological ones of a discursive type (*Art de contemplació*). Llull thereby shows the double trajectory of the saint: on the one hand, the way in which divine grace animates human love in the various estates of society by the paths of piety, formation, charity and reform; on the other hand, the form in which the Passion of Christ invites the compassion of the Christian in the interior life by the paths of sacrifice, conformity, service, and transformation. In these ways, the fictional hagiographer concludes the linear narrative and rounds out the cyclical symbols of the life and teachings of Blanquerna, saint, sage, and witness of love.⁷³

⁷¹ See Tomás Carreras Artau, «Els caràcters de la Filosofia Franciscana i l'esperit de sant Francesc» in *Estudios filosóficos*, II: *Escritos histórico-filosóficos* (Barcelona, Instituto Luis Vives del CSIC, 1968), 9-48.

⁷² Cf. Llull's autobiographical writings in *Obres essencials* (ed. cit. [note 2]): the confessions and meditations in *Libre de contemplació* (1270-72); the critical reevaluation and reaffirmation of the poems, *Desconhort* (1295-96) and *Cant de Ramon* (1298-99); and the spiritual and missionary witness of the *Vida coetània* (1311) and *Phantasticus* (1311); the last is edited by Lola Badia (Barcelona, Stelle dell'Orsa, 1985).

⁷³ On the various models of sanctity that are reflected in contemporary hagiographies, see Régine Pernoud, *Les Saints au Moyen Age* (Paris, Plon, 1984); Paul Szarmach (ed.), *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe* (Albany, State Univ. of New York Press, 1984); André Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1981); and Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society* (Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982).

3. *BLANQUERNA*: THE EXEMPLARY NOVEL AS SERMON AND PARABLE

In *Blanquerma*, the medieval arts of preaching are applied in the context of the new urban mission of the Franciscan and Dominican preachers, amplified with the methods of the new scholastic encyclopedias of the university theologians, and exemplified through the new vernacular parables inspired by the poetry and hagiography of the friars. As a result, the whole novel can be seen to function as a sermon on what should be the Christian's response to the Passion of Christ (the «five wounds» of the Prologue), while each of its parts provides a specific type of homiletic discourse that addresses a given aspect of the life of holiness: debates in the family, exhortations in the religious community, proclamations in the city, challenges to the Church, and responses to the world, as well as dialogues of the heart, mind and soul. This *art of preaching* (as scholastic method and spiritual poetics) develops a fictional type of hagiography that is oriented towards the formation of the saint in contemporary society and directly addresses the «modern» mind of the thirteenth century.⁷⁴

In the first two books of *Blanquerma*, Lull traces the symbolic journey of the protagonist across the hierarchical orders of the Christian society of his day. This echoes the *progress* and *redaction* of the Franciscan saint's life:⁷⁵ even as the spiritual quest is conceived against a background of scholastic disputes over faith and reason, and the apostolic mission is undertaken through the city streets and markets, what is reflected in the pilgrimage of

⁷⁴ Cf. the studies on the religious poetics of two of Lull's contemporaries in Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas* (tr. H. Bredin) (Cambridge, MA, Harvard Univ. Press, 1988), and John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (ed. R. Jacoff) (Cambridge, MA, Harvard Univ. Press, 1986).

⁷⁵ See da Campagnola, «L'Itinerario di una conversione», «Francesco e le istituzioni francescane», and «Lettura episodica di una maturità spirituale» in *Francesco d'Assisi* (ed. cit. [note 36]), 127-202.

the contemporary Christian and his Church is the translation and interpretation of the original message of the Gospel. The principal characters, most of them burghers and urban clerics inspired by the example of Blanquerna, serve as models of conversion and mediation for contemporary readers/listeners; they serve to further the religious education of «modern» Christians, as it has been shaped by the popularizing of hagiographic legend, spiritualizing of didactic narrative, and humanizing of mystical devotion in Franciscan preaching. In this complex process of exemplification,⁷⁶ Lull in effect integrates the psychological order (the interior life according to Augustinian-Franciscan Trinitarianism), the ideological order (the evangelical and ecclesial criteria of renewal through Christ-centered contemplation and of reform through action on behalf of one's neighbor), and the sociological order (the authority, responsibility and morality of the institutions and offices of the Christian society as a real and ideal City of God).

Throughout the novel, the hagiographic aspects of the fiction are developed and the exemplarity of the hero as the saint for his age is underscored. By way of a series of homiletic techniques and literary devices that combine the traditions of Oriental wisdom narratives with the objectives of Latin didactic discourses, Lull portrays the religious experiences, relationships, teachings, and works of Blanquerna in forms that can be used, not only for preaching to others, but also for forming new preachers. It is significant that, within the novel itself, Blanquerna compiles his life story as a book to serve as an example to others and charges a minstrel with its recitation «en les plaçes e en les corts e en los monestirs».⁷⁷ In this way, the fictional saint becomes his own hagiographer.

The full implications of the novel as a sermon for the

⁷⁶ Cf. the rhetorical technique, social criticism, and moral/spiritual message in Zink, *op. cit.* (note 20), 199-303, 389-427, and 429-79.

⁷⁷ *Blanquerna* (ed. cit. ([note 18]), Bk V, c 115; III, 181.

thirteenth-century Christian and his Church are developed in Books III and IV of *Blanquerna*. There Lull projects, through the type of the saint as urban and church reformer, his own projects for social renovation and religious renewal. The role of the Church as pastor and teacher is modeled by bishop, and then pope, Blanquerna. Through his example, he inspires many preachers, missionaries, minstrels, knights, mystics and martyrs, whom he organizes according to the rule of prayer that is translated into action (the Beatitudes for the diocese and the *Gloria in excelsis* for the papacy). His purpose is that of reevangelizing the cities of Christendom and of converting the lands of infidels and pagans; for Blanquerna, as for Lull, the urban mission prepares and consolidates the mission to foreign lands. This double project serves to develop the utopian potential of the hagiographic genre. Through Blanquerna's papacy, Lull reveals the evangelical agenda of the Franciscan reformers in the practical terms of the Fourth Lateran Council, as well as in the spiritual terms of the Augustinian duality of the Two Cities. What is needed to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth, then, is a double crusade: at home and abroad, social and intellectual, militant and mystical. The saint must therefore be soldier, sage/fool, and servant of Christ in this world and the next.⁷⁸ For Lull, he must be above all a master preacher of the Gospel for his time.

In Book V, the *Llibre d'Amic e Amat* shows the point of departure and of return of the reforming saint. In these 366 sayings and parables, Blanquerna describes the ascent of the intellect and the elevation of the heart towards the pure love of God. Through dramatic monologues and allegorical dialogues, the Friend (Blanquerna or the Soul) manifests his compassion, relationship, and union with the Beloved (Christ). By means of these mystical accounts of folly and martyrdom,

⁷⁸ See Robert Neville, *Souldier, Sage, Saint* (New York, Fordham Univ. Press. 1978).

quest and union, fall and elevation, the hero of the hagiographic legend is transformed into the archetypal vehicle of divine grace. Thus, Lull's experience and art of preaching finds fulfillment in this exemplary novel: it evolves as a sermon on the life of a modern saint, culminates in the witness to the Gospel of that saint's parables, and offers object lessons and symbolic readings for Christians of all ages. From the call to form oneself in holiness and to reform all Christendom, both the author and protagonist return to the contemplation and imitation of Christ Himself. For Ramon Lull, this is precisely the role of Blanquerna, the saint and preacher: to mirror self and society in such a way that the image of God is revealed and the likeness to Christ is approximated.⁷⁹

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⁷⁹ The medieval use of the terms «image» and «likeness», in the dynamic sense of the human imitation of and fulfillment in Christ, refers back to Patristic authors, especially Irenaeus and Augustine. See Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), 80-81 and 235-36.