

Josep Guia i Marín, *Fraseologia i Estil: Enigmes Literaris a la València del Segle XV, 'L'Estel', 3 i 4, València, 1999, 361pp. ISBN: 84-7502-578-1.*

One of the applications of stylistics has to do with the establishment of authorship in cases of dubious attribution. Such a method was applied by Josep Guia in his earlier book, *De Martorell a Corella: descobrint l'autor del Tirant* (Sueca 1996). Here, Guia extends his method of finding concordant phraseological collocations between works known to be by Joan Roís de Corella (1435-1497) and those attributed to Isabel de Villena (1430-1490) and Jaume Roig (c. 1410?-1478). The method employed is as follows:

L'objectiu a atènyer – del qual aquest llibre només presenta unes primeres concrecions – és la construcció d'un mètode estilomètric o, fins i tot, d'una teoria estilològica, que estudiï el fràsic d'un corpus textual determinat i en faci el repertori de totes les recurrències, les classifiqui a partir del concepte de concordança i les caracteritzi mitjançant els representants canònics de cada classe de concordança, amb la finalitat d'arribar a plantejar un problema d'estilometria gairebé nou, en l'àmbit català, tot i que en altres llocs ja s'han fet treballs d'aquesta mena a partir de l'estudi de les freqüències lèxiques. (p. 11)

What emerges is a phraseological and stylistic argument for a single authorial voice at work in *Tirant lo Blanc*, *Vita Christi* and *Espill*.

The historical inspiration for Guia's work begins on 29 July 1880 at the *Jocs Florals* of 'Lo Rat Penat', where Víctor Balaguer held the Inquisition responsible for the extermination of literary creativity in the *Països Catalans*: 'L'Inquisició! ¡Ah! Jo la coneix. Llargas horas y llarchs dias he passat no fa gaire al arxiu d'Alcalá d'Henares, fullejant causas y papers de las Inquisicions de Toledo y de Valencia, de Valencia sobre tot.' ... 'que havia tingut per missió « d'occir la literatura llemosina »' (Guia, p. 27). Balaguer mentioned the case of a certain Valencian poet: 'que de segur hauria arribat á ferse célebre donant tal volta nom á son sigle, acusat d'escriure versos amatoris del

gènero d'Ovidi, y condemnats sos manuscrits al foch y ell á silenci perpétu y a severas penitencias...' (*ibidem*, p. 27) Here Guia is following the lead of Jaume Fuster, who also wondered at this reference. Fuster returned to the question three times, eventually formulating the hypothesis that the poet in question referred to Corella (see *Llibres i problemes del Renaixement* (València, 1989, p. 80). Guia provides additional historical context to strengthen Fuster's suspicions: the inquisitorial proceedings against the Valencian Bible (1478) which took place in 1483-1484. Corella was involved in correcting and translating the Psalms and is mentioned in the interrogation of Daniel Vives (17 May, 1483) in an advisory role. Guia concludes that Corella was a key figure in the Valencian vernacular Bible project, closely connected by bonds of friendship and common ideals with those clerics, printers and scholars responsible for the project. Reference to Manuel Ballesteros's study 'Valencia y los reyes Católicos (1479-1493)' (*Anales de la Universidad de Valencia*, XX, 1943-44) reminds us of the 'golafretería espoliadora' of King Ferdinand II (1479-1516) and his partisan use of the Holy Office.

Thus one gets a glimpse of Corella's public and private importance during this crucial period of the 1480's when Corella enjoyed the plenitude of his professional maturity. Contemporaries placed their careers on the line in defence of their friend. 'La revolució de la impremta i l'obra de Corella' shows the pivotal role he played in harnessing the power and possibilities of newly imported technology (indeed many Germans seem to be around in Valencia during this period). Corella was presumably silenced courtesy of Inquisitorial dictat 'a «silenci perpetu»'(p. 55). In fact, the only work that was printed bearing his name during his lifetime was a *Vida de santa Anna*. Guia is excellent on providing detailed coverage of the publishing history of Corella's works. Thus, *La història de Joseph* was only published posthumously in 1503. The *Vida de santa Magdalena*, 'la tercera i potser més reeixida obra hagiogràfica coneguda de Corella', was never published. These facts lead Guia to wonder whether any of the 'Ovidian' works were published. In reply to such a question, Curt Wittlin points to Philippe Berger's notice of an inventory of the books of A. de Busaran, bookseller (d. 1508), and

which included 'quatre llibres nomenats juhi de paris' (p. 56). One of the features of Corella's works was that they were published in Barcelona (Guia cites a lost edition of *Plant dolorós de la reina Hècuba*, Joan Luschner, Barcelona, 1495-1505) or, more dangerously, bore faked locations of publication (thus, for example, Corella's *Psalteri* was supposed to have been published in Venice in 1490 by a Joan Rix de Cura). The small devotional works that were published are all included in books in which Corella does not appear either as author or editor. When Corella's name finally does make its way into print, it is as the translator of Ludolf of Saxony's *Vita Christi* (dubbed in Catalan *Lo Cartoixà* because Ludolf was a Carthusian monk), an unquestionably pious opus. The prologue even contains a crawling entreaty to the inquisition which, 'segons Jordi Carbonell, «sembla respondre a l'ambient de pànic» creat per la Inquisició... amb la possible existència d'una condemna pesant sobre Corella' (pp. 58-59).

This information sets up the historical context of the book's thesis, according to which, the most important means available to Corella for bypassing the alleged inquisitorial veto upon him was the use of surrogate authors. Guia shows that an intended 1502 edition of *Lo passi* corresponds to a work earlier ascribed to Bernat Fenollar (1440-1516) and Pere Martines (late fifteenth-century) in an edition of 1493, and that, moreover, there are stylistic indices showing that the composition was the work of a single author (pp. 60-64). Guia also thinks that the 'certàmens' or poetic competitions organised by a Ferrando Dieç were in part at least another subterfuge for an airing of poetry by Corella: 'hi ha massa *escriptors* en aquells anys que només *escriuen* quan són a la vora de Corella' (p. 65). Significantly, someone may already have been on the scent of these literary shenanigans when, in 1488, a Lluís Roís was accused of being the spokesman for someone else's verses at a competition organised by Pere Gisquerol: 'En efecte', Guia notes, '*l'Obra de Loís Roíz ab la qual guanyà la joia és plena d'estilemes i fraselogisme corellians*' (p. 65). Guia's *desideratum* still seems a long way off:

A mesura que les hipòtesis apuntades sobre la vida i l'obra de Joan Roís de Corella vagin rebent confirmació, la cruïlla de la fi del segle

XV, per a la història de la literatura catalana, esdevindrà més coneguda, especialment pel que fa als agents que en provocaren la decadència, això és, que avortaren la continuïtat normal de la nostra literatura, mitjançant la desfeta dels sectors socials i econòmics en què es recolzava i, particularment, mitjançant la condemna al silenci, a la clandestinitat i a l'oblit, de l'autor que escrigué, entre més obres, la primera gran novel·la moderna de la literatura universal. (p. 67).

Chapter II covers some old ground in its consideration of Corella's presence in *Tirant* which occupies pp. 69-150. There is a useful section on 'Estat de la qüestió'; a section concerning 'El darrer acabat del Tirant'; rubrics (in the contents and between chapters); the *incipit*; the colophon, the dedication and prologue. Additional 'concordances fraseològiques entre l'obra religiosa de Corella i el Tirant' include some very clear (and a lesser number of less convincing concordances) with *Vida de santa Anna*, *Istòria de santa Magdalena*, *Història de Josef* and *La Sepultura de mossèn Francí d'Aguilar*. Chapter III deals with Isabel de Villena. It is especially useful for its treatment of Mary Magdalene. The *Istòria de santa magdalena* and *Vita Christi* (Isabel de Villena) are at times so close as to be quite as convincing as the parallels adduced by Guia in relation to *Tirant lo Blanc* and works known to be by Corella.

However, not all Guia's parallels are equally convincing. It will be interesting to see scholars debate the merits of specific examples (and one defers here to critical literature). For the moment it may be noted that there is a coincidental use of Latinate expression in Corella's *Sepultura de mossèn Francí d'Aguilar* (1482), *Visió a la porta de la senyora nostra de Gràcia* (1488), and the *Vita Christi* (1497) which does not prove much.

Chapter IV, 'L'Espill reflecteix el seu autor', begins in confident tone, summing up the main thrust of this important book: 'Després del cavaller, per a una novel·la de cavalleries i amors, i de l'abadessa, per a una vida de Crist, un metge era un autor adient per a un llibre en què la vida quotidiana es presenta desimbolta i punyent i en què les dones són les grans protagonistes' (p. 219). So, Corella chose a knight (Martorell) to be the surrogate author of his chivalric romance; an

abbess to take care of his Life of Our Saviour; and a medical doctor (Jaume Roig) to reflect the raw and often bloody realities and untamed fantasies of his fifteenth-century vision of Valencian life.

It is certainly a powerful and compelling thesis which seems most counter-intuitive in regard to Roig, because the registral and metrical patterns of his poem are so different to anything that Corella wrote that they might seem to preclude *a priori* the possibility of establishing convincing parallel collocations. Needless to say, the present reviewer is not certain that Guia has succeeded in proving his case. In Chapter IV, as in earlier chapters, however, the author seems to maintain a high level of exactitude in his method and the conclusions which he reaches appear – with what meagre powers of scrutiny the present reviewer possesses – amply borne out by the evidence submitted to analysis, if not in all cases equally, then at least in sufficient cases for this book to merit the patient attention it deserves from the scholarly community it seeks to serve. One must therefore be grateful to the author for the successful completion of such a difficult book and the present reviewer is confident that its impact – alongside Guia's other work in this field – will continue to be felt and appreciated for a long time to come.

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