



## Vides d'escriptors a l'Edat Moderna: retòrica, història i poètica

### II. USOS RETÒRICS I FUNCIONS LITERÀRIES

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*“Entregà sos escrits a les flames”*: forms and functions of a biographical topos from Virgil to Comadira passing through Marino and Garcia

Poets in their mortuary chambers asking for their verses to be delivered to the flames is a commonplace started by the first biographers of Virgil. The scene does not only seek to justify the Virgilian concern for having to leave the *Aeneid* unfinished. Precisely the various modulations and interpretations of the desire to destroy one's own creation allow the topos to be transferred to multiple creators of the Modern Age, even to those who disseminated their writings through the printing press.

This paper explores the various configurations and multiple uses of this biographical device, primarily when transferred to contemporary creators during the Renaissance and Baroque. Besides the prestige conferred by the emulation of the Virgilian gesture, the story is used to show the demand for formal perfection by the creators, their intellectual depth and ethical dimension. The first biographers of Giovan Battista Marino (Giovan Battista Baiacca, Girolamo Preti) and of Vicent Garcia (Manuel de Vega) use the topos to justify the sensualism and lust of some of the best compositions of the Baroque period, since these poems would have been allegedly

disseminated against the will of their authors. The desire to destroy one's own work also admits an ironic distancing, as when the story maximizes the transcendence of the burning, reveals its absurdity or exhibits the errors of those in charge of executing the author's demands.

The story appears in collections of biographies, in academic discourses and in prologues of posthumous complete works. Quite surprisingly, some of its elements still endure today and are used by creators in the staging of the authorial figuration. Thus, this paper also aims to suggest some of the postmodern uses of the topos and to reflect on references to the flaming condition of verses in contemporary literature.