

## Francis Petrarch and the European Lyric Tradition Abstracts

**William D. Paden**, "Petrarch as a Poet of Provence."

Petrarch was a poet of Provence because he spent much of his life there, even though he used Italian instead of Occitan. His Italian genres are similar to those of the troubadours, and he also practiced their genres. Themes such as love from afar and love from on high provide a setting for his love. By raising vernacular poetry to the heights of prestige, Petrarch represents the culmination of troubadour art.

**Michelangelo Picone**, "Petrarch and the Unfinished Book"

The problem that Petrarch's *Canzoniere* poses for the modern reader is the same as that posed by all collections of poems assembled by their author: it is a matter of understanding the connection between each of the poems and the collection, the relation between the whole and the parts. On the one hand, the collection presents a discontinuous series of poems composed separately that can be read as discrete works; on the other hand, the same poems come together as part of a love and/or existential story. Our task is to study the *Canzoniere* as a macrotext and to clarify the relation of each of the compositions to the collection of lyric verse to which it belongs. Petrarch's desperate attempt to complete his work is the same hopeless challenge that the mythical Arachne dared to make to Minerva. At the deepest level Petrarch reveals an awareness of the fact that every human endeavor is a spider's web that is woven in the course of a lifetime, and thus is never completed. The destiny of human beings therefore is to weave a tapestry that is never finished, just as the fate of the poet is to write an in-finite work; namely, a work that in the end can never reach the perfection and integrity of the divine work.

**Tom Peterson**, "Fabulous Petrarch: *la raccolta del 1342* as the Source of the Fabulous in *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*"

Recent studies of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* have acknowledged the great importance of narrativity. Together with that development has come a greater attention to the formal stages of the collection over the years of its composition. On the one hand, philologists provided the data concerning Petrarch's labors on his manuscripts; on the other, literary critics delayed for years after Wilkins' 1951 study of the *Making of the Canzoniere* before beginning to study the early "forms" of the work as they relate to theories of autobiography and the actual historicity of the text. My goal is to assess the albeit open-ended and unstable unity of the *Rvf* in terms of its narrative development and to avoid in the process the view of an atemporal "Petrarch" who is assumed, willy-nilly, to be the work's author, its character, and its narrator. I will argue here that the *Raccolta del 1342*, the first of the so-called forms of the *Rvf*, constitutes a coherent collection and merits study as such.

**Karlheinz Stierle**, "A Manifesto of New Singing: *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 125-29"

The *canzone* is an essential element of the architecture of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*. The inner spaces of this poetic work are marked by *canzones* and configurations of *canzones*. The group of *canzones RVF* 125-129 is of particular significance within the whole of the so-called *Canzoniere*. It is a unique group of five *canzones* and represents, as it were, the very center of Petrarch's new poetics of absence, failure, negativity, and their transgression towards a new poetic positivity of the mind's experience of itself. Going through this series of *canzones*, we can follow an exemplary

movement from radical crisis in Petrarch's conception of poetry to a new poetics of *pensare*.

**Dino S. Cervigni**, "The Petrarchan Lover's Non-Dialogic and Dialogic Discourse: An Augustinian Semiotic Approach to Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*"

From the initial address, "Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il sono," directed at the reader, to the concluding canzone, addressed to the Blessed Virgin, Petrarch's *Rime sparse* is structured as a macro-discourse. Throughout, the lyric I can be said, paraphrasing an Augustinian semiotic statement, to feed himself on words: "Significationibus pascor"; that is, the Petrarch-persona feeds himself on signs, words, images, and allusions: a plethora of *significationes* that ultimately fail to influence or even reach the other. At the very end, however, realizing his failure in reading and employing the signs present in God's creatures and throughout creation, the Petrarchan lover ultimately performs a fundamental semiotic shift: he directs at sacred realities all the words and images he had previously employed, which thus — contrary to the foundering signs he had previously directed at human interlocutors — become efficacious, and even *sacramenta*, according to the Augustinian notion of signs.

**Paul Colilli**, "Petrarch's *Canzoniere*: Files from the Corpus of Scholarship (1974-2003)"

The aim of this article is to provide a general overview of the scholarship related to Petrarch's *Canzoniere* that has been published since 1974. The intent is not to offer an wide-ranging representation of the state of research, but rather a panoramic view of the readings that have been put forward concerning the *Canzoniere*. A number of trends warrant attention, in particular the effort that has been put into attempting to reconstruct the various iterations of the *Canzoniere*, which Petrarch bequeathed to posterity as a work in progress.

**Fiora A. Bassanese**, "Gaspara Stampa's Petrarchan Commemorations: Validating a Female Lyric Discourse"

Accepting the Cinquecento's dominant ideology, Gaspara Stampa reworked Francis Petrarch's words, themes, forms, and metaphors as a validated means of forming her own lyric discourse within the limitations imposed by imitation. Declaring herself a dedicated Petrarchist, Stampa nevertheless managed to express her own existential situation and her sex by utilizing allusive reinvention rather than slavish reproduction, even in her most overtly derivative compositions. This essay considers Gaspara Stampa's imitative strategies by analyzing her *innamoramento* poem and the three anniversary sonnets contained in the *Rime* (1554), taking into account the function of the Petrarchan model as an instrument for creative self-fashioning. While these four sonnets openly appropriate the language and imagery of the *Canzoniere*, they also manipulate the source's constituent elements to adjust for gender, forming novel metaphors and conceits, and rendering a female discourse possible. By assimilating Petrarch's voice, Gaspara Stampa was able to speak of herself and her sex in a manner her audience understood and appreciated as the ideal medium for lyric self-expression.

**Sara Sturm-Maddox**, "The French Petrarch."

The story-making in Petrarch's *Rime sparse*, giving rise to numerous commentaries and to biographical annotations in editions of his lyric collection, was central to the reception of the *Rime* in France. It made its mark on cultural politics in the sixteenth century in the "naturalization" of Petrarch in the Vaucluse as a poet of France, and on the Renaissance French lyric in the manner in which a number of poets adopted and adapted his *canzoniere* as dominant lyric model. Its central role is well illustrated in the self-

conscious shaping of the poetic career of France's greatest poet of the century, Pierre de Ronsard, who aspired to the title of "French Petrarch."

**JoAnn DellaNeva**, "An Exploding Canon: Petrarch and the Petrarchists in Renaissance France."

In the sixteenth century, Petrarch came to be seen as the prime model aspiring authors should use in writing their own poetry. In reaction to this tendency, however, a more eclectic understanding of imitation was developed, one that suggested that several lesser figures were also suitable models. This effort was aided by the proliferation of lyric anthologies that included many very minor poets, published by Giolito and his rivals. At precisely this time, the Pléiade poets in France began writing their own poetry in the Petrarchist manner and frequently turned to the Italian anthologies as a treasure trove of possible sources. They considered the Italian anthologies to be analogous to Petrarchan handbooks or commonplace books that helped them become proficient in the language of Petrarchism. While their broad eclecticism led to an "exploding canon" of suitable models that embraced even amateur poets, their judicious use of notable fragments from these texts frequently resulted in an imitation that surpassed its model.

**Deborah Lesko Baker**, "Petrarchan Lyric Subjectivity in Joachim DuBellay's *Antiquitez de Rome*"

The essay focuses on a re-reading of selected sonnets from the opening of Joachim DuBellay's 1558 volume, *Les Antiquitez de Rome*, in the context of the pervasive adaptations of the *Canzoniere*'s lyric speaker in sixteenth-century French poetry. Using as its centerpieces the *Antiquitez*'s dedicatory poem to King Henri II, the opening sonnet addressed to the Divine Spirits of ancient Rome, and Sonnet 5's imitation of Petrarch's famous "Chi vuol veder" (RVF 248), the essay articulates the subject position of the DuBellay's lyric speaker through his thematic and rhetorical reformulations of the classic Petrarchan inaccessibility crisis within the realms of cultural anachronism and loss.

**Anne J. Cruz**, "'Verme morir entre memorias tristes': Petrarch, Garcilaso, and the Poetics of Memory."

Studies of classical and Renaissance mnemotechnic arts demonstrate that *memoria* functioned as a poetics or art of poetry. The active processes of dividing, composing, re-ordering, and collecting images located at different places (or *loci*) by the poet's memory in turn render the poems' verbal and visual images. Memory thus informs Petrarch's *Canzoniere* as a guiding effort to reach back to an ordered past that nonetheless results in a failed integration, evinced in Laura's fragmentation and his incomplete conversion. Yet, despite Laura's dispersal, the poet's imagination gathers the fragments visually to create new narrative scenes that express the tensions between past and present. Although few poems by the Spanish Renaissance poet Garcilaso de la Vega imitate Petrarch directly, in this article I posit that Garcilaso's Petrarchism transcends their differences. Several of his poems show how he emulates Petrarch's art of memory by observing his present condition while investigating the traces of his past. *Memoria*, therefore, allows both poets to reconstruct their past and recast their emotions.

**Gordon Braden**, "Wyatt and Petrarch: Italian Fashion at the Court of Henry VIII"

Sir Thomas Wyatt's translations and imitations of Petrarch mark the beginning of the English Renaissance encounter with Petrarchism as a literary movement. Wyatt removes or deemphasizes some important features of his originals, but takes others very seriously; some of the most striking results, as in "They flee from me," come when he brings expectations nurtured in the Petrarchan narrative of unconsummated desire to

promiscuous sexual love and its aftermath.

**James Haar**, “A Musical Accompaniment to Petrarchan *lezioni* at the Accademia Fiorentina”

In its early years the members of the Accademia fiorentina (founded in 1541) seem to have divided their interest between Dante and Petrarch. Florentine musicians were drawn more to Petrarch than to Dante; among them was Matteo Rampollini, who had written madrigals for the wedding of Cosimo I de’ Medici in 1539. Rampollini’s one published volume, *Il primo libro de la musica [...] sopra di canzoni del divin poeta Francesco Petrarca* (undated; c. 1550), contains settings of seven complete Petrarchan canzoni, the only collection of its kind in the whole of the madrigal repertory. Rampollini’s poetic choices and the nature of the music he wrote suggest a close, if undocumented, relationship with Florentine literary academicians.

**Kristina Varade**, “Lady Morgan’s *The Wild Irish Girl*: The Petrarchan Tradition in Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Irish Literature.”

The analysis of *The Wild Irish Girl* bears out the importance of Petrarch and his Italian tradition, which opens up a new mode to view the works of British and Irish nineteenth-century authors such as Lady Morgan. The importance of spiritual and physical guidance; the image of Glorvina, the “wild Irish girl” who represents an “Irish Laura”; and the further incorporation of ample Petrarchan conventions, such as a “once chilled heart,” or the “sparkling fluid” of the eyes, coalesce to depict a decidedly Italian emphasis in specifically Irish and Romantic works.

**Jocelyn Dawson**, “When You Are Old: Projecting Age in Petrarch’s ‘Se la mia vita da l’aspro tormento,’ Ronsard’s ‘Quand vous serez bien vieille’ and Yeats’s ‘When You Are Old.’”

It is well-known that W. B. Yeats modeled his 1891 poem “When You Are Old” on the sixteenth-century French poet Pierre de Ronsard’s “Quand vous serez bien vieille.” The poems share the theme of projecting the beloved into a future of old age and regret, a theme inspired by Petrarch’s “Se la mia vita da l’aspro tormento.” Each of the three love poets develops this theme distinctly, varying the speaker’s approach of the beloved, his own self-portrayal, and the treatment of regret.

**Margaret Brose**, “Mixing Memory and Desire: Leopardi Reading Petrarch.”

The essay proposes that Giacomo Leopardi remains the true heir to Petrarch’s temporal anxiety. The temporal crisis faced by Petrarch, adumbrated first perhaps in Augustine’s *Confessions*, problematizes past and future in relationship to the present of the speaking subject. While the trauma of transience will be written on the human body in the pages of the *Rime sparse*, Leopardi will move that anxiety out of the body and into language itself. The essay examines two aspects of Leopardi’s complex filiation with Petrarch. On the one hand, Leopardi’s brilliant commentary to the *Canzoniere* (1826) reveals an uncanny ventriloquism: Leopardi adapts the first person singular, becoming the *alter ego* of Petrarch, thus screening his own anxiety of influence. On the other hand, the marrow of the *Canzoniere*, its temporal anxiety, is directly absorbed into Leopardi’s *Canti*; in these lyrics, as well as in the *Zibaldone*, Leopardi develops a theory of time, poetic re-figuration, memory and desire. Leopardi learns from Petrarch that experiences of past and future, figured as memory (*rimembranza*) and hope (*speranza*), are performative rhetorical constructions. Petrarch deals with temporal anxiety by constructing in his lyrics an “iterative present” tense: the lyric space of enunciation exists as a suspended present without time’s corrosive effects. Leopardi, who repeatedly stated that the present

could never be poetic, constructs an intricate system of figural transpositions which fill up the textual present, itself a void, with the affect of memory and desire. For both poets, beauty, bodies, and language inevitably reveal loss.

**Massimo Lollini**, “Padre mite e dispotico”: riflessioni sull’eredità culturale e poetica del Petrarca”

Lollini reflects on how the notion of Petrarchism has been developed in recent criticism and in contemporary poetry. He holds that the attempt at tracing the complex problem of Petrarch’s cultural and poetic heritage has to go beyond the search for the “true” historical Petrarch or for his influence on modern poets. The real challenge is to take on Petrarch invitation to appreciate the value and the limits of poetic discourse in the context of modern culture, religion and philosophy.

**Ernesto Livorni**, *Ungaretti’s Critical Writings on Petrarch and the Renewal of the Petrarchan Tradition*

Giuseppe Ungaretti è uno dei poeti che, nell’ambito di quella modalità poetica del primo Novecento che va sotto il nome di Ermetismo, ha portato nuova linfa alla linea lirica petrarchesca. In Ungaretti l’accostamento alla poesia di Petrarca si accompagna all’allontanamento dall’esperienza delle avanguardie parigine e dalla filosofia di Bergson verso un recupero delle istanze della classicità rappresentate da Petrarca, appunto, e poi da Leopardi nell’ambito della tradizione letteraria italiana, e da Platone nell’ambito della riflessione filosofica. Il saggio ripercorre le tappe di questo cammino poetico e gnoseologico di Ungaretti, fotografandolo in tre momenti importanti, definiti dal rapporto che la poesia ha con concetti come quelli di rivelazione, memoria ed oblio.

**Simone Marchesi**, *Fra filologia e retorica: Petrarca e Boccaccio di fronte al nuovo Livio*

This study focuses on the dialogue in which Boccaccio engages with Petrarch's philological masterpiece, the reconstruction and dissemination of the text of Livy's History of Rome, through the Introduction to the *Decameron* and the Prologue to his translation of Livy's fourth *Decade*. It studies Boccaccio's emphasis on rhetoric as mediation between Petrarch's notion of philological discontinuity and Dante's opposite idea of typological continuity with classical culture.

**Kristina M. Olson**, “Concivis meus”: Petrarch’s *Rerum Memorandarum Libri* 2.60, Boccaccio’s *Decameron* 6.9, and the Specter of Dino del Garbo”

This essay offers a reading of *Decameron* 6.9 in light of its Petrarchan analogue, that of the story of *Dinus florentinus* from the second book of the *Rerum Memorandarum Libri* (2.60), and examines the history of these two narratives, which, despite their resounding similarities, were independently composed. Ultimately the essay highlights another aspect behind *Dec.* 6.9; namely, Boccaccio’s familiarity with Dino del Garbo’s commentary on “Donna me prega,” as it relates to the author’s relationship to Dante as his commentator.

**Elsa Filosa**, “Petrarca, Boccaccio e le *mulieres clarae*: dalla *Familiare* 21:8 al *De Mulieribus Claris*”

The essay intends to demonstrate Boccaccio’s knowledge of Petrarch’s *Familiare* 21:8, and to show the possibility that the composition of *De Mulieribus Claris* may have been inspired by Petrarch’s letter. The article analyzes in detail Proba’s and Hypsicratea’s biographies, written by Petrarch as well as Boccaccio. The essay’s conclusion offers some important considerations on the representation of women in these two authors, pointing out in this regard Boccaccio’s modernity vis-à-vis Petrarch.