
La recepció de l'obra d'Arnau de Vilanova. Actes de la IV Trobada Internacional d'Estudis sobre Arnau de Vilanova

Jaume Mensa, Sebastià Giralt, Jon Arrizabalaga and Jaume de Puig (eds.)

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While strolling through Lleida, if someone asks who Arnau de Vilanova is, the majority of answers would be “the name of the General Hospital”. But if you keep digging and ask why it was given this name, someone might be able to tell you that he was an important doctor. Both are honoured: the hospital and the doctor, and both are part of Master Arnau’s reception today. But, of course, one does not exhaust the other.

After all, the mediaeval master was also an erudite man, and as such, in 1303 he read his work *Confessio Ilerdensis* before the bishops gathered at the Tarragona Provincial Council in that same city on the Segrià region. Incidentally, in 2023 the Universitat de Lleida and Jaume Mensa offered an outstanding edition and translation of this work within the “Polyeideia” collection (thus, it was issued after the Fourth Conference). In his introduction, Mensa reports on the mutual relationship and shows how Arnau, the doctor of popes and kings, was invited by Boniface VIII to devote his life to healing instead of theology. We would all have given him the same advice if we were ill and had to judge his thinking, which often clashed with professional theologians, specifically the Dominicans. Judging your Galen is nettlesome, but being left without him would be even worse.

An example of this is the work with a medical title but theological content entitled *Antidotum contra venenum effusum per fratrem Martinum de Atheca, praedicatorum*. Fortunately, in 2023 Jaume Mensa’s painstaking hand and expertise were at work on volume XII of the “Arnaldi de Villanova Opera Theologica Omnia” collection, a publication made for the Corpus Scriptorum Cataloniae under the aegis of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Ateneu Universitari Sant Pacià. These are the three institutions that have also given us the written version of the *Actes* (Proceedings) on the reception of Master Arnau’s works.

This is the fourth conference of its kind and shows the maturity that studies of Arnau de Vilanova have achieved. Both Jaume Guillamet, president of the Philosophy and Social Sciences Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, and Armand Puig, rector of the Ateneu Sant Pacià, start by reminding us that the driving force and soul behind these gatherings is Dr Josep Perarnau: "Dr Perarnau has contributed to summoning and gathering experts on the figure of this great thinker and doctor. Without his tenaciousness, competence and effort, these conferences would likely have never been held" (pp. 11-12). And he has left good disciples, so good that they have set up the new Centre de Filosofia i Teologia Medievals Catalanes, as reported by its leaders, Jordi Gayà, Jaume Mensa and Alexander Fidora (pp. 17-20).

This first section also takes stock of the medical, theological and digital publications of Arnau's works and then presents a brief report on this Fourth Conference.

A series of intriguing studies form the bulk of the volume we are presenting. It begins with Francesco Santi's stimulating contribution on Arnau and his time. If we say that he behaved like a prophet, the shadow of a quirky individual in his time and in ours immediately looms. However, if we situate him within the tradition of the Church as a prophetic community like Santi does, things change. Today we would say that the connotations of his stance are strangely modern: the pre-eminence of secularism in view of the crisis in religious life, a reform of corrupt institutions and even the prevalence of subjectivities 300 years before rationalist modernity.

The volume continues with a series of contributions on Arnau's writings, both published and unpublished. For example, Sebastià Giralt studies and edits the aphorisms in the work *Medicationis parabole*. Sergi Grau and Celia López Alcalde study *Libellus de conformitate visus*, which is attributed to Arnau. Fernando Salmón addresses the authorship of *De morbo ert accidenti*. Jordi Bossoms examines *Abbreuiacio Regiminis Acutorum*. And finally, Josep Alanyà surveys Arnau's documents from Valencia and Morella, with a particular focus on his last will and testament. Yet further on, Maria Cabré presents *De mysterio cymbalorum*.

Next, the volume contains a series of wide-ranging studies. The article by Theo H. M. Falke examines a crucial event in the life of the illustrious physician: the censure of Paris in August 1300 and his sojourn with the king of France, Philip IV, as an envoy of his relative James II of Aragon. Rafael Ramis continues by compiling 32 references to Arnau from authors between 1518 and 1737, including alchemy and religious polemics. Next, Jaume Mensa picks up the story in 1300 and the eschatological controversy, which focused on the Duns Scotus follower Henry of Harclay, who was horrified by Arnau's theses on the coming of the antichrist. Revisiting the title of the conference, the reception of Arnau de Vilanova, Antoine Calvet analyses a fifteenth-century manuscript that contains pseudo-Arnaldian works of alchemy and thus gives us a glimpse into the fascinating world of attributions. The last two articles, by Jaume de Puig and María Cristina Pascerini, focus on the nineteenth century. The first delves into the French mediaevalists, with Barthélemy Haréau standing out as a prominent figure. The other focuses

precisely on a crucial representative of Spanish mediaeval historiography, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo. The volume closes with a noteworthy article by Michael McVaugh on Master Arnau's legacy, which he calls *Nachgässe*, based on information collected in Valencia, Montpellier and Naples.

It should come as no surprise that the proceedings of the Fourth Conference end with detailed tables: biblical references, manuscripts, incipits, anthroponyms and works by ancient and mediaeval authors, along with anonymous ones. This serves as proof of the quality and effort that lie behind this volume as an endeavour to better grasp and understand this *medicus theologizans*, one of the most outstanding names in mediaeval Catalan culture.

Dr Perarnau would surely feel proud that dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants like himself are also growing. And so are we, to further extol Master Arnau. The conference, like Lleida, has not exhausted Arnau, but instead they are mutually honoured if we carefully examine this volume while we eagerly and gratefully await the Fifth Conference.