

Writing by candlelight: the *lucubratio* as topos from Cicero to Marko Marulić

In the letter to Brutus in the introduction to Cicero's *Paradoxa stoicorum* we can find the earliest reference in Latin prose to the nocturnal work of the writer, and the image of the writer who "appropriates part of the night for his studies (*partem noctium studiis vindico*, Seneca, Ep. 8.1)" has become a classic image that as metaphor was to live on until this day. Our intention – as much as our powers allow us – is to follow the concept of the *lucubratio* from antiquity until the Renaissance, in the literal and in the figurative sense, as well as in more complex topoi-formulae, giving examples ranging from Cicero, Pliny, Quintilian and Aulus Gellius, through Jerome and a number of Christian writers, to Hermolaus Barbarus (with his *Castigationes Pliniana*) and Erasmus, with particular reference to the Croatian Humanists, such as Marko Marulić.

James Kerr is strangely enough the only one to have dealt at any length with the culture of *lucubratio*, paying particular attention to the image of the night scene, with the writer at his desk, in the eyes of his audience, already having conditioned emotions and expectations, according to the *realia* of Roman nocturnal practices.

Our intention, on the other hand, is to follow the actual topos in the context of the theme of the exordium, and particularly in connection with the topos of the writer's search for patronage from a person of high rank and great power.

We shall pay particular attention to the problem of the title of the work and the evolution of titles in which *lucubrationes*, *lucubrationculae* and so on can be found.