

COLLOQUIUM REPORT  
FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CLASSICISM: BERNAT METGE  
AND PETRARCH

ORGANIZED BY Lluís Cabré (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), Alejandro Coroleu (ICREA-Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and Jill Kraye (The Warburg Institute), the colloquium Fourteenth-century Classicism: Bernat Metge and Petrarch was held at the Warburg Institute on 12 February 2010.

The Warburg Institute, which is now a member Institute of the School of Advanced Study of the University of London, has a long history. The Institute stems from the personal library of the Hamburg scholar Aby Warburg (1866–1929). In 1933 Warburg's volumes were moved by Fritz Saxl from Germany to London to escape the Nazi regime, and in 1944 the library was incorporated in the University of London. Since then, and particularly under the guidance of the late Ernst H. Gombrich, the Warburg Institute has become a centre of excellence in the study of the classical tradition in all its aspects. It is a remarkably cosmopolitan institution, which –devoted to the study of the reception of the classics in European culture and attending particularly to the Renaissance and Italian Humanism—is heir, in equal measure, to the Germanic and Anglo-American tradition of studies. All this, and above all its unique library—which is arranged thematically—and rich photographic collection, makes the Institute into a magnet which attracts researchers and students from all over the world. It has therefore been a privilege to be able to introduce Bernat Metge to the some forty scholars (some of them travelling from Catalonia for the occasion) gathered at the Institute to listen keenly to the papers presented at the colloquium.

The colloquium was introduced by Jill Kraye, Professor of Renaissance Philosophy and currently chief Librarian. In her opening remarks Kraye pointed to the close connection between the Institute and the colloquium topic: the study of the classical tradition and, therefore, the work of Petrarch and his imitators. She also drew attention to the cosmopolitan nature of the colloquium, in accordance with the Institute's personality, clear from the origin and background of the speakers involved, who came from Germany, Great Britain and Italy as well as Catalonia. Last but not least, Kraye was particularly pleased that the Warburg Institute had been able to host a gathering on Bernat Metge, an author —she pointed out—who has received very limited attention from scholars at international level.

The following papers were discussed:

LOLA BADIA § UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

*Il «Sogno» di Bernat Metge e coloro «che l'anima col corpo morta fanno» (Inf. 10.15)*

The starting point of Badia's contribution was the clear distinction between the sources of Metge's *Llibre de Fortuna i Prudència* (Alan de Lille's allegorical poetry and the *Roman de la Rose*) and *Lo somni* (which draws on Boccaccio and Petrarch). She subsequently examined the use and development of various philosophical arguments in these works, particularly around the character of Bernat.

LLUÍS CABRÉ AND ALEJANDRO COROLEU § UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA AND ICREA-UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA

*The arrival of the Latin Petrarch in the Crown of Aragon: Bernat Metge's «Griselda»*

Cabré and Coroleu examined the sources employed by Metge in his translation of Petrarch's Latin version of the *Griselda* of 1388. Even though Metge's text draws on Philippe de Mézières's French version, it departs considerably from the original in its defence of the truthfulness of the story. Unlike De Mézières, who argued for the truthfulness of the story merely on its geographical origin, Metge sought to identify the historical female figures discussed by Petrarch. Cabré and Coroleu showed how Metge found them in Valerius Maximus's *De amore coniugali* (IV 6), the source of Petrarch's passage.

ROMANA BROVIA § UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO

*Per una storia del petrarchismo latino: il caso del «De remediis utriusque fortune» in Francia (secoli XIV–XV)*

Romana Brovia pointed to the centrality of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortune* within European culture from the end of the fourteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Her study focused on France, where the popularity of the *De remediis* was higher than that of the Bible. A Christian manual for meditation, Petrarch's writing was, alongside other medieval encyclopædic works, a key text in the dissemination of classical culture at the time. In her contribution Brovia drew attention to the diversity of manners in which Petrarch's text circulated in France, in Latin and in the vernacular, and very often divorced from its original intention and dialogical form.

STEFANO MARIA CINGOLANI § UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA

*Bernat Metge e gli auctores: da Cicerone a Petrarca, passando per Virgilio, Boezio e Boccaccio*

In his paper Cingolani attempted to reconstruct Metge's *mental* library in his *Lo somni*, a work written at the end of Metge's life. Metge's sources are Christian, modern (Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch) but, above all, classical (Cicero, Ovid, Valerius Maximus, Lucan, Juvenal). For Cingolani, however, understanding of Metge's sources and books is as important as knowing how this corpus was read and used in Metge's text.

ENRICO FENZI § GENOA

*Petrarca contro Aristotele*

Fenzi's starting point was Metge's words in his *Lo somni* (18): «Aristòtil, que après de Plató s'acostà més a la veritat.» He then argued that Metge does not oppose Plato to Aristotle. Rather, their relation is hierarchical. Metge shares Petrarch's view that for Plato—rather than for Aristotle, the philosopher par excellence—it has been easier to reach knowledge of all things. Fenzi also pointed out that Petrarch's preference for Plato is indicative of a cultural shift, in which Metge ought to be placed.

JAUME TORRÓ § UNIVERSITAT DE GIRONA

*Il «Secretum» di Petrarca e la confessione in sogno di Bernat Metge*

Torró's contribution put forward a proposal of reading of *Lo somni* which, well beyond the background against which the text was written—the dynastic conflict around the succession of Joan I and the imprisonment of the king's councillors, among whom was Metge—owes much to the influence of Petrarch's *Secretum*. In his paper Torró also drew attention to the unique nature of *Lo somni*, the only true successor to the *Secretum*.

ROGER FRIEDLEIN § RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

*Bernat Metge's «Lo somni» and the tradition of transgressing the 'consolatio' model*

Friedlein's paper put forward a proposal of *Lo somni* as a transgression of the *consolatio* model, best represented by Boethius, one of Metge's sources. Unlike Boethius's *Consolatio philosophiae*, in which the main character is gradually consoled by Philosophy, in *Lo Somni* the structure is reversed. Whereas Bernat, as a result from his dialogue with Joan I on the immortality of the soul, is consoled by the king, at the end of book II he is overwhelmed by the perplexity as the king is unable to reveal his future. The ensuing pause, during the poetic narration of Orpheus, is interrupted by Bernat's conversation with Tyresias. At the end of book IV, Bernat remains unconsoled.

BARRY TAYLOR § THE BRITISH LIBRARY

*Bernat Metge in the Context of Hispanic Ciceronianism*

Although Metge's work chronologically coincides with the age of the rediscoveries of Cicero's texts in Western Europe, none of these *new* works is present in *Lo somni*. In this, Taylor claimed, Metge is not different from other fourteenth-century Hispanic writers. Taylor further analysed Metge's Ciceronian style by focusing on the *cursus*, a feature present above all in Metge's letters.

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THE DISCUSSION PROVED stimulating and plentiful in ideas. ✎ Jane Whetnall asked about Metge's drawing on Boccaccio's *Decameron* in his *Valter e Griselda* (Cabré and Coroleu), a source which, according to Giuseppe Tavani, can be identified in Metge's text. ✎ Jill Kraye focused on the sources of *Lo somni* (Cingolani), in particular texts by the Church Fathers, an influence confirmed by Jaume Torró, who mentioned Cassiodorus's *De anima*; the influence of Cicero's *De natura deorum* on Metge was also discussed, and Lluís Cabré pointed out that the text was not used in the schools. ✎ As far as the dissemination of Petrarch's works is concerned (Brovia), Lola Badia pointed to the need to study the influence of French culture via the convent house of the Célestins at Barcelona. ✎ Fenzi commented on the influence of Petrarch's *Secretum* on Metge (Torró), by reminding the audience of the scant dissemination of this work in fourteenth-century Europe and showing the uniqueness of Metge, the first to realise that proper intellectual discourse should be modelled on Petrarch. ✎ Responding to questions addressed to him, Roger Friedlein reminded the audience of the need to place the sophisticated structure employed by Metge within the tradition of Boethius and of Petrarch's *Secretum*, a topic which Friedlein is currently studying. ✎ For his part, Barry Taylor stated that, even though Metge's Latin style did not greatly differ from that employed by other Hispanic prose writers, he exhibited a moderate command of Latinising resources; the issue of the *cursus* in the vernacular—highly controversial, according to Lola Badia—ought to be confirmed or dismissed by studying Metge's Latin letters.

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