The PetrArchive Project: **A New Digital "Rich Text" Edition/Commentary of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta***

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Abstract

This project proposes a digital edition of an experimental subset of key texts in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (*Rvf*), using Wayne Storey's new edition and commentary, and to encode, following the Text Encoding Initiative Guidelines (http://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/index.html), seven distinctive textual groupings of the work's 366 texts that comprise the author's poetry. This textual-visual digital scholarly project, the PetrArchive, will supply a state-of-the-art scholarly tool for students, teachers, and scholars of Petrarch's formative icon for book culture and Western poetry, and provide the first online interactive and open-access edition for specialized audiences.

   The project is a collaboration between Wayne Storey and John Walsh. Storey is an accomplished scholar and editor of Petrarch and Walsh has extensive technical expertise and experience developing digital scholarly editions. Together Storey and Walsh share an interest in visual information and the visual and design aspects of poetry and literature.

   This collaborative project is an open source initiative designed for students, scholars, teachers, and translators to utilize the enhanced interactive commentary and search resources of what we call a "rich-text" edition of Petrarch's influential *magnum opus* that will be instrumental to the work's interpretation and translation for the years to come. The team will experiment with text encoding, image processing, and a range of current and emerging web development technologies (e.g., HTML5, CSS3, and JavaScript) to offer new modeling strategies for the digital presentation of complex problems of reordering and revision to both specialized and general audiences. With these new open-access tools, users will have new and more authentic ways to read and examine Petrarch's work in its unique medieval form and to utilize multiple configurations of his reordering of the collection over time. Special attention is paid to the poet's transcriptional design for each page of his work and the intricate relationships among the five poetic genres that constitute the *Rvf*, a feature that has never been represented even in print editions of the work. The instructional viability of these features has been extensively tested in Wayne Storey's undergraduate and graduate courses on Petrarch and early Italian literature. Quick modular introductions to these different ways of viewing Petrarch's "visual poetics" will orient the user to the world of Petrarch's scribe and open new avenues of interpretation and use in the PetrArchive website, where additional development of early copies and editions of Petrarch's *Rvf* will be integrated into this editorial project. These "visual poetics" are difficult to represent in modern print documents or in basic HTML web pages. However, recent advances in web technologies, particularly the advanced typographical, layout, and design features of HTML5 and CSS3, will allow the collaborators to provide rich and attractive representations of the interconnected textual and visual aspects of Petrarch's works.

Background and significance of the project:

One of the most powerful icons for Italian and world literature alike, Petrarch's *Rvf*, or as it came to be known, the *Canzoniere*, was deemed by French, Italian, Spanish, and English Renaissance scholars the model for poetic language and expression. The text of this icon of Italian and European literary culture has been the object of controversy thanks in part to Petrarch's own propensity for erasure and reordering. It is difficult to know how many

authorized versions of the work circulated before Petrarch's death in 1374. Thus the text of Petrarch's *Rvf* that we read today is a composite of hundreds of years of transmission through numerous hands and printings and accrued meaning. Especially in the case of Petrarch's *Rvf*, the most intricate details in the history of the text are potentially dynamic elements in that "accrued version".

Petrarch's *Rvf* in his own hand demonstrates unique non-conformities organized systematically on the principles of: 1) contrasting visual constructs to distinguish diverse poetic genres and themes mixed in the collection of its 366 poems, and 2) an obsessive practice of erasure, emendation, and postponement to contrast the stability of the book's material structure and its insistent metaphor of fragmentation. Petrarch's *Rvf* challenges our ability to plot chronologically the authorial and scribal variants that occur on the parchment of the still unbound fascicles of his manuscript at the time of the poet's death in 1374.

The most dynamic shift in this development of the *Rvf* is the way that visual layouts for the poems construct our understanding of the matrices that we define as ancient and modern. From the overarching form of the book itself to intricate patterns of rhyme, repetition, verse layout, commentary, and illustration we read Petrarch's iconic *Rvf* as "ancient" while expecting it to conform to our modern standards of language, norms of print culture, fixity of forms, and coherence of order and development. One of the first principles in the evolution of an iconic text like the *Rvf* is every transmitting culture's need to make the text conform to its own editorial and aesthetic standards. Today there are two material paradigms of textual conformity for Petrarch's *Rvf*: the single-sonnet-per-page layout with notes at the bottom of the page, and the running commentary-note construction.

In spite of Petrarch's manuscript (Vatican Latino 3195) we have to search for the Text of the *Rvf* also among the 14th- and 15th-century fair copies of the work. Copyists of the early manuscript copies attempted, with limited success, to maintain this systematic resistance to uniformity, the very nature of the pre-print document. These editors and copyists struggled with Petrarch's unique layouts for individual genres and for textual relationships on the face of every manuscript page. Petrarch's second principle of erasure is much more deeply buried in these early copies. Fourteenth-century witnesses reveal variants of multiple exemplars which Petrarch himself had authorized for circulation during his 35 years of work on the *Rvf*.

Petrarch's *Rvf* is composed of a multiplicity of works: the 366 microtexts revised and experimentally reordered within the single container of Petrarch's own non-circulating service copy of the manuscript Vatican Latino 3195. In the 16th century alone, the beginning of the work's second part was established at two different poems (canzone *Rvf* 264 and sonnet *Rvf* 267) by the same editor, Pietro Bembo, in the Aldine editions of 1501 and 1514. Other manuscripts document alternative forms of the work that reveal revisions that circulated before the preparation of Petrarch's last experimental service copy. Most late 14th-century and several 15th-century fair copies, including the 1472 printed Padua edition, reveal the states of the *Rvf* in diverse stages of its cultural reception and represent a register of editorial activity that was essential to determining Petrarch's text.

One of the most vexing problems of MS Latino 3195 was never addressed before Storey's study of 1993 (*Transcription*): the visual poetics that Petrarch used in his own copies of the work and its individual poems from as early as the 1330s until his death. Storey's work established that the graphological layout of the poems on the manuscript page were an essential part of Petrarch's poetics. The rapid multiplication of copies after his death meant that Petrarch's complicated formulae were soon abandoned by copyists keen on making editions for patrons with newer reading habits and expectations. Petrarch's non-conforming poetic formats were soon seen as incompatible with the Renaissance sonnet form.

We know that Petrarch always preferred that his sanctioned copies be produced by professional scribes. Thus Storey's edition is based upon the close examination of Petrarch's own manuscript of his *Rvf* (Vatican Latino 3195), a careful analysis of the erasures and emendations and scribal-poetic formulae, and the witnesses of early manuscripts and editions that might have contained his authorized versions of the work.

Storey's "rich-text" edition considers the single manuscript leaf as a primary textual-editorial unit. The digital format proposed by Storey and Walsh allows the reader to see the contents of the entire page. The format of four sonnets usually grouped on a single side of a folio are maintained as a textual entity, just as Petrarch's singular organization for the sestina is always grouped with a sonnet on one side of a single charta, and poetic "manifestos"—such as "Mai non vo' più cantar" (leaf 22v) and "I' vo pensando" (53r)—are arranged to begin at the top of a fresh leaf.

New Frontier project goals:

The collaborating PIs intend to construct models for five significant subsets of Petrarch's work that will demonstrate the diverse levels of text and visual poetics inherent in the poems. Subset 1A focuses on the first organizational principle of Petrarch's *Fragmenta*: the four-sonnet construction of the manuscript leaf based on a 31-line transcriptional field (see Ex. 1; see all examples @ http://dcl.slis.indiana.edu/petrarchive/). Subset 1B reconstructs the subtle visual poetics of the rare disruption of this principle in, for example, leaf 22r of Petrarch's manuscript, to call attention to a dramatic shift in the work's narrative (Ex. 2). Subset 2 constructs the digital formation of Petrarch's second organizing principle for the manuscript page and his visual poetics: the counterbalance of the sestina's vertical reading strategy, down the transcriptional column, with a single sonnet's horizontal code (Ex. 3). Subset 3 investigates the 157 lines of "Quel' antico mio dolce empio signore" (*Rvf* 356) as a common site of reordering, another of Petrarch's revisionist principles. The poem's reconstruction is imaged from different manuscripts and editions since Petrarch was forced by a lack of material space to distort the poem in his own final transcription (Ex. 4). Subsets 4A and 4B tackle the complex versioning of poems that have been the subject of Petrarch's extensive erasure and emendation by reconstructing the layers of the poet's revisions both in his own manuscript and in those of subsequent manuscripts that reflect earlier and later versions. This fourth subset will be consist of A) the four poems on leaf 26r in which Petrarch attempts to maintain the fair copy status of the manuscript (Ex. 5), and B) the four sonnets of leaf 45r in which Petrarch has abandoned fair copy practices. The fifth subset reconstructs the complexities of textuality in diverse forms of longer poems (canzoni) in versions of the poem *Rvf* 70 ("**L**Asso me, ch'i' non so in qual parte pieghi"), in which Petrarch singles out his quotations of other poets by isolating their verses on independent lines at the end of each stanza (Ex. 6).

The textual and graphological representations of the text will be supplemented by other resources developed for the digital edition. These resources include a visual "map" of Petrarch's graphological enterprise. This map will provide diagrammatic "wireframe" representations of Petrach's layouts, categorize those layouts, and link from diagrams to individual texts. Another planned resource is an illustrated glossary of the visual, textual, and scribal elements present in the documents. In order to illustrate the contrast between Petrarch's layouts and more conventional layouts, the collaborators will build dynamic visualizations in which select documents will morph between Petrarchan and conventional graphological forms.

Potential impact of the project on the field:

PetrArchive will have a direct impact both upon the study of one of the foremost intellectual poets of early modern western literature, offering a significantly richer interactive and open-access study site than the static sites currently available online or in print. Storey's edition restores and offers commentary on the original spatial layout of Petrarch's entire poetic project, recapturing the poetic importance of the individual manuscript page as a coordinated architecture of textual presentation. It will also restore the text with a more authentic approach to the problem of punctuation, and offer analyses and reconstructions of Petrarch's experiments in his service copy, including reconstructions of versions of the *Rvf* and of individual poems to which Petrarch returned multiple times to alter. Using a combination of text encoding and web technologies, we will be able to distinguish and isolate the syntactic, prosodic, and editorial layers of punctuation. This site will eventually become part of a larger project on the study of the relationship between visual layout — in print and manuscript — and poetic/narrative forms. Other relevant work that exploits the visual aspects of poetry includes the pattern poetry of George Herbert, 17th-century Spanish labyrinth poetry, the letterpress productions of William Morris's Kelmscott Press, Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, and many examples of modern electronic literature.

Potential private/government funding agencies:

The work completed as part of a New Frontiers grant will result in a compelling and functional online prototype that the collaborators will use to illustrate applications to the NEH and ACLS for funding to complete the work on Petrarch and to develop the larger project on visual poetics.

Work Plan
Weeks 1-16 (January - April, 2013)
- Encode sample documents and develop encoding guidelines.
- Encode the following subsets: subset 1A, charta (leaf) 1v (4 sonnets); subset 1B, charta (leaf) 22r (3 sonnets); subset 2: charta (leaf) 14v (one sestina, one sonnet), subset 3, chartae (leaves) 69v–70r (one canzone, one sonnet).
- Create illustrated glossary.
- Create organizational scheme and diagrams for the "Visual Map" of the *Rvf*.

Weeks 17-32 (May - August, 2013)
- Encode the following subsets: subset 4A, charta (leaf) 26r (one madrigal and 3 sonnets); subset 4B: charta (leaf) 45r (four sonnets); subset 5, chartae (leaves) 15r and 15v (2 sonnets, 1 canzone (50 vv.) and 1 partial canzone (38 vv.).
- Develop prototype web site.

Weeks 33-48 (September - December, 2013)
- Test and refine of web site.
- Develop "layer tool" to isolate, hide, reveal various textual and visual layers of the documents.
- Develop "graphological morphing" tool to illustrate transition between Petrarchan and conventional graphological forms.
- Integration of tools and public release of prototype.