

Scachs d'Amor

Links of Interest

The English translation of "Scachs d'Amor".

The 15th century Catalan poem, "Scachs d'Amor," describes a game of chess played between Venus and Mars. The game which accompanies this text is believed to be the earliest recorded game under the modern rules of chess. The English translation of the poem below is available through the generosity of the late Dr. Josep Miquel Sobrer of Indiana University.

A poem called *The Chess Game of Love [Scachs d'Amor]*, written by Don Francí de Castellví and Narcís Vinyoles and Mossèn [Bernat de] Fenollar, under the names of three planets: Mars, Venus, and Mercury, by conjunction and influence of which the work was devised.

Don Francí de Castellví carries the game of Mars and takes the name of Love; his standard is red [white pieces]; his King is reason, his Queen, will; his Rooks, desires; his Knights, praises; his Bishops,¹ thoughts; his Pawns, services.

Narcís Vinyoles carries the game of Venus, and takes the name of Glory; his standard is green [black pieces]; his King is honor; his Queen, beauty; his Rooks, reserve; his Knights, disdains; his Bishops, sweet glances; his Pawns, courtesies.

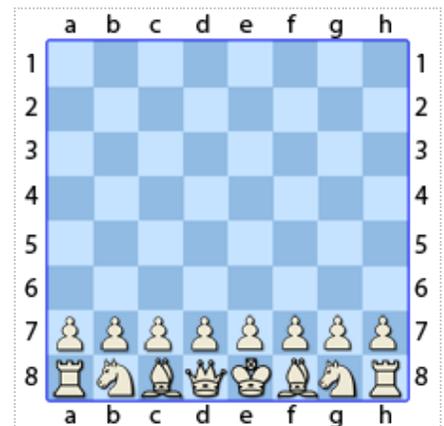
Mossèn Fenollar speaks the effects of Mercury: first, he scans the board; he compares it to Time; he counts the number of houses, they are sixty-four; sixty-four stanzas answer to them; he proffers the laws and pacts that must be followed by the players.

The stanzas are in chain form [ABAB/BAB/CC], with nine lines each and in sequential order, that is, four, three, and two, and thus must they be written and read. In their inscriptions [*epitafi*] you will see the sum of their literal sense, that is, the game of chess and the pacts to be obeyed.

The Chess Game of Love

Castellví (Mars)

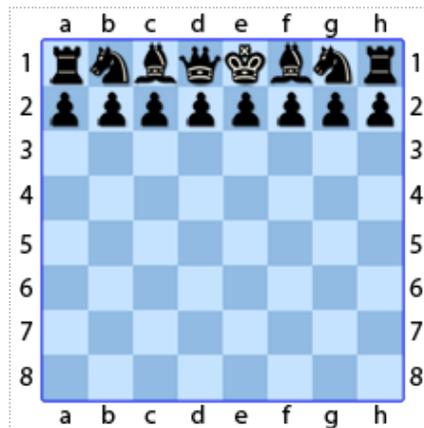
As Mars met Venus in a temple,
While having Mercury in their presence,
He devised a game of chess, with new example:
Taking Reason as King without preeminence;
Will for Queen, with great potency;
Thoughts he deems for his Bishops;
His Knights, praises of sweet eloquence;
Rooks are desires to flare up one's memory;
Pawns are servers striving to Victory.



Vinyoles

(Venus)

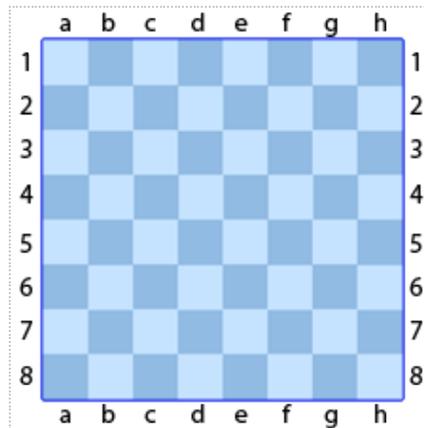
Venus, to exercise her glory,
 Desired for her Rooks cautious reserve;
 For Knights, disdains of deserved return;
 Her Bishops, glances of delightful sight;
 For her Lady she took most pleasing beauty;
 And her King, following the tale of love,
 Was Honor, his life ever in danger;
 For faithful Pawns he took courtesy,
 All armed and clad with ostentation.



Fenollar

(Mercury)

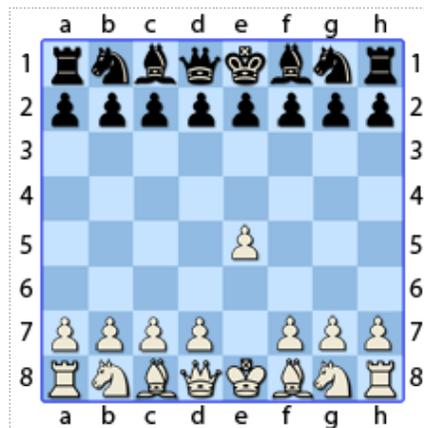
Mercury, always ready in his ways,
 Painted the board with hues clear and dark:
 And made it Time, split into days and nights,
 A box to bring the first enclosures.
 Crossing it, he divided it into four natures
 Of times diverse; and then, in following his guides,
 Of each part he made four equal parts.
 By dividing in this mode the rest,
 The list adds up to four and sixty.



Castellví

(King's Pawn to the fourth house)

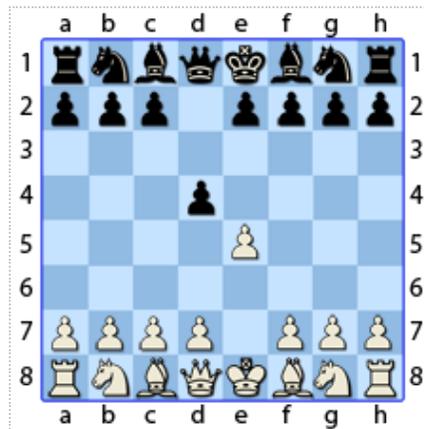
The fields assigned and all the men at ready,
 The great warrior, with his red standard,
 Decided to move as soon as required
 Taking Love as the name for the battle;
 He moved towards the field of the beautiful
 The most valiant Pawn in conquest:
 He moved two paces towards her.
 By this move the King discovers Reason
 And opens the road of Will.



Vinyoles

(Queen's Pawn to the fourth house)

The gentle Lady, not lacking in spirit,
 Carrying the green banner of Hope
 And shouting: "Glory, glory covers
 My people with all blessings!"
 Her Pawn, courteous, well-tempered
 Moves up, because Beauty opens,
 In the game of love, the first step.
 With a humble gesture for defense,
 Her heart was pierced with the thrust of love.



Fenollar

(He says that a piece touched must be played)

The first rule you must abide by
 Is, in this game, that a piece once touched
 Firmly, admitting neither debate nor confront,
 By any player, true, must be played.
 It falls to reason: for a lover's thoughts
 Having chosen, cannot freedom afford
 Or doubt, but take full submission.
 Thus the saying: "Courage and folly
 In every move, as once done, done it is!"

Castellví

(His King's Pawn takes the Lady's Pawn)

Good service, received with courtesy,
 Made a new effort to accept it,
 Becoming lord of the spot where he took it
 Giving no thought whether she'd be annoyed;
 Because the force that led him so to love her,
 Moved him to such glory of desire,
 Ever following love, until he found her.
 The enterprising one, to get his way
 Will not be stopped by turns or thrusts.

**Vinyoles**

(The Lady, to her fourth house, takes the Pawn that had taken hers)

So as to let Beauty's fame shine through,
 Seeing that service delights in Courtesy,
 With great rigor she left her house
 To punish all those foolish fantasies.
 Caring not a bit for silly niceties,
 Looking around, as a crane scans the field,
 She kills the Pawn who'd strutted proud.
 One who takes action must look, to learn,
 To not being hit by the aims he's taken.

**Fenollar**

(He says a piece is taken for good)

The next law that you both must abide by
 Is that a piece taken will remain captive;
 And so Will must take great care
 Whom she takes, for she's a haughty dame.
 One who dodges the highest of hits
 Remains the lowest, and so will learn the game;
 Understanding will get this gently.
 If Will won't placate Reason,
 It stands to sense that the captured be felled.

Castellví

(His Queen's Knight moves to the Bishop's third house, aiming towards the Lady)

Will, as it is desirous to please.
 As soon as it can to the chosen Lady
 Strives towards her in order to get
 His great Praise with most perfect tongue.
 It was a discreet person's mind
 To think ever to serve and not displease
 One who has been made lady of his heart.
 It is a fool who dares give insult
 Against one who is due a vassal's homage.

**Vinyoles**

(The Lady goes back to her place)

So as to keep the homage tower
 The gracious lady returns to her place;
 For a Knight, mostly one of noble breed,
 Should not wish to stain an honest fame.
 So the one in love, when inflamed by passion,
 Should not attempt to damage the goods of honor;
 And, if he dared do so, as she flees, his plan is broken.
 For when it rains, if you seek shelter under leaves,
 Believing yourself dry, you might get wet.

**Fenollar**

(Says that if you have pointed at or touched the house, you must get in)

The third decree tells all to retrieve
 To their castle or house of conquest,
 And should not want to ever again lose it;
 Otherwise, they ought to die with drawn sword.
 For Will feeds such fire
 As brings about continued strength;
 A lady is one who stuns all senses.
 Because, against one's wishes, you'll never conquer love,
 And cannot change until the wish desists.

Castellví

(The King's Bishop moves to the fourth house in line with the Queen's Bishop)

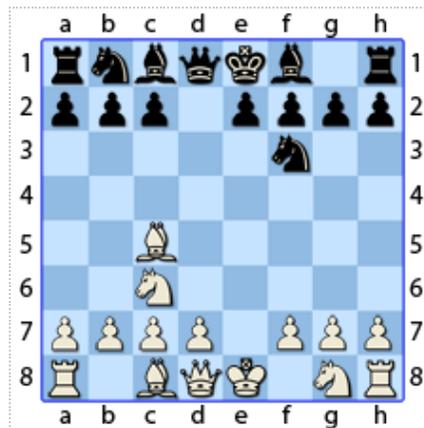
Reason, finding sharper than a knife's edge
 The Lady whom he most humbly loved,
 Being left quite sad from such deception
 And seeing that Praises and Services she disdained,
 For the value that appealed to her.
 His Thought, that conquers with sighs,
 To the fourth degree he sent a spy.
 One who would leap for his exaltation
 Must first lower himself a bit.



Vinyoles

(The King's Knight moves to the third house of the King's Bishop)

The Honesty of one who wants to attract
Great Beauty, if it will be divine,
Transmits Disdain, quite consciously,
To cut off the vein of Thought.
For if he declines from virtue
And would never limit himself,
He will be undone by forbidding Honor.
By its nature fire is always burning,
But water will make it dance back to measure.



Fenollar

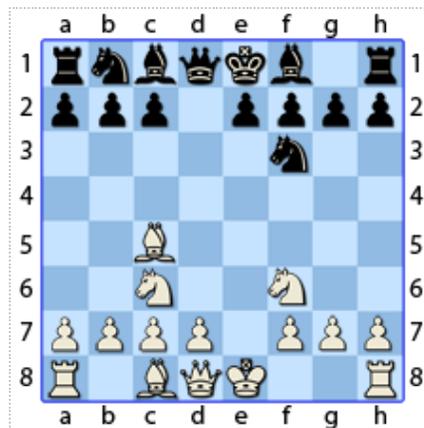
(So the King can go first to his third house)

The next decree for this our game
Is that Kings to their third house,
At first shot, keeping within measure,
May jump in total freedom;
And so they'll show that for the high road
We must at times abandon the safety of the plain:
Such model is expected from them.
Thus each one, as limits are trespassed,
Will err, but slightly if attention is paid.

Castellví

(Plays King's Knight to the Bishop's third house)

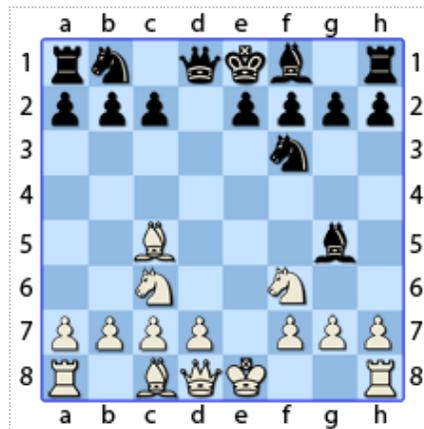
One in love, realizing that pride
And annoyance does not please the gentle lady,
Had to use Reason, to temper events;
And Reason was a willing and great ally:
Her Sweet Speech, that so seduces,
Gave him, with no need of fearsome sword
To reach one whom the world adores.
What great help, and at very little cost,
The sweet sound is of composite Praise.



Vinyoles

(Plays the Queen's Bishop to four houses from the other King's Knight, whom the Bishop threatens)

A bitter treat encased within sweet crust
Is the Adulator, who flatters all senses,
And flattering Beauty, approaches
The deceit hiding beneath flattery.
From his eyes, to give her the pay of love,
A Sweet Regard comes in place of an answer,
Thus healing the wound of her Disdain.
The eyes can look at the invisible
And torment the dispassionate spirit.



Fenollar

(Says that with the jump of the third he cannot take the King)

Because Kings, with invincible power,
 Cannot extend themselves beyond their reason,
 It is decreed that, by making the move possible,
 They can never checkmate, or take;
 Thus showing the world that in meting punishment or revenge
 They must blend mercy with wrath,
 And not overflow their understanding;
 For, if they are great with their wings of potency,
 Greater they'll be by using clemency.

Castellvi

(Plays the King side rook pawn one point, threatening the Bishop)

Seeing the Gaze on such fine countenance,
 The good Desire, serving under Reason,
 Soon sent, with great reverence,
 His Service, to receive one who excites him.
 Affection, written upon one's eyes,
 Awakens the heart, for convenience
 Of the lover, where true love dwells.
 Conformity is the most certain bet
 As among lovers it feeds their friendship.

**Vinyoles**

(His Queen's Bishop takes the King's Knight)

As Praise awakens the spirit
 And placates Beauty with noble mien,
 With Sweet Regard, hitting right on the heart,
 Took Praise, in whom hope finds closure,
 And to signify that the lover never lacks,
 At any time, the offered end of love,
 If the fountain of praise is never stanchd.
 For flatterers make the lady so happy
 That discontentment appears as contentment.

**Fenollar**

(Says the King should not move to the third house over the other pieces)

It was agreed that Kings, in whom such value
 Sits, should not jump over the others,
 But rather, along safe roads
 They must go, where robbers won't attack.
 For, as they shine with hour homage,
 Leaving behind those who cannot help them,
 If poorly guarded, they hurt themselves and their subjects.
 Nature wills for members to defend
 The head from hurt, as that's where offense hits.

Castellví*(The Queen takes the Bishop of the other Queen)*

With brightness compensated by great love,
 The eyes so lively in their gaze burned
 The happy song of spirited Praise,
 And humbly requested Will's response.
 As they showed themselves they gave such effort
 That soon took as pay and recompense
 The Rays of the Sun that penetrated the Will.
 Stars are the eyes for mariners
 To navigate, who in this sea are drowning.

**Vinyoles***(The King advances his pawn one house)*

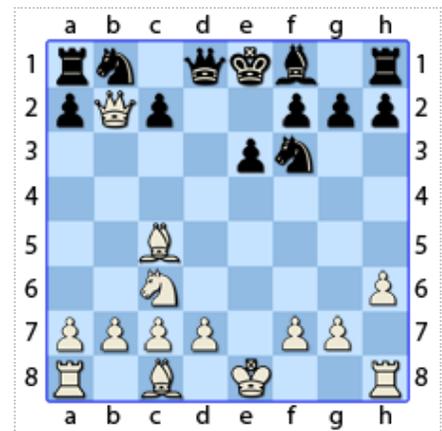
So that lovers may more clearly know
 The Honesty carefully enacted
 By Thought, which lovers follow,
 With courteous playfulness put up a gate
 By moving one Pawn one step;
 The enemies may spread their squadrons
 Seeing for them that all hope has died.
 Discretion courteously combs
 What desire foolishly musses.

**Fenollar***(Says that the King, as he rises, cannot move to the third house)*

Another law, now numbering the eighth,
 That the valiant King, by retreating his person,
 May never, as he's bound by honor,
 Skip so much for all the honor of his high crown;
 Rather, step by step, as is better ceded,
 Make his way back without fear or ruing
 And with the gravity that crowns such princes.
 For a discreet flight is better
 Than to fall prisoner because of rash concerns.

Castellví*(His Queen takes the Knight's Pawn on the Lady's side)*

But lusting after amorous fruit
 Moved so the free Will
 To enter the field of Venus in his fight
 Of a Courtesan he tries to disdain.
 Mostly because it was the undertaking
 Of one who's burning in the fire of love:
 Great Beauty, temptress of the wisest.
 Seeing that fire has made a flame of smoke
 Should alert all that poison is being poured.



Vinyoles

(Moves his Queen's Knight to two points of the Queen)

Beauty, seeing that Will is aflame,
 Taking her Courtesy against Disdain
 And threatening skittish Fame,
 For defense, moves with grace;
 And having its Knight leap, offers
 Battle against the Lady's field
 Who attempted to combat Shame.
 This is a fine example that disaster never follows
 One who can sense the scent.



Fenollar

(Says that the King must not be wounded or taken without warning, that is calling check)

Another Law that must be ever followed:
 That the King not be treated like the rest.
 If any move is made against him
 Or if besieged by danger from the enemy,
 You must warn him, before he's hit by an arrow;
 So disposes in the sky that Star
 That endowed him with the royal ermine.
 The name of King sows dread on enemy camp:
 He defends his faithful and bans the wicked.

Castellví

(Plays his Queen's Knight to the fourth house of the other Lady's Knight)

Now that war has broken between them,
 The great Queen, calling the beautiful name of Love,
 Orders the return, apace and close,
 Of a Knight to her defense,
 And to conquer, by gathering her troops,
 The Courtly Defeat of the enemies
 That was badly spread on the field.
 If one does not counterattack at first,
 If he will oppose at last, will fail.



Vinyoles

(Moves his Queen's Rook to the house of her Bishop)

Modesty is the gold on which Beauty is mounted:
 That's why it sits near it in the castle,
 And abandons, seeing that the flatterer resorts
 To the Courtly style, since he faints of dread.
 For Honesty, unseen by all,
 Is wounded in a chaste prison
 And let the Flatterer into the passageway.
 Fear is suited to a bird in danger
 As it will save it from being ensnared.



Fenollar

(Says that the King, being checked, must be covered or move)

Given that the King has been incautiously warned,
 The next Law says he must move or be covered;
 The enemy is not lacking in daring:
 Disdain of foe might well devastate him.
 Prudently then he must stop the advancing danger,
 As the great lion overcome by a weasel
 We see each day, much as he dons the royal toga.
 We are all equal, in death and birth:
 So equal musty our fearing be.

Castellvi

(His Queen's Knight takes the Rook Pawn on the Queen's side)

Seeing how Shame moves to assert her value
 To Honor, Courtesy, and Beauty,
 The Knight, having weighed his options
 And no longer restrained, enters the fray
 And breaks that shield which Fear
 Of dishonest failing hides behind,
 It being the Passion the Lady praises.
 The winner, in winning, watches his shot
 For often the foe, in turning, overcomes.

**Vinyoles**

(Queen's Knight moves to three houses from his line)

Beauty, when she can do no more, looks
 With outrage, keeping and defending her piece,
 And if Praise moves or mingles his;
 Beauty remains, constant, unmoved.
 For if everything is for the nobler part
 And it would seem that its Disdain shoots
 Out of its way, or so the people think,
 The Discreet, seeing something out of proportion, says:
 "He who burns his house must know what he's doing."

**Fenollar**

(Says each player must play on his turn, not twice in a row)

Reason must be whole and not empty
 Most reasonable in all for everyone;
 That's why in the game each player takes his turn:
 The one first, going for what seems laudable;
 Then the other, responding to such notable task;
 Each a chance to fire, hope or fret,
 Equal both in the concordant turns.
 Let no one think, if winning, to break this rule
 For order must be kept in battle.

Castellví*(His Knight takes the Queen's Rook)*

The Knight, breaking his whip,
 Defeats Shame and comes close to the honorable
 Beauty so that, with joy and a smile,
 Would die like the swan on a green field.
 If he dies happy, with undignified death,
 The Will should not open the battle,
 As the Knight's horse has become a meek lamb.
 You see daily death in this sort of fencing:
 So think highly of the pain of love.

**Vinyoles***(His Lady's Knight takes the Queen's Knight)*

Having lost Shame, which is the acme
 Of Honesty, fragrant as a lily,
 A strong file to break all villainess,
 Moves Outrage, burning hotter than a cauterizer,
 Against the Flatterer, giving him such martyrdom
 As to erode with torment his false bitterness
 And from such sweet potion he makes a soft salve.
 Beauty must defend herself and be jealous
 For things are priced the more they cost us.

**Fenollar***(Says no false move is made, such as a Knight for a Rook, etc.)*

A pact is better, even if I have not said it before,
 That one cannot steal the power of another;
 Thus each must his weight calculate with its tare;
 Do not step beyond your rightful place,
 Rather play just, so your eye does not fault
 The one it looks at. A great race is planned
 If you would exchange your Knight for a Rook.
 A priest should shun all pomp
 And so should the Knight anything against his honor.

Castellví*(His Queen's Pawn moves to the fourth house)*

Having broken up the squadron, on the way to victory,
 The winner renews his efforts
 With shouts and the blare of a valiant horn;
 These increase their courage and their strength.
 Will, seeing Beauty sail against the wind,
 Gives her the present, so as not to stop the game,
 Of a new Service to reinforce their friendship.
 The game of love must be played adroitly;
 One who would force a victory will only find defeat.



Vinyoles*(Lady's Knight to three paces of the same Lady)*

The Queen, seeing that Will so badly
 Accompanies the Service it left,
 Dispatched a great Disdain, with strange foresight,
 To do outrage to the trap she perceived,
 Mostly as she thought and saw to
 Shoo with Disdain the other company
 Of the Thought or Will she had made.
 When an enemy feigns being abandoned
 You must flee, for craft with craft is made.

**Fenollar***(Says the Pawn can go no further without battle)*

Adding a smart edict, it is ordered
 That the Pawn, should it play against Pawn,
 Must do battle body against body,
 Otherwise he cannot go further.
 But if he stands with heavy lance,
 Ahead it goes, as the other one quits,
 And let it take effort to be carried to better port.
 Knights are reined back by honor,
 But villains are stopped only by force.

Castellví*(His King's Bishop moves to four houses of the other Queen's Knight and checks the King)*

Thoughts that scold and mutter
 As they see Will's desire and works
 Importuning Honesty, they plot,
 So as not to remain disfavored and needy;
 These are the masters and apprentices
 To end all contrary ills;
 They are the sponges of the light of love.
 One who, in hurriedness, would hunt
 Will take nothing and surely fall and shame himself.

**Vinyoles***(His Lady's Knight takes the King's Bishop to four spaces from his line)*

Outraged Gesture, seeing that Thought threatens
 Honesty, forcing the strong to rise,
 Delivers and is ready to die in the fray
 Before an evil Thought is conceived of Honor;
 Stating that, whenever a sinful crime is done,
 It should not remove it one bit,
 Since truth relieves it from guilt.

The saying goes: "He who bandages a hale finger,
Being not ill, can healthily unbandage it."

Fenollar

(King cannot combat King directly)

Another ancient rule must be observed:
That King may never another King combat,
But rather each must remain near his men,
Because heads must never debate.
For others are hitting and defending
In their good order; the King must quietly
Command his hosts to overcome his foes.
A servile act, unworthy of royal pride,
Is like two rams locking their horns.



Castellví

(His Queen takes the Lady's Knight, who was at four places from his seat, and checks)

Will, seeing that so many times
Cruel Disdain cruelly lies it fallow,
In order to put a stop to its charges,
Disdainfully condemns and banishes it,
While Honor can celebrate shortly
And confronting it, without a need for truce,
To one who has so besieged her.
One who thirsts for an ending must
Seek help by word, deed, thunder, lightning, and rain.



Vinyoles

(His King is covered by his Knight, two places from the Queen)

The royal authority must never move,
Unless the situation is grave and necessary:
Thus Honor decides to enclose,
Disdaining the adversary's thrust.
Of such service this is pay,
For a Courtly Style could flourish
In such fortune, and turn quite against him.
In such dire straits, courtesy stops
Gravity and pomp, in its hurried flight.



Fenollar

(Says check mate is nigh)

If assailed by a reverse of fortune
Is the King, and all his power
With him, we want, by clear law,
To see him die in sorrow, as no clearing is expected;
For the royal crown and command
Presupposes excess of freedom

And, should he lose it, all hope is also lost.
 Dignity is bonded to the soul
 And honor always outlives life.

Castellví

(Moves his Queen's Pawn to four places from the other Queen)

So that ever Beauty may be served,
 Good Will, mindless of Outrage,
 Commands with infinite love the passage
 Of his Service, who is a graceful page.
 And he, allowing all advantage,
 With humble mien invites Courtesy
 To take his life as taxation.
 It is Humility that will lighten, purge, and placate
 Two hearts together, even if quite diverse in nature.



Vinyoles

(His King's Pawn moves to take the Pawn of the other Lady)

Courtesy has but a limp purse,
 And will never turn away a gift
 Or, if it did rebuff, his heart will ever pine
 For appetite, which is dry and thirsts for rain.
 And so, as soon as taken, it won't budge
 And make a castle out of a wee shack;
 But when it fails, he rues it more sternly.
 One who takes must think of a refund
 For, forcing ease, it will be forced to compensate.



Fenollar

(Speaks about mate)

Lacking the King people to defend him,
 As his vassals have protected him so badly,
 He must then, as fortune declares,
 Remain alone, as his people have all been taken;
 A King without men cannot be thought a King;
 But virtue will recompense with comfort
 The cruel fate that has been pressed on him.
 In evil and in good must ever fortune
 By shared by King and men and all.

Castellví

(Plays his Lady's Bishop to three houses from the King)

In order to adjust all his efforts in one,
 Will will put its Thought
 Before Reason, not caring a bit
 If something is lost, like Services, or anything else;

Leaving the words and relying on the gloss
 It will serve that time, just once,
 Whom Honor has taken as spouse.
 If a good Will paints an image of love,
 It will never be undone, by neither life nor death.

Vinyoles

(Plays his King's Bishop to three houses of the Lady)

The Lady says, as her distinct voice sings:
 "Be vigilant, Honor!" as she sees that the
 guard is kept
 by the Eyes; reading the red ink of love
 they keep alert, for the hour seems late;
 in such a way and with such vigilance is
 guarded
 Great Beauty, girding itself with such
 sash,
 That her repete may be assured.
 This combat is won in such way
 That the victor flees and the loser waits.



Fenollar

(The common check)

Another corroborating decree advises
 That should the King have no place to retreat,
 Or anyone to cover him, as his enemy prospers
 To the point that he might be fatally wounded,
 As he dies, he'll give his body as payment,
 And his people will fall, bannerless,
 Into servitude, if he'd flatter his own life:
 In the perils of the bitter battle
 More is saved by the eye than covered by the shield.

Castellvi

(Plays his King's Rook to the house of the Lady)

Seeing Beauty shield herself so strongly,
 Privation, as it moves the appetite, causes
 Desire to free itself and come out
 To take the place of Will.
 He's prodded by wanting, but delight is his
 Final cause, and if the end's delayed
 His ardor may cease and take pause.
 All movement moves with some defecte
 Until arriving to its desired goal.



Vinyoles

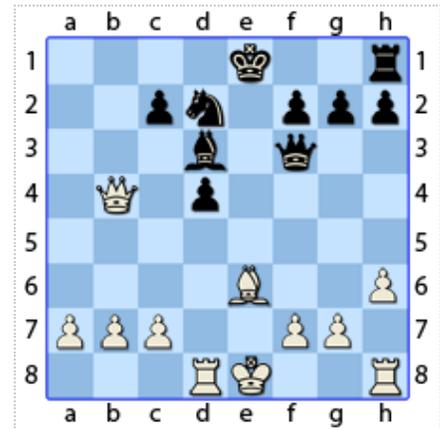
(His Lady moves to three houses from the King's Bishop)

As Desire begins in his effect,
 Let him come to the spot where Will
 Used to be free, because a straight way
 Could lead to where Beauty guides;
 And Beauty, with light of grace,
 Entered the third level of the Delightful Aspect
 Of Honor, which always involves danger.
 Beauty must cover itself with virtue
 If it will find worship in the world.

Fenollar

(Says the Queen may move like all pieces, except the Knight)

But our game would now adorn itself
 With a new and strange style for one who'd look,
 Taking the orb, sceptre, and throne
 Where, mostly, the Queen requests her honor.
 Since it is said that she is worthier and stronger
 She can quite well stroll the whole field,
 But cannot bend, by neither fear nor wrath.
 The haughtier you see your freedom
 More should you beware of not having it captured.



Castellví

(His King's Rook takes the Lady's Pawn)

Seeing that the Queen is not flinching,
 The good Desire of Courtesy acts,
 Inflamed with such vivid ardor
 That the greenest forest might burn without truce;
 For hope delivers him from toil,
 A delight to revive one's forces,
 And making Will the heir to final ugliness.
 The fire of love calls for green wood:
 If it is dry, the more it burns, the more it sours.



Vinyoles

(Plays his Lady to three houses of the Knight of her King)

Beauty carrying effort as a standard
 In order to punish the deceitful Services,
 Moved to the front of disdainful Disdain:
 She loses the greedy gain of Honor,
 For the combats of love, if graceful,
 Shoot their wares: and what rock
 Will not give in to delightful acts?
 Better a no from a chaste one
 Than a yes coming from a vicious one.



Fenollar

(The Pawn cannot get to be Queen, nor there can be more than one Queen)

If the ancients, to increase their brood,
 With no regard to law or justice,
 From lowly blood and ordinary paste
 Strive to create a thousand Queens out of malice,
 The laws of amorous malice say
 That the diamond more lawfully
 Can be mounted and shine with great clarity.
 The faithful lover falls but for one;
 The ungrateful infidel does adore the idols.

Castellví

(Plays his Queen's Bishop to four points of his King's Bishop)

Will, honoring the sweet eyes
 And delicate gaze, as it looks, moves quickly;
 Its Thought surmounts and remembers
 By the right of those in whom living love sparkles;
 By ardor, that takes and leaves, it distillates
 Liquor from his to soften his heart
 With the reports tumbling within his head.
 Love is one that engages through the eyes,
 But if it constrains, the part and the whole are menaced.



Vinyoles

(His King's Bishop takes the Queen's Bishop at four spaces from the line of the King's Bishop)

Thought, always pursuing Sweet Regard,
 Setting itself to attack the first,
 Was taken and killed so it cannot bring any more damage
 Nor turn his Will totally blind;
 For one who tries so hard besieged by anxiety
 To the point of bottling up the goods of Honor
 And drowning his spirits right in front.
 Honor will live as Will will allow;
 Only this will Will bring good and bad.



Fenollar

(The Queens should not take themselves)

Since our style transports all power
 From loving Kings to beloved Queens,
 Just as between Kings it is not licit to strike.
 So will the Queens behave;
 Still they may be battled against by others,
 And taken, should they lack an escort:
 This is their only limitation.
 And for this reason the law of our school says
 That the Queen should never be alone.

Castellví

(His Queen takes the other Queen's Knight to two places from said Queen, and checks the King)

Good Value finds no discomfort
 From Thought spent in such an article,
 But, with an effort from Desire, it chooses and fights
 Against Disdain, the support of Honesty;
 And Disdain, raising its voice clearer than beryl,
 It now frets and trebles
 Seeing Pleasure within its own *episticle*.²
 Perfection takes form from its end;
 And thus the love of good gains shape.

**Vinyoles**

(His King moves to the house of his Bishop)

Honesty with such words, forms
 Its great clamor, shouting: "O, lofty Venus!
 Since your virtue cannot reform mine
 And your help fails me at this juncture,
 My poor Value loses its shine;
 Seeing that yours does not conform itself with mine,
 My Virtue as it flees leaps out."
 If such frights are not good for Kings,
 They are still natural and sustain its being.

**Fenollar**

(If the Queen is lost, so will the game)

Mercury says that now, as the Queens
 Comprehend so, as they can all and command all,
 If by misfortune their enemies take them,
 Their armies retreat and flatten;
 Therefore they should be guarded lest they be deceived
 Because by fear they cannot defend themselves
 Or just with their own effort they will neither thread nor unthread.
 Shame and fear are virtues in the Lady,
 As they are prevention in one, and contrary to great fame.

Castellví

(Queen's check mate in the house of the other Queen)

Mars, the prince inflaming our hearts
 So as to triumph in such high conquest,
 Took Honor that claims to be above all things
 And offered it quickly to good Value;
 And this, climbing to the degree offered
 By the beautiful Flower, with amorous flame
 Sacrifices the Fruit of Love with great fanfare.
 In the moon lies the point of this eclipse,
 And to understand it is to understand the Apocalypse.



1 - The Catalan equivalent of bishop is *alfil*, a word used exclusively for this chess piece. From Arabic *al-fil*, or "the elephant."
(Translator's note.) ([back to poem](#))

2 - The translator failed at finding a meaning for this word. Suggestions welcome. ([back to poem](#))
