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Digital project: Petr*archive*

Petr*archive*. An edition of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*. Edited by H. Wayne Storey and John A. Walsh, with the collaboration of Isabella Magni.

The [Petr*archive*] is an open access "rich-text" digital edition of one of the masterpieces of Italian and Western literature: Francesco Petrarca's songbook *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta.* The project proposes a new digital way of visualizing, studying and investigating Petrarch's work by offering a more "authentic" text as well as multiple indices and tools to access the diverse strata of the work's composition and cultural contextualization. The website combines different levels of visualization of the text: facsimile color high-quality images of all the chartae of the partial holograph Vaticano Latino 3195, its complete diplomatic transcriptions and edited forms. Petr*archive* offers new ways of representing and analyzing Petrarch's continuous and unfinished work (erasures, renumbering, palimpsests, visual poetics and layout on the canvas page), while maintaining a clean and simple digital interface. The edition also offers access to the *Fragmenta*'s early manuscript tradition, text and visual indices, a glossary, commentaries both in Italian and in English and an innovative interactive timeline. The Petr*archive* is a collaboration between Prof. H. Wayne Storey (one of four scholars - together with Furio Brugnolo, Gino Belloni and Stefano Zamponi - responsible for the Vatican Library's 2003-2004 two-volume facsimile edition and commentary of Petrarch's *Fragmenta*) and Prof. John A. Walsh (expert and responsible for developing digital scholarly tools and editions, such as The Algernon Charles Swinburne Project - http://swinburneproject.org - and The Chemistry of Isaac Newton - http://chymistry.org). My personal contribution to the project steadily grew in the past four years from encoder to researcher, lead encoder and investigator. I am now a permanent member of the team and I serve as a 'bridge' between Italian and Digital Humanities.

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Francesco Petrarca's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*

Francesco Petrarca's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* is an iconic work in the Italian and larger Western literary traditions. Yet it presents problematic issues, still debated among scholars, related to both its

origins and its 'final form': throughout its genesis up until its latest transcription, the *Fragmenta* shows extraordinary textual swings "between fixity and variation" (Storey 2013: 10). The basis of any textual research on the *Fragmenta* is accepting that it is not a completed work, nor a stable text, and that it was probably still unfinished when Petrarca died in 1374.

A songbook of 366 poems of five different genres (sonnet, canzone, ballata, madrigal and sestina), the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* has experienced centuries of textual transmission and cultural re-interpretations. Many modern and contemporary editions use as the main source for the text the partial holograph Vaticano Latino 3195, often considering it as the "final" and "original" form. Petrarca's holograph is a witness, though, to ongoing revision, reorganization, multiple layers of production, which influence its interpretation and reveal its openness. There are only a few established dates in the genesis of the text: Giovanni Malpaghini[1], a young copyist from Ravenna, transcribed the first four fascicles of the Vaticano Latino 3195, part of the fifth, the entire seventh, and part of the last two quires. He worked under the strict surveillance of Petrarca himself, probably living at the poet's place. Around 1368, during the compilation process, for unknown reasons Malpaghini decided to quit the copyist 'service' and left Petrarca and his songbook. After the copyist's sudden departure, Petrarca took up Malpaghini's "no small labor" (letter Sen. V 5) and transcribed the remaining poems, starting a long process of revision of the entire work[2]. From its intended status as a fair copy, also suggested by the use of a professional scribe and rubricator, Vaticano Latino 3195 soon became a service copy in which the poet experimented his visual poetics as the basis for a potential but never realized final fair copy. By the time Petrarch finished transcribing the last *chartae*, the loose gatherings had become a "work zone". The partial holograph Vaticano Latino 3195, then, is a fundamental witness but not the only manuscript that should be considered when reconstructing Petrarch's songbook. This paper reports the new digital methods applied in the building of the Petr*archive*.

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[1] I note here how in a recent publication, Monica Berté doubts about the identity of the copyist of Petrarch's partial holograph MS Vaticano Latino 3195, proposing to separate the historical figure of young Giovanni Malpaghini from that of Petrarch's scribe (see "Malpaghini copista di Petrarca?" in *Cultura neolatina* LXXV: 2015 205-16).

[2] Likely in 1369, the poet sent out for rubrication the loose gatherings completed up until that point in the attempt to create a fair copy. Once the *chartae* were back in Petrarca's hands, the poet started a careful work of emendation, erasing words, lines or entire poems, changing, often dramatically, both the micro and the macro structures of those loose rubricated sheets. Simultaneously, the poet continued the transcription of the remaining *chartae*.

The Petr*archive* project: methods, goals and principles

The edition's main goal is to make a work so intricate in its interconnected micro- and macro-structures, more accessible and 'readable' in its authorial forms: that is, its link between material and prosodic formulae at the level of the single *charta* (both thematic and linguistic), of the individual fascicle, and of the entire book. The basic authorial principles that characterize Petrarca's 366 texts and his carefully constructed visual poetics in MS Vaticano Latino 3195 are:

1. 31-line per *charta* organized in two columns;

2. the contrasting visual structures to distinguish the five different poetic genres of which the *Fragmenta* is composed: the two columns horizontal reading strategy for sonnets, madrigals, ballata and canzone, as opposed to the two-column vertical reading strategy of sestina. This implies, for example, that the sonnet is transcribed over seven transcriptional lines (two verses per line, horizontal reading), and not the modernized fourteen lines. Even though these visual and transcriptional structures might seem like a trivial detail, they still greatly influence the way we read these poems;

3. use of space as punctuation and organizational device, signaling, for example, the subdivision of the collection in two parts (cc.49-52v);

4. thematic and visual integrity of the *charta*, in which the poems are not simply juxtaposed but also carefully selected to form groupings of pomes deeply linked by meaning, thematic unity and contrast.

The Petr*archive*'s first task is therefore to maintain and re-visualize these basic authorial principles. The digital medium allows us to "skip" the Renaissance filter that still influences our perceptions of the collection, offering a more 'authentic' text: special attention is paid to the poet's "visual poetics" and his transcriptional design. The edition offers representations of different strata of the text, proposing high-resolution TIFF images of the Vatican manuscript, its diplomatic transcription and a new edited form all in one virtual space and in one single XML document of encoding. This methodological choice allows the user to access a clearer text, which is closer to the materiality of the handwritten codices both at a micro- and a macro-text level. The coexistence in a single document/file of encoding of these three representations of the *Fragmenta* also offers the opportunity to 'decode' some crucial, difficult and hardly translatable moments of the texts. The encoding of *charta* 1v (which presents four sonnets according to the first editorial principle of

organization of Petrarch's *charta*) serves as an example of how the digital code translates textual and prosodic features together with visual aspects of the façade of the *charta*:

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<pb n="charta 1 verso" facs="../images/vat-lat3195-f/vat-lat3195-f-001v.jpg" />
<lg xml :id="rvf005" type="sonnet" n="5">
<lg type="octave">
<lg type="dblvrs" corresp="#canvasline">
<l n="1"><hi rendition="#red #fs24pt">Q</hi><hi rendition="#small-caps">u</hi>ando io <choice><orig>mouo</orig><reg>movo</reg></choice> i sospiri a chiamar <choice><orig>uoi</orig><reg>voi</reg></choice><supplied>,</supplied></l>
<l n="2"><choice><orig>El</orig><reg>E 'l</reg></choice> nome che nel cor mi scrisse <choice><orig>amore</orig><reg>Amore</reg></choice>&v2c ;</l>
</lg> […]³
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The short example of encoding above shows how the fundamental and yet most ignored of Petrarch's editorial choices, his visual poetics, is maintained in the digital code: every pair of verses is therefore translated in the strip of encoding as a <lg> (line group) of two verses (type="dblvrs") corresponding to one canvas line (corresp="#canvasline"). The result of the transformation of the encoding onto the web page is a more authentic representation of Petrarch's visual poetics and editorial principles for which he worked restlessly for over a decade, supervising the copyist work first, and attempting to continue it later. (See http://petrarchive.org/content/c001v.xml)

The edition also offers text and visual indices to access the diverse strata of the work's composition and cultural contextualization: the entire manuscript's macro-structures and different hands clearly marked by different visual colors (*chartae* transcribed by Petrarch's principal copyist [possibly Giovanni Malpaghini] in brown and by Petrarca himself in blue http://dcl.slis.indiana.edu/petrarchive/images/Petrarchive__Visual_Index_to_Vat__lat__3195.jpg),

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³ In this basic strip of encoding, the tag <pb> indicates a page break including the facsimile image (facs="../images/vat-lat3195-f/vat-lat3195-f-001v.jpg") of charta 1v (n="charta 1 verso") and is followed by the markup of the first line group (<lg>) transcribed on the same charta: sonnet *Rvf* 5 (type="sonnet" n="5"). Every single tag of the alphanumeric strip of encoding refers to and translates one specific textual, prosodic or visual component of the medieval manuscript: the charta is divided in multiple <lg> (line group): the first is a "sonnet" line group (*Rvf* 5). This fourteen-verses line group is then subdivided into two subsequent <lg>: octave (lg type="octave"), the first four verses organized over four canvas lines (lg type="dblvrs" correps="#canvasline"); and sestet (lg type="sestet"), the remaining six verses transcribed over two canvas lines (lg type="dblvrs" correps="#canvasline").

clear visual display of the different fascicles composing the manuscript and their correlations (http://dcl.slis.indiana.edu/petrarchive/visindex_fascicles.php); organization of space in micro- and macro-texts and its significance.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Advantages of the use of digital tools and text encoding, an example:

The palimpsest in position 121 on c.026r (See http://petrarchive.org/content/c026r.xml) is one case in which scholars have been able to carefully dig deep below the evidence of this dramatic shift: once the "fair" copy loose gatherings were decorated with alternating red and blue initials, Petrarca intervened at poem 121 which, prior to this intervention, was the ballata *Donna mi vene spesso ne la mente.* He completely erased the ballata and the ascender of the rubricated initial gothic D, leaving only the rounded body of the D, now resembling an O. Over the erased *Donna mi vene spesso ne la mente,* Petrarca transcribed the madrigal *Or vedi amor che giovenetta donna.* The ink of *Or vedi amor che giovenetta donna* is evidently lighter and the hand noticeably different, even though Petrarca tried to imitate Malpaghini's *ductus.* Even if the ballata was erased (and therefore expelled from the collection) by the poet himself, it is still present in much of the early manuscript tradition of the *Fragmenta* (it still remains, therefore, as a "testo fantasma" in the songbook). With the combination of common Web design techniques and scholarly text encoding we have created, for the first time, a virtual *charta* that may be manipulated by the reader to explore different layers of the text and its genesis. The strip of encoding created for the representation of the dynamics of the *charta* allows the visualization of the palimpsestic moment of substitution between not only two different poems, but also two different genres:

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<pb n="charta 26 recto" facs="../images/vat-lat3195-f/vat-lat3195-f-026r.jpg"/>
<subst>
<del type="erasure">
<lg xml :id="rvf121p" type="ballata">
<lg type="dblvrs">
<l n="1"><hi rendition="#fs24pt">D</hi><choice><abbr>ō na</
abbr><expan>onna</expan></choice> mi <choice><orig>uene</orig><reg>vene</
reg></choice> spesso ne la mente<choice><orig>)</orig><reg> ;</reg></choice></l>
<l n="2"> […] </l>
</lg>
[…]
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</del>

<add>

<lg xml :id="rvf121" type="madrigal" n="121">

<lg type="stanza">

<lg type="dblvrs" corresp="#canvasline">

<l n="1"><hi rendition="#red #fs24pt">O</hi>r <choice><orig>uedi</orig><reg>vedi</reg></choice><supplied>,</supplied> <choice><orig>amor</orig><reg>Amor</reg></choice><reg>,</reg> che <choice><orig>giouenetta</orig><reg>giovenetta</reg></choice> <choice><abbr>dō na</abbr><expan>donna</expan></choice><choice><orig>&virg ;</orig><reg/></choice></l>

<l n="2"> […] </l>

</lg>

[…]

</add>

</subst>

</ab>[4]

The digital interface allows for the first time to visualize the relationship and the roles of the palimpsest *Donna mi uene spesso ne la mente*, erased and overwritten by *Or uedi amor che giovenetta donna* by the poet himself. The user can easily move from one layer to the other as diplomatic and edited versions of both poems are available: carefully studied encoding allows us to unveil with a simple click of the mouse on the manicula the text beneath the surface. Commonly in printed editions this crucial "mobile" moment of the Fragmenta was not clearly and visually available to the readers:

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[4] In the strip of encoding above, the erased poem (<del type="erasure">) is marked as a ballata (<lg xml:id="rvf121p" type="ballata">) while the added poem (<add>) a madrigal (<lg xml:id="rvf121" type="madrigal" n="121">). The digital code, therefore, allows the existence of the different layers of representation of the two texts, virtually co-present in position 121:

* Reproduction in TIFF image of c.26r of the partial holograph Vaticano Latino 3195;
* Diplomatic transcription of the text of madrigal *Or vedi amor* (*Rvf* 121) overwritten;
* Edited transcription of the same poem;
* Image of manuscript Morgan 502, a version of the ballata *Donna mi vene* erased in Petrarch's partial holograph;
* Diplomatic transcription of the mentioned ballata-palimpsest;
* Edited transcription of the same poem.

The digital code relates and represents both the partial holograph and the early manuscript tradition, displaying their interconnections and dynamics.

Donna mi uene was either not mentioned or "relegated" to a quick mention in the footnotes. This example, like many others, shows how carefully studied encoding and the digital medium allow to present a more "authentic" text and to diminish the distances between the experience of contemporary users and that of manuscript readers in the medieval context, for whom the specific disposition of the genres on the *charta* had to appear meaningful if not familiar.