ABSTRACT

Renzo Tosi, *Rumor in ancient (and modern) proverbs* 3-22

In the first section of this article some proverbs concerning the rumor are studied. They are *vox populi vox Dei*, rumor acquiring new elements by spreading, speed of the rumor, rumor producing deleterious effects. In the second section some proverbs that derive from rumors are studied. The first is concerning the famous king Midas. Some proverbs concern populations, others animals. Finally, some derive from famous phrases attributed to his-torical figures.

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Bruna Pieri, *«Ut fama est»: the poet's voice between hearsay and asseveration; some case studies from classical and late antique Latin literature* 23-44

In Latin literature (as well as in its Greek models), the poet's speech is represented ambivalently: as the result of both invention and tradition

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what the poet says is both a lie and an authoritative word. Plautus had already highlighted this ambiguity of the poetic speech, but this duplicity becomes evident when Latin poets, through the so-called Alexandrian footnote, claim to repeat the song of other poets. Catullus, in his *carmina docta*, employs the Alexandrian footnote as a display of doctrine (c. 68), or to signal his personal innovations (c. 64), or for parodic purposes (c. 67). In Lucretius' poetry the relationship between the poet's voice and truth becomes a key issue of his didactic poem and the reference to the *fama* in some cases aims to stigmatize the lies of myth, in others to asseverate historical and scientific content. As for Virgil, he proves to be influenced as much by Catullus as by Lucretius. Christian poets (Paulinus and Licentius are considered here) renew the function of this stylistic device, either by transforming (i.e. Christianizing) the very nature of the *fama* they refer to, or by interpretating the myth through allegory. In Augustine, Virgil's speech helps to asseverate the refutation of his opponent Faustus.

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Jean-Yves Tilliette, *The literary Fortune of the Vergilian Picture of «Fama» (Aen. 4, 173-190) until the end of the Middle Ages* 41-64

In the fourth book of the *Aeneis*, Vergil draws an astonishing portrait of the goddess Fama, who is about to make Dido's misconduct public, in the form of a gigantic winged monster, provided with thousands of eyes and mouths. One could expect such an impressive creation to meet great success with the writers of the Middle Ages, given the place that Virgil's work held then in school programs. In reality, this is not the case: some elements of the Virgilian phraseology (*Fama malum, Fama volat pernicibus alis, monstrum horrendum,* …) are regularly reused so to appear as pure clichés. But the substantial reality of the monster has faded. The article tries to identify the reasons: use of a less ambiguous and more religiously connoted vocabulary, confusion with other more popular allegories, such

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as that of *Fortuna*, obliteration of the meaning of «rumour» in favor of that of «renown». It was not until the end of the Middle Ages and the appearance of a «court society» that the character was to rise from the ashes.

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Lucia Castaldi, *The Legend of the Damnation of King Charles the Hammer and its Presence within a French Branch of the* Vita Gregorii *by John the Deacon* 65-112

In the acts of the synod of Quierzy in 858, attributed to Hincmar of Reims, we can read the legend of the damnation of king Charles the Hammer. As an *excerptum*, this text has an independent manuscript tradi-tion. In addition to the codices used by Wilfried Hartmann in the latest edition of the *Acta Synodi Carisiacensis*, two other French witnesses of the *excerptum* are described, where the *Damnatio Karoli Martelli* is transmitted together with the *Vita Gregorii* of John the Deacon: Arras, Médiathèque de l'abbaye Saint-Vaast 160 (CGM 221), ff. 65v-66r, s. XI (*Ar*) and Paris, Bib-liothèque nationale de France, lat. 5355, ff. 113v-114r, s. XII (*Pa*). The two French codices derive (*Ar*, directly; *Pa* indirectly) from the *scriptorium* of Reims where in the 11th century manuscripts and texts were prepared to support the reform of the Church promoted by pope Gregory VII. The recensio and the *stemma codicum* of the *Remensis* branch of the *Vita Gregorii* allow to reconstruct the complex phases through which the manuscript copies of the Roman hagiography were made and to determine that *Pa* derives (through an interposed codex) from Ar. However, the *recensio* of the *Damnatio Karoli Martelli* leads to the conclusion that the *excerptum* was copied in *Ar* and *Pa* independently, reproducing the episode from two dis-tinct branches of the transmission. In the *Appendix* a new critical edition of the *Damnatio* is offered on the basis of the 11 known manuscripts of the *excerptum* and the *Acta Synodi Carisiacensis*.

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Roberto Gamberini, *Rumor, Testimony, Perception and Representation of Reality in Raoul Glaber* 113-30

Raoul Glaber's historical narration begins from orality and proximity. The word of man is compared with the word of God and reveals its nature: testimony of truth or, on the contrary, rumor, lie, slander. Human instincts and feelings distort the perception of reality, which can only be correctly interpreted through the use of reason. Raoul Glaber thus reveals himself to be a rationalist, because for him reason is the most powerful means, if not the only one, to understand the word of God in Sacred Scripture and to interpret divine manifestations in history. Even prophetic visions are removed from the field of the prodigious and become tools for the interpretation of reality. As a consequence of the rationalization of the earthly events and appearances and of their figural interpretation in accordance with divine revelation, history acquires a theological value: it becomes the continuation and completion of Sacred Scripture, the key to understanding the world and the destiny of man on his path of salvation.

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Jeroen Deploige, *"Caculatores ac susurratores". Rumours, Gossip and Hear-say in the Hagiography of the Abbeys of Saint Peter and Saint Bavo in Ghent, Tenth-Eleventh Centuries* 131-52

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the monastic communities of Saint Peter and Saint Bavo in Ghent were involved in a harsh struggle for local prestige. During this conflict, they produced a particularly important series of hagiographic narratives. These texts functioned as literary and stylized "arguments" in a context of ongoing mutual envy and debate.

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They also allow to perceive how in this conflict a whole range of other utterances were used as well, including a wide variety of rumours and gossip. In a way, this conflictual hagiography contains traces that allow for the development of a kind of typology of *rumor* and *opinio* in the Middle Ages. The case of the Ghent abbeys thus provides a good illustration of how rumour and hearsay helped to structure local communities and networks, to shape their identities and social memories, and to build shared values and knowledge.

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Julien Théry, *Fama: Public Opinion as a Legal Category. Inquisitorial Procedure and the Medieval Revolution in Government. (12th-14th centuries)* 153-94

The *fama communis* or *publica* («common fame» or «renown») held an increasingly important place in judicial sources from 1150-1200 onwards. Its new significance should be correlated with the development, within ecclesiastic and secular jurisdictions, of procedures of an inquisitorial nature. *Fama* and inquisitorial justice were inseparable at the heart of a judicial and governmental revolution that was also, more broadly, socio-political and cognitive. It is difficult for medievalists to escape the inclination to consider *fama* to be factual data, as it is presented in the sources. But *fama* always required the validation of the judicial authority to take effect – meaning to hold value as an element of proof, to instigate a trial, to authorise a testimony, or to justify the use of torture. It was the key-element of a system of com-munication dominated by the central authorities. Far from being a force that emanated from the self-organisation of the social world, *fama* was indissociable from relationships of power involving the central institutions that were developing, with a public vocation, and the communities that they brought under their control. *Fama* amounted to a framework of «negotiations» between institutions and society, specific to the first cen-turies of central power in the West. The competence and prerogative of veridiction, monopolised by public authorities, were the foundation of a specific governmentality, the strategies

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of both the individual players and the institutions being organised according to the *fama/veritas* couple.

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Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *'Ut dicitur, femina fuit'. The Hearsay in the Legend on the Female Pope* 195-218

In the vast majority of the 109 texts on the legend of the female pope that have been collected up to 1500, *ut dicitur* type formulations are literary borrowings, which is why they should not be considered as evidence of 'hearsay'. In only one of the two oldest notices on the female pope (*Chronica minor*), does the mention of 'hearsay' indicate that the author wishes it to be a true 'hearsay' that did not, however, circulate among the Roman 'people', but among the high Roman and curial clergy. Martino Polono's version contains three formulas that seem to support the general purpose of the nar-rative: the exclusion of the female pope from the list of supreme pontiffs and his elimination from the historical memory of the papacy. Of the twenty-one literary texts concerning the second legend of Pope Joan, that of the verification of the newly-elected pontiff 's masculinity, only the first three present *ut dicitur* formulas: their function is that to emphasize the novelty of an information that could not fail to arouse curiosity.

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Francesco Santi, *Scholasticism Uses Hearsay? A Case in Three Sermons by Bonaventure Concerning the Icona of the* Pietà 219-30

The examination of three sermons dedicated to Mary mother of Jesus and delivered in Paris between February 2, 1268 and April 6, 1268,

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shows how Bonaventure elaborates - in the course of these works - the icon of the *Pietà*: the body of Jesus dead exhibited by his mother in perfect soli-tude. The icon corresponds to what could be called an apocryphal tale (having no correspondence in the accounts of the passion found in the New Testament), but also it corresponds to the image of god that is emer-ging at the end of the XIII century. The references to anonymous hymno-graphy (with expressions such as *quidam dixit* or *dicitur*) show how Bona-venture in the elaboration of the figure of the Pietà also refers to what can be considered a diceria, in a salvific historical time in which he believes he can give truth value to the *vox populi* (as shown by some references in the Collationes in Hexaemeron).

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Danielle Jacquart, *How Medieval Physicians Have Reported What it Was Said About Them* 231-44

In the first part of this paper, some examples are given of the ambivalent attitudes that some medical writers have shown towards popular beliefs. In the second part, the focus is on their testimonies of the ordinary people' s distrust in medical or surgical practitioners in general. In the third part, the focus is on their strategies for preserving individual fama and the writings of *cautelae*. This paper relies on the writings of four practioners from the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth: one surgeon, Henri de Mondeville, and three physicians, Arnold of Villanova, Bernard de Gordon and Alberto de Zancariis.

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Iolanda Ventura, Dicitur *Between* auctoritas*, Normative Attitude, and* opinio *in Medieval Encyclopedias* 145-86

My paper examines the notion of '*dicit/dicitur*' in Thirteenth-century Latin encyclopedias, with special reference to the work *De proprietatibus rerum* written by Bartholomew the Englishman around 1230-1240. In this paper, such notion is examined by establishing a 'typology' of the reference to sources used by Bartholomew, and by analyzing the role played by '*Mit-tlerquellen*' ('filter-sources') in the construction of a certified knowledge and in the communication of an information characterized by a *consensus*. Furthermore, the paper examines the role of the *auctoritates* in the treat-ment of branches of knowledge characterized by their fluid nature, and by their representation in form of *summae*, as well as in the representation of disciplines where the circulation of information occurs through oral and 'internal' communication among experts or communities of experts.

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José C. Santos Paz, *Interaction between Prophecies and Rumors in the Late Middle Ages* 287-310

Medieval prophecies played a fundamental role in the spreading of news (often fake news), in order to create public opinion on certain issues. For this reason, they were frequently associated with rumors, although the manifestations of this relationship are varied and complex. First, this contribution describes the ways of transmission (direct and indirect) of prophecies that favored the creation of rumors, focusing on preaching. In addition, different cases are considered that demonstrate the interaction

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between rumors and prophecies, in particular the tradition of Merlin, the legends about Emperor Frederick II and the news regarding the birth of Antichrist.

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Jean-Patrice Boudet, *The Astrologers' Rumour* 311-42

The Arab-Latin translations of the twelfth century provided European astrologers with a fairly sophisticated grid for analysing the phenomenon of rumour, from the point of view of its degrees of accuracy and falsity, its publicity and its possible extinction. But actual traces of the application of their theory are very rare and it is in fact in seventeenth-century England that a practical example of astrological interrogation about a rumour of a political-military nature can be examined. This is the subject of the present article.

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Maxime Gelly-Perbellini, *Rumours and Suspicions of Witchcraft in the Kingdom of France at the end of the Middle Ages (14 th-15th centuries)* 343-70

Rumor constitutes a key element of the mechanisms of accusation, both from a procedural and social point of view, in the repression of witchcraft at the end of the Middle Ages. Above all, when recorded by justice system, the rumoring voice refers to the *fama*, or «renommée» (reputation), of an indi-vidual. It plays an important role in setting the judicial

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machine in motion. It also has an important sociological dimension since it helps to socially define an individual, his honor and his criminal status. The article thus aims to explore some aspects of rumors of witchcraft and the accusatory *fama* as they can be found in the judicial documentation of the kingdom of France at the end of the Middle Ages. By first focusing on the formulations of the witchcraft rumor as well as the different notions which make it possible to define it, we then propose to reflect on the functions and effects of the cir-culation of witchcraft rumors and the *fama* of witches and sorcerers based on a few examples taken from judiciary documents (letters of remission, Criminal Register of the Châtelet, Parliament of Paris).

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Martine Ostorero, *«Witch», «Son of Vaudois»! How to react to the infamous rumour of witchcraft? (Duchy of Savoy-Western Switzerland, 15th-early 16th centuries)* 371-402

Diabolical and sectarian witchcraft, as documented from the fifteenth century onwards, is an imaginary crime largely based on the spoken word. Public rumour (*vox et fama publica*), recorded in court through witnesses, and denunciation actually create the crime. The crime of witchcraft, even more radically than that of heresy, imprisoned suspects and defendants in the dramatic mechanics of *diffamatio*, from the moment it was given evidential value. How an individual defamed of witchcraft could react? The richness of Western Switzerland's documentation makes possible to explore the issue of *fama* from several angles. The focus here will be on four means of defence or resistance of individuals confronted to the defamation of witchcraft: the purgatory oath, the use of a lawyer, the filing of a complaint for insult, and the rule of the three concordant trials. A second part, based on a case study, will highlight political reactions to the witch-hunt, partic-ularly with regard to abusive denunciations, in

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order to control, if not limit, the repression. Urban communites and authorities like the États de Vaud relied on the Carmelite preacher Humbert de Costa, author of a still unknown treatise against the reality of the crime of witchcraft, in an attempt to hinder the Dominican Inquisition.

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Marina Montesano, *Chatting in the Spinnery. The "Evangiles des Quenouilles" between Gender, Aage, Interpretations* 403-18

During certain nights between Christmas and Candlemas, a man agrees to listen and serve as scribe to some women who gather to spin and chat in the house of one of them. What he writes is supposed to capture pre-cisely what is said on those nights. This is the simple plot of the *Evangiles des Quenouilles*, a 15th-century text at the centre of which should therefore be female chatter and gossip, but on the meaning of which critics have exercised themselves. Is it a collection of folk sayings and traditions, as some parallels with contemporary sources seem to show? Or is it rather to be interpreted as an example of a misogynist text, written to show the comic side of women's gatherings at a time when practices deemed super-stitious were met with suspicion and sometimes persecution? Both of these paths have been explored: in this essay, I try to find an explanation that takes them into account while breaking the interpretative impasse.

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Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *The Rumor, between Immediate Present and Continuous Present: the Effects of a 'Differential History' on Medieval Political Society* 419-34

Historiography has long considered rumor as the popular side of propa-ganda validated by the authority. But thanks to recent studies, rumor has changed side and has been recognized for a plasticity suitable for strength-ening the arsenal of tools manipulated just as much by the power in place. In this article, and on the basis of English, French and Burgundian cases from the end of the Middle Ages, I analyze not only the mechanisms of rumor (its favorite themes, its means of dissemination, its sources of credi-bility and plausibility), but also its relation to time. By trying to understand the reasons for its infinite repetition, I introduce the notion of 'differential history' allowing us to grasp the presents of an era and the importance of subjective perception as a driving force behind the cyclical nature of rumor, constantly revived over time, according to the expectations specific to each individual.

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Jacques Chiffoleau, *Rumours from Nantes. The Unending Story of the Crimes of Gilles de Rais* 435-566

Rumours and secrets - swirling, persistent, endlessly variable – have fol-lowed the history of Gilles de Rais, lord of Machecoul and Marshal of France. They have passed down from the 15th century to modern times, playing a role in the transmission of his story perhaps even greater than the supposed scale of his victims and the unspeakable horror of his crimes: magic, heresy, sodomy, murder of children, and lèse majesté. Vague rumours and unspeakable crimes go hand in hand, one invoking history, the other exciting the imagination. His trial in 1440 began with rumour and hearsay, already portending an uncer-tainty that would not be resolved. It is those rumours, clinging through the centuries to this infa-

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mous event, transmitted orally and through a variety of documents, which demonstrate the extraordinary flexibility of the story, end-lessly repeated, of the crimes of the cruel lord of Machecoul. His conviction and execution did not put an end to the questions first posed by his contemporaries. The combination of his secretive trials, confessions of sadistic acts, and difficult-to-find archival sources, have continued to sustain the rumours, encouraging invention and fiction. Moreover, each generation has made its own use of the history of de Rais, imprinting its own preoccupations on the story. Chroniclers from the 16th to the 18th centuries did not exhaust the uncertainties and mysteries, and even historians, fiction writers, and play-wrights of our modern era seem incapable of coming to terms with his story of horrors, of concluding his trials, and putting an end to the rumour.

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Monica Azzolini, *Marvellous Natural Particulars: Testimony, Rumour, and Proof in Ulisse Aldrovandi's Work* 567-92

This essay investigates the role of orality in the work of the Bolognese naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi. By examining a series of examples related to unknown and wondrous species like dragons and exotic fish. Rumours and descriptions of monstrous animals (real or fake) circulated widely, making the realm of the possible much broader in the early modern period than it is today. Aldrovandi avidly sought out unusual specimens: their rarity, as well as the challenges of classifying them, made the search for such crea-tures a natural goal for him. For early modern naturalists like Aldrovandi hearsay had a heuristic value even if this was not at par with direct expe-rience. It was part of the way new knowledge was constructed and com-pared with classical sources and first-hand experience. I therefore argue that reliance upon hearsay and second-hand information, both from expert informants and from unverified sources,

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contributed significantly to the production of new knowledge in the work of Aldrovandi and other six-teenth-century naturalists.

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Luca Tonetti, *"Fingeranno casi e favole": Hearsay and Medical Reputation in Early-Modern Bologna. The Case of Marcello Malpighi* 593-614

The dispute between Marcello Malpighi and Giovanni Girolamo Sbaraglia touched on various aspects of the relationship between theory and practice in medicine, in particular the role of anatomical knowledge in the development of therapy and pathology. These were more than just two opposing views of medicine. Malpighi even feared for his reputation as a
good physician, since one of Sbaraglia's followers, Paolo Mini, seemed capable of even inventing lies to show the shortcomings of his practice and thus discredit him. The distinction between deliberate slander and criticis is at the heart of the short treatise De moralibus criticae regulis by Giovan Gioseffo Orsi, who examines the Malpighi-Sbaraglia dispute from a different perspective, focusing on the guiding principles in scholarly practices. The aim of this paper is therefore to analyse this dispute up to the publication of an 'unauthorised' edition of Malpighi's medical consultations in 1713. This edition, with its embarrassing errors, was likely to reignite the debate (and rumours) about Malpighi's inexperience as a physician.

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