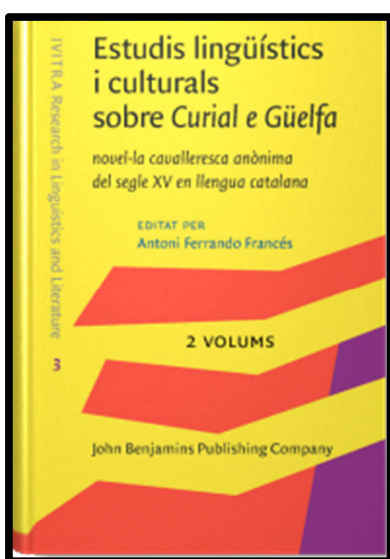


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This is volume 3 of the new collection ‘IVITRA Research in Linguistics and Literature’ directed by Prof. Vicent Martines. This volume consists of a gathering of essays edited by Antoni Ferrando and devoted to the topic of *Curial e Güelfa (CG)*, an anonymous novel written in Catalan ca. 1450. To my knowledge, this is the most extensive compilation of essays ever devoted to this paramount medieval Catalan chivalric romance. The numerous essays included in this two-volume set examine all aspects of the work including historical, ecdotal, literary, and linguistic analyses. Ferrando has been able to gather a magnificent set of renowned experts from France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, and Great Britain who study matters pertaining to synchronic and diachronic Catalan linguistics, codicology, and onomastics, Arabic and Latin literatures, trouvadour lyric, French *roman*, medieval Catalan literature, medieval philosophy, and cultural studies. The volume comprises nearly 1,200 pages and includes three indexes: an index of proper names, a second of places, and a third of commented words, which is of great philological interest.

This collection of essays represents a groundbreaking accomplishment destined to become a point of reference for future studies on *CG* as well as for any scholar who studies the medieval language and literature of the Crown of Aragon. More importantly, it represents the greatest effort to bring to the attention of the international scholarly community a masterpiece of Catalan literature, not sufficiently known outside of Spain even among experts in Romance literatures. This lack of knowledge about *CG* is the result of the fact that the novel is anonymous, that it was only discovered at the end of the 19th century, and that it was published for the first time in 1901. In addition, it has been constantly compared to *Tirant lo Blanc* (a better-known work due to Cervantes and Vargass Llosa). It has not helped either that *CG* has a somewhat complex style and that scholarly analyses on the work has always been second to *Tirant lo Blanc* (despite the European setting of the plot in *CG* and the clear influence of Italian humanism on the work). Antoni Ferrando has contributed to the

dissemination of *CG* in international circles by publishing a new philological edition of this work (Toulouse: Anacharsis, 2007) and by coordinating the translation of *CG* into several languages, such as French by Jean-Marie Barberà (Anacharsis, 2007), Portuguese by Ricardo da Costa (2011) and Italian by Cesáreo Calvo & Ana Giordano (2012). Each translation has a prologue by Ferrando.

The *Estudis sobre Curial e Güelfa* gather 38 articles in four sections.

The first section deals with the MSS transmission and the literary and historical analysis of *CG*. Avenoza and Sánchez Hernampérez provide us with the best codicological description of the MS to date. Colón offers an interesting reflection when expressing puzzlement about a work that seems Valencian from a lexicographical point of view and Catalan in atmosphere. Ferrando cautions us about several “methodological problems” when analyzing *CG* from a linguistic standpoint. He provides us with the transcription of some *makulatur* (recently discovered) that associate *CG* to a Toledo milieu. Furthermore, he adds some insightful remarks that could help us determine the date and geographical place of composition of *CG*. Finally, he offers a convincing analysis of the Boccaccian literary model used by the anonymous author of *CG*. This model favors diatopic variation and not the supradialectal criteria prevalent at the chancery. Grifoll explains the historical references in *CG* within the context of the European politics of the 1430s.

The second section includes some remarkable contributions to the cultural world of *CG* that foster novel points of view derived from the many areas of expertise of the authors. Thus, Babbi frames *CG* within the main novelistic contemporary European tendencies. Beltrán points out that *CG* echoes some of the most famous chivalric figures of the 1410s such as Boucicaut and Guillalmes du Chastell. Butinyà notes that *CG* uses novel narrative techniques and a mixture of several cultural traditions, and she sees in it an influence of the humanistic contemporary tendencies. Compagna interprets that the author of *CG* seeks an internationalization of a novel based upon Italian literary sources. Courcelle suggests that the author had close contact with the cultural atmosphere of Florence. Escartí analyzes with panache the role played by writing in the daily relationship among the protagonists. Espadaler studies the prose and the manner in which the different adventures are presented as being clearly influenced by the genre of history, and in particular compares *CG* with Catalan historical works from the time. Franco analyzes *CG*'s attitude toward the Muslim world. Hauf examines the relationship of Curial with Làquesis and Güelfa, who eventually redeems the not-so-faithful lover through her *gratia pareveniens*. Vicent Martines neatly explores the plastic dimension of *Curial*. Mesa (following in Ferrando's footsteps) observes that *CG*'s anomalies in relation to its Latin sources also appear in the 14th-c. commentaries on the *Divine Comedy*. Miralles studies the love relationship between Curial and Güelfa in light of the Latin classics. Isabel de Riquer and Meritxell Simó analyze the sources of the episode of the “devoured heart”. In sum, *CG* is an elaborate text that offers multiple intertextualities and cultural

hybridizations and requires, as pointed out by Annichiarico, a great deal of expertise and professionalism when being translated into another language.

The third section deals with the linguistic dimension of *CG* for which the contributors utilize the most modern methodology of analysis. Thanks to the contributions of Batllori, Súnier, Fischer, Joaquim Martí, Molina, Montserrat, Pérez Saldanya, Rigau, Ramos, Rofes, Schmid and Wheeler, we have a precise and updated study on the language used in *CG*. In addition, these articles as a whole supersede the previous work by Alfons Par (on the syntax of Metge's *Lo somni*, 1923, and *CG*'s language and style, 1928), a meritorious endeavor although not always accurate. Scholars agree on the date of *CG* (ca. 1450), as pointed out by Par. For some there is a syntactic influence from Italian and Aragonese, while for others there are fonetic and morphological traits that point in the direction of Occidental Catalan or Valencian. Finally, others highlight *CG*'s innovative characteristics over its archaic traits and in particular remark on the wealth of connectors in *CG*. In any event, all these analyses deny the possibility that *CG* is not an authentic work written in the mid-15th century.

The fourth section deals with lexicography and onomastics. Casanova suggests that some Latinisms reflect an Italian influence. After advocating the adoption of a new methodological approach in particular for the analysis of dialectal variation and lexico-semantic change in medieval Catalan, Josep Martines points out several lexical and semantic transferences from French, Castilian, Occitan and particularly Italian sources (*Il Decamerone*). Terrado focuses on a possible Aragonese influence. Upon analyzing voiceless vowels, the consonant system, morphology and the lexical peculiarities of *CG*, Veny concludes that this work offers Occidental traits, and in particular Valencian ones, that have even been preserved in contemporary uses. Wittlin thinks that the scarce presence of binomial expressions, which are frequently utilized by translators in their work, is proof that *CG* is not a translation, as some critics have posited. Turull and Ramírez provide us with a complete annotated onomastical index of *CG*. From a lexicographic point of view, *Curial* is a work composed with highly Latinized language and style with a strong Italian influence (and to a lesser degree with an influence from Aragon and France) that contains clear Valencian preferences.

In sum, the articles provide the reader not only with the most updated literary and cultural analyses on *CG*, but also with a novel methodological approach to the study of *CG*. Furthermore, they agree that *CG* is a complex literary work that reflects the presence of the Crown of Aragon and of the Catalan language in Italy at a time of clear Valencian influence. As Antoni Ferrando points out, the essays gathered in this volume offer clues about the multilingual context that produced *CG* and provide a valid explanation for the linguistic experimentalism and the use of an integrative language in the novel. And all of this points in the direction of Italy.

Estudis lingüístics i culturals sobre Curial e Güelfa is a tour-de-force in the analysis of *CG* that does away with many of the clichés repeated *ad nauseam* by scholars when writing about this novel. Needless to say that it is a merit of the editor

Antoni Ferrando to have gathered contributions that offer many points of view and methodological approaches. That is the way to advance the understanding of *CG*, to overcome the many ideological prejudices of the past, and to open new paths for the analysis and appreciation of a masterpiece.