

A FEW BASIC PREMISES OF CHIVALRY:

From Ramon Lull's *Book of Knighthood and Chivalry*

"Neither horse, nor amour, nor elections makes a knight worthy. He is part of the three estate system where some work, some pray, and some fight; all to God's will" (20).

"The knowledge of chivalry should be put into books, that the art is known and read in such a manner as other sciences have been read, that the sons of knights learn first the knowledge that pertains to the order of chivalry after they have been squires. They should ride through diverse countries with the knights and there should be no error in the clerks and in the knights under whom they study" (22).

"Knights ought to take coursers to joust and to go to tourneys, hold an open table, to hunt harts, bears, and other wild beasts, for in doing these things the knights exercise themselves to arms and thus maintain the order of knighthood" (30).

"Chivalry is more in accord with courage than in the strength of the body" (33).

"Knights must possess wit and discretion" (34).

"The knight must maintain and defend women, and respect and defend those less powerful than he" (35).

"He must have a good horse and complete harness" (41).

"Of the examination of the squire who will enter the order of chivalry or knighthood: the examiner should be of high repute and should seek to raise knighthood only those who are worthy" (47).

"After his knighting, he ought to ride among the people; the knowledge of his pledge keeps him from evil" (60).

“Lechery and chastity fight against one another, and the arms with which lechery wars on chastity are youth, beauty, heavy drinking, and eating too much meat, bright clothes, bravado, falsehood, treason, injury, and the despising of God and his glory” (85).

“A knight should be courteous, should speak well, and should have good harness and fair horse. Chivalry is not the horse or arms, in the power, but is rather the knight himself, if he is committed to chivalry” (97).

“God has honored the knight. And all the people honor him likewise...” (99).

From Caxton’s epilogue:

“O ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry that was used in those days? What do you now, but to go to the banes and to play at dice? And some not well advised used not honesty and good rules again in the order of knighthood. Leave this, leave this and read the noble volumes of Saint Grail of Lancelot, of Galahad, of Tristram, of Perceforest, of Percival, of Gawain, and so many more. There you will see manhood, courtesy, and gentleness” (103).

From Geoffroi de Charney’s *A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry*

“Deeds of arms in war are the most honorable” (49).

“There is another category of men at arms who when they begin are so naïve that they are unaware of the great honor that they could win through deeds of arms; nevertheless they succeed so well because they put their hearts into winning the love of a lady” (52).

“Men should love secretly, protect, serve, and honor all those ladies and damsels who inspire knights...to undertake worthy deeds that bring them honor” (66).

“A good man at arms should not pamper his body” (68).

“Good men at arms have no fear of discomfort” (69).

“Hence it should be understood that good knights may have to undergo hard trials and adventures, for it can truly be said to them that when they want to sleep, they must keep vigil; when they want to eat, they must fast; when they are thirsty, there is often nothing to drink; and when they would rest, they have to exert themselves all through the night; and when they would be secure from danger, they would be beset by great terrors; and when they would defeat their enemies, sometimes they would be defeated or killed or captured and wounded and struggle in to recover; this is not to speak of the perilous adventures they may encounter on their journeys in search of deeds of arms, such as the danger of crossing sea or river, ...of passing over treacherous places or bridges, of encountering riots or robbers. All these dangers must they endure” (95).