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## REVIEWS



Rafael Beltran Llavador, *Tirant lo Blanc: Evolució i revolta en la novel·la de cavalleries*. València, Institució Alfons el Magnànim, "Col·lecció Politècnica", 12, 1983, 175 pp.

While a careful reading of Joanot Martorell's timeless masterpiece *Tirant lo Blanc* might take the better part of your summer holiday, the secondary literature about the novel can still be absorbed on a long weekend (including the 1966 reprint of J. A. Vaeth's Columbia University thesis from 1918, still useful for its plot outline). That this apparent lack of scholarly interest in what Cervantes declared to be "the best book in the World" is not due to any weakness of the novel in holding even modern readers' interest, can be seen in the great success of David Rosenthal's English translation from 1984. Had *Tirant lo Blanc* (like Chaucer or Chrétien in other, more "normal", countries) been part of the reading list of twentieth-century Spanish universities, many a professor would have accumulated, during his or her teaching career, some special insights and original theories as basis for a monograph. The new situation in higher education in the *Països Catalans* might yet bring such results; it is, however, surprising that the first book-length publications in these "new times" about *Curial e Güelfa* (see above) and *Tirant lo Blanc* are not by seasoned historians of literature but from energetic graduate students rewriting their *tesis de llicenciatura* or *doctorat* (to a certain degree, this scenario might also fit two recent U.S. publications: Antonio Torres, *El realismo del "Tirant lo Blanch" y su influencia en el "Quijote"*, Barcelona, 1979, and Kathleen McNerney, *Tirant lo Blanc Revisited: A Critical Study*, Ann Arbor, 1983). While it is always refreshing to observe the discovery of an old literary masterpiece and its creator by an intelligent modern reader, it is inherently difficult to satisfy the thesis advisor's expectations and a publisher's hopes in one and the same book.

The first two chapters of Beltran's book seem the result of the author having been asked to study and summarize the history of feudalism and to compare *Tirant* with other novels of chivalry. At least to this reviewer, they do not seem to contribute anything to a better understanding of Martorell and his novel. The title of the third chapter, *La revolta del text*, and the list of sources the author claims to follow (p. 87, note 1: Barthes, Bremond, Courtes, Hendricks, Kristeva, Luckács (*sic*), Propp, Todorov, etc.) take on an ominous ring. Fortunately, Beltran does not ape these glittering foreign methods, but follows his own good sense and intuition. His analysis of the

novel's structure is the best part of his book, formulating quite well several convincing insights. The fundamental question, what links the various elements of the novel and makes them all necessary?, is always close to the surface. Beltran concludes that Galba did not change, or add to, Martorell's planned structure.

After this stimulating survey of the novel's constituent parts, which goes beyond a mere plot-outline in a useful way, the last chapter, on the *Sentit final del Tirant*, is, again, quite disappointing. The sweeping generalizations might "épater les bourgeois", but can hardly be claimed to be unprejudiced conclusions from the preceding chapters.

CURT J. WITTLIN  
U. OF SASKATCHEWAN

Anton Espadaler, *Una reina per a Curial*. Edicions dels Quaderns Crema, "Assaig", 3, Barcelona, 1984, 252 pp.

The anonymous fifteenth-century Catalan novel *Curial e Güelfa* can hardly be said to be of difficult access. The 1932 edition can still be found in second-hand bookstores, and the editions in the series "Els Nostres Clàssics" and "Les Millors Obres de la Literatura Catalana" are both in print. Two Spanish translations exist, and in 1982 Pamela Waley published her English version. There might soon be a new edition of the original (by A. Ferrando), an Italian translation and a complete concordance made at the University of Barcelona. However, there is no tradition of regular and concerted publishing of analytic studies of this text and its many aspects. Espadaler's book could be a sign of a younger generation rediscovering their literary heritage and of their desire to reinterpret it in the light of methods and ways of questioning developed outside of Spain during the thirty year hiatus in university-based Catalan studies. That this is done in an overly idiosyncratic style, often falling into a superficial essayistic prose, is, hopefully, not a conscious break with traditional scholarly presentation.

Espadaler sets himself two major goals: to critically summarize four earlier hypotheses about the unknown author of the novel, preparing the ground for his new fifth one, and to determine the place of *Curial e Güelfa* among other contemporary chivalric novels and related texts.

Given his obvious antipathy against King Alfons, who was more inter-



ested in Lucrezia d'Alagno than in the affairs of state of València and Catalonia, one should not expect to find the author among the Magnanimous' courtiers. Even though he is familiar with Naples, he is more attracted by the small marquisate of Monferrato, related to count James of Urgell, the "Disfortunate" pretender to the Aragonese crown, followers of which (like the Cardonas) are favored by the author. He also shows more sympathy for knights of Burgundy (with which the Perellós family had close contacts) than for those from France proper.

Such observations, however, will not lead us to a name for *Curial's* author. Ferrando dared identifying him with Joan Olzina from València, but even though Espadaler's rebuttal of this hypothesis on linguistic grounds has been proven unsound by Germà Colon ("Era valencià l'autor del *Curial*?", *Butlletí de la Soc. Castellonense de Cultura*, 61 (1985), 82-91), there is still no definitive study of the "dialect" of this text. Espadaler's own hypothesis is that *Jacme Perpunter*, whom Curial meets in Tunis, was a real-life textile merchant from Solsona who could very well be the author of the novel. He would have written it in the years 1456 to 1458 as a present for Queen Maria, who would have identified with the Güelfa.

The second part of Espadaler's book asks the right questions, but does not always follow through to conclusions. Determining the precise "genre" *Curial e Güelfa* belongs to, and measuring the degree of influence of (byzantine/moorish) erotic-sentimental novels, of chivalric-didactic literature, of epistolary combats, etc., does not seem, after all, to shed light on the *why* of this literary creation, which could well be of more interest than the *how*. Boccaccio, *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré* and *El Victorial* get a chapter each. Another approach, attempting to circumscribe *Curial's* place in the evolution of socially determined literary and stylistic sensibilities in Catalonia, is limited to a discussion of Chronicles and prosifications, even though this line of questions shows much potential for new insights. Ideas of Duby, Zumthor and Jauss are taken up at various occasions, but not in a systematic way. The question, why an aging merchant (or lawyer, or teacher?) should suddenly feel the urge to write a novel, and succeed in creating a masterpiece, is asked, but not answered. It should at least have been pointed out that this phenomenon actually happened a second time, only a few years later, with some surprising similarities, in Martorell's *Tirant lo Blanc*.

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*Selected Works of Ramon Llull (1232-1316)*. Edited and Translated by Anthony Bonner. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1985, Vol. I, xxix + 646 pp; Vol. II, 1329 pp.

The publication of a scholarly book on such an important subject as Llull by an American University Press, a book translated and edited by an American scholar living in Mallorca, is an important event for all Catalanophiles living and working in the United States, Canada and the English-speaking world. It makes available to the layman as well as the specialist a wealth of Lullian texts otherwise impossible or very hard to find; more important even, Bonner is both an excellent translator and a careful scholar. His previous translations have centered upon Medieval texts: François Villon, the Troubadours. He is perfectly at home in the Catalan language, having written in Catalan a book, *Plantes de les Balears*, published in Palma in 1976. A frequent contributor to *Estudios Lulianos*, his scholarship on the subjects of Llull, Medieval thought, Medieval politics and literature, is impressive. Moreover, he combines erudition and common sense, and always offers a judicious and well balanced approach to the many and complex problems posed by Lullian texts.

In his Preface Bonner explains that he has tried to offer a selection of Llull's writings representative enough so as to give a reasonably accurate picture of the man's system and his place in the history of European thought and literature. This task is a difficult one, for Llull wrote almost three hundred works. "But with Llull there is a core around which his other works gravitate: this is the Art, which he firmly believed God had given him on Mount Randa, in his native Majorca, and upon which his fame in the Renaissance was grounded" ("Preface", xi). Since the Art was conceived as a system around which all other knowledge could be organized, and since it was in fact the backbone of all the rest of Llull's thought, it is naturally the basis for this anthology. The first volume opens with the *Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men*, the main effort by Llull in the field of apologetics — and we should not forget that Llull conceived his Art as a tool to convince and convert the infidels and make better Christians those who already knew Christ's doctrine. Being a popularization of the Art, it helps the modern reader to understand what follows, the *Ars demonstrativa* and the *Ars brevis*, the two phases of the development of the Art. They are followed (vol. II) by the *Principles of Medicine* to show the reciprocal relationship between the Arts and science, and, perhaps to reward the reader for



the hard work that these pages demand, by the splendid *Felix* with its vast fresco of Medieval life and attitudes, especially its Book VII, often edited as a separate work, the *Book of the Beasts* with its fables and anecdotes, a Machiavellian (avant la lettre) book of fables that reminds us of the *Roman de Renart*, the *Arabian Nights*, and *Pantchatantra*.

Since Llull was also the first of the great Spanish mystics, Bonner closes his anthology with the *Flowers of Love*, poetic brief statements full of wonder and mystery.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of Bonner's scholarship can be found in the section "Historical Background and Life". He uses the Latin text instead of the Catalan version of Llull's autobiography as being older and more complete and fills the lacunae with his own narrative in a most satisfactory way. Bonner solves several puzzles and gives a clear overview of Llull's life and times. His introductions to the *Ars Demonstrativa* and the *Ars Brevis* are models of precision and brevity. Llull's thought is analogical, and although not in the mainstream of the development of modern logic it offers many original insights that can even help us understand how certain computers work. The sections on "Llull's Thought" (I, 53-70) and "Llull's Influence: The History of Lullism" (I, 71-92) are also excellent. I would like to add that the two volumes are impeccably printed (and I have detected no misprints) and beautifully illustrated. To sum up, Anthony Bonner and the Princeton University Press must be congratulated for having produced such an impressive, scholarly, useful book. I can think of no better introduction of Llull's works to an English-speaking audience, more erudite and better balanced than the pioneering translations of E. Allison Peers half a century ago, and I do not hesitate to state that this anthology will become a landmark in Lullian and Medieval studies for many years to come. The only shortcoming I can think of is that (at least in my opinion) the anthology would have been more complete if *Blanquerna* and the *Llibre de l'orde de Cavalleria* had been included. Perhaps a third volume could be added later on to this already impressive anthology.

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Philip D. Rasico, *Estudis sobre la fonologia del català preliterari*. Barcelona, Curial, Edicions Catalanes, i Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, "Textos i Estudis de Cultura Catalana", 2, 1982. 247 pp.

Few studies of pre-literary Catalan have been done to date. Joan Bastardas' "El català pre-literari" was presented at the Fourth International Colloquium on Catalan Language and Literature and was subsequently published in its *Actas* (1977). In it he expresses the need for a definitive study of the subject, as also have Antoni Badia i Margarit, Anscari Mundó and Joan Coromines. Prof. Rasico's work represents that definitive study called for. In it he studies in depth the thirteen most important and representative phonological transformations most distinctive of Catalan of the pre-literary period. This period is defined as extending from the beginning of the ninth century until the last quarter of the thirteenth, when we have the *Vides de Santz Rosselloneses* and the first writings of Ramon Llull. Many of the documents cited by Prof. Rasico remain unpublished, housed mainly at the Archives of the Crown of Aragon in Barcelona.

The book is prefaced by a twelve page prologue written by the eminent Canadian *catalanista* Joseph Gulsoy, who also has published several studies on Catalan phonology. In it he presents an overview of phonological studies on Catalan done to date and the special importance of this one of Prof. Rasico. He concludes the chapter with his own complementary study of the consonant and vowel components of Catalan as they existed before the loss of unstressed vowels, which Gulsoy believes to have occurred in the ninth century.

The *Introducció*, by Prof. Rasico, sets forth the parameters of his study, its methodology and its documentation. He also presents a brief historical synopsis of the state of the Catalan language in the early Middle Ages.

Chapter II of the book treats the vocalic changes observed in pre-literary Catalan. They are seven in number: 1) V. L. /é/ – W. Cat. /ó/; 2) evolution of Ě, Ů (stressed) before yod; 3) monophthongization of ÁI, ÉI, ÁU; 4) change of CE- to CI-; 5) change of internal postonic A to E; 6) confusion of unaccented vowels /a/, /e/; and /o/, /u/; 7) apocope of the final vowel.

Chapter III deals with consonant changes, of which six are described: 1) the pre-literary descendents of B, V, –F– and –P–; 2) the development of /ž/ and /š/; 3) assimilation of the groups nasal/liquid + voiced stops; 4) the

palatization of -LL- and L-; -LY-, -C'L-, -G'L-; 5) evolution of -NN- and -MN-; 6) loss of final -N and -R.

The final chapter consists of a summary of the findings presented and the general conclusions arrived at. Prof. Rasico points out that many of the previous studies on Catalan phonology of the period in question are either inaccurate or grossly inadequate. Another result of the study, according to Rasico, is that it supports the theory of Catalan as a bridge between Ibero-Romance and Gallo-Romance.

There is no Bibliography *per se*, but the copious footnotes cite, in a very complete manner, all previous studies of Catalan phonology. As Prof. Gulsoy pointed out in his prologue to the work, the documentation of the epoch at times is open to a variety of interpretations and not everyone will agree with all of Rasico's findings and conclusions. The forthcoming publication of additional volumes of the *Diccionari etimològic i complementari de la llengua catalana* by Joan Coromines and Joseph Gulsoy should serve to clarify some of these problem areas. Prof. Rasico is to be commended for this definitive study of the sound system of Catalan before its emergence as a written, literary language.

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Francesc Roca, *Un viatge útil. De l'auge de 1945/1973 a la "crisi"*. Barcelona, Edicions 62, "L'Escorpi", 1985, 154 pp.

If economics is, as has often been claimed, "the dismal science", then it is useful to find economists who can write clearly and are exciting to read. Francesc Roca is one of these economists. In this slim book he traces the development of what he calls the Long Prosperity (1945-1973) and the "crisis" (1974 to the present). He tries to sort out the main mechanisms that made this first period of prosperity possible and then points out some of the causes of the present relative economic crisis, more a recession than a full-blown crisis. His references to Catalonia and Catalan economics make this book especially interesting to all Catalanophiles. Roca points out that the growth of the GNP in Catalonia from 1960 and 1973 was 8.4 per cent average each year, while from 1973 and 1979 the rate of growth had slowed down to 2.6 per cent per year. This means that during the first period the

Catalan economy grew faster than that of any country of Western Europe, although the increase in prices was also higher than in these countries. An imbalance between the growth of the GNP and inflation developed finally and given the fact that the Catalan economy had become almost fully integrated to that of the industrial world the second period would witness the slowing down of the GNP not only in Western Europe in general, and in the Third World more dramatically, but also in Catalonia. The "bottom line" is still one of growing prosperity. In order to understand the modern economical world Roca points out that the mechanisms described by classical economists related to Adam Smith and *laissez-faire* broke down a long time ago and the only safe guide into modern times is John Maynard Keynes, but adds that Keynes cannot be fully understood without Marx and other theoreticians that point out the instability of the Classical economic system, from Sismondi to Natalie Moszkowska.

As is often the case, Roca is more convincing when describing the actual evolution of economic systems than when pinpointing the theoretical and historical causes for such evolution. Roca, for instance, does not mention the five-fold increase in oil prices in 1973 as a factor in the slowing down of the world economy. Many economists will disagree with him on this point. Moreover, his expectations about the rapid industrialization of the Third World and the end of hunger worldwide seem too optimistic given the recent famine in Ethiopia and other African countries. Nevertheless, *Un viatge útil* is an intelligent and well organized panorama of Catalan economic accomplishments and shortcomings within the framework of the world economic systems. A few neo-Marxist overtones do not detract from the general tone, pragmatic and down-to-earth, of Roca's overview.

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