Fate and Fortune in Renaissance Thought

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The concepts of fame and fortune in Renaissance thought seem to remain out of a particular scholarly interest. While having a significant medieval background in theological texts and in *The Consolation of Philosophy* and other philosophical treatises, these concepts received new life during the Renaissance period. The cause was a renewed interest in Cicero’s treatises, as well as in Alexander of Aphrodisias and Stoic philosophy. On the other hand, the question of fate and fortune played an important role in artistic, political and astrological debates in that time.

This interdisciplinary conference brought together both young and prominent scholars working in different fields including art history, political history, humanism, Renaissance philosophy and literary studies. While both keynotes lectures given by Professor Dilwyn Knox (UCL) and Dr Stephen Clucas (Birkbeck) dealt with Renaissance philosophy, the session papers observed various aspects of the problem. Marina Gorbunova (Moscow) and Ovanes Akopyan (Warwick) examined the significance of the fortune iconography in the early modern period not only in Western Europe but also in seventeenth-century Russia. Donato Verardi (Paris) shed new light on fatalistic debates in respect of astrological controversies in the Renaissance, while Elisabeth Blum (Loyola University, Baltimore) explored the *fortuna* question in Giordano Bruno’s *Lo Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante*. Finally, Anthony Ellis (Bern) and Orlando Reade (Princeton) revealed the reception of fate and fortune concepts in Henri Estienne and English Renaissance poetry respectively.

Apart from the scientific aspects of the conference, the discussion continued in a less formal atmosphere, during the coffee breaks and lunch. It is expected that the conference will lead to the publication of the proceedings, which is currently being under negotiation with Brepols. Several external scholars have already expressed their interest in contributing to the volume.

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