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The Orde de Religió in the Romanç d'Evast e Blaqueria

by Raymond Lull:

Fruitful Tension Between Contemplative and Active Life

Introduction. 1. General aspects of the works of Raymond Lull. 2. Particularities of the Blaqueria. 3. Influence of the Cistercian model in the *Religió* of Raymond Lull. 4. Monastic life and hermit life in the Blaqueria. 5. Characteristic elements of the state of religious life. Conclusions. Basic bibliography.

Introduction

The topic that concerns us: «The *orde de religió* in the *Romanç d'Evast y Blaqueria*¹ by Raymond Lull», could raise skepticism among some people who are not familiar with the work of this medieval philosopher and theologian (1232/5-1315/6) about the contribution that the study of a romance or novel can make to the systematic knowledge of Lullian thought, particularly on the subject that interests us. One could also ask, why choosing precisely the *Romanç d'Evast y Blaqueria* (from now on *Blaqueria*) among the nearly 265 works attributed to Lull? Well, there are several reasons why such skepticism can easily be dispelled, as the thickest fog vanishes when it is crossed by the sun's rays, if they are sufficiently intense and prolonged.

In that sense, this study aims to elucidate the characteristics of the *estament* of *religió*, i.e., the second state of Christian life described by Lull in *Blaqueria*, which corresponds predominantly to the feminine and masculine monastic religious life. In this way, we aim at making evident both the evangelical freshness, and the philosophical and theological elements with which the Majorcan writer describes this state of life. In this regard, reference will be made to some possible historical conditioning of said Lullian approach. We will also attempt to point out the reasons why Lull uses precisely this literary genre as a vehicle for his *Ars*'s (Art or method) expression. Although they are not the direct object of this study, we will also refer to other states of life presented in *Blaqueria*, especially hermit life and the order of marriage, because in some circumstances Lull connects them directly to «el orde de religió».

In *Blaqueria*, the Majorcan mystic intends to «give doctrine and rule»² about «five states of people», so that men and women may know how to live «en este mon per tal que en l'altre eternalment sia en la gloria de Deu»³. In the romance's prologue, Lull explains that, with the five books contained in this work, he wanted to signify the five wounds that the Lord received «en la santa vera creu per redimir el seu poble de la servitud del diable»⁴. The five *estaments*

¹ This is the original title of the work according to R. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaqueria*, ed. by A. Soler and J. Santanach, in *Nova edició de les obres de Ramon Lull*, Vol. VIII, Palma 2009. This edition is the main source of this work.

² LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaqueria*, Del Pròleg, p. 87.

³ LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaqueria*, V, 115, §6, p. 581.

⁴ LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaqueria*, Del Pròleg, p. 87.

described in the *Blaquerna* are: marriage, «religió» (referable mostly to what is now known as monastic religious life), the episcopate, the apostolic lordship (papacy and cardinalate), and the hermit life.

The Catalan word *estaments* used by Lull in this work is predominantly referred to the five states or forms of life described therein. On other occasions, the term *estament* is used to signify a state of mind⁵. On the other hand, in some occasions Lull also uses the term «estat», that is, state, to refer to religious life⁶ or to marriage⁷. Another term used in *Blaquerna* is «orde», corresponding to the Latin *ordo*, which refers to the different orders or forms of life: «orde de matrimoni», «orde de religió»⁸. Therefore, these *estaments* are comparable to those that in the current language are defined as states or forms of Christian life, or specific vocations. In addition to *Blaquerna*, Lull deals with these and other states or forms of life in other works, with different modalities and amplitudes, but a complete treatment of that is beyond the scope of this study.

The second book of *Blaquerna*, dedicated to the religious life, is by far the largest of the five that Lull dedicates to the states of Christian life, and comprises from chapter 19 to 66, that is 48 chapters out of a total of 99. Because of the close relationship with which Lull presents this way of life with respect to the hermit life, it is convenient to indicate that the latter is developed in the fifth and last book, being the shortest of all and covering only four chapters, from 96 to 99. Although in the modern ecclesial language the religious or consecrated life⁹ covers various modalities, including the monastic life, the hermit, the active life, etc., it must be remembered that when Lull speaks of «religió» it means preponderantly monastic life, both feminine and masculine.

1. General aspects of the works of Raymond Lull

To help better understand the content of *Blaquerna*, something will be said about the language used by Lull in his works, without pretending to make an exhaustive presentation. To begin with, it should be noted that Lull is considered as a liminal figure in the culture of his time for his efforts to devise a language different from the academic circles of his day. The language with which he dreamed was free of adornments and emotions, purely intellectual, and, at the same time, comprehensible to all and easy to translate, not very different from mathematical formulas¹⁰. At the same time, we cannot forget the richness and complementarity of contents and styles shown by the work of Raymond Lull, in whom «art and science harmonize in a vital union, and if his novels reveal his philosophical, theological and cosmological positions, we could extract from many of its treatises beautiful literary pages, rich in metaphors and warm poetic breath»¹¹.

⁵ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, II, 19, §3, p. 145.

⁶ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, I, 4, §9, p. 103.

⁷ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, Del Pròleg, p. 87.

⁸ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, I, 4, §10, p. 103; 146-149, ecc.

⁹ In the contemporary ecclesial language, the term “consecrated life” has prevailed over that of “religious life” since the publication of the Postsinodal Apostolic Exhortation Postsinodal *Vita Consecrata*, of Saint John Paul II (March 25, 1996).

¹⁰ Cf. F. DOMÍNGUEZ, *Works*, in *Raimundus Lullus, An Introduction to his Life, Works and Thought*, ed. by A. Fidora and J. E. Rubio, in *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 214, *Supplementum Lullianum*, Tomus II, Turnhout 2008, p. 125-126.

¹¹ M. BATLLORI, Prologue to *Obras Literarias de Ramón Llull*, ed. preparada y anotada por los padres M. Batllori - M. Caldentey, Introducción biográfica by S. Galmés, Madrid 1948, XVII (our English trans.).

While the great medieval personalities wishing to change the world preferred to preach to the masses, Lull chose the composition and dissemination of written works, according to his primary purpose of writing «the best book in the world» to convert «the infidels». His interest was to engage in a rational dialogue with Christian and non-Christian leaders and intellectuals («*cum maioribus et inteligentioribus*»)¹². The intellectuals of the time wrote only to comment and improve the understanding of the works already considered as authorities, while Lull sought to propagate a science whose radical novelty he attributed to the divine illumination that he had received in Mount Randa. That is why he writes works with titles like *Rhetorica nova*, *Logica nova*, *Metaphysica nova*, etc.¹³

The importance that Lull gave to his works manifests itself in several ways. One is the fact that from 1292 on he began signing them, also indicating the place and date of writing, thus avoiding any shadow of anonymity. In addition, during his travels he was accompanied by an amanuensis. Besides, he established in his will three custodians of his works and the way in which the public could have access to them¹⁴. Furthermore, it is significant that he defined himself thus: «I am a troubadour of books»¹⁵. The main reason why Lull gave his works such importance comes from his conviction of having discovered a method that would end all theological and philosophical dissension. Although the reception of his art met with great resistance from his contemporaries, Lull wanted to make sure that future generations would have access to the content of his books. He even claimed that evil would disappear from Earth if his works were taken seriously¹⁶.

Lull's contribution goes beyond the philosophical and theological content of his writings because, through them, he also emerges as the father of Catalan literature, since he made Catalan the first modern European language, after Greek and Latin, by developing it in order to enable it to express very subtle feelings and philosophical concepts of great abstraction. In addition to using his mother tongue, Lull also wrote in Arabic and Latin. Unfortunately, none of his works written in Arabic are preserved. On the other hand, the relationship between the corresponding texts that are preserved in Catalan and Latin goes through multiple strata and is extremely complex. In addition to this difficulty, the structural differences of each language are also obstacles to arrive at a precise and definitive reconstruction of the original texts¹⁷. It should be added that the manuscript tradition of Lullian works is immense. Several libraries around the world preserve some 2,000 manuscripts of works written by Lull and many others corresponding to the pseudo Lullian tradition.

2. Particularities of Blaquerna

The current critique considers that Lull most probably started writing the *Romanç d'Evast and Blaquerna* in 1276, or a little later, as it can be deduced from its remarkable closeness to some passages of the *Lliber de Doctrina pueril*, to finish it in Montpellier in 1283¹⁸. Modern research on Blaquerna's plurilingual transmission has shown the complexity of this process,

¹² *Liber de praedicatione*, ROL, IV, 104.

¹³ Cf. F. DOMÍNGUEZ, *Works*, 126.

¹⁴ Cf. F. DOMÍNGUEZ, *Works*, 127.

¹⁵ Verso 66 de 79, *Cant de Ramon*, ORL XIX, 259.

¹⁶ Cf. F. DOMÍNGUEZ, *Works*, 127.

¹⁷ Cf. F. DOMÍNGUEZ, *Works*, 128-129.

¹⁸ The issue of Blaquerna's date of writing has attracted constant interest, as shown in the articles listed in the bibliography: A. BONNER, *La data de Blanquerna*, in *Estudios Lulianos*, 26 (1986) p. 143-147; and A. SOLER I LLOMPART, *Encara sobre la data del Blaquerna*, in *Studia Lulliana*, 31 (1991) p. 113-123.

which started with the original version in Catalan. This language was used in much of the literary production of Lull made between 1274 and 1289, clearly marked by a didactic and encyclopedic purpose. There is evidence to suggest that the first translation was made in Occitan as a starting point for translations into French and Latin. The Occitan translation would be the one Lull would have brought to Rome and Paris in 1287, and not the original one. For him, the writing of texts and the strategies for their dissemination had a direct relationship. For that reason, modifications, more or less remarkable, were introduced in the written work in order to better adapt it to the idiosyncrasies of the recipients and thus optimize the effectiveness of the doctrinal message that was intended to be transmitted¹⁹.

Beyond the catechetical and didactic intention of the work, Gavagni affirms that the *Blaquerna* is a novel that allows a specifically literary reading due to the character of the constructions and the narrative schemes that it uses²⁰. Gavagni detects three lines of narrative discourse development from the structure present in the novel: the first is of a biographical nature, the second of a social nature, and the third of a moral nature. In his analysis, Gavagni returns to what authors like Menéndez and Pelayo had already indicated about the original and innovative elements with which *Blaquerna* contributes to the novelistic tradition in its biographical approach.

Blaquerna's biography has as its thread the search for the ultimate realization of the protagonist's own ideal of life, identified from the beginning as the hermit life, which he manages to reach only after a long path, a true journey that leads *Blaquerna* to a series of encounters and forms of life that postpone, against his will, the realization of his intimate longing, but on the other hand, allow him to promote and realize a social and moral reform through this 'journey'.

Another important aspect of *Blaquerna* is that it has been considered as the first successful attempt of biographical novel in the western literature of the Middle Ages and the work that contains some of the best pages of Lull, full of 'autobiographical' references that allow us to have a good idea of his authentic personality. More than any other work of his, *Blaquerna* describes the environment, time and land that served as the setting for Lull's intense activity²¹. Llabrés i Martorell characterizes this work as follows:

Blanquerna és obra maestra de la literatura europea, la primera novel·la biogràfica que, en un quadre viu i atractiu, pinta les clarors i les ombres de l'Edat Mitjana, els vicis i les virtuts d'una societat que és cridada, per la ploma àgil i aguda de Ramon Llull, a una reforma profunda per assolir l'ideal que convé a una Cristiandat forta i justa, pacífica i missionera. *Blaquerna* és...la gran utopia que un esperit privilegiat, des de l'òptica de cristià convertit i conscient, traça per als seus contemporanis, perquè la societat del seu temps, en cadascun dels estaments, aculli íntegrament la voluntat divina, manifestada a l'Evangeli de Crist²².

¹⁹ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna, Introducció*, 30-70.

²⁰ G. GAVAGNIN, *Per una lectura del Blanquerna*, in *Ramon Llull; il lullismo internazionale, l'Italia*. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Napoli, 30-31 marzo, 1 aprile 1989), p. 209-210.

²¹ Cf. A. OLIVER I MONSERRAT, "*Blaquerna*" y "*El Llibre de les Besties*" de Mestre Ramon, un retaule de la vida medieval, una utopia de la reforma de l'Eglésia i del món, in *El setè centenari del llibre de Blanquerna*, Mallorca 1985, p. 14-15.

²² P. LLABRÉS I MARTORELL, *Pròleg per a un centenari*, in *El setè centenari del llibre de Blanquerna*, Mallorca, 1985, p. 6.

3. Influence of the Cistercian model in the *religió* of Raymond Lull

In his effort to clarify the sources and forms of spiritual and intellectual development of Lull in the nine years that followed his conversion and that made possible his amazing literary and missionary work, Gabriel Seguí demonstrated²³, first from some passages from *Vita Coetanea*²⁴, that the Majorcan had deep ties with the Cistercian monastery of *Santa María de La Real*, in Mallorca. Subsequently, from the analysis of the second book of *Blaquerna*, Seguí confirms «with numerous proofs, the liking that Lull felt for the royal Abbey and its influence on the formation of his eminent personality»²⁵. In his analysis he describes the episodes into which the book in question is divided: the life of a monastery of nuns, the journey of Blaquerna in search of a place to live his ideal of hermit life, his temporary job as a knight's squire who lived in an abbey and, finally, his entry into the Order of said abbey or monastery. Thus, it concludes:

Lull, in the last 14 chapters of this second book by Blanquerna, describes, minutely, a monastery of an important Order, which undoubtedly is the Cistercian one, since all its organization and terminology is proper to the reform carried out by San Bernardo.

In addition, there is no doubt that in the imaginary description of this Cistercian convent, the monastery of La Real plays an important role, where Ramón had spent his formative years and had learned to know and love Santa María [...].

The result of the comparison between the monastery of Blanquerna and the Cistercian abbey of La Real, has corroborated the perfect harmony in almost all the collected data, which is a convincing proof that Ramón Lull, in the description of the convent of Blanquerna, had in mind the Cistercian monastery of the Royal, which was the cenacle where his apostolic soul had been formed²⁶.

In addition to listing the material characteristics of the convent in question, Seguí also identifies and describes the three types of religious dwelling therein: Abbot, monks and lay friars²⁷. According to his analysis of the text, all the religious from other Orders are called *freres*²⁸. Later, he synthesizes the cultural and intellectual ambiance that existed in the abbey. Next, he enumerates the main charges of the monks of the monastery. At this point Seguí states that *Prior* acts as the Abbot, but the text mentions both characters and Lull uses the *prior* to exemplify the desire for honor and pride, for he wanted to become the abbot. This ambition caused him a «not virtuous» sadness, until he is questioned and repents himself, confesses his error and regains joy²⁹. The other charges are: *Cellerer*³⁰ (warehouseman), the *Sacristà*³¹ and the *Ostaler* (inkeeper)³².

For the purpose of this study, it is interesting to mention what Seguí added later:

²³ G. SEGUÍ, *La influencia cisterciense en el beato Ramón Lull*, in *Studia Lulliana* 1 (1957) p. 351-370; 2 (1958) p. 245-272.

²⁴ Autobiography dictated by Lull to a monk of the monastery of Vauvert, France, probably in September 1311. It has been deduced that the Latin version was the first one, since Lullio thought of it as his presentation to the participants in the Council of Vienne, of the same year, and that the Catalan version was made by a disciple in the late fourteenth century, who made several changes for hagiographic reasons.

²⁵ G. SEGUÍ, *La influencia cisterciense en el beato Ramón Lull*, p. 256 (our Eng. trans.)

²⁶ G. SEGUÍ, *La influencia cisterciense en el beato Ramón Lull*, p. 257-258 (our Eng. trans.)

²⁷ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, II, 53, §1; 54, §4 y 56, §1.

²⁸ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, II, 58, §4, p. 267.

²⁹ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, II, 57, §3-7, p. 262-264.

³⁰ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, II, 57, 58, 60, 62 y 63.

³¹ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, II, 59, §2, p. 271.

³² Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, II, 57, §5, p. 263.

Among the characteristics of the Abbey of Blanquerna, two stand out, the love that the monks had for Our Lady and the environment of greater science, which was introduced among the young members of the community. And these are precisely two notes of the monastery of Santa Maria de la Real after the year 1245, which influenced, powerfully, the person of Ramón, during his formative years³³.

From the analysis of *Blaquerna*'s text it is clear that the influence of the Cistercian model in the description of the *religió* does not imply that this description is a copy or a mere representation of the model, but that it serves Lull as a vehicle to introduce his instruments of renewal and reform in this state of life, that is, the study and application of his *Ars*³⁴, the virtues, the authentic devotion, the first intention, etc. In this sense, it is interesting to consider a story that is found at the end of the first book of *Blaquerna* and serves as a transition to the second. It is about a friar who preached at a church on the occasion of a great feast, before a large crowd that included many notables who praised his sermon much and followed him to the monastery³⁵. The friar was pleased by these praises and by the fact that other friars saw the people following him. While the friar was boasting in his heart, they found on the way a young woman who had not converted from her sins of lust, even though the friar had preached to her for a long time and she had confessed to him, and yet she converted for the good example of Evast and Aloma, Blaquerna's parents, who had become penitents. The story continues with the preacher friar's repentance and change, who then engaged in a dialogue with a lay brother asking if more fruit is obtained from preaching with good works and good example or by preaching with words. By virtue of God and by the example of Evast and Aloma, the friar decides to adjust his works to his words. The story does not mention to which Order these religious belonged, it only calls them friars.

4. Monastic life and hermit life in *Blaquerna*

It is interesting to note that *Blaquerna*, in describing the state of the «religió», concentrates its attention on the monastic life of men and women, and makes scarce explicit references to friars, or specifically to the mendicant orders, Franciscan and Dominican, which Lull not only knew, but was close to³⁶. This remarkable absence of references to mendicant orders could be due to factors such as historical resistance to the recognition of said Orders³⁷ and the questions that Lull raised in his comments to the Sentences of the great masters to the role of teacher and preacher. However, it seems that Lull did not break with the old scheme and maintained the principle of contemplative life practiced in two forms: community form (monastic life) or individual form (hermit life).

Despite this conception inherited by Lull, he required a new form of religious that would allow him to fulfill his purpose to establish «monasteries» for the teaching of the Saracens'

³³ G. SEGUÍ, *La influencia cisterciense en el beato Ramón Llull*, p. 261.

³⁴ Cf. F. A. YATES, *Raimondo Lullo e la sua Arte, Saggi di lettura*, a cura di S. Muzzi, Roma 2009, p. 82-84.

³⁵ Cf. LLULL, *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, I, 18, §1-4.

³⁶ Esta cercanía está atestiguada por su participación en el Capítulo general del Orden Dominicano de 1285, en Bolonia, y en los Capítulos generales de los frailes Menores de 1287, en Montpellier, y de 1289, en Rieti. No olvidemos además que la *Vita coetanea* también narra que Lull se planteó seriamente la alternativa de entrar a una u otra de estas Órdenes durante la crisis de Génova (cf. *La Vita Coetanea*, § 19ss).

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language and that of other «infidels», the third purpose that was forged in his heart after his conversion³⁸. In the case of the *Colegio de Miramar*, in his native Mallorca, those called to put it into practice were the Friars Minor³⁹. In any case, Lull does not seem to identify the mendicants with “his” religious, i.e., those who would come to his school-monasteries for the mission among non-Christians. Thus, for example, the *Llibre contra Anticrist*⁴⁰, which maintains the duality “contemplative life” - “active life”, indicates that «religious» and «secular men» should be selected and prepared for the mission: «Los preycadors demunt dits deuen ésser triats e alets de les religions e dels hòmens setglàs covinents al sant offici damunt dit»⁴¹. In *Blaquerna*, Lull puts a lament in the lips of the “Canon of persecution” because many clerics and religious pray for rain, but few of them go around the world to preach the Christian faith to the «infidels» (III, 76, §13).

In this sense, what Lull says about religious life and religious in the *Ars ad faciendum et ad soluendum quaestiones* can be very significant. This work was written in 1295, i.e. after *Blaquerna* and when the “newness” of the mendicants had already passed. In this work, Lull describes the religious life as the «concordance» between contemplative and active life, and as a form of life characterized by freedom from material goods that allows dedication to prayer, devotion, preaching and other works, all of which represents a higher living example. It also insists on poverty, holiness of life and the central goal of remembering, understanding and loving God and neighbor⁴². All this allows us to assume that most of texts that refer to the hermit life can be applied to other models of religious life.

It is convenient to refer now, albeit briefly, to the valuable analysis that E. W. Platzeck made of several works by Lull, including *Blaquerna*, in his article *La vida eremítica en las obras del beato Raimundo Lulio*⁴³. In this essay, Platzeck deduces the essential elements of the eremitical life in Lull's thought and distinguishes a typology of hermits, in order to identify the normal type of hermit, the preconditions of the hermit contemplative life, and the method of the hermit contemplation. For the purpose of this work, It is convenient to refer to the *Libre d'intenció*, quoted by Platzeck, in which Lull states that the first intention for a true religious is contemplative life and the second one is active life, and that bad religious succumb to the temptation to reverse this order. The Blessed affirms that the intention for which religious life is higher and nobler than other offices is that religious must be light and example for others, and that the «infidels» are directed to the truth by the martyrdom and the preaching of devout and fervent religious, who do not hesitate to endure death for the love of honoring God, and that,

³⁸ Cf. *La Vita Coetanea*, § 8, 21.

³⁹ This school was founded with the support of King Jaime de Mallorca and there studied 13 Friars Minor, with the approval of the Provincial Minister of Aragon and the Minister General, after Pope John XXI confirmed the foundation of the monastery with the bull *Laudanda tuorum* of October 17, 1276. The *Blaquerna* makes direct reference to the foundation of this monastery of Miramar by King Jaime de Mallorca, noble and wise. He also mentions the number of friars: 13; the object of study: the Arabic language, and the purpose of these studies: to prepare these friars to go to «honrat Jesucrist entre ls infeels», enduring many hardships and even death. The narrative continues with the decision of a bishop to found in his diocese a monastery similar to that of Miramar. The curricula of this new monastery included “diverses sciencies e diverses lengues” (Book II, 65, §4, 296-297). The Miramar model is mentioned in this work in other occasions; for example, in the decision of Pope Blaquerna and the cardinals in Book IV, 80, §3.

⁴⁰ Text from ca. 1274 and, therefore, prior to the *Blaquerna*.

⁴¹ R. LLULL, *El Llibre contra Anticrist*, Edició i estudi del text de J. Perarnau i Espelt, ATCA 9 (1990), 1440, p. 151.

⁴² Cf. R. LLULL, *Ars ad faciendum et ad soluendum quaestiones*, op. 64, MOG V, Int. v, 350-351 (708-709).

⁴³ E. W. PLATZECK, *La vida eremítica en las obras del beato Raimundo Lulio. Sapientissimi regis puerperae!*, in *Revista de Espiritualidad*, 2 e 3 (1942) p. 3-47.

through the prayer of fervent and holy contemplative sisters, God's great mercy may forgive sinners and exalt «justice in charity in their servants»⁴⁴.

Among the various conclusions reached by Platzeck, it is enough to mention, for reasons of space, a paragraph that synthesizes the basis of religious life and the relevance of the figure of the hermit in the works of the Majorcan:

[...] if it is so that contemplation forms the basis and is the foundation of religious life, it is not surprising that the hermit plays such a large role in the works of Raymond, because this hermit is for the thirteenth century, perhaps for all the Middle Ages, simply the symbol of the contemplative life; and it does not surprise us either that, at the end of his long life, Blanquerna, after having instituted a new order in the Holy Church, renounces to his papal dignity, retires to a hermitage and becomes Master of the hermits of Rome. The figure of Blanquerna is precisely very important to underline the contemplative note of all religious life⁴⁵.

5. The characteristic elements of the state of religious life

This section presents fourteen characteristics of the «orde de religió» that have been identified in the second book of the novel, although there will also be references to elements of this state of life that are found in other parts of the novel and to aspects of the hermit life, which, as it was already mentioned, has a close relationship with the state of religious life. This list has been the result of a textual analysis and does not claim to be definitive or complete, but only a tentative approach that can serve as the basis for a more extensive and in-depth analysis.

1) Divine origin and human mediation

Blaquerna's second book on religious life opens with the reference to young Natana who was deeply impacted by thinking every day on the words that young Blaquerna had told her. Through them she meditated on the passion of Jesus Christ, and on the difficulties and death that the holy martyrs Catherine, Eulalia and Magdalene suffered for the love of God. Thus, the firm will of Natana to withdraw from the world and enter the order of religion is explained by two factors: by «virtue of God» and by meditation («*cogitació*») which «converts the will» to that on which one meditates constantly (cf. II, 19 §1-2). For Lull, the unquestionable origin of the desire to assume this way of life is found in God's action, who acts directly in the human heart. At the same time, this inspiration is awakened by the words full of devotion and conviction of those who have experienced God, motivating others to think and reflect deeply on the meaning of their life (cf. also II, 20, §2).

When young Blaquerna explains his vocational intentions to his father and mother, he affirms that it was the light or divine inspiration that moved his heart to remember and understand poverty and hermit life, to renounce to this world, in order to devote himself more perfectly to contemplate and to love the Son of God. For that «signification», he wanted to follow the life and rule of Elijah, John the Baptist and the holy fathers of the desert, who fled the world and overcame flesh, devil, and every obstacle to contemplate and to love the God of glory, which is the beginning and end of all goods (cf. I, 5 §4). The theme of divine inspiration as the origin of the vocation to hermit life is mentioned at other times, as it happens when Natana asks to enter the monastery and talks about the vocation of young Blaquerna (cf. II, 20,

⁴⁴ R. LLULL, *Libre d'Intenció*, in *Nova Edició de les Obres de Ramon Llull*, XII, Palma 2013, c. 56-57 (our English trans.).

⁴⁵ PLATZECK, *La vida eremítica en las obras del beato Raimundo Lulio*, p. 14 (our English transl.).

§1). Later, the abbess welcomes Natana recognizing that the divine radiance had illuminated the young woman's heart and that this light was now illuminating the nuns so that they persevered in good works (cf. II, 20, §2). It is God who would also place his mother Nastasia in the «estament» of external person, living in a house by the door of the monastery (cf. II, 20, §19).

Likewise, the abbess declares that Natana should be received not because of the dowry she would give to the monastery – being from a rich family – but for the virtues she had (cf. II, 20, §3). These virtues were the seven gifts that she had received from the young Blaquerna and to which she wanted to serve in that monastery, among the nuns (cf. II, 20, §1). Elsewhere, Lull directly connects the divine inspiration, as the principle of the vocation, to the action of the Holy Spirit, as it can be seen when he writes that the young Blaquerna, who resists the temptation of the young Natana, had not forgotten his desire to consecrate himself and the fire of the Holy Spirit, «which had inflamed his heart», came soon to his aid (cf. I, 6, §6). Blaquerna explains to Natana the reason for his joy and his praising of God by saying that the Holy Spirit had enlightened his heart with the light of his grace, which had made him long for the hermit life, so that he had only God in his heart (cf. I, 6, §7).

2) Totalizing option for God in response to a choice

In the first book of *Blaquerna*, dedicated to marriage, there is a very clear reference to the vocational experience of young Blaquerna when he expresses to his parents his desire to opt for the hermit life. He does not want to hold in his heart honor, nor riches or delights of this world, nor anything else, but God alone, who created him and made him to be his tabernacle. Aware that his parents had different plans, the young Blaquerna affirms that a great injury would be done to God if the chamber in which God wants to be is taken away from God and an injury would be done to Blaquerna's heart, too, if God would be taken away from it (cf. I, 5, §3). Later, in that same dialogue with his parents, the young Blaquerna clearly states that he wants to go to God, who calls him, and for whose love he wants to leave everything: father, mother, honor, wealth, wellbeing, etc. He assures that nothing and no one else can satisfy his deep desire for God (cf. I, 5, §6). This fundamental option of Blaquerna brings to mind, although it does not make the Christological dimension explicit, the vocational experience of Jesus' disciples: «And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life» (Mt 19: 29).

This totalizing option is a response to an election on the part of God, which constitutes an appropriation of the person, according to the statements of the young Blaquerna when he speaks of himself to his parents, explaining that he no longer belongs to himself, since someone else has taken him for himself and taken him away from them and from the delights of this world (cf. I, 5, §13). This is the same logic that is seen when speaking of the abbess of the monastery of Natana, after her death: God wanted to give himself to her in glory, so that she would participate in that glory, since she had donated herself to God in this world (cf. II, 22, §1).

3) A state of greater holiness?

In the intense dispute between Aloma and Evast in chapter 4 of the first book, Evast declares that the «orde de religi6» is of greater holiness than the order of marriage, eliciting a firm reaction from Aloma, who does not want to be against the order in which God put her and have

kept her. In addition, she affirms the importance of living in any order or state of life with devotion, since many, for lack of it, disregard their order and leave it (cf. I, 4, §3-4). On the other hand, when the young Natana, at the instigation of Aloma, tries to seduce the young Blaquerna to marry her, even with theological arguments, she goes so far as to say that Evast and Aloma «are holier than anybody else in this city» (I, 6, §5). In this way, Lull does not seem to propose that religious life is automatically a path of greater holiness in relation to marriage, but, rather, affirms the importance of living one's vocation with devotion, that is, with a deep sense of faith in Christ and, therefore, a married couple can reach a very high level of holiness and preach by example more effectively than preachers.

At the same time, the novel also extols the sanctity of Abbess Natana: «And all ladies praised and blessed God, who had given so much wisdom, charity and holiness to their Abbess Natana» (II, 37, §3). In addition, the desire for greater holiness guides the decision of Blaquerna when he consents to the appeal made by the monks to join them, even as he thinks of his future hermit life: «prudence showed him that the life which he would have in the monastery would justly multiply the holiness of his hermit life» (II, 55, §4).

4) Withdrawing from the world to contemplate God and the Virgin Mary

Another outstanding element of the vocation to the second state of life presented by Lull is the desire to «withdraw from the world», to «despise» his delights and honors in order to devote himself to contemplation. In the aforementioned dialogue between Blacherna and his parents, when speaking of divine inspiration, the young man also attributes to this reason the desire to renounce to this world so that he can more perfectly contemplate and love the Son of God (cf. I, 5, §4). For the young protagonist, «being in the world» is a risk, especially for a young man, considering that the final reason why one is in the world is to know, love, praise and contemplate God (cf. I, 5, §6). When Evast announces to his relatives and friends the news about Blaquerna's vocational decision, he explains it as falling in love because of divine goodness that urges his son to become a hermit and devote himself to the contemplation of divine virtue in wild places: «esser hermitá e contemplar la divina virtut en los agrests e en los lochs inhabitables» (I, 7, §1). Young Blaquerna, before saying goodbye to his parents, recognizes that they had made him know theology and other sciences, for which he had known God, who is known through what is represented by his work and his virtue in the creatures. He sees the world as an obstacle to contemplate God and meditate on his high virtue. He desires the solitude of the mountains to apply what he has learned and to love, know, praise and bless God without hindrance. Another reason that moves him to leave the world is the fact that he barely sees any person that fulfills the duty of honoring, loving and knowing God, thanking God for the goods received from God. For this reason, he prefers to live with the wild beasts, the trees and birds that are blameless (cf. I, 7, §5).

The contemplation of God and of the Virgin Mary is the central objective of young Blaquerna who wishes to go to the forests as a hermit: «jo vaig als boscos a contemplar el meu senyor Jesucrist i la seva mare, verge gloriosa, nostra senyora santa Maria» (I, 6, §12). Thus, contemplative activity emerges in *Blaquerna* as a central element of religious life. This element is confirmed in another passage, when young Blaquerna, overcoming the temptation of marriage, proposed by the young Natana, advises her to leave the world and enter one of the orders of «women of religion» so that, in their company, she may direct her faculties to God and to the contempt of the world: «contemplar, rememrar, entendre, voler la santa virtut de Deu e la viltat d'aquest mon e la gloria qui totstemps es perdurable» (I, 6, §14).

Already in the second book of *Blaquerna*, in chapter 37 (*De memoria*), Abbess Natana explains to the nuns of her monastery that they were brought together to remember the Sovereign Good, source of all goods, and to forget the vanities of this world. In this sense, she teaches them that it is a great obligation for them to remember every day and at all times the benefits received from God, especially salvation through the incarnation, passion and death of God's Son, but also the dignities or attributes of God (goodness, greatness, eternity, power, salvation, love, perfection, etc.). In an interesting dynamic that oscillates between remembering and forgetting certain things, the abbess explains to her sisters that it is not convenient to remember what they had done in the world, but rather to remember God, Our Lady and the saints (cf. II, 37, §1). Likewise, when Blaquerna enters the monastic Order and talks about the sciences to be studied by the monks so that they have access to theology, he once again refers to the purpose for which the monks were there and had left the world (cf. II, 56, §5).

Withdrawing from the world represents a precondition to dedicate oneself to the contemplation of God and his attributes, as well as of the Virgin Mary. This *fuga mundi* joins the centennial tradition of the Church, initiated by the ancient hermits and anchorites, and continued in another form by the contemplative feminine and masculine communities. Nonetheless, considering *Blaquerna* in its entirety, the protagonist's deep desire to withdraw from the world does not lead him to a total and definitive isolation from the world, but, on the contrary, it leads him providentially to meet countless people, groups and circumstances in which he carries out an extraordinary work of reform and mission. Only at the end of his long and fruitful life, can the protagonist fulfill his dream of living apart from the people, dedicated to remembering, understanding and loving God in the hermit life. However, even there he recreated his soul with the difficulties he had endured in his long life (cf. V, 98, §1), interceded with his prayer for the Pope and the Roman Curia (cf. V, 98, §5), and wrote the *Libre de amich e amat* to strengthen hermits in their contemplation and devotion (cf. V, 99, §1-3).

5) Desire to suffer and die for the love of Christ

When young Blaquerna explains to the young Natana his desire to search for the hermit life, he also affirms his willingness to suffer the rigors of life in the desert – hunger, thirst, heat, cold – just like the holy women Catherine, Eulalia and Margaret let themselves be tormented and martyred for the love of Jesus Christ (cf. I, 6, §9). It is precisely the desire to «endure sufferings» for Christ in the hermitage which moves Blaquerna to leave his land in order to find a place where he can fulfill this desire (cf. I, 6, §12). Faced with this enterprise so superior to human forces, Blaquerna affirms his total trust in the Lord's help (cf. I, 6, §10) and firmly believes that his future is in the hand of God, who is his hope and will show him the place where he can fulfill his vocation (cf. I, 7, §7).

The lack of willingness to suffer «some difficulties that are very serious» (II, 19, §7) in religious life was decisive for Nastasia not to enter it when she was young. On the other hand, given the threats she now makes to her daughter Natana, who wants to enter religious life, the latter is ready to resemble «the saints who, for her husband, Jesus Christ, endured many anxieties in this world» (II, 19, §12). Faced with the danger of death, Natana passionately exhorts the nuns to remember the example of Jesus Christ, who wished to die for their redemption and that of the apostles, the martyrs and the other virgins who died to honor Jesus Christ. At such devout and virtuous words, all the nuns resolved to suffer and endure death rather than returning Natana to her mother (cf. II, 20, §8-10).

6) Ordering of the corporal senses

Once elected Abbess through the Art's method, Natana meditated every day on how she could «order the monastery to good habits» (cf. II, 24, §9). It begins with the ordering of the five corporal senses, to which Lull dedicates chapters 25 to 29: «de oír», «De veser», «De odorar», «De gustar», and «De sentir». Through a spiritual strategy of avoiding certain practices and customs, Natana tries to prevent the nuns from remembering and desiring the vanities of this world, which hinder prayer and meditation on the passion of Jesus Christ (cf. II, 25, §2). In addition to avoiding evil, he proposes concrete alternatives to guide the senses so that the hearts of the nuns would exalt themselves to God (cf. II, 26, §4), to come to love the good life of the saints (cf. II, 25, §6), to trust in food for the body no more than in virtues of the soul (cf. II, 28, §4), etc.

7) Spousal dimension of religious life

At the beginning of the first chapter of Book II, during the conversation with her mother Nastasia, Natana explains why she wants to enter religious life instead of getting married. Faced with the proposal to marry the best man in the city, she affirms her desire to marry the best man in the world. It describes the supreme greatness of Jesus Christ who, at the same time, has shown an insuperable humility in his incarnation and redemptive passion. At the conclusion of her argument, Natana expresses her great desire to have Jesus Christ as her husband and asks her mother to grant that wish as soon as possible (cf. II, 19, §1-5). Another explicit reference to this spousal dimension occurs once Natana has been accepted into the monastery and the abbess asks her to be the sacristan, since she likes to contemplate the cross and the altar «which signifies our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our soul's spouse» (II, 21, §2, cf. II, 27, §1). In these passages, Lull clearly enters into the ecclesial tradition that affirms the spousal dimension of religious life, formulated especially in relation to its feminine modality.

8) Great devotion

The profound experience of faith that gives rise to the vocation of Blaquerua and Natana is expressed through their great devotion to God that impacts those who hear their testimony. Blaquerua speaks with great devotion on multiple occasions and moves many people to the point of favoring their conversion of life. This great devotion manifests itself from the day that young Blaquerua says goodbye to his parents and prays on his knees, worshiping God, blessing «our Lady Holy Mary», the angels and saints, and praying to God for his parents: «The way in which he prayed was so devout and so pious that all those who were with him were crying and begged God to give guidance to Blaquerua so that he would have a long life under God's care» (I, 8, §7). Natana also speaks with great devotion and tears when she enters the monastery and her words deeply touch the abbess and other nuns (cf. II, 20, §2). On another occasion, Natana shows great devotion and piety through her words and her tears, which move all the nuns after the burial of the abbess of the monastery (cf. II, 23, §4). When Abbot Blaquerua, overwhelmed by the heavy temporal affairs, goes to visit the friar of the «Full of Grace» chapel, he discovers in him a great devotion and laments himself for not having the same devotion (II, 62, §11).

However, devotion in *Blaquerua* is not limited to a way of praying or speaking, but also acts as a catalyst for the right discernment, coupled with holiness and good sense, to refute bad intentions. This was so clear in the case of the abbot who dismisses the warehouseman's fear,

who had suggested eliminating sciences and art studies, which monk Blaquerna was teaching to the monks (cf. II, 57, §2). On the other hand, devotion is not exclusive to this state of life, since it is revealed through the words of several characters of the *Blaquerna*, from different states of life.

9) The experience of the virtues

A recurring theme in *Blaquerna*, which appears in Book II, directly related to religious life in general and to Abbess Natana in particular, is that of the virtues. Lull uses those virtues that the Catholic tradition calls theological and cardinal virtues (cf. CCC 1809-1823), but he does not classify them as such, at least in this Book II. So, when Natana «enters the order», i.e. when she enters the monastery, she explains her desire to live out the seven virtues that young Blaquerna had «left» her: «Blaquerna m'a lexades .vii. dones son les .vii. virtuts, per les quals hom serveix Deus Jesucrist e per les quals hom va a la sua benauyança e fuyg als .vii. demonis, qui son los .vii. peccats mortals...» (II, 20, §1).

The importance of the virtues in religious life is made evident by the fact that Lull dedicates a chapter to each one of them in Book II: chapter 30 to the 7 virtues in general and faith, 31 to hope, 32 to charity, 33 to justice, 34 to prudence, 35 to strength, and 36 to temperance. In these chapters, the abbess Natana clearly and forcefully instructs the sisters about these virtues and the sins that are opposed to them, based on various circumstances of monastic life. In this sense, it is interesting to see that Blaquerna defines himself as «servant of virtues» (II, 53, §3).

10) Prayer

Once young Blaquerna makes a clear and elaborate explanation of his motives to withdraw from the world in order to contemplate God and to consider God's high virtue, he adds another motivation, intercessory prayer: «on lo pusca pregar per vos e per mon senyer pare Evast» (I, 7, §7).

Naturally, the subject of prayer is essential in religious life as shown in Chapter 40 of this Book II. According to Lull, orderly prayer is the noblest work in religious life, while disorderly prayer is very unpleasant to God. In this chapter, the abbess shows her nuns an elaborate catechesis on various aspects of prayer: its different forms; its foundation in God's great love and works, the need to involve human faculties – memory, intellect, and will – and virtues to contemplate and desire the glory of God and to despise «our sins and this world's vileness» (II, 40, §3); the help of the fire of the Holy Spirit; the importance of praying for the clergy, the princes, all Christians and the infidels; thanksgiving, asking for forgiveness, supplicating the virtues, worshiping the Savior and persevering in these attitudes.

The theme of prayer and contemplation reappears on multiple occasions in this second book, as when Blaquerna is traveling through the forest looking for a place to live as a hermit and finds favorable and unfavorable situations to pray and contemplate God (cf. II, 42, §1-2), or when he feels tempted by the beauty of a maiden and raises his prayer, asking for help from the virtues (cf. II, 51, §1), or when he is very hungry while traveling through the forest and he prays to receive strength and virtue (cf. II, 51, §8). The theme reappears with great relevance, in chapter 55, dedicated to «council», while Blaquerna deliberates whether or not to enter the monastery (cf. II, 55, §3-4).

11) Obedience

The theme of obedience is treated in chapter 39 from the perspective of the will, as a faculty given by God to man and bound to the intellect. Through an elaborate philosophical reasoning, the abbess Natana explains to the nuns that obedience is more consistent with religious life than with life in the world because the will that freely loves to be subject to obedience is «higher to reach merit, charity and justice» than the will that is not under obedience. In order to conclude her teaching, Natana asks each religious to submit her own will to her own intellect, and she wishes and commands that the will of each sister be bound and subject to her will as abbess, and that the abbess's intellect and will be bound and subject in general to the understanding of the nuns. This triple dynamic explains the office of the abbess and the abbot (cf. II, 39, §4).

The theme of obedience in consecrated life is thus treated by Lull in relation to the human faculties of freedom, will, memory and understanding, that is, according to the criteria of the *Ars*, but applied with a factor of evangelical reciprocity, which recognizes the primacy of the authority with respect to the members of the community and at the same time indicates the basic attitude of the authority to exist and to be in function of the good of the community, that is, to serve.

The subject of obedience appears later on several times in Book II, developing different aspects of it. For example, at the end of chapter 53 the abbot exhorts Blaqueria to obey him and all his monks who begged him to stay with them, becoming one of them, to teach them everything he knew. In addition, chapter 54 is expressly dedicated to obedience. In it, Blaqueria responds to a debate on whether there is greater merit in the virtue of obedience in ordinary life than in the hermit life, saying that it is more important for the will to obey the intellect. However, he explains that God wants obedience to faith rather than to imagination, which can mislead the intellect: «Deus vol que hom sia obedient a fe mortificant la ymaginació, qui vol offerre a l'enteniment falsament semblança contra la operació del poder divinal» (II, 54, §8).

In the aforementioned chapter 55, while Blaqueria seeks council among the virtues, as he considers attentively the events he was living and prays assiduously, there emerges an obedience to the will of God that corresponds to the search for the good of others above one's own desires or plans, all of which envisioned by an enlightened intellect. Then, Blaqueria postpones his journey to the hermit life in order to become a monk, hoping that this life will help him to multiply holiness when he can finally embrace the hermit life, convinced that this is the will of God and that at that moment he could serve God in the monastery more than in the hermitage. With his religious profession and the putting on of the habit, he gives himself totally to the Order and to the monastery for the great joy of the monks.

12) Penance

On several occasions, Lull alludes to religious life using simply the expression «to do penance», though he also identifies several of its modalities, from a way of life, to the various practices of corporal mortification, or the elements of conversion from sin to grace. Thus, during the catechesis on prayer in Chapter 40, Natana exhorts the religious to thank God for having freed them from the bondage of the world and for having reunited them in the monastery to do penance (cf. II, 40, §6). In the following chapter, the abbess proposes to the nuns creating a service of spies while she commits herself to do penance and to ask for forgiveness if it is discovered that she has done something against her Order (cf. II, 41, §3).

The centrality of the penitential dimension in religious life is also perceived when Blaquerna is looking for a place to realize her hermit vocation in the forest: «Blaquerna anava molt desirós con pugués atrobar loch cuvinent a fer penitencia» (II, 48, §1). In addition, the whole chapter 52 is dedicated to penance. First, using a narrative example, Blaquerna unmask the false penance of a man who had taken refuge in a convent and then teaches him what penance is in practice and in theory. In front of the monks gathered in chapter, he explains that three things are suitable for penance: contrition of heart, confession by mouth and satisfaction for committed sins. At the end of the same chapter, Blaquerna indicates that doing penance gives glory and praise to God.

13) Spiritual and intellectual formation

In chapter 53, dedicated to the virtue of perseverance, mention is made of the importance of the Word of God in the lives of the monks with whom Blaquerna is living. It is interesting to note that he explained the Scriptures to them even before he was one of them. Through an allegory, the abbot expresses his conviction of the need to feed the soul of the monks through sermons and the Word of God (cf. II, 53, §2).

Chapter 56 touches on an unavoidable subject, considering the character of the novel and, especially, this *Book II*, because the proper intellectual formation of religious is a key element, not only for the life of the monastery, but also for the reform project expressed in the novel by Lull. As soon as Blaquerna enters the Order (cf. II, 55, §5), and following his own exhortations to the religious, the studies in the monastery are ordered, as well as the place and time of study, and the monks are distributed in the various types of studies according to their personal conditions (cf. II, 56, §6). Blaquerna is entrusted with teaching the necessary sciences for the intellectual formation of monks, namely: grammar, logic, philosophy, theology, medicine and law. Blaquerna says that in a year time they could learn the principles and the Art of the four most important general sciences: theology, natural philosophy, medicine and law. And he adds that, with those principles ordered and demonstrated by the Art, students could use sciences according to their needs and apply those principles to other sciences. In his argumentation, Blaquerna affirms to the monks gathered in chapter: «it is convenient for us to have diverse sciences so that we may have the science of theology, which is the fulfillment of all other sciences» (II, 56, §5).

14) Poverty

The explicit theme of poverty related to religious does not appear very frequently in this Book II and, when it appears, it is usually linked to another condition or virtue; neither does it appear in the title of any of its many chapters. However, at the beginning of the book, when the young Natana explains to her mother the intention to enter in religious life, she cites as her inspiration Jesus Christ, to whom piety and love made him humble himself to be poor and go through torment and death so that sinners will attain eternal life (cf. II, 19, §5). On the other hand, in chapter 58, the monastery's abbot and warehouseman take Blaquerna for an outing to rest from his work, and both of them carry many food provisions. Blaquerna reprimands them repeatedly, telling them that these things are contrary to hope, poverty and rough life, while they are proper to (religious) «active life» (cf. II, 58, §1). He adds that a religious man must find pleasure when in his path he is faced with scarcity of some things, because scarcity is a good opportunity for hope, patience, penance, poverty, humility, and it is a good example to those he meets on his way (cf. II, 58, §7). The monk Blaquerna also rebukes very strongly a bishop who

had gone hunting with his nephew and many other people, and then organized a banquet with much squandering and minstrels that offered worldly entertainment (cf. II, 58, §2-3).

On the other hand, the third book of *Blaquerna*, on the prelacy or episcopate, dedicates chapter 69 to the theme «*De pobrea*» (of poverty) and describes the office of poverty assumed by a canon. In addition, the themes of the poor and that of the «poor of Jesu Christ» appear in *Blaquerna's* first (I, 1, §10, 11, I, 4, §1,11, etc.) and third book (III, 69, § 5) with an evangelical and prophetic spirit. However, one cannot ignore the numerous references to corporal mortification and the ideal of humility and austerity embraced by both nuns and monks in Book II of *Blaquerna* (cf. II, 20, §1; II, 28, etc.). The most obvious explanation for the scant mention of poverty in Book II may be that the religious life described in this book follows more the monastic model and not that of the mendicant life, and this shows the diverse emphasis that the two modalities represented in respect to evangelical poverty at Lull's time.

Conclusions

This essay started with some semantic clarifications that allow us to see that Lull uses the terms «estament» and «de religió» in *Blaquerna's* Book II to refer to the state of religious life. He also uses the term «orde de religió» to express the form of life or order proper of the religious. In order to answer the initial question about the characteristic elements of religious life, a brief introduction was made to the work of the Majorcan blessed as a whole and to *Blaquerna* in particular. This introduction has not attempted to take up all the points of view with which Lull's writings have been analyzed, but only to facilitate an adequate understanding of the text in question, from the point of view of spiritual theology.

An analysis has been made of the role played by the monastery of La Real in the spiritual, philosophical and theological formation of Lull, and the influence of the Cistercian model in the description of a monastery in *Blaquerna*. It has been seen that Lull focuses mainly on monastic life when he speaks of religious life in Book II and the probable reasons why this happened. It has become evident that there is a special relationship between the «orde de religió» and the hermit life, and that contemplative life has the primacy over active life. This does not imply that the latter is useless or unnecessary. On the contrary, it has been seen that the mission of announcing the Christian faith is nourished by a deep life of meditation, study and contemplation. It has been seen how important it was for Lull to dare making this announcement to Muslims and Jews, and in what way he proposed it. As some authors have indicated, there are works by the Blessed who express, in doctrinal form, the meaning and purpose of religious life, such as *Ars ad faciendum et ad soluendum quaestiones* and the *Libre d'Intenció*, among many others. *Blaquerna* expresses these contents and others in narrative form, using a great literary creativity as a vehicle to reach an audience that goes beyond the academic readers.

The list of 14 characteristics of the state of religious life that have been identified here does not claim to be definitive or complete, but rather a general approach from the perspective of spiritual theology, which should be deepened and enhanced through other studies. However, these fundamental features allow us to understand how Lull used elements taken from his social and cultural context, to develop a proposal of reform of monastic religious life through the application of his Art and other elements of his philosophical and theological baggage in *Blaquerna's* Book II.

Some of the characteristics attributed to religious life in Book II are also present in other states of life, although with different nuances or modalities. Such is the case of the divine origin of this state of life, the need for human mediation to discover that vocation, great devotion,

doing penance, living the virtues and fighting sin, prayer, poverty, etc. Other elements are more typical of this way of life: withdrawing from the world to devote oneself to contemplation, the desire to suffer and die for the love of Christ, the spousal dimension, etc.

In *Blaquerna*, the foundation of this state of life is found in the estrangement with the world, not as a created reality, but as a reality that has departed from the first intention of the creation of man and woman – to know and love God. The other foundation is the dedication to contemplating God and his virtues, and the Virgin Mary. However, the other elements are also necessary to understand the breadth of areas that Lull considers in his proposal of renewal of Christian life in this state of life – the spiritual and intellectual formation, the great devotion, the desire to share the cross of Christ and the commitment to proclaim the gospel in non-Christian lands and spheres. If divine contemplation is the foundation of religious life in *Blaquerna*, this inexorably leads to the conformation with Christ's humility and love, and to announce – with proper preparation and without vainglory – the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and the Passion of Jesus Christ to non-believers so that they may participate in life everlasting.

We can conclude by saying that in *Blaquerna's* Book II, Lull has shown the path of holiness proper to religious life with many concrete examples and with many theological and philosophical reasonings. At the same time, this path of holiness appears in connection with the paths of holiness from other states of life also represented in this significant novel. The Blessed Majorcan has also demonstrated in his representation of religious life the fruitful tension between contemplative and active life. His proposal clearly illustrates the importance of pairing theology and holiness.

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