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CICERO'S LIFE AND DEATH IN  
MANUSCRIPTS PRESERVED IN SPAIN

In the Patio de Escuelas opposite the university stands a statue, cast at Rome in 1869, of a figure eminent in the history not just of Salamanca but of Spanish literature, Luis de León. In 1572 the inquisition removed him from his post for almost five years, and on resuming his duties he opened his first lecture with the words «Dicebamus hesterna die»(1). The words suit this 12<sup>th</sup> *Colloquium Tullianum*, which follows the 11<sup>th</sup> at a longer interval than usual. Actually they suit it better than I should have wished. For this paper I had the idea of discussing medieval interest in Cicero as a historical figure and connecting it somehow with manuscripts written or preserved in Spain, but it turned out that precisely that topic, though without particular reference to Spain, had engaged P. L. Schmidt at the last *Colloquium*. All too true, then, that *dicebamus hesterna die*, or rather that *dicebat hesterna die Petrus Lebrecht Schmidt*(2).

Instead, what follows will be a miscellany, first of observations prompted by manuscripts of Cicero currently in Spain, then of footnotes on Schmidt's topic. Before proceeding, however, I should like to recall a letter that reached Cicero at Arpinum in July 45 after the death of his beloved daughter: *A Caesare litteras accepi consolatorias datas prid. Kal. Mai. Hispali* (*Ep. ad Att.* 13, 20, 1) – sent on April 30<sup>th</sup> from Seville. Caesar was quite busy at the time.

Medieval inventories of Spanish libraries are not common, and in only one earlier than the 15th century is Cicero named(3). This is how it came about:

(1) F. H. Reusch, *Luis de Leon und die spanische Inquisition*, Bonn 1873, 114, from N. Crusenius, *Monasticon Augustinianum*, München 1623, 208-209: «Primam vero lectionem post tenebras ut auspicabatur, pleno consensu [Reusch: Crusenius prints *concessu*] ad novitatem evocato, inquit *Dicebamus hesterna die*».

(2) *Bemerkungen zur Position Ciceros im mittelalterlichen Geschichtsbild*, «Ciceroniana» n. s. 11, 2000, 21-36. See also *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 2, München-Zürich 1983, 2063-2077: 'Cicero in Mittelalter und Humanismus', especially 2072-2073, D. Briesemeister, 'Rezeption in den Literaturen der iberischen Halbinsel', 2075-2077, P. L. Schmidt, 'Textgeschichte'.

(3) M. & K. Manitius, *Handschriften antiker Autoren in mittelalterlichen Bibliothekskatalogen*, «Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen» Suppl. 67, 1935, 39. I may have missed inventories published since.

*Anno domini mcclxxiii ... ad preces domini Gundissalui electi Conchensis uenimus v<sup>o</sup> nonas madii ... ad quandam domum suam que uocatur Alualadiel, que distat per duas leucas a ciuitate Toletana, ad hoc inuentarium faciendum de bonis suis, et inuenimus in bonis suis, preter illa que in alio inuentario continentur, ista que subsequuntur.*

Presumably it was important to distinguish between personal and ecclesiastical property. The document goes on to record that Gudiel owned 43 manuscripts, among them these(4):

[37] Retorica de Tullio, vieia e nueva, en un volumen

[38] Libro de Platon con glosa

[39] Tullio de officiiis.

'Platon' may be Cicero's *Timaeus*. Inventories will continue to be discovered, though, and one recently published, which concerns the papal library when it was housed at Peñíscola in the pontificate of Pedro de Luna (Benedict XIII), has revealed that Alfonso of Aragon took a special interest in a manuscript of Cicero, now Escorial R I 2: on January 26<sup>th</sup> 1424 *fuit de mandato ipsius domini nostri pape datus iste Tullius regi Aragonie*. Of the few manuscripts picked out in this way, another contained Cicero's *Ad familiares*(5).

Manuscripts currently in Spain that transmit classical Latin authors have been listed in a very useful catalogue by Lisardo Rubio(6). They run to 735, though probably not many of them were in Spain before the 17th century. No fewer than 161 include works of Cicero's (22%). Some copies of the *Somnium Scipionis*, however, are missing from the index, because they occur with Macrobius's commentary. One of these, Valencia Univ. 55, has a subscription that greatly appeals to me:

f. 244 (ult.) *Finis. Laus deo. Ioan. Rainaldus Mennius Surrentinus illustrissimo ac felicissimo Alfonso de Aragonia duci Calabriae opus tranquille excripsit millesimo quadringentesimo septuagesimo secundo dum cometis tempore omnes perterrentur.*

The comet scared everyone else out of their wits (*fo ditto che segnificava morte de gran signori*), but the scribe calmly wrote out Cicero's disclosures about the universe and life after death, which promised benefactors of their country an eternal abode in the heavens (*Somnium*

(4) F. J. Hernández - P. Linehan, *The Mozarabic cardinal: the life and times of Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel*, Florence 2004, 480-485.

(5) Marie-Henriette Jullien de Pommerol - Jacques Monfrin, *La bibliothèque pontificale à Avignon et à Peñíscola pendant la grande schisme d'Occident et sa dispersion*, Rome 1991, 539-540 no. 904, 675 no. 337.

(6) L. Rubio Fernández, *Catálogo de los manuscritos clásicos latinos existentes en España*, Madrid 1984.

13)(7). The manuscript valued by Alfonso, Esc. R I 2 (membr. XIV, France), is also valued by editors of Cicero, especially for its text of the *Verrines*(8), and others that they value include Escorial V III 6 (membr. XIV<sup>2</sup>, northern Italy)(9), Madrid B. N. 9116 (membr. XIV<sup>2</sup>), in which Leighton Reynolds identified a rich collection of meditations on the *Tusculan disputations* that goes back to Petrarch(10), and Esc. R I 12 (membr. c. 1420, Antonio di Mario), among the earliest copies of speeches found by Poggio and also among the best witnesses to speeches that had circulated only since the days of Petrarch and Boccaccio(11).

Anyone in the Middle Ages who might have wanted historical information about Cicero, for inclusion perhaps in an *accessus* (an introduction to one of his works), would have had difficulty in finding it. True, he talks about himself in various works, but nothing like a connected account would have come to hand. If one scans Bruni's *Cicero novus* of about 1435 for explicit references to authorities(12), one finds him citing Plutarch, Nepos (from Gellius 15, 28), Cicero's letters to Atticus, and Juvenal. Obviously Plutarch's life of Cicero, recovered for western Europe in Bruni's own day, was a godsend, but only Juvenal, hardly the most authoritative of historical sources, was available at all widely in the Middle Ages, and even Bruni had not seen, for instance, Nepos's life of Atticus or Dio's Roman history. Here is a brave shot at Greek history as well as Roman from a medieval reader of the *Philippics*, perhaps William of Malmesbury(13):

*Demosthenes fuit Atheniensis orator ccc<sup>is</sup> annis ante Tullium, sicut idem Tullius in fine secundi libri De diuinacione dicit; de quo Demosthene*

(7) On this comet see Rossella Bianchi, *Paolo Spinoso e l'umanesimo romano nel secondo Quattrocento*, Roma 2004, 56.

(8) L. D. Reynolds, *The transmission of the De finibus*, «It. med. uman.» 35, 1992, 1-30, at p. 14-15. See also, for pseudo-Cicero *De re militari*, of which this seems to be the earliest copy, M. D. Reeve, *Modestus, scriptor rei militaris*, in P. Lardet (ed.), *La tradition vive: Mélanges d'histoire des textes en l'honneur de Louis Holtz* (Bibliologia 20), Turnhout 2003, 417-432, at p. 419, 428, 429-430.

(9) P. L. Schmidt, *Die Überlieferung von Ciceros Schrift 'De legibus' in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, München 1974, 229-232.

(10) L. D. Reynolds, *Petrarch and a Renaissance corpus of Cicero's philosophica*, in O. Pecere - M. D. Reeve (edd.), *Formative stages of classical traditions*, Spoleto 1995, 409-434; *Petrarch and Cicero's philosophical works*, «Les Cahiers de l'Humanisme» 1, 2000, 37-52.

(11) M. D. Reeve, ed. of *Pro Quinctio*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1992, xxii-xxiii.

(12) A. Mai, *Sex orationum partes ...*, Milano 1817, 254-301.

(13) M. R. James, *Two ancient English scholars*, Glasgow 1931, 23-25; R. M. Thomson, *The reading of William of Malmesbury*, «Rev. Bén.» 85, 1975, 362-402, at p. 372-377. For complications see L. D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission*, Oxford 1983, 77, 80-81. Attempts like William's at reconstructing the Ciceronian corpus became more frequent in 14th-century Italy.

*eleganter ad Tullium dictum est 'Demosthenes, Marce Tulli, preripuit tibi ne esses solus orator, ne primus' [Jerome, Ep. 52, 8, 3]. Is ergo Demosthenes oraciones illas appellauit Phillippicas quas contra Phillippum regem Machedonum patrem Alexandri Magni edidit, qui tyrannice Athenas inuaserat; ad cuius imitationem Marcus Tullius Cicero oraciones illas appellauit Phillippicas quas contra Anthonium edidit, qui tyrannidem affectabat super Romanos post interitum Gaii Cesaris, sicut commemorat beatus Augustinus in libro tercio de ciuitate Dei [3, 30]. Sed enim uterque pro Phillippicis suis occisus est, Demosthenes a Phillippo, Tullius ab Anthonio, unde Iuuenalis ... [10, 114-132]. (Cambridge U. L. Dd 13 2 [membr. 1444, Cologne] f. 197r).*

Demosthenes took his own life years after the death of Philip, but William or whoever it was had evidently been reading a commentary on Juvenal(14). More typically, Cicero for William's contemporary Geoffrey of Monmouth was simply a paragon of persuasiveness. Supporting a speech of King Arthur's, one of his henchmen begins as follows:

*Licet unusquisque nostrum totus in se reuersus omnia et de omnibus animo retractare ualeret, non existimo eum praestantius consilium posse inuenire quam istud quod modo discretio sollertis prouidentiae tuae reuoluit. Prouide etenim prouidit nobis tua deliberatio Tulliano liquore lita, unde constantis uiri affectum, sapientis animi effectum, optimi consilii profectum laudare indesinenter debemus. (De gestis Britonum 160).*

The word play in the second sentence, evidently designed to match Arthur's Ciceronian brilliance, smacks more of Gorgias or Apuleius.

Oddly, though, a piece of what purports to be biographical information about Cicero that did circulate in the Middle Ages seems to have been ignored in modern scholarship. It occurs in eight of the manuscripts catalogued by Rubio, for instance Escorial f IV 18. Twelve epitaphs on Cicero, ascribed to different authors but very similar in content and style, can be read as nos. 603-614 in the *Anthologia Latina*, a modern collection of mostly short poems that have survived from Antiquity in various contexts. The epitaphs first appear among other poems but are then transferred to copies of Cicero's works, especially his last, *De officiis*(15). Here is Vomanus's contribution, no. 614, which I choose because it also gives Cicero's age at his death, though nos. 608 and 611 already touch on the point that concerns me:

(14) See the passage quoted by Schmidt, *Bemerkungen* 29 (see n. 2).

(15) B. Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, I, Paris 1982, lists all manuscripts of Cicero (apart from palimpsests) that he takes to have been written before 1200, together with associated texts such as *accessus*; the epitaphs are no. 601 in his list of associated texts. He has published supplements in III 2 (1989) 14-53 and in «Rev. hist. text.» 21, 1991, 43-48; 24, 1994, 208-214; 27, 1997, 38-46; 30, 2000, 135-146; 32, 2002, 79-82.

*Inclitus hic Cicero est Lamiae pietate sepultus,  
quem Fortuna neci tradidit immeritae;  
maximus eloquio, ciuis bonus, urbis amator;  
perniciesque malis perfugiumque bonis;  
qui sexaginta completis ac tribus annis  
seruitio pressam destituit patriam.*

Nowhere else to my knowledge is it attested that Cicero was buried by someone called Lamia. Doubtless the person meant is L. Aelius Lamia, a family friend of Cicero's who in 58 organized support for him among the *equites* and for whom in 43, when he was standing for the praetorship, Cicero organized support in return (*Pro Sestio* 29, *In Pisonem* 64, *Ad fam.* 11, 16-17; 12, 29); after that, nothing is heard of him except that he obtained the praetorship and at an unknown date was cremated by mistake (Val. Max. 1, 8, 12)(16).

Another epigram about Cicero that appears in medieval manuscripts deserves more attention than it has received (*Anth. Lat.* 785 notes):

*Tullius erexit Romanae insignia linguae  
rhetoricas Latio dum sonat ore tubas*

It always accompanies *De inventione*, which it precedes in Vat. Lat. 11506 (s. IX<sup>2</sup>) and follows in Laur. 50, 20 (s. XI), but in several other manuscripts it precedes an extract on rhetoric from Cassiodorus (*Inst.* 2, 2) that in turn precedes *De inventione*: Munich Staatsbibl. Lat. 6400 (s. X<sup>2</sup>), Paris B. N. Lat. 2335 (s. XI), St Gallen 820 (s. X), Vat. Pal. Lat. 1588 (s. IX<sup>1</sup>) f. 39v (s. X-XI), Vienna 116 (s. X)(17). Whatever its age, Cicero as a commander on the battlefield of oratory was surely thought up by someone familiar with *cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae* – though it might have taxed even the greatest of commanders to raise a standard aloft while blowing a trumpet.

For *linguae* in that line there is the author's variant *laudi*, but in casting my vote for *linguae* as the original word I follow Scevola Mariotti, longest-serving vice-president of the Centro di Studi Ciceroniani(18). Happily its first president – *disertus ille artifex regendae rei publicae*, as Augustine said of Cicero «in libro tercio de ciuitate Dei» (3, 30) – is still presiding.

(16) *RE* I 1894, 522 no. 75. Giancarlo Mazzoli's paper on the declaimers set me wondering if the poet met the name in that environment.

(17) Munk Olsen no. 602 (see n. 15); the extract from Cassiodorus is no. 485. G. Achard in the Bude edition of *De inventione* (Paris 1994) does not mention this cluster of texts.

(18) «Parola del Passato» 9, 1954, 371-372 = *Scritti di filologia classica*, Roma 2000, 545-547; see also M. D. Reeve, «Class. Rev.» 113, 1999, 44.