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The 'Order of Matrimony' in Ramon Llull's Blanquerna.

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Ramon Llull was a man who thought on a grand scale. In 1263 at the age of thirty, this Catalan love poet and courtier who had lived a worldly, perhaps licentious, life experienced a dramatic religious conversion which took the form of a repeated vision of Christ on the cross¹. According to an account of his life written while he was still alive, this profound conversion led him to determine that he must devote the rest of his life to converting the Saracens to Christianity and to reforming what he saw as a lax Christian society. But he could not decide how he should go about this evidently large task until one day, as this contemporary account explains,

a certain impetuous and all-encompassing notion entered his heart: that later on he would have to write a book, the best in the world, against the errors of the un-believers. Since, however, he could conceive neither the form nor manner of writing such a book, he was most amazed. Nevertheless, the greater and more frequent was his wonder, the more strongly the inspiration or notion of writing the aforementioned book grew in him.²

This impetuous, all-encompassing notion led to a most remarkable body of literature. In the fifty-four remaining years of his life, Llull's grand vision of writing the "best book in

¹ For these and the following details of Llull's life I depend on Anthony Bonner "Historical Background and Life of Ramon Llull," in *Selected Works of Ramon Llull* ed. Anthony Bonner, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 3-52.

² *Vita coetanea* 5, trans. by Anthony Bonner in the work cited in the previous note, p. 15.

the world" realised itself in the writing of some 263 works in his native Catalan, Latin, and Arabic. These works focused on innumerable subjects--philosophy, theology, mysticism, missiology--and were written in a variety of literary forms³. And they all were part of his elaborate mission of spreading the Catholic faith.

Many scholars have shown how Llull's philosophy was completely centered upon this all-compassing desire to convert the un-believer and return the wayward believer to the true faith⁴. The subject to be considered in this paper, however, is how this grand desire can be found at the centre of one of Llull's literary works as well. Between 1283 and 1285⁵ Llull wrote in Catalan his fictional tale *Llibre d'Evast e d'Aloma e de Blanquerna* usually known as *Blanquerna*, a work that has been rightly seen as a predecessor of the modern European novel; for like many later novels *Blanquerna* is concerned to a great extent with the problems of society and the need to reform them. Told simply the tale is as follows: Evast and Aloma, both of them young, wealthy, and pious, marry and have a son *Blanquerna* whom they raise carefully in the Catholic faith. *Blanquerna*, when he

³ Bonner, "Llull's Thought," in *Selected Works* i, p. 53.

⁴ See e. g. Tomas Carreras y Artau and Joaquin Carreras y Artau, *Historia de la filosofia espanola: filosofia cristiana de los siglos xii al xv* i, Madrid: Real Academia de Ciencias Exactas, Fisicas y Naturales, 1939) pp. 339-344.

⁵ Joan Pons i Marques, "Introduccio a *Libre d'Evast e d'Aloma e de Blanquerna* in *Obres Essencials* i, Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1957, p. 116.

to demonstrate how he combined them into a vision of marriage in a reformed Christian society.

order

1) The first idea that Lluïl drew upon, the idea upon which he centered his view of marriage, was that it was an order--like a religious order--within the church. Gabriel le Bras has pointed out that during the years when Lluïl was writing it was something of a commonplace for popular preachers to talk in this fashion.

7. Such preachers and writers as Jacques de Vitry, William Peraldus, Henry of Provins, Pierre de Limoges, Robert de Sorbon, and Guibert de Tournai were among those who expressed such ideas⁸. According to them married couples were a vitally important division of Christian Society and therefore the thousands of married couples in Christendom made up a distinct order comparable to the other orders in the Church. Jacques de Vitry, for example, wrote in his *Historia occidentalis* that

Non solum hos qui seculo renunciant et transeunt ad religionem regulares iudicamus, sed et omnes Christi fideles, sub evangelica regula domino famulantes et ordinate sub uno summo et supremo abbate viventes, possumus dicere regulares. Habent enim clerici et sacerdotes in seculo commorantes regulam suam et proprias ordines sui observantibus et institutiones. Pari modo proprius est ordo coniugatorum, alius autem vidurum et alius virginum⁹

7 G. le Bras, "La doctrine du mariage chez les theologiens et les canonists depuis l'an mille," *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique* 9/2, Paris, 1902, col. 2180.

8 See *ibid.*, and Nicole Beriou and David L.D'Avray, "Henry of Provins, O.P.'s Comparisons of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders with the 'Order' of Matrimony," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 49 (1979): 513-517.

9 Jacques de Vitry, *Historia occidentalis* 23. i, crit. ed. John Frederick Hinnebusch, O.P. (Fribourg, Switzerland, 1972), pp. 165f.

reaches his majority, decides to adopt the religious life and has an immensely successful ecclesiastical career, passing from monk to abbot to bishop and eventually to pope in fairly rapid succession, and then retiring from high office to live as a hermit.

In the short prologue to *Blanquerna* Lluïl makes it quite clear that this novel is part of his work of advancing the Catholic faith. His intention, he says, is to provide instruction and rules of life for the people who are members of each of the five estates of life to which the five parts of his book correspond, namely, the married life, the monastic life, the episcopacy, the papacy, and the eremitical life⁶. Each of the five books are of interest in their own way, but the first book is of particular interest for the exalted view it imparts of marriage. For marriage played a crucial role in the reformed Christian society that Lluïl hoped to see. In his view, marriage was to be an ecclesiastical order within the church with its own rule and responsibilities, accompanied by its own special grace. In forming this view of marriage Lluïl drew on three contemporary ideas of the meaning and function of marriage in Christian society, and combined these ideas into one literary portrait of what he termed the 'order of matrimony'. The task of this study will be to set forth these three ideas which Lluïl used and then

6 Ramon Lluïl, *Libre de Evast e Blanquerna* (v. 1), Proleg, *Els nostres classics* 50-51: Barcelona, 1935 p. 123. I have chosen to use the *Els nostres classics* edition of the work on the basis of Anthony Bonner's judgement that it is the best edition of *Blanquerna* (See Bonner, *Selected Works*, p. xxvii).

42 Many of these writers were fond of asserting that matrimony was a particularly important order because God had seen fit to honour it upon many occasions. William Peraldus pointed out in his *Summa aurea de virtutibus et vitiis* that, to begin with, God had founded it himself: "Ordinem matrimonii instituit ipse Deus qui errare non potest." He goes on to say that the Lord had also honored it by founding it in paradise--something no other order could claim, allowing it to survive the flood, allowing the Blessed Virgin to enter into it, and appearing at a wedding himself with his disciples at Cana¹⁰. Some of these preachers even went so far as to hint that because God had founded the order of matrimony, it was more elevated than the other orders. Henry of Provins, a priest--it might be noted--of the Order of Preachers, said in 1273 that

Vos videtis quod noster ordo et fratrum minorum non est diu quod incepit; et similiter alii ordines post incarnationem inceperunt; sed iste ordo incepit a principio mundi. Plus, quidam homo mortalis de Hispania fecit nostrum ordinem; quidam homo de Lombardia ordinem fratrum minorum; sed istum ordinem fecit ipse deus, et non de novo, sed a principio mundi. . .¹¹

And in a similar vein Peter de Limoges said simply

Si enim ordo predicatorum venerabilis est quia fuit institutus a beato Dominico, ergo multo fortius ordo matrimonii, quia institutus est a deo. . .¹²

10 William Peraldus, *Summa aurea de virtutibus et vitiis*, 1. 6. 15. 1 18., Venice, 1497, p. 46v, 97v.

11 cited by D'Avray, "Henry of Provins, O.P.'s Comparison," p. 514.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 515.

It was this remarkably high view of marriage as an order that, as will be shown below, Lull used as the unifying concept for his own vision of marriage. *Matrimoni spiritual*

2 The second idea he drew upon was that marriage in its highest form should be a spiritual marriage in which the spouses gave up sexual relations with each other and lived as brother and sister. This idea apparently had extensive currency in the literature of Lull's age as well, and not surprisingly, some of the same people who touted marriage as an order also preached the virtues of the spiritual marriage as well. In 1213¹³, for example, Jacques de Vitry wrote a biography of Mary of Oignies, a woman who had lived in Flanders and died not long before. She had developed a huge regional reputation for her sanctity and good works and a saintly cult was growing quickly in her town. In his biography Jacques was careful to emphasize that Mary had lived her saintly life within a spiritual marriage. She had been forced to marry against her will but because of her holiness she managed to turn a potentially unpleasant marriage into a model of sanctity. Her husband was eventually so moved by his wife's charity and devotion that he decided to give up sexual relations with her and assist her in her many charitable acts.¹⁴ Mary and

13 Hinnebusch, *Historia occidentalis* p. 4.

14 Jacques de Vitry, *Vita* 1.13, *Acta sanctorum* 25 (Junio v), (Paris and Rome, 1867) p. 550d.

her husband became famous for their work among the poor and especially for their ministry towards lepers¹⁵.

The influence exercised on society by such lives as Mary's is testified to by the fact that Jacques's life of her became an important prototype for the Beguine movement¹⁶. And Jacques's biography of Mary was by no means the only such account of spiritual marriage. A biography of Marie de Maillac, a late thirteenth-century French woman apparently had some circulation as well. She and her husband, after entering into a spiritual marriage became well-known for their many acts of charity among the poor and sick¹⁷. That men and women could achieve a high level of sanctity while still married to each other in such spiritual marriages was clearly in the air in thirteenth-century Europe, and it seems to have impressed itself on Llull in a large way.

Llave de finis aeternitatis

But it was not only in the area of popular preaching that new ideas were arising in regard to marriage. Sacramental theologians were making advances as well, and from such theologians Llull drew the third element of his view of marriage, that is, that it was a channel of sacramental grace. The thirteenth century was a particularly fruitful period for the theology of marriage. Partly out of a universal desire to

¹⁵ Ibid., 1.14 (p. 550e).

¹⁶ Hinnebusch, *Historia occidentalis*, p.9, n. 3.]

¹⁷ Marino Bosco-Gualteri, "Vita de vidua ac virgine Maria de Maillico", *Acta sanctorum* 9 (March 3), (Paris and Rome, 1865) pp.734-744.

systematize and clarify, and partly out of a need to defend the traditional view of Christian marriage against heretics¹⁸, that century saw a great deal of fruitful work in many areas of the theory of marriage, but especially in regard to its sacramental character. Specifically it was the theologians of the thirteenth century who finally gave a satisfactory answer to a question that had been troubling theologians for two or more centuries: whether the sacrament of marriage, like the other sacraments, was a means of effective grace.

During much of the Middle Ages the theology of marriage had been heavily influenced by the thought of St. Augustine and particularly by his theory that it was through sexual intercourse that original sin was passed on from parents to their off-spring, and moreover, that matrimony was only a remedy against sin and not a positive means of sanctification¹⁹. Because of this when later theologians began working out a complete theory of the sacraments in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the sacrament of matrimony presented them with a difficult problem. For part of the fundamental definition of a sacrament as it was worked by the scholastics was that a sacrament must give effective grace and so be a means of sanctification for those who partake in it.²⁰ But if in the act of intercourse, original sin is passed on

¹⁸ G. le Bras, "La doctrine du mariage," col. 2139.

¹⁹ Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, *El matrimonio: misterio y signo*, 4 vols., Pamplona, 1971, vol. 2, by Tomas Rincon, p. 416.

²⁰ J. R. Quinn, "Sacraments, Theology of," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 12, (New York, 1967), p. 813.

chastity is better and more perfect than conjugal chastity, he nevertheless asserts quite strongly that sexual union would have been in harmony with the perfection of human nature prior to original sin, and that now in the fallen state it is still in harmony if it takes place within matrimony, because, "Matrimony so orders this act that it is free of the disorder which would be there without the sacrament. . . Thus, in Bonaventure's view, the marital act is not an evil, but a good and perfection of human nature."²⁵ Because it is a perfection of human nature, matrimony is not just a remedy for sin, but also confers a gift of grace to those who decide to marry out of charity and in order to procreate children²⁶. Matrimony is therefore, like the other sacraments, a means of sanctification: as the man and wife grow ever more united to each other in marriage, so they become more united to Christ²⁷. St. Thomas' views seem to have been very similar to those of St. Bonaventure²⁸ though it is difficult to piece together his mature views on the subject because he died before completing the section of the Summa in which he would have dealt with the theology of marriage. What is important for our purposes is to note that this doctrine held by both St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure not surprisingly became quickly recognised by

²⁵ J. F. Quinn, C.S.B., "St. Bonaventure and the Sacrament of Matrimony," *Franciscan Studies* 34 (1974) pp.106,110, 111.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²⁸ Rincon, *El Matrimonio*, p. 416.

to the unborn child, and if it is only a remedy for sin, how can matrimony be an avenue of effective grace?

This quandary caused matrimony not to be accepted universally as a sacrament in the scholastic sense until the mid-twelfth century²¹; and even among those who did accept it as a sacrament, many were only willing to accept it in a qualified sense. Many tended to teach that matrimony was indeed a sacrament, since Christ himself had compared the relation between himself and his church to that between a man and his wife; but at the same time they denied that matrimony, like the other sacraments, was a means of effective grace. Peter Abelard, for example held to this view²², as did Hugh of St. Victor, his otherwise very high view of marriage notwithstanding²³.

Alexander of Hales paved the way for the solution of this problem in his extensive writings on the theology of marriage²⁴, but it was his student, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas Aquinas who finally took the significant step of demonstrating that marriage did indeed confer effective grace just as did the other sacraments. Though St. Bonaventure maintains that virginal

²¹ Phillipe Delhaye, "The Development of the Medieval Church's Teaching on Marriage," *Concilium* 55 (1970), p. 85.

²² G. H. Joyce, S.J., *Christian Marriage, an Historical and Doctrinal Study* (London, 1948), p. 168.

²³ Rincon, *El matrimonio*, p.277. Other theologians of the period who held similar views include, for example, the school of Abelard, Hugh of Saint-Cher, and William of Auxerre. (See Rincon *El matrimonio*), pp. 148, 277.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 417, 418.

welded together into a picture of marriage that is striking and original.

This unified vision of marriage is centered upon the notion of marriage as an order; it is this concept which provides the essential structure for his view of marriage. He employs the phrase order of matrimony from the very beginning of the work, and he does so in such a way as to suggest strongly to the reader that the order of matrimony is an order of the same kind as the other religious orders. In the first paragraph of the work, for example, he tells how Evast while still unmarried was troubled because the religious of the city were encouraging him to take the habit, while certain wealthy laymen desired to be related to him through marriage. Evast sat up all one night considering whether he should join the "order of matrimony or the order of religion."³¹ Such parallel references to the two orders abound in book one of Blanquerna, and what is more, they can be found in other of Llull's works as well. For example in his *Doctrina pueril*, a book of instruction written for his son, he says that

You are obligated, son, to be in the order of matrimony or the order of religion because all other States vary from the final purpose for which you were created³².

That Llull is using the Catalan orde in an ecclesiastical sense is also suggested by the manner in which he uses another

³¹ Llull, *Blanquerna* I. i. (p. 19).

³² "Obligat est, fill, a esser en orde de matrimoni o de religio: car tot altre estament se descove ab la final entenci oper la qual est creat." Ramon Llull, "Doctrina pueril" 28.iii., *Obres de Ramon Llull* i, p. 51 (my translation).

48 all the schools and established itself as the teaching of the church²⁹.

All three of these ideas were in the air, then, in the years before Llull wrote *Blanquerna*. It should be noted that Llull was acquainted with friars of both the major orders--his association with the Dominican St. Raymond of Penyafort, for example, is quite well documented³⁰--and since, as was seen above, these three ideas were being spread primarily by friars, it is very likely the case that he learned them through those contacts. This cannot, of course, be easily established with any certainty, and no attempt will be made below to establish any direct links between Llull's particular ideas and those of individual friars. But it will be demonstrated that, in one way or another, Llull was very decidedly breathing the same intellectual air as many of his contemporaries, at least in regard to the theory of marriage.

Each one of the ideas discussed above is present in the first book of *Blanquerna*. Marriage in Llull's view is an ecclesiastical order; in its highest form it is a spiritual marriage; and it is a sacrament in the fullest sense and is thus a means of effective grace. But *Blanquerna* is neither a sermon, nor a saint's life, nor a treatise of sacramental theology; it is a novel and as such the presentation of marriage found there is a unified vision in which the three ideas discussed above are

²⁹ Joyce, *Christian Marriage*, p 174.

³⁰ See, e.g., Bonner, "Historical Background," p. 17.

a unique vocation to defend the church militarily. In Lull's view, then, an orde is definitely an ecclesiastical structure³⁵.

Since the orde de matrimoni is an ecclesiastical order Lull even takes care in Blanquerna to point out the relative status of the order of matrimony with respect to the other orders. Evast explains at one point that if one has a great desire to give up carnal pleasure and give oneself to a life of prayer, repentance and preaching, then the order of religion is a better order, saying that

the religious life is an estate more fitted for all these things than is the estate of marriage³⁶

It is clear, then, that in Lull's view, although matrimony is an order, it is a lesser order than the other orders of religion. On this particular point, then, Lull would not go so far as Henry of Provins who gave matrimony the highest place among religious orders.

If matrimony is indeed a religious order, it should have certain distinct characteristics and its own vocation. As Lull presents it, the order of marriage should be characterized by great devotion to God in daily worship and by service to the world through ministering among the poor and sick. These ideas

35 Ramon Lull, "Libre que es de l'Orde de cavalleria", esp. pts 1 & 2 in which he treats of the origin and duties of the order of chivalry, Obres essencials i, pp. 527-534.

36 l'orde de religio es mes dispost stament a totes estes coses e moltes dealtres, que no es l'orde de matrimoni. Lull Blanquerna, I. iv. (p. 48). For this and the following citations of Blanquerna I use the translation of E. Allison Peers, Blanquerna, London, 1925, p. 49.

word estament, which means 'estate' or 'status'. He employs estament to speak of marriage as well, but he does so only in contexts that make it clear to the reader that what he is talking about in those passages is the social unit of marriage or the status of a given marriage in time. For example, when he describes the intent of the work in his prologue he uses the word estament to speak of each of the five states of life that he is to write about³³. He also uses estament later in the first book in chapter nine which is entitled "De l'estament d'Evast e Aloma." Here he is talking about the 'state' or 'description' of their marriage after Blanquerna has gone³⁴. What all this indicates is that when Lull wishes to speak of a social estate or class he uses the word estament, and that when he wants to speak of an ecclesiastical order with its own special vocation and characteristics he uses the word orde. It so happens that marriage is both a social estate and an ecclesiastical order in his view, but the two different words with their different connotations should not be confused. It might be noted that in his Libre que es de l'Orde de cavalle he implicitly makes this same distinction between the estate of knighthood--a social class, and the order of knighthood--an ecclesiastical order with

33 Lull, Blanquerna, Proleg, pp. 17,18.

34 Ibid., I. ix., p. 91.

Stament = orde

hospital so that they can nurse the infirm³⁸, and they begin begging for their food on the streets with the other poor of their city³⁹. Here the parallels with the life of Mary of Oignies and her husband are, of course, striking. Evast even takes it upon himself to begin preaching to the poor, or something very like preaching at any rate. In chapter fourteen, Llull writes that

So Evast sat among the poor, to whom he spoke many good words, comforting and consoling them, and putting them in mind of Jesus Christ and of the Apostles who loved poverty.⁴⁰

Their city was, of course, quite impressed with the remarkable marriage of Evast and Aloma, as indeed were such people as a gluttonous bishop⁴¹, a proud friar⁴² and many others sinners who were led to mend their ways by the example of Evast and Aloma's life together. Indeed the last eight chapters of book one are short exemplary chapters, each of which contains a brief incident demonstrating the remarkable effect the holy lives of Evast and Aloma have on those who meet them. Llull writes that

38 Ibid., I. x., pp. 96, 97.

39 E.g. Ibid., I.xii., p. 100, 101.

40 "Evast s'asech entre los altres pobres, als quals de hia moltes bones paraules, e.ls confortava, e.lls consolava en la lurpobretat, remembrant a aquells la pobretat e la humilitat de Jesu Crist e dels apostols, qui amaren pobretat." Ibid., I.xiv., p. 105, Peers, p. 86-87.

41 Ibid., I. xi., pp. 97-100.

42 Ibid., I. xviii., pp. 115-117).

are present from the beginning of the work as well. In the early part of their marriage, Evast and Aloma did not live celibately. But their marriage was characterized from the very beginning by remarkable devotion to God and memorable acts of charity. The following words from the beginning of chapter two of book one are very characteristic:

In charity, patience and humility lived Evast and Aloma ever, and on Sundays and great festivals Evast went to the monasteries of the city, and with the monks therein he sang and praised his creator. Even so likewise did Aloma in the convents with the nuns; and they went to the hospitals, doing service to the unfortunate that were therein, and visited the poor and needy to whom they secretly gave alms....³⁷.

But their marriage takes on an even higher degree of sanctity and service when Llull introduces the second central element of his view of marriage. Half-way through book one, Blanquerna, their son, leaves to live as a hermit and Evast and Aloma decide that they should live together in a spiritual marriage. They even write for themselves a simple rule to live by. Under this rule they will have a lay brother look after all their goods; they will wear only plain clothes and eat meat only three days a week; they will rise each morning at Matins and say the hours; and they will discipline each other in the spiritual life. [Ibid., I. ix. (pp. 91, 92).] They go on to found a

37 "En caritat, passiencia y en umilitat estaven tots jorns Evast y Aloma; y en los diumenges y grans festes Evast anava als monestirs dels religiosos e cantava e loava ab ells al seu creador; aco mateix feya Aloma en los monestirs de les dones de religio. E anaven per los hospitals, servint los malalts y vestiven los vergonyants, als quals feyen secretament almoyna. ." Llull, Blanquerna, I. i. (p. 29), Peers, p. 37.

conception of the order of matrimony is the belief that it should be a means through which husband and wife grow in sanctity.

The first suggestion that this is so is found early in the work when Lull describes the wedding of Evast to Aloma. During their wedding the priest says to them that God will bless them and his grace will be shown through them to all men⁴⁴. This indication that God will give them a gift of grace in their marriage is followed, as we have seen above, by many references to the personal sanctity of both Evast and Aloma. For one of the signs of grace working in a life would surely be a charitable disposition. That Evast and Aloma become ever more effective servants of the poor is clearly a result of steady growth in personal, internal sanctity. But the internal working of the gift of the specific sacramental grace of matrimony is most apparent in the growth in charity of Evast and Aloma toward each other and thus toward God. And this growth in charity is best characterized by the great concern of each of them for the other's well-being.

A good example of this growth occurs when, after Evast and Aloma have been married for many years, Evast decides that he would like to live out the rest of his days in a monastery, and so suggests to Aloma that they should both enter religious houses and devote their lives to prayer. Aloma is shocked by this suggestion and cannot bring herself to agree with Evast. She says to him:

44 Ibid., I. i., p. 22.

Great was the example of the worthy life which Evast and Aloma led, and through their merits God bestowed favours upon many men, and heard the prayers of many sinners in that city, and healed many sick folk in the hospital through the intercessions of Evast and Aloma. Through the good example of Evast many that had been hardened sinners became penitents, and many men entered the religious life. And all the things that Evast and Aloma did were for a rule and example and exhortation, and caused remorse of conscience in the men that saw them, and by that which they did they mortified in sinners the seven deadly sins...⁴³

At this point it is clear, then, that Lull's view of matrimony is that it is an ecclesiastical order characterized by charitable work among the poor and that in its highest form it becomes a spiritual marriage in which the spouses live as brother and sister under a rule.

But what of the concern of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas that marriage was also a means of effective grace in the lives of the participants? This idea is equally present in Blanqueria. For as Lull describes how Evast and Aloma grow old together it is clear that while he is describing their external work together in the order of matrimony he is also imparting to the reader something of how Evast and Aloma are slowly sanctified by the internal work of sacramental grace. For integral to his

43 "Gran era l'exempli e la bona vida que Evast e Alomafahien e per los lurs merits Deus fahia moltes gracies a molts homens, e exhoia molts pecadors en aquella ciutat, e molts malalts sanava Deus en l'ospital per l'oracio d'Evast e Aloma. Molt home sulia esser pecador qui per lo bon exempli d'Evast faia penitencia, e molt home n'entrava en religio; e tot co que Evast e Aloma fahien, era regla, exempli, e preicacio, eremordiment de consciencia als homens qui vehien Evast e Aloma: e per co que fahien, mortificaven en los pecadors los .VII. pecats mortals, segons esta manera." Ibid., I. x., p. 97, Peers, pp.81-82.

Know thou then indeed that my heart hath never suffered such grief or pain as now that I see myself opposed to thy they will, for the love which I have ever borne thee constrains me so greatly that the tears of my heart rise even to mine eyes...⁴⁵

But this is not just the former love poet coming out in Llull; this not just amor; it is caritas as well. For it was pointed out above that Evast was convinced that the religious orders were superior to the order of matrimony in certain ways, and he had desired for much of his life to go into a monastic house. Yet after several long discussions of the matter, Evast finally sees that his wife would be hurt too deeply if he were to separate himself from her and it is at this point that he decides that they must continue living with each other, doing service to God as man and wife in spiritual marriage⁴⁶. The point is that in charity toward his wife he willingly gave up the more blessed life of the monastery to live out his days with her.

A similar example of this charity which grows between Evast and Aloma occurs late in the first book when Evast and Aloma are no longer young, but are still begging on the streets. One day a certain shoemaker, taking pity on them, said that he was only a poor man but had enough food to feed one of them and asked them

45 ". . . sapiau perveritat que.l meu cor no sosten que per jamai ningun temps tantade dolor ni de passio com ara quant contrastata al vostre voler; per que tan fortment me constreny la bona amor que yo.us hehagut tots temps quant no obeixch al vostre voler, que aygua delmeu cor puja als meus ulls. . ." Ibid., I. iv., p. 45, Peers, p.47.

46 Ibid., I. iv. p. 28.

to decide between themselves who should eat with him. In a lovely paragraph, Llull writes that:

Evast said to Aloma that she should dine that day with the shoemaker, and that he would go and seek to dine elsewhere. But Aloma, who loved and honoured Evast greatly, said that she would go and seek elsewhere, and that he should remain. Charity and love was there between Evast and Aloma, and each had compassion on the other, for the cold was great and the rain fell heavily, so that they went through the streets with great distress. They strove then together thus, and each desired the other to remain, but Evast at all hazards resolved that Aloma should remain. So Aloma, who was ever obedient to the will of Evast, remained, and Evast went elsewhere to seek alms for the love of God⁴⁷.

This sort of scene calls to mind very vividly the notion of St. Bonaventure discussed above that as the man and wife become more and more united to each other in matrimony, they become more united to Christ at the same time. Through these and other examples it is clear that while Evast and Aloma go about their lives of service among the poor, living in apostolic poverty, they also are each growing in charity toward the other as the sacramental grace of marriage works in them. As a married couple they treat each other as brother and sister, begging on the streets, helping each other along the way, and thus growing personally in grace.

47 "Evast dix a Aloma que menjas aquel jorn ab locabater, que ell iria a cercar altre loch on pogues menjar. Mas Aloma, qui molt amava e honrava Evast, dix a Evast que ella iriacercar altre loc, que Evast degues romanir. Caritat e amor foenfre Evast e Aloma, e la .I. havia pietat del altre. Gran frete fran pluja fahia, e ab treball anaven Evast e Aloma per les carreres. Dementre que Evast e aloma se contenien, e la .I. volia ferromanir l'altre, Evast volch a totes passades que Aloma romanguesab lo cabater. Aloma, qui tots jorns era obedient a la volentatde Evast, romas; e Evast ana cercar almoyna, per la amor de Deuen altre loch." Ibid., I. xiii., p. 103, Peers, p. 85.

It is apparent, then, that Ramon Llull was in agreement with many other innovative thinkers of his time in regard to the place and ends of matrimony. Marriage to him was not merely the remedy for sin that it had been for most theologians since Augustine. Like many of his contemporaries he came to see it as an order of the Church ordained by God to a positive and active role in both the exterior work of the church and the interior work of each soul's sanctification. That Llull was apparently not very original in any of his ideas on marriage may come as a surprise to Llull scholars who are familiar with his unique philosophy. Yet Llull was not simply copying current notions of matrimony; he must be given credit for taking several strands of this new thought on matrimony and molding them together into a coherent, literary whole. He managed quite successfully to weld together the notions of the order of matrimony, the spiritual marriage, and the effective grace of matrimony, and the resulting exalted portrait of marriage is both believable and visionary. It is a portrait, moreover, quite in keeping with Llull's grand desire to reform and expand Christian society.

REVIEWS

David Nicholas *The Domestic Life of a Medieval City: Women, Children, and the Family in Fourteenth-Century Ghent*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985.

While the medieval scholarly world has recently seen a plethora of works analyzing all the various social aspects of urban life in England, Italy and southern France, there has been at the same time a paucity of information concerning the social history of the major urban areas of northern France and the Low Countries. This is a truly unfortunate lacuna in modern medieval scholarship considering the size of the towns in these regions. David Nicholas with his book, *The Domestic Life of a Medieval City*, has sought to rectify this situation by analyzing the social history of the town of Ghent.

During the fourteenth century, Ghent was the second largest city in northern Europe behind Paris. In it thrived a vibrant, independent and generally wealthy population who relied on English wool for their cloth-making opulence. Frequently during this century the Flemish reliance on English wool would breed rebellion as the towns would revolt against their count who was nearly always allied with the French king. But while these political and military aspects of the town have been analyzed by several modern historians, including Professor Nicholas himself, the social structure of the people within the town has been largely ignored. This neglect is not due to the paucity of