

CURIAL E GÜELFA, AN ITALIAN-CATALAN ROMANCE FROM THE 15TH CENTURY LACKING ‘ANOMALIES’ AND ‘MYSTERIES’

ABEL SOLER
UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA
SPAIN

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ABSTRACT

The ‘anomalies’ (Jaume Riera, 1991) or ‘mysteries’ (Rosa Navarro, 2011-2016) that have allowed stating the hypothesis of a falsified Curial in the 19th century by Milà i Fontanals do not match with the criteria of palaeographers, philologists and other experts, who certify the authenticity of the only codex and the work it contains. Lola Badia and Jaume Torró prefer to speak about the ‘perplexities’ that a book that does not fit in the literary culture in the Catalonia in the middle of the 15th century has arisen for centuries in the literary criticism. If, alternatively, we search for the origin of the work in the court of Alfonso the Magnanimous in Naples—influenced by the Italian humanism— everything seems more credible.¹

KEYWORDS

Curial e Güelfa, Literary Falsifications, Milà i Fontanals, Chivalric Romance, Alfonso the Magnanimous.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Curial e Güelfa, Falsificationes Litterariae, Milà i Fontanals, Fabula caballeriorum, Alphonsus Magnanimus.

1. Used Abbreviations: ACA, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó; ASN, Archivio di Stato di Napoli; BHUV, Biblioteca Històrica de la Universitat de València; BnF, Bibliothèque nationale de France; CeG, Curial e Güelfa. English translation by Àngel Company Albert.

1. Anomalies, mysteries and perplexities

In the *Curial* edited in 2011 by Lola Badia and Jaume Torró, the editors advised the reader about the singularity of the work and the presumed disturbing effects: *Des del seu adveniment al món de la lletra impresa l'any 1901, el Curial e Güelfa no ha deixat de desvetllar perplexitats*. The criticism *s'ha mogut entre la desorientació i l'entusiasme davant les successives hipòtesis que han pretès desentrellar tants enigmes*; we understand the ones of a work contained in just one manuscript or preparatory copy, lacking a title, signatures or an attributable authorship.² Where Badia and Torró speak about *enigmas*, the philologist and learned person Jaume Riera i Sans—in an article from 1991—listed a series of *anomalies* that brought him to, not just doubt about the authenticity of this work, but also to attribute it hypothetically to Manuel Milà i Fontanals (1818-1884).³ The immediate press turmoil obliged the codicologists and palaeographers to make a speech about the undeniable and empirically stated authenticity of the manuscript, perfectly datable in the decade of 1440.⁴ Not taking into account these certifications (*Alguns experts en paleografia encara hi continuen —pobrets—, assegurant que només es podia escriure entre 1440-1450*),⁵ Riera proposed—without any success nor serious influence, we can say—to dismiss the *Curial* from the canon of Catalan classics. Later individual research and collective approaches (*v. gr.*, the *Estudis lingüístics i culturals* about the work coordinated by Antoni Ferrando)⁶ have helped to discard the supposed anomalies and locate the text in the literary culture of the Italy of the first *Quattrocento*, and with the court in Naples of Alfonso the Magnanimous. This contextualisation follows with foundations the traditional hypothesis of the criticism from the

2. "Since its arrival to the world of the printed letter in 1901, the *Curial e Güelfa* has not stopped revealing perplexities"; "has moved between the disorientation and enthusiasm towards the succeeding hypotheses that have tried to figure out so many enigmas." *Curial e Güelfa*, eds. Lola Badia, Jaume Torró. Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 2011: 9.

3. Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII, XIV i XV", *Actes del novè Col·loqui Internacional de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes (Alacant-Elx, 9-14 de setembre de 1991)*, Rafael Alemany, Antoni Ferrando, Lluís B. Messeguer, eds. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1993: I, 425-491, especially 479-491.

4. See, among others, Mundó, Anscari M. [Manuel Mundó Marcet]. "Les vicissituds de 'Curial e Güelfa'". *Avui*, 19 setembre 1991: 31; Perarnau Espelt, Josep. "El manuscrit medieval del 'Curial e Güelfa'". *Arxiu de textos catalans antics*, 11 (1992): 363-377; Hernández, Carmen; Ruiz de Elvira, Isabel. "Estudio sobre la encuadernación del ms. 9750 de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid: 'Curial e Güelfa'". *Arxiu de textos catalans antics*, 2 (1992): 373-377; Gimeno Blay, Francisco M. "Notes d'un paleògraf a propòsit del 'matritensis' 9750 de la Biblioteca Nacional: 'Curial e Güelfa'". *Caplletra*, 15 (1994): 75-88; Avenoza Vera, Gemma. "De nou sobre el ms. del 'Curial e Güelfa': una aproximació codicològica", *Estudis lingüístics i culturals sobre 'Curial e Güelfa', novel·la cavalleresca anònima del segle XV en llengua catalana*. Antoni Ferrando, ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012: 3-20; Sánchez Hernampérez, Arsenio. "Nuevas observaciones sobre la encuadernación del Ms. 9750, 'Curial e Güelfa', de la Biblioteca Nacional de España", *Estudis lingüístics i culturals sobre 'Curial e Güelfa', novel·la cavalleresca anònima del segle XV en llengua catalana*. Antoni Ferrando, ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012: 105-110.

5. "Some experts in palaeography still continue—poor them—stating that it could only be written from 1440 to 1450." Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 491.

6. Ferrando Francés, Antoni, ed. *Estudis lingüístics i culturals sobre 'Curial e Güelfa', novel·la cavalleresca anònima del segle XV en llengua catalana*. 2 vols. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012.



beginning of 20th century.⁷ Riera i Sans has not insisted in the hypothesis of the falseness but Rosa Navarro has done it, an author who considers the *Curial*—against the most diverse evidences and statements by experts and critics—as a book from the 19th century attributable to Milà. Being right or not, we must acknowledge the interest that the ‘doubts’ stated by these two scholars arise—all of them reasonable and suggestive—to formulate questions and open new research lines around this controversial chivalric romance.

2. Possible answers to the anomalies listed by Riera

2.1 A manuscript with unknown origin

As Jaume Riera states, *mai no s’ha pogut saber d’on procedia el manuscrit únic del Curial*,⁸ as the spine label that formerly identified it was lost, which is a common fact in medieval texts. This fact, regarding the *Curial*, stops being ‘mysterious’ since we know that the binding of the codex can be dated in Toledo, towards the end of the 15th century and it also presents concomitances with other books of the cathedral in Toledo. Some *makulatur* have been extracted, coming from recycled paper of trials from the noble house of the Fuensalida,⁹ a family allied to the king and the Infants of Aragon,¹⁰ and present in the Central-Italian campaign in the years 1446-1448.¹¹ Altogether, this can give cause for new ways of hypothetical interpretation about the—until recent years— unsuspected origin of the manuscript. We should take into account, moreover, the multilingual character of the Valencian and Italian court of the Magnanimous (1416-1458), where the presence of exiled Castilians—many of them bilingual or familiarised with the Catalan language and literature—was abundant and constant.

7. Most of the contribution of this article have further explanation in Soler, Abel. *La cort napolitana d’Alfons el Magnànim: el context de “Curial e Güelfa”*. 3 vols. Valencia-Barcelona: Institució Alfons el Magnànim-Institut d’Estudis Catalans-Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2017.

8. “it has never been possible to know the origin of the only manuscript of the ‘Curial’”. Riera Sans, Jaume. “Falsos dels segles XIII...”: 480.

9. Ferrando Francés, Antoni. “Precaucions metodològiques per a l’estudi lingüístic del ‘Curial e Güelfa’”, *Estudis lingüístics i culturals sobre ‘Curial e Güelfa’, novel·la cavalleresca anònima del segle XV en llengua catalana*. 2 vols. Ferrando Francés, Antoni, ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012: 31-88, especially 39-40.

10. See: Carrillo de Huete, Pedro. *Crónica del Halconero de Juan II*. ed. Juan de Mata, Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1947: 468-469 (chap. 341); Franco, Alfonso. *El condado de Fuensalida en la Baja Edad Media*. Cadis: Universidad de Cádiz, 1994: 68.

11. ASN, Tesorería general antigua, 1/IV, ff. 16r, 43v, 46v and 47r; Croce, Benedetto. *España en la vida italiana del Renacimiento*, transl. José Sánchez Rojas, Madrid: Mundo Latino, 1919: 65.



2.2. Castilian words and Castilian spelling

Riera considers *a very strange thing* the presence in the *Curial* of some words (*pennora, sennora*) *escrits a la manera castellana i té els reclams dels dos primers plec en castellà* (Quaderno primero, Segundo), *escrits de la mateixa mà que tot el text*. According to him, *la presència de trets gràfics i mots castellans en un còdex de lletra catalana* would be an unusual fact in the 15th century in Catalonia.¹² Moreover, it is commonly known that the scribes of chancery were used to change in handwriting texts in Latin, Castilian and Catalan, not finding as strange some eventual orthographic interference. On the other hand, the ‘way from Toledo’ of research opened by codicologists, apart from the presence of Castilian and bilingual readers in the court of Alfonso —starting with the monarch himself, who spoke Castilian—, make it explainable the marginal notes or the indications in the bookbinder in Castilian. Having discarded, therefore, the strangeness, it is worth advising that the marginal claims and a curious margin note *corrige* (which remained unnoticed to Riera) does not belong to the same hand that the body of the textual transcription. As it seems, they were added afterwards by someone who attributed himself legal authority on the manuscript and the work. This “someone” addressed in Castilian to a scrivener who, thanks to some linguistic clues (*rodas, tengas, reebas...*), could be Aragonese.¹³

2.3 A ‘modern’ punctuation

Ramon Aramon, who edited the *Curial* between 1930 and 1933, was very surprised of having found in the syntactic structure of the literary discourse in *Curial, una puntuación muy lógica, que facilita en gran manera su lectura*. Riera interprets that *es tracta d’una puntuació moderna*, and states that in the texts from the 15th century the writers *assenyalen les clàusules de dicció, però ignoren les comes*.¹⁴ He puts the example —among others— of the following sentence: *E axí ells[,] apartats Apol-lo[,] presos alguns rams dels arbres a ell consagrats[,] lo cap del dit Curial cenyí...*¹⁵ As it can be observed, what stands out is not any modernity, but simply a preference for the ablative absolute (*caught, detached*, as the nucleus of their respective complements, foregrounded to the beginning of the sentence) typical of an author who used to read Julius Caesar: another interesting clue to identify him. He acknowledges it

12. “a very strange thing”; “(*pennora, sennora*) written in the Castilian way and it has complaints of the two first sheets in Castilian (*Quaderno primero, Segundo*), handwritten in the same way as the rest of the text”; “the presence of graphical traits and Castilian words in a codex in Catalan spelling”. Riera Sans, Jaume. “Falsos dels segles XIII...”: 480.

13. The hypothesis of the Aragonese copist was used by Perarnau (1992) and developed by Ferrando, Antoni. “Introducció”, *Curial e Güelfa*, Antoni Ferrando ed. Toulouse: Anacharsis, 2007: 5-35, especially 8.

14. “A very logical punctuation, which favours its reading very much.”; “it is a modern punctuation”; “they point out the speaking clauses, but they ignore the commas.”

15. “And thus they[,] having moved Apol-lo away[,] having taken some bunches from the trees consecrated to him[,] wrapped the head of the mentioned Curial...”



himself (*Legit he en Tito Lívio la victòria..., e noresmenys la de Júlio e Pompeyo...*,¹⁶ CeG III.91), and Jaume Torró and Lola Badia note it.¹⁷

Another thing is the consideration that we could make about the commas as slash (/) that the writer uses to mark the *reciting* clauses as in the Italian way, because the *Curial* was a literary work written and thought to be recited: *E per ço us vull recitar...* (CeG I.0); *Qui totes les coses de la tristor dels dos amants volgués recitar..., volent scriure a vostra consolació e plaer, recitaré*¹⁸ (CeG I.14). The first one who used the slash (/) to set out the rules and provide rhythm to the text was Boncompagno da Signa, in his treaty about writing letters *Palma* (1198).¹⁹ In the 14th century was used by Petrarca and Boccaccio, and in the Italian 15th century its use was widespread. The Lombard grammarian Gasparino Barzizza, whose son—the humanist Guiniforte Barzizza—was strongly linked to the king of Aragon and his curia in the years 1432-1448, suggested in his *Doctrina punctandi* the use of this paragraphematic sign (/),²⁰ which with the arrival of the press would be transformed into the modern typographic sign of the comma (,).²¹ Some works by Gasparino were sent to Gaeta by his son in 1440, and would probably have an influence in the use that some scribes in the royal chancery made of this slash (/), generally to divide the different parts in a certificate. Leonardo Bruni (d. 1444) clamoured to the king Alfonso because his scribes and writers ignored these punctuation signs. Some years later, Filelfo was proud because some subjects of that king—praiseworthy exceptions—were used to punctuate their writings.²²

After all, this punctuation could not be unknown, not for the author of the *Curial* nor the transcription scribe of the *Matritensis* 9750. The singularity that the anonymous novel presents is that the author uses systematically this comma or pause sign to provide the rhetoric rhythm for reading it.²³ If the different editors of this work had paid attention to such an evident detail like this one of the *interpunctio* or *punteggiatura* in the Italian way, they would have—perhaps—punctuated some fragments of the text in a more appropriate way. And, certainly, some sterile

16. "I've read in Titus Livius the victory..., and furthermore the ones by Julius and Pompey...".

17. *Curial e Güelfa*, eds. Lola Badia, Jaume Torró...: 694-695.

18. "And for this reason I want to recite you..."; "The one who wanted to recite everything about the sorrow of these two lovers..., willing to write to your consolation and pleasure, I will recite".

19. Pini, Virgilio. "Buoncompagno da Signa", *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Treccani, 12 October 2016, <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/boncompagno-da-signa_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/boncompagno-da-signa_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>).

20. Tognelli, Jole. *Introduzione all'ars punctandi*. Rome: Edizioni del Ateneo, 1963; 19; Cignetti, Luca. "La [pro]posizione parenetica: criteri di riconoscimento e proprietà retorico-testuali". *Studi di grammatica italiana*, 20 (2001): 69-125, especially 74.

21. According to: Trovato, Paolo. *Storia della lingua italiana. Il primo Cinquecento*. Padua: Libreria Universitaria, 2012: 80 (first edition: Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994); the editions of Dante and Petrarch by Bembo from the years 1501-1502 were relevant for the suppression of medieval slash for the modern orthographic comma.

22. Mateu Ibars, Josefina; Mateu Ibars, M^a. Dolores. *Colectánea paleográfica de la Corona de Aragón (siglos IX-XVIII)*. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 1980: I, 128.

23. As the copist who transcribed the works of Roís de Corella will do a century after in the *Cançoner de Mayans*.



discussions would have been avoided about which was the “homeland” of the Curial (*aquest llombart*, “this Lombard”, the writer says explicitly, *CeG* III.82), based on the position of a comma that the author puts, in fact, to avoid misunderstandings: *Fonch ja ha lonch temps / segons yo he legit >en Cathalunya< / un gentil hom [blank space] appellat...*²⁴ As Riquer already warned: we must bear in mind the idea that the author, who probably recited in Naples, remembers (or pretends remembering, according to a perverse medieval literary *topos*) that he had read the events of Curial the Lombard in a faraway Catalonia.

2.4 The Valencian Lexicon: Is It Another Anomaly...?

Having already checked some codicological, orthographical and palaeographical topics, Riera finds a *linguistic anomaly* in the fact that *Curial* presents —different from the literary texts from that time²⁵— evident Valencian lexical preferences.²⁶ Riera considers it, moreover, as an *engany de base* (“trick from the beginning”), for understanding that the work could be false and from the 19th century. He does not specify, in fact, what is the “trick” he refers to. Did Milà i Fontanals —the possible forger— fake he was an author from the Valencian golden age? Was he advised by some friend from Valencia, those that looked for *culleretes*, *raboses* and *oronelles* in the *séquies* of the *alqueries*, and marked the pitchers with *almànguena*...? Logically, the supposition of the trick is hard to admit, but not the warning about the fact that the *Valencianisms*²⁷ constitute another idiolect component more in a text with a culturally hybrid language, not exempt from several words from Castilian, Italian, French, archaisms and neologisms, altogether.²⁸ If that is the case, we will have to think —consequently— as Curt Wittlin does, in *a well-travelled novelist from the kingdom of Valencia, who had reasons to remain anonymous*.²⁹ In the learning and “travelling” journey of this author, a journey that necessarily goes through Valencia, he finds undoubtedly the cornerstone for a right cultural contextualisation and literary interpretation of *Curial e Güelfa*.

24. “It was a long time ago / according to what I have read >in Catalonia< / there was a gentle man [blank space] called...” (*CeG* I.1).

25. *No hi ha cap escriptor principatí del segle XV que presente les característiques lèxiques del Curial, ni cap escriptor valencià coetani que concentre en la seua obra un nombre de preferències lèxiques valencianes tan elevat com l'autor del Curial*, (“There is no writer in Catalonia in the 15th century that presents the lexical characteristics of *Curial*, nor any contemporary Valencian writer who concentrates in his work a number of Valencian lexical preferences as high as the author of *Curial*”), according to Ferrando Francés, Antoni. “Precaucions metodològiques...”: 81.

26. See, among others, Veny, Joan. “Valencianitat del ‘Curial’”, *Estudis lingüístics...*: 1089-1106, especially 1090.

27. Typical lexical words used in Valencian region (Translator’s Note).

28. Riera Sans, Jaume. “Falsos dels segles XIII...”: 481.

29. Wittlin, Curt. “Ressenya a Wheeler, Max W. (transl.) (2011), ‘Curial and Guelfa. A classic of the Crown of Aragon’. Translated into English by Max W. Wheeler. Amsterdam: John Benjamins (IVITRA Research in Linguistics and Literature, vol. 2)”. *Estudis Romànics*, 36 (2014): 614-617, especially 617.



To the anomalous valencianity of the *Curial*, Riera also added the anomaly of some neologisms. He put the example of the adjective *glomerós* (“swarming”), which appears in three occasions in the work and *no té paral·lel en cap llengua veïna*, a circumstance that *indica, ben clarament, que estem en presència d’una fictícia producció moderna*.³⁰ Not necessarily: it is a word taken from the original and Latin version of the *Historia destructionis Troyae* by the Italian Guido delle Colonne, which was the version that the anonymous writer consulted, instead of the Catalan version by Jaume Conesa.³¹ Where Guido writes *fuge subsidium*, the writer of the chivalric romance copies [*donar-se a*] *subsidi de fuyta* (“to find a way of escape”). And there Guido writes *in glomerosa multitudine pugnatorum* (original sentence, practically a hapax of his own and in the *Curial*),³² the author in question—and who cannot be Manuel Milà i Fontanals—applies it to combat situations against the new *teucris* of the humanists, the ‘Trojans’ of the 15th century in Italy,³³ of the kind: *desquaernen aquella multitud glomerosa dels turchs* (CeG III.91).³⁴ Conesa (*Històries troyanes*, 1367-1372) preferred to translate it for *ab gran multitud de combatents*;³⁵ the Castilian translator Pedro de Chinchilla (*Libro de la Historia Troyana*, 1443) preferred the alternative formula *con muy grand compañía de gente de armas*.³⁶

2.5 Horace and the literary culture of the anonymous author

Riera speaks ironically about the classical sources that the author of the *Curial* expresses to be aware of: *Fa tan bonic de tenir una menció d’Horaci a la nostra literatura, en una època que les altres pràcticament el desconeixien!*³⁷ In fact, the mention by *Curial* (*Cert és a mi que vosaltres fes companyia a Homero, Virgílio, Oràcio, Ovídio e a Lucano e a molts altres...*,³⁸ CeG III.28) depends directly on Dante (*Inf.* IV, 88-90): *quelli è Omero*

30. “has no comparison with any other neighbouring language”; “indicates—clearly—that we are facing a modern fictional production.”

31. Martines, Josep. “Aproximació a les novetats lèxiques i semàntiques del ‘Curial e Güelfa’”, *Estudis lingüístics...*: 941-998, especially 990.

32. “through a swarming multitude of fighters”. Delle Colonne, Guido. *Historia destructionis Troiae*. ed. Nathaniel Edward Griffin, Cambridge (Mass.): Medieval Academy of America, 1936: 169.

33. See Bisaha, Nancy. “The New Barbarian: Redefining the Turks in classical terms”, *Creating East and West. Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004: 43-93.

34. “they disorganize that swarming multitude of Turks”.

35. “with a great multitude of fighters”. Delle Colonne, Guido. *Les Històries troyanes de Guiu de Columpnes; traduïdes al català en el XIV^{en} segle per en Jacme Conesa, y ara per primera volta publicades per R. Miquel y Planas*. Barcelona: Miquel Rius, 1916: 182.

36. “With great company of people with weapons”. Delle Colonne, Guido. *Libro de la Historia Troyana*. transl. Pedro de Chinchilla; ed. M^a. Dolores Peláez Benítez, Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1999: 229.

37. “It is so beautiful to have a mention of Horace in our literatura, in a time where the others virtually didn’t know about him!”. Riera Sans, Jaume. “Falsos dels segles XIII...”: 482.

38. “It is true for me that you are companions of Homer, Virgil, Orace, Ovid and Lucan and many others...”



*poeta sovrano / l'altro è Orazio satiro che vene; / Ovidio è 'l terzo, e l'último Lucano.*³⁹ Let's pay attention, moreover, in the orthographic influence of the Tuscan writer: *Orazio* > *Oràcio*. So, there's no need that the author of the Catalan novel had a direct knowledge of the classic.

2.6 *Curial and Don Quixote de la Mancha, before the lions*

It is true that the *Curial* displays some element in the plot—as an anecdote—in common with *Don Quixote*. Riera attributes it to a plagiarism of Cervantes by Milà i Fontanals suffering the 'Erasmus syndrome'. He quotes an essay by Manuel Montoliu⁴⁰ to compare *l'aventura de l'hidalgo manchego en la segona part del Quijote*⁴¹ with the fight of *Curial* with the lions in the 'farmyard' of the king of Tunisia in the book III of the novel. Both authors, Cervantes and—much more directly—the anonymous writer we are looking for, got inspiration from a medieval Castilian chronicle, as Anna Cortadellas⁴² explains. This Castilian chronicle also attracted attention to Beuter (Valencia, 1551): *Era valiente cavallero este infante don Henrrique (...). Le llamó el rey [of Tunisia] en un corral (...) Y salióse del corral (...) abriendo una otra de una estancia do había dos bravos leones...*⁴³ The coincidences of this text with the *Curial* are eloquent, but Beuter wrote after the anonymous writer and some decades before *Don Quixote*.

2.7 *Is the Curial a modern novel? A disconcerting literary genre*

Jaume Riera stated his "disconcert" in the verification that the *Curial* presented some constructive, narrative and other elements that made the book a medieval *rara avis*, or even approached it to the modern novel. It was based on a critical comment by Sanvisenti that would be fortunate in successive approaches and editorial introductions to the *Curial*: the verification that this narrative is closer *alla formula*

39. Alighieri, Dante. *Divina Comèdia*, transl. Joan-Francesc Mira. Barcelona: Proa, 2009: 58-59 ("Homer is, the sovereign poet; Horace, / the satirist, the one that cometh next; / the third is Ovid, Lucan is the last", Langdon, Courtney. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1918: I, 45).

40. Montoliu, Manuel de. "Curial e Güelfa", *Un escorç en la poesia i novel·lística dels segles XIV i XV*. Barcelona: Alpha, 1961: 47-70, especially 63-64.

41. "The adventure of the nobleman from La Mancha in the second part of *Don Quixote*". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 482.

42. Cortadellas Vallès, Anna. *Repertori de llegendes historiogràfiques de la Corona d'Aragó*. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2001: 32.

43. "This infant Mr. Henrrique was a brave knight (...). The king [of Tunisia] called him in a farmyard (...) And he went out of the farmyard (...) opening another chamber where there were two brave lions..." Beuter, Pedro Antonio. *Segunda parte de la Corónica general de España, y especialmente de Aragón, Cathaluña y Valencia*. Valencia: Joan de Mey, Valencia, 1551: f. 129v (ll. II, cap. 46).



*d'uno dei tipi del romanzo storico moderno.*⁴⁴ Comas considered it an announcement of *la novel·la històrica del Romanticisme*.⁴⁵ Riquer observed that *l'autor del Curial escriu el que modernament en diríem una novel·la històrica*.⁴⁶ And Riera concluded: *...d'on resulta, és clar, que el Curial e Güelfa ha de ser posterior a 1826, data de la primera edició espanyola d'una novel·la de Walter Scott*. And, moreover, it contained according to him *elements de la novel·la de fulletó*.⁴⁷

These elements *de fulletó* ('of melodramatic novel') are what Sònia Gros⁴⁸ and other critics document as narrative techniques and the lyrical-rhetorical resources learnt from Boccaccio. Certainly, the novel contains technical and literary aspects (subtle irony, satire, parody of chivalry...) that announce what the modern novel would become afterwards, understood as a tradition that has its starting and brilliant point in *Don Quixote*. If Miguel de Cervantes had had access to *Curial e Güelfa*, he would have reprieved it from the fire, as he does in fact with *Tirant lo Blanc*. In short, the innovations and creative audacities of the anonymous writer should not be a reason to find it strange, but to make the scholars and lovers of Catalan literature be glad.

2.8 The heraldic 'burell' and the Neapolitan attire

Riera bases on Riquer⁴⁹ to consider that the colour *burell*⁵⁰ in the heraldic in the *Curial*, *no s'ha fet servir mai en heràldica*.⁵¹ He does not take into account that in the *Curial*—different from, for instance, the *Saintré* by La Sale—it doesn't matter so much the heraldic orthodoxy, but Dante's allegory, in the Italian way. The writer himself announces in the novel which knights and for what reason they will use *burell* colour, *si són amorosos de viudes, véngan ab paraments burells e negres*⁵² (*CeG* I.26). These colours, adopted by Curial in praise of the widow Güelfa, were the ones that the widows at that time used to wear as a sign of mourning. It is obvious that

44. "to the formula of one of the kinds of modern historical novels". Sanvisenti, Bernardo. "Su le fonti e la patria del 'Curial e Güelfa'". *Studi medievali*, 1/1 (1904-1905): 94-106.

45. "The historical novel of Romanticism". Comas, Antoni. "Ecolis a 'Curial e Güelfa'", *Assaigs sobre literatura catalana*. Barcelona: Tàber, 1968: 45-107.

46. "The Curial's autor writes what we would say in modern times a historical novel". Riquer, Martí de. "Curial e Güelfa", *Història de la literatura catalana*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1964: II, 602-631.

47. "...so we can conclude, clearly, that *Curial e Güelfa* must have been created after 1826, the date of the first Spanish edition of a novel by Walter Scott."; "elements of the melodramatic novel.". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 483.

48. Gros Lladós, Sònia. 'Aquella dolçor amarga'. *La tradició amatòria clàssica en el 'Curial e Güelfa'*. València: Universitat de València, 2015.

49. Riquer, Martí de. "Els metalls, les colors i les pennes en heràldica catalana", *Estudis de llengua i literatura catalanes*, 4, Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1981: 87-107.

50. The term *burell* refers to a dark color similar to a dark grey especially used in the clothing of poor people or as a sign of mourning and it has no translation into English (Translator's Note).

51. "has never been used in heraldry". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 483-484.

52. "If they are in love with widows, they must come with black or 'burell' clothes".



in the Catalonia of Gabriel Turell (*Arbre d'honor*, 1471) the *burell* colour was an ignoble colour, inappropriate for heraldic usage: *Del lehonat e burell (...): en armeria no són compresas*.⁵³ *Burell* colour was a grey reserved for the attire of poor people and begging clerks, or for mourning clothes. The Envy appears allegorised in *Curial* wearing *una roba burella de drap gros*⁵⁴ (CeG III.94). And the *semé* of fine gold of the fleurs de lis of *Rena(r)t* d'Anjou is downgraded heraldically into *renarts burells* ("burell color vixens"). However, we must take into account that, in the Italian refined court of the king of Aragon the *burell* colour was widely used according to the heraldic austerity and the connatural attire of the country.⁵⁵ Alfonso V ordered to bring from England fabrics of *frisó, coloris burell*, of great quality.⁵⁶ This fabric was known as the *burell blanquinós de frisó de Flandes*,⁵⁷ according to a document from 1437,⁵⁸ to distinguish it from the dark and coarse *burell*. In the autumn of 1450, the Magnanimous king sent purchasers to Flanders with the order to bring him *dues peces de drap de llana inglés, burell, del pus bell e ffi que trobar se porà e de la sort que-s diu no hix may de Inglaterra: tant és fi! E que sia burell net, sens neguna mescla. E per aquesta rahó lo u los dos d'ells passaran en Inglaterra*.⁵⁹ The studies of the royal wardrobe in Castel Nuovo and the humanistic sources tell us that Alfonso the Magnanimous used to dress with black and *burell* colour,⁶⁰ like *Curial*. This is an indicator among many others that helps us to relate the genesis of the text in the court in Naples.

2.9 Allegorical heralds and young squires with badly cut tunics

The heralds with abstract names also attracted Riera's attention: *Bon panser, Venjança, Bonté*. He explains that, *si més no, durant el segle XV, no s'ha documentat*

53. "Regarding the lehonat and burell color (...): they are not military purposes". Turell, Gabriel. *Arbre d'honor*. Barcelona: Barcino, 1992: 71.

54. "A 'burell' clothing with thick fabric".

55. The merchants from Barcelona loaded fabrics *acolorats de roba scura, prout est usaticum pro partibus Sicilie*. See Carrère, Claude. *Barcelone, centre économique à l'époque des difficultés (1380-1462)*. Paris: Mouton et Cie., 1967: 151.

56. "Frisian, 'burell' color". Batlle Gallart, Carme. *La crisis social y económica de Barcelona a mediados del siglo XV*. Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1973: 389.

57. "whitish 'burell' color of Frisian cloths from Flanders".

58. Colón Domènech, Germà. *De Ramon Llull al Diccionari de Fabra. Acostament lingüístic a les lletres catalanes*. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2003: 157-165, especially 260.

59. "Two pieces of English wool fabric, 'burell' color, of the most beautiful and finest that can be found and the one that it is said it is never exported from England: it's so fine! And it's neatly 'burell' color, without any mixture. And for this reason one and the other will pass to England." ACA, Cancelleria reial, reg. 2658, f. 70v (Castel Nuovo in Naples, 19th November 1450).

60. According to Montalto, Lina. "Vesti e gale alla corte aragonese: I. Il tesoro e la guardaroba di Alfonso primo; II. La guardaroba di Ferrante, duca di Calabria, i III. La guardaroba di Isabella, duchessa di Calabria, e dei suoi figli". *Napoli nobilissima. Rivista d'arte e di topografia napoletana*, [New Series] 1 (1920): 25-29, 41-44, 70-73, 127-130 and 142-146 (especially 27), the king of Aragon used *...non gravi di ricami d'oro e di seta, non pesanti per sfarzo di pellicie (...); la clothes, di damasco o velluto nero o 'burello' (...); egli indossa di colore oscuro*.



cap herald que porti nom abstracte.⁶¹ But it's not like that, in fact: they were very common in the flamboyant Gothic Europe. In the Navarre of 1446, Riquer records a pursuivant called *Léal* ("Loyal").⁶² In 1450, the king of England sent another pursuivant to Burgundy with the name of *Bonreport*, which reminds us to the Bon Panser in *Curial*.⁶³ Around 1430, the king of Navarre, Juan de Trastámara, sibling of Alfonso the Magnanimous had a herald called Pamplona and a pursuivant called *Bonne Foi* ("Good faith"), an allegorical and abstract denomination very close in meaning to the one of *Bonté* in *Curial e Güelfa*.⁶⁴ *E così via*. We cannot find as strange some ironies of the kind *Ara pusch yo ésser apellat lo donzell de la cota mal tallada*⁶⁵ (CeG I.42). And even more when the author warns us that they were laughing at the one speaking: *Curial, sentint ço de què reyen, dix...*⁶⁶ Riera considers that the words by the Lombard are incoherent, because everyone knew that he was an armed knight and nobody *no podia prendre'l per donzell*.⁶⁷ However, what the author does is, simply, to allude parodically to a well-known character of the *Tristan en prose*, called *le chevalier à la Cote Mal Taillée*, as Badia and Torró explain.⁶⁸

2.10 Golden scourges and crossed swords

Un escut amb unes deixuplines, according to Riera, és introbable al segle XV.⁶⁹ Perhaps that could happen in Catalonia, but not in Milan, where Güelfa was the 'suzerain'. There, when the Ambrosian Republic was established (1447), the defenders of communal freedom raised the flag of saint Ambrogio carrying golden whips (the popular *staffile*), with which —according to the tradition— had expelled the Arian heretics and now scared away the enemies of the country. A new currency was coined with the same emblem and they were called *ambrosini*.⁷⁰ As it is known, the clergymen used as heraldic mobile goods some objects related to their religious profession: mitres, sticks, aspergillums, scourge for self-mortification, etc. We ignore if it is a coincidence, but in August 1447 the duchy palace in Milan was full of Catalan speakers —the flags of the coat of arms of the crown of Aragon fluttered on

61. "At least, during the 15th century, no herald has been named with an abstract name." Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 484.

62. Riquer, Martí de. *Caballeros andantes españoles*. Madrid: Gredos, 2008: 23 (first edition: Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1967).

63. Ferguson, John. *English Diplomacy (1422-1461)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972: 188 and 202.

64. Ferguson, John. *English Diplomacy...*: 201.

65. "Now I could be named the page with the badly cut tunic".

66. "Curial —listening that they were laughing— says...".

67. "could consider him to be a page". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 484.

68. *Curial e Güelfa*, eds. Lola Badia, Jaume Torró...: 572-573.

69. "A shield with some whips... was imposible to be found in the 15th century". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 484.

70. Ghiglione, Natale. *La Repubblica Ambrosiana (1447-1450). S. Ambrogio, patrono e protettore dello stato dalla libertà*. Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2011.



the towers, before the communal revolution— and the paper with which a part of the *Curial's* manuscript was transcribed (with watermarks of the *Biscia Viscontea*) was the same that the duchy administration in Milan used in 1447.⁷¹

Well, the coat of the scourges of the *Curial* doesn't have as much relation with Milan as with the Aragonese nobleman *Johan Martines de Luna*, lord of Illueca, protected in his young age by his uncle the antipope Benedict XIII, whose mortal remains he recovered in 1430 to honour them.⁷² The writer could have the impulse to associate the knight with the golden scourges of the pope Luna, perhaps alluding in a literary joke to what had been *Ecclesiae masrix* or *Ecclesiae flagitium* ("a whip of the Church"), according to a nickname traditionally applied by the papist legitimacy to the most obstinate and intransigent antipopes.

Un escut amb dues espases entrecruades, according to Riera, és més propi del general Prim que del rei Pere.⁷³ Perhaps he is right, but it was also a known symbol in Italy. We believe that the love story of *Curial* (< Imperial *Curia*, German Hohenstaufen, Crown of Aragon...) and the *Güelfa* (< the Church, Anjou of Naples, Italy...) is interfered or has allegorical connotations —as Antoni Ferrando⁷⁴ deduced— to commemorate the triumph of the king of Aragon in Naples (1442) and his adoption —by means of the agreements of Terracina with the Church (1443)— of the double succeeding legitimacy: [1st] as a heir of Conradin of Sicily for being the king of Aragon, and [2nd] as a heir of Charles d'Anjou, for being Joanna II of Naples' adoptive son. For that reason *Curial* visits consecutively Sicily and *Partenope* (Naples), at the expense of falling in a venial literary anachronism, making as coetaneous the reigns of Charles and Conradin. We must also remember that a novel of propaganda from Anjou like *Pierre de Provence* (Neapolitan court of René of Anjou?; 1437, in a first draft), presents a protagonist armed with the crossed keys of *Pierre*, who becomes the king of Naples. This work story contains some repeated plot elements —symptomatically— with episodes set in Tunisia in the *Curial*,⁷⁵ and uses symbols (the name of Pierre, and St Pierre, Provence, the keys of the Church...) that are linked to the vexillological and iconographic tradition of the Naples of the Anjou. There, the kings —the Anjou from Provence— were not only vassals of the pope of Rome, but also the defenders and *gonfalonieri* of the Church. For that reason they held, as the king Alfonso will hold, the crossed keys of St Peter Apostle to the battlefield. The author of the *Curial* could have interpreted that

71. Topic announced in Soler, Abel, "Iconografia italiana i literatura cavalleresca catalana: les al·legories de les arts liberals en *Curial e Güelfa*", *Linguaggi del metareale nella cultura catalana*. Veronica Orazi, Silvia Grassi, Lúdia Carol Geronès, Simone Sari, Isabel Turull, eds. Turin: Dipartimento di Lingue e letterature straniere e culture moderne dell'Università di Torino, 2016: 41-57.

72. Febrer Ibáñez, Juan José. *Peñíscola. Apuntes históricos*. Castellon de la Plana: Hijo de J. Armengot, 1924: 194-196.

73. "A shield with two crossed swords (...) is more typical of the general Prim than King Pere." Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 484.

74. Ferrando, Antoni. "'Curial e Güelfa': una història amorosa en clau?". *Dones i literatura entre l'edat mitjana i el Renaixement*. Ricard Bellveser, ed. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 2012: II, 797-830.

75. As it has been stated by Babbi, Anna Maria. "Il 'Curial e Güelfa' e i romanzi francesi del XV secolo". *Estudis lingüístics i culturals...*: 139-156.



putting in the hands of *Pere* in the *Curial* —*lo rei d'Aragó* (“the King of Aragon”)⁷⁶— some crossed keys would have meant lowering the Crown of Aragon to a field of submission to Rome as the Anjou traditionally acknowledged, and also the author of *Pierre*. Being rebellious against this symbolical-political perspective, the writer *makes up* an allegorical flag of the king of Aragon according to the political dream of Dante expressed in *De monarchia*. Alighieri had into consideration the papal bull *Unam Sanctam* of the Neapolitan jurist Benedetto Gaetani (pope Boniface VIII, 1294-1303), where they spoke about two allegorical *Peter's swords*, and where the sword of the spiritual power (the *Guelph* Party, Rome) prevailed to the sword of temporal power (the *Gibellin* Party, the Imperial Curia).⁷⁷ For Dante —and for the anonymous author— it was the time when the temporal power of a monarch could take the reins of a peaceful Italy and would cooperate harmonically with the Church, but without being to be subdued to it. We notice how the writer promises an “award” to the love of Curial and Güelfa when the work begins, but ends up making the ‘lady’, at the end of the story, a mere feminine escort of the triumphant hero: the crowned *princeps*, Curial. This feasible allegorical reading —reserved to some listeners or learned readers in political and Dante’s issues— should be taken into account, as Ferrando advised, by those who aspire to a thorough interpretation of the literary intention of the anonymous writer and the reasons that led him to write it.

It is easier —and less cryptic— the explanation of certain heraldic emblems, like the golden wing that the duke of Orleans orders to make for the love of Lachesis, and that Riera also considers being strange and parodic.⁷⁸ In the Middle Ages the speaking wings —or not speaking ones— were common in heraldry: it appears, for instance, in medieval blazons of municipalities like *AL-cora*, *AL-baida*, *AL-coi*, etc. The noble family Villena from Valencia and Naples painted in their wall decorations a wing with a hand holding a sword, to depict the name of *Manu-El*, interpreted as *manu-ala* or *in manu, ala*.⁷⁹ Likewise, in the *Curial*, and in honour to the *verge alamanya* (“German virgin”) Lachesis (*CeG* I.40), the duke of Orleans will bring a green insignia (the colour of love) decorated with a golden wing. The *VER-ge ALA-manya* and the duke in love *D'OR-leans* justify the colour *VER-da* with an *ALA (MAGNA) D'OR*.⁸⁰

76. *Curial e Güelfa*, eds. Lola Badia, Jaume Torró...

77. Pertile, Antonio. *Storia del diritto italiano, dalla caduta dell'Impero Romano alla codificazione*. Padova: Istituto del Diritto Pubblico e delle Fonte del Diritto; Fratelli Salmin, 1892-1902: I, 302 and n. 39.

78. Riera Sans, Jaume. “Falsos dels segles XIII...”: 484.

79. See Mira, Eduard. “Sor Isabel de Villena / Elionor d'Aragó-Anjou. Heràldica i intencionalitat comunicativa”. *Dones i literatura entre l'edat mitjana i el Renaixement*. Ricard Bellveser, ed. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 2012: II, 759-796.

80. Soler, Abel, “‘Cuer desirous’”. *Enigmes lírics i mots heràldics en el ‘Curial’*. *Tirant*, 19 (2016): 253-274, especially 260.



2.11 The alternation *tu/vos* and the Pallars from Mediona

The alternation that the author makes in the dialogues between *tu* and *vos*⁸¹ as a treatment is the one that corresponds to the Catalan language from the 15th century. The philologist Martí Mestre considers there is nothing to comment about.⁸² Both in *Decameron*—main literary referent for the anonymous writer of the *Curial*— and in *Tirant*, don't display many differences in this alternation. The fact that the envious courtiers or Curial himself treat their lord as *tu* (you), the marquis of Montferrat, responds to what was normal then in informal discussions. It is not, as Riera supposes, a distraction.⁸³ Nevertheless, in certain circumstances, for instance the meeting with a stranger, it was common to address him as *vos*, as a sign of politeness: *Cavaller, yo no us coneix, ne encara coneix aquexa senyora, però, si axí és com vós diets...*⁸⁴ (CeG I.14).

It is not any *disbarat* ("folly"),⁸⁵ but a subtly hidden sarcasm, the fact that the writer makes the counts of Pallars descend from the house of *Madiona*/Mediona. The obvious joke—among many others contained in the work—takes the shape of a remark ironically addressed to certain dedicatee (if there was a real dedicatee and not a figurative one): *E sapiats que d'aquell linatge de Madiona són exits tots los de la casa de Pallars, e aquells eren cap e principi de tot lo linatge*⁸⁶ (CeG III.70). Anton Espadaler believes that this is an *elogi de la casa de Pallars, d'inequívoc sentit polític*,⁸⁷ which could be related to Hug-Roger de Pallars, general captain of Catalonia, or someone around him, in the context of the war against Joan II of Aragon (1462-1472).⁸⁸ Likewise, the complete absence of genealogical foundation of this remark disturbs⁸⁹ him: the Pallars lineage have—absolutely—nothing to do with Mediona or the Mediona. Antoni Ferrando sees here *una llicència literària (...), possiblement amb una finalitat que ara com ara se'ns escapa*.⁹⁰ Riera recalls a text by Beuter (16th century) where Guillem de Mediona appears and, after switching to a different topic, the author tells afterwards the legend of the son of an emperor who came to

81. Formal lexical item for *you*, with unnoticeable distinction in English (Translator's Note).

82. Martí Mestre, Joaquim. "Aspectes de morfologia nominal en el *Curial e Güelfa*". *Estudis lingüístics...*: 597-630, especially 611-615.

83. Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 484-485.

84. "Knight, I don't know you, nor I know that woman, but, if it is as you say..."

85. Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 485.

86. "And you must know that from that lineage of Madiona appeared all the ones of the house Pallars, and those were the beginning and ending of the whole lineage".

87. "a praise of the house Pallars, with a clear political sense".

88. Espadaler, Anton-M., "'Curial e Güelfa': El jo de l'autor i la història", *Estudis lingüístics...*: 277-286 (278). See, by the same author, Espadaler, Anton-M., "Sobre el lloc i l'ocasió del 'Curial e Güelfa'", *El (re) descobriment de l'edat moderna. Estudis d'homenatge a Eulàlia Duran*, Eulàlia Miralles, Josep Soler Vicens eds. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona-Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2007: 221-231.

89. Or, if not, it disturbed him many years ago. See Espadaler, Anton-M. *Una reina per a Curial*. Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1984: 74.

90. "a literary license (...), perhaps with a hidden purpose that we cannot reach". Ferrando, Antoni. "'Curial e Güelfa': una història amorosa...": 825.



Catalonia in Carolingian times, who *fue heredado del condado de Pallars, y por esso hazen las águilas con unas pajas en medio, que son de aquel linaje*.⁹¹ This learned reference does not relate —absolutely— Mediona with Pallars, but Riera considers it enough to think about a note by Beuter taken hazardously by Milà i Fontanals as the reason for this genealogical bond Mediona-Pallars.

In fact, as the *Llibre dels reis* and some other medieval chronicle that appeared afterwards explain, the Pallars were not —but the Cardona— the ones who —according to a legend lacking genealogical and documental foundation— were descendant from ‘the’ Madiona:

*E vengueren ab lo dit compte [Guifré el Pelós], entre ·ls altres nobles e cavalers, en Guillem de Mediona, qui depuys fo vescompte e era cavaler françés (...). E d'aquí avant (...) senyorejà Catalunya [Guifré] ·XXXIII· anys. E aprèès poch de temps creà en Guillem vescompte de Mediona, qui depuys fo vescompte de Cardona.*⁹²

As a consequence, the house of Cardona would have descended from a legendary house of the viscounts of Mediona. Thus is also recorded in the *Flos mundi*, another well-known universal Catalan chronicle (ca. 1407; BnF, ms. Esp. 11) informed by the previous one and accessible in the Neapolitan library of the Magnanimous.⁹³ Perhaps, the Cardona from Naples repudiated —with documents and genealogies at hand— (as their descendants would do afterwards: *¡quan errado vaya el Flos mundi en esto!*, the genealogist Llobet will say with outrage in the 17th century)⁹⁴ about the probable mythical origin. Cardona is a great town and castle; Mediona, a tiny *varvassoria*⁹⁵ in comparison... By doing this, the writer would have played in that dispensable remark —as he does in many other cases— to the pseudo-etymological witticism (*Mà-d[í]óna < in manu donat o mihi donat*) to allude to the ruined Pallars —and not the learned and opulent Cardona-Villena from Valencia-Naples— as the true descendants from the house of Mediona.⁹⁶

91. “it was inherited from the county of Pallars, and for that reason they make the eagles with some straw in the middle, as they come from that lineage”. Beuter, Pedro Antonio, *Segunda parte...*, f. 24v.

92. “And with the aforementioned count [Guifré el Pelós], came among the other noblemen and knights, Mr Guillem de Mediona, who afterwards was viscount and was a French knight (...). And from then onwards (...) ruled Catalonia [Guifré] 34 years. And who soon after made Guillem become viscount of Mediona, who afterwards became viscount of Cardona”. *Llibre dels reis*, ed. Stefano M. Cingolani, Valencia: Universitat de València, 2008: 243 (chap. 40, f. 268v).

93. *Dietari del capellà d'Anfós el Magnànim*, ed. Josep Sanchis Sivera, Valencia: Acció Bibliogràfica Valenciana, 1932: xx, comments that the autor of the diary that he is editing, and that is attributed —in some part— to Melcior Miralles, would have consulted the *Flos mundi* in Naples.

94. “¡the ‘Flos mundi’ is so much mistaken in this!” Llobet, Bernat-Josep. *Declaración del árbol de la genealogía y descendencia de los antiquísimos, nobilísimos y excelentísimos vizcondes, condes y duques de Cardona, en el Principado de Cataluña*. Barcelona: Antoni Lacavalleria, 1665: f. 4v.

95. From medieval Latin *vassus vassorum* (‘vassal of vassals’), it was the title that, in the Early Catalan feudal middle ages, was given to the owner of a fief from a great vassal, from whom he became a vassal (Translator’s Note).

96. See above the similar case of the lineage *Manuel de Villena*, interpreted as *in manu-ala* or *ala in manu*.



The sarcasm requires further historical-contextual explanation. Arnau-Roger IV of Pallars (1401-1451), count of Pallars Sobirà (1442-1451) and one of the great noblemen in Catalonia, kept the worst possible relationship with the king.⁹⁷ He didn't take part in the war in Italy (1432) and started a private "war" against the count of Foix (1433-1436) that obliged Queen Maria, deputy of Catalonia, to intervene strongly against him.⁹⁸ He fought afterwards, in a new dispute of parties or war between noblemen (decades of 1440-1450) with the Cardona from Catalonia, who were relatives of the Valencian Cardona living in Naples.⁹⁹ Totally in debt, confronted with the ruling queen, pursued by the creditors and strongly criticised by the Catalan Cardona, he set off with a small retinue towards Italy, and remained there for some years (1444-1447) maintained by Alfonso V. In the records of the royal treasury, the succeeding 'alms' or *donatius graciosos* provided by the king to the count, some of them in kind (*draps de seda e llana de Florència*, in February 1446)¹⁰⁰ so as to be able to be dressed according to his nobility rank. He was treated as *magnífich senyor* and *gran conestable del regne d'Aragó* ("Magnificent Lord" and "Great Constable of the Kingdom of Aragon"), but his theoretical magnificence vanished before the richness and elegance of any Neapolitan baron, of those who were accompanied by a small army, as if they were *condottieri*. The wages of the count of Pallars used to be quarterly wages of 50 golden ducats (a regular horse cost around 30 ducats) *per a son sosteniment* ("for his maintenance").¹⁰¹ It was the same salary that got — simultaneously— any of the king's pages, like Giovanni Antonio Caldora... So the beggar's surname of *Madiona* suited him very well. When he came back to Catalonia, in the summer of 1447, the count of Pallars arrived as poor as he had departed and quarrelled again with Queen Maria,¹⁰² so the king had to take the decision to send him to court for rebellion and confiscate his county (1449). He died soon after (1451) absolutely ruined.¹⁰³ The humanist Beccadelli portrays him as a maniac, who

97. Sáiz Serrano, Jorge. *Caballeros del rey. Nobleza y guerra en el reinado de Alfonso el Magnánimo*. Valencia: Universitat de València, 2008: 81, note 113.

98. Josep M. Bringué i Portella, "Arnau Roger de Pallars", *Diccionari d'història de Catalunya*, Jesús Mestre Campi, dir. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1993: 61; Earenfight, Theresa. *The King's Other Body. María of Castile and the Crown of Aragon*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010: 91-93.

99. The conflict derived now and then in urban factions, with peace and truces traceable in Sans-Travé, Josep-Maria dir. *Diataris de la Generalitat de Catalunya, vol. 1 (1411-1539)*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1994. The king was obliged to rule as a referee among dignitaries, as it can be observed in an episode from 1448 collected by Ametller Vinyas, Josep. *Alfonso V de Aragón en Italia y la crisis religiosa del siglo XV; obra póstuma de José Ametller y Vinyas, revisada y dada a luz por Jaime Collell*. Girona: P. Torres, 1903-1904: III, 678.

100. "silk and wool clothes from Florence". See Igual, David; Navarro, Germán. *La tesorería general y los banqueros de Alfonso V el Magnánimo*. Castellon de la Plana: Sociedad Castellonense de Cultura, 1994: 108, 112-113, 146, 161, 187 and following.

101. Mateu Llopis, Felipe. "Algunos documentos referidos a la gestión del tesorero de Alfonso V, Mateo Pujades, en Nápoles, y al 'itinerario' del rey (1441-1447)", *Hispania*, 3 (1940): 3-31, especially 26.

102. Earenfight, Theresa, *The King's Other Body...*: 91-93.

103. Chilà, Roxane. *Une cour à l'épreuve de la conquête: la société curiale et Naples, capitale d'Alphonse le Magnanime (1416-1458)*. Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry-Montpellier III (PhD Dissertation), 2014: III, 252-253 <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01144965/file/2014_CHILA_diff.pdf> (Consulted 12th



even proposed the Magnanimous about a plot to murder the king in Castile. The king of Aragon answered *que, ni per Castella, ni per la senyoria de tota Spanya, ni per lo imperi del món, él permetria ni consellaria tan gran e detestable cas que li paria; que seria naftrar e ensutziar la glòria sua e ofenrrre a Déu volent tal manera de victòria*.¹⁰⁴ This fellow from Pallars could not be very appreciated in Naples.

2.12 'E quals fades me fadaren...?'

Regarding rhetorical questions of the kind *quals fades me fadaren...?*²¹⁰⁵ (CeG I.22 and III.28), we can do as Riera does and look for parallelisms in the works of the Catalan authors Joaquim Rubió (1862: *jo era... com un nín a qui han fadat malas fadas*)¹⁰⁶ or Marian Aguiló (1864: *poruc dels fats que em fadaren*).¹⁰⁷ However, just having a look at the 15th century we will find more direct and reasonable sources. As when Enric de Villena (Valencia, 1427) compared the Parcae with the fairies, as the anonymous writer does: *Dijeron los poetas que tres fadas eran que fadaban a todos los omes...*¹⁰⁸ Also, the anonymous Catalan writer of Seneca's *Tragedies*, a work also related with the Valencian court of the Magnanimous, says that the Moires are *tres fades* who, dominated the *fat* or men's destiny.¹⁰⁹ The Castilian Álvarez de Villasandino, protected of the constable Dávalos (a nobleman exiled in Valencia since 1422)¹¹⁰ wrote: *Mas non me fadaron a mi tales fadas / que no meresçiese entrar en tal coro*.¹¹¹ The starting point of this Castilian expression can be found in the popular beginning of *Romance de la Infantina*, as follows: *Estas fadas me fadaron, / en haldas de*

October 2016); Sobrequés, Jaume; Sarobe, Ramon; Rella, Ferran. *Hug-Roger III. Epistolari de guerra i exili del darrer comte de Pallars (1451-1500)*. Barcelona: Base, 2008: 24.

104. "that, not for Castile, nor the sovereignty of the whole Spain, nor the empire of the whole world, he would never allow nor advice such a big and neglectable issue that was being born; which would mean injuring and making his glory get dirty and offending God wishing such a way of victory". Beccadelli, Antonio. *Dels fets e dits del gran rey Alfonso*. transl. Jordi de Centelles, Eulàlia Duran; eds. Mariàngela Vilallonga, Joan Ruiz Calonja, Barcelona: Barcino, 1990: 162-163.

105. "Which witches bewitched me?". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 485-486.

106. "I was... like a child who has been bewitched by evil witches". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 485-486.

107. "afraid of the fates that bewitched me". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 485-486.

108. "The poets said that three witches bewitched all men". Villena, Enric de. *Traducción y glosas de la Eneida de Enrique de Villena. Libro segundo*, ed. Pedro Manuel Cátedra. Salamanca: Biblioteca Española del Siglo XV-Diputación de Salamanca, 1989: II, 73.

109. Sèneca, Luci Anneu. *Tragèdies. Traducció catalana medieval amb comentaris del segle XIV de Nicolau Trevet*, ed. Tomàs Martínez Romero, Barcelona: Barcino, 1995: I: 123.

110. Perea Rodríguez, Óscar. "El 'Cancionero de Baena' como fuente historiográfica de la baja Edad Media castellana: el ejemplo de Ruy López Dávalos", *Cancioneros en Baena. Actas del II Congreso Internacional 'Cancionero de Baena'*. In *memoriam Manuel Alvar*, Jesús L. Serrano Reyes, ed. Baena: Ayuntamiento de Baena, 2003: I, 293-333.

111. "But those witches didn't bewitch me, nor they made me join their choir". Ochoa, Eugenio de, ed. *El Cancionero de Juan Alfonso de Baena (siglo XV), ahora por primera vez dado a luz*. Madrid: La Publicidad, 1851: 91.



*una mi tía...*¹¹² The *cancionero* poet Diego del Castillo, in *Parténope la Fulgente* (Naples, 1458), wrote (vv. 93-94): *¡Oh, maldita sea la fada, / cuytada que me fadó!*¹¹³ As it can be observed, it was a very common expression among the Castilian friends of the infants of Aragon who —like Castillo— would find good reception and shelter in the courts in Valencia, Gaeta and Naples. Moreover, the reiterative rhetorical phrase of *Curial quals fades me fadaren...?* is a syntactic calque of the Castilian *¿cuáles fadas me fadaron...?* It constitutes, therefore, the thousandth evidential element that makes us think in the court in Parténope of the Magnanimous as the birthplace of the anonymous chivalric novel: a work written in *lenguatge català*, but permeable to Castilian and Italian loans.

2.13 Anvils of blacksmith and maternal uterus

The sentence *lo brogít del ferir era tan gran, que paria que fossen molts ferrers qui a grans colps ferissen sobre moltes encluses*¹¹⁴ (CeG II.47) attracted Riera's attention, which could be related —according to him— with a work of the *Jocs Florals* in Barcelona in 1862: *dantse forts y espessos colps que ressonavan en llurs armas com los dels martells sobre una enclusa*.¹¹⁵ Without neglecting the coincidence between these two authors, one from the 15th century and the other one from the 19th century, we must warn that the author from the 15th century was a reader of Macrobius and the sentence in question —perhaps in both cases— could be inspired in the anecdote of the classic about how Pythagoras made up the idea of the musical harmony of the spheres. He says that, certain day, *cum enim casu praeteriret in publico fabros ignitum ferrum ictibus mollientes, in aures eius malleorum soni certo sibi respondententes ordine repente ceciderunt*.¹¹⁶

Similar coincidences happen with anecdotes taken from the classics, which Riera finds in authors from the 19th century. For instance, *la imatge del qui es refugiaria, si pogués, en el ventre de la seva mare*,¹¹⁷ appears in *Curial* and in *L'Atlàntida* [1877] by Verdagner. The author of *Curial* said that, *si Honorada, sa mare, fos stada present, dins lo seu ventre, si pogués, o almenys davall les sues faldes, vergonyosament fugint,*

112. "These witches who bewitched me / in my aunt's skirt". See Suárez López, Jesús. "Romance de la Infantina y el caballero burlado". *Lletres asturianes. Boletín Oficial de l'Academia de la Llengua Asturiana*, 31 (1989): 121-132.

113. "Oh, damned be the sorrowful witch / who bewitched me!" Simó, Lourdes. "'Parténope la fulgente', de Diego del Castillo, y el género de la elegía epistolar en la poesía cancioneril del siglo XV". *Revista de poética medieval*, 6 (2001): 87-114, especially 104.

114. "the screams of the injures were so big, that it seemed that there were many blacksmiths beating on many anvils".

115. "hitting so strongly that it sounded in their weapons as hammers on anvils." Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 486).

116. Macrobius, Ambrosius Theodosius. *Commentarii in Ciceronis Somnium Scipionis*. Ludwig von Jan ed., Quedlinburg-Leipzig: Gottfried Bass, 1848: 133.

117. "the image of the one who would take refuge, if he could, in his mother's belly".



*esglayat, se fóra amagat de por*¹¹⁸ (CeG III.24). He was recalling —as Verdaguer?— a reading of Justin,¹¹⁹ of Plutarch or, even, an anecdote in *Iliad*, in the translation done in Naples by Valla, as Jaume Torró¹²⁰ proposes or suggests. We don't think it is advisable, therefore, to resort to friar Cinto or the *Jocs Florals* to search for parallelisms.

2.14 'Alguns digueren que era àguila, altres milà'¹²¹

At certain moment of the action, Curial *traqué un elm molt bell e rich ab un leó qui tenia en les mans un ocell: alguns digueren que era àguila, altres milà*¹²² (CeG I.17). Riera makes the interpretation that this is the author's signature of Manuel Milà, who wanted to falsify the work but leaving clue or hint. What the anonymous writer from the 15th century does is, in fact, using a typical symbolism of moralists and medieval preachers, and Dante's, and of anyone in the Middle Ages to portray the idea that Curial is in a big dilemma: the Güelfa (the lion) tries to make him evolve virtuously: from knight (falcon), to a sovereign prince (eagle). It will be the moral responsibility of the teenager, therefore, to avoid falling in vice and depravation, which can make of him a vile *kite bird*. Well, the one who will judge at the end of the story if he is an eagle or a kite —the bird held by the lion— will not be him, unable of looking at his own crest, but the spectators. This idea of the thousand eyes that look and assess if the prince is a vile man —unworthy to reign— or a virtuous one —according to the moral principles of the philosophers— is a *topos* from the humanistic treaties of the kind *speculum principis*, which could be of interest for the author.¹²³ For the heraldic specialists (Turell, *Arbre d'honor*, 1471) the kite

118. "if Honorada, his mother, would have been present, if he could, he would have hidden in her belly or at least under her skirt, escaping shamefully and terrified".

119. Lida de Malkiel, María Rosa. *Dido en la literatura española: su retrato y su defensa*. London: Tamesis Bocks, 1974: 112; Plutarque. "Actions corageuses et vertueuses des femmes", *Oeuvres morales de Plutarque, traduites du grec par Ricard*, Paris: Lefèvre, 1844: I, 571-620; Plutarch. *Oposcoli brevi di Plutarco, volgarizzati da Marcello Adriani*. Francesco Ambrosoli ed. Milan: Fratelli Sonzogno, 1826: II, 203.

120. Badia, Lola; Torró, Jaume. "Ambient internacional i cultura de cort en 'Curial e Güelfa': primer suplement a l'edició de Quaderns Crema 2011". *Mediaeval Studies in Honour Curt Wittlin*. Lola Badia, Emili Casanova, Albert Hauf, eds. Alacant: Institut Interuniversitari de Filologia Valenciana, 2015: 51-66, especially 58-63. More details in Torró Torrent, Jaume, "Il romanzo cavalleresco tra letteratura antica e i romanzi cavallereschi francesi e borgognoni", *L'immagine di Alfonso il Magnanimo tra letteratura e storia, tra Corona d'Aragona e Italia*, Fulvio delle Done, Jaume Torró, eds. Florence: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2016: 221-240.

121. "Some said it was an eagle, others that it was a kite".

122. "brought a very beautiful and rich helmet with a lion holding a bird with the hands: some said it was an eagle, others said it was a kite".

123. Cappelli, Guido M. "La otra cara del poder. Virtud y legitimidad en el humanismo político", *Tiranía. Aproximaciones a una figura del poder (Actas del Seminario Internacional "Los límites del poder: figuras del tirano")*. Guido M. Cappelli, Antonio Gómez Ramos, eds. Madrid: Dykinson, 2008: 97-120, especially 115-118.



was an ignoble bird, as opposed to the noble eagle, *coratjosa, brava e sforçada*.¹²⁴ In the blazons, the eagle, the falcon and the sparrow hawk are looking up; whereas the kite is looking down.¹²⁵ The vileness of the kite appears again in Giovanni di San Gimignano (1570);¹²⁶ in *L'escoufle*, a roman attributed to Jean Renart (author of *Roman de la Rose*); in Ausiàs Marc (chant 64, vv. 25-28);¹²⁷ in Lluís del Milà (*El Cortesano*, Valencia, 1561),¹²⁸ etc. This opposition kite vs. falcon-eagle, popular in the 15th century would inspire, however, the allegoric crest of the Italian knight in the novel. And the spectators of the chivalric tournament, which would also represent for Curial an *inner* tournament (the teenager who must know himself), didn't have a clear idea if the young knight (falcon) would become a prince (eagle) or would waste himself (kite). The moral dilemma has nothing to do with any encrypted signature, but with the indecision of the young man between the Güelfa (virtue) and Lachesis (vice). Albert Hauf appeals to *Peraldis* to explain that the kite birds were a metaphor of luxurious men that let themselves be seduced and hunted by 'laces' of the *fembres pecaorius* ("female sinners").¹²⁹ Thanks to the Vicent Ferrer's sermons we know that the metaphor of the kite bird as a lustful man was popular in Valencia around 1400: *¿Pensau-vos, mes filles, que Déus vos haje donades les mamelles per mostrar les frexures als milans, com a putanes?*¹³⁰

2.15 'Manca de procacitat i de cultura teològica'¹³¹

Willing to issue a careful opinion about the literary quality of the *Curial*, Riera thinks that are *trets negatius [sic]* of the *Curial* the *manca de procacitat i de cultura teològica*¹³² that the author shows, in contrast to his varied—and even surprising—

124. "corageous, brave and hardworking". Turell, Gabriel. *Arbre d'honor*. Barcelona: Barcino, 1992: 62-63.

125. Turell, Gabriel. *Arbre d'honor...*, prints 1 and 2, respectively.

126. Di San Gimignano, friar Giovanni. *Summa de exemplis et rerum similitudinibus locupletissima*. Cologne: Giovanni Arnoldo Cholini, 1570: 119. Quoted by Hauf, Albert. "Sedució (Làquesis) versus elecció i gràcia prevenint (Güelfa): El dilema de Curial (Mt 6, 22-24)", *Estudis lingüístics...*: 327-362, especially 337, note 16.

127. Pagès. Amédée. *Ausiàs March i els seus predecessors*. Valencia: Edicions Alfons el Magnànim, 1990: 233.

128. Milà, Lluís del. *El Cortesano*, ed. Vicent-Josep Escartí, Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 2010: 235.

129. Peyral, Guilhem. *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum [ca. 1236]*. Venice: Francesco Ziletti, 1571: II, 63b. Quoted by Hauf, Albert. "Sedució (Làquesis) 'versus' elecció i gràcia prevenint (Güelfa): El dilema de Curial (Mt 6, 22-24)". *Estudis lingüístics...*: 327-362, especially 348.

130. "Do you believe, my daughters, that God has given you your breasts to show your insides to the kite birds like whores?" in Ferrer, Vicent. "Sermo Navitivitatis Virginis Mariae", *Sermons*. Gret Schib, ed. Barcelona: Barcino, 1971-1988: III, 257. Quoted by Hauf, Albert. "Sedució (Làquesis) 'versus' elecció...": 349.

131. "The lack of insolence and theological culture". Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 486.

132. "negavite features [sic] of the Curial the lack of insolence and theological culture" Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 486.



literary culture.¹³³ Should —the anonymous writer— be indecent, like Joanot Martorell? Or an expert in theology like Antoni Canals? Not necessarily. What Riera defines as *negative* features (the subtlety in the language, the restrained eroticism, the pagan and worldly focusing...), because they discard the novel as a genuine medieval work, portray it, on the other hand, as a fresh and innovative text. And the truth is that the *Curial* follows the ideological guidelines of the Italian humanism, and we could even define it as a text of *humanistic chivalry*, like the epic poems of the Florence of the Medici, where chivalry and pagan mythology merged. It is not strange, as a consequence, that Riera resorts to quote Lola Badia: *Poesia i filosofia són per al nostre anònim dos vessants complementaris i en certa manera simètrics del saber, que desitja veure ben arrelats en el seu protagonista (...). Poesia i filosofia convergeixen cap a un mateix ideal ètic.*¹³⁴ This attitude has nothing to do with 19th century's attitude, nor with the Barcelona of Milà i Fontanals, but with the Italy of the *Quattrocento*; a country where —as Kristeller explains— *los humanistas eran identificados a menudo como oradores, o como poetae et oratores, antes de que el término humanista hubiera entrado en uso.*¹³⁵ Thus it is explained the fact that the unknown author of the *Curial* crowns symbolically his *alter ego* with paper as the *millor e pus valent entre los cavallers, e major de tots los poetes e oradors qui vuy són*¹³⁶ (*CeG* III.34), because chivalry and humanism were compatible for him.

3. Weirdness and mysteries: Rosa Navarro's contribution

Twenty years after Riera formulated his controversial theory, which is hard to sustain nowadays, Rosa Navarro Durán continued it with the objective of increasing the possible evidences that would conclude that Milà i Fontanals was the author of the novel. The *Curial*, qualified once again as an *extraña novela* ("strange novel"), would have many other *misterios a desvelar* ("mysteries to be

133. Riera Sans, Jaume. "Falsos dels segles XIII...": 486.

134. "Poetry and philosophy are for our anonymous autor two complementary sides —and in a certain way simetrical— of knowledge, that he wishes to be rooted in his protagonist (...). Poetry and philosophy merge towards the same ethical ideal". Badia, Lola. "La segona visió mitològica de Curial i notes per a una interpretació de l'anònim català del segle XV", *Actas del I Congreso de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval (Santiago de Compostela, 2 al 6 de diciembre de 1985)*, Vicenç Beltrán, ed. Santiago de Compostela: Promociones y Publicaciones Universitarias, 1988: 157-176. Badia, Lola. "La segona visió mitològica de Curial i notes per a una interpretació de l'anònim català del segle XV", *Curial i Güelfa. Estudis de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes. XIV*. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1987: 265-292, especially 279.

135. "the humanists were usually considered as orators, or like 'poetae et oratores', before the word humanist was widely used". Kristeller, Paul Oskar. "El territorio del humanista", *Historia y crítica de la literatura española, 2. Siglos de oro: Renacimiento*. Francisco Rico, dir., Francisco López Estrada, ed. Barcelona, 1980: 34-44, especially 39.

136. "the best and bravest among the knights, and the greatest of all the poets and orators nowadays" Kristeller, Paul Oskar. "El territorio del humanista...": 39.



revealed”).¹³⁷ The scholar, in successive contributions on this topic, has assumed and defended the basic hypotheses by Riera (*extrañezas del códice*, “weirdness in the codex”, and other misunderstandings), and has tried to complete them with good sense of humour and some doses of reading perspicacity. She finds it strange, for instance, that the *Curial*—examined by Milà in 1876—was not published by Antoni Rubio until 1901. She should have taken into account the slowness of the publishing processes prior to 1900, and the difficult biographical circumstances of Rubió, which obliged him to delay the edition some years. All this has been treated thoroughly by Eulàlia Miralles and Rafael Roca in a conference about *Curial* held in Verona (October 2016).¹³⁸ And we don’t find anything that escapes from normality.

3.1 ‘Hoc’, Andrea and the mountain of Montserrat

According to Rosa Navarro, the affirmative adverb *hoch* (“yes”), instead of *sí*, wouldn’t be typical of an author that *se afirma... fue un valenciano que estuvo en la corte de Alfonso el Magnánimo de Nápoles*, but someone from Gascony or Languedoc, not from Valencia.¹³⁹ As medievalists and linguists are aware of, *hoc* was a common way to affirm as common in Languedoc as in Valencia in the 15th century, not only in informal environment, but also in formal and notarial registers. Let’s make Ausiàs March’s testament serve as an example: *dixeren concordantment que “hoch”, e yo, dit notari, ab aquells. E que l’havien vist criar en la vila de Gandia*.¹⁴⁰

Andrea, in Italian, was and it is a male name. And *no es posible que un catalán de la corte de Alfonso el Magnánimo en Nápoles, como se afirma, pueda ponerle ese nombre a dama tan destacada en la obra*.¹⁴¹ The lady does not stand out in the work’s plot, nor is strange

137. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “Misterios de una extraña novela: ‘Curial e Güelfa’”. *Clarín. Revista de nueva literatura*, 96 (2011): 3-11; Navarro Durán, Rosa. “Pistas literarias para desvelar el misterio del ‘Curial e Güelfa’”. *Subverso. Isla de libertad crítica, literaria y cultural, Subverso. Isla de libertad crítica, literaria y cultural*, 30 March 2013. 10 November 2016 <<http://www.subverso.es/?p=1164>>; Navarro Durán, Rosa. “El general Curial y la literatura”. *Clarín. Revista de nueva literatura*, 108 (2013): 6-10; Navarro Durán, Rosa. “‘Curial e Güelfa’, mélange de gothique et de Renaissance”. *El texto infinito. Tradición y escritura en la Edad Media y el Renacimiento*. Cesc Esteve, ed. Salamanca: SEMYR, 2014: 191-225; Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel ‘Curial e Güelfa’: An erudite creation by Milà i Fontanals”. *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, 8 (2014): 53-94.

138. Roca, Rafael. “Quan i de quina manera Manuel Milà i Fontanals localitzà el ‘Curial e Güelfa’”, *‘Curial e Güelfa’. La cavalleria umanistica italiana nel XV secolo. Convegno internazionale (Verona, 10-12 ottobre 2016)*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017, forthcoming; Miralles, Eulàlia. “Sulle prime edizioni catalane del ‘Curial’”, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017, forthcoming.

139. “as it is said... was someone from Valencia who was in the court of Alfonso the Magnanimous in Naples”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “Misterios de una extraña...”: 4.

140. “agreed to say “hoch” (yes), and I, the mentioned notary, with them. And that they had seen him being brought up in the city of Gandia.” Reproduced by Garcia-Oliver, Ferran. *En la vida d’Ausiàs March*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1998: 262 (doc. No. 3 in the appendix).

141. “it’s not possible that a Catalan from the court of Alfonso the Magnanimous in Naples, as it is said, can put that name to such an important lady in the book”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “Misterios de una extraña...”: 4.



that the author —an admirer of Boccaccio and living in Naples— wanted to pay homage to Andrea Acciaiuoli, the only lady in medieval Italy, a notorious resident in the Neapolitan court of the 14th century, who, for more details, anecdotally had this male name. The author from Certaldo dedicated *De mulieribus claris* (ca. 1361-1362) to her, a catalogue of women with strong character, and took the chance to relate the etymologically ‘manly’ name of *Andrea* —countess of Montedorisio in the 14th century— with the moral strength of the dedicatee, which was exceptional in the ‘weak sex’. The same strength would have the *Andrea* of the *Curial* when she reduced her husband to a puppet, to an *efeminat* man (‘submissive to women’): *tant se era enamorat lo marquès de Andrea, sa muller, que ja no curava de degú, ans oblidava totes altres coses*. And *Curial per lo dit afeminat senyor era més en oblit*¹⁴² (CeG I.3). It is a satire and also a homage to Boccaccio.

Nevertheless, *Monferrato* does not admit any graphic misunderstanding with *Monserrat*, as Navarro proposes. So as to, where it is written “marquis of Montferrat” cannot “verse” *también la palabra “Monserrat” con ese alta*.¹⁴³ If you consult the manuscript, you will confirm it. And it is also uncertain that the French novel *Saintré* was a source for the *Curial*. Despite a coincidence in the plot that could be accidental (the *topos* of a powerful lady that favours a young page, in debt of the courtier lyrical poetry), we haven’t found any intertextuality nor points of coincidence. Moreover, La Sale seems that finished his work after the *Curial*. Regarding the *Novellino* as a source, this is not a new discovery. As Navarro says, Menéndez Pelayo already spoke about it, and this relation between both texts has been stated by several critics.¹⁴⁴ For the literary *topos* of recognising someone thanks to a song that reveals it, we don’t need to resort to the *Relaciones de la vida del escudero Marcos de Obregón*, a Spanish work by an author who lived after than *Curial*’s author. We could easily go back to the past, up to the times of the famous Blondel de Nesle, a poet who knew the anonymous writer of the Catalan story, even if it was just for the slogan *ami sans amie*.¹⁴⁵

142. “the marquis was so much in love with Andrea, his wife, that he didn’t look after anybody, but he forgot all the other things. And *Curial* was forgotten by that effeminate lord.”

143. “‘be seen’ also the word “Monserrat” with a long ‘s’”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “Misterios de una extraña...”: 4.

144. Sansone, Giuseppe-E. “Medievalismo del ‘Curial e Güelfa’”, *Studi di Filologia Catalana*, Bari: Adriatica editrice 1963: 205-242, especially 211 [first edition: “Medievalismo del ‘Curial e Güelfa’” *Discorso inaugurale dell’anno accademico 1961-1962, letto il 18 novembre 1961*. Bari: Università degli Studi di Bari, 1962 without pages]; Ferrando, Antoni. “Sobre el marc històric de ‘Curial e Güelfa’ i la possible intencionalitat de la novel·la”, *Actes del Col·loqui Internacional ‘Tirant lo Blanch: l’albor de la novel·la moderna’ (Ais de Provença, 21-22 d’octubre de 1994)*, Jean-M. Barbera, ed. Barcelona: Centre Aixois de Recherches Hispaniques-Institut Interuniversitari de Filologia Valenciana- Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, 1997: 323-369, especially 335; Butinyà, Júlia. *Tras los orígenes del humanismo: el ‘Curial e Güelfa’*. Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2001: 64; Monson, Don A. “De la chanson par la ‘razo’ à la nouvelle: ‘Atressi cum l’orifanz’”, de Rigaut de Barbezieux et ses commentaires narratifs médiévaux”. *Medioevo romanzo*, 16 (1991): 271-284; Badia, Lola; Torró, Jaume. “El ‘Curial e Güelfa’ i el ‘comun llenguatge català’”. *Cultura Neolatina*, 74/1-4 (2014): 203-245, especially 209-210.

145. “a boyfriend without a girlfriend”. See Soler, Abel, “‘Cuer desirous’...”: 261-263.



3.2 'París e Viana' and 'Tirant lo Blanc'

It is also known that the affair of *París e Viana*, the couple explicitly quoted in the *Curial*, contains elements in common with the story object of study.¹⁴⁶ And we don't have to think about Milà i Fontanals, as we know that the novel appears registered in 1417 in the Royal Palace in Valencia.¹⁴⁷ There could have met Joanot Martorell and the anonymous writer of the *Curial* in the decade of 1420. But from this fact to put this title of an epigraph as *La fuente esencial*¹⁴⁸ [of the *Curial*]: "*Tirant lo Blanc*", there is a great difference. Understandably, Rosa Navarro has put all her efforts in finding parallelisms between both works, but the result is reduced to some shared topics among all literature of Arthurian tradition: the fight of the knight with giants or zoomorphic characters, the lady's piece of clothing that the knight shows in a tournament, the shipwreck as a metaphor of the spiritual or moral falling, and little more. The *Curial* and the *Tirant* were two works written in different peninsulas and by two men with very different mentalities,¹⁴⁹ despite the comparative insistence of Navarro: *Si Tirant se llama así porque su padre es señor de la marca de Tirania, Curial se llama de esta forma tan curiosa porque es hijo... de la curia*.¹⁵⁰ Another wise reflection but as difficult to verify as the previous one, it deserves the name of Arta *tal vez cobrase sentido si lo asociáramos al gascón D'Artagnan de Alexandre Dumas*.¹⁵¹ It does not escape to Navarro the anecdotic coincidence between both authors, already noticed by the editors in the last century: the fact of *esclatar-li la fel* ("exploding the bile") to someone as a cause of a sudden death. Let's pay attention: *la fel* (bile), in feminine, as in Valencian way; not as in most of the Principality. Perhaps, it was a common

146. According to Pellissa Prades, Gemma. "'París e Viana i Curial e Güelfa': un estudi comparat". *España y América en el bicentenario de las independencias*. Francisco Fernández, Lucía Casajús, eds. Castellon de la Plana: Universitat Jaume I, 2012: 531-548, especially 531, moreover, these elements in common don't reveal any special or precise dependance of *Curial* from *París e Viana*. See also Ferrando, Antoni. "La traducción catalana de la 'Història de les Amors de París e Viana'", *Pour une histoire comparée des traductions. Traductions des classiques, traductions du latin, traductions des langues romanes du moyen âge et de la première modernité*, Dominique de Courcelles; Vicent Martines, eds. Paris: Droz, 2012: 123-135.

147. d'Alòs Moner, Ramon. *Documenti per la storia della Biblioteca d'Alfonso il Magnanimo*. Rome: Tipogr. del Senato, 1924: 403 (doc. No. 3).

148. "The essential source", Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 4.

149. See Ferrando, Antoni. "'Curial i Tirant', cara a cara". *La novel·la de Joanot Martorell i l'Europa del segle XV*. Ricard Bellveser, ed. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 2011: II, 415-450; Soler, Abel. "La relació de Martorell amb la cort de Nàpols i la discreta presència d'Itàlia en 'Tirant lo Blanc'". *More about 'Tirant lo Blanc'. From the sources to the tradition. / Més sobre 'Tirant lo Blanc'. De les fonts a la tradició*. Anna Maria Babbi, Vicent-Josep Escartí, eds. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2015: 35-52.

150. "If Tirant is called like that is because his father is lord of Tirania, so Curial is called with this curious way because is son... of the curia", Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 4.

151. "perhaps it would be meaningful if we associated it to the Gascon D'Artagnan by Alexander Dumas" (Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 6). The name of this lady is related with the rights that the duke of Calabria —Ferdinand of Aragon, son of the Magnanimous and a more than likely dedicatee of the 'Curial'— could allege in the woman's name in the despot are of Arta (Greece), a well-known state in the decade of 1440 in the court in Naples, due to the assistance expedition that were sent against the Turkish. But this is an issue that we defer, for being too long to be exposed here.



belief in the Valencian court of 1420-1430, as it appears in Martorell, the *Curial* and Marc.¹⁵²

3.3 Having fun with the parodic genius of the author

One of the attributable merits to the articles by Rosa Navarro articles is having listed some of the many parodic, satiric, ironic or directly burlesque episodes that the author tries to hide —or not— along a discourse that keeps in *seriofaceto*, ambiguous tone. Ramon Aramon had already spoken about that long time ago (*L'humorisme en el "Curial e Güelfa"*, 1936),¹⁵³ but without reaching to understand thoroughly the literary intention and relative modernity of the author, regarding this topic. Navarro enjoys the episodes that are *trágicamente divertidos* ("tragically funny"), like the fact that a lady who reads and studies *Aeneid*, helped by a learned knight, would show her eloquence afterwards, forged upon the classics: *¡Quién hubiera imaginado tales comentaristas!*¹⁵⁴ Well, obviously, Leonardo Bruni, in *De studis et litteris* (1424), dedicated to the learned lady Battista da Montefeltro, whose closing would serve as an inspiration for this episode.¹⁵⁵ And what about the *melocotonero mayor* ("bigger peach tree") in the feet of which 'Johan' will find Camar's treasure? Well, we just need to read *Decameron* (VII.1) to find there an orchard, someone called Gianni and a *pesco grosso* at the feet of which he also had to find something. The author of *Curial*, who takes inspiration from this work, translates the *unto bisunto* of the Tuscan original for the Valencian word *almànguena* ("red ochre"). Perhaps, he did it in deference to some listeners that could be mostly Valencian; as the courtiers in the Naples of Alfonso were mostly Valencian, where *Curial* was probably written.

*¡Hay que ver cómo besa Camar, casi con ventosa!, y ¡qué brazos de pulpo tiene!*¹⁵⁶ It is, obviously, a satirical parody of the *polypus* that the poet Ovid evokes when the nymph Salmacis (*Metam.* IV, 366) catches Hermaphroditus to make him copulate with her. With all this, the grotesque definition of the woman in love as *aquell magre cors e flach, penjat del coll*¹⁵⁷ of *Curial* links —to some learned listeners, and the Neapolitan court— with an epistle from Valla addressed to king Alfonso in 1444, where there was a verse from *Aeneid* (IV, 79: *Pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore*) that had been imitated by Ovid in the *Heroides* (I, 30: *Narrantis coniunx pendet ab ore*

152. March, Ausiàs. *Poesies*. Vicent-Josep Escartí, ed. Valencia: Alfons el Magnànim, 1993: 241, vv. 33-34.

153. Aramon Serra, Ramon. "L'humorisme en el 'Curial e Güelfa'". *Homenatge a Antoni Rubió i Lluch*. Barcelona, 1936: III, 703-723.

154. "Who would have imagined those commentators!" Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 7.

155. Bruni Aretino, Leonardo. *Opere letterarie e politiche*. Paolo Viti, ed. Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1996: 250. See also Cappa, Carlo. "Creatività e mellificazione. L'Anno europeo della creatività, tra avvenire e memoria". *La creatività: percorsi di genere*. Margarete Durst, M. Caterina Poznanski, eds. Milan: Franco Angeli, 2011: 11-38, especially 24.

156. "Let's see how Camar kisses, almost with a sucker! And such an octopus arms she has!", Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 7-8.

157. "that lean and slim body, hanging from the neck" (*CeG* III.59).



virii).¹⁵⁸ The author takes these worthy precedents to destroy them lyrically, and make his friendly listeners laugh. That, obviously, is wittily humanistic. And we must celebrate it without strangeness.

Navarro also notices the parodic character of the couples of relevant lovers that dance around the Güelfa, in the style that we find in the *Tirant* and other medieval works, including the Flemish tapestries. It is an ancient literary and artistic *topos*. *Podemos asombrarnos*, well, *al ver a Fedra e Hipólito* (*¿tal vez éste reconsideró su negativa en el Hades, y el autor del Curial se enteró?*), y ¡a Aquiles amenazando a su hijo Pirro!¹⁵⁹ Certainly, it is comic and revolutionary the intromission of the tragic couple Hypolitus-Fedra. Regarding the single Achilles, it could also be explained in the parallelism that the readers would establish between the new Achilles from the 15th century, a ‘totally single’ Magnanimous and the Pyrrhus who came by sea from Valencia (1438) to warranty the fall of the new Troy: the Naples of the Anjou. *Amençar* here is a synonym of ‘challenging’ the son to make him study. We must know that the personal enterprise of the future Ferdinand I of Naples (the insignia of mount agate —not of diamonds as it is sometimes said— with the word *Naturae non artis opus*) was an evocation of the cameo of the mythic Pyrrhus of Epir, decorated with the heart of the muses directed by Apollo (the same image that the author deploys in the extense foreword to book III of *Curial*).

Most of the “mysteries” are solved when the text is well contextualised: in the court in Naples of Alfonso V of Aragon. We could think that Navarro did not understand properly the phrase having before the eyes *moltes bèsties en pastura* (*CeG* I.23).¹⁶⁰ This phrase, with erotic connotations, appears constantly in the *Novellino* by Masuccio, a courtier in Naples and a rival of Boccaccio. Curiously, it is shared by this author and *Curial’s* author, in the same cultural and reading environment, but in different languages and diverse literary approaches. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge Rosa Navarro —clever reader— the merit of having perceived *el toque genial de la parodia, que da tintes cómicos a la épica en el Curial*.¹⁶¹ She is right, indeed, when she mentions the influx from the *Diàlegs dels déus* by Lucian of Samosata behind the comic and ridiculous language of the mythological episodes: *la Envidia, cuyos dedos eran sarmientos “ja de dos o tres anys podats del cep” (jse puede apreciar la ironía lucianesca!)*.¹⁶² The enjoyable *imitatio* of Lucian —direct, Italian and humanistic— had already been noticed in 1936, for his surprise and incredulity, by Aramon i Serra but nobody had checked it since then.

158. Valla, Lorenzo. *Laurentii Valle epistole*, eds. Ottavio Besomi, Mariangela Rregoliosi. Padua: Antenore, 1984: 260 (doc. No. 27). See also Soria Olmedo, Andrés. *Los humanistas de la corte de Alfonso el Magnánimo, según los epistolarios*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1956: 293-297.

159. “We can be amazed, well, when we see Fedra and Hypolitus (Did he perhaps reconsider his refusal in the Hades and the author of *Curial* was informed of that?), and to Achilles threatening his son Pyrrhus!”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “Misterios de una extraña...”: 9.

160. “many pasture beasts”.

161. “the genius touch of the parody, which provides comical hints to the epic in the *Curial*”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “Misterios de una extraña...”: 9.

162. “the Envy, whose fingers were vine shoots “two or three years after being cut from the vine” (we can notice the Lucian irony!)”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “Misterios de una extraña...”: 9.



The appearance of *Venus, cuya cabeza estaba ceñida por los ojos de Argos (tal vez Juno se los había prestado, aunque nada precisa la historia)*¹⁶³ is not the product of any learned joke, but a hint of interest about the Italian Neo-Platonism at that time. The conversion of Argos' eyes (the *Curial* points to Ovid, *Metam.* I, 720) into a crown of stars in Venus' head is a poetic resource of the Neo-Platonism, lacking a mythological foundation, to feature the Venus *Urània* ("Celestial") as a protector of pure love (*The Symposium*, by Plato) and marriage love (in substitution of Juno). The painters of the Italian Renaissance started to represent it like that. It is the famous topic of the *Venere con la corona di stelle* ("Venus with the star crown"). The anonymous writer of *Curial* agrees with the painters of the *Quattrocento* who, following the platonic association between celestial harmony and love harmony (*The Symposium*, 187a-188b),¹⁶⁴ spread the new representation of the celestial Aphrodite.¹⁶⁵

The suicidal Camar shouts: *Johan, aparella a mi los teus... christiana són e he nom Johana!*¹⁶⁶ (*CeG* III.66). In *La Celestina*, a subsequent work to *Curial*, Calisto exclaims: *¡Melibeo só!* ("I am Melibeo"). We notice an onomastics osmosis very typical of medieval and popular love literature (if he is *Flores*, it is normal that she is *Blancaflor*), that is unimportant. And if the corpse of the 'martyr' Camar from Tunis (ancient Carthage) appears tied *a un pal* ("to a post") and exposed to the lions is because it is a parody of the *Passio* (available then in Milan and Naples) Perpetua from Carthage, also tied to a post and exposed to the lions.¹⁶⁷ We don't need to resort to *Tirant* to explain it. And it is not very sensible looking for the sources of a novel from the 15th century like the *Curial* in works written afterwards like *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *Don Quixote* or *I promessi sposi* by Manzoni, because it appears in this last work someone called Ambrogio di Spinola from the 16th century that is a homonym to the corsair that appears in the *Curial*. The *Ambròsio de Spíndola* in the *Curial* was a Genovese corsair protected by King Alfonso V, who lost his ships in Gaeta (1437).¹⁶⁸ Being for some years after in the duchy in Milan (1446), provoked the entry of the Venetian army in Lombardy, and obliged the Magnanimous to move his armies and set off towards the north.¹⁶⁹ The literary revenge served in the *Curial* was more than obvious for the listeners in the court in Naples. The readers from the 21st century, however, need an explanation note to allow us to understand the inherent comicalness in this

163. "Venus, whose head was tight crowned by Argos' eyes (perhaps Juno had lent them to her, although it is not mentioned in the story)." Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 8.

164. Plato. *Diàlegs, volum VI. El Convit*, ed. and transl. Eulàlia Presas, Barcelona: Fundació Bernat Metge, 1983: 53-54.

165. There was an iconological transfer from the muse who protected the astronomy (Urania, mentioned by Plato; which was painted crowned with stars in the middle ages) to the reclaimed goddess of Love.

166. "Johan, match yours with me... I am a Christian and my name is Johana!".

167. Soler, Abel. "Perpètua de Cartago i Camar de Tunis. Sobre algunes fonts del 'Curial' accessibles a Itàlia". *Scripta. Revista internacional de literatura i cultura medieval i moderna*, 8 (2016): 90-104.

168. Zanotto, Francesco. *Il Palazzo Ducale di Venezia, illustrato*. Venice: G. Antonelli, 1861: IV, 201-202.

169. Cognasso, Francesco. *Il ducato visconteo e la Repubblica Ambrosiana (1392-1450)*. Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri per la Storia di Milano, 1955: 369.



passage. But this comment, obviously, cannot be attributed —anachronistically— to Manzoni's work.

As Rosa Navarro confirms in a right way, the *Curial* is a *divertida y documentada novela*,¹⁷⁰ where the gods from Olympus swear among them like greengrocers, and where the ridiculous goddess Fortune *manifiesta conocimientos elementales de cocina*.¹⁷¹ She remembers, in this case, the sound of the paella when you stir-fry the meat. In the end, what can we say about *ese retrato del dios del mar que Luciano no hubiera podido imaginar...?*¹⁷² All these rhetoric questions are convenient and demand an answer, but the answer does not take us to a nineteenth-century humour, but a humanistic and almost Renaissance one: the typical humour of a writer, *formed* in medieval and classical readings, who knows how to *deform* them skilfully, conscious of the creative freedom that the art of *poetar* provides him. *La extraña modernidad de la obra, o más aún..., la audacia narrativa de esta novela que se dice fue escrita antes que el "Tirant lo Blanc"*,¹⁷³ are things that literature criticism should celebrate instead of questioning it. The same way that we celebrate unanimously the brilliance —parodic and other kinds— that brought Miguel de Cervantes to give example of the deepness that fictional literature could reach at his time. The *Curial* is a link in the same chain.

Rosa Navarro insists in the comical topic when she states: *La parodia está presente en toda la obra (tanto en los episodios caballerescos como en los alegóricos y mitológicos), y tiene pinceladas geniales*.¹⁷⁴ Perhaps more than she can imagine. Just after, she looks for an explanation for the Sanglier who *spumava* through the mouth in the Sanglier des Ardennes of the *Quentin Durward* (1823) by Walter Scott,¹⁷⁵ instead of searching the source in the description of the Geoffroy in *Roman de Mélusine* (1404-1405) by Coudrette.¹⁷⁶ Or she speaks about the presence in Catalonia of the French general Philibert Curial (1774-1829) in the 19th century as a cryptic justification for the name of the hero in the novel.¹⁷⁷ It is also original the proposal of identification for the copyst of the *Matritensis* 9750 with some relative of Milà i Fontanals: *¿Su hermano Pablo, el pintor?*¹⁷⁸ Or the confusion with a modern pencil (*la caja del manuscrito está dibujada a lápiz*)¹⁷⁹ with the techniques for outlining in drypoint, typical of the professional scribes from the 15th century, like the one who transcribed the draft

170. "a funny and documented novel". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 8.

171. "shows elementary cooking knowledge!". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 8.

172. "a characterization of the god of the seas that Lucian would not have been able to imagine". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Misterios de una extraña...": 8.

173. "The strange modernity of the book, ore ven more..., the narrative audacity of this novel that it is said it was written before *Tirant lo Blanc*". Navarro Duran, Rosa. "Pistas literarias...": 1.

174. "Parody is present in all the work (both in the episodes of knights and in allegorical and mythological ones), and it has brilliant passages". Navarro Duran, Rosa. "Pistas literarias...": 1.

175. Navarro Duran, Rosa. "Pistas literarias...": 8-9.

176. See Coudrette. *Le roman de Mélusine*. Laurence Harf-Lancner, ed. Paris: Flammarion, 1993: 95.

177. Navarro Durán, Rosa. "El general Curial y la literatura...": 6-10.

178. "His brother Pablo, the painter?" (Navarro Durán, Rosa. "El general Curial y la literatura...": 6-10).

179. "The layout of the manuscript is drawn with pencil". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "Curial e Güelfa, mélange...": 193.



or unique codex of the work that has arrived to us.¹⁸⁰ Regarding the presumed endings in *-ba* in the verb forms of the past simple, it was already said some decades ago that they were an orthographic confusion of Agustín Duran, when he passed his notes to Milà, for having read some *v* of Catalan gothic writing —with a high initial stroke— as if they were *b*.

In general, the observations that —as an exceptional reader— professor Navarro makes about the *Curial* are interesting to help for the interpretation of aspects of the work that are unusual in the contemporary letters, for instance, the commented parodic bias. However, some of the explanation proposals are hypothetically risky or, moreover, epistemologically questionable: *Si 'curial' quiere decir 'cortesano', nada mejor que abrir las páginas de El cortesano, publicado en Valencia en 1561...*¹⁸¹ It is a possibility, but it would be better —for our understanding— avoiding the anachronism.

3.4 Dresses with laces, Valencian pilota ('ball') and torches for dinner

Among the repertoire of possible *extrañezas* ("weirdness") that Navarro thinks to find in the Italian-Catalan text, we find one about Lachesis, when she gives Curial a dress with laces and eyes —Petrarchesque emblems of worldly seduction. *Es justo reconocer* —she observes— *que la idea del bordado de los ojos y ojales es valenciana y no alemana*.¹⁸² She justifies it resorting to *El cortesano* (16th century), where the allegorised Desire is dressed with *terciopelo carmesí, con unos ojos en blanco mirando al cielo, broslados entre muchas alas de oro*,¹⁸³ attached to the slogan *El deseo siempre vela, mira y vuela*.¹⁸⁴ That finding would be interesting if the literary referent would have been prior to the writing of the *Curial*. But we must take into account that the ladies in the Neapolitan court of the Magnanimous were dressed *gonnelle di tela d'oro o d'argento, di broccato o velluto, seminate dalla propria "impresa"*,¹⁸⁵ and adorned by *anelletes grosses* ("thick rings") made of silver (in a certain way, *ulls*, "eyes") and *laços* ('laces'), according to descriptions from the years 1440-1450. Isabella, duchess of Calabria and prince Ferran's wife, had —for instance— a beautiful dress of *cordellines* ("strings") i *laços de seda* ("silk laces").¹⁸⁶ And this is not the only reference to dresses, fashion and traditions that lead us again to Naples.

180. See Avenoza Vera, Gemma. "De nou sobre el ms. ...": 6-8.

181. "If 'curial' means 'courtier', the best is to open the pages of 'El cortesano', published in Valencia in 1561. ...Navarro Durán, Rosa. "'Curial e Güelfa', mélange...": 195.

182. "It is fair to acknowledge —she observes— that the idea of the embroidering of the eyes and buttonholes is Valencian and not German". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "'Curial e Güelfa', mélange...": 195.

183. "Crimson velvet, with some eyes in white looking at the sky, embroidered among many golden wings". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "'Curial e Güelfa', mélange...": 195.

184. "Desire always watches over, looks and flies". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "'Curial e Güelfa', mélange...": 195.

185. "Skirts with golden or silver fabric, brocade or velvet, done by the same company". Montalto, Lina. "Vesti e gale...": 71.

186. Montalto, Lina. "Vesti e gale...": 143.



The game of *pilota* —yes, the current national sport of Valencian Country— was feverishly played by the knights in the 15th century including, obviously, the ones that escorted the king to Naples. But it was also a common sport in the north of Italy. So there is no need to relate it —as Navarro does— with *el juego de pelota muy canicular*¹⁸⁷ that the protagonists of the Renaissance opuscle by Lluís del Milà¹⁸⁸ practised in Valencia. As it was also a common practice —and we don't need to search for many far away literary sources on this topic— that the knights around the Magnanimous (Jordi de Sant Jordi, Santillana, etc.) used to play the harp.¹⁸⁹

Navarro also finds it strange, carrying on with aspects of the atmosphere, the decision of the anonymous writer when he introduces the infants Jaume and Frederic holding some torches in their hands to light the table where their father was having dinner, the king Peter III of Aragon: *e com s'enujaven acomanaven-les algun poch a cavallers notables qui de prop los staven, però com viandes venien o lo rey venia, ells prenien les torxes*¹⁹⁰ (CeG I.46). We don't need to resort to Walter Scott again but to the Italy before the *Curial*, where they joked about the recently achieved prosperity of the mercantile oligarchies from the north. Riccobaldo da Ferrara reminded this way the times of the king Frederic II of Sicilly (and Naples, predecessor to the Magnanimous), when austerity reigned in the palaces, and not the late-medieval comfort of easy-living:

*En aquellos tiempos, las costumbres y los hábitos eran rudos (...). Por la noche la mesa de la cena estaba iluminada por antorchas sostenidas por un niño o un sirviente; no se tenía por costumbre tener velas de sebo o de cera (...). Los hombres y las mujeres llevaban muy poca o ninguna plata como adorno de sus vestidos (...).*¹⁹¹

The scene of the torches in the *Curial*, precisely, takes place at the end of an episode where the writer devoted himself to refute the widely known poverty or austerity, which the Catalans were famous for in Italy. This subject spread specially thanks to the xenophobia and incorrect interpretation of Dante's verses about *avara povertà della Catalogna*¹⁹² (*Parad.* VIII, 77-78), that the writer fixed poetically in a positive and praising sense for the people born in the Principality.¹⁹³ Likewise, when this objective has been attained, he decides to adorn the episode with a last stroke

187. "A very canicular ball game". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "'Curial e Güelfa',mélange...": 195.

188. Navarro Durán, Rosa. "'Curial e Güelfa, 'mélange...'" : 199.

189. Navarro Durán, Rosa. "'Curial e Güelfa, 'mélange...'" : 209.

190. "and as they got angry, they told some notable knights to hold them closely, but as the food came or the king came, they lit the torches".

191. "At that times, the traditions and habits were rough (...). At night the dinner table was lit by torches held by a child or a servant; they didn't use to have tallow or wax candles (...). Men and women wore little or any silver as adornment of their clothes (...)." Quoted by Hills, Paul, *La luz en la pintura de los primitivos italianos*, transl. Isabel Bennisar Madrid: Akal, 1995: 123 (English edition: Hills, Paul. *The Light of Early Italian Painting*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

192. "miserly poverty of the Catalonia".

193. Soler, Abel. "Italians contra catalans? Rerefons dantesc i circumstàncies històriques d'un episodi de 'Curial e Güelfa'", *Del manuscrit a la paraula digital. Estudis de llengua i literatura catalanes / From Manuscript to*



of humour based on another subject, this one from Italy, about those ancient vain Italian men from the 15th century, so poor that obliged their children to hold torches while they were having dinner.

3.5 Verisimilitude, ironic subtlety and literary ‘private joke’

The priest in Don Quixote considered good to reprieve *Tirant* because *aquí comen los caballeros y duermen*.¹⁹⁴ As Navarro states, *en el “Curial” no solo duermen, sino que antes les preparan la cama; y no solo comen sino que cenan. No hay relato donde se detallen más los “sopars”: desde el comienzo hasta el final*.¹⁹⁵ This willingness of portraying verisimilitude and naturalness was shared with Martorell by the anonymous author of the *Curial*. Thus, when they bring one of the jerkins of the knight for Güelfa from Tunis, she sends Melchior to see *si hauria Curial leixat algun jupó en casa sua*, to check if both of them were *fets per a un cors*¹⁹⁶ (CeG III.41). These are details that are perfectly understandable for an enthusiastic reader of *Decameron*, and we don’t need to compare it with works from the 19th century. It isn’t anachronistic at all the irony of humanistic sign, that *está en todas partes* (“is everywhere”).¹⁹⁷ Or *ese sutil humor* (“that subtle humour”), typical of *vir facetus*, of a *cortigiano* from the Renaissance *avant la lettre*,¹⁹⁸ that the humanists of the court in Naples tried to recreate literarily to depict a human portrait of king Alfonso.¹⁹⁹ Or the meta-literary parody (false praises to *maestre Guido*) and literary parody that sometimes arises, which criticises harshly some excesses of ancient medieval literature: *Virats... peus e mans tallats volar a la terra, caps asclar, polmons e fetges peजार, gemechs e crits*²⁰⁰ (CeG III.91). In the Italy in times of the *Curial*, the Arthuric chivalric stories were an obsolete poetic material, which was asking to be subjected to parody. Not for anything —as Rosa Navarro herself confirms— the ambivalent and subtle *narrador* —who cannot be Milà, we insist— *pregona su procedimiento con su genial invocación, al comienzo del libro tercero, no a las Musas (...), sino a las Piérides (...): “yo, axi en aquesta obra com en totes les coses que parle,*

Digital Word: Studies of Catalan Language and Literature. Manuel Pérez Saldañ, Rafael Roca, eds. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017: 36-49.

194. “the knights eat and sleep here”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “‘Curial e Güelfa’, ‘mélange...’”: 209.

195. “in the ‘Curial’ they not only sleep, but they have their bed prepared before; and they not only have lunch but also dinner. There is not a story with a greater detail of the ‘dinners’: from the beginning to the end”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “‘Curial e Güelfa’, ‘mélange...’”: 209.

196. “if Curial would have left any doublet in his house, to check if both of them were done for a body”.

197. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “‘Curial e Güelfa’, ‘mélange...’”: 218.

198. Luck, Georg. “‘Vir facetus’: A Renaissance Ideal”. *Studies in Philology*, 55 (1958): 107-121.

199. Montaner Frutos, Alberto. “La palabra en la ocasión. Alfonso como ‘rex facetus’ a través del Panormita”. *e-Spania. Revue interdisciplinaire d’études hispaniques médiévales et modernes*. 4 December 2007. 26 June 2014 <<http://e-spania.revues.org/1503>; DOI: 10.4000/e-spania.1503>.

200. “The spotted ones... feet and hands flying to the ground, cracked heads, lungs and liver crushed, shrieks and cries”.



són imitador de les míseres es garrules filles de Pièrides".²⁰¹ Even this *captatio benevolentiae* is liable of a double reading or meaning, by a writer who will speak *rudament e grossera* ("rudely and roughly") about Greek-Latin myths.²⁰² Indeed, the author of the *Curial*—and regarding this we believe that professor Navarro is totally right—wrote a book *llo de parodia erudita, de diversión literaria, de ingenio (...); jugaba con la literatura confiando en que los lectores sabrían gozar como él* of this pleasure.²⁰³

3.6 Renaissance imitatio, wide world and Catalan chronicles

Revising a hypothesis in 2016, Rosa Navarro makes "the extraordinary scholar" Milà i Fontanals the "discoverer" of the *Curial*,²⁰⁴ a role attributable in fact to the librarian of the National Library in Madrid, Agustín Durán.²⁰⁵ She retakes arguments by her and Riera regarding the unknown identity of an author who *uses compound imitation—of various literatures—like a Renaissance bee*, a writing procedure unthinkable in the Catalonia from 1445,²⁰⁶ but not in the Italy of the humanists. For the *Curial*, specifically, we must relate it with the method of the Lombard Gasparino Barzizza, whose son, Guiniforte, had strong bonds with the court of the king of Aragon around the years 1432-1448. Gasparino recommended the Petrarchian *imitatio*, based on the Seneca image of the bees and honey, and provided some instructions to practice it: *addendo, subtrahendo, transferendo et immutando* ("add, subtract, transfer and transform").²⁰⁷ The author of the *Curial* followed them in an experimental and successful way, as it is unanimously acknowledged by the criticism. The opuscles of the grammarian circulated around the scribes' offices of Joan Olzina²⁰⁸ and Gabriel Altadell,²⁰⁹ courtiers—like the anonymous writer—of the Naples ruled by Alfonso.

201. "the narrator proclaims his procedure, with brilliant invocation, in the beginning of book three, not to the Muses (...), but to the Pierides (...): 'I, both in this work as in all the things I speak about, am an imitator of the miserable and chatterbox daughters of Pierides'". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "*Curial e Güelfa*, 'mélange...': 218.

202. Navarro Durán, Rosa. "*Curial e Güelfa*, 'mélange...': 222.

203. "full of learned parody, of literaray enjoyment, of witness (...); he played with literatura believing that the readers would know how to enjoy like he does". Navarro Durán, Rosa. "*Curial e Güelfa*, 'mélange...': 223.

204. Navarro Durán, Rosa. "The Gothic Novel...": 54-55.

205. See Roca, Rafael. "Quan i de quina manera...", forthcoming.

206. Navarro Durán, Rosa. "The Gothic Novel...": 58.

207. García Galiano, Ángel. *La imitación poética en el Renacimiento*. Kassel: Reichenberger- Publicaciones de la Universidad de Deusto, 1992: 85-86.

208. If not for Gasparino, for one of his most notable disciples. See Sabbadini, Remigio. "Notizie sulla vita e gli scritti di alcuni dotti umanisti del secolo XV raccolte da codici italiani (II)". *Giornale storico della Letteratura italiana*, 6 (1885): 163-176, especially 166, is about some manuals of rhetoric imitation brought from Milan.

209. Hernando Delgado, Josep. "Del llibre manuscrit al llibre imprés. La confecció del llibre a Barcelona durant el segle XV. Documentació notarial". *Arxiu de textos catalans antics*, 21 (2002): 257-603, especially 268 i 294.



More things: the fact that the proverbial sentence *lo món és ample e gran* (“the world is wide and great”) coincides with another one by Shakespeare (*the world is broad and wide*) could be, according to Navarro, another ‘sign’ more that the author of the work lived in the 19th century.²¹⁰ However, the *Curial* is a text that collects multiples proverbs, metaphors, etc, coming from biblical or homilies’ repertoires, which —logically— appear randomly in subsequent works. In this case, it is the Gospel’s *topos* of *mundus amplius* that Jesus Christ uttered just before introducing himself saying: *Jo sóc el camí...* (“I am the way”, *Io* 14:19). Precisely, this sentence happens just in the moment when *Curial* sets off as a wandering knight. The rest is just pure coincidence.

Following a questionable thesis by the criticism from the last century, Navarro wants to find in the *Curial* some echo from the Catalan chronicles of Desclot and Muntaner (14th century). Pamela Waley, Antoni Ferrando, Miquel Aguilar²¹¹ and other critics have proved that he did not acquaint himself with the Catalan chronicles at hand, but he preferred Italian sources. He would be aware of the Catalan works —in any case— for having listened to them in the court. As he didn’t want to be a chronicler, he reproduced some mistakes that are unthinkable in Catalan chronicles but repetitive in Italian sources. Even the plot of the *llegenda del bon comte (de Barcelona) i l’emperadriu*²¹² depends on a story with central European connection reachable in the north of Italy.²¹³ When Lola Badia stated in 1985 that the anonymous writer *coneixia clarament Desclot*,²¹⁴ she would do it for the inertia of previos publishings, not checked with intertextual evidences. For instance, the anonymous writer allows himself to speak ironically about the *molts autèntichs e grans llibres per diverses, grans e molt solemnes doctors escrits*²¹⁵ (solemn doctors...?) where *los strènuus actes d’armes* (“the brave acts of arms”) of the king Peter III of Aragon are told (CeG II.113). He is interested directly about the classics: Cesar, Livy, etc.

210. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...”: 60.

211. Waley, Pamela. “Historical Names and Titles in ‘Curial e Güelfa’”. *Medieval Hispanic Studies presented to Rita Hamilton*. Alan D. Deyermond, ed. London: Tamesis Books Limited, 1976: 245-256, especially 253; Ferrando, Antoni. “Introducció”...: 5-35, especially 13; Aguilar, Miquel. “La llegenda del bon comte i l’emperadriu: entre l’amor cortès i la política d’estat”. *Journal of Catalan Studies*, 8 (2005): 63-76, especially 68.

212. “legend of the good count (of Barcelona) and the empress”.

213. Ferrando, Antoni. “Fortuna catalana d’una llegenda germànica: el tema de l’emperadriu d’Alemanya falsament acusada d’adulteri”, *Actes del desè Col·loqui de Internacional de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes (Frankfurt am Main, 18-25 de setembre de 1994)*, Axel Schönberger, Tilbert Dídac Stegmann, eds. Barcelona: Associació Internacional de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes-Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, 1996: II, 197-216; Ferrando, Antoni. “Els desenvolupaments quattrocentistes de la llegenda de l’emperadriu d’Alemanya, amb atenció especial a ‘Philipertus et Eugenia’ i al ‘Curial e Güelfa’”, *La cultura catalana en projecció de futur*. Germà Colón, Tomàs Martínez, Maria Pilar Perea, eds. Castelló de la Plana: Fundació Germà Colón; Universitat Jaume I, Castelló de la Plana, 2004: 187-213.

214. “clearly knew about Desclot”. Badia, Lola. “La segona visió mitològica...: 157-176. Also Badia, Lola. “La segona visió mitològica de *Curial*...: 265-292, especially 272, note 11.

215. “many authentic and great books, written by many diverse, great and very solemn doctors”.



More questionable than the relationship of the *Curial* with the ancient chronicles is the idea of exploring 19th century classics like *Ivanhoe* to find parallelisms.²¹⁶ It is hard to maintain a wide range of proposals ranging from Ramon Muntaner to Walter Scott and expect that this proposal keeps sense and coherence. Indeed, Fate provides so many coincidences that *Salonés de Verona* (not ‘Salones’), opponent of the Lombard and the Catalan, would be *undoubtedly (...) comparable with the name Bonifaci de Verona, cited by Muntaner in his “Crònica”*.²¹⁷ There is an alternative believable explanation, based on the participation of a knight from the court of Aragon in the war (1438-1440) of the ‘Salones’ (Salò and the riverbank of Garda) and Verona between Milan and Venice.²¹⁸ This is one of the several autobiographical references that are traceable in the book.

3.7 Somewhere between Fulgentius and Cervantes

More foundation has the idea of searching Fulgentius among the sources of the *Curial*. The author quotes him explicitly in the preface to book III. However, we must take into account that the knights of Phoebus (*Titan, Etheus, Lampaus e Philogeus, CeG III.29*) don’t depend from a direct consultation of the classic, but an indirect one (Pietro Alighieri, 3rd red., *Purg.* XV, 1-36 and XXXII, 52-72).²¹⁹ The same occurs with the allegorised Muses, as Xavier Gómez studied.²²⁰ In fact, the anonymous ‘makes up’ an original version of Fulgentius’ fable from Italian intermediaries, perhaps without having had access ever to the original source. On the other hand, the feminine names *Cloto* and *Làquesis* (two of the three *Parcae*) are not strange, and must not be attributed to an influx by Villena,²²¹ but to the fact that the author—a privileged reader of the Latin version of the *Republic* by Plato, a book that was dispatched in 1440 from Milan to Naples— would link the *Làquesis* in the *Curial* with the *Lachesis* in the myth of Er: the platonic *Parca* that obliges the men’s soul to choose between virtue and vice, and advises that the responsibility of this choice will only be his own, without possible attribution of human errors to the Gods or Fortune.²²² Isn’t this *Curial*’s plot?

216. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...”: 78-80.

217. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...”: 78, note 91.

218. See: Soler, Abel. “Italians contra catalans?...”: 36-49.

219. Alighieri, Pietro. *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis (III red.)*, ed. Paolo Procaccioli, Rome: Lexis, 1999. Online version: *Biblioteca Italiana*, 2005, Sapienza Università di Roma, 16 January 2016 <http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/indice/visualizza_scheda/bibit001184>.

220. Gómez Font, Xavier. “‘Decem musae, ut vocis modulamina?’ (‘Curial e Güelfa’, III, 6-7)”, *Actas del VII Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos (Madrid, 1987)*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1989: III, 493-500.

221. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...”: 88.

222. Soler, Abel. “La Làquesi de Plató, el ‘Curial’ i el neoplatonisme italià”. *XVII Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval (Roma, 26-30 de septiembre de 2017. La Sapienza, Università di Roma)*. Rome: Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval, forthcoming.



It could be a ‘strange thing’ in the reader some satiric reference to ecclesiastic authorities in the *Curial*,²²³ totally unprecedented in Catalan environment, but understandable in an Italy of Boccaccio readers and anticlerical jokes, where the humanists spread treaties against the friars. Being the novel contextualised in an Italian environment, therefore, it is not so extraordinary the fact that the *Curial*, in some details, *surpasses the irony of “Qujote”*,²²⁴ or that the author is able to treat the young squire with the badly cut tunic in a parodic way and other mythic characters of the Breton topic, advancing to Cervantes a century and a half. Navarro is right when she concludes: *Humour is a constant feature of “Curial”; in this case, the nickname of an Arthurian knight in “Qujote” is subjected to joke without that attitude obliging us to consider the anonymous writer as an admirer of Cervantes’ irony.*²²⁵ In any case, he should be considered an undervalued forefather of the author of *Don Quixote*.

3.8 Liberal arts and a friend of his friends

It is quite interesting the comparison established between the oneiric parade of the liberal arts of the *Curial* —paganising, humanistic— and the *Visión deleitable* (1454) by Alfonso de la Torre —scholastic, theocentric.²²⁶ It would be more interesting if we could confirm that the *Visión* is from 1437 —as some critics state—, as the ‘vision’ of the *Curial* could be interpreted as something parodic. Nevertheless, everything seems to indicate that the work of the bachelor De la Torre was written afterwards. Moreover, we have checked that the referred episode in the *Curial* depends on a Milanese manual from *Trecento*, the *Canzone de delle virtù e delle scienze*, with iconographic plagiarism and repetition of hapaxes of the kind *Subeumetria*.²²⁷

We can discard, finally, due to chronological reasons, the fact that the anonymous writer had access to some verses by Jorge Manrique (*ca.* 1476) where some expressions of the kind *amigo de sus amigos* and *¡qué enemigo de enemigos!*²²⁸ are used (*Coplas por la muerte de su padre*, vv. 301 and 304).²²⁹ In the *Curial*, Aquil·les is *amich de son amich e enemich de son enemich*²³⁰ (*CeG* III.31), a common phrase and a calque from Castilian, a language which the author was fluent in where he takes resources like *fer lo buç* (< *fazer el buz*, “to reverence”), *finçar los genolls* (< *hincar las rodillas* “to kneel down”), etc. The sentence that attracts the attention of the scholar could have as its source the Latin version of the *Iliad* by Lorenzo Valla (Naples, 1440-1445;

223. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...: 88.

224. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...: 68.

225. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...: 82.

226. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...: 88-90.

227. Soler, Abel, “Iconografía italiana...”, 41-57.

228. “a friend of his friends and, what enemy of the enemies!”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...: 90.

229. Quoted by Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...”: 93-94.

230. “a friend of his friend and enemy of his enemy”. Navarro Durán, Rosa. “The Gothic Novel...”: 93-94.



XX, 196-197: *Et Achilles hilarem..., inquit: "amici mei, atque amicorum praecipui..."*),²³¹ accessible where the *Curial* was written.

4. Conclusion

The questions made by Jaume Riera and Rosa Navarro, which allow to establish the hypothesis of a falsified *Curial e Güelfa* in the Catalan *Renaixença* of the 19th century—and attributable to Milà i Fontanals—, collide with the criteria of scholars or specialists in very different fields of study (codicology, palaeography, medieval history, diachronic linguistics, etc.), which certify as indisputable the authenticity of the codex and the work contained, written in the middle of 15th century. The doubts stated by both scholars would find an echo easily, obviously, if we admitted the proposal of a *Curial* written in the Catalonia of queen Maria or the Civil War (decades 1440-1460), as part of the criticism supports. However, they are not strange at all when we locate this novel in the geographic (the Italy of Alfonso the Magnanimous), historical-cultural (the court in Naples influenced by the humanism) and chronological context (decade of 1440) that it corresponds.

231. "And Achilles, who felt happy..., said: 'My friends, and the most distinguished among my friends...'", BHUV, ms. 413 (Homer. *Homeri Ilias, per Laurentium Vallensem in latinum sermonem traducta*, transl. Lorenzo Valla) f. 84v.

