FELLOWSHIP FINAL REPORT

Middle Ages in Renaissance

Maria Clotilde Camboni[1,2,3], Chiara Lastraioli[1]

[1]Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR), CNRS, University of Tours
[2]LE STUDIUM Institute for Advanced Studies, 45000 Orléans, France
[3]Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, University of Oxford

REPORT INFO

ABSTRACT

This project aimed at reassessing the views about the "Renaissance", both by some leading representatives and in emblematic environments related to this cultural movement. The project reappraised their attitudes towards the Middle Ages, focusing on a critical, revealing cultural domain: the vernacular one. It investigated the context in which a selection of Medieval vernacular models were brought during the Italian Renaissance, testing the potential of the following three new interrelated approaches: 1. analysis of the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century tradition of medieval lyrical poems in connection with different perspectives on the poets transmitted through it; 2. comparative analysis of different relevant passages evaluating the medieval vernacular Italian tradition and proposing paradigms of historical development; 3. assessment of the effective influence on Renaissance poets of the early medieval lyrical authors/texts, taking into account the results of the above-mentioned analyses of the tradition of these texts.

1- Introduction

It is well known that the concepts of Middle Ages and Renaissance are strongly intertwined: it can be said that one cannot stand without the other. The founding myth of the Renaissance, created by its thinkers, writers and artists, is the idea of a revival of Classical antiquity. The essence of the Renaissance is defined by the attitude towards the culture of the past (Garin 1975), on the assumption that the development of a new age that requires a dismissal of the old ones, and of several centuries of "darkness" between the Ancients and their Renaissance counterparts. The cultural artifacts of this "dark" Middle Ages are therefore rejected as models, and equally rejected are their typical characteristics. Consequently, when in a peculiar area one of these "medieval" features persist in Renaissance works – like the gold in sixteenth-century Venetian painting – an explanation for such cultural relics must be found (see Bouvrande 2011).

Nowadays, what was once the current idea of the Renaissance is strongly contested, and considered more a creation of some Italian authors than a valid label for a distinct historical and cultural period (see f. i. Le Goff 2015). However, from a cultural viewpoint some historical differentiations can be made, and the main one is the affirmation of the idea that artistic/cultural production must consist in imitation of the Classics. This is especially true in what is considered the culminating phase of the Italian Renaissance, the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The Classics were models to follow also during the Middle Ages, and between the two ages, Middle Ages and Renaissance, there are not only oppositions, contradictions, the negation of the former by the latter, but there is also the

question of the extent of the continuities and disruptions between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (the matter has also been debated from a philosophical viewpoint: Burnett et al. 2008). In this frame of analysis, the role of Italian vernacular culture raises particular questions.

With the rise of vernacular literature, from the second half of the fifteenth century, and more particularly from the beginning of the sixteenth, a new group of models must in fact be defined. If art must consist in an imitation of the "ancients", those who composed vernacular texts could not model their works just on ancient Greek and Latin authors. They had to imitate some "modern" vernacular writers – even though the number of these writers that might be referred to as "ancients" is quite limited. Moreover, when these vernacular writers are finally assumed as models, and proposed as models by treatises and other such writings, they are in few significant cases referred to as "Ancients", even if this entails derogating from already established lexical uses (Trovato 2015).

The imitation of vernacular authors was notably theorized by Pietro Bembo, who, sanctioning the possibility of taking as models certain ones (above Petrarch and Boccaccio), also stated which ones, and limited any proliferation in the models that could be utilized. If the pool of available models for the vernacular literature had been very broad this might have invalidated the basis of the above-mentioned founding myth. The success of Bembo's codification will be the starting point of some authors' popularity and influence, and for others led to their decline or even eclipse.

Bembo's choice was not the only possible one, and in fact his theorization raised some opposition, before it triumphed in the second part of the sixteenth century.

Besides the "tre corone" (Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio) other medieval vernacular authors were in fact known and could be considered as even more 'ancient' than these three figures. Guido Cavalcanti, for example, is represented with the three crowns in Giorgio Vasari's famous picture of 1544, *Six Tuscan Poets* (with,

according to Vasari himself, Cino da Pistoia and Guittone d'Arezzo: Parker 2012). Cavalcanti came to be included in major manuscript and print collections and was was the focal point of manuscripts like those written by Antonio Manetti (Tanturli 1992; 1998). Some other thirteenth century authors are recalled by Giulio Camillo, who ordered and sent to Bembo the copy of the ancient manuscript with vernacular lyric poets that is to date the only manuscript of this kind that we know to come from Bembo's library (Zaja 1995). Some of the most 'ancient' early Italian lyric poets are also featured in the two literary collections assembled in Florence to celebrate the glory of Tuscan poetry, the *Raccolta Aragonese* by Lorenzo de' Medici and Agnolo Poliziano and the so-called "Giuntina" print edition of 1527 (Cannata Salamone 1999; Vecchi Galli 2002). Even Bembo, according to his most recent editor, in his early production imitated some "archaic" models (Bembo 2008).

2- Experimental details

The aim of this project was to set in context the process that lead to the definitive Bembist choice of vernacular authors.

To narrow the field of the research, the chosen focus has been on vernacular poetry. The vernacular poetic tradition starts well before the one in prose, and includes many more authors, texts, and possible models to be selected (or rejected). Despite the success of Dante's *Convivio* in the late fifteenth century Florence (Arduini 2012) and the reappearance of the *Novellino* (Richardson 1992), Boccaccio as a model for vernacular prose has never had any serious competitors.

A further narrowing of the research scope was accomplished by focusing on lyric poetry. This was the primary code of the classicistic literary experience, and a fundamental part of the linguistic and literary education of writers in the period. The research has nevertheless taken into account non-lyric production (and also non-poetic) works by which medieval culture has been mediated to the Renaissance.

Three different approaches have been tested:

1. Analysis of the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century tradition of medieval lyrical poetry, in connection with different perspectives on the authors of the earlier Italian lyric tradition.
2. Comparative analysis of different relevant passages evaluating the medieval vernacular Italian tradition and providing different paradigms of historical development, taking into account their knowledge of each other and their acquaintance with strands of the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century recovery of early medieval lyrical poems and their tradition.
3. Assessment of the effective influence on Renaissance poets of early medieval lyrical authors/texts, in connection with the results of the above-mentioned analysis of the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century tradition of these authors and texts.

The work started from the analysis of a cultural operation carried out in Lorenzo de' Medici's Florence, through the *Raccolta Aragonese* ("The Aragon Collection"). This was a collection of early and contemporary Tuscan poems sent by Lorenzo to Federico d'Aragona, the younger son of the King of Naples, about 1477. The original manuscript is now lost, but its content and appearance can be reconstructed by means of the study of its copies and of similar manuscripts. The collection was accompanied by a letter now generally agreed to have been penned by Agnolo Poliziano, which constitutes one of the first critical reflections on Italian poetry. The sending of this book was part of Lorenzo's cultural diplomacy, which sought to gain prestige for Florence through the promotion of its language and literature (Barbi 1915; Breschi 2016; Calitti 2010).

Besides these aspects, the importance of the *Raccolta Aragonese* lies in the fact that for compiling the anthology Florentine intellectuals in Lorenzo de Medici's environment recovered from some older manuscripts a remarkable number of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century lyrical poems, creating a collection of "more ancient" poetry, poetry that was not circulating at this time and that as a result of their initiative began to be transmitted again. .

The first hypotheses to be tested concerned the role played by the Raccolta Aragonese, regarding in particular the access to the poems transmitted by it, and the possibility of its opening letter being known by Pietro Bembo.

Before embarking on the analysis of the late fifteenth-early-sixteenth century circulation of the *Raccolta Aragonese* itself and of its copies, it has been necessary to undertake a preliminary analysis of the formation of the collection, focusing in particular on the different views of the previous tradition that had taken shape in Laurentian Florence and that were represented in the *Raccolta*.

The late fifteenth-early-sixteenth century circulation of the *Raccolta Aragonese* itself and of its copies was subsequently analysed, retracing the different readings that this collections has received.

The hypothesis of Bembo's knowledge of the *Raccolta* and in particular of the letter that precedes the anthology has been considered and substantiated. Bembo's historical paradigm has been analysed in comparison with contrasting historical paradigms of Laurentian Florence, in particular that of the prefatory letter of the *Aragonese*, weighing the similarities and dissimilarities between their narratives concerning cultural development, and the ways in which they are elaborated.

Finally, a pilot study, one testing the influence of a subset of the Aragonese poem on a poet of Federico d'Aragona's close entourage, was carried out and presented at a conference in Italy (communication *'Quelli altri antichi da don Federico. Su alcuni rimatori della Raccolta Aragonese e i "Sonetti et canzoni" di Sannazaro'* – International conference « I Sonetti et canzoni di Iacopo Sannazaro », Gargnano del Garda, Italy, 20-21.9.2018).

3- Results and discussion

The main published research findings of this project have been:

Attribution of some contradictory aspects of the *Raccolta Aragonese* to the fact that that the collection is the result of team work and the interference of different editorial and redactional logics in separate but interlinked moments during the work of the team.

Reconstruction of these different logics and of the sources that mainly inspired them, i.e. Petrarch's list of poets in his *Triumph of Love* on the one hand, and Dante's *Comedy* along with its exegesis on the other.

Reconstruction of some passages in the construction of the *Raccolta*, resulting in at least one integration and rearrangement of the anthology, and of the treatment of its sources by its compilers.

New and more detailed hypotheses about the appearance and physical composition of the lost manuscript.

New observations about Federico d'Aragona relationship with the original manuscript and inferences about the accessibility of the latter.

Reconstruction of different readings of the *Raccolta*, e.g. by Paolo Cortese (Rome, 1492-93).

Among these readings: establishment of the strongly Petrarchan perspective of a derived anthology, containing a subset of poems of the original *Raccolta.*

Dating (after 1484 – before 1494) and identification of the environment (the entourage of Federico d'Aragona) of this derived anthology.

Assessment of the influence of the poems transmitted by the derived anthology on a poet belonging to the close entourage of Federico d'Aragona

Analysis of the relationship of Pietro Bembo's *Prose* with the introductory *Epistola* of the *Raccolta Aragonese*

Corroboration of the hypothesis of Bembo's knowledge of Poliziano's *Epistola*

Analysis of the relationship of Pietro Bembo's *Prose* with Cristoforo Landino's *proemio* to his *Comento sopra la Comedia*

Evaluation of the similarities and dissimilarities between the different narratives concerning cultural development to be found in Bembo, Landino and Poliziano and of the ways in which these narratives are elaborated in the three texts considered.

Besides these findings, some unanticipated aspects have emerged during the research work. The main ones are: 1. The strong influence of some Medieval texts both on Renaissance evaluations of the medieval tradition and on the set-up and choices of several Renaissance manuscripts of medieval lyrical poetry; 2. The progressive development by Italian Renaissance intellectuals of an historicizing perspective towards the medieval vernacular tradition, which seems to manifest itself in a variety of sources including implicit and fragmentary accounts; 3. The influence of the contemporary recovery process of different kinds of medieval texts on this progressive development of an historicizing perspective; 4. The apparently fundamental role of this historicizing perspective in the process of canon formation. Aspect (1) has determined a shift in the development of the research project, due to the necessity of investigating and expanding on it. Together with (2), (3) and (4), it has also been the starting point for the design of a new research project.

Organization of events and communications

Dr Camboni has organized with the help of Pr Lastraioli an interdisciplinary conference (*The dynamics of the relationship with the more recent past in early modern Europe: between rejection and acknowledgement* – Le Studium Conference, Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR), Tours (20-22.06.2017)). The aim of the conference was to explore the early-modern perceived reality of the continuities and the disruptions between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, from an highly interdisciplinary standpoint. Besides providing a broader context to Dr Camboni's ongoing research regarding narratives

concerning cultural development and the ways in which they are elaborated, the conference allowed scholars from different fields to discuss and talk about their researches in this domain, thereby opening new perspectives and fostering new scientific connections between Centre-Val-de-Loire and international scholars.

Communication 'The same trajectory of history for different stories: shifting views of the medieval vernacular poetic tradition during the Renaissance' – The dynamics of the relationship with the more recent past in early modern Europe: between rejection and acknowledgement – Le Studium Conference, Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR), Tours (21.06)

In connection with the Le Studium" scientific conference "The dynamics of the relationship with the more recent past in early-modern Europe: between rejection and acknowledgement", a public "Le Studium Lecture" took place: "Quand a-t-on cessé de manger «comme au Moyen Âge» ?". It was given by Bruno Laurioux, former Deputy Scientific Director for the ancient and medieval worlds and then Director of the CNRS Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, also former director of the InSHS, now professor of medieval history at the university of Tours and president of the IEHCA (Institut Européen d'Histoire et des Cultures de l'Alimentation: European Institute for the History and Cultures of Food). The subject of his lecture concerned the evolution of alimentary habits and of the imagery and symbolism concerning food at the passage between Middle Ages and Renaissance. The unevenness of early modern value judgments in this regard mirrors the contradictory contemporary attitudes towards "foreign", "exotic", "ethnic", "fusion cuisine", and so on, providing an interesting counterpart for society at large to become aware of how our stances on such a fundamental element as food are shaped by cultural forces.

4- Conclusion

The research has confirmed the important of the strand of pre-Petrarchan lyric tradition recovery

mediated by the *Raccolta Aragonese*. It has also established that this anthology has been mostly read through a Petrarchan lens. The conspicuous impact of this collection despite its strictly limited availability has been highlighted.

The three research approaches proposed are even more interrelated than expected and have been refined. The outcome of testing their potential has produced very positive results.

The pilot studies and test of new approaches that have been developed during Dr Camboni's stay at the CESR have allowed Dr Camboni to design and propose a new research project, aimed at reconstructing the processes through which historical/historicizing perspectives on the earlier vernacular tradition were acquired and constructed during the most crucial period of the Italian Renaissance (ReMedIt - *Between rediscovery and recreation: Renaissance accounts of medieval Italian vernacular literary tradition* [1476-1530]). This project has been financed by the European Commission with a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual European Fellowship Grant, and is currently being developed at the University of Oxford.

The network developed by Dr Camboni at the CESR and thanks to her Le Studium conference has been crucial for the development of her current project at the University of Oxford: Dr Camboni's current host scientist, prof. Simon Gilson, is one of the invited speakers of that conference. Dr Camboni is also scheduled to be one of the invited speakers in an international conference organized by another participant of her Le Studium conference, Dr Laura Banella, that will take place in March 2020. We can anticipate with certainty that other scientific relationships developed during Dr Camboni's conference will be exploited and will be beneficial for her current research project.

5- Perspectives of future collaborations with the host laboratory

We cannot account for all ongoing scientific relationships between Centre-Val de Loire scholars and international ones resulting from

Dr Camboni's Le Studium conference. Limiting ourselves only to Dr Camboni's contact and collaborations, besides the above-mentioned contacts with scholars invited to her conference, Dr Camboni is constantly in contact with her host scientist Chiara Lastraioli and has recently published an article in a scientific journal directed by her (Camboni, Maria Clotilde. 2019. 'Un sonetto di Giovanni Muzzarelli (*Me freddo il petto e de nodi aspri e gravi*), il testo Beccadelli e la Raccolta Bartoliniana', *Italique* XXII (2019), 237-257).

Besides Prof. Lastraioli, other scientists of the CESR could be potentially involved in Dr Camboni's current researches, and Dr Camboni has already identified a possibility for hosting scholars in whatever field with a French affiliation at the University of Oxford.

We can anticipate that the scientific network developed by Dr Camboni during the visiting period as Le Studium Fellow will be helpful to further research projects. The CESR is one of the eligible hosting institutions for an ERC grant that Dr Camboni is currently considering applying for; Dr Camboni also applied for a permanent position at the French CNRS in 2017, listing the CESR as her first choice among the institutions where she could be based. She is evaluating the possibility of applying again in the future.

6- Articles published in the framework of the fellowship

Strictly project-related:

1. Camboni, Maria Clotilde. 2017. 'La formazione della Raccolta Aragonese', *Interpres* XXXV (2017), 7-38
2. Camboni, Maria Clotilde. 2019. 'Paradigms of Historical Development: The *Raccolta Aragonese*, Landino, and Bembo's Prose', *Modern Language Notes* 134.1 (Italian issue, 2019), 22-41
3. Camboni, Maria Clotilde. 2020. '*Quelli altri antichi da don Federico*. Su alcuni rimatori della *Raccolta Aragonese* e i *Sonetti et canzoni* di Sannazaro', in *I 'Sonetti et Canzoni' di Iacopo Sannazaro (Gargnano del Garda, 20-21 settembre 2018)*, ed. by G. Baldassari, C. Berra, P.

Borsa e M. Comelli (Milano: Università degli Studi di Milano). Forthcoming, Spring 2020.

Other publications :

4. Camboni, Maria Clotilde. 2016. '*Cantus/cantilena, sonum fabricantis, discordium/concor-dium*: nota sulla terminologia metrica del primo Trecento', *Studi mediolatini e volgari* LXII (2016), 5-15.
5. Camboni, Maria Clotilde. 2017. 'La sensibilità formale di Guinizelli e Cavalcanti all'interno del panorama duecentesco', *Chroniques italiennes web* 32 (1/2017), 50-71.
6. Camboni, Maria Clotilde. 2017. 'Lisabetta and Lorenzo's tomb (on *Decameron* IV 5)', *Italica* 94.3 (Fall 2017), 431-447.
7. Camboni, Maria Clotilde. 2017. 'La novella di Lisabetta da Messina (*Decameron* IV 5)', in *Esercizi di lettura per Marco Santagata*, ed. by A. Andreoni, C. Giunta, M. Tavoni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2017), 157-166

Dr Camboni has also prepared the outline of a monograph about the *Raccolta Aragonese*, its reception and different related perspectives on Medieval lyrical tradition. She has circulated this outline among academics, editorial consultants and members of editorial boards of Italian and Anglophone publishing houses, in order to assess the possibility of publishing such a book. This project has been put on hold and is now being reconsidered in the light of the last developments of Dr Camboni's current research project.

7- Acknowledgements

8- References

For a bibliography, please refer to articles (1), (2) and (3) of 6. Articles published in the framework of the fellowship

Arduini, Beatrice. 2012. "Il ruolo di Boccaccio e di Marsilio Ficino nella tradizione del Convivio di Dante." In *Boccaccio in America. Proceedings of the 2010 International Boccaccio Conference at The University of Massachusetts Amherst*, edited by Michael Papio and Elsa Filosa, 95–103. Ravenna: Longo.

Barbi, Michele. 1915. *Studi sul canzoniere di Dante, con nuove indagini sulle raccolte manoscritte e a stampa di antiche rime italiane: in servigio dell'edizione nazionale delle opere di Dante promossa dalla Società Dantesca Italiana*. Firenze: G. C. Sansoni.

Bembo, Pietro. 2008. *Le rime*. Edited by Andrea Donnini. Roma: Salerno.

Bouvrande, Isabelle. 2011. "Une Spécificité de La Peinture Vénitienne Du Cinquecento: Les Culs-de-Four Dorés." *Albertiana*, no. XIV: 143–60.

Breschi, Giancarlo. 2016. "La Raccolta Aragonese." In *Antologie d'autore: la tradizione dei florilegi nella letteratura italiana: atti del Convegno internazionale di Roma, 27-29 ottobre 2014*, edited by Enrico Malato and Andrea Mazzucchi, 119–56. Pubblicazioni del "Centro Pio Rajna". Sezione prima, Studi e saggi. Roma: Salerno Editrice.

Burnett, Charles, José Francisco Meirinhos, Jacqueline Hamesse, Warburg Institute, Universidade do Porto. Gabinete de Filosofia Medieval, and Fédération internationale des instituts d'études médiévales. 2008. *Continuities and Disruptions between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Proceedings of the Colloquium Held at the Warburg Institute, 15-16 June 2007, Jointly Organised by the Warburg Institute and the Gabinete de Filosofia Medieval*. Textes et Études Du Moyen Âge 48. Louvains-la-Neuve: Brepols.

Calitti, Floriana. 2010. "Pisa settembre 1476. La memoria aragonese delle lettere toscane." In *Atlante della Letteratura Italiana. I. Dalle Origini al Rinascimento*, edited by Sergio Luzzatto, Gabriele Pedullà, and Amedeo De Vincentiis, I:545–51. Torino: Einaudi.

Cannata Salamone, Nadia. 1999. "L'Antologia e il canone: la Giuntina delle Rime Antiche (Firenze, 1527)." *Critica del testo* 2: 221–47.

Garin, Eugenio. 1975. *Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press.

Le Goff, Jacques. 2015. *Must We Divide History into Periods?* European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism. New York : Columbia University Press.

Parker, Deborah. 2012. "Vasari's Ritratto Di Sei Poeti Toscani: A Visible Literary History." *MLN* 127 (January): S204–15.

Richardson, Brian. 1992. "Criteri editoriali della prima stampa del Novellino." *Lingua nostra*, no. LIII: 4–7.

Tanturli, Giuliano. 1992. "Proposta e risposta. La prolusione petrarchesca del Landino e il codice cavalcantiano di Antonio Manetti." *Rinascimento* XXXII: 213–25.

———. 1998. "Filologia cavalcantiana fra Antonio Manetti e Raccolta Aragonese." In *Sotto il segno di Dante. Scritti in onore di Francesco Mazzoni*, edited by Leonella Coglievina and Domenico De Robertis, 2:311–20. Firenze: Le Lettere.

Trovato, Paolo. 2015. "P. Trovato, 'Antichi' e 'moderni' tra Medio Evo e Rinascita. Schede su due parole-utensile (con una coda sul proemio A dei 'Discorsi' di Machiavelli)." I (1): 9–39.

Vecchi Galli, Paola. 2002. "Dalla Raccolta Aragonese alla Giuntina di Rime antiche: riflessioni sul canone lirico italiano fra Quattro e Cinquecento." In *Il Canone e la Biblioteca. Costruzioni e decostruzioni della tradizione letteraria italiana*, edited by Amedeo Quondam, 193–207. Roma: Bulzoni.

Zaja, Paolo. 1995. "«Oscuri velami» in alcuni
        sonetti di Giulio Camillo." *Lettere
        Italiane* 47 (1): 10–46.