

Carlo Ginzburg

In Between



Born in 1939 in Torino, Italy. 1957-61 student at Pisa (Scuola Normale Superiore). 1961 laurea in lettere e filosofia, University of Pisa. 1962-70 teaching assistant, University of Rome. 1968 libero docente. 1970-76 Assistant Professor of Modern History, University of Bologna. 1976-78 Professor of Modern History, University of Lecce. 1978-88 Professor of Modern History, University of Bologna. 1988-present: Franklin D. Murphy Professor of Italian Renaissance Studies, UCLA. Fellowships: 1965-66 Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Villa I Tatti, Settignano (Firenze). 1967-68 The Warburg Institute, London. 1973 Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton. 1975, 1986 The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. 1978-79, 1981-83, 1987, 1993 Directeur d'Etudes associé, Centre de Recherches Historiques, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris. 1983 Whitney Humanities Center, Yale. 1985 Center for Renaissance Studies, The Newberry Library, Chicago. 1986, 1995 The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica. 1992 Aby Warburg Prize. Major Publications (all translated into several languages): *I benandanti. Stregoneria e culti agrari tra '500 e '600*, 1966. *Il formaggio e i vermi. Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500*, 1976. *Idagini su Piero, Il Battesimo, il ciclo di Arezzo, la Flagellazione di Urbino*, 1981. *Miti emblematici*, 1986. *Storia notturna. Una decifrazione del sabba*, Torino 1989. *Il giudice e lo storico. Considerazioni in margine al processo Sofri*, Torino 1991. Articles in *Past and Present*, *Annales*, *Quaderni storici*, *Rivista storica italiana*, *Critical Inquiry*, *Elementa* etc. — Address: 4, Largo Respighi, I-40126 Bologna.

Before coming to the Wissenschaftskolleg I had not realized how important its geographical location could be. Located between the city and the woods, close to the center but enclosed in a distinctive neighbourhood, (as I immediately realized) the Wissenschaftskolleg might allow the fulfillment of seemingly contradictory aims, such as being secluded

from and involved in the vibrant life of Berlin. In the first months the environment provided by the Wissenschaftskolleg's invisible library proved to be so effective — even beyond my wildest expectations — that I spent my research time mostly in my office. I was able to complete at last a long postponed task: the introduction to the Menachem Stern lectures on "History, Rhetoric, and Proof" I gave in Jerusalem some years ago. For some reason, all the (mostly internal) obstacles that had thus far prevented me from writing that piece, which was supposed to put together a series of widely divergent case-studies, had disappeared. I worked with unusual concentration. At the same time I started to discover the city; I was exposed to its extraordinary musical richness. Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus introduced me to some memorable theatrical events. Berlin, with its mixture of East and West, of endless destruction and construction, nearly intoxicated me. I learned to see Berlin through Menzel's eyes, as an unfinished project. Days were getting longer; I realized that the dark Berlin winter was nearly over. It has been too short, I told Stephen Greenblatt during a walk in the woods. He remained perplexed for a second, then agreed. Spring came, full of light and leaves; but I still miss the winter.

Lectures, seminars, concerts, conversations at dinners or around the fax machine, where I used to engage in long, erratic dialogues with Moti Feingold: the Wissenschaftskolleg offered this, and much more. I enjoyed these opportunities, as well as the possibility of submitting some of my reflections to different audiences, either in Berlin or outside Berlin (Hamburg, Göttingen, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Bielefeld). The interaction with these intellectual environments proved to be extremely stimulating. To my deep regret, my poor German remained a serious obstacle up to the very end, notwithstanding Eva Hund's generous efforts — but I will be always grateful to her for having taught me to appreciate the spell of Ingeborg Bachmann's prose.

I spent a large part of the year working on a collection of essays that will come out soon in Italian. Most of these essays focus on distance as metaphor. Not entirely by chance, I brought this project to completion in a place steeped in the presence of the past. Distance from the past and presence of the past were topics of intense, sometimes deeply emotional conversations with various people during the year. There were also, inevitably, a few unpleasant moments.

I left Berlin with many good memories. It has been an unforgettable year.