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Summary

FROM THE DICTIONARY OF MEDIEVAL LATIN IN THE CZECH LANDS: *BALATRO*

The main aim of the article is to analyse the meaning of a rather uncommon word *balatro* in Medieval Latin within the context of Medieval Latin sources of Bohemia and with regard to Latin acting terminology of the day. The meaning of the word in classical Latin and its etymology are discussed first. The second part of the article presents various interpretations of the etymology and meaning of the word in the Middle Ages, which also drew on late ancient commentaries and scholia on Horace's poems. The definition of the word *balatro* by well-known Medieval Latin lexicographers (Papias, Hugutio of Pisa, Osbern of Gloucester, Iohannes Ianuensis) and celebrated lexicographical works (*Vocabularius Ex Quo*) is briefly discussed.

Attention is further shifted to the interpretation of the word in lexicographical sources of Czech origin. The Medieval Latin and

Latin-Czech glossaries mostly define *balatro* as a profligate, a rogue, or as a jester, a buffoon, a clamorous actor. Several bilingual glossaries also provide interesting old Czech translations of *balatro*, e.g. *brdlak*, *požerač* (denoting a “glutton”), etc. In one Latin-German dictionary containing Czech glosses one can find a German equivalent of *balatro* – *rueffer*: this could mean a *precursor*, that is, an actor who used to present and introduce the medieval play at the beginning. Apart from the lexicographical sources, the word *balatro* also appears in a medieval formula collection from the fourteenth century together with buffoons (*scurrae*), goliards (*goliardi*), gluttons (*epulae*) and profligate people (*deguli*).

Latin or bilingual sources of Bohemia containing the word *balatro* clearly indicate that the name could imply several meanings and that there was not always a strict border between “jester” and “actor” and even “glutton”, “profligate” or “vile fellow”: like other acting terms, the word *balatro* had pejorative connotations stemming from the negative and unfavourable role and status of actors in medieval society in general. The use of the word *balatro* within Medieval Latin in the Czech Lands, in contrast, may have a close connection with the growing role of the courtly jester in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Keywords: *balatro*; jester; buffoon; Latin lexicography; acting Latin terminology; medieval theatre

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