

RAMON LLULL, *Ars brevis*, and *Ars abbreviata praedicanda, versio latinus II*

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper

Southern Netherlands, c. 1490-1550; and Germany, c. 1490-1520.

ii (paper, i, marbled) + 35 + ii (paper, ii<sup>v</sup>, marbled) folios on paper, watermarks, ff. 1-23v, pot with cover, without additional motif, with handle, one line: similar to Briquet 12495, Antwerp, 1549, with variants Oudenbourg, 1484, Utrecht, 1488, Aisey-le-Duc, 1493, and Ribeaupville, 1519, or Piccard, 31202, Trest, 1505; ff. 24-35, hand or glove, with a cuff, above a flower with six petals, similar to Piccard 155973, Neuenbürg, 1494, Piccard, 155968, Bartenstein, 1517, Piccard 155974, Johannsburg, 1517, Piccard 155966, Marienburg 1520, Piccard 155967, Morungen, 1518, and Piccard 155969, Marienburg, 1517, no similar marks found in Briquet, modern foliation in pencil, top, outer corner recto, earlier incomplete modern foliation, bottom, outer corner recto, 1-24, and in roman numerals, i-xii, starting on f. 24, top, outer corner, recto, (collation, i<sup>s</sup> ii<sup>s</sup> iii<sup>s</sup> [6, f. 22, fragment only remains, 8, cancelled] iv<sup>12</sup> [beginning f. 24]), no catchwords or leaf and quire signatures, written by two scribes, with different formats: ff. 1-23v, frame ruled very lightly in ink and brown crayon, with horizontal rules full across and with full-length vertical bounding lines, (justification, 150-149 x 90-88 mm.), written below the ruled line in a small, pointed cursive script in thirty-seven to thirty-nine long lines, red paragraph marks, three-line red initial, f. 1, two-line red or green initials, tables and diagrams in green, yellow and red, f. 1v, 2, 3v, 4, 4v, and 7 (described below); ff. 24-35, ruling indiscernible, (justification, 160 x 98-95 mm.), written in an upright cursive gothic script in thirty-eight to thirty-four long lines, decorative majuscules, text ink, at the beginning of new sections of the text, red paragraph marks, in very good condition, except f. 22, mostly torn out, f. 11, with small tear in outer margin, slight staining throughout, with no loss of text, darker on the opening leaves, inner margin in the first quire, bottom margin, f. 1, and top and outer margins, ff. 18-23v, f. 24, darkened and stained in the margin, ff. 24v-31, with light staining. Bound in modern light brown morocco, spine with four slightly raised bands, and "1307," in gilt, turn-ins tooled in gold, marbled endpapers, in excellent condition. Dimensions 198 x 133 mm.

This manuscript includes two texts by one of the most intriguing figures of the High Middle Ages, Ramon Llull (1232-1316), the *Ars brevis*, called "Llull's single most influential work," and the *Ars abbreviata praedicandi*, a Latin translation of a work on preaching Llull wrote in Catalan. Only two copies of the *Ars brevis* are recorded in the United States, and it only appeared twice for sale in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. No copies of the *Ars abbreviata praedicandi* are recorded in the United States, nor does it appear in the Schoenberg Database. The unidentified text on f. 21 is certainly of interest.

## PROVENANCE

1. Based on the evidence of their script, both texts can be dated to the end of the fifteenth century or the first half of the sixteenth century and were probably copied in Germany or the southern Netherlands. The watermark evidence in both cases is unfortunately not very helpful. The watermark found on the paper used for the *Ars brevis* circulated over a long span of time from the late fifteenth century through 1549, mostly in the southern Netherlands, but also in France, and possibly Czechoslovakia. The watermark associated with the *Ars brevis praedicandi* does seem to support a date between 1490 and 1520 for this text, but it was distributed over a very broad area of Germany.

At the end of the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century, Llull's works were valued in many centers of Europe, and his ideas strongly influenced prominent thinkers including the

humanist theologian, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étapas (c. 1455-1536), and Bernard de Lavinheta (d. c. 1530), both of whom taught in Paris, and the eminent German thinker, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535). The texts in this manuscript were certainly of great interest to many university trained theologians at this time.

The two texts are preserved in a modern binding, and there are unfortunately no clues as to how long they have been bound together. The fact that this copy of the *Ars abbreviata praedicandi*, which was written in 1312/3, transcribes the date of the text as 1307 is puzzling. Was the scribe influenced by the date of the *Ars brevis*, a text which was composed in 1307/8? If so, then this might be seen as an argument that both these texts circulated together from an early date.

However, they were certainly copied by different scribes and on different lots of paper. Moreover, the first folio of the second text is darkened, suggesting it was once at the beginning of a volume, despite the fact that it now begins imperfectly. Both sections have some staining in the outer margins from damp, etc., but with rather different patterns. Therefore, although it is not altogether impossible that both these texts were part of the same manuscript from an early date, it seems more likely that they have independent origins, and were brought together later.

2. Clipping from Sotheby sale, 12 July 1971, lot 44 laid in; front flyleaf, f. i<sup>v</sup>, in blue pencil, "1307," and in pencil, "(36)," and "SE/-/"; front flyleaf, f. ii, in blue pencil, "31," front flyleaf, f. ii<sup>v</sup>, "Rol xii"; back flyleaf, f. ii, "SC, 19935."

## TEXT

ff. 1-23, *Ars brevis siue artificum magistri Raymundi Lullii, Deus cum tua gratia sapientia et amore, Incipit ars brevis, que est imago artis, que sic intitulatur deus cum tua summa perfectione, Incipit ars generalis etc.*, incipit, "Ratio quare facimus istam artem breuem . . . magister doceat scolares de predictis." *De fine huius libri, Ad honorem et laudem dei et publicae utilitatis finiuit Raymundus Lullus hunc librum Pisis in monasterio sancti domini mense Ianuarii anno millesimo ccc vii incarnationis domini nostro Iesu cristi cui sit laus et honor per infinitis secula seculorum deo gratias amen.*

Ramon Llull, *Ars brevis*, f. 20, ends imperfectly, "Vade ad nonum subiectum instrumentive et agas//"  
[pars 11, line 432, online edition, Library of Latin Texts]; most of f. 22 is torn out, with a few words remaining from the lower half of the folio, and f. 23 resumes, "//per quem modum est valde generalis . . ., [pars 11, line 506]" and the text continues, with no breaks, to the end.

The text on f. 21rv, which begins, "Brevis ad ea que in <?> declaratio, In <?> est speculatio . . .," has not been identified in the online corpus of Llull's works at this time, although its vocabulary is certainly Llullian; it may be notes on the text, or a page from a commentary on the *Ars brevis*; further research is needed to identify its source. It is hard to explain why the text of the *Ars brevis* is interrupted by the text on f. 21rv; it is not an added leaf, nor can it be a leaf misbound from another quire, since ff. 20-21 is the middle bifolium of this quire. This leaf seems to be copied by the same scribe as the remainder of the quire. Perhaps the scribe left this leaf blank in error, and then used it for another text.

Llull explained his system of thought, his great "Art," in many works over the course of his life, but the most influential of these was the *Ars brevis*, which was written in Pisa in c. 1307/8. This work was an abbreviation of the larger work, the *Ars generalis ultima* ("Ultimate general art"), also known as the *Ars Magna*, written between 1305 and 1308. At the time of his conversion (discussed below), Llull resolved to "write a book, the best in the world, against the errors of nonbelievers," and after a period of nine years of study, c. 1274, the Lord "illuminated his mind," and granted to him the form and method for writing this book (Bonner, *Doctor illuminatus*, p. 18). This was the genesis of

Llull's great system of thought, his Art, which he spent his lifetime explaining and refining in many works.

In Llull's words, "the subject of this art primarily consists in demonstrating the truth of the holy Catholic faith through the use of necessary reasons to those who are ignorant of it, as well as reassuring those who already know and believe it . . ." (Bonner, *Doctor Illuminatus*, p. 55, *Lectura super artem inventivam et tabulam generalem*, v. 359-60). He thus constructed a system of thought that sought to prove the Christian mysteries such as the Incarnation and the Trinity using arguments acceptable to the faith not only of Christian believers, but also to Muslims and Jews, drawing on general considerations or principles. Llull's initial works explaining his Art were not greeted warmly by his contemporaries. He therefore continued to refine and explain his ideas in the *Ars generalis ultima*, written in 1305-8, and in its abridged version, the *Ars brevis* of 1308. One of the new ideas he introduced in these works is his "*ars combinatoria*," which involved devices to mechanically combine various components of his Art. As explained in the *Ars brevis*, his Art provided its readers with a system of thought, which could be used to approach any problem. This aspect of his thought was to fascinate thinkers down to the time Leibnitz and has continued to intrigue modern philosophers. The *Ars brevis* was a successful presentation of his ideas, explaining all his concepts in a straightforward, explicit fashion, which proved to be easier to understand. Llull lectured on the *Ars brevis* in Paris in 1310, and in subsequent centuries the *Ars brevis* was the most frequently copied and commented on work by Llull.

The *Ars brevis* was broadly disseminated. It was printed four times in the fifteenth century, and an additional eight times in the sixteenth century, and many times after that; Latin edition in *Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina, Tomus XII, 123-127, Barcinone, in Monte Pessulano, Pisis annis MCCCXV-MCCCXVIII composita*, ed. Alois Madre, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 38, Turnhout: Brepols, 1984, pp. 171-255 (also available online at Brepolis latinus, Library of Latin Texts). English translations can be found in Bonner. *Selected Works of Ramon Llull*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 569-646, and in Bonner, *Doctor illuminatus*, pp. 297-364. The Ramon Llull Database of the University of Barcelona includes an extensive list of printed editions, and lists three manuscripts in Catalan, and sixty-eight in Latin (this manuscript is not listed).

ff. 24-35, "///apparet. Et in ipsa figura scripte sunt litere alphabitaris supradicte scilicet, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, cuculus minor est diuisus in octo partes et inqualibet est a. . . . que est de mixtionibus. [Epilogus] Iste liber appellatur ars praedicationis . . . magnam affectionem habeant." *De fine huius libri, Finiuit Raymundus cum dei benedictione hunc librum in ciuitate maioricarum mense februaryi anno millesimo ccc vii incarnationis domini nostri Iesu Christi cuy sit laus et gloria in secula seculorum amen. Qui scripbit [sic] scripbat [sic] semper cum domino viuat, Non est in speculo res que speculator in illo, W<?>lis, [possibly a monogram of the scribe's initials]. [Ends mid f. 35, remainder and f. 35v, blank].*

Ramon Llull, *Ars abbreviata praedicanda (opus 208)*, beginning imperfectly at line 55. Llull composed this text in Catalan in Maiorca in 1312/3; there are three Latin translations (Llull was not the translator), this one is the second version. The date included in this copy of the text, 1307, would appear to be a scribal error. Llull composed a number of treatises on preaching, and worked intensively on the subject while he was in Maiorca in 1312-13. His *Art abrevjada de predicació* (the Catalan original of the text in this manuscript), was designed to be a much shorter and easier to understand version of his *Liber de virtutibus et peccatis*, or *Ars maior praedicationis*. His theory of preaching, not surprisingly, was strikingly original. Since his aim was the persuasion of audiences who were not Christian, he sought to replace the use of authorities from scripture with a system of moral instruction that would be accepted not only by Christians, but also by non-Christians, who did not accept the authority of the Bible.

The work does not appear to have been printed prior to the Latin edition, *Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina, Tomus XVIII, 208-212, in Civitate Maioricensi anno MCCCXIII composita*, ed. Abraham Soria Flores, Fernando Domínguez and Michel Senellart, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 80, Turnhout, Brepols, 1991, pp. 50-157, also available in an online edition at Brepols Latin, Latin Library of Texts; this manuscript includes lines 55-789 of the online edition. The Ramon Llull database lists twenty-one manuscripts of the *Ars abbreviata praedicandi* (including all three versions), not including this manuscript.

## DIAGRAMS

An integral part of the text of the *Ars Brevis* are a number of charts and figures; this manuscript includes two large circular diagrams, ff. 2, 3v, a large table, f. 7, two smaller tables, ff. 1v and 4, and a small circular digram, f. 4v:

f. 1v, a small table, with the letters B-K, with their associated meanings, in chart form;

f. 2, *Prima figura* is a circle with "A" in the center, and with letters representing the nine fundamental principles of the Art inscribed around the circumference (B, goodness, C, greatness, D, eternity or duration, E, power or authority, F, wisdom, or instinct, G, will or appetite, H, virtue, I, truth, K, glory; in text ink and light brown, with green lines connecting points on circle;

f. 3v, *Secunda figura*, is a circle, with "T" in the center of three interlocking triangles in red, green and yellow, arranged in a circle; it represents three triads of concepts;

f. 4, (the third figure), a triangle with "compartments" or pairs of all the possible binary combinations without repetitions of the concepts from the first two figures, in text ink, with green;

f. 4v, a small circular diagram, in brown and green, with the letters b-k, inscribed in the outer ring, and with a small thread extant in the middle (missing are two smaller circles, with the same letters, that would have rotated around their common center, and thus generated "compartments" of three letters);

f. 7, a large table, with combinations of letters.

This manuscript includes texts by one of the most intriguing figures of the High Middle Ages, Ramon Llull (1232-1316). Llull's thought, expressed in a huge corpus of works, was important not only in his own day, but throughout the Renaissance and Early Modern period; his thought holds renewed fascination for today's historians and logicians. The manuscript includes the *Ars brevis*, which has been called "Llull's single most influential work," and a text on preaching, the *Ars abbreviata praedicandi*, a Latin translation of a work Llull wrote in Catalan. There are only two copies of the *Ars brevis* in the United States (at Columbia, Plimpton Collection, and St. Bonaventure University), and it seems to have appeared in only two other sales in this century. There are no copies of the *Ars abbreviata praedicandi* in the United States, nor is it recorded in a sale by the Schoenberg Database (given the imperfect descriptions of Llull's works, it is difficult to judge the accuracy of the Schoenberg Database on these points).

Ramon Llull (1232-1316) was born in Palma, on the island of Majorca, previously part of the Islamic Almohad Empire, which had only recently been conquered by King James I of Aragon. He was from a wealthy family, married, and had children, but in 1263 he experienced a conversion, and devoted the remainder of his life to Christ, writing, preaching, and leading missionary efforts to convert his Islamic neighbors.

Lull was an amazingly prolific writer. Paltzeck's chronological catalogue of his works includes 292 works (of which 256 are preserved); the Freiburg editors of his Latin works count 280, of which 240 are still extant. He wrote in Latin, Arabic, Catalan, and had works translated into French, Provençal and Italian. He is credited with writing one of the first novels, a work in Catalan, and he urged the study of Arabic in the schools, writing a few treatises in Arabic himself. He was important as a contributor to many fields, including philosophy, theology, and apologetics. The central expression of his system of thought, which he called his "Art," was "a complex system, using semi-mechanical techniques combined with symbolic notation and combinatory diagrams, which was to be the basis of his apologetics in addition to being applicable to all fields of knowledge" (cited by Bonner, *Doctor Illuminatus*, 1985, p. 1).

The Pseudo-Lullian Alchemical corpus is a large collection of as many as 143 texts, dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although Lull's reputation as an alchemist still lingers today, it is now well-accepted by modern scholars that none of these are authentic works by Lull. Many of these works, however, use Lullian language, as well as Lull's characteristic figures and charts, examples of which accompany the *Ars Brevis* in this manuscript.

## LITERATURE

Bonner, Anthony. *The Art and Logic of Ramon Llull: a User's Guide*, Boston, Brill, 2007.

Bonner, Anthony, ed. and translator. *Doctor Illuminatus. A Ramon Llull Reader*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1985.

Bonner, Anthony, ed. and translator. *Selected Works of Ramon Llull (1232-1316)*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1985.

Fidora, Alexander, and Josep E. Rubio, eds. *Raimundus Lullus: an introduction to his life, works and thought*, translated by Robert D. Hughes, Anna A Akasoy and Magnus Ryan. Turnhout, Brepols, 2008.

Hillgarth, J. N. *Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourteenth-Century France*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971.

Lull, Ramon. *Obras selectes de Ramon Llull (1232-1316)*, ed. Anthony Bonner, Palma, Editoria Moll, 1989.

Lull, Ramon. *Raimundi Lulli opera Latina*, ed. F. Stegmüller, et al. ed. Palma, 1959-67, and Turnhout, Belgium, Brepols, 1975-- .

*Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina, Tomus XII, 123-127, Barcinone, in Monte Pessulano, Pisis annis MCCCIV-MCCCVIII composita*, ed. Alois Madre, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 38, Turnhout, Brepols, 1984.

*Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina, Tomus XVIII, 208-212, in Civitate Maioricensi anno MCCCXIII composita*, ed. Abraham Soria Flores, Fernando Domínguez and Michel Senellart, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 80, Turnhout, Brepols, 1991.

Platzeck, Erhard-Wolfram. *Raimund Lull, sein Leben, seine Werke, die Grundlagen seines Denkens (Prinzipienlehre)*, Düsseldorf, L. Schwann, 1962-64.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Centre de Documentació Ramon Llull, "Who is Ramon Llull?":

[http://quisestlullus.narpan.net/eng/82\\_figdemo\\_eng.html](http://quisestlullus.narpan.net/eng/82_figdemo_eng.html)

Ars brevis:

[http://quiestlullus.narpan.net/eng/719\\_art\\_eng.html](http://quiestlullus.narpan.net/eng/719_art_eng.html)

Ars abbreviata praedicandi:

[http://quiestlullus.narpan.net/eng/721\\_pred\\_eng.html](http://quiestlullus.narpan.net/eng/721_pred_eng.html)

Ramon Llull Database, Centre de Documentació Ramon Llull, University of Barcelona:

<http://orbita.bib.ub.es/ramon/index.asp>

Raimodus-Lullus Institut:

<http://www.theol.uni-freiburg.de/institute/ist/qut>

Manuscripts of Llull's works:

[http://www.theol.uni-freiburg.de/institute/ist/qut/llull\\_engl](http://www.theol.uni-freiburg.de/institute/ist/qut/llull_engl)

Piccard online:

<http://www.piccard-online.de/start.php>

Brepolis Latin, Library of Latin Texts (formerly CLCLT), including online editions of *Corpus christianorum*:

[http://www.brepolis.net/BRP\\_Info\\_En.html#](http://www.brepolis.net/BRP_Info_En.html#)

TM 426