



Catalan Classics in other languages: *Tirant lo Blanch*

by Donatella Siviero

The *editio princeps* of *Tirant lo Blanch* by Joanot Martorell (València, 1410/11-1465) was published in Valencia by Nicolau Spindeler on November 20th, 1490, just sixteen years after the introduction of the printing press into the Iberian peninsula. In a period in which the average print run was between 400-500 copies, 715 were printed of this book. The Valencian edition was followed, seven years later, by a Barcelonan edition started by the typographer Pere Miquel and, when he died, was completed by Diego de Gumiel.

The history of the translation of the *Tirant* began a few years later. And it was Diego de Gumiel again, in Valladolid now, who printed the Castilian version in 1515. The translation introduces a division into five books and distances itself frequently from the original; it isn't presented to its readers in any way, and the names of the author and the translator do not appear. Among the many omissions, that of the dedication should be stressed, in which the author presented himself as "I Johanot Martorell, knight", so that *Tirante el Blanco* appeared to its readers to be an anonymous Castilian novel. It is highly possible that Cervantes only knew this version and not the original. In the year 1538 the Italian *Tirante il Bianco*, by Lelio Manfredi, appeared, published in Venice by Pietro di Nicolini da Sabbio and based on the 1490 edition; this excellent translation was reprinted twice more, in 1566 and 1611. The French 18th century translation, partial and summarised, and anonymous, was undated (but possibly done in 1737) and omitted to give the place of publication; it was based both on the Castilian version and the Italian one. It has been attributed to Claude-Philippe de Tubières, count of Caylus, and is preceded by an "Avertissement", maybe by the same translator, which is considered to be the first critical/translational study of the work. It was reprinted in 1775 and 1786.

In the 20th century, the *Tirant* was rediscovered thanks to the interest shown in the novel by personalities such as Dámaso Alonso and Mario Vargas Llosa. The first contemporary translation is the Castilian one by Joan F. Vidal Jové in 1969, on which the partial translation into Romanian was based, done by Oana Busuioceanu, in 1978. In 1985, the English translation by David H. Rosenthal (New York) came out, and became a publishing event: Rosenthal claimed that his was the first translation into English, but in 1974 Ray La Fontaine had already completed one, as a doctoral thesis, which was later published in 1993 (New York). In 1987, the Finnish translation by Paavo Lehtonen came out, based on Rosenthal's text; a year later the Dutch translation by Bob de Nijs came out, another publishing success, with three editions in six months; in 1990, the German version, by Fritz Vogelsang, appeared; then the Chinese one, by Dilang Qishi, in 1993; and in 1994 the Swedish translation by Miguel Ibáñez (Stockholm) came out. In short, over the centuries the fate of the *Tirant*, a novel which the author pretends has been translated from English into Portuguese and from Portuguese into Valencian Catalan, owes a great deal to its translations. This is an important sign of the vitality of a classic.

Translated by Matthew Tree