

It might seem that the idea of chivalry, understood as a certain state, a way of life, and a collection of values proper to it and inseparable from it, is an anachronism today. In the best possible case, it is merely a historical term, interesting perhaps (for some), but somehow completely incompatible with contemporary life. After all, chivalry was born and developed in a completely different world: the world of feudalism, seniority, mystics, saints and wonder-workers; in the days of castles, cathedrals and scholastic argumentation. Can it, therefore, be anything more today than an admirable artefact from a misty, half-legendary, fairy-tale past? What has a Knight to do in the world of businessmen, corporate officers, creators of images, HR specialists, bankers and IT techs? In other words, can the idea of chivalry have for us, people of the twenty-first century, any meaning at all? Is the Knight not an impossible thing today, simply put? Despite the fact that – unapologetically – I am an advocate of the past, a cultural nostalgist, even I have had to deal with these questions when coming across the text of Ramon Llull's *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* in the “Franciscan Authors” series. Of course: works of philosophy, theology or mysticism age very slowly, and the greatest among them don't age at all – they are voices of Eternity, the Logos, which is going to resound until the end of the world. But what spiritual nourishment can be sucked from a “handbook” for a knight, written around 1275? Quite a lot, as it turns out. I admit that I fell in love with this little book from the very first pages. It is perfect in its sparing, and yet dignified, simplicity. Blessed Ramon Llull, from Mallorca, who lived between 1232 and 1315, a Franciscan tertiary and an educated man of wide talents, is aware of the fact that he is not addressing himself to scholars, but to squires and knights, and thus: to persons who may be well-born and in possession of indispensable bases of knowledge and refinement, but who have no devotion to theoretical research; he is addressing men of action. And so he speaks simply, passing by intricate logical argumentation, so fashionable at the time (with which Llull was not unfamiliar, by the way, being as he was the inventor of a famous combinatorial system of philosophy), striving through few, but powerful, phrases to grasp the very nature of the chivalric state, or the essence of the upright life, led according to a devotion to justice. And here we have the first, inalienable value of this little work: we quickly become oriented (despite the portions dealing with the inheritance of castles, service to the senior, exercises in the military art), that the Doctor Illuminatus is sketching for us a universal pattern of the honourable, honest, courageous man, ready for sacrifice on behalf of the common good. This little work is something of an instructional manual for one to become just that.

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Essay collections

Światło Zachodu. Szkice o myśli i kulturze chrześcijańskiej, 2019

Vestigia Dei, 2017

Ostatnie królestwo. Szkice teologiczno-polityczne, 2016

Wędrowniki po codzienności. Eseje o paru ważnych rzeczach, 2011

Próżniowy świat, 2008

Pająk. Szkice prawie filozoficzne, 2007

Awards

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