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Universalità della Ragione. Pluralità delle Filosofie nel Medioevo
Universalité de la Raison. Pluralité des Philosophies au Moyen Âge
Universality of Reason. Plurality of Philosophies in the Middle Ages

XII Congresso Internazionale di Filosofia Medievale
Palermo, 17-22 settembre 2007

Volume II.1
Comunicazioni
LATINA

a cura di
Alessandro Musco
e di Carla Compagno - Salvatore D'Agostino - Giuliana Musotto
Indici di Giuliana Musotto

2012

Carla Compagno ha curato l'editing dei testi della sezione *Lulliana*; Salvatore D'Agostino ha curato l'editing della sezione *Latina* del vol. II.2; Giuliana Musotto ha curato l'uniformità redazionale dell'intero volume e gli *Indici*; Alessandro Musco ha curato la supervisione dell'editing redazionale del volume ed il coordinamento scientifico-editoriale.

Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale (S.I.E.P.M)
Universalità della Ragione. Pluralità delle Filosofie nel Medioevo = Universalité de la Raison. Pluralité des Philosophies au Moyen Âge = Universality of Reason. Plurality of Philosophies in the Middle Ages : 12. Congresso Internazionale di Filosofia Medievale : Palermo, 17-22 settembre 2007. – Palermo : Officina di Studi Medievali, 2012.
ISBN 978-88-6485-025-2 (Intera opera)

V. II.1 : Comunicazioni : Latina / a cura di Alessandro Musco … [et al.] ; indici di Giuliana Musotto. (Biblioteca dell'Officina di Studi Medievali ; 14.II.1)
I. Musco, Alessandro
II. Compagno, Carla
III. D'Agostino, Salvatore
IV. Musotto, Giuliana
1. Filosofia – Medioevo – Atti – Palermo
180 CDD-21
ISBN 978-88-6485-049-8 (vol. II.1)

Cip: *Biblioteca dell'Officina di Studi Medievali*

I saggi qui pubblicati sono stati sottoposti a "Peer Review" / The essays published here have been "Peer Reviewed"

Collana diretta da:
Armando Bisanti, Olivier Boulnois, José Martinez Gasquez, Alessandro Musco, Luca Parisoli, Salvador Rus Rufino, Christian Trottmann, Pere Villalba i Varneda.

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Via del Parlamento, 32 – 90133 Palermo
e-mail: edizioni@officinastudimedievali.it
www.officinastudimedievali.it - www.medioevo-shop.net

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Prima edizione, Palermo, luglio 2012
Stampa: FOTOGRAF – Palermo
Grafica editoriale: Alberto Musco

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Concepts of Philosophical Rationality in Inter-Religious Dialogue: Crispin, Abelard, Aquinas, Llull*

This paper analyses the way in which the genre of inter-religious dialogue contributed towards shaping the concept of philosophical rationality in the Latin West from the eleventh to the early fourteenth century.

To this end, four concepts of philosophical rationality – as these were developed in different inter-religious dialogues and other apologetic writings – will be presented and discussed: first, the concept of rationality underlying Gilbert Crispin's (1045-1117) *Disputationes*; second, that of Peter Abelard (1079-1142) in his *Collationes*; third, that of Thomas Aquinas (1224/25-1274) in *De rationibus fidei* and the *Summa contra gentiles*, and, finally, that of Ramon Llull (1232-1316) as expressed in his *Ars*.

1. Gilbert Crispin: From Hermeneutics to Philosophical Apologetics

The first author to be considered, Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster during the eleventh century, wrote two apologetic dialogues: a *Disputatio iudaei et christiani* and a *Disputatio christiani cum gentili*. The former includes a dedicatory letter to Anselm of Canterbury – whom Gilbert may have met during his early years at Bec –, in which the author explains that the work is, in fact, a report of a genuine disputation he conducted with a learned Jew on matters of faith.[1] Following the traditional pattern of Jewish-Christian disputations, the dialogue turns out to be a treatise on hermeneutical issues concerning the interpretation of the Old Testament, with both interlocutors relying on the authority of Scripture (*scripturarum aeque testimonio nitens eidem ipsi*).[2] The merit of this dialogue lies not so much in its reflections on the relation between faith and reason, but rather in the pro-

* This paper has been written with the support of the research project "The Perception of Islam in Medieval Europe" (Project FFI2008-06919-C02-02/FILO of the DGI-MEC and 2009SGR00824 of the AGAUR-Generalitat de Catalunya) at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. – I am grateful for the help of Robert D. Hughes (Prague).

[1] Both dialogues will be quoted from the critical edition of Gilbert's works by A. S. Abulafia and G. R. Evans: GILBERT CRISPIN, *The Works of Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster* (Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi, 8), Oxford University Press, London-Oxford 1986. In brackets we will indicate the page references to the recent Latin-German edition: GILBERT CRISPIN, *Religionsgespräche mit einem Juden und einem Heiden*, ed. and transl. K. W. Wilhelm and G. Wilhelmi (Herders Bibliothek der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 1), Herder, Freiburg i. Br. 2005.

[2] GILBERT CRISPIN, *The Works*, cit., p. 9 (32).

cedural remarks it contains, such as, for instance, the Jew's request at the beginning of the dialogue for a discussion *toleranti animo*,[3] evoking reason in this context less as a counterpart to faith than as the opposite of polemics: *His in rebus rationi potius vacare volo quam contentioni.*[4] Yet, while a friendly atmosphere does, in fact, prevail throughout the conversation, this atmosphere does not lead to the conversion of the Jew, for at the end of the disputation the respective positions of the interlocutors seem to be just as far apart as they were at the start.

The meagre outcome from this authority-based dialogue with a Jew may have served as the point of departure for Gilbert's rigorous revision of his apologetics, which, in turn, led him to conceive of the second disputation, wherein he shifted the dispute to a more general level: In his *Disputatio christiani cum gentili* no longer do we find the representatives of different religions engaged in debate, but rather a Christian together with a gentile, the latter of whom identifies himself with the pagan theists of the Ancient philosophical tradition.[5] Unlike in the former disputation, therefore, arguments from Scripture are dismissed accordingly in this work right from the outset: *Omittamus igitur scripturarum auctoritatem [...]».*[6] *Instead the partners within this dialogue agree that reason alone should be their judge: «Iudicem sequamur rationem*.[7] Now, what is of great interest for the present purposes, is the very concept of reason employed in this dialogue. Gilbert himself gives a very clear definition of reason, using the gentile, i.e. the philosopher, as his mouthpiece:

> Reason is that power of the soul which distinguishes the just from the unjust. And justice involves giving to everybody and preserving for him that which is his. Therefore, reason requires that men give to Him, from Whom they come [i.e. to God], that which is His, insofar as they are men.[8]

This concept of rationality can be traced back, through Anselm of Canterbury, to the stoicism of Cicero, suggesting a very close link between philosophy as a whole and ethics.[9] Again, as in the previous disputation, it seems that reason's counterpart is not, in the first instance, faith, for we must seek this counterpart in the ethical domain rather than on the epistemological level, or at least admit that it has strong ethical implications.

The aforesaid definition of philosophical reason, namely, as the ability to distinguish between what is just and what is not, is complemented by a number of remarks on the methodology of philosophical argumentation. Thus, Gilbert opens the disputation with a reflection on logic, in which he explains that the constitutive parts of logic are invention

[3] *Ibid*., p. 10 (34).

[4] *Ibid*., p. 11 (36).

[5] *Ibid*., pp. 62-63 (138-140).

[6] *Ibid*., p. 64 (140).

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 63 (138): «Ratio est ea vis animi, quae iustum ab iniusto discernit. Iustitita est dare ac ser[vare] cuique, quod suum est. Ad eum igitur, a quo est homo, exigit ratio, ut homo referat hoc ipsum, quia est homo».

[9] CICERO, *De finibus*, V, XXIII, 65, and ANSELM's *Monologion*, LXVIII. C. J. Mews has pointed to the similarities between Gilbert's text and another work from the Anselmian milieu: the *Disputatio inter christianum et gentilem*; C. J. MEWS, *St Anselm and Roscelin: Some New Texts and Their Implications: I. The* "De incarnatione verbi" *and the* "Disputatio inter christianum et gentilem", in «Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge» 58 (1991), pp. 55-98, esp. pp. 77ff.

and judgment (*inventio et iudicium sunt constitutivae partes logicae*).[10] With this, he draws once more on Ciceronio-Boethian source material, also present in Anselm. Along with the logical tradition leading up to the twelfth century, Gilbert conceives of logic in terms of Boethius's *In Ciceronis Topica* and his *De differentiis topicis*, works in which invention and judgment form a complex organic whole.[11] He also shares with this tradition the belief that reasoning, as this is developed in the *Topics*, is both probable and demonstrative. In a passage from *De altaris sacramento* he states:

> The topics under which we prove something to be or not to be are either inherent in the thing under discussion or brought in from outside it. But topics taken from the outside of the subject do not provide a less convincing *fides*, i.e. certainty, than those inherent in the thing under discussion.[12]

Following Cicero,[13] Gilbert is therefore combining what we would call today topical and demonstrative arguments in a remarkable way saying that they may both lead to equally certain conclusions.

With Gilbert one witnesses the discovery of philosophical reason as a medium for inter-religious dialogue, a discovery which becomes manifest in the transition from a dialogue between the confessions to a philosophical dialogue about religion. The concept of philosophical reason put forward by Gilbert, stems from the Ciceronio-Boethian tradition and is characterized, as we have seen, by a strong ethical commitment and a debt to the Late Ancient dialectical tradition.

2. Peter Abelard: Faith, Reason and Opinion

If we turn to Peter Abelard and his *Collationes*, we can observe some interesting similarities between this work and Gilbert's *Disputatio christiani cum gentili*, even though, as J. Marenbon has pointed out, it is not likely that Abelard was familiar with this work.[14]

Unfortunately, we are able neither to discuss this question here nor to touch on the different problems the *Collationes* pose with regard to dating or to the contested issue of the philosopher's identity, etc.[15] Instead we shall take a brief look, once more, at the concept of

[10] GILBERT CRISPIN, *The Works*, cit., p. 62 (136).

[11] On the interrelatedness of invention and judgment, as developed in Boethius's *In Ciceronis Topica*, and its role in eleventh-century dialectic, especially in Anselm of Canterbury, see the excellent study by P. BOSCHUNG, *From a Topical Point of View. Dialectic in Anselm of Canterbury's* "De grammatico" (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 90), Brill, Leiden 2006, esp. pp. 35-36.

[12] GILBERT CRISPIN, *The Works*, cit., p. 125: «Loci, ex quibus aliquid esse vel non esse probamos, alii sunt in ipso, alii extrinsecus ab ipso, unde agitur; nec tamen minorem faciunt fidem loci extrinsecus sumpti quam loci haerentes in ipso, unde agitur». The English translation is quoted (with slight changes) from G. R. EVANS, *Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster. The Forming of a Monastic Scholar*, in «Studia Monastica» 22 (1980), pp. 63-82, here p. 77.

[13] Cf., for instance, CICERO, *Topica*, II, 8.

[14] Cf. his *Introduction* to PETER ABELARD, *Collationes*, ed. and transl. J. Marenbon and G. Orlandi, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2001, p. XL.

[15] For these and other questions, S. SEIT's comprehensive interpretation of the *Collationes*: "*Dilectio consummatio legis". Abaelards 'Gespräch eines Philosophen, eines Juden und eines Christen' und die Grenzen einer rationalen Gotteslehre*, in M. LUTZ-BACHMANN-A. FIDORA (Eds.), *Juden, Christen und Muslime. Religionsdia-*

philosophical reason as depicted in this dialogue.

Abelard insists even more than Gilbert himself on the need for genuinely philosophical argumentation within the sphere of inter-faith dialogue. He speaks programmatically of two swords, the sword of Scripture and that of reason, and the range of philosophical reasoning for matters of faith receives explicit discussion at the beginning of the second *Collatio*, in which the philosopher criticises what he calls Gregory's «escape-clause for wretches» (*miserorum refugium*), i.e. the question of the relation between insight and merit.[16] Even though the philosopher's radical position, as expounded in this passage, may not be a faithful reflection of Abelard's own views on this matter – these views often being expressed in a more moderate fashion –, it provides a more than tolerable match with the account given in his late *Theologia Scholarium*.[17]

As far as the concept of philosophy itself is concerned, there can be no doubt that Abelard moves within the same tradition as did Gilbert, i.e. the stoic legacy. In presenting himself, Abelard's philosopher states:

> When I had studied for a long time in our philosophical schools and had become learned both in philosophical reasoning and the philosophical authorities, at length I turned my attention to moral philosophy. Moral philosophy is the goal of all branches of knowledge; it is so as to study it that all the other disciplines must first be mastered.[18]

This concept of philosophy, with its particular stress on ethics, is decisive for the entire direction the *Collationes* take. For, as is well known, the *Collationes* develop around the idea of the *summum bonum*, drawing upon Cicero, Seneca and other authors from the stoic tradition as sources. Yet, in our opinion, it may not be enough to explain Abelard's strong commitment in this work to ethics as the cornerstone of philosophy in terms of his familiarity with a certain philosophical tradition alone; this commitment, rather, seems further to suggest an attempt on his part to provide a philosophical basis that corresponds to the requirements of rational discourse on matters of faith between different communities, here conceived precisely as *leges*, i.e. in ethical terms.

As far as methodology is concerned, we find Abelard introducing some remarkable distinctions into his notion of dialectic as this regards Gilbert. Thus, he opposes opinion and reason, from the outset, saying that the former, i.e. opinion, pertains to faith when this is not philosophically justified, while the latter, i.e. reasoning, is the proper activity of philosophy[19] – an opposition which reminds one of the controversy between Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux on the definition of faith as an *existimatio*.[20]

loge im Mittelalter, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 2004, pp. 40-95.

[16] PETER ABELARD, *Collationes*, cit., pp. 6 and 88-91.

[17] See the discussion in MARENBON's *Introduction*, cit., pp. LV-LVIII.

[18] PETER ABELARD, *Collationes*, cit., p. 3 (English); the Latin texts (p. 2) reads: «Nostrorum itaque scolis diu intentus et tam ipsorum rationibus quam auctoritatibus eruditus, ad moralem tandem me contuli philosophiam, quae omnium finis est disciplinarum et propter quam cetera omnia praelibenda sunt studia».

[19] *Ibid*., pp. 2 («in omnibus non opiniones hominum, sed rationis sequi ducatum»), 8 («ratio vos induxerit aliqua an solam hic hominum opinionem»), 14 («potius hic ratio detinet quam opinio») *et passim*.

[20] On this controversy, P. DINZELBACHER, *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Leben und Werk des berühmten Zisterziensers*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1998, p. 241.

This distinction, absent from the conception of Gilbert, will have important consequences for the further development of dialectic, as shall be seen later. It goes hand in hand with a reassessment of the validity of certain topics or *loci*. While Gilbert claimed that extrinsic and inherent topics may lead to the same degree of certainty, Abelard states most clearly that this is not the case:

> Philosophers have been right to judge the topics of such arguments [i.e. arguments based on authority and tradition] [...] as entirely extrinsic, resting on opinion rather than the truth and needing no cleverness of invention at devising arguments founded on them, since the person who employs them is using someone else's words, not his own.[21]

As in Gilbert so for Abelard, topical arguments are not simply opposed to demonstrative reasoning, but rather topics and invention form a part of the latter. What is new, however, is the open opposition Abelard establishes between extrinsic topics, on the one hand, and inherent topics, on the other, as regards the kind of certainty they yield. According to Abelard's interpretation of the Ciceronio-Boethian tradition,[22] the only topics capable of producing strong philosophical arguments – for inter-faith dialogue as well as for any other purpose – are the inherent ones, while extrinsic topics are relegated to the domain of pure opinion. Abelard's views concerning the value of extrinsic topics and of opinion clearly affect the status of faith, which turns out to be a deficient epistemic mode, when not philosophically founded.

Though one can observe striking similarities between Gilbert and Abelard concerning their stoic background and their stress on an ethically charged conception of philosophy, one must conclude that Abelard clearly goes further in the way he describes the complex relations that obtain between dialectic and faith as regards reason and opinion.

3. Thomas Aquinas: Splitting Topical and Demonstrative Reasoning

With the reception of the Aristotelian corpus in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the philosophical foundations of inter-religious dialogue change considerably. As these changes cannot be presented here in detail, we shall concentrate on some of the salient philosophical features of thirteenth-century inter-religious dialogue as they are expressed by Thomas Aquinas in *De rationibus fidei* and the *Summa contra gentiles*.

Both works start from the premise that it is of no avail to employ arguments from authority for apologetic ends, since they would not be accepted by Muslims. Instead, Aquinas sets out in *De rationibus fidei* by saying that the partners in a dialogue should be convinced by either moral or philosophical reasons, whereas in the *Summa contra gentiles* he speaks of philosophical reasons alone.[23] The fact that Aquinas marks a distinction in *De*

[21] PETER ABELARD, *Collationes*, cit., p. 93 (English); the Latin text (p. 92) reads: «Unde bene philosophi talium argumentorum locos [...] omnino extrinsecos et a re disiunctos et omni virtute destitutos iudicaverunt, utpote in opinione potius quam in veritate consistentes et nullo ingenii artificio ad suorum inventionem argumentorum egentes, cum is, qui ea inducit, non suis sed alienis utatur verbis».

[22] For his interpretation, Abelard is more dependent on Boethius and his *De differentiis topicis*, II and III, than on Cicero.

[23] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De rationibus fidei*, 1, and *Summa contra gentiles*, I, 1-9.

rationibus between moral and philosophical arguments and omits the former in the *Summa*, is telling. As we have seen, while in Gilbert and especially in Abelard, a pre-eminently ethical concept of philosophy dominated their discourse, in Aquinas ethical considerations seem to take a back seat. In fact, from the first chapters of the *Summa contra gentiles* onwards, it becomes evident that the concept of philosophy characterising Aquinas's apologetics is a purely theoretical one, namely that of Aristotelian metaphysics and its philosophical theology.[24]

Aquinas combines this metaphysical approach with an Aristotelian epistemology, in particular with the latter's theory of demonstration as laid down in the *Posterior Analytics*. He shows that there can be no demonstration of God's essence in the strict sense of a *demonstratio propter quid*, since reason cannot attain God's quiddity; nor is it possible to penetrate into his essence by way of *demonstratio quia*, i.e. through His effects, «since the effects are not equal in power (*virtus*) to the cause».[25] *Demonstratio quia* only proves the existence of God, though does not do similarly for the Trinity, the Incarnation or the other Articles of Faith. This is why, for Aquinas, no necessary reasons, as he says in *De rationibus*,[26] can be adduced to prove the divine mysteries, even though, of course, these latter are in no way contrary to reason. According to Aquinas, only topical reasons can do so, i.e. probable arguments such as arguments of convenience, analogies, similitudes, etc.[27] Without doubt, Aquinas's treatment here of the concept of topics differs considerably from that of Gilbert and Abelard, since he regards the topics as clearly opposed to demonstrative science – a shift which has to do with the reception of the *Posterior Analytics* and their scholastic interpretation.

As is well known, Aquinas's favourite strategy as far as apologetics goes, however, is the negative one: it consists of refuting the interlocutor's opposing claims and objections against the Christian faith, since, in the final analysis, the latter cannot be in disagreement with the truth. He states:

> Whatever arguments are raised against the Articles of Faith, they are not derived correctly from the first principles, which are established by nature and are self-evident. Therefore, they do not have the force of demonstrative proofs but are probable reasons or fallacies. And therefore they can be resolved.[28]

This quotation is remarkable, for, as it stands, it suggests that each and every argument against the Articles of Faith can positively be shown to be false. However, in his *Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate*, Aquinas gives a more precise account of the question at stake. Here he says:

[24] For a more detailed analysis of the position Aquinas develops in the first nine chapters of the *Summa contra gentiles*, M. LUTZ-BACHMANN, *Rationalität und Religion. Der Beitrag des Thomas von Aquin zu einer rationalen Grundlegung des Religionsdialogs in der* "Summa contra gentiles", in M. LUTZ-BACHMANN-A. FIDORA (Eds.), *Juden, Christen und Muslime*, cit., pp. 96-118.

[25] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra gentiles*, I, 3

[26] ID., *De rationibus fidei*, 2.

[27] *Ibid*., 3 *et passim*.

[28] ID., *Summa contra gentiles*, I, 7: «Ex quo evidenter colligitur, quaecumque argumenta contra fidei documenta ponantur, haec ex principiis primis naturae inditis per se notis non recte procedere. Unde nec demonstrationis vim habent, sed vel sunt rationes probabiles vel sophisticae. Et sic ad ea solvenda locus relinquitur».

> If anything [...] is found [...] contrary to faith, this is not philosophy but rather an abuse of philosophy arising from faulty reasoning. Therefore it is possible to refute an error of this sort by philosophical principles, either by showing that it is entirely impossible or that it is not necessary. For, as matters of faith cannot be demonstratively proved, so some assertions contrary to them cannot be demonstratively shown to be false.[29]

This passage is more cautious, for it does not claim that all arguments against the Articles of Faith can be shown to be openly wrong, but merely contents itself with saying that they can be shown not to be necessary arguments, thus leading to a kind of stalemate-situation in the dialogue.

In conclusion, what is most important for Aquinas's account of the philosophical foundations for apologetics, is the fact that he provides a metaphysical basis for inter-faith dialogue which is construed in terms of the epistemological distinction between topics, understood as merely probable reasoning, on the one hand, and demonstrative science, on the other, thus pointing to the very limits of philosophical arguments within inter-faith dialogue.

4. Ramon Llull: Reconciling Topics and Demonstration

Compared to Thomas Aquinas, Ramon Llull has often been charged with an extreme rationalism for proving, as he claims, the Articles of Faith by means of «necessary reasons». Others have tried to defend Llull against his critics, alleging that those «necessary reasons» were nothing more than arguments of convenience. Yet, the issue seems to be much more complicated than these positions suggest.

In fact, Llull's philosophico-theological programme has to be seen as a direct answer to the problems of apologetics as these arose from what can be considered the standard account given in his day. In particular, Llull was not satisfied with the scholastic distinction between topics and demonstrative science which led to what he felt was an undue opposition of theology and philosophy. It is precisely this distinction and the opposition deriving therefrom, that Llull wanted to overcome with his so-called *Ars*: a system which takes the basic concepts of the three monotheistic religions of its time (concepts including God's attributes, the virtues and vices, etc.) and combines them in mechanical figures (i.e. rotating circles) in order to convince Muslims (and Jews) of the logical superiority of Christianity and, so, to convert them to the Christian faith. In integrating logical, ontological, ethical and also philosophico-theological notions, the *Ars* offers a point of departure which encompasses the ethical approach championed by Gilbert and Abelard as well as the metaphysical one employed by Aquinas.

Now, in order to bridge the gap between topical and demonstrative reasoning, the *Ars*,

[29] ID., *Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, q. II, art. 3, co.; English translation from A. Maurer in: THOMAS AQUINAS, *Faith, Reason and Theology*, Pontificial Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1987, pp. 48-49; the Latin reads: «Si quid autem [...] invenitur contrarium fidei, hoc non est philosophia, sed magis philosophiae abusus ex defectu rationis. Et ideo possibile est ex principiis philosophiae huiusmodi errorem refellere vel ostendendo omnino esse impossibile vel ostendendo non esse necessarium. Sicut enim ea quae sunt fidei non possunt demonstrative probari, ita quaedam contraria eis non possunt demonstrative ostendi esse falsa, sed potest ostendi ea non esse necessaria».

which Llull termed both *inventiva* and *demonstrativa*, presented new forms of demonstration. In fact, Llull was in complete agreement with his contemporaries, such as Thomas Aquinas, regarding the fact that neither *demonstratio propter quid* nor *demonstratio quia* were apt for proving *in divinis*. Therefore, he devised certain new forms of demonstration, designed to turn topical or, as Llull says, «opinative statements», into demonstrative truths, namely the *demonstratio per aequiparantiam* and the *demonstratio per hypothesim*. Both can be understood as direct responses to the Thomasian account.

Aquinas, as we have seen, rejected the possibility of proving *in divinis* by means of *demonstratio propter quid*, since God's quiddity remains inaccessible; similarly, no demonstration *in divinis* is possible for him either by means of *demonstratio quia*, since the effect does not possess the same power as its cause. It is precisely here that Llull's *demonstratio per aequiparantiam* comes into the play as a form of demonstration based on equally powerful terms, namely, God's attributes, whose relation is not one of cause and effect – either in the sense of a descent or an ascent –, but of equality.[30] Along with his theory of the correlatives, this type of demonstration is used by Llull to put forward proofs about God's inner relatedness and ultimately about the Trinity. However, since much has been said about the significance of this type of demonstration, we shall not dwell on this.[31]

Instead we shall have a look at Llull's *demonstratio per hypothesim*, a subject which seems to have been neglected so far. Actually, Llull does not arrive at an explicit formulation of this type of demonstration until very late in his life, but it is an underlying feature of most of his production ever since the earliest days. It is only in 1312, however, that Llull sets out his theory in some detail, in a book called *De novo modo demonstrandi*, which he dedicates to the Emperor of Sicily, Frederic III, and the Archbishop of Monreale, Arnau de Reixac.[32]

As in the case of Llull's *demonstratio per aequiparantiam*, his *demonstratio per hypothesim* can also be understood as a response to Aquinas, namely to his negative procedure of refuting the arguments against faith. As we have seen, in the more optimistic picture Aquinas draws of this procedure in the *Summa contra gentiles*, it seems that any objections against the Christian faith could be shown to be false. This is Llull's starting point: take two not only contrary but also contradictory topical statements about Christian faith as opposing hypotheses, e.g. God became man and God did not become man. Now, you do not have to prove that God in fact became man, for it suffices to show that the contradictory hypothesis is false.[33] Indeed, in many of Llull's works we find arguments which adhere closely to this pattern: what Llull customarily demonstrates is the impossibility of a supposedly contradictory topical hypothesis, an impossibility which leads to the necessity of the affirmation of its opposite.

With these new logical devices, Llull's *Ars* aimed at reconciling topical and demonstra-

[30] Llull already introduces *demonstratio per aequiparantiam* in his *Ars demonstrativa* (*c*. 1283). In 1305 Llull devoted a whole tract to this topic, the *Liber de demonstratione per aequiparantiam*, edited by A. Madre in *Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina* IX (CCCM 35), Brepols, Turnhout 1981, pp. 201-231.

[31] Cf., for instance, the detailed discussion in J. M. RUIZ SIMON, *L'Art de Ramon Llull i la teoria escolàstica de la ciència*, Quaderns Crema, Barcelona 1999, pp. 238-295.

[32] The text has been edited by A. OLIVER-M. SENELLART in *Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina* XVI (CCCM 78), Brepols, Turnhout 1988, pp. 339-377.

[33] *Ibid*., pp. 356-360.

tive reasoning for the purposes of inter-faith dialogue, but not for these purposes alone. For Llull thought of his *Ars* as a universal science which he opposed to standard scholastic epistemology, the latter, in his eyes, being deficient because of its undue separation of topics and demonstrative science. His attempt to bring together both parts of Aristotelian logic was to have important consequences for the history of philosophy: Nicholas of Cusa, for instance, took over Llull's project with his *Ars coniecturalis*, as did Leibniz with his *Characteristica universalis* – two philosophical projects which attempted to go beyond the scholastic separation of topical and demonstrative reasoning.

Against this background, the tradition of medieval inter-religious dialogue can be understood not only as a reflection upon the different faiths – an element of no slight importance itself, of course –, but it is also a significant contribution towards a critical and constructive determination of the very concept of philosophical rationality and dialectic, and therefore an integral part of the self-image and self-conception of philosophers and philosophy.