

## TIRANT LO BLANCH AND THE SOCIAL ORDER OF THE END OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The appearance of a new edition of what Cervantes called «el mejor libro del mundo»<sup>1</sup> is an occasion to make a new beginning in the appreciation of Martorell's amazing novel, which one may now *enjoy* reading and not merely take it up as a monument of forgotten literature.

That there is matter for *enjoyment* in this book is due partly to the vividness and maturity of its style in many parts, despite the dangerous facility for set speeches which all the characters show, but also to a strange reversal of the normal relations between fact and fiction in the Middle Ages. When we are assured that the *Sergas de Esplandián* were discovered underneath the earth of a hermitage near Constantinople, we feel that the last place one needs to ransack for a manuscript would be this hermitage near Constantinople. The authority of Merlin or Turpin or Cide Hamete Benengeli is cited in fiction precisely because it does not exist, but when Martorell claims to have followed an English book, it is established that he had been in England at the court of the king he named and that he had a competent knowledge of the English language. When he claims to have translated «no solament de llengua anglesa en portuguesa, mas encara de

1. JOANOT MARTORELL i MARTÍ JOAN DE GALBA, *Tirant lo Blanc*. Text, introducció, notes i índex per MARTÍ DE RIQUER. Il·lustracions de FRANCESC ALMUNI (Barcelona, Biblioteca Perenne, 1947). In the 207 prefatory pages Sr Martí de Riquer has gathered all the astonishing progress of the last thirty years: his own work and that of Messrs Vaeth, Nicolau d'Olwer, Ivars, Bohigas, Givanel i Mas, Gili i Gaya, Moll and others, among whom he has been kind enough to include my colleague Alfred Ewert, editor of *Gui de Warewic*, and even an early essay by the author of these lines. There is a complete set of Martorell's cartels of defiance, the *Tractat d'orde de cavalleria* in which Guillem de Vároich instructs «un escuder (de Bretània era natural)», a careful analysis of the plot and the sources of *Tirant*, and a study of its style and influence. The text is complete, though Sr Capdevila i de Balanzó was undoubtedly right in thinking that the tale would have been improved by pruning; the paper is light and the print clear, the orthography modern, and vignettes enliven the reading.

portuguesa en vulgar valenciana», a Valencian *Guillem de Våròich* comes to light, almost certainly from Martorell's pen, and there may well have been a Portuguese text. The point is that in one of Martorell's affirmations there is no *a priori* reason for disbelief as with other writers of fiction, but a presumption of truth; one must simply discover in what sense his words should be taken. It would not be impossible for him, even if he had no knowledge of Portuguese, to dictate to a Portuguese amanuensis a summary of *Guy of Warwick* at the behest of a Portuguese prince. The Catalan translation is in fact merely a summary of the end of the romance to serve as an introduction to Ramon Lull's treatise. The Portuguese prince is real enough, and in 1460 he may have been hopeful of gaining a kingdom («rei expectant»), though not Portugal (which he ceased to claim in 1455), but Catalonia-Aragon. This is Sr Riquer's suggestion, and it seems highly probable. The term «rei expectant» does not look as if it had a legal value.

*Amadís* or *Tristán* may represent ideals which fifteenth century knight strove to attain, as we know Nun' Alvares Pereira modelled his life on that of Sir Galahad. But Nun' Alvares was compelled to marry, and the knightly ideals were in fact unattainable. But the presumption of truth which recent research has established for *Tirant* makes it, in its turn, a document for the actual life of the fifteenth century second only to the English *Paston Letters*. It is superior to documents in the archives since it gives motivation as well as action. Thus, we may say, people of Martorell's circle *did* act, or at least *would have* acted if their conduct were freed from the trivial obstacles of daily life, and these would have been their motives in doing so. Sr Riquer calls attention to what modern psychological slang calls «wish-fulfilment» in *Tirant*. The novel shows action achieving its ends in a way it did not for Martorell himself. Of the four great military enterprises of the book, two are of the nature of «wish-fulfilment»: the successful defence of a Constantinople which actually fell in 1453, and the conquest of Moslem Africa by establishing contact with the Negroes and Prester John — a feat which was not shown to be vain until 1520, though by then it had become irrelevant.

From the survival of Martorell's cartels of defiance («partides per A. B. C. e sotscribes de la mia pròpia mà») we can easily infer the verisimilitude of the numerous cartels of defiance (likewise «partides per A. B. C. e sotscribes») in the novel which correspond to other motivations. A curious feature of them is their rank misstatements. Kirieleison de Muntalbà accuses Tirant of treacherous conduct: for fighting

«ab armes falses e dissimulades, entre cavallers d'honor no acostumades portar».

Tomàs de Muntalbà is not even capable of composing such letters, but offers to sustain everything asserted by Kirieleison and adds

«que la batalla vull, e no em parleu de concòrdia, ni perdó no pot haver negú de mi».

Sr Riquer's suggestion that Martorell is here parodying Don Gonçalvo d'Íxer, comanador de Muntalbà, in these scenes and waging a battle which in fact was denied to him, seems to me very probable; the more so since Don Gonçalvo does not seem to have been capable of writing a letter himself and transmits verbal messages of the same brusque kind as Tomàs :

«per algunes raons les quals en part a ell no vendria bé que jo les explicàs, jo no vull veure sa lletra de batalla ne menys accepte aquella».

But an important point is that Tirant's causes of battle are wholly right and his opponents' wrong, so that the duel becomes a judgement by God. Mrs Rosa María Lida de Malkiel has recently pointed out that the witch in Juan de Mena's *Laberinto* is not satisfied with any corpse, like Lucan's sorceress, but with one unburied «por aver muerto en non justa batalla».<sup>2</sup> She adds «o sea en guerra civil», but the words seem also to cover the case of the knight conquered in the lists. For the savage treatment of them there is plenty of evidence in *Tirant*, and the principle is the same. On the pretext for battle the conqueror is right and the vanquished not merely unfortunate, but wrong and damned. Hence the refusal to surrender even when the jousts were devised as a form of recreation; hence the holocaust of famous knights under the Round Tower of Windsor. This slaughter we must accept as proper to the age, even if somewhat exaggerated in amount for a festive occasion. The blood-lust of the fifteenth century had overleaped all reasonable bounds. But the importance of the pretext for battle is attested earlier: in the four forms of challenge which the Cid offered to his opponents (so that they could take advantage of any textual weakness in any one of them), and in Don Juan Manuel's story of Don Pero Núñez el Leal<sup>3</sup> who won his duel but lost his eye because of an imperfect cause :

«ella díxol' que ciertamente ella nunca fiziera aquel yerro de que la acusavan, mas que fuera su talante de lo fazer».

The situation confuses brute strength, a just cause, and technical defects in the pretext, and in the novel Tirant is made to fight only in the justest of causes.

2. ROSA MARÍA LIDA DE MALKIEL, *Juan de Mena* (México 1950), 83.

3. *Libro de los enxemplos del conde Lucanor et de Patronio*, ENXEMPLE XLIV.

In Martorell's experience things were otherwise. For the wrong done to his sister, Na Damiata, he offered to fight En Joan de Montpalau on a mixed cause, the injury done to the lady and the promise of marriage. En Joan would fight only on the latter cause, and Martorell seems not to have had so much faith in his sister's assertions as to risk battle on the single issue of the «palabra de esposa». So the two young men protracted their correspondence with a singular lack of tact. Their uproarious conduct must have published Na Damiata's misfortune over all València, and, as Sr Riquer remarks, she alone lost by it. The correspondence is lengthened by quibbles rooted in the notion that God was somehow interested in the precise wording of cartels and judged accordingly, but also by the sheer pleasure that young men find in insulting each other. I would not accompany Sr Riquer in the insinuation of illiteracy or lesser literacy in regard to En Joan de Monpalau. His complaint against certain words employed by Martorell is a quite justified criticism of a certain preciosity of style. That a schoolboy could have explained the words is as irrelevant as the consideration that schoolboys could have explained some of the words which irritated Barahona de Soto in Herrera's poems or Quevedo in Góngora's. Martorell is wrong when he says «no em cur jo de retoricar mes lletres»; he did like the use of rhetoric, and he used it in his cartels in *Tirant* and in the speeches which his ladies and gentlemen all too frequently address to each other. Meanwhile the facts of his life show that «la venganza es el peor remedio».

The disorder of the Martorell home is repeated in the palace of the Emperor at Constantinople. There young men penetrate without difficulty and at any hour to the rooms of unmarried girls, and the Emperor exercises no more control than that of his casual perambulations round the palace. He himself is, like so many of Pérez de Guzmán's characters, «muy dado a las mujeres», and would gladly trifle with the maids-of-honour were it not for his obvious impotence. The aged Empress, herself set upon a stripling of a squire but more competent in these matters, treats the Emperor with familiar contempt, calling him «En beneit». That such were the habits of the court of Constantinople we need not believe, but that Martorell's home and others known to him were ill-regulated explains the misfortune of Na Damiata and many others in her day.

In this connection, however, there is a point missed by those who have accused the author of *Tirant* of immorality, namely, that the ideal of conduct between men and women may have been other than we hold. Sr Riquer has remarked that, though Plaerdemavida's words are free, her conduct is perfectly honest. But it is also the case that Estefania de Macedònia's conduct, if free, is faithful and that she makes an admirable wife.

The case of Carmesina is complicated by her royalty on the one hand and by Tirant's refusal to accept any rank between his simple knighthood and the office of Cæsar. But the common use is attested by Cervantes in *La fuerza de la sangre*. Marriage was made «sin las diligencias y prevenciones justas y santas que ahora se usan», that is to say, without the sacrament enforced by the resolutions of Trent in 1564. It consisted of «sola la voluntad de los contrayentes», though Cervantes employs a priest to make a formal «desposorio» before witnesses. A marriage according to Scottish law is still said to consist of an exchange of promises between the parties in the presence of witnesses. The ceremony in church was thus of merely secondary interest and chiefly of importance for the public, which was not privy to the will of the parties. But witnesses were also not essential to matrimony, and there is a certain preference for «sola la voluntad de los contrayentes». Thus it is «sobre palabra de esposo» that Elisena and Perión come together in *Amadís de Gaula*, and Amadís' birth, though doubtful, is never treated as illegitimate. Moreover Darioleta in that novel, being aware of the sentiments of the parties, is as active as Plaerdemavida in consummating the marriage. Of course, to anticipate marriage is technically a sin,<sup>4</sup> but thanks to St Paul wedlock is in any case to be considered a less perfect state. This state of mind is not so difficult to comprehend. In modern novels, the vast majority are concerned with the events which lead to the consent of the parties; the intervention of other persons and the peal of wedding-bells is of no artistic interest. In *Tirant lo Blanch* these secret promises are kept; but En Joan de Montpaul, if he gave a promise, did not keep it; and so life differs from the ideal.

We can thus understand the conduct of Martorell's heroines not as lascivious, but as the expression of this older preference for the secret promise and consummation. Plaerdemavida, whose thoughts are always straightforward, knowing the intentions of Tirant and Carmesina, is zealous to have them carried out. They resist for certain reasons of their own, but their marriage is in fact made on p. 772 :

«Perquè açò sia vertader matrimoni, dic jo amb paraules de present :  
Jo, Carmesina, dó mon cos a vós, Tirant lo Blanc, per lleal muller, e  
prenc lo vostre per lleal marit».

The espousals occur only on p. 1161, and the state of matrimony is terminated as soon as possible by the deaths of the hero and heroine. Similarly, Estefania and Diafebus have every intention of marrying; they are therefore in effect married from the start, and as they are private persons,

4. *Tirant*, 1213.

their friends promote the consummation. Estefania invites marital familiarities «de la cinta amunt»,<sup>5</sup> and consummates her marriage before there is a public notification. Her conduct shocks the oversensitive modern mind, but represents an ideal which dates the veritable marriage from the consent of the two parties. This ideal is expressed in the opening words of one of Shakespeare's sonnets :

«Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
admit impediments.»<sup>6</sup>

The conduct of Princess Carmesina is more difficult to follow, and it is fortunate that we have in view both of Martorell's models. Roger de Flor simply stipulated for the title of Megaduc and the hand of the Emperor's niece. But Tirant, whose conduct corresponds to an ideal pattern, refuses to sell his services or to get a wife by bargaining. The former decision involves the difficulty that his social status is and remains far below that of an Emperor's daughter, even though he has had influence enough to raise her title from Infanta to Princess and to make his friend Duke of Macedonia — the second person in the state. In *Guy de Warewic* there are two models. The less important is the case of Laurette, the Emperor's daughter, whom Hernis offers to Guy in reward for his services and whom Guy is willing to accept — until he chances to remember his love for Felice :

«Li arcevesque sunt avant venuz,  
de l'esposer tut revestuz,  
li anel d'or sunt aporté ;  
e Gui dunc a primes s'est purpensé  
de sa amie, qu'il tant ama,  
en poi de hure ublié l'a.»<sup>7</sup>

The other is Felice herself. At first she refuses to marry an unknown squire :

«Dune sui jo fille vostre seignur ?  
Mult me faites grand deshonor,  
quant me requerez de folie,  
que jo seie vostre amie.»<sup>8</sup>

Then he goes to France and gains fame in a tournament, but she still requires proof that Guy is the best of knights :

5. *Tirant*, 443.

6. Sonnet 116.

7. *Guy de Warewic*, ed. EWERT (Paris 1933), vv. 4225-4230. (CFMA, LXXV.)

8. *Guy de Warewic*, vv. 343-346.

«Ne vus hastez mie, sires Gui!  
Uncore n'en estes tant preisé,  
que alsí bon n'ait el regné.»<sup>9</sup>

The rest of the book is occupied with proofs of Guy's superlative valour, so that Felice complies with the duty of an *amie* (like Güelfa) by insisting on the perfect formation of her cavalier. The marriage is made but the spouses stay together only time enough to beget a son :

«Ensemble furent cinquante jurz,  
plus ne durerent lur amurs.»<sup>10</sup>

One must admit that Felice, when compared with Carmesina, seems a provincial ; not because Carmesina is the heiress of an empire, but because she is a Valenciana of the circle of Martorell and Jordi de Sant Jordi, who read Boccaccio, Petrarca and Dante, and had a subtler psychology. The hieratic attitudes of the two girls are, however, the same. The difference is that Felice has no other attitudes, and if Guy forgot her in Constantinople, he could have pleaded in justification that he really knew very little about her. So, when Carmesina saw Tirant for the first time and talked about him with Diafebus, her «feminil fragilitat» coloured her cheeks and stoped her tongue :

«Car amor d'una part la combatia, e vergonya d'altra part la'n retraïa.  
Amor l'encenia en voler lo que no devia, mas vergonya lo hi vedava per  
temor de confusió.»<sup>11</sup>

There is nothing of this sort in Felice's sentiments, for the psychology of her author could have given no account of them. Carmesina sends a message to him :

«Senyor Capità, molt estic content dels principis. No sé la fi quina serà.»<sup>12</sup>

But when the poor knight proposes his love he gets from Carmesina, as from Felice, an angry negative :

«¡Que la filla de l'Emperador, qui és posada en tan gran dignitat,  
sia estada requesta d'amors per lo seu Capità...!»<sup>13</sup>

9. *Guy de Warewic*, vv. 1056-1058.

10. *Guy de Warewic*, vv. 7557-7558.

11. *Tirant*, 315.

12. *Tirant*, 333.

13. *Tirant*, 349.

The words are practically those of Felice<sup>14</sup> (the artist draws a delightful little sketch of a haughty princess at the end of this chapter). But Felice does not share Carmesina's sudden revulsion of feeling on pp. 353-54, revealed in the charmingly repentant message to her lover :

«Doncs vós, la mia Estefania, vullau haver mercè de mi : anau cuitadament a Tirant e pregau-lo molt de part mia que no es vulla leixar de fer alguna novitat, que a mi desplaui molt lo que he dit.»

These are signs that Martorell had not only read much, but had observed truly and subtly. We cannot follow in this notice the whole course of the love of Carmesina and Tirant, but we may observe that it continues to show these subtleties. It is not that Carmesina and Tirant feel differently from the rest concerning «the marriage of true minds». On the contrary, they energetically forward the pregustration of wedlock, if I may so describe it, of Diafebus and Estefania. But their own positions are different and impose a special kind of reserve, since she must mate with an equal and he will accept no reward for his services save what she freely gives. The compromising situations invented for them by their friends (as for the parents of Amadís by Darioleta), though justified by the consent of the parties to matrimony, are not pressed to an end, both because of their exceptional social stations and because of a certain  *pudor*, as the Romans would say, that was part of their magnanimous temperaments.

In the detail of social conduct one notes the lack of such a code as Castiglione invented in the next century. The boys and girls of this story lack conversation. Their meetings soon become a romp if not formalized into set speeches. The *estilo cortesano* of Spanish plays in the next two centuries reveals the difference made by the Italian art of conversation, but formalism and awkwardness show that the meeting of two sexes without scandal was still difficult.

One of Carmesina's magnanimous purposes is to make Tirant not the perfect courtier (like Curial whose name is but an older form of *cortesano* > *corteggiano*), but a soldier. To Plaerdemavida, caressing her body, she says :

«Més estimaria ell ésser rei que no tocar-me així com tu fas».<sup>15</sup>

So, in her cruder language, Felice had demanded from Guy proof that he was the best knight in the land. Neither Felice nor Carmesina will give way to pleasure until they have done everything a woman can to

14. *Guy de Warewic*, vv. 343 ff.

15. *Tirant*, 674.



perfect their man, and Tirant and Guy understand the conditions laid upon them.

But the soldier whom Carmesina forms is a very modern general. He is unlike Guy in having a definite conception of strategy and tactics. He operates «ab més giny que força». Some of Guy's tactics are practicable, but more often they are fantastic. Tirant wages three well-planned campaigns. They are, of course, imaginary, but one would compare them to the problems set to British staffs during the stationary part of the late war. The novelist is entitled, like the setter of staff exercises, to imagine the circumstances that suit his educative purpose. Given the conditions supposed in *Tirant lo Blanch*, his strategy and tactics might really have produced the results ascribed to them.

The first campaign is Guillem de Vàroic's defence of England. In *Gui de Warewic* Anlaf, king of Denmark, unites with Colebrant of Africa and a decisive battle takes place outside the north gate of Winchester. It is not said where the enemy landed, but the most probable port would be Southampton. In *Guillem de Vàroich* (which doubtless represents Martorell's first thoughts) «el rey de Gibraltar e lo rey de Tànger» (but no Anlaf of Denmark) land somewhere and win ground as far as Warwick:

«e vençeren los moros als crestians moltes batalles, e desconfiren lo rey, e conquistaren fins a la ciutat de Vàroich.»<sup>16</sup>

According to *Tirant* the enemy was the Moorish king of Grand Canary. He landed at Southampton secretly, and there was a battle at a place not named which ended in a complete rout of the English. This place would naturally be Winchester. The English king retired to Canterbury. Canterbury covers the road from Dover to London, but not that from Winchester and Southampton, so that perhaps Martorell had in mind a secondary landing near Dover. The King, again defeated, retired to London, and the Moors captured half of the great bridge. The old Bridge of London, with a continuous row of houses on each side and some inhabitants who were said never to have set foot on either shore, could be captured in this way and held as a fortress pressed against the heart of the city. But there was also a battle «prop d'una ribera d'aigua», which could hardly be other than a ford on the Thames. In *Gui de Warewic* a large space is given to an assault on Wallingford, just south of Oxford, by Mordred of Cornwall. Crossing the Thames at this point, while also directing a thrust against the heart of London, the Moors would force the English King to abandon

16. *Guillem de Vàroich* in *Tractats de Cavalleria*, ed. BOHIGAS (Barcelona 1947), 45. (ENC, LVII.)

the defence of London, if he was not to be shut up by a pincer movement. Retirement north-west towards Wales would bring the army to Warwick as a point covering the threat from Wallingford. It is possible that this account is too ingenious. Martorell does not say as much. On the other hand, it is clear that the brief summary in *Guillem de Vàroich* is not his only source, but that he referred back to a complete *G. de Warewic*, and to combine the names of all three texts would give a wholly reasonable account of the campaign. The defeat of the Moors is due to the use of bombs «de certs materials compostes», which Guillem de Vàroich had seen made at Beirut in Syria. There is no word of them in *Gui de Warewic*, and the observation is first found in *Guillem de Vàroich*. Amplifying this notice for *Tirant lo Blanch*, Martorell says the bombs are of quicklime slaked with water and then fired; the more water was poured on them, the more they flamed up.<sup>17</sup> William Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick's defence of Rouen is mentioned in *Tirant*,<sup>18</sup> but not in *Guillem de Vàroich* because that treatise is short. An original notice is that Guillem (in *Tirant*), after mass and before battle

«menjà d'una perdiu, per ço que natura s'esforçàs un poc».<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, the whole incident teaches the doctrine that

«en les guerres més val aptesa que fortalesa».<sup>20</sup>

so that we see

«los pocs vençre als molts, e los flacs vençre als forts».

The use of «espinacs»<sup>21</sup> strewn in front of the portal of the King's camp might have been copied from a famous stratagem by the Scots at Bannockburn (1314), when the English horses were crippled by these caltrops.

*Tirant's* vessel forced its passage through the Straits of Gibraltar by throwing canisters of burning oil and pitch into Moorish ships, making use of an «eixàvega de cordes» to cause stone shots to rebound and mattress shields round the waist and the two castles. His principal adviser in such matters was Cataquefaràs, surely a Portuguese seaman.<sup>22</sup> We have then, not merely a novelistic episode, but an actual record of the

17. *Tirant*, 27.

18. *Tirant*, 42.

19. *Tirant*, 44.

20. *Tirant*, 54.

21. *Tirant*, 57.

22. *Tirant*, 232.

dangers of the Straits, possibly a record of some actual fight, and an acknowledgement of Portuguese maritime skill. The construction of a fire-ship is described on p. 257. To approach a sandy beach rowing boats backwater, run gently into shallow water and lower landing-ladders; but an alternative method, riskier in general but safer under pursuit, is to drive hard with the oars<sup>23</sup> and jump on shore. The boat is damaged but the rowers escape.

Since Martorell may have obtained much verbal information about the siege of Rhodes from Mossèn Jacme de Vilaragut, it is not possible to say how many of Tirant's measures are his own inventions, but we can compare his plans for the defence of Constantinople with his known models, *Gui de Warewic* and Roger de Flor. In the first the enemy attacks from a base at Iconium (Konieh) in Asia Minor, and there is no strategy nor more tactics than the personal prowess of Guy. Roger de Flor also had to deal with an attack from Asia, but at a time when the Empire held only the peninsula of Artaki on the other side of the sea of Marmora. He made a first thrust to clear his way out, catching a Turkish horde, complete with women and children, between two river mouths and annihilating it. Then he prepared his main campaign. He caused his admiral En Ferran d'Eunés to advance to Chios, while the army struck inland to do battle at Philadelphia. This advance south-east combined with the southerly route of the ships allowed him at all times a short way of escape to the sea. Having won his victory Roger de Flor, like Alexander, proceeded to secure the coastal towns before he marched up the Meander valley along the old Persian road to the Cilician Gates. This, unlike Guy's exploit, is an achievement of real generalship.

Martorell's problem is quite different, and the fact that he had models serves to emphasize his originality. Adrianople was taken in 1361, and it was impossible to envisage the defence of Constantinople save as a European war. It is hard to follow the details because minor places are merely imaginary (Miralpeix and Bellpuig and the like), but the line of battle is determined by the city of Pelidas, which is set at the distance of the ancient Perinthos (75 miles from Istanbul), or the modern lines of Lule-Burgas. Martorell supposes that a river (Transimeno) descends to a port on the Sea of Marmora, and that the main bridge of Malvef is defended by castles at both ends. Tirant can operate on either bank at choice, but the enemy must waste time making temporary bridges. Like Marmont in the Salamanca campaign, Tirant marches and countermarches un-

23. *Tirant*, 291. A friend who has visited Rhodes says that the conditions for Tirant's manoeuvre are satisfied by the beach and water-gate of the fortress.

til his enemy is confused. Tirant's opponents were induced to divide their strength. He then provoked the army on the east bank to battle; his main body retired until the division commanded by Diafebus got behind on the exposed flank. Diafebus attacked too soon, and the rout was less than total. For sundry novelistic reasons the enemy on the western bank is not similarly annihilated, but its defeat comes much later, when it has been drawn into an assault on Constantinople and Tirant attacks from the rear. The principle is the same: to lock the enemy in battle and then to bring up unexpected reserves on flank or rear. The first place to fall to the victorious Christians is Estranges or Estrenes. Martorell describes it as the birthplace of Aristotle (Stagira), but the name corresponds to Istraça ( $\zeta$  = Catalan *tx*) a strong point at the end of the Istraça Dağları, a range which runs towards the Catalca defence line in front of Istanbul. Martorell knows something of the city of Constantinople and may have had a vague notion of its landward lines of defence. The point is that he has endeavoured to illustrate strategically and tactically how to defend Constantinople under the conditions, not of Guy of Warwick or Roger de Flor, but of his own day. He has imagined physical conditions suitable for this demonstration, but within those hypotheses he has produced an entirely feasible military solution. The defeat of the Turks before Constantinople is total and has the same far-reaching effect that we have seen in our own day when great empires collapse.

The African campaign has been referred to Joinville and St Louis, but seems to me much more an anticipation of Cardinal Jiménez and Charles V. The problem was felt in Portugal in Martorell's day. Prince Henry the Navigator's motives for his voyages of discovery were in part military:

«A quarta razão foi porque de .xxx. anos que havia guerreado os Mouros, nunca achou rei Cristão nem senhor de fora desta terra que por amor de nosso senhor Jesus Cristo o quisesse à dita guerra ajudar. Queria saber se se achariam em aquelas partes alguns príncipes Cristãos em que a caridade e o amor de Cristo fosse tão esforçada que o quisessem ajudar contra aqueles inimigos da Fé.»<sup>24</sup>

His third motive was to discover how far the power of his enemies extended («até onde chegava o poder daqueles infieis»). Hence the Portuguese were delighted to encounter on the Senegal River African tribes who were definitely not Moslems, and the first measure taken was to ensure their conversion.<sup>25</sup> Zurara claimed that 927 souls had been saved

24. ZURARA, *Crónica de Guiné*, ed. JOSÉ DE BRAGANÇA (Lisbõa 1937), I, 62.

25. ZURARA, II, 71.

up to the time of writing. Moreover, according to his calculation and that of the ancient geographers, the Niger ran eastward across Africa to Ethiopia and thence turned northward as the Nile. By the fifteenth century the Land of Prester John had been localized in Ethiopia, though endowed with all the power described by Mandeville. It was not until 1520 that the Portuguese discovered how very weak was this Christian power nor, until somewhat later, that they realized its remoteness from the Catholic conception of Christianity. When Prince Henry planned his voyages and Martorell wrote his novel, it was still conceivable that the Moors of Africa could be circumvented by a bold advance due south into Negro territory, by the wholesale conversion of some Negro potentate's subjects (Escariano), and by junction with the forces of Prester John. Martorell thought of it as a military exploit, as Cardinal Jiménez and the Emperor must have done. Tirant operated from Tlemçen, which is near enough to Oran, and boldly cut across country (not knowing or caring to remember that it was stark desert) to Escariano's fortress-capital of Mont Tuber. So the Russians captured Berlin by a bold raid in the Seven Years' War. Tirant is represented as allying himself with unstable elements in the cosmopolitan medley of North Africa; with the new Turkish military aristocracy (not always or often Turkish by birth) represented by «el Cabdillo sobre los cabdillos» (rightly identified by Sr Riquer with the officer known as *bèylerbeyi* 'provincial governor' — the spelling of the title should be corrected) and the renegades (l'albanès — arnaut). Tirant made Escariano's conquest of Tlemçen useless by capturing Mont Tuber and an imaginary place called Montàgata, south of the Mountains of Fez, i. e. of the main Atlas ranges. He then used Tlemçen as a lure to draw on the Moors of Tunis, Bugia and Morocco, himself retaining liberty of action by operating in the open country near the city. Mont Tuber was taken by the ancient device of Gobryas as recorded by Herodotus and others, and Martorell records a number of other stratagems by which Tirant was able to use advantageously his smaller forces against larger armies. We have again, under hypothetical conditions, a practical series of military exercises directed towards one of the main problems of Martorell's day. Throughout them all, Tirant remembers the three necessities of successful warfare: «gent, argent e forment».<sup>26</sup>

That a single soldier should be entrusted with considerable forces because of his skill as a *condottiere* was not without parallel in the Italy of Martorell's day. He might reasonably suppose this to happen to Tirant

26. *Tirant*, 327.

when shipwrecked on the African coast. If these troops were exclusively professional, they could be used to defeat vastly superior mixed armies, as Ruy Díaz had shown long before and Hernán Cortés would show again. Untrained hordes, because of their panic, could be turned against the sound military cadres of a mixed force. If there were a Negro potentate with the power of the Jamjam Escariano, with a capital that could be captured by a bold march and a stratagem, and himself ready for conversion with all his people, then Moslem Africa would be ripped along its «soft under-belly». That there were other factors outside Martorell's ken could not be known until a beginning had been made with enterprises of this sort by the capture of Orán.

I give all these considerations because they illustrate how this new edition of *Tirant lo Blanch* is a basis for quite new ways of discussing Martorell's work. His sources are now known. But the only reason in favour of source-hunting is to reveal the originality of the imitator. If we fix our eyes on sources, the novelist would seem to be endeavouring to recreate situations of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. If we note the difference of treatment, we see he is preoccupied with his own age. He offers solutions for the problems of his time. As he was not free to act, he remained all the more at liberty to imagine how Constantinople could have been defended and how Africa might yet be conquered. The prologue in England is appropriate. If Martorell never knew Henry V, he knew many of his great captains, the most notable masters of war of that age — «els crudelíssims anglesos». It is remarkable that the career of St Joan of Arc made no impression on his mind. He was not even tempted to create a Britomart or Briolanja as a type of feminine warrior. St Joan's devotion to country which seems to us moderns the highest expression of valour, to the extent that it eclipses the real military importance of captains like Dunois, was perhaps merely abhorrent to Martorell as it was to the churchmen who condemned her. Martorell's women are of another sort. They lack the art of conversation which was not yet invented, and they treat sex as it was treated in Martorell's age. Yet they have their ideals, their reserves, and their loyalties, which the prudishness of the nineteenth century wilfully misunderstood. On the other hand, we must still be on the look out for evidences of Martorell's experience. His «Senyor d'Escala Rompuda» may be fictitious, but there was actually an English Lord Scales, one of the principal members of the Yorkist faction, who appears in the pages of Commines and of Washington Irving. The Emperor is called Frederic on p. 299, but Enric on p. 578 — proof that Martorell had in mind the Henris of *Gui de Warewic*. It is the easier to understand that Carnesina combines the status of Lau-

rette in that poem with the sentiments of Felice, while her name has the romantic quality of Blanchefleur, daughter of the Emperor of Germany. There are so many references to «farces e entremesos» that we must suppose them to have been current at this age, including plays of this sort upon Corpus Christi Day, yet the Castilian *entremés* was still to be born. So far as Martorell's usage goes, the term *entremès* would seem to be *entremets*, a performance between courses at a banquet. There seems already to have been an «entremès del negre».<sup>27</sup> Cervantes, referring to conditions in Castile a century later, speaks of «entremeses, ya de negra, ya de rufián, ya de bobo, y ya de vizcaíno».

Nor must we lose sight of the part played by the very magnificent gentleman Mossèn Joan Martí de Galba. The Valencian language had developed between the date of *Guillem de Vairoich* and that of the cartels, and the latter still hesitate on points of grammar which have reached a solution in *Tirant lo Blanch*. To the set speeches and formal letters of defiance Galba may have contributed his share. The whole African campaign is inadequately introduced — a wind happens to blow Tirant's flagship from the vicinity of Constantinople to Tunis! — and it might represent Galba's fourth part, if we suppose that he worked in the same sense as Martorell. He probably told the story of the dragon of Cos from Mandeville, but knowledge of Mandeville is implicit in the very design of a Christian conquest of Africa, that is to say, with Mandeville's realm of Prester John reaching as far as Ethiopia. The very brief married life of Tirant and Carmesina must belong to Martorell, since it is modelled on the fifty days of *Gui de Warewic*, but that love should end immediately in death is a convention of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. For *La Celestina* or Tansillo or Encina death is the consummation and proof of love. The Empress's intrigue with Hipòlit may owe a good deal to Galba, but it would not have been against the taste of Martorell.

There are works which arouse in the reader a sentiment of sheer astonishment, and *Tirant lo Blanch* is one. An aesthetic judgement does not come first; perhaps the first feeling is a sense of extraordinary power. It is possible even to feel a degree of disappointment. So great, so obviously superior, a gift of thought and creation, ought it not to have produced something more universally acclaimed a masterpiece? Sr Riquer is right, I think, in believing that Cervantes' words «merecía... que le echaran a galeras por todos los días de su vida» refers to «galeras de imprenta» and means that the book ought to be kept permanently in print. And yet Cervantes' deliberate obscurity of expression requires us also to think of

27. *Tirant*, 769.

the more obvious meaning: that the author should have been condemned to the galleys for his work! With such power of realistic portraiture, why do not his personages stand out more clearly as individuals? With such a grip on the art of war, why is there so little study of the actual terrain? With such a command of direct speech — for instance, the insuperably vigorous «Reprensió que fa la Princesa a la Viuda Reposada»<sup>28</sup> — why are there so many examples of the art of the *rhétoricien*? Why so many *longueurs*, when his best effects are achieved in few words? With such a wealth of proverbs, why is there no Sancho? Why, with all his extraordinary gifts, did Martorell leave to Cervantes the writing of «el mejor libro del mundo»? Reading and rereading this book raises more and more of such questions; they are a measure of the astonished respect and bewilderment of the reader of Martorell.

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28. *Tirant*, 691.