

The Medieval Self-commentary: A Transnational Perspective

Fondation Hardt, 22-23 July, Vandœuvres, Genève

To medieval authors commentaries and exegesis were a means to establish a dialogue with a past regarded as exemplary. And yet, toward the Late Middle Ages, exegesis becomes more and more a means of self-expression and self-assertion. European writers from different geographical areas increasingly dedicate themselves to comment on their own writings, instead of glossing on authoritative texts of the past. Hermeneutics turns out to be integral to the process of creativity. The present conference aims at exploring the progressive emergence of self-commentaries in medieval Europe, in order to investigate how and why new expressive and communicative forms developed from traditional formats. Self-commentaries are also linked to broader processes of diffusion and legitimation of vernacular languages across Europe. They therefore represent a unique source to understand how pre-modern and modern individual identities shaped and re-presented themselves. The development of self-commentaries is a break with the tradition of ancient and medieval exegesis. Such a break was made possible by the emergence of new social groups as well as by transformations involving book production in late medieval Europe. The conference will be the first attempt to look at medieval self-commentaries as a pan-European, pre-humanistic phenomenon, considering continuities and discontinuities across multiple national traditions. To this end, we will bring together scholars belonging to different fields and theoretical approaches, in order to address the manifold questions raised by medieval self-commentaries. More information about the conference can be found at www.selfcommentary.com

Organizers

Aglæe Pizzone, University of Geneva
Ian Johnson, University of St. Andrews
Francesca Geymonat, University of Torino

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Tuesday 22 July

9.45-10.00

Francesca Geymonat (University of Torino), Ian Johnson (University of St. Andrews) and Aglae Pizzone (University of Geneva), Introductory remarks

Session 1-Models, typologies, contexts. Moderator Claire-Marie Schertz-Lomenech

10.00-10.40

Andrea Capra (University of Milan), I and I. The uneasy beginnings of self-commentary in ancient Greece and its later reception [ABSTRACT](#)

10.40-11.20

Luigi Pirovano (University of Milan), Exegesis and self-exegesis between late antiquity and humanism: a (dis)continuous history [ABSTRACT](#)

11.20-11.40

Coffee Break

11.40-12.00

Discussing transitions: self-exegesis from late-antiquity through the Middle Ages. Respondents Aglae Pizzone and Ian Johnson

12.30-14.15

Lunch

Session 3-Didacticism and Self-commentary. Moderator Ian Johnson

14.20-15.00

Michael Grünbart (University of Münster), Strategies of self-furnishing: John Tzetzes and George Lakapenos

15.00-15.40

Sabrina Corbellini (University of Groningen), Self-comment and re-elaboration in the works of Dirc Potter

15.40-16.20

Cristina Panzera (Université de Bordeaux 3), Scriba Amoris. Didactic poetry and self-commentary in Francesco da Barberino

16.20-16.40 Coffee Break

16.40-17.20

Giulio Vaccaro (CNR Florence), Modes of self-commentary in Cecco d'Ascoli

17.20-18.00

Farkas Kiss (University of Innsbruck), Self-commentaries and imitation: speaking through personae in educational literature in Hungary (John Vitéz, Valentin Eck)

18.00-18.20 General discussion

Dinner

Wednesday 23 July

Session 4-Translations and self-commentaries. Moderator Aglae Pizzone

9.00-9.40

Elizabeth Fisher (George Washington University), The Boethius Translations of Manuel Holobolos and Maximos Planoudes: Self-Revelation and Self-Concealment

9.40-10.20 Ian Johnson (University of St. Andrews), Texts making selves and selves making texts: varieties of middle English self-commentary in Richard Rolle's *Psalter*, the *Speculum devotorum* and John Walton's *Boethius*

10.20-10.40

General discussion

10.40-11.00

Coffee Break

Session 5-Self-reflection and self-positioning. Moderator André-Louis Rey

11.00-11.40

Micol Long (University of Munich), Authorial awareness and self-analysis in the letters of Bernard of Clairvaux

11.40-12.20

Aglae Pizzone (University of Geneva), Me, myself and I: biography and the triune author in Tzetzes' *Historiae*

12.20-13.30

Lunch

13.40-14.20

Divna Manolova (Central European University), Self-exegetical reflections on authority and innovation in Nikephoros Gregoras' *Historia Rhōmaikē*

14.20-15.00

Paulina Rychterová (University of Vienna), Between pride and prejudice: Czech lay theologian Thomas of Stitne (ca.1330-1400) and his "Selbstbetrachtungen"

15.00-15.20

General discussion

15.20-15.40

Coffee Break

Session 6-Self-commentary and narrative strategies. Moderator Roberto Leporatti

15.40-16.20

Simone Marchesi (Princeton University), Solving doubts, responding to criticism: Dante's self-commentary in Paradiso

16.20-17.00

Albert Russell Ascoli (University of California-Berkeley), The Griselda Complex: Petrarch's self-commentary on Boccaccio

17.00-17.40

Sherry Roush (Penn State University), Self-commentary from the Other World? "Petrarch" Speaks

17.40-18.00

General discussion

18.00-18.15

Francesca Geymonat, Ian Johnson and Aglae Pizzone, Concluding remarks

Dinner