
REVIEWS

ARCHER, Robert, 2011. *La cuestión odiosa. La mujer en la literatura hispánica tardomedieval*, Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim.

Published in 2011, six years after the English version, the volume reviewed here provides a totalizing perspective of the late medieval Hispanic texts that tried to address the issue of gender identity. The research career of Robert Archer, an expert in the medieval literature of the Iberian Peninsula and an authority on the work of the Valencian poet Ausiàs March, allows us to understand this volume as a logic contribution after almost fifteen years of research on this particular topic. A topic that, during the last decades, has been enriched by interesting reflections from different fields, and which involves, besides gender studies, several analyses centred on sermon literature (Goldberg), sentimental romance (Cortijo, Rohland, Weissberger) and brief literature (Lacarra), among others.

The book consists of an introduction and six chapters, followed by the conclusions and a section including specialized bibliographic references. The introduction presents the methodological approach of the study. Other types of literature, such as lyric poetry, Castilian epics and hagiographical texts are deliberately left aside, since the author considers that each one of them deserves a separate study.

The first chapter is devoted to didactic literature, and analyses texts whose main purpose was to ready women for their immediate social reality: marriage. Hence, we find here works as the *Libre de les dones* of Eiximenis, the *Jardín de las nobles doncellas* of Fray Martín de Córdoba, the Romance translations of the *De institutione feminae christianae* of Lluís Vives, the sermons of Saint Vincent Ferrer and three other opuscula containing advice for marriageable daughters.

The following chapter delves into the text of the *Corbacho* or *Arcipreste de Talavera*, of Alfonso Martínez de Toledo. Archer relates this work to the aforementioned treatise by Eiximenis and to the *De amore* of Andreas Capellanus.

The third section explores the humorous and satirical tone displayed by some of these works focusing on *Lo somni* of Bernat Metge and Jaume Roig's *Spill*. In that regard, the author shows that extreme misogynistic stances as the one Roig assumes, resorted to humour in order to show feminine mischief, which has created the impression, wrong according to Archer, that their misogynistic discourse was not actually serious.

The texts with profeminine content are analysed in the fourth chapter, which goes through the most relevant works that defended women. Next to brief texts we find here major profeminine Hispanic works: the *Triunfo de las donas* of Juan Rodríguez de Padrón, the *Tratado en defensa de las virtuosas mujeres* of Diego de Valera and the *Libro de las virtuosas e claras mugeres* of Álvaro de Luna. Archer dismisses the thesis that these works were written as a mere reaction to the *Arcipreste de Talavera* or that Queen Isabel the Catholic had anything to do with their promotion, interpreting them rather in the framework of another ‘debate’, following Julian Weiss in this: the right of lay aristocracy to write about topics generally reserved for the clergy. The chapter ends with the study of two more texts: the *Triunfo de les dones* by Joan Roís de Corella and the *Cárcel de amor* of Diego de San Pedro.

The analysis of Pere Torroella’s *Maldezir de mugeres* provides a turning point for Archer’s book, since this poem reached such a success that Archer deems it central to the posterior development of this kind of literature. The work ends with the analysis of the texts stemming from the works of Torroella, among which we point out the anonymous sentimental romance *Triste deleytación* or *Grisel y Mirabella* by Juan de Flores, where Torroella himself becomes a character.

The conclusions Archer draws in this volume highlight the intertextuality between the works he presents, although, according to the author, a literary dialogue between them cannot be ascertained. It is therefore that he does not find suitable to talk about a pro- and antifeminine ‘debate’ in the Hispanic domain. The exhaustive analysis of these sources also enables a relativization of the assessment of these texts against the pro- and antifeminine labels (‘only misogynistic since they do not defend women and vice versa’), revealing a variety of intentions among the authors and a diversity of concepts and usages as to what each one understood as feminine or masculine. However, several common features can be perceived, since all of them share a certain anxiety regarding the contradictory perspective bequeathed to them by the authorities on the subject. Archer demonstrates that the Eve/Ave dichotomy was not a mere literary topic for ludic or moralizing purposes, but concealed the true problem of definition of gender identity, masculine as well as feminine, which, in many cases the authors left unsolved.

The book is exhaustive and careful in its analysis and contextualization of works and authors. It is also brave in its attempt to pierce a conceptually complex reality, and innovative since it offers a global perspective of these literary texts, escaping the standard classification even in the way the volume is presented.

The relationship between the shaping of gender and the contradictions of the biblical and patristic legacy regarding woman, are still today a subject of research and reflection within and outside

the scholarly sphere, and volumes such as the one authored by Robert Archer help us reveal misogynistic discourses that, although weak in their foundations, unfortunately still live on.

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CIFUENTES I COMAMALA, Lluís i CÓRDOBA DE LA LLAVE, Ricardo, 2011. *Tintorería y medicina en la Valencia del siglo XV. El manual de Joanot Valero*, Barcelona: CSIC.

By the end of the fifteenth century, an Aragonese dyer named Joanot Valero, who worked in the dyer's workshop of Sant Mori in the city of Valencia, decided to copy in Catalan and Aragonese a set of recipes that had fallen into his hands. The material he had gathered dealt with different aspects of his job, that is, instructions to dye and remove stains, but also to cure the diseases and ailments caused by the practice of dyeing. This is how the sum of two subjects as seemingly contradictory as those appearing in the title of this book can be understood: dyeing and medicine. The unique manuscript has been preserved merely by accident in a microfilm copy at the Biblioteca de Catalunya. It is but one of the many manuscripts from whose existence we know of, but which are, unfortunately, in an unknown location.

The mere account this preamble provides raises many interesting questions for any historian. Why did Valero, a craftsman like many others in the medieval Valencia, decided to make this copy? Could a craftsman of that time read and write texts of some technical difficulty? How frequent was that? Was it common for artisans to gather texts containing technological knowledge? How many extant similar texts are there?

Two historians with a well-recognized career, although devoted to different research subjects, have met not only to offer a careful edition of the text, but also to raise a series of considerations, concerns and debates for those interested in the aforementioned topics. As a matter of fact, Lluís Cifuentes is a historian of medicine at the University of Barcelona, who has distinguished himself by his editions and studies on medieval scientific and medical texts in the Catalan domain, whereas Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave, is a professor at the University of Córdoba, who has specialized in the study of the industrial processes and technology used in the medieval period. Suffice it to say that this book precisely appears when the same publisher has devoted the last issue of the *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* to the importance of technology during the Middle Ages. The complementarity is both suggestive and recommendable.

The book is divided in three main sections. The first is a complete introductory study in which we can biographically locate the figure of Valero together with the industrial, cultural and, in conclusion,

the production context of the text at hand. A detailed analysis of the content and its contextualization within the framework of Western Europe can also be found here, regarding both the technical perspective of dyeing and occupational medicine. The second section deals with the careful edition of the manual, together with its Spanish translation, which is rather infrequent. However, for the sake of its understanding and accessibility to a broader audience, the Spanish version appears next to the edition of the original text. Finally, the third section is composed of a series of complementary resources which are very helpful both for specialists and interested readers: a technical vocabulary, an index of technical terms, anthroponyms, toponyms and cited works as well as a table index; an extensive bibliography and several facsimiles of the work end the volume.

The result is, altogether, superb, since it offers the chance to approach a kind of literature that is highly interesting for the understanding of the circulation of knowledge and craft techniques in the Late Middle Ages. Precisely one of the most suggestive proposals of the authors is that the circulation of written works for craftsmen must have been very intense. The main problem is the preservation of the manuscripts. This means that the level of literacy of many people was higher than we often think. The account books and libraries already denote these skills in the early fourteenth century. They were indeed fairly common in all kinds of artisan workshops but also among other trades such as those related to law practice (attorneys and notaries), and health care, such as pharmacists, barber-surgeons or veterinary surgeons, all trained outside universities. The obstacle of Latin was solved with an early translation of texts into the vernacular. It was in this way that knowledge pervaded a society that was eager to get the best out of it. Municipal schools, present everywhere, provided for the training of many of these people. Others could learn from the masters who employed them as apprentices. In particular, texts such as the one Valero copied were conceived as a support for daily practice. Thus, the authors suggest that Valero copied a technical manual that was essential for his training, and which was provided to him by his master. The sophistication and complexity of the recipes included, made impossible a mere oral transmission in this and many other crafts. But there is even more, because the manual becomes a medical self-help book, a kind of books, which were traditional at the time but misjudged and little considered by historiography, as is the case of the *Tresor de pobres* that Cifuentes vindicates. In truth, these booklets were humble, small, made of paper and simply bound. Hence it is understandable that their preservation is so unlikely.

Ricardo Córdoba and Lluís Cifuentes offer, therefore, the possibility to contemplate many aspects concerning the practices of craftsmen in general and, in particular, the world of dyers; but also the world of health care and illness, medicine in conclusion, and its major importance for the men and women of the Late Middle Ages.

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CURIAL, 2011. *Curial e Güelfa*. L. Badia, J. Torró (eds.), Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 755 p.

The new critical edition of the *Curial e Güelfa* by Lola Badia and Jaume Torró, has the merit of introducing the novel to a general public while being an invaluable resource for scholars of 15th century literature. The way in which the information is structured favours didactic explanation and facilitates data retrieval.

The volume is headed by an introduction that goes through the existing literature, especially regarding the most controversial issues, such as the analysis of the linguistic aspects, the dating of the text (which Badia and Torró place in the second half of the decade of the 1440s) and the authorship, a topic in which a brief state of the art is offered without taking sides for any of the hypotheses relating the author and a specific geographic origin. Actually, Badia and Torró maintain that the author used a language model free from localisms that they call «vulgar il·lustre» ('distinguished vulgar') following the lead of Dantean terminology, which complicates the identification of dialectal features. They mention in that regard the existence of lexical cognates between solutions coming from different dialects, such as «arribar» and «plegar» ('to arrive').

Although the name of the author is unknown to us, we can approach him from the characterization of the fictional character of Melcior de Pando, who plays the role of chronicler of the feats of Curial. Moreover, the sources of the novel are a useful tool in order to reconstruct the culture of the anonymous author, who was well acquainted with troubadour literature through the Italian tradition, as well as with chronicles, the Matter of Britain, the classics and the literature of Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch, which together with the works of other medieval authors (Rodríguez del Padrón, Enric de Villena), became a way of reception of the texts of Ovid, Virgil, Statius, Lucan and Seneca, all of them apparent throughout the work. Badia and Torró devote an extensive section of the introduction to expound on the influences on the novel, among which stands out the *Filocolo* by Boccaccio. This work enables the explanation, among other aspects, of the function of dreams (with the episode at the temple of Apollo) and the «poètiques ficcions» ('poetic fictions') in the *Curial e Güelfa*, which had been questioned by the critics.

The analysis of the trial of the main character at Parnassus is precisely one of the key episodes to interpret the conception of literature the text conveys, since it deals with the controversy between poetic truth (embodied here by Homer and later by the Virgilian Dido through the character of Càmar) and historical truth (represented by Dictys and Dares). Everything suggests that the author finds in the moral purpose the justification for a poetic recreation of history, which he formulates theoretically during the episode at Parnassus and applies in his treatment of the character of Càmar, but also in the rest of the story.

After all, the *Curial e Güelfa* is a romance with a clear moral purpose: vindicating honest love (legitimated by the final marriage of the lovers, the same solution put forward by the *Filocolo*) and presenting a virtuous model of the Christian knight. That is, although the story is placed in the 13th century, the distance between the moment of composition of the work and the knight-errantry tales led by Tristan and Lancelot is shown by the overcoming of the moral universe of those characters marked by adultery and fatalism (which opposes the idea of fortune present in the *Curial*). Here we find the recourse to emulation, also used by the author in regard with classical heroes (the story of Dido and Aeneas) and which serves to the purpose of reinforcing the model that *Curial* embodies.

The introduction ends with an account of the criteria followed for the critical edition of the novel. Whereas in the last edition of the novel Ferrando (2007) held to the chapter arrangement of the original, as had done before him Rubió i Lluch (1901) and Miquel i Planas (1932), Badia and Torrò follow, on the whole, the chapter division of Aramon (1930-1933), although they rewrite the titles and number the paragraphs (which becomes indispensable in order to quickly locate the commentaries on the text that appear at the end of the book, which are organized according to paragraphs). The few amendments are collected in the footnote section and the spelling of the words is adapted to their current usage, while maintaining both morphology and lexicon. As regards proper names (to which a subsection of the introduction is devoted), the spelling forms reported by the manuscript are transcribed according to the norm, but the variants are also respected. Thus, Venus Xipriana is called «Cipriana» as well as «Ciprinya», and Conradí, grandson of Emperor Frederick, appears both as «Corral» and «Corralí» in the same passage (Ferrando 2007 solved this kind of issues by means of square brackets and brackets, so that he transcribed «Corral[í]»). In a review published in 2009 Butinyà echoed these solutions). At the end of the volume, Badia and Torrò collect in an index the different spellings of anthroponyms and toponyms provided by the text, together with the normative form and a brief outline of the character or location when suitable.

The edition of the text of the *Curial e Güelfa* is also accompanied by a glossary of the terms currently in disuse that appear in the novel (a good starting point for future linguistic research and a must for the non-specialized reader) and by the aforementioned commentaries on the text, also addressed to both kinds of expected readers. The commentaries take a significant portion of the volume (pp. 533-703) and the clarity of their exposition, their accuracy and detail stand out. They are a rich information source in order to get to know the social, historical and cultural references of the novel. Furthermore, all the literary materials that, to the best of our knowledge, appear in the novel can be easily tracked here.

In conclusion, it is a reference edition rigorously composed and based on a solid knowledge of the novel and the context in which it was written, making it accessible to the general public as well as to scholars.

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MALLORQUÍ GARCÍA, Elvis, 2011. *El Llibre Verd del bisbe de Girona (1362-1371). El delme i l'estructura feudal de la diòcesi de Girona al segle XIV*, Girona: Diputació de Girona. 580 p.

All the researchers that devote ourselves to the medieval centuries (and those immediately after) have at some point faced the tithe. The tithe was in theory collected by the rector of a parish among his parishioners in order to defray his own sustenance expenses. It was in force from the Carolingian period until the nineteenth century and it usually involved a 10% of the production. Yet in practice, things were not always, or everywhere, so clear. There were still many open and obscure issues concerning this payment, central to the understanding of the feudal and post-feudal world. That is why the recent publication of the *Llibre Verd* of the bishop of Girona is so important, and not only due to the transcription of its content, but also and especially because of the introductory study heading it, which answers many questions while raising others. From now on this book will undoubtedly become a reference for medievalists and scholars of the rural world of later periods.

Elvis Mallorquí, a medievalist at the University of Girona, offers an excellent and detailed study and transcription of the manuscript of the *Llibre Verd*, which although not unknown, had not been globally studied or published before. This book, written between 1362 and 1371, as the author shows, was commissioned by the bishop of Girona in order to calculate episcopal incomes with precision. In fact, the bishop ordered Guillem Bernat de Perles, author of the manuscript, to enquire about the value of the tithe of the 419 parishes of the diocese, who were their owners, who and when collected them, that is, if the collectors were ecclesiastics or laymen, and in which way it was distributed, and also if there were any other fiefs that belonged to the bishop, besides the tithe, in the parishes of Girona. The assignment of the bishop was thus very clear, to get accurate information about everything concerning the tithe in his diocese. I am personally convinced by the hypothesis of E. Mallorquí who proposes that the bishop's real intention was to control tithe transactions, and also obtain economic profit from them. In fact, every time the tithes ended up in the hands of laymen, the bishop was entitled to receive the *lluïisme* (a fee payable to landowners as a result of any transaction within their domains), and in case the tithes were collected by religious he could demand of the cleric the payment of a tax as compensation. Therefore it was necessary to know exactly who and what did these tithes represented: the goal was knowledge as a means of control. Once again, the management of information becomes crucial in the feudal world, and not only due to possible economic benefits.

After this assignment, a survey was conducted by collecting information from more than 500 respondents, which provided an excellent snapshot of the tithe in the bishopric of Girona in 1371. The information compiled in the manuscript was of utmost importance for bishops (therefore it was used until the nineteenth century), but also for historians. For the first time, details related to the tithes that were already known can now be documented. For example, more than half of

the tithe collectors were laymen (mostly knights, rural noblemen, but also citizens from Girona, craftsmen and farmers) and scarcely a 10% of their value was actually received by parish priests, although it is true that the *primícia* (a tax on the harvest which used to be the equivalent to half of the tithe) was mostly collected by them.

Many are the contributions made by the author, besides the transcription of the *Llibre Verd*. Nevertheless I would like to underline a few. As a result of his vast work, for the first time historians can visualize, by means of fine and accurate maps, the medieval borders of the parishes of Girona. Some borders are indeed described as ‘uncertain’, and the author himself considers that ‘it only intends to be a provisional resource’, but what a useful tool! Among other things, the image the *Llibre Verd* depicts is so exact and accurate that it allows us to know that there were units subjected to tithe, which were smaller or larger than the parish, such as lands, farmhouses or neighbourhoods. The conclusion is that the collection of tithes perfectly matched the settlement pattern. And that is another of the contributions of the book: it will become indispensable in order to understand rural settlement and society, and the way in which the society of Girona was structured, as well as the internal organization of ‘medieval Church’.

Tithe collectors were many and varied, laymen and ecclesiastics. For example, in Vilobí d’Onyar, the tithe was divided into 32 parts and there were 8 collectors. The book shows the dense network of vassal dependences structured in accordance with the incumbencies of the tithes of Girona. However, the bishop of the diocese was always at the top. He will appear from this moment on, and more than ever, as the landlord who demands and receives homage whenever suitable. Thus, the bishop is ‘the lord of lords in the territory of Girona’, not only because he controlled the tithes managed by his ecclesiastic subordinates, but also because the laymen who owned tithes were his vassals. The study of the information compiled in the *Llibre Verd* also allows the author to contemplate new and stimulating hypotheses concerning the feudalization process of the Old Catalonia.

The *Llibre Verd* obviously provides information concerning the production in the bishopric of Girona, which is key to the better understanding of the medieval rural world, and additionally, Mallorquí has captured this information on maps, which offer a splendid vision of what and where was produced within the diocese. That also applies to livestock and fish production, which were rather unknown, and to craft activities. On the basis of the information provided by the manuscript, the author calculates which was the real value of tithes, and suggests that between 1362 and 1371 the tithes of the diocese of Girona amounted to 21.360’32 *lliures* per year. Since this rather high figure does not include minor tithes or *primícies*, we must then assume it was the basic component of feudal incomes and seigniorial economy. Moreover, as Mallorquí claims, the *Llibre Verd* provides a valuable indication of the wealth of the parishes of Girona, which has to be exploited yet.

Finally, we must add that this book should be read together with the doctoral dissertation of the author, also recently published, *Parròquia i societat rural al bisbat de Girona, segles XIII i XIV* (Fundació Noguera, Barcelona 2011). Undoubtedly, both works are part of the same research and complement each other. Thanks to Elvis Mallorquí, our knowledge of the rural world of Girona and the structuring and organizing role parishes played at all levels, has hugely been improved. Due to all the aforementioned reasons his contributions are already essential. Dealing with tithe in any territory, from its genesis until its abolition in the nineteenth century, will not be possible without previously reading this book.

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SOLDANI, Maria Elisa, 2011. *Uomini d'affari e mercanti toscani nella Barcellona del Quattrocento*, Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.

In the last decades, the subject of commercial diasporas has attracted once more the attention of researchers, especially in the Italian sphere, where this research line, now renovated, is related to a long historiographical tradition, especially for the Tuscan area, concerning the study of the economic activities of merchants, including those developed outside their hometown.

Besides the works of Federico Melis on the Datini company –the greatest exponent of economic historiography–, or the pioneering papers by Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol or David Luis Igual and Enrique Crusselles for Valencia, there are no thorough monographic studies about the Tuscan presence in the Crown of Aragon. This was fairly evident in the case of Barcelona, as well as quite paradoxical, especially considering that during the fifteenth century the relationship with the Tuscan commercial world and its presence became a major political and economic issue for the public opinion of the time. The present book intends to fill that gap, in particular, for the period prior to the Catalan Civil War of 1462-1472. It does so getting fully involved in the current historiographical controversy regarding the late medieval commercial world in the Crown of Aragon and the Mediterranean –the late medieval economic crisis or the influence of Alfons the Magnanimous on the creation of a Mediterranean Catalan-Aragonese economic space–.

Throughout the three sections in which she structures her work (‘Modalità d’insediamento e organizzazione professionale’, ‘I rapporti col potere’, ‘I Profili dei mercanti e delle compagnie’) the author, besides looking into the exclusively economic activities of merchants, tries above all to understand those activities, as well as the merchants themselves, within a broad social and political context. Her aim is to identify and understand the factors causing their departure from their place of origin, the features and several modes of migration, their reception into their new

place of settlement, the activities they carried out, the social, political and economic relationships they established with their host location, their individual and collective strategies, their ways of organization, etc.

By means of a detailed analysis and interpretation of data, based mainly on the wealth of the notarial archives of Barcelona but also on that of the royal and municipal chanceries, and in view of the total absence of Tuscan accounting records referring to the area of Barcelona, the author isolates two quite well defined groups as regards the Tuscan presence in the 15th-century Barcelona: the Pisans and the Florentines. Both realities have a lot to do with the political and economic factors that determined their transfer to Barcelona, which in turn also conditioned their reception.

The Pisans, mostly exiled due to the Florentine conquest of their city in 1406 and the turbulent years that followed, mainly experienced a kind of migration that in many cases became permanent. They were naturalized and entered Barcelona's society and its leading elite. They did so because of their economic and financial strength, which allowed them to establish strong ties with power; because of their political and administrative background, resulting from their belonging to the ruling groups in their places of origin, and also by means of political and marriage strategies with local families. On the other hand, the Florentine presence, greater in number, was the result of a different model: the factor or partner of a major financial and trading company that established a subsidiary company or an agent in Barcelona –an important international financial centre–. Those factors only spent in the city a more or less extended time span. Their important economic and technical resources and their positioning towards certain economic sectors, such as finance and luxury goods, enabled them to establish privileged relationships with the leading groups and the centres of political power, indispensable for their success but also for their survival in complex political situations –the war between Florence and Alfons the Magnanimous or the several expulsion orders issued against Italians–. In this context, individual strategies proved much more effective than collective ones. In both cases, the importance of political and social aspects was decisive for their departure from their places of origin, but also for their occupations in their new settlements, a topic often marginalized by a historiography that was mostly focused on econometric and mechanistic aspects.

It is quite impossible to summarize in a brief review all the contributions of this book to current research; the reader will only appreciate them through an attentive, and highly recommendable, reading. It only remains to congratulate ourselves for the release of this book, meant to become an essential reference for those researchers interested in the Catalan-Aragonese and Mediterranean commercial world.

DANIEL DURAN I DUELTA