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Ramon Llull and *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*: an attempt to retake the ideals of the Christian Chivalry

Raimundo Lúlio e *O Livro da Ordem de Cavalaria*:
tentativa de retomada dos ideais da Cavalaria Cristã

Abstract:

This text aims to analyze the presence of ideals of Christian Chivalry that should be retaken considering the view of Ramon Llull's *The Book of the order of chivalry* (1272- 1283). We consider this a literature work that allows us to reflect on aspects of History of Education, because, for us, it can be considered a resumption of concepts, values, ideas and virtues of Christian chivalry in the thirteenth century. Considering the importance of dialogue between the work itself and the social context in which it was designed, we selected to our study the historical analysis based on the Social History. After presenting some parts that can be taken as foundation to our hypothesis, we conclude this text reflecting on the importance Llull brings the knowledge contained in a book and how this would bring about the cavalry, being a literate knowledge, so that this literary source becomes important and rich source of study for the History of Education.

Keywords:

History of Education; Ramon Llull; Literature.

Resumo:

Este texto pretende analisar a presença de ideais da Cavalaria Cristã a serem retomados na visão de Raimundo Lúlio no *Livro da ordem de Cavalaria* (1272- 1283). Consideramos esta uma obra literária que nos permite refletir sobre aspectos da História da Educação, pois, para nós, esta obra pode ser considerada uma busca pela retomada dos conceitos, valores, ideias e virtudes da Cavalaria Cristã no século XIII. Considerando a importância do diálogo entre a obra e o contexto social em que ela foi produzida, selecionamos para nossa análise a análise histórica baseada na História Social. Após apresentar algumas partes que, para nós, podem ser consideradas como fundamentos para nossas hipóteses, concluímos este texto refletindo sobre a importância que Lúlio traz para a sabedoria contida em um livro e como esta sabedoria pode ser descrita em um livro, uma sabedoria literária, de forma que esta obra literária se torne uma importante e rica fonte de estudo para a História da Educação.

Palavras-chave:

História da Educação; Raimundo Lúlio; Literatura.

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Introduction

This study has as theme the resumption of the ideal of Christian Chivalry, or *milles Christi*, present in *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, from Ramon Llull. Ramon Llull was born in Palma de Maiorca, Spain, between 1232 and 1235. We consider the thirteenth century in Medieval Europe as the local-time context and we aim to analyze how the work selected as a literary source may show the concern of Llull with the resumption of concepts, values, ideas and virtues of Christian chivalry in the thirteenth century.

The existence of continuities and ruptures, and the complexity of cultural relations of transition between different generations and values propagated by them seem to be evidenced in the work of Ramon Llull. The study of Llull's influence is approached by different areas of study, for example: philosophy, law, linguistics, computer science, sociology and history, (Badia, 1988; Battlori, 1960; Trias Mercant, 1976; Reboiras, 1983; Jaulent, 1996; Silva, 1997; Fonseca Filho, 1998; Vasconcelos, 2005; Lima, 2007).

Ramon Llull has an extensive written work that dealt with the teachings of the Christian doctrine to children and nobles and some concepts related to his own theory of the world that could be explained, which he named *art* (Jaulent, 1998). In this sense, considering the variety of topics covered by Llull, when outlining the methodological approach to research, we selected to our study the historical analysis based on the Social History (Castro, 1997). This choice is due, among other things, to the possibility of opening it for various approach courts and the importance of dialogue between the work itself and the social context in which it was designed.

We also emphasize the importance of Social History as a methodological way to this work - since the hypothesis is that for history, this work has the importance of, as a source, reveal elements that help us understanding the social behavior necessary in that historical period, and how it is configured as a pedagogical manual dictating the ideal model for a key group in the medieval social structure.

Ramon Llull: resumption of concepts, values, ideals and virtues of Christian chivalry in the thirteenth century

Llull was fluent in Latin, Catalan and Arabic (Mata, 2006). We consider that the context of his born city, Maiorca, in the rout of products and religious peregrinations is very important for the context of speaking and understanding in another languages but also in understanding deeply about many cultures. So, being able to express

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himself and understand about the context of people around him was a determining factor (and almost mandatory) in the process of converting Muslims - since only knowing how to communicate with unbelievers with appropriate language made it possible to argue through the reason of the superiority of the Christian religion. This argument seems to be one of the foundations of his catechesis.

The work of Llull sets in both general and catechetical categories. It is observed that the writing of concern such works as *The Doctrine for Children* (1274-1276); *The book of the passage* (1292); *The ultimate book* (1305); *The Book of the Holy Land Acquisition* (1309), these three on the Crusades and the own biography dictated by him in *Vida Coetânia* (1311). His works reveals some attempts to take Christianity to the Muslims, causing a strengthening of the Christian faith through education on various segments of society such as children, nobles and knights. For this study, we highlight the work on the education of the Christian chivalry in the thirteenth century, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*.

Ramon Llull was, according to Souza (2011), a landowner and lived around the nobility, justifying, according to Franco Junior (1984) his education to the day-by-day of the knights. We can infer that the teachings Llull brings in this book are appropriate to their daily life, or a career for which he was educated, as he spent his childhood in the court of Majorca.

Llull presents the chivalry education permeated by higher virtues such as justice, wisdom, charity, loyalty, truth, humility, strength and hope, preceded by the more important all of them – loving and fearing God. These virtues are components that constitute the major character of a knight who defends the faith of Christ. The knight should be brave, righteous and having salvation because it would have been anointed by God to take his word. Thus, this literary work aimed at the rider education through their behavior, values that underpin the Christian chivalry and the ideals that should be disseminated by it, considered models of education of the society.

Llull suggests how to be a good Christian and how to obtain salvation, a very important and strongly intrinsic goal to general medieval men. In addition, Llull dictated rules that assist in the formation of the knight and its revaluation as a social model, in order to conquer respect for being the way in which the lost virtues could be recovered. For this, Llull prepared a story, presented in the *Prologue* from *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*.

In the story, an old knight, who was dying and would like to reflect on his past and on the deteriorating condition in which the medieval chivalry was in the thirteenth century, discovers an aspiring knight on his way to a kingdom. At this meeting, the old man delivered to the aspirant a book that would be a work about the order of chivalry institution - its functions, rules, their training and ceremonies. This is why the

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old man asks the aspiring knight to take the book with him and show it to the king and to all the other knights. Let's see his words:

Fair son, I am an old and feeble man and cannot live much longer; therefore, you shall carry with you this little Book written to describe the loyalty, devotion and proper behavior of a Knight. Take it to the court where you are going to show to all of those who are about to be dubbed Knights. And when you have been freshly dubbed yourself and set out to return to your own country, come again to this place and bring me news regarding those who have been newly made Knights and who intend to obey the teachings of chivalry (Llull, 2000:11)³.

For the old man, the aspiring knight, after reading it, could understand the real function of the rider, defending the true faith of Christ, and the values that were not found any more in knights, so that the Order could recover its ideal. For the old knight, the *Book*, should be taken by the aspirant to the kingdom and delivered to be read by all riders, and it could, at the same time, restore the virtues that had been lost by the chivalry order, and revalue the knights to the society. It was understood that the *Book* would be a literary work about chivalry, honor that had never been granted. Being delivered to the king the Book, the teachings of the order of chivalry would be, as well as other sciences, contained in a book and could then restore respect for the order.

The book on which Llull spoke was the very *Book of the Order of Chivalry*. After the *Prologue* that tells the story of the meeting between the old knight and the aspirant, the work begins with seven chapters that constituted the *Book* to be delivered to the king. The work starts stating since the beginning of cavalry, craft belonging to the knight, and the examination of the ceremony to receive the chivalry, weapons and costumes belonging to the knight and honors to be provided to them.

The search for a lost ideal, a resumption of virtues and values that now belonged to the medieval chivalry had a profound meaning for Llull. For him, these virtues and values were so present in this ideal model of a rider that in the beginning of this order, centuries before, the knights were called to seek the virtues that had been extirpated in the world. At the time that the book presents the beginning of chivalry, there is the following statement:

³ This is our own translation from Lullio (2000), merged to the Caxton's translation, available at: http://www.rgle.org.uk/Llull_B_C.htm

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When charity, loyalty, integrity, justice and truth grew weak in the world, then there began cruelty, injury, disloyalty and falseness. Thus error and trouble came into the very world where God had planned for man to know, love, serve, fear and honor Him (Llull, 2000:13)

For Llull, the qualities of love and fear of God, together with the qualities of nobility, of courage and morality, would be responsible for bringing back to society the lost virtues: charity, teaching, truth and justice. It is inferred here that this recovery of lost values could be given through the example that the Christian knight was to society. We understand that education is a process that occurs beyond the formal education institutions: it gives the relations with society, experiences and examples that withdraw it. It is, for this work, the great importance that the social role models have on society education beyond the formal institutions, including the established social relationships, life experience. In this particular case, the role model in question is the medieval knight equipped with the ideals, virtues and values that Llull sought to resume.

Educational models and role models are outstanding features in different civilizations (Lupi, 2010). It is observed that the educational phenomenon is needed to contribute to the process of social change. In this educational phenomenon various actions can be considered: from the formulation of the most varied teaching strategies up to the spontaneous transmission of values and knowledge in the family, religious and social life, such as, education for social workers or role models.

Thus, the transmission of social role models implies in an ideal of man, presented at times as fearless, brave and protective, or ideal to be responsible for their actions. Lupi (2010: 127) considers that all civilizations practiced the war, and still practice, and almost all have the warrior hero as maximum, usually at the top of the social and ruling classes. It is seen as a show, or an icon, the survival issue, the need to use weapons to defend the group, culture, civilization or empire⁴.

Considering the statements of the author about the existence of hero models in all civilizations, in the case of the time frame chosen for this work, the Middle Ages, especially among the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there is the creation of a figure can be presented as a man of model to be followed in that society: the rider. The medieval knight turns out to inspire the image of a brave man who is strong, defender, and faithful.

⁴ [...] Todas as civilizações praticaram a guerra, e a praticam ainda, e quase todas têm o guerreiro como máximo herói, geralmente no topo das classes sociais e dirigentes. É tido como uma mostra, ou um ícone, da questão de sobrevivência, pela necessidade de usar armas para defender o grupo, a cultura, a civilização ou o império (Lupi, 2010:127).

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In this sense, we resorted to some Arias statements (2010: 11), for whom with some frequency is presented to us today, the idealized image of medieval chivalry like a group of men of high moral conduct and ethics, aimed at protecting the weak and oppressed, with an unshakable loyalty to his lord or king and the word given on oath⁵. Besides Arias (2010), Barthélemy (2000) also states that up to this day, the figure of the knight, especially the French knight appears as a courageous and generous model. This idealized figure, a role model because of the God fearing and a defender of the Christian faith, has established itself as an icon in the medieval period, and especially during the Crusades.

Regarding the Crusades, it is noteworthy that the thirteenth century, the written work in context, was a century arising from a period marked by commercial renaissance, the rise of cities, universities, corporate offices and a whole debate that put in check the structures that the Christian church had built socially. New social relations were presented, according to Oliveira (2007).

The warrior crusading ideal was no longer over the same direction, even with the papal appeals, and Ramon Llull. According to Rousset (1980) he attempted to develop a theory of missionary crusade, through the conversion of believers, seeking the upgrading of the crusade-ideal, even if not understood at the time of preparation in the thirteenth century. In his words, from 1291 was completed the period of the General Crusades, but, on the other hand, the development of the missions came gradually and among the best replace the Crusade and, thanks to the Catalan Ramon Llull, in particular, who fixed principles were elaborated methods, in short, lays out a missiological doctrine that was in the thought of this theologian, replace the Crusade. We can observe, by the words of Rousset (1980), the attempt from Ramon Llull to revalue the ideal from crusade, based on the missionaries molds, since the warrior at the crusades was no longer practiced at the end of the XIII century as the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Within the framework of crusade-ideal of the medieval knight, which is responsible for the conversion of infidels, the defense of the Christian faith, the knight, for Llull, needed to behave properly to his post, since it was an icon in society. This icon, for Llull, should be guided in virtues, in love and fear of God. Since the Crusades were no longer practiced, the chivalric order already did not have the same function in XIII Century purposes as in previous centuries, nor had the medieval knight over the same conduct. Thus, it can be seen that the *Book of Order of Chivalry* was intended by Llull to show the riders how important it is to be a noble society, have principles, values, especially when it belongs to a group in society that is in evidence and inspires other members of society.

⁵ Com alguma frequência é apresentada para nós, nos dias atuais, a imagem idealizada de cavalaria medieval como a de um grupo formado por homens de elevada conduta moral e ética, voltados à proteção dos fracos e oprimidos, com uma fidelidade inabalável ao seu senhor ou rei e à palavra dada em juramento (ARIAS, 2010:11).

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It is for this reason that the knight is considered as an example of conduct related to the virtues that can aid in the recovery of the same virtues by the company given that the riders know and want to love, know and honor God and his works, "and give doctrine to the people and good example to love and honor God "(Llull, 2000: 17). In addition, Llull says that the nobler the principles have more bound to be good and to please God and the people. The knight is presented as a model of conduct, of the behavior necessary and which are charged by their position and social function. Its social function, as well, is pointed out by Llull as responsible for the recovery of the missing ideals:

Fortunately, however, no sooner had laxness in enforcing the law first arisen than fear in turn caused justice to be restored to the honor in which she was formerly held. Therefore, all the people were divided by thousands. Out of each thousand there was chosen a man more notable than all the rest for his loyalty, his strength, his noble courage, his breeding and his manners (Llull, 2000:13).

In this scenery, being the strongest, most noble courage, balancing with love and wisdom, chosen among many for having more "good manners", the knight met virtues to fulfill the sacred function of bringing the Christian faith and protect the weak. However, it was necessary to take on this responsibility, so that when entering the cavalry, the decision was guided to reflect on their role and keep in mind what motivates them:

Next, he who would enter the Order of Chivalry had to consider well the noble beginnings of chivalry and ask himself whether the excellence of his manliness and good behavior accorded properly with the principles of the Order. For if they did not, he would be contrary to his Order and to his origins "(Llull, 2000:13-14).

In other words, the choice of chivalry involved a conscious decision-making responsibility, before the Christian faith and the society. In this sense, even Llull points out that by opting for the cavalry, the knight cannot help but love and respect other orders, since God does not make a contrary order to another. They should love clerics and know the virtues that inspire them, since they were the same that should inspire the riders. Therefore, Llull says that every rider should have virtues and deep understanding of its features:

Every Knight ought to know the seven virtues which are the source and root of all good habits and are the path to everlasting heavenly glory. Of

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these seven virtues, three are called "theological" or "divine" while the remaining four are "cardinal." The "theological" ones are faith, hope and charity. The "cardinal" ones are justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude (Llull, 2000: 89).

In addition to knowing and possessing these virtues, they should have in mind the functions of protection of the Catholic faith and the fear of God:

The duty of a Knight is to support and defend the Holy Catholic Faith, according to which God the Father sent his Son into the world to take on human flesh in the Glorious Virgin, our Lady Saint Mary. To honor and spread the Faith in this world, our Lord suffered many tribulations, wrongs and a painful death (Llull, 2000: 23).

Through the function of keeping the Catholic faith and his example, seen as a virtue in society, the Knight proposed by Raymond Lully, in order to be worthy of belonging to the order of chivalry, should, as well as fulfilling its function, does not have attitudes that contradict the example they should be. Note the concern with the element that has the knight of honor and does not behave accordingly to their responsibilities:

The duty of a Knight is to support and defend women, widows and orphans, and sick or enfeebled men. For just as it is both reasonable and customary that the greatest and mightiest should help the lesser and the feeble, and that the latter should feel free to seek redress from the great, so the Order of Chivalry - which is great, honorable and powerful — should succor and help those that are in lower orders, who are less powerful and honored. Hence, to do wrong and violate the rights of women, of widows who need help, or of orphans who need custody — or to rob and destroy weak men who lack strength, and to take away that which belongs to them — these things may not possibly accord with the laws of chivalry. This is mere wickedness, cruelty and tyranny. The Knight who, instead of these vices, is full of virtues is worthy to hold the proper office of chivalry (Llull, 2000: 37).

Not being a bad example to society and reflecting the wickedness, deceit and cruelty, which are not part of the principle of order of chivalry, should be part of the conduct of a rider who has in mind its responsibilities. Llull suggests that the virtues should reflect, in addition to conduct, in body and soul a rider who is a friend and meets the principle of chivalry. With regard to the body, its virtues should reflect the actions of riding, jousting, tossing the Table, carrying weapons, participating in

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tournaments, encircling cities, hunting and all things that are part of the rider duties, bearing in mind that all these actions are part of a larger action: to maintain and defend the faith of Christ. And for that, there is no point to a rider to have all the necessary physical skills and do not have the reflection of their actions and in their soul true love and fear of God. In these terms, states:

Thus the Knight that practices all of the endeavors that concern his physical preparedness for chivalry but who, nevertheless, has none of these virtues in his soul is not a true friend to the Order of Chivalry. For if he tried to rationalize his neglect by separating these virtues, saying that such matters of the soul are not compatible with chivalry, it would simply signify that the body and chivalry together were contrary to both the soul and these virtues — and that is clearly false (Llull, 2000: 31).

Thus, it is possible to observe that Llull made a distinction between the knights who belonged to the order and respected the ideal of nobility, virtue, love and fear of God and the knights who had all the physical skills to the cavalry, but did not have these virtues. So these riders became negative role models, and an order that did not have at its core its real value. Llull denounces violence and injury of the knights of his time, suggesting that when there is the ultimate goal of war is to make peace, there is no real function because it does not respond to the ideal of the principle of chivalry and thus put in check the existence of this institution. After all, justice and peace are not contrary to the cavalry, but not injustice and the love of purely war without a higher goal: "[...] If this were the case, then these riders now that are enemies of peace and love wars and jobs are knights; and those who pacify the people and flee these works are offensive and are against the Cavalry "(Llull, 2000: 39). We observed this statement in an ironic tone, since the bad work and the search for peace in the society, even by force, are principles inherent in the cavalry by Ramon Llull.

Final Considerations

The irony suggested by Llull has foundation, since for Barthélemy (2000) the knight figure has been increasingly brutalized, characterized by someone who participated in the cavalry activities not for God, but for the sake of war. And this foundation, added to the feeling evidenced by Llull that without virtues, the office of the cavalry has no sense, let us understand the questions raised by him:

So if this is so, and the knights who are now using the craft of being offensive and cavalry warriors and amateur evil and work, wonder what

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else were the first riders, who agreed with the justice and peace, pacifying men for justice and force of arms? For as in the early days, now is the knight craft pacify the men by force of arms; Knights and Warriors, insulting, that there are in these times when we are not in the Order of Chivalry not have the office of the rider, where the Cavalry, and which and how many are those who are in their order? (Llull, 2000: 39).

This question seems to have a deep relationship with the main goal, to analyze the Book of Order of Chivalry as a revival of the ideals of the Christian chivalry in the thirteenth century. It demonstrates perhaps the questions that inspired Llull to question the existence of the order and its function in the thirteenth century, since it was no longer practiced as Llull considered in the previous centuries - permeated by virtues, the ideal of love and fear of God, defend the weaker, the pacification of society by force, but with a goal of justice. If these are missing, which were the principle of chivalry, that is why this order would have been created by God to help the men according to Llull, then the existing cavalry at the XIII century has no function and it is therefore not a cavalry order.

This element, thus, refers to the conversation between the old and the aspiring knight. Since that man who sought to belong to the order of chivalry did not know what the real function of the rider was, its beginning, its principles and knowledge required to perform this task. This understanding demanded a deep reflection and consequently a conscious decision making of their role in society and that they would be a role model. These attributes could characterize not only the riders on their way to that kingdom, but personified a whole set of knights of the time, perhaps the majority. The riders, however, endowed with physical elements and capabilities to perform the work with the body, for more than being aware of their importance and power, were devoid of the virtues necessary for the soul, the reflection of their responsibility to society and, in this case, before the Christian faith. To assist in the search for this ideal and explain how and why these virtues were necessary to the principle of chivalry and knighthood craft, Llull presents him *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*.

The knight gave the book to the squire; and when the squire just read, understood that the rider is an elected among a thousand men to be the noblest profession of all, and then having understood the rule and the Order of Chivalry, thought him a little and said, '- Ah, Lord God! Blessed are You, that ye brought me in place and time for me to have knowledge Cavalry, which was long desired by me without knowing the nobility of his Order and the honor that God put all those who are of the Order Cavalry (Llull, 2000: 10).

Llull suggests that, like the one squire could deeply understand the principles, ideals and virtues belonging to the order of chivalry through book reading, the

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delivery of the book to the king and the other knights, which symbolically characterized the dissemination of his book and his teachings, could help the men of Medieval Europe, in the thirteenth century, in the understanding of the need to reclaim values and ideals that were themselves the Christian cavalry, and had been gradually lost by the knights of the time. We also note the importance Llull brings the knowledge contained in a book and how this would bring about the cavalry, being a literate knowledge, so that this literary source becomes important and rich source of study for the History of Education.

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