Abstract

Chaucer's encounter with Italian literature was not just an experience with texts, but also with books. The literary excellence of the work of Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch, the most studied of Chaucer's Italian sources, is well recognized. But these sources are also marked in terms of their material production and circulation in Italy: Boccaccio and Petrarch, for example, are intimately involved in the copying of texts, and are powerfully aware of how books inflect the reader's interpretation of a text. This essay examines Chaucer's sources with a focus on their materiality. While no precise manuscript has yet been identified as having been in the possession of Chaucer, it is nevertheless possible to consider the wider material contexts of these sources, in what might be termed a 'virtual materiality'. Chaucer's use of Filippo Ceffi's translation of the *Heroides* is also discussed: not only is it now possible to plausibly identify the textual tradition available to Chaucer, but some of the early material expressions of the *Eroidi* reveal much about its relationship to contemporary vernacular literary culture, such as Dante's *Commedia*. Chaucer's extensive use of the *Teseida* is cast in new light in the context of its restricted circulation in fourteenth century Italy. Only a material reframing permits such questions to be posed.

Chaucer's Italian Books: A Study in Virtual Materiality

Geoffrey Chaucer's engagement with Italy continues to be a vibrant field of literary and historical inquiry.[1] The new *Sources and Analogues of the 'Canterbury*

[1] For a synthetic recent bibliography see K. P. CLARKE, *Chaucer and Italy: Contexts and/of Sources*, «Literature Compass», 8/8, 2011, pp. 526-533. For more recent work see: R. F. GREEN, *Griselda in Siena*, «Studies in the Age of Chaucer», 33, 2011, pp. 3-38; ID., *Why Marquis Walter Treats His Wife So Badly*, «Chaucer Review», 47, 2012, pp. 48-62; K. E. GROSS, *Chaucer's Silent Italy*, «Studies in Philology», 109, 2012, pp. 19-44; J. HARKINS, *Chaucer's* Clerk's Tale *and Boccaccio's* Decameron *X.10*, «Chaucer Review», 47, 2013, pp. 247-273; L. SCHWEBEL, *Redressing Griselda: Restoration through Translation in the Clerk's Tale*, «Chaucer Review», 47, 2013, pp. 274-299; EAD., *The Legend of Thebes and Literary Patricide in Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Statius*, «Studies in the Age of Chaucer», 36, 2014, pp. 139-168; K. GASTON, *"Save oure tonges difference": Translation, Literary Histories, and* Troilus and Criseyde, *Chaucer Review*, 48, 2014, pp. 258-283; EAD., *The Poetics of Time Management from the* Metamorphoses *to* Il Filocolo *and* The Franklin's Tale, «Studies in the Age of Chaucer», 37, 2015, pp. 227-256; W. T. ROSSITER, *Chaucer joins the* Schiera*: The* House of Fame*, Italy and the Determination of Posterity*, and N. HAVELY, *'I wolde…han hadde a fame': Dante, Fame and Infamy in Chaucer's* House of Fame, both in *Chaucer and Fame: Reputation and Reception*, ed. by I. Davis & C. Nall, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2015, pp. 21-42 and pp. 43-56, respectively; K. L. MCKINLEY, *Chaucer's* House of Fame *and its Boccaccian Intertexts: Image, Vision, and the Vernacular*, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2016; F. M. BIGGS, *Chaucer's* Decameron *and the Origin of the* Canterbury Tales, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2017; DAVID WALLACE, *Italy*, in *A New Companion to Chaucer*, ed. by P. Brown, Hoboken, NJ & Chichester, Wiley, 2019, pp. 213-226; K. P. CLARKE, *The Italian Tradition*, in *Geoffrey Chaucer in Context*, a cura di I. Johnson, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 126-131; K. GASTON, *Reading Chaucer in Time: Literary Formation in England and Italy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020; the section *Chaucer in a European Frame* in *The Oxford Handbook of Chaucer*, ed. by S. Conklin Akbari and J. Simpson, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020, esp. the essays by Martin Eisner, *Dante and the Author of the* Decameron*:*

Tales', for example, or the Norton edition of *Troilus and Criseyde*, printed with a parallel translation of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, each respectively offers readers the tools for a broadly comparative approach.[2] Such an approach has furnished and continues to furnish many important insights. The study of Chaucer's sources has necessarily focused on internal evidence, since not a trace of the author's library survives, nor indeed has any autograph material yet been identified. Perhaps for this reason scholars have been slower to examine the medieval material contexts of the production, circulation and reception of these same sources. But the vernacular Italian works read by Chaucer are distinctive for the richness of their material manuscript expressions in the fourteenth century. Boccaccio and (albeit to a lesser extent) Petrarch were intensively engaged in the copying of texts (their own, or of others), while Dante's *Commedia* was produced in practically every book format available to a

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Love, Literature, and Authority in Boccaccio, pp. 286-302, Warren Ginsberg, *Boccaccio's Early Romances*, pp. 303-324, and R. L. MARTINEZ, *Chaucer's Petrarch: 'enlumyned ben they'*, pp. 325-350; H. FULTON (ed), *Chaucer and Italian Culture*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2021; R. W. HANNING, *Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Stories for an Uncertain World: Agency in the* Decameron *and the* Canterbury Tales, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021; S. LIVNE, *'On Truth,* Pietà*, and Reader Response in Dante's* Purgatory *10 and Chaucer's* House of Fame *1*, «Studies in Philology», 118/4, 2021, pp. 605-630; L. SCHWEBEL, *Tropes of Engagement: Chaucer's Italian Poetics*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, forthcoming.

[2] R. M. CORREALE and M. HAMEL (eds), *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, 2 voll., Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 2002-2005; GEOFFREY CHAUCER, *Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. by S. A. Barney, New York & London, W. W. Norton & Co. Ltd, 2006. The parallel-text format has long characterized editions of *Troilus and Criseyde*, from GEOFFREY CHAUCER, *Chaucer's* Troylus and Cryseyde *(from the Harl. ms. 3943) compared with Boccaccio's* Filostrato, ed. W. M. Rossetti, London, Pub. for the Chaucer Society by N. Trübner & Co., 1883, to GEOFFREY CHAUCER, *Troilus & Criseyde: A New Edition of The Book of Troilus*, ed. by B. A. Windeatt, London, Longman, 1984.

scribe over the course of the century.[3] While these manuscripts may not be directly linked to Chaucer, a range of possible 'virtual' books can be explored. By attending to the manuscripts, then, new perspectives become available and new questions come into focus.

Several rich strands of research offer a ways of considering these manuscript sources, from material culture in medieval Italy, to material philology, and visual poetics.[4] Chaucer's engagement with his Italian sources was filtered through the discussions he had while in Italy, the texts he read there, and the books he handled, perused, and possibly even acquired there. That is, in reading these Italian books, with their various formats, scripts, *mise en page*, their 'look and feel', Chaucer was exposed

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[3] On the paucity of literary autographs in the fourteenth century see RICHARD BEADLE, *English Autograph Writings of the Later Middle Ages: Some Preliminaries*, in *Gli autografi medievali: problemi paleografici e filologici. Atti del Convegno di studio della Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, Erice, 25 settembre-2 ottobre 1990*, a cura di P. Chiesa & L. Pinelli, Spoleto, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1994, pp. 249-268.

[4] W. ROBINS, *Vernacular Textualities in Fourteenth-Century Florence*, in *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity*, ed. by F. Somerset and N. Watson, University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003, pp. 112-131; W. ROBINS (ed), *Textual Cultures of Medieval Italy*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2011; M. ZACCARELLO, *Filologia materiale e culture testuali: per la letteratura italiana antica* in ID., *Reperta: indagini, recuperi, ritrovamenti di letteratura italiana antica*, Verona, Fiorini, 2008, pp. 1-22; H. W. STOREY, *Transcription and Visual Poetics in the Early Italian Lyric*, New York, Garland, 1993; ID., *La prassi nordamericana della filologia materiale*, «Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie», 132/4, 2016, pp. 1013-1033; ID., *Appunti sulla metodologia materiale e sui testi italiani nel Medioevo*, «Medioevo letterario d'Italia», 14, 2017, pp. 89-116.

to a literature being materially expressed in ways that were different to England.[5] In this essay, then, sources long been familiar to readers of the work of Chaucer will be refracted through their material expressions in the late fourteenth-century.

Chaucer and/in Italy

Chaucer made two documented trips to Italy.[6] On the first, over a six-month period between 1372–1373, he went with a trade mission to Genoa to negotiate access to ports in England, accompanying two Genoese merchants: Giovanni del Mare (known to the English as John de Mari) and Jacopo Provano (known as Sir James de Provan), both men of high rank in the service of Edward III.[7] On this journey Chaucer also went to Florence, and although we do not know much about this leg of the visit,

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[5] Two essential points of reference for the study of book production in England in this period are: J. GRIFFITHS & D. PEARSALL (eds), *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, and A. GILLESPIE & D. WAKELIN (eds), *The Production of Books in England, 1350-1500*, Cambridge & New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011. See too: D. SAWYER, *Reading English Verse in Manuscript c.1350-c.1500*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020; D. WAKELIN, *Immaterial Texts in Late Medieval England: Making English Literary Manuscripts, 1400-1500*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022; and M. JOHNSTON, *The Middle English Book: Scribes and Readers, 1350-1500*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023.

[6] M. M. CROW & C. C. OLSON (eds), *Chaucer Life-Records*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966, pp. 32-40, 53-61. The evidence is only very partial, but Chaucer 'passed at Dover' on 17 July 1368, which has sometimes been linked to his first master, Prince Lionel, travelling that year to Lombardy to marry Violante Visconti, daughter of Bernabò.

[7] See K. P. CLARKE, *Genoa*, in *The Chaucer Encyclopedia*, ed. by R. Newhauser, V. Gillespie, J. Rosenfeld and K. Walter, Hoboken, NJ & Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2023, pp. 808-809.

we do know he was there on the king's 'secrees busoignes'.[8] The second visit to Italy took place in 1378, where he went with a delegation, including Sir Edward de Berkeley, to Milan, negotiating with Bernabò Visconti and a man well-known there as Giovanni Acuto, but more easily recognizable to Chaucer as his fellow-Englishman John Hawkwood.[9] These were two relatively important trips, with both economic and political dimensions. The Italian merchants, importing and exporting not just from Southampton but also from London, comprised an important source of revenue for the Crown, while the secret business referred to on Chaucer's 1372-3 visit is thought to be the negotiation of loans to the king. Indeed, one might well wonder why Chaucer, a relatively low-ranking civil servant, should have been chosen for such missions at all.[10] His involvement in these assignments clearly shows that 'those close to the king considered him of proven ability, discreet and dependable, a custodian of the royal interest both in negotiation with magnates and as the man behind a figurehead Sir This or That, who would take care of the subtleties of language and the detail of 'paperwork'.'[11] It is often hypothesized that Chaucer had a working knowledge of vernacular Italian, likely through contact with London's fairly numerous Italian

[8] See K. P. CLARKE, *Florence* in *The Chaucer Encyclopedia*, cit., pp. 726-727; cfr. ID., *Florence*, in *Europe: A Literary History, 1348-1418*, ed. by David Wallace, 2 voll., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, I, pp. 687-707.

[9] The Warrant specifies that Sir Edward de Berkeley and Geoffrey Chaucer 'sont ordenez daler en nostre message sibien au sire de Melan Barnabo come a nostre cher et foial Johan Haukwode es parties de Lumbardie pur ascunes busoignes touchantes lexploit de nostre guerre'; CROW & OLSON (eds), *Chaucer Life-Records*, cit., p. 54.

[10] On Chaucer's diplomatic role see W. T. ROSSITER, *Chaucerian Diplomacy*, in *Chaucer and Italian Culture*, ed. Fulton, cit., pp. 17-44 (esp. 25-28).

[11] G. KANE, *Chaucer*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 13-14.

community.[12] These opportunities may have presented themselves early for a Chaucer growing up in the Vintry Ward and coming into regular contact with merchants. Much of this of course, is speculation: we know nothing for sure of Chaucer's early London contact with things Italian.

While it is entirely plausible that Chaucer knew some vernacular Italian, it is also worth asking what this might mean, precisely. In the fourteenth century, numerous vernaculars were in use throughout the Italian peninsula. [13] In the *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante had asserted their great variety and number, while in Tuscany and Lombardy alone, he says: 'et in hoc minimo mundi angulo non solum ad

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[12] For example: W. CHILDS, *Anglo-Italian Contacts in the Fourteenth Century*, in *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*, ed. by P. Boitani, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 65-87; D. PEARSALL, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992, p. 102; D. WALLACE, *Italy*, in *A Companion to Chaucer*, ed. by P. Brown, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, pp. 218-219; and M. TURNER, *Chaucer: A European Life*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2019, p. 146, for: 'it is probable that his knowledge of Italian made him particularly useful'.

[13] For more on the linguistic variety of the Italian vernacular in the Middle Ages, see the relevant sections in *L'italiano nelle regioni: Lingua nazionale e identità regionali; Testi e documenti*, a cura di F. Bruni, 2 voll., Torino, UTET, 1992-1994; *Storia della lingua italiana*, a cura di L. Serianni & P. Trifone, 3 voll., Torino, G. Einaudi, 1993-1994, esp. vol. III, *Le altre lingue*; R. CASAPULLO, *Storia della lingua italiana: Il Medioevo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1999; P. MANNI, *Storia della lingua italiana: il Trecento toscano. La lingua di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2003, as well as EAD., *La lingua di Dante*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2013, and EAD., *La lingua di Boccaccio*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2016; Giovanna Frosini, *Il volgare*, in *Dante fra il settecentocinquantenario della nascita (2015) e il settecentenario della morte (2021). Atti delle celebrazioni in Senato, del Forum e del Convegno internazionale di Roma, maggio-ottobre 2015*, a cura di E. Malato & A. Mazzucchi, 2 voll., Roma: Salerno editrice, 2016, II, pp. 505-533, and EAD., *Il volgare di Dante*, in *Dante*, a cura di R. Rea & J. Steinberg, Roma, Carocci, 2020, pp. 245-265.

millenam loquele variationem venire contigerit, sed etiam ad magis ultra' ('even in this tiny corner of the world, the count would take us not only to a thousand different types of speech, but well beyond that figure').[14] A Londoner, such as Chaucer, who had not yet been to Italy, however, would have been primed for precisely this multilingualism by observing how Italians themselves lived in the city, for they tended to group together by city of origin, and, thus, by regional language. The language of the Genoese, the Lombards, the Venetians, the Neapolitans, and the Florentines were all quite noticeably different, a fact that would have been obvious to a listener as close and acute as Chaucer, a Chaucer who can make a joke about regional linguistic differences in the Parson's *Prologue*, or indeed about the English inflections in the Prioress's French.[15] Indeed, the vernacular in use by Italian merchants in London was itself amenable to the influence of English, adopting terms such as 'customs' and

[14] *De vulgari eloquentia* I x 7, citing the text of P. V. Mengaldo, in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Opere minori*, a cura di D. De Robertis, *et al.*, 2 voll. in 3 tt., Milano-Napoli, Riccardo Ricciardi, 1979-1988, II, p. 90; for the English translation, see DANTE ALIGHIERI, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. & trans. by S. Botterill, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 25; see too the fascinating essay by F. BRUNI, *La geografia di Dante nel* De vulgari eloquentia, in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *De vulgari eloquentia*, a cura di E. Fenzi, con la collaborazione di L. Formisano & F. Montuori, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2021², pp. 243-251. On this passage see M. TAVONI, *Perché i volgari italiani sono quattordici (*De vulgari eloquentia *I x 7)?*, in *Una brigata di voci: studi offerti a Ivano Paccagnella per i suoi sessantacinque anni*, a cura di C. Schiavon & A. Cecchinato, Padova, CLEUP, 2012, pp. 131-145, and cfr. Tavoni's commentary in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *De vulgari eloquentia*, a cura di M. Tavoni in DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Opere*, ed. dir. da M. Santagata, 2 voll. [of three projected], Milano, A. Mondadori, 2011—, I, pp. 1065-1547, at pp. 1252-3.

[15] *CT* I (A), 124-126; X (I), 42-44; all reference to the work of Chaucer will be to GEOFFREY CHAUCER, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by L D. Benson, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

'exchequer', or units of measurement such as 'tankard'.[16] Innovations were not just linguistic in nature, but also technological: the letters exchanged between the Ricciardi in London and their headquarters in Lucca represent an important early witness to the language of Lucca in the late thirteenth century, but are also amongst the earliest examples of paper in circulation in England.[17] The English language in the fourteenth century was itself highly variegated and regionally inflected, and Chaucer was adept at negotiating the multilingualism of court and port.[18]

The Tuscan vernacular, in particular that used in Florence, certainly enjoyed a prestige in the later fourteenth century due to the quality and success of its literary output, as well as the vibrancy of the state's political organization. As the state expanded, so did the influence of its vernacular. This expansionism was not just

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[16] See R. CELLA, *Anglismi e francesismi nel registro della filiale di Londra di una compagnia mercantile senese*, in *Identità e diversità nella lingua e nella letteratura italiana. Atti del XVIII Congresso dell'A.I.S.L.L.I., Lovanio, Louvain-La Nueve, Anversa, Bruxelles, 16-19 luglio 2003*, 3 voll., Firenze, Cesati, 2007, I, pp. 189-204, and EAD., *Le carte della filiale londinese della compagnia dei Gallerani e una Ricordanza di Biagio Aldobrandini (ottobre 1305)*, «Bollettino dell'Opera del Vocabolario Italiano», VIII, 2003, pp. 403-414.

[17] For the Ricciardi letters in the National Archives at Kew, E 101/601/5 and SC 1/58/15, 20, see *Lettere dei Ricciardi di Lucca ai loro compagni in Inghilterra (1295-1303)*, a cura di A. Castellani & I. Del Punta, Roma, Salerno, 2005; on their paper support, see O. DA ROLD, *Paper in Medieval England: From Pulp to Fictions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 30-31, 40-41.

[18] See, for example, D. A. TROTTER (ed), *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 2000; J. A. JEFFERSON & A. PUTTER (eds), *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain (c. 1066-1520): Sources and Analysis*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; and R. W. CHAMBERS & M. DAUNT (eds), *A Book of London English, 1384-1425*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1931. On London, see J. HSY, *Trading Tongues: Merchants, Multilingualism, and Medieval Literature*, Columbus, OH., Ohio State University Press, 2013.

political or territorial, but also imaginative, with a powerful literary dimension.[19] The crucial figure in this vernacular border-crossing is undoubtedly Dante Alighieri, Florence's exiled poet, who, in the first two decades of the fourteenth century, was writing the *Commedia*. Dante's exile has some significant consequences for the earliest circulation of the poem, a good deal of which happens outside of Florence and Tuscany.[20] For example, Genoa is where one of the earliest manuscripts of the

[19] See, for example, P. SGRILLI, *L'espansione del toscano nel Trecento*, in *La Toscana nel Secolo XIV: caratteri di una civiltà regionale*, a cura di S. Gensini, Pisa, Pacini, 1988, pp. 425-464; a broad account may be found in A. STUSSI, *Lingua, dialetto e letteratura*, in *Storia d'Italia*, a cura di R. Romano & C. Vivanti, 6 voll. in 10 tt., Torino, G. Einaudi, 1972-1976, I, *I caratteri originali* (1972), pp. 677-728 (esp. 688-693), now in ID., *Lingua, dialetto e letteratura*, Torino, G. Einaudi, 1993, pp. 13-19. On the question of mutual comprehensibility of these dialects see P. MANNI & N. MARASCHIO, *Il plurilinguismo italiano (secc. XIV-XV): realtà, percezione, rappresentazione*, in *L'Italia alla fine del Medioevo: i caratteri originali nel quadro europeo*, a cura di F. Salvestrini & F. Cengarle, 2 voll., Firenze, Firenze University Press, 2006, II, pp. 239-267; N. VINCENT, *Languages in Contact in Medieval Italy*, in *Rethinking Languages in Contact: The Case of Italian*, ed. by A. L. Lepschy & A. Tosi, London, Legenda, 2006, pp. 12-27; ID., *Language, Geography and History in Medieval Italy*, «The Italianist», 30 / supp. 2, 2010, 44-60; and A. CARLUCCI, *How Did Italians Communicate When There Was No Italian? Italo-Romance Intercomprehension in the Late Middle Ages*, «The Italianist», 40/1, 2020, pp. 19-43.

[20] For an introduction to the problem see C. BOLOGNA, *Tradizione testuale e fortuna dei classici italiani*, in *Letteratura italiana*, a cura di A. Asor Rosa, 6 voll. in 7 tt., Torino, G. Einaudi, 1982-1986, vol. 6, *Teatro, musica, tradizione dei classici* (1986), pp. 445-928, esp. pp. 553-565, now in ID., *Tradizione e fortuna dei classici italiani*, 2 voll., Torino, G. Einaudi, 1993, I, pp. 181-199; see too C. CIOCIOLA, *Dante*, in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, a cura di E. Malato, 12 voll., Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2001, vol. 10/1, *La tradizione dei testi: la tradizione manoscritta*, pp. 137-199 (esp. pp. 174-185). An important reassessment is *Nuove prospettive sulla tradizione della "Commedia": una guida filologico-linguistica al poema dantesco*, a cura di P. Trovato, Firenze, F. Cesati, 2007; *Nuove prospettive sulla tradizione della Commedia: seconda serie (2008-2013)*, a cura di E. Tonello & P. Trovato, Padova,

Commedia was likely copied, while the Veneto has long been recognized as a centre for the early copying and dissemination of the poem.[21] Emilia-Romagna, with its internationally famous University at Bologna, was another crucial area for the

Libreriauniversitaria.it Edizioni, 2013; *Nuove prospettive sulla tradizione della* Commedia*: terza serie (2020)*, a cura di M. Cita, F. Marchetti, & P. Trovato, Padova, Libreriauniversitaria.it, 2021; and E. TONELLO, *Sulla tradizione tosco-fiorentina della Commedia di Dante (secoli XIV-XV)*, Padova, Libreriauniversitaria.it, 2018; see too R. VIEL, *Sulla tradizione manoscritta della* Commedia*: metodo e prassi in centocinquant'anni di ricerca*, «Critica del testo», XIV/1, 2011, pp. 459-518. A succinct account is in P. SHAW, *Transmission History*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante's 'Commedia'*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Barański & Simon Gilson, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 229-244; now essential is: DANTE ALIGHIERI, Commedia. *A Digital Edition*, ed. by P. Shaw, Firenze, Fondazione Ezio Franceschini–Saskatoon, Inkless Editions, 2021², available at https://www.dantecommedia.it, especially Shaw's extensive introduction.

[21] Piacenza, Biblioteca Comunale Passerini Landi, MS 190 (referred to with the sigil 'La') dates to 1336, was copied by Antonio da Fermo, a scribe from Le Marche, and commissioned by Beccario Beccaria (*c.*1275-1356), who had a distinguished legal career as a podestà (judge). See now *Dante e la Ligura: manoscritti e immagini del Medioevo*, a cura di G. Ameri, M. Berisso & G. Olgiati, Genova, Segep, 2021. The sigils are those used in D. ALIGHIERI, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, a cura di G. Petrocchi, 4 voll., Firenze, Le Lettere, 1994². All reference to the *Commedia* will be to this edition, with my own translations, while careful account is also taken of D. ALIGHIERI, *Commedia*, a cura di G. Inglese, 3 voll., Firenze, Le Lettere, 2021. A sonnet by the Venetian poet Giovanni Quirini (*ante* 1295-1333) refers to lending his beloved copy of his 'mero | libro di Dante' ('candid', or 'true book of Dante'), a manuscript that might well be the first copy of the *Commedia* in circulation in Venice; for the poem see GIOVANNI QUIRINI, *Rime*, a cura di Elena Maria Duso, Roma–Padova, Antenore, 2002, no. 34, pp. 56-57, and see too G. FOLENA, *Il primo imitatore veneto di Dante, Giovanni Quirini*, in *Dante e la cultura veneta*, a cura di V. Branca & G. Padoan, Firenze, Olschki, 1966, pp. 295-421, now in ID., *Culture e lingue nel Veneto medievale*, Padova, Programma, 1990, pp. 309-335 (esp. pp. 325-327).

production of authoritative, early witnesses to the poem.[22] While the poem being copied was unmistakably recognizable as Tuscan, scribes were adept at making changes to reflect local linguistic conventions, a process Alberto Varvaro has called «commutazione linguistica» (code-switching).[23] For example, the opening line of the poem in Urb is: «Nel meggio del cammin di nostra vita» (In the middle of the journey of our life), with «meggio» being a northern form of «mezzo», the reading more familiar to a Tuscan reader.[24] Throughout the fourteenth century, the *Commedia* came to be copied in a wide variety of book formats, ranging in size and formality from large deluxe 'registers' in cursive script, to less formal *zibaldoni* ('notebooks'), to books in traditional gothic scripts, surrounded by a dense apparatus of commentary.[25]

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[22] Amongst the most studied witnesses are: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1005 + Milan, Biblioteca Braidense, MS AG XII 2 (Rb); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Urbinate latino 366 (Urb); and Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 10186 (Mad). For descriptions see M. B. ROTIROTI, *Codicologia trecentesca della* Commedia*: entro e oltre l'antica vulgata*, Roma, Viella, 2004, cat. 146, 44, and 185 respectively (pp. 127, 114, 132).

[23] A. VARVARO, *Gemeinromanische Tendenzen XII. Literatursprachenbildung / Tendenze comuni alle lingue romanze XII. La formazione delle lingue letterarie*, in *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik. Band II, 1: Latein und Romanisch. Historisch-vergl. Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen*, ed. by Günter Holtus, Michael Metzeltin & Christian Schmitt, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996, pp. 528-537 (p. 533*b*).

[24] This example is cited in SHAW, *Transmission History*, cit., p. 233; Urb is the base-text for DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Dantis Alagherii Comedia*, a cura di F. Sanguineti, Tavarnuzze [Firenze], Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001, and see pp. LXVI-LXVII for further examples of Urb's northernisms (and cfr. DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Commedia*, ed. Petrocchi, cit., vol. 1, pp. 88-89).

[25] See A. PETRUCCI, *Storia e geografia delle culture scritte (dal secolo XI al secolo XVIII)*, in *Letteratura italiana. Storia e geografia*, a cura di A. Asor Rosa, 3 voll. in 4 tt., Torino, G. Einaudi, 1987-1989, vol.

The geography of northern Italy can be plotted at numerous points in the work of Chaucer. Two of the tales told by the pilgrims on the way to Canterbury are set in Lombardy, with the Clerk naming Padova, Piemonte, Saluzzo, West Lombardy, Monviso; he describes the river Po passing through Emilia, Ferrara and Venice.[26] Walter sends his children to the Count of Panico, near Bologna.[27] Milan and Lombardy are associated with the Visconti, particularly with Bernabò.[28] The Merchant tells a tale of a knight from Pavia, also in Lombardy.[29] The Shipman associates the Lombards with banking.[30] The Wife of Bath's loathly lady refers to the city of Dante and cites from the *Commedia* to educate the knight on *gentilesse*:

> Wel kan the wise poete of Florence,
>
> That highte Dant, speken in this sentence.[31]

Chaucer draws attention to, he *textualizes*, the Wife's reference to the city by placing the name Florence in rhyme position. Such a rhyme-word is rare in Middle English verse. Dante, while frequently invoking the name of his native city, places the noun in rhyme position only once in his *Commedia*. In one of the poem's most Florentine cantos, Dante places 'Florence' in the mouth of Farinata, during his magnificent account of defending the city (*Inf.* 10. 91-93):

II**, *L'età moderna* [1988], pp. 1193-1292 (pp. 1228-1229) now in ID., *Letteratura italiana: una storia attraverso la scrittura*, Roma, Carocci, 2017, pp. 167-168.

[26] *CT* [*ClT*] IV (E) 27, 44, 46, 47, 48, 51.

[27] *CT* [*ClT*] IV (E) 590, 764, 939; 589, 686, 763, 939, 1069.

[28] *CT* [*MkT*] VII 2399-2400 / B² 3589-3590.

[29] *CT* [*MerT*] IV (E) 1245-1246.

[30] *CT* [*ShipT*] VII 367 / B² 1557.

[31] *CT* [*WBT*] III (D) 1125-1126.

«Ma fu' io solo, là dove sofferto

fu per ciascun di tòrre via Fiorenza,

colui che la difesi a viso aperto»

["But it was I, and I alone, where everyone else would have put up with Florence being destroyed, who defended her openly"].

Dante's reply provides the two other rhyme words of the *terza rima* (*Inf.* 10. 94-96):

«Deh, se riposi mai vostra semenza»,

prega' io lui, «solvetemi quel nodo

che qui ha 'nviluppata mia sentenza»

["Ah, that your seed might rest", I begged him, "untie that knot which here has tangled up my mind"]

It is no coincidence that the Wife of Bath uses exactly the same rhyme words, *Florence* : *sentence*, from the very same poem she cites. She has evidently read her Dante with care. Striking, too, is the relevance of the third rhyme word, *semenza* 'seed, ancestry', in the context of the loathly lady's discourse on *gentilesse*.[32] Her naming of the city of Florence is inextricably linked to, indeed filtered through, the city's greatest vernacular poem.

[32] Cf. the rhyme-words *volume* and *custume* in *CT* [WBPro] III (D) 681-682, borrowed from *Pd.* 33. 86, 88; discussed in S. LERER, *Medieval English Literature and the Idea of the Anthology*, «PMLA», 118/5, 2003, pp. 1251-1267 (p. 1254), and in greater detail in K. TAYLOR, *Chaucer's Uncommon Voice: Some Contexts for Influence*, in *The Decameron and the Canterbury Tales: New Essays on an Old Question*, ed. by L. M. Koff & B. D. Schildgen, Madison, N.J., Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000, pp. 47-82 (pp. 52-54) and EAD., *Chaucer's Volumes: Toward a New Model of Literary History in the* Canterbury Tales, «Studies in the Age of Chaucer», 27, 2007, pp. 43-85 (esp. pp. 44-45).

Chaucer's second visit to Italy, in 1378, was to enter negotiations with the powerful Visconti in Milan. But by the time of this visit, the English and the Visconti had already been in extensive diplomatic exchanges. During the 1370s there were (unsuccessful) royal nuptial negotiations between Richard II and Bernabò Visconti's daughter Caterina. Another of Bernabò's daughters, Donnina, married an Englishman, the hugely successful Essex mercenary John Hawkwood, while Henry Bollingbroke, Earl of Derby and then Hereford, greatly impressed Lucia Visconti while visiting Milan on his return journey from Jerusalem. Gian Galeazzo, who had ousted (and possibly poisoned) Lucia's father Bernabò, was not optimistic about Henry's prospects and he married her off to Frederick of Thuringia. However, this marriage was annulled and she went on to marry an Englishman, Edmund Holland, Earl of Kent. Her former suitor, now King Henry IV, gave her away at the altar in the church of St Mary Overy and she lived in London until her death in 1427.[33] When Bernabò was imprisoned and murdered in 1385, his two sons, Mastino and Carlo, prudently left Lombardy temporarily in 1388 and spent time in London. While Chaucer does not mention it, it seems unlikely that, having been on a mission to negotiate with Bernabò in Milan only a decade earlier, Chaucer would not have heard that the two rightful heirs to Visconti power were in the city. Indeed, their presence in the city may well have occasioned further information to circulate on their father's death, prompting

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[33] H. BRADLEY, *Lucia Visconti, Countess of Kent (d. 1424)*, in *Medieval London Widows, 1300-1500*, ed. by C. M. Barron & A. F. Sutton, London, Hambledon Press, 1994, pp. 77-84. See too J. MACKMAN, *Lucia Visconti, Countess of Kent*, *England's Immigrants 1330-1550 website*, October 2013 [<https://www.englandsimmigrants.com/page/individual-studies/lucia-visconti-countess-of-kent/>].

Chaucer to add the Bernabò stanza in the *Monk's Tale*.[34]

The Visconti Library, at Pavia, has been seen as a possible point of contact between Chaucer and the literary texts he read so closely.[35] This is certainly a plausible idea, and raises the wider issue of the cultural forces at work around the Visconti throughout the period.[36] The library was splendid. Inventories reveal it contained a wide range of material, from the moral and philosophical work in Latin and vernacular of Boethius and Albertanus of Brescia, to literary work, such as Dante's *Commedia* and Boccaccio's *Decameron*, *Teseida*, *Filostrato*, as well as all his major Latin work.[37]

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[34] *CT* VII 2399-2406/B[2] 3589-3596; cfr. S. H. Cavanaugh's note *ad* l. 2399 in the *Riverside Chaucer*, p. 933, citing G. L. KITTREDGE, *The Date of Chaucer's Troilus and other Chaucer Matters*, London, Pub. for the Chaucer Society by K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. and by H. Frowde, Oxford University Press, and in New York, 1909, pp. 46-50, on some of Hawkwood's men visiting the court of Richard II shortly after Bernabò death.

[35] See R. A. PRATT, *Chaucer and the Visconti Libraries*, «ELH», 6, 1939, pp. 191-199; and W. E. COLEMAN, *Chaucer, the* Teseida*, and the Visconti Library at Pavia: A Hypothesis*, «Medium Ævum», 51/1, 1982, pp. 92-101.

[36] A most important contribution is that of M. ZAGGIA, *Linee per una storia della cultura in Lombardia dall'età di Coluccio Salutati a quella del Valla*, in *Le strade di Ercole: itinerari umanistici e altri percorsi. Seminario internazionale per i centenari di Coluccio Salutati e Lorenzo Valla (Bergamo, 25-26 ottobre 2007)*, a cura di L. C. Rossi, Firenze, SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2010, pp. 3-125; see too ID., *Culture in Lombardy, ca.1350–1535*, in *A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Milan: The Distinctive Features of an Italian State*, ed. by A. Gamberini, Leiden, Brill, 2015, pp. 166-189.

[37] On the Visconti library inventory see E. PELLEGRIN, *La bibliothèque des Visconti et des Sforza, ducs de Milan, au XV^e siècle*, Paris, Vente au Service des publications du C. N. R. S., 1955, and EAD., *La Bibliothèque des Visconti et des Sforza, ducs de Milan. Supplement*, Firenze, L. S. Olschki, 1969, as well

However, it is not clear *when* and *how* specific items entered the collection. Its rather heterogeneous nature has much more to do with conquest than commission, as the seigneurial libraries were incorporated as each neighbouring state came under Visconti control.[38] Thus, the humanism to which Chaucer may have been exposed in Pavia, especially through its Library, was starkly marked with politics and force. Two of the manuscripts commissioned by Bernabò may well accurately attest to his own literary tastes, not Dante's *Commedia*, or local vernacular poetry, but rather French chivalric texts. The manuscripts are the richly illuminated Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS Fr. 343, a copy of the *Lancelot du Lac* and MS N.A. Fr. 5243, a copy of the *Guiron le courtois*.[39]

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as *I libri del Petrarca, la biblioteca dei Carraresi, la biblioteca dei Visconti e degli Sforza*, published in two monographic issues of «Studi petrarcheschi», 7-8, 1990-1991.

[38] ZAGGIA, *Appunti*, cit., pp. 166-167; CORNISH, *Lombardy: Milan and Pavia*, in *Europe: A Literary History, 1348-1418*, ed. Wallace, cit., pp. 673-686 (p. 677).

[39] See WALLACE, *Chaucerian Polity*, cit., pp. 45-7 on the so-called 'Visconti Hours', Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MSS Banco Rari 397 & Landau-Finaly 22; for images and commentary see *Il Libro d'Ore Visconti*, Commentario al codice, a cura di M. Bollati, Schede descrittive, a cura di A. Di Domenico, 2 voll., Modena, Panini, 2003. On *Guiron* see N. MORATO, *Il ciclo di Guiron le Courtois: strutture e testi nella tradizione manoscritta*, Firenze, Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2010, and *Le cycle de Guiron le Courtois: prolégomènes à l'édition intégrale du corpus*, sous la direction de L. Leonardi et R. Trachsler, études réunies par L. Cadioli et S. Lecomte, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2018; and for the critical edition: *Il ciclo di Guiron le Courtois: romanzi in prosa del secolo XIII*, ed. dir. da L. Leonardi & R. Trachsler, Firenze, Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2020–: *IV: Roman de Guiron, parte prima*, cur. C. Lagomarsini, 2020; *V: Roman de Guiron, parte seconda*, cur. E. Stefanelli, 2020; *VI: Continuazione del Roman de Guiron*, cur. M. Veneziale, 2020; *I: Roman de Meliadus, Parte prima*, cur. L. Cadioli & S. Lecomte, 2021; *II: Roman de Meliadus, Parte seconda*, cur. S. Lecomte, 2021; *III/1: I testi di raccordo*, cur. V. Winand, 2022.

Chaucer's Clerk locates Petrarch rather specifically in his post Milanese period, when he tells the pilgrims that he learned the tale 'at Padowe' (IV [E], 27).[40] Padova had strong literary associations with the name of Petrarch, but it has also been associated with influential and highly refined book illumination in the late fourteenth century by celebrated artists such as Jacopo Avanzi and Altichiero. One fascinating example involves a text that was subject to the closest scrutiny by Chaucer: Boccaccio's *Filostrato*. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS II. II. 90 measures 285 × 215 mm and comprises 40 folios now bound in a composite book; the *Filostrato* is at ff. 65r-104r.[41] The text is written in a sober and careful *littera textualis* in two columns

[40] Much research has sought to 'place' Petrarch in Lombardy and the Veneto: *Il Petrarca ad Arquà. Atti del Convegno di studi nel VI Centenario (1370-1374) (Arquà Petrarca, 6-8 nov. 1970)*, a cura di G. Billanovich & G. Frasso, Padova, Antenore, 1975; *Petrarca, Verona e l'Europa. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Verona, 19-23 sett. 1991)*, a cura di G. Billanovich & G. Frasso, Padova, Antenore, 1997; *Petrarca e la Lombardia. Atti del convegno di studi, Milano, 22-23 maggio 2003*, a cura di G. Frasso, G. Velli & M. Vitale, Roma, Antenore, 2005; *La cultura volgare padovana nell'età del Petrarca. Atti del convegno, Monselice-Padova, 7-8 maggio 2004*, a cura di F. Brugnolo & Z. Verlato, Padova, Il poligrafo, 2006; *Francesco Petrarca, da Padova all'Europa. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Padova, 17-18 giugno 2004*, a cura di G. Belloni, G. Frasso, M. Pastore Stocchi & G. Velli, Roma, Antenore, 2007.

[41] Branca gives the manuscript the sigil F4 in his edition of *Filostrato*; see GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Tutte le opere*, ed. dir. V. Branca, 10 voll., Milano, Mondadori, 1964-1998, in vol. II, [1964], pp. 1-228, 839-872; see too V. PERNICONE, *I manoscritti del «Filostrato» di G. Boccaccio*, «Studi di filologia italiana», 5, 1938, pp. 41-82 (p. 49, n. 22, and Tavv. I-II). See the *scheda* by D. DE ROBERTIS in *Mostra di manoscritti, documenti e edizioni. Firenze - Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, 22 maggio-31 agosto 1975*, 2 voll., Certaldo: A cura del Comitato promotore, 1975, I, pp. 27-28 (Cat. 4). A sensitive iconographic description may be found in the *scheda* by S. MARCON in *Boccaccio visualizzato: narrare per parole e per immagini fra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, a cura di V. Branca, 3 voll., Torino, G. Einaudi, 1999, II, p. 244 (Cat. 93), and figs. 254-265 on pp. 242-243; see too the description in L. BANELLA, *Su alcuni*

of continuous verse, the first line of each *ottava* distinguished only with an off-set initial.[42] It has been dated to the third quarter of the fourteenth century (perhaps more specifically the 1370s to the 1380s).This *Filostrato* was evidently intended to have a complex and rich decorative apparatus, with decorated capital letters opening each 'Parte' (or Book), and a set of rubrics guiding the reader, all unexecuted. The rather ample *bas de pages* have been furnished with a series of twelve drawings *à grisaille* representing scenes from the poem.[43] The illustrator shows great sensitivity to the poem, 'lasciando lo spazio dovuto all'effusione sentimentale [e] dimostra di avere ben chiaro il tono dominante dell'opera' (leaving the necessary space for [the poem's] emotional expression, and displays a clear sense of the overall tone of the work).[44] The scenes are not classicized, but instead are populated with characters dressed in a recognizably contemporary manner. Their style of clothes, indeed, is strongly recalled in the illustrations in a richly decorated copy of Valerius Maximus, Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 2463, produced in 1377, as well as the copy of *Guiron le Courtois*

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manoscritti illustrati del Filostrato, «Studi sul Boccaccio», XXXIX, 2011, pp. 315-366 (pp. 361-363) as well as the *scheda* by S. CHIODO in *Boccaccio autore e copista*, a cura di T. De Robertis, C. M. Monti, M. Petoletti, G. Tanturli & S. Zamponi, Firenze, Mandragora, 2013, cat. 6, pp. 81-82.

[42] In certain respects the *mise en page* resembles the layout of the *Roman de Troie* in, for example, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 3340 (dated to 1237), on which see G. HASENOHR, *Les romans en vers*, in *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre manuscrit*, sous la dir. de H.-J. Martin & J. Vezin, Paris, Éditions du Cercle de la librairie - Promodis, 1990, pp. 245-264, and M. CARERI *et al.*, *Album de manuscrits français du XIIIe siècle: mise en page et mise en texte*, Roma, Viella, 2001, n. 1, pp. 3-6.

[43] These occur between ff. 67r-78r; two other illustrations, on ff. 75r and 78r, were added at a later point by a somewhat less competent hand; see BANELLA, *Su alcuni manoscritti*, cit., pp. 362-363.

[44] BANELLA, *Su alcuni manoscritti*, cit., p. 323. She goes on: 'Le immagini sono estremamente puntuali sia come posizione rispetto al testo che visualizzano, sia come densità, non lasciando sprovvisto praticamente nessun episodio della relativa rappresentazione'.

cited above (BnF, MS N.A. Fr. 5243).[45] There is no evidence that Chaucer encountered this specific manuscript, nor is that being argued here. However, his use of the *Filostrato* in the composition of *Troilus and Criseyde* is so close that he likely worked from a personal copy, either purchased from London or obtained while in Italy.[46] And unlike the *Teseida* and the *Decameron*, which have very small early manuscript circulations, the *Filostrato* is extant in no fewer than 104 witnesses, of which 11, at least, date to the fourteenth century.[47] The variety of book formats, scripts and use of paper and parchment suggest a diversified readership, from an aristocratic elite to the opposite end of the spectrum. The production of a book such as MS II. II. 90, by an artist of evident talent and discussed critically in the circle of very high status artists, is a salutary reminder that Boccaccio's vernacular romance, in the particularity of this

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[45] S. MARCON in *Boccaccio visualizzato*, cit., p. 244.

[46] See, for example, D. GRAY, *Chaucer, Geoffrey*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*, ed. by H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison, 61 voll., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004², vol. 11, pp. 247-259 (250); and B. A. WINDEATT, *Troilus and Criseyde*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 50. See too K. P. CLARKE, *Boccaccio, Giovanni*, in *The Chaucer Encyclopedia*, ed. Newhauser, Gillespie, Rosenfield and Walter, cit., pp. 219-224.

[47] On the *Filostrato* see G. MARRANI, '*Filostrato*', in *Boccaccio autore e copista*, cit., pp. 75-77, and the entries on manuscripts on pp. 78-83. More specific to the fourteenth-century manuscript tradition is F. COLUSSI, *Indagini codicologiche e testuali sui manoscritti trecenteschi del Filostrato di Giovanni Boccaccio*, unpublished PhD thesis, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2003. The lack of a critical edition of the *Filostrato* continues to hamper efforts at a fuller understanding of this remarkable poem, rendering it difficult to discern which textual branch of the tradition was used by Chaucer. No scholar has yet tackled this question, though as long ago as 1937, Vincenzo Pernicone alluded to such an identification being possible, and that work was then ongoing by a certain William A. Walker, 'un giovane studioso Inglese': see GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Il Filostrato e il Ninfale fiesolano*, a cura di V. Pernicone, Bari, Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1937, p. 373 n. 1. No trace of this work has yet come to light.

manuscript, is a textual and artistic 'event' that can be located in northern Italy at around the time Chaucer was in Lombardy. Just as it might be possible to consider Chaucer's encounter with *Grisilidis* as a Lombard phenomenon, discussed below, so too, this exposure to Lombardy might well have involved the *Filostrato* or inflected his encounter with Boccaccio's poem.

Traces of Lombardy might just be discernible in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 61, a celebrated manuscript of the *Troilus* with a frontispiece representing a figure—assumed to be Chaucer—standing at a lectern before a courtly audience in noble dress.[48] Much about this manuscript is unusual: the style of the frontispiece is distinctly 'foreign', and has proven difficult to place. Reprising and refining a hypothesis first proposed by Patrick Wormald, Gerhard Schmidt has suggested that the artist is Lombard, 'who had learned his art in the last decade of the fourteenth century in the circle of Giovannino de Grassi'.[49] That is, an artist patronized by the Visconti and responsible for the lavish Visconti Hours. The choice of a fine, formal *textualis* (or 'textura' in Malcolm Parkes's term) also sets this manuscript apart: 'Textura was rarely employed for English literary works in the fifteenth century. No other Middle English manuscript extant illustrates such a lavish textura as the Corpus

[48] A digital facsimile may be consulted at https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/dh967mz5785; for a print facsimile of the manuscript see: M. B. PARKES AND E. SALTER (eds), *Troilus and Criseyde: A Facsimile of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS.61*, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1978, esp. *Palaeographical Description and Commentary* by M. B. Parkes, pp. 1-13; see too J. ROBERTS, *Guide to Scripts used in English Writings up to 1500*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2015², n. 43, pp. 192-194.

[49] G. SCHMIDT, *Chaucer in Italy. Some Remarks on the 'Chaucer Frontispiece' in Ms. 61, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, in *New Offerings, Ancient Treasures: Studies in Medieval Art for George Henderson*, ed. by P. Binski & W. Noel, Stroud, Sutton, 2001, pp. 478-489 (p. 489).

Troilus'.[50] An Italian reader of the Corpus *Troilus*, that is, might have felt its vernacular expression consonant with the material articulation of its Boccaccian source in a book such as MS II. II. 90.

The *Commedia* in Florence, 1373: Boccaccio as *Commentator* and *Scriptor*

Chaucer's visit to Florence early in 1373 may have been to negotiate with the Bardi bank, who had provided loans to Edward III, but it also may have exposed him to nascent attempts at a cultural repatriation of Dante.[51] This was set in motion by Giovanni Boccaccio, who, in the name of the Compagnia di Or San Michele, went to the monastery of Santo Stefano dell'Ulivi in Ravenna in 1350 and presented Dante's daughter Antonia, who had taken the name Suor Beatrice, with ten gold florins by way of symbolic compensation for her father's exile. In 1373 discussions were underway amongst certain Florentine citizens for the public funding of a man of learning to be appointed to read and expound upon 'el Dante', that is, the *Commedia*. The benefits offered to the audience of such instruction were clear: 'tam in fuga vitiorum, quam in acquisitione virtutum quam in ornate eloquentie possunt etiam non grammatici informari' ('even the unlearned may receive instruction regarding the avoidance of vices, the acquisition of virtues, and comely eloquence').[52] Strongly echoing the

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[50] K. E. KENNEDY, '*Hunting the Corpus* Troilus*: Illuminating Textura'*, «Studies in the Age of Chaucer», 44, 2022, pp. 133-163 (pp. 153-154).

[51] See note 8 above for two brief literary sketches of the period and the city.

[52] A. GHERARDI, *Statuti della Università e Studio Fiorentino dell'anno MCCCLXXXVII seguiti da un'appendice di documenti dal MCCCXX al MCCCCLXXII*, Firenze, Cellini, 1881, pp. 161-162, cited and translated in M. PAPIO, *Boccaccio as* Lector Dantis, pp. 3-37 (pp. 7-8, 592 note 11), in GIOVANNI

intentio in a medieval *accessus*, one can also see a wider civic programme being pursued.[53] Especially noteworthy is the reference to *eloquentia*, in a city where Filippo Ceffi's work continued to be copied and held in the larger libraries of merchants and magnates. The project also had a discernible political dimension: the city was establishing itself as having a position of literary, linguistic, and civic preeminance; the *Commedia* was its ambassador, circulating throughout the peninsula. In August the appointment was approved in the Council of the Capitano del Popolo and the Council of the Podestà e Comune: the man chosen for the job was the century's greatest Dante scholar, Giovanni Boccaccio.

The series of public lectures were begun in late October 1373, and their precise number is not known for certain. Illness may have caused the lectures to be suspended in January of 1374, though as Marco Santagata has noted, Boccaccio was paid in two instalments, the first on 31 December 1373, and the second on 4 September 1374, suggesting that more lectures were delivered than the sixty that survive in written form.[54] At the time of Boccaccio's death the unfinished *Esposizioni* comprised 24

BOCCACCIO, *Expositions on Dante's Comedy*, introd. & trans. M. Papio, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2009.

[53] See, too, *Decameron*, *Proemio* 14, where its female readers 'utile consiglio potranno pigliare, in quanto potranno cognoscere quello che sia da fuggire e che sia similmente da seguitare', citing from GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Decameron*, a cura di A. Quondam, M. Fiorilla, & G. Alfano, Milano, BUR Rizzoli, 2013, p. 132, as well as Boccaccio's assertion that one of the reasons Dante wrote the *Commedia* in the vernacular was 'per fare utilità più comune a' suoi cittadini e agli altri Italiani' in GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, a cura di P. G. Ricci, in *Tutte le opere*, cit., III (1974), 1a red. §191. Cfr. *Epistola* XIX (*Generose miles*), 17, 'sic et vitia deprimi et virtutes extolli, pusillanimes animari, otiosos in frugem vite meliori impelli', citing from GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Epistole e Lettere*, a cura di Ginetta Auzzas, in *Tutte le opere*, cit., V/1 (1992), p. 662.

[54] See M. SANTAGATA, *Boccaccio: fragilità di un genio*, Milano, Mondadori, 2019, pp. 283-288. For the

'quaderni' and 14 'quadernucci', unbound fascicles of parchment, while the manuscript circulation of the *Esposizioni* is somewhat limited. Even if the material traces of the *lecturae* are hard to reconstruct, there can be little doubting their cultural impact in the city, which was to be felt long after.

Boccaccio's contribution to the interpretation and dissemination of the work of Dante is not limited to his role as *commentator*, through public lectures, nor indeed to the composition of his other works in celebration of Dante such as the *Trattatello in laude di Dante*. The interpretation of Dante is also expressed in Boccaccio's extensive work as *scriptor*, in his copying of no fewer than three separate manuscripts of the *Commedia*: Toledo, Archivo y Biblioteca Capitolares (Biblioteca del Cabildo), MS 104.6 (To, *c*.1348-1355); Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1035 (Ri, *c*.1360); and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L. VI. 213, which was

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documents see L. REGNICOLI, *Documenti su Giovanni Boccaccio*, in *Boccaccio autore e copista*, cit., pp. 385-402, nn. 170, 179. On the *lecturae* more generally see: S. GILSON, *Modes of Reading in Boccaccio's* Esposizioni sopra la Comedia, in *Interpreting Dante: Essays on the Traditions of Dante Commentary*, ed. by P. Nasti & C. Rossignoli, Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 2013, pp. 250-282; G. ALFANO, *La "conveniente cagione": il progetto culturale delle* Esposizioni, and L. AZZETTA, *Le* Esposizioni *e la tradizione esegetica trecentesca*, in *Boccaccio editore e interprete di Dante. Atti del convegno internazionale di Roma, 28-30 ottobre 2013, in collaborazione con la Casa di Dante in Roma*, a cura di L. Azzetta & A. Mazzucchi, Roma, Salerno, 2014, pp. 255-274 and pp. 275-292; see also R. HOLLANDER, *Boccaccio's Divided Allegiance (*Esposizioni sopra la "Comedia"*)*, in *Boccaccio: A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, ed. by V. Kirkham, M. Sherberg & J. L. Smarr, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2013, pp. 221-231 (with notes on pp. 437-439). For the text see GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Esposizioni sopra la 'Comedia'*, a cura di G. Padoan, in *Tutte le opere*, VI [1965]; see too G. PADOAN, *L'ultima opera di Giovanni Boccaccio: le Esposizioni sopra il Dante*, Padova, C.E.D.A.M., 1959.

originally combined with MS Chig. L. V. 176 (Chig, *c.*1363-1366).[55] Boccaccio's manuscripts are innovative in several important respects.[56] Giorgio Petrocchi based his critical edition of the poem on manuscripts that predated Boccaccio because he saw in Boccaccio's manuscripts a significant—and effectively irreparable—break in the

[55] These manuscripts have been intensely studied. See: BOSCHI ROTIROTI, *Codicologia*, cit., cat. 269, 156 & 36; S. BERTELLI, *Codicologia d'autore. Il manoscritto in volgare secondo Giovanni Boccaccio*, in *Dentro l'officina di Giovanni Boccaccio*, a cura di S. Bertelli & D. Cappi, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2014, pp. 1-80, esp. pp. 20-23 for a description of To, pp. 17-19 for a description of Ri, and pp. 4-6 for Chig (L V 176 + L VI 213); see also the descriptions in *Boccaccio autore e copista*, cit., cat. 49, pp. 266-268 (for To), cat. 50, pp. 268-270 (for Ri), and cat. 51, pp. 270-272 (for Cyhig), all prepared by Sandro Bertelli, as well as the descriptions in M. CURSI, *La scrittura e i libri di Giovanni Boccaccio*, Roma, Viella, 2013, pp. 129-134; specifically on Chig see the entry by Marco Cursi in M. CURSI, & M. FIORILLA, *Giovanni Boccaccio*, in *Autografi dei letterati italiani. Le origini e il Trecento. Tomo I*, a cura di G. Brunetti, M. Fiorilla, & M. Petoletti, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2013, pp. 43-103 (p. 49, n. 3, with previous bibliography). On Ri see also M. BOSCHI ROTIROTI, *Censimento dei manoscritti della Commedia: Firenze, Biblioteche Riccardiana e Moreniana, Società Dantesca Italiana*, Roma, Viella, 2008, no. 24, pp. 57-59, and S. BERTELLI, *La tradizione della* Commedia *dai manoscritti al testo. 2: I codici trecenteschi (oltre l'antica vulgata) conservati a Firenze*, Firenze, Olschki, 2016, pp. 542-545 (cat. 58). See too A. BETTARINI BRUNI, G. BRESCHI, & G. TANTURLI, *Giovanni Boccaccio e la tradizione dei testi volgari*, in *Boccaccio letterato. Atti del convegno internazionale: Firenze - Certaldo, 10-12 ottobre 2013*, a cura di M. Marchiaro & S. Zamponi, Firenze, Accademia della Crusca, 2015, pp. 9-104. Ri and Chig may be consulted in digital facsimiles at the following links: http://www.autografi.net/ dl/resource/2819 and https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Chig.L.VI.213, respectively, while for MS Chig. L. V. 176, see GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Il codice Chigiano L.V. 176*, a cura di D. De Robertis, Roma, Archivi Edizioni – Firenze, Fratelli Alinari, 1975.

[56] See M. CURSI, *La scrittura e i libri di Giovanni Boccaccio*, cit., esp. pp. 97-106; and ID., *Cronologia e stratigrafia nelle sillogi dantesche di Giovanni Boccaccio*, in *Dentro l'officina di Giovanni Boccaccio*, ed. Bertelli & Cappi, cit., pp. 81-130; see too, T. DE ROBERTIS, *Il posto di Boccaccio nella storia della scrittura*, in *Boccaccio letterato*, cur. Marchiaro & Zamponi, cit., pp. 145-170 (esp. p. 159).

textual tradition.[57] Whatever one may say about his accuracy as a scribe, it is his attention to the physical format and the script used that plays a significant role in the subsequent copying tradition of the poem.

The Florentine tradition of copying Dante's *Commedia* is characterized by a text disposed on the page in two columns, and written in a cursive script referred to as a 'lettera bastarda su base cancelleresca' ('*bastarda* hand on a chancery script base'). This is most famously exemplified in Milan, Biblioteca dell'Archivio storico e Trivulziana, MS Trivulziano 1080, in the hand of Francesco di ser Nardo da Barberino, dated to the year 1337.[58] The remarkably insistent and regular use of this particular format and script for so many copies of the poem means that they became strongly (unmistakably, even) identified with the *Commedia* in the period up to 1350.[59] This is even more striking given that no single figure has been identified as having co-ordinated the 30 or so scribes (sometimes solely, sometimes collaboratively)

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[57] See DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Commedia*, ed. Petrocchi, cit., I, pp. 17-47, and G. PETROCCHI, *Dal Vaticano Lat. 3199 ai codici del Boccaccio: chiosa aggiuntiva*, in *Giovanni Boccaccio editore e interprete di Dante*, a cura della Società dantesca italiana, Firenze, Olschki, 1979, pp. 15-24. This view has been challenged by more recent philological work on the poem: see A. E. MECCA, *Il canone editoriale dell'antica vulgata di Giorgio Petrocchi e le edizioni dantesche del Boccaccio*, in *Nuove prospettive sulla tradizione della Commedia: seconda serie (2008-2013)*, cur. Tonello & Trovato, cit., pp. 119-182; ID., *Giovanni Boccaccio editore e commentatore di Dante*, in *Dentro l'officina di Giovanni Boccaccio*, ed. Bertelli & Cappi, cit., pp. 163-185; ID., *L'influenza del Boccaccio nella tradizione recenziore della Commedia: postilla critica*, in *Boccaccio editore e interprete di Dante*, ed. Azzetta & Mazzucchi, cit., pp. 223-253; and TONELLO, *Sulla tradizione tosco-fiorentina della Commedia di Dante*, cit., pp. 105-143.

[58] On this manuscript see BOSCHI ROTIROTI, *Codicologia*, cit., no. 198 (p. 134); on its rubrics see K. P. CLARKE, Sotto la quale rubrica*: Pre-reading the* Comedìa, «Dante Studies» 133, 2015, pp. 147-176.

[59] See BOSCHI ROTIROTI, *Codicologia*, cit., p. 76.

responsible for the 62 manuscripts that comprise the 'Danti del Cento' group. The term 'scattered' *scriptorium* has been used to describe the phenomenon.[60] As Teresa De Robertis has observed, the script that is so characteristic of the Danti del Cento is notable for certain archaicizing features, typical of a script dating to about fifty years earlier.[61] Indeed, De Robertis has even suggested that this script might be better considered a deliberate fashion, rather than the visual result of a hand more accustomed to a cursive, notary practice.[62] The reasons for this unusual graphic anachronism are unclear, and may be resolved as more is learned of the particular historical circumstances of these scribes. But it is tempting to wonder if this a deliberate attempt at adding a further classicizing layer to the reading experience, akin to the phenomenon Malcolm Parkes called 'archaizing hands'.[63] Graphically, the

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[60] CECCHERINI, *Uno "scriptorium" diffuso: copisti e notai*, in *«Onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze»*, cur. Azzetta, Chiodo & De Robertis, cit., pp. 203-207.

[61] See T. DE ROBERTIS, *Rivalutazione di un frammento dantesco*, «Studi Danteschi», LXVI, 2001, pp. 263-278, esp. pp. 267-268; see too: I. CECCHERINI & T. DE ROBERTIS, Scriptoria *e cancellerie nella Firenze del XIV secolo*, in *Scriptorium. Wesen, Funktion, Eigenheiten. Comité international de paléographie latine, 18. Kolloquium, St. Gallen 11.-14. September 2013*, ed. by A. Nievergelt *et al.*, München, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Kommission being Verlag C.H. Beck, 2015, pp. 141-169 (pp. 144-145); and I. CECCHERINI, *Mercanti copisti delle opere di Dante*, in *Intorno a Dante: ambienti culturali, fermenti politici, libri e lettori nel XIV secolo. Atti del Convengo internazionale di Roma 7-9 novembre 2016*, a cur. di L. Azzetta & A. Mazzucchi, Roma, Salerno, 2018, pp. 295-306 (p. 300 and n. 7).

[62] T. DE ROBERTIS, *Dante come libro*, in *«Onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze»*, cur. Azzetta, Chiodo & De Robertis, cit., pp. 79-87 (at p. 81).

[63] M. B. PARKES, *Archaizing Hands in English Manuscripts*, in *Books and Collectors 1200-1700: Essays Presented to Andrew Watson*, ed by J. P. Carley & C. G. C. Tite, London, The British Library, 1997, pp.

manuscripts have the same archaic feel as the language of the poem, a language that belongs to the late thirteenth century, before Dante's exile.[64] This 'look' devised for a book of vernacular poetry, in particular the use of *lettera bastarda cancelleresca*, stands in contrast to many other vernacular literary manuscripts, where a more formal bookhand, *littera textualis*, was used, often suggestive—as noted above—of a statement of self-confidence and prestige for the new vernacular.[65] Indeed, early copies of the *Commedia* in *littera textualis* are few in number, and mostly are associated with a production and circulation outside Florence.[66]

When Boccaccio came to put together three copies of the *Commedia* from the late 1340s to the late 1360s, he chose a format and a script that were strikingly different

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101-141, now in ID., *Pages from the Past: Medieval Writing Skills and Manuscript Books*, ed. by Pamela Robinson & Rivkah Zim, Farnham, Ashgate, 2012, Ch. 4.

[64] On the language of the *Commedia* as having archaic characteristics see I. BALDELLI, *Lingua e stile delle opere in volgare di Dante*, in *Enciclopedia dantesca*, dir. U. Bosco, 6 voll., Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 1984², VI, pp. 55-112 (p. 93*b*), reprinted in ID., *Studi Danteschi*, a cura di L. Serianni & U. Vignuzzi, Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2015, pp. 355-486 (p. 440); and ID., *Dante e la lingua italiana*, Firenze, presso l'Accademia, 1996, p. 8. See too G. FROSINI, *Il volgare*, in *Dante*, cur. Malato & Mazzucchi, cit., pp. 522-523, and EAD., *Il volgare di Dante*, in *Dante*, cur. Rea & Steinberg, cit., pp. 245-265.

[65] BOSCHI ROTIROTI, *Codicologia*, cit., pp. 99-105.

[66] There is a small number of notable exceptions: the earliest is Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Dep. Breslau 7 (Rehdiger 227), which dates to the 1330s (on which see the *scheda* by I. CECCHERINI in *«Onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze»*, cur. Azzetta, Chiodo & De Robertis, cit., cat. 30, pp. 222-223); Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MSS Pal. 313 and Pal. 319 (on the former see the *scheda* by T. DE ROBERTIS & S. CHIODO, ivi, cat. 32, pp. 232-235); Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 40, 11, and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Barb. lat. 4117. Of these, only MS Breslau 7 and MS Barb. lat. 4117 are in a single-column layout.

to that to which Florentine readers had become accustomed. Each manuscript is in a formal *littera textualis*, and the poem is disposed in a single column, with wide margins. Marco Cursi has suggested that the models for this format were culturally prestigious classical texts, such as Virgil's *Aeneid* or Statius's *Thebaid*.[67] While in general terms the script and layout remain similar across the three manuscripts, one neglected feature is subject to substantial changes: the system of rubrics. In To, the earliest of the three manuscripts, these rubrics are in Latin; in Ri, Boccaccio switches to vernacular; while in Chig, he greatly expands the rubrics, which now comprise summaries of the action of each canto. Boccaccio is thus making the *Commedia* look more like a classic, and is setting the poem into a wider vernacular tradition of manuscripts produced in Florence; by re-rubricating the *Commedia* he is acknowledging its widening readership. In a sense, it is a process of rendering Dante a more international, less locally Florentine, *auctor*.[68] And Geoffrey Chaucer is just such an international reader.

Filippo Ceffi's *Eroidi* and Chaucer's Vernacular Italy

[67] CURSI, *La scrittura e i libri di Giovanni Boccaccio*, cit., p. 104.

[68] This is discussed in greater detail, with a fuller bibliography, in K. P. CLARKE, *Boccaccio and the Poetics of the Paratext: Rubricating the Vernacular*, «Le Tre Corone», VI, 2019, pp. 69-106, and cfr. CLARKE, *Pre-reading the* Comedìa, cit. See also G. POMARO, *La rubrica tra testo e paratesto*, «Filologia mediolatina», XXVI, 2019, pp. 173-191; EAD., *La prima lettura della* Commedia*: le rubriche*, in *Da Boccaccio a Landino: un secolo di "Lecturae Dantis". Atti del Convegno internazionale, Firenze 24-26 ottobre 2018*, a cura di L. Böninger & P. Procaccioli, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2021, pp. 345-379; and F. MARCHETTI, *Primi appunti sulle rubriche della* Commedia, in *Édition de textes canoniques nationaux. Le cas de la Commedia de Dante*, dir. S. Baddeley & E. Tonello, avec la collaboration de F. Marchetti, Paris, Éditions des archives contemporaines, 2020, pp. 65-129.

Chaucer's use of an Italian translation of Ovid's *Heroides* by Filippo Ceffi has long been acknowledged. [69] Massimo Zaggia's monumental edition of the *Eroidi* has made possible a much fuller and sharper account of Ceffi's literary and cultural context, as well as his patronage by Simone Peruzzi and his wife Lisa Buondelmonti, two of the most powerful political families in Florence in the early fourteenth century.[70] Ceffi's vernacular *Eroidi* may thus be considered part of a complex intersection of literature, politics and gender. As a Florentine notary—like other notaries in the city, such as Andrea Lancia—Ceffi was intensely engaged in the translation of Latin work into the Florentine vernacular: he completed (in 1324) a *volgarizzamento* of the *Historia destructionis Troiae* by Guido delle Colonne; Ceffi's work for Simone Peruzzi also extended to the copying of Latin texts, such as the *Satires* of Persius in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 8050, dated in the colophon to 1321.[71] As Alison Cornish has shown, the civic aspect of these

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[69] S. B. MEECH, *Chaucer and an Italian Translation of the* Heroides, «Publications of the Modern Language Association», 45/1, 1930, pp. 110-128. See too K. P. CLARKE, *Chaucer and Italian Textuality*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 27-46.

[70] *Heroides: Volgarizzamento fiorentino trecentesco di Filippo Ceffi*, a cura di Massimo Zaggia, voll. 1-2, Firenze, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2009-2014, and vol. 3, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2015. See too the excellent review by R. VIEL in «Studi sul Boccaccio», XLV, 2017, pp. 359-367. For the few biographical details, see M. PALMA, *Ceffi, Filippo*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, dir. A. M. Ghisalberti, 100 voll., Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960-2020, vol. 23 [1979], pp. 320-321. Manuscripts in the hand of Ceffi continue to come to light: see L. AZZETTA & I. CECCHERINI, '*Filippo Ceffi volgarizzatore e copista nella Firenze del Trecento*, «Italia Medioevale e Umanistica», LVI, 2015, pp. 99-156.

[71] See CECCHERINI in AZZETTA & CECCHERINI, *Filippo Ceffi volgarizzatore e copista*, cit., pp. 99-117; on the manuscript see the *scheda* signed by M. PETOLETTI in *«Onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze»*, cur. Azzetta, Chiodo & De Robertis, cit., cat. 47, pp. 274-275.

volgarizzamenti, constantly updated and reworked, often by figures whose names are not known, creates a particular kind of open, anonymous vernacular textuality whose authority is decentred and constantly renegotiated by readers, scribes, compilers, and writers.[72] Zaggia's analysis of the manuscript tradition of the *Eroidi* confirms this process of innovations and accretions, and three 'versions' are evident, designated *alpha* (in 22 manuscripts), *beta* (in 6 manuscripts), and *gamma* (in 17 manuscripts). The text in the *beta* version, for example, suggest a revision which has resulted from an attentive re-reading of the Latin; while that of *gamma* suggests a stylistic revision, typified in Ceffi's *amanti* (*Ep*. 2, 7, translating the Latin 'amantes') becoming *fini amanti*, which hints at a certain lyric taste.[73] Zaggia's account of the variants that characterize each of these versions makes it possible to confidently hypothesize that it was the *gamma* version which Chaucer was reading.[74]

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[72] A. CORNISH, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, esp. pp. 16-43, 44-69.

[73] *Heroides*, cur. Zaggia, cit., vol. II, pp. 203-268.

[74] See *Heroides*, cur. Zaggia, cit., vol. II, p. 224; Vol. III, pp. 356-7 and CLARKE, *Chaucer and Italian Textuality*, cit., pp. 28-9: in the *Legend of Medea* (*LGW* 1672-5), a clear echo may be heard of *Ep*. 12. 11, 'Deh, or perché mi piacquero oltre a l'onestade li tuoi biondi capelli e la tua beltade e la 'nfinta grazia della lingua?'; two variants in the *gamma* version are close to Chaucer's rendering: *oltre agl'onesti termini* ('More than the boundes of myn honeste') and *infinita grazia* ('the infynyt graciousnesse'). In the *Legend of Dido*, the queen closes with a swan song in which she laments how the gods were against her, 'Syn that the goddes been contraire to me' (*LGW* 1360); Ceffi's autograph translates Ovid's *adverso deo* (7. 4) with 'poi che gl'idii mi sono incontro' (*Ep*. VII 3; ed. Zaggia, p. 483), however, the *gamma* version reads 'mi sono contrari': see *Heroides*, cur. Zaggia, cit., vol. III, p. 207; M. C. EDWARDS, '*A Study of Six Characters in Chaucer's* Legend of Good Women *with Reference to Medieval Scholia on Ovid's* Heroides, unpublished B.Litt. thesis, Oxford, 1970, pointed to a gloss in the Latin manuscripts of *Heroides* 7. 4: 'aduersus: id est contrario deo'.

The 'sociology' of Ceffi's *Eroidi* can be explored with even sharper clarity through Zaggia's exhaustive account of the manuscript tradition, an account which is all the more remarkable given that, as an editor, Zaggia worked from Ceffi's autograph, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 1644.[75] One of the *gamma* version manuscripts is New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Osborn MS Fa. 33.[76] Produced in Florence in 1393, Osborn MS Fa. 33 has a handsome (though not deluxe) programme of decorated initials, which shows visual affinities with three important Strozzi manuscripts of the *Commedia*, dated to the second quarter of the fourteenth century, and typical in script and format to the numerous witnesses known as the 'Danti del Cento'.[77] The script of Osborn MS Fa. 33 is a *minuscola cancelleresca*, which Zaggia notes has a decidedly archaic quality for this date. It can only be speculated why this might be, but it is tempting to wonder if the scribe is seeking to visually recall the *cancelleresca* script used in 'Danti del Cento' manuscripts. Thus Ceffi's *Eroidi* are visually and graphically articulated with

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[75] The term 'sociology' invokes D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999; on the autograph see *Heroides*, cur. Zaggia, cit., vol. I, pp. 122-124, and 365-373.

[76] *Heroides*, cur. Zaggia, cit., vol. II, pp. 107-11; and M. Zaggia & M. Ceriana, *I manoscritti illustrati delle "Eroidi" ovidiane volgarizzate*, Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, 1996, pp. 17-22.

[77] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MSS Strozzi 149, 150, 151. See Boschi Rotiroti, *Codicologia*, cit., cat. 105, 106, 107 (pp. 122-3); S. Bertelli, *La tradizione della "Commedia" dai manoscritti al testo. 1. I codici trecenteschi (entro l'antica vulgata) conservati a Firenze*, Florence, L. S. Olschki, 2011, cat. 17, 18, 19 (pp. 353-357); F. Pasut, *Pacino di Bonaguida e le miniature della* Divina Commedia*: un percorso tra codici poco noti*, in *Da Giotto a Botticelli: pittura fiorentina tra gotico e Rinascimento. Atti del convegno internazionale, Firenze, Università degli studi e Museo di San Marco, 20-21 maggio 2005*, a cura di F. Pasut & J. Tripps, Firenze, Giunti, 2008, pp. 41-62. On the Danti del Cento see Boschi Rotiroti, *Codicologia*, cit., pp. 77-88.

the 'look and feel' of the *Commedia* in the format that had been virtually canonized in Florence by the middle of the century. If the script looked archaic, one other feature of the manuscript looked modern: its system of decorated catchwords (a technique of including, at the bottom of the final page of one fascicle, the first word of the next fascicle, thus ensuring their correct ordering during binding). Zaggia suggests that it is the scribe himself who is responsible for the decoration. Contemporary examples of this phenomenon in fourteenth-century Tuscan manuscripts are exceedingly rare, but one in particular stands out for its cultural, literary and codicological importance. Giovanni Boccaccio's autograph of the *Decameron*—Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussicher Kulturbesitz, MS Hamilton 90—includes a sequence of catchwords decorated with portrait-busts representing both narrators and characters in the narrative, who appear as if emblazoned with the words of the *Decameron*.[78]

The graphic alignment of the *Eroidi* with the 'look and feel' of the *Commedia* can be traced back to a very early moment in the textual circulation of the *volgarizzamento*. Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 1578, is a witness to the *beta* version, in parchment, measuring 290 × 200 mm, comprising the *Eroidi* and a vernacular translation of the pseudo-Ovidian *Pulex* (which are often copied together). The manuscript is in a *cancelleresca* hand, of very high quality, and may be dated to the 1330s, which is notable given that Ceffi had only finished composing the *Eroidi* in 1325.[79] The identity of the scribe responsible for MS Ricc. 1578 has not yet been

[78] On these catchwords see K. P. CLARKE, *Text and (Inter)Face: The Catchwords in Boccaccio's Autograph of the* Decameron, in *Reconsidering Boccaccio: Medieval Contexts and Global Intertexts*, ed. by Olivia Holmes & Dana E. Stewart, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2018, pp. 27-47.

[79] *Heroides*, cur. Zaggia, cit., vol. II, pp. 58-9 (with a dating 1330s-1340s). See also the *scheda* by I. CECCHERINI in *«Onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze»*, cur. Azzetta, Chiodo & De Robertis, cit., cat. 29, pp. 220-221 (with a dating restricted to the 1330s).

discovered, but the hand is very well known as that found in a number of notary documents in Florence in this period, as well as no fewer than eight copies of the *Commedia*, including Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS Parmense 3285 ('Parm'), a particularly authoritative early witness to the poem (the scribe is hence labelled the 'copyist of Parm').[80] The *Eroidi* are thus drawn in to a material discourse of vernacularity, one in which the *Commedia* exerts a strong gravitational pull. The force of this pull is rendered evident by comparing Ceffi's own autograph of the *Eroidi*, which is in a *littera textualis*, a formal Gothic bookhand typical of copies of the work of Virgil or Ovid, for example. Books, that is, enjoying an elevated cultural prestige. Ceffi's decision to express his *volgarizzamento* in *littera textualis* is quite typical of many manuscripts of early vernacular literature in Florence, as demonstrated by Sandro Bertelli.[81] These are books that visually, graphically, do not express a status anxiety, but rather assert with confidence a place in the new vernacular literary culture of the city.

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[80] On Parm see BOSCHI ROTIROTI, *Codicologia*, cit., cat. 234 (p. 138); on the scribe, ivi, pp. 84-5, as well as G. POMARO, *Frammento di un discorso dantesco*, Nonantola, Modena, Poligrafico Mucchi, 1994, and EAD., *Ricerche d'archivio per il «copista di Parm» e la mano principale del Cento. (In margine ai «Frammenti di un discorso dantesco»)*, in *Nuove prospettive sulla tradizione della "Commedia"*, cur. Trovato, cit., pp. 243-279. See too T. DE ROBERTIS, *Il posto di Boccaccio nella storia della scrittura*, cit., p. 154, nota 30, and CECCERHINI, *Uno "scriptorium" diffuso*, cit., pp. 205-207. On the iconography of Parm see K. P. CLARKE, Inferno *1: Openings and Beginnings*, in *Reading Dante with Images: A Visual Lectura Dantis*, ed. by Matthew Collins, London & Turnhout, Harvey Miller, 2021, pp. 33-53 (pp. 39-41, with bibliography).

[81] S. BERTELLI, *I manoscritti della letteratura italiana delle origini: Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana*, Tavarnuzze, Impruneta: SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011, p. 27, and ID., *I manoscritti della letteratura italiana delle origini: Firenze, Biblioteca nazionale centrale*, ivi, 2002, p. 31.

Confidence and flair characterize the way Ceffi addresses his patron, identifying both her and himself in the Prologue to *Epistle* 4 with an etymological, phonetic riddle. Lisa's name is revealed by punning on the fleur-de-lis, 'quello bello fiore che l'alto re de' Frenceschi porta nelle sue celestiali insegne' (that beautiful flower which the lofty king of France wears on his standard); while his own name may be revealed, he says, by uttering 'Bocca di lampana' in Hebrew and 'Guardia d'amore' in Greek.[82] Thus his patron's name is associated with politics, while his own name is associated with the ancient languages of learning. It is in this charged context of politics and language that Ceffi then goes on to describe the 'target language' of his *Eroidi* as 'volgare fiorentino' (*Ep*. 4, *Pr* 5), a term which is rather rare in early sources.[83] Dante Alighieri, writing in 1303-1305, describes his vernacular as 'locutio vulgaris' in the *De vulgari eloquentia* (I I 2); the *Epistle to Cangrande* (XIII 31), whose dating is uncertain but likely close to 1320, says this is a language 'in qua et muliercule comunicant' (with which little women, too, communicate).[84] Later in the fourteenth century Boccaccio used the terms 'volgare fiorentino' or 'fiorentino idioma' to describe the language of Dante, in the *Trattatello in laude di Dante* (1351-1355, early 1360s) and the *Esposizioni* on the *Commedia* (1373-1374), as well as the language of his own *Filostrato* (*c*.1339) in the *Proem* and of his hundred stories in the Introduction to Day Four of the *Decameron*

[82] See the extensive discussion in *Heroides*, cur. Zaggia, cit., vol. I, pp. 103-110. The Hebrew words would be *peh* 'mouth' and *lapid* 'torch', the Greek words, *philos* 'love' and *hippeús* 'knight', all giving 'Filippo'. On the Prologue to *Ep*. 4 see too CLARKE, *Chaucer and Italian Textuality*, cit., pp. 37-39.

[83] *Heroides*, cur. Zaggia, cit., vol. I, p. 448.

[84] See DANTE ALIGHIERI, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. Tavoni, cit., p. 1132 (see nota 14 above); and DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Epistole*, ed. Claudia Villa, in *Opere*, ed. dir. Santagata, cit., II, p. 1504.

(*c*.1348).[85] While the term 'volgare fiorentino' was becoming less marked by the middle of the century, Boccaccio is clearly engaging with Dante's theoretical considerations of the status of the vernacular. The intensity of this reflection for Dante is undoubtedly tied up with his exile in 1302, and the fact that much of his vernacular writing is undertaken in places using a different language. Unlike Dante, who might be said to be writing from *without*, Ceffi is writing from *within*, in the flux of a vernacular still in the making, a Florentine *in fieri*.

The latter part of the fourteenth century saw a decline in the appearance of new *volgarizzamenti*, likely under the influence of Petrarch and an early Humanist turn towards Latin. And the death of Petrarch and Boccaccio marked the beginning of what Benedetto Croce called the 'secolo senza poesia', the *century without poetry*, a lack only remedied for Croce with the circle of poets around Lorenzo de' Medici in the late fifteenth-century.[86] But while a literary history might give one account of the period

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[85] See GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, 1st red. §§38 & 199, 2nd red. §§116 & 137, citing from the edition of P. G. Ricci, in *Tutte le opere*, cit., III [1974], pp. 446, 488 and 525, 530; *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante*, II *Esp. litt.* §80 & 82, and IX *Esp. litt.* §94, citing from the edition of G. Padoan in *Tutte le opere*, cit., VI [1965], pp. 113, 114 & 491; *Filostrato Proem* 29, citing from the edition of V. Branca in *Tutte le opere*, cit., II [1964], p. 22; *Decameron* IV *Intr.* 3, citing from *Decameron*, a cura di Quondam, Fiorilla, & Alfano, cit., p. 686. See too G. FROSINI, *«Luce nuova, sole nuovo» (con qualche nota su Malebolge)*, in *«Per beneficio e concordia di studio»: studi danteschi offerti a Enrico Malato per i suoi ottant'anni*, a cura di A. Mazzucchi, Cittadella PD, Bertoncello, 2015, pp. 439-454 (esp. 446-447).

[86] B. CROCE, *Poesia popolare e poesia d'arte: studi sulla poesia italiana dal tre al cinquecento*, Bari, G. Laterza & Figli, 1933, p. 209. An important corrective has been E. PASQUINI, *Il «secolo senza poesia» e il crocevia di Burchiello*, now in ID., *Le botteghe della poesia: studi sul Tre-Quattrocento italiano*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1991, pp. 25-86.

during Chaucer's time in the north of Italy, the commissioning and production of manuscripts tell another story: that is, even as new *volgarizzamenti* have fallen out of fashion, Ceffi's *Eroidi* continue to be read.

Translating Petrarch

Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (mid-1380s) closely translates Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, but also integrates a range of other philosophical and historical sources, such as Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* and Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* for example, as well as a lyric poem by Petrarch, which becomes three stanzas of a 'song' sung by Troilus after he is struck by love for Criseyde (*Tr*. 1. 400-420).[87] That sonnet, 'S'amor non è, che dunque è quel ch'io sento?' (If it is not love, what then is it that I am feeling?), is included as number 132 in an anthology of poems known as the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (*Rvf*), over which Petrarch intensively laboured from the late 1330s until his death in 1374, which is evident from the surviving partially autograph manuscript material.[88]

[87] Reference will be made to *Troilus & Criseyde*, ed. Windeatt, cit., and to the notes of Stephen A. Barney in the *Riverside Chaucer*, cit., pp. 1020-1058. On the sources see too WINDEATT, *Troilus and Criseyde*, cit., pp. 37-137. On Chaucer's use of Petrarch see: E. H. WILKINS, *Cantus Troili*, «ELH», 16, 1949, pp. 167-173, and republished without changes in ID., *The Making of the "Canzoniere" and other Petrarchan Studies*, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1951, pp. 305-310; W. T. ROSSITER, *Chaucer and Petrarch*, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 2010, pp. 109-131; and W. GINSBERG, *Chaucer and Petrarch: "S'amor non è" and the* Canticus Troili, «Humanist Studies & the Digital Age», 1, 2011, pp. 121-127.

[88] The draft material survives in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 3196, on which see FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Trionfi, Rime estravaganti, Codice degli abbozzi*, a cura di V. Pacca &

How Chaucer came to read this poem is not known. Any consideration of the problem, however, must acknowledge the care Petrarch exercised in the circulation of his work, and that few contemporaries had a clear sense of the emerging *Rvf*, even if individual poems did circulate separately, such as correspondence sonnets with Stramazzo da Perugia (*Rvf* 24), for example, or Giovanni Dondi dall'Orologio (*Rvf* 244).[89] The *Rvf* went through a series of distinct phases of development, which Ernest H. Wilkins called 'forms', the earliest of which are hypothesized on the basis of marginal notes in MS Vat. lat. 3196.[90] The earliest material book witnessing the *Rvf* is

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L. Paolino, introd. di M. Santagata, Milano, A. Mondadori, 1996, pp. 755-889, and see too FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Il codice degli abbozzi. Edizione e storia del manoscritto Vaticano latino 3196*, a cura di L. Paolino, Milano-Napoli, R. Ricciardi, 2000. A facsimile is available: FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Il Codice Vaticano lat. 3196: autografo del Petrarca*, a cura di M. Porena, Roma, Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1941, and may also be consulted online at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3196. The (partial) autograph of the *Rvf* is Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 3195, on which see FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta. Codice Vat. lat. 3195. Commentario all'edizione in fac-simile*, a cura di G. Belloni, F. Brugnolo, H. W. Storey, & S. Zamponi, 2 voll., Roma, Antenore, 2003-2004; a digital facsimile may be consulted at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3195. All reference to the *Rvf* will be to FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Canzoniere*, a cura di M. Santagata, Milano, A. Mondadori, 2004², taking account of the rich commentary in FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Canzoniere: Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, a cura di R. Bettarini, 2 voll., Torino, Einaudi, 2005.

[89] See E. H. WILKINS, *On the Circulation of Petrarch's Italian Lyrics during His Lifetime*, «Modern Philology», 46/1, 1948, pp. 1-6, repr. (and slightly revised) in ID., *The Making of the "Canzoniere"*, cit., pp. 287-293.

[90] WILKINS, *The Making of the "Canzoniere"*, cit., pp. 75-194, and cfr. R. S. PHELPS, *The Earlier and Later Forms of Petrarch's Canzoniere*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1925, which laid a good deal of groundwork for Wilkins. For a different view of the number of forms see the summary in M. Santagata's commented edition, cit., pp. CCV-CCXI, and for the full argument: M. SANTAGATA, *I frammenti dell'anima: storia e racconto nel Canzoniere di Petrarca*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2004². See

copied by Giovanni Boccaccio in 1363-1366: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L. V. 176, ff. 43v-79r.[91] Petrarch devised the so-called 'Chigi form' of the *Rvf* between 1359-1363, and Boccaccio probably encountered it during a meeting between the two authors in Venice in the Spring of 1363.[92] Thus if Boccaccio as author of the *Filostrato* is a key source for Chaucer in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Boccaccio as scribe may be said to play a crucial—and often underestimated—role in the early transmission of the *Rvf*.

Boccaccio's decision to copy is by no means a servile gesture of homage to the great master Petrarch, but rather a critical act of interpretation, where the size and format of the page, the choice of script, the inclusion of rubrics, all articulate a particular kind of vernacular textuality. Indeed, if the *Rvf* as copied by Boccaccio in Chig is compared to MS Vat. lat. 3195, supervised (and in part copied) by Petrarch, it is striking how they offer two different visual expressions of lyric poetry. In Petrarch's design, the sonnet is disposed two verses to a line, often divided by a large 'gap' which sometimes gives the impression of a composition set out in two columns. Boccaccio's layout in Chig is normally described as 'a mo' di prosa' (in the manner of prose), so in a text block that does not lineate the verses, with paraph marks indicating lines 9 and 12 of the sestet. This layout is familiar to a reader of fourteenth-century lyric poetry,

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too D. DEL PUPPO & H. W. STOREY, *Wilkins nella formazione del canzoniere di Petrarca*, «Italica», 80/3, 2003, pp. 295-312.

[91] For a facsimile see GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Il codice Chigiano L.V. 176*, cur. De Robertis, cit.

[92] On Boccaccio's scribal approach to the layout see K. P. CLARKE, *Boccaccio and the Poetics of the Paratext*, cit., pp. 89-90, and pp. 99-106 on the place of the *Rvf* in the manuscript; see too M. EISNER, *Boccaccio and the Invention of Italian Literature: Dante, Petrarch, Cavalcanti, and the Authority of the Vernacular*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 74-94.

similar to other 'songbooks' such as Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 3793, or MS Chig. L. VIII. 305.[93] That is, where Petrarch seeks to visually distinguish his poetry from that of his contemporaries, Boccaccio by contrast makes the work of Petrarch rather more similar to those same contemporaries.

The relationship between Boccaccio and Petrarch has undergone a profound reassessment in modern literary scholarship.[94] For example where once passages in the *Filostrato* were seen as echoing the *Rvf*, the direction of influence is now read in the reverse, and Petrarch is the one whose lyrics are, in part, nourished by Boccaccio's vernacular.[95] The originality and dynamism of the *Filostrato* are often overlooked. In the *Filostrato* Boccaccio shows himself to be a diligent and intelligent reader of Dante's *Commedia*, while also engaging deeply and critically with a wide variety of vernacular

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[93] See F. BRUGNOLO, *Libro d'autore e forma-canzoniere: Implicazioni grafico-visive nell'originale dei* Rerum vulgarium fragmenta, in PETRARCA, *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta: codice Vat. lat. 3195. Commentario*, cur. Belloni *et al*., cit., pp. 105-129; and see too G. BORRIERO, *La 'critica della forma' e i canzonieri italiani del Due e Trecento*, in *L'ornato parlare: studi di filologia e letterature romanze per Furio Brugnolo*, a cura di G. Peron, Padova, Esedra, 2007, pp. 559-588.

[94] See, for example, F. RICO, *Ritratti allo specchio: Boccaccio, Petrarca*, Roma, Antenore, 2012; P. VECCHI GALLI, *Padri: Petrarca e Boccaccio nella poesia del Trecento*, Roma, Antenore, 2012; M. VEGLIA, *La strada più impervia: Boccaccio fra Dante e Petrarca*, Roma, Antenore, 2014.

[95] Cfr. *Fil* III 83 and *Rvf* 61; and *Fil* V 54-55 and *Rvf* 112. M. SANTAGATA, *Per moderne carte: la biblioteca volgare di Petrarca*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1990, pp. 246-270 and cfr. G. VELLI, *La poesia volgare del Boccaccio e i «Rerum vulgarium fragmenta». Primi appunti*, «Giornale storico della letteratura italiana», CLXIX, 1992, 183-199, now in ID., *Petrarca e Boccaccio: tradizione, memoria, scrittura*, Padova, Antenore, 1995², pp. 222-238

lyric work by his fourteenth-century contemporaries.[96] In addition, while the metrical form of the poem (*ottava rima*: an eight-line stanza of hendecasyllables, with the scheme ABABABCC) may not have been invented by Boccaccio, he can certainly be described as one of its earliest adopters, and, in comparison with the popular *cantari* poems in the scheme, by far its most skillful versifier.[97] The deftness of Boccaccio's handling of this scheme is evident in five *ottave* in *Filostrato* V 62-66, where Troiolo reflects with melancholy upon the loss of Criseida, which are adapted from a canzone by Cino da Pistoia, 'La dolce vista e 'l bel guardo soave'.[98] There is no comparable example of such an extensive re-use of Cino in the Italian *Trecento*, but it is striking that in *Troilus and Criseyde* Chaucer imitates even this literary technique by grafting Petrarch's sonnet into three stanzas of rhyme royal, a metrical form which is itself indebted to Boccaccio's *ottava rima*. To read the *Filostrato* was thus to read a work

[96] The scope and richness of the lyric allusions may be observed in the notes by Vittore Branca in his edition of the *Filostrato* for *Tutte le opere* II (1964), cit., pp. 839-872, and in GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *Filostrato*, a cura di L. Surdich, con la collaborazione di E. D'Anzieri & F. Ferro, Milano, Mursia, 1990.

[97] See *Filostrato*, cur. Surdich, cit., p. 6 for a synthetic statement of the problem, and note *ad* V 62 (p. 336) for its bibliography. See too M. GOZZI, 'Riflessioni sull'ottava', *Studi sul Boccaccio*, XXXIX, 2011, pp. 397-407.

[98] See D. DE ROBERTIS, *Per la storia del testo della canzone 'La dolce vista e 'l bel guardo soave'*, «Studi di filologia italiana», X, 1952, pp. 7-24, now in ID., *Editi e rari: studi sulla tradizione letteraria tra Tre e Cinquecento*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1978, pp. 11-26; A. BALDUINO, *Boccaccio, Petrarca e altri poeti del Trecento*, Firenze, Olschki Editore, 1984, pp. 183-195 (more generally on Cino); G. GORNI, *Un'ipotesi sull'origine dell'ottava rima*, in «Metrica», I, 1978, pp. 79-94, now in ID., *Metrica e analisi letteraria*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1993, pp. 153-170 (and esp. pp. 163-165); S. BARSELLA, *Boccaccio e Cino da Pistoia: critica alla poetica dell'amore nella parodia di «Filostrato» V e «Decameron» III 5, X 7*, «Italianistica», XXIX/1, 2000, pp. 55-73; and I. CANDIDO, *Boccaccio Reading Cino Reading Dante in Filostrato 5.62-66*, «MLN», 134S, 2019, pp. S105-S117.

fully immersed in, and richly expressive of, the flourishing literary culture of fourteenth-century Italy.

The international reputation and status of Petrarch in the 1370s was largely based upon work written in Latin. Thus Chaucer's translation into English of *Rvf* 132 represents one of the earliest such engagements with Petrarch's collection of poems. It is, however, anteceded by another translation—in this case of *Rvf* 132 and *Rvf* 134—by Coluccio Salutati (c.1332-1406).[99] A man of enormous learning and gifted with political acumen, Salutati did much to 'internationalize' politics and literature in the city of Florence.[100] As a budding Humanist, Salutati corresponded with Petrarch, though they never met: Petrarch seems not to have been quick to reply.[101] It is striking that Salutati's gesture of homage to the Latinist Petrarch should be expressed by way of the *Rvf*, turning the vernacular into Latin hexameters. It is perhaps also a gesture specifically designed to appeal to a Petrarch who often expressed anxieties about the use of the vernacular. The triptych comprising *Rvf* 132-134 explores the theme of love through an Occitan genre of enigmatic contradictions and opposites known as *devinelh*, and these poems are often described as quintessentially 'Petrarchan'.[102] In

[99] For the text of both translations see A. ZARDO, *Il Petrarca e i Carraresi: studio*, Milano, U. Hoepli, 1887, pp. 306-307; the manuscript witnesses are Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Palatino 185, f. 122r and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 2616, f. 331v.

[100] See *Coluccio Salutati e l'invenzione dell'umanesimo*, a cura di T. De Robertis, G. Tanturli, & S. Zamponi, Firenze, Mandragora, 2008; and *Coluccio Salutati e Firenze: ideologia e formazione dello Stato*, a cura di R. Cardini & P. Viti, Firenze, M. Pagliai, 2008.

[101] See the *scheda* by G. TANTURLI in *Coluccio Salutati e l'invenzione dell'umanesimo*, cur. De Robertis, Tanturli, & Zamponi, cit., pp. 41-42.

[102] See notes and bibliography in FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Canzoniere*, cur. Santagata, cit., pp. 648-658 and FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Canzoniere: Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, cur. Bettarini, cit., pp. 641-650.

the translation of *Rvf* 132, Salutati maintains the *quaestio* format and respects the division of the vernacular sonnet's octet and sestet structure, but does not use rhyme. The poem's particular wording suggests that Salutati may have had access to a text in circulation predating that of Petrarch's final version.[103]

Salutati's translations of *Rvf* 132 and 134 into Latin hexameters are the earliest such examples based on what were to become canonical vernacular sonnets, and, when compared with contemporary Latin sonnets, have been described as 'l'opera di un filologo più che quella di un poeta' (the work of a philologist more than of a poet).[104] If

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An excellent discussion is P. BOITANI, *The Tragic and the Sublime in Medieval Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 56-74, and cfr. ID., *Letteratura europea e Medioevo volgare*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2007, pp. 97-122. See too M. PICONE, *I paradossi e i prodigi dell'amore passione (*RVF *130-40)*', in *Il Canzoniere: lettura micro e macrotestuale*, a cura di M. Picone, Ravenna, Longo, 2007, pp. 313-333 (esp. pp. 315-319).

[103] See Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 3195, f. 30r, copied by a scribe traditionally identified as Giovanni Malpaghini (though this identification has recently been cast into doubt in M. BERTÉ, *Giovanni Malpaghini copista di Petrarca?*, «Cultura neolatina», LXXV/1-2, 2015, pp. 205-216). On the early circulation of *Rvf* 132, and Salutati's poem, see E. H. WILKINS, *Toward the Discovery of Early Texts of Poems Contained in the* Canzoniere, in *The Making of the "Canzoniere"*, cit., pp. 253-264, esp. 260-264; see now: M. DE NICHILO, *Petrarca, Salutati, Landino:* RVF *22 e 132*, «Italianistica», XXXIII/2, 2004, pp. 143-161 (esp. 156-159); G. FRASSO, *Pallide sinopie: richerche e proposte sulle forme pre-Chigi e Chigi del «Canzoniere»*, «Studi di filologia italiana», LV, 1997, pp. 23-64 (esp. 31-35); and E. M. DUSO, *Il sonetto latino e semilatino in Italia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento*, Roma-Padova, Antenore, 2004, pp. LVIII, and 24-26.

[104] DUSO, *Il sonetto latino*, cit., p. LVIII. Salutati's few attempts at compositions in the vernacular are not notable for their literary quality: see G. TANTURLI, *Umanesimo civile, umanesimo volgare: i sonetti di Coluccio Salutati*, in *Firenze alla vigilia del Rinascimento: Antonio Pucci e i suoi contemporanei. Atti del convegno di Montreal, 22-23 ottobre 2004, McGill University*, a cura di M. Bendinelli Predelli,

the Latin texture loses some of the sonnet's most distinctive characteristics, for example its rhymes (one of the key innovations of romance vernacular verse forms) then Salutati's Latin rendering proves to be receptive to echoes of Petrarch's own Latin work as well as classical echoes that Petrarch had fully assimilated into his vernacular. That is, Salutati 'recuperates' a literary, Latinate, substrate in the vernacular sonnet.[105] Petrarch's vernacular poetics were refined and elite, his language turned in a highly technical way.[106] Salutati is cognizant of the 'artificiality' of Petrarch's vernacular, and is drawing out, or somehow authenticating the poem by bringing out its latent Latinitas, moving beyond the vernacular linguistic surface of the sonnet to find its hidden truth.

Chaucer's decision to include *Rvf* 132 in the *Troilus* is part of a complex literary encounter with the *Filostrato*, but it is important to acknowledge how Salutati's translation of the same sonnet created around it a certain Humanist gravitational force, pulling it from the vernacular to Latin. Boccaccio's handling of the *Rvf* in Chig is another lens through which this literary encounter may be viewed, especially his joining the *Rvf* and the *Commedia* together in the same manuscript: Petrarch's collection of poem, still almost unknown to a reading public, is drawn into the literary, vernacular orbit of Dante's epic, by then well established as a major work. David Wallace has argued that the structure of the first Book of *Troilus* closely mirrors

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Fiesole, Cadmo, 2006, pp. 333-378, now in ID., *La cultura letteraria a Firenze tra Medioevo e umanesimo: scritti 1976-2016*, a cura di F. Bausi *et al.*, Firenze, Polistampa, 2017.

[105] See esp. DE NICHILO, 'Petrarca, Salutati, Landino', cit., pp. 158-159. On Petrarch's Latin see S. RIZZO, *Petrarca, il latino e il volgare*, «Quaderni petrarcheschi», VII, 1990, pp. 7-40; and EAD., *Il latino del Petrarca e il latino dell'umanesimo*, «Quaderni petrarcheschi», IX-X, 1992-1993, pp. 349-365.

[106] See M. VITALE, *La lingua del Canzoniere ('Rerum vulgarium fragmenta') di Francesco Petrarca*, Padova, Antenore, 1996.

Dante's *Vita nuova*, with Troilus modeled in part on the figure of Dante returning to his room after seeing Beatrice.[107] That this Dantean Troilus should express himself in a Petrarchan voice is precisely the kind of layered, interwoven reading of Dante and Petrarch invited by Boccaccio in Chig.

Petrarch Translating

When Chaucer's Clerk cites Petrarch as his source for the story of Griselda, he refers to the Latin translation that comprises the third epistle of four addressed to Boccaccio, collected in Book XVII of the *Res seniles* (Letters of Old Age).[108] The decision to translate a work of vernacular fiction is startling: it stands as Petrarch's only such translation, and his only piece of extended narrative. [109] Petrarch describes in vivid detail the circumstances around the translation of *Dec.* X 10: from an initial, hurried encounter with the *Centonovelle*; a focus on the beginning and the end of the work (the most important, according to the manuals of rhetoric); a realization that those who do not know vernacular Florentine will be deprived of a worthy story such that of patient Griselda; and finally a decision to make it more widely available in a cosmopolitan, learned language. In the fourth and final letter, Petrarch describes the

[107] See WALLACE, *Italy*, in *A New Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Brown, cit., pp. 230-232.

[108] See FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Res seniles*, a cura di S. Rizzo, con la collaborazione di M. Berté, 5 voll., Firenze, Le Lettere, 2006–2019; for the text of *Res Senile* XVII see vol. IV, *Libri XIII-XVII*, pp. 416-485; see too M. BERTÉ & S. RIZZO, *«Valete amici, valete epistole»: l'ultimo libro delle* Senili, «Studi medievali e umanistici», XII, 2014, pp. 71-108, and the essays nows in *Le* Senili *di Francesco Petrarca: testo, contesti, destinatari. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Dipartimento di studi umanistici di Torino, 5-6 dicembre 2019*, a cura di S. Stroppa, R. Brovia & N. Volta, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2021.

[109] G. MARTELLOTTI, *Momenti narrativi del Petrarca*, «Studi petrarcheschi», IV, 1951, pp. 7-33, now in ID., *Scritti petrarcheschi*, a cura di M. Feo & S. Rizzo, Padova, Antenore, 1983, pp. 179-206.

earliest reception of the Latin text, with two friends from Padua and Verona having diametrically opposing reactions, from emotional credulity to stony incredulity. These aspects have all received varying degrees of critical attention, though usually in isolation from the other. When read together, some important insights become available.[110] Almost never mentioned, for example, is the way in which Petrarch dramatizes the material production of his translation, and how the material challenges of that act of translation reflect his emotional response to Boccaccio's (now lost) letter. Petrarch describes being so upset at Boccaccio's letter that he decided not to reply; instead he turns to a translation of the story of Griselda (*Sen* XVII 3). That translation became so filled with erasures and corrections, he had it recopied, which in turn afforded Petrarch the time to write a reply (*Sen* XVII 2). Thus, the Latin translation is being produced in a fair copy by a scribe while the reply is being composed in Petrarch's own hand. Petrarch even notes the order in which the letters must be read, his reply first, the translation second, and that Boccaccio will immediately distinguish them because one hand will be familiar, and the other not (*Sen* XVII 1 8).

That Petrarch is here resisting Boccaccio in *Res Seniles* XVII is commonly acknowledged, redirecting a readership from the vernacular to Latin, reframing the story in distinctly moralistic terms, quite alien to its context in the *Decameron* with a

[110] See K. P. CLARKE, *On Copying and Not Copying* Griselda*: Petrarch and Boccaccio*, in *Boccaccio and the European Literary Tradition*, ed. by P. Boitani & E. Di Rocco, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2014, pp. 57-71 and ID., *Griselda's Curious Husband: Petrarch, Boccaccio, and* Seniles *17*, «Studi sul Boccaccio», XLIV, 2016, pp. 301-312. See too the excellent account of G. ZAK, *Petrarch's Griselda and the Ends of Humanism*, «Le Tre Corone», II, 2015, pp. 173-191. For a bibliography of recent work on Petrarch's translation of the Griselda story see I. GIACALONE, De insigni obedientia et fide uxoria*: dieci anni di studi sulla Griselda di Petrarca (2003-2013)*, «Petrarchesca», 3, 2015, pp. 109-121. See too R. MORABITO, *Le virtù di Griselda: storia di una storia*, Firenze, Olschki, 2017.

narrator, Dioneo, who is characterized by audacious antiphrasis. But attending to the distinctly material focus of Petrarch's account of the epistolary exchange in *Sen* XVII 1 reveals another layer of resistance: namely, in the decision not to send his translation in an autograph version, complete with erasures. No autograph trace of these letters survive, indeed, few autographs of Petrarch's letters have; what does survive, however, permits a glimpse of both of what Petrarch did not send, and what he might have sent.

A distinctive feature of Petrarch's scribal practice is the careful and deliberate use of different scripts to signal varying levels of formality, ranging from a cursive chancery script, to a more formal, non-cursive script.[111] An example of this latter script is found in Padua, Biblioteca del Seminario vescovile, MS 357, ff. 1r-2v, an epistle dated to 13 July 1370 addressed to Giovanni Dondi dall'Orologio (*c*.1330–1379).[112] Petrarch collected this letter with another, also addressed to Dondi, to comprise Book XII of the *Res seniles*.[113] When the letter was concluded, Petrarch added a short note at the top of the start of the letter (f. 1r), apologizing for the messiness and asking that the

[111] See A. PETRUCCI, *La scrittura di Francesco Petrarca*, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1967, pp. 107-114 and FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Epistole autografe*, a cura di A. Petrucci, Padova, Antenore, 1968, pp. 12-14. See too A. C. DE LA MARE, *The Handwriting of Italian Humanists*, Vol. 1, fasc. 1, Oxford, Printed at the University Press for the Association Internationale de Bibliophilie, 1973, pp. 1-16.

[112] The letter comprises two pages (originally one single sheet of paper), with parts of the page in places nibbled away (by a mouse?); the page measures 302 × 225 mm, and the *mise en page* recalls the layout of a book (that is 'portrait' format – other autograph letters follow the typical epistolary layout in oblong 'landscape' format). See PETRARCA, *Epistole autografe*, cur. Petrucci, cit., pp. 6, 40-51, Tavv. XVII-XX.

[113] See *Res seniles* XII, cur. Rizzo con Berté, cit., in Vol. 3, pp. 328-425.

additions and corrections be taken as a sign of intimacy and familiarity: 'Tu additiones et lituras quasi signa familiaritatis accipies'.[114]

Petrarch's decision to have the letter recopied before sending it to Boccaccio offered an opportunity to reframe it in a new format. While the format of the recopied letter is not known, an alternative format to that observed in the letter to Dondi may be considered in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 972, ff. 1r-6v. This autograph, identified by Emanuele Casamassima, comprises a letter addressed to Pope Urban V after 5 September 1367, congratulating him on the return of the papacy to Rome.[115] Petrarch collected this letter in the *Res seniles* as IX 1.[116] Philological work on the text of the epistle led Silvia Rizzo to argue that the manuscript represents an early stage in the composition of the letter, and that the autograph was held back from its illustrious addressee because of the number of corrections and marginal additions. A subsequent copy was drawn up by one of Petrarch's scribes, and it was this (lost) copy that gave rise to the two branches of the textual tradition. The manuscript is of

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[114] See PETRARCA, *Epistole autografe*, cur. Petrucci, cit., p. 51; *Res seniles*, cur. Rizzo con Berté, vol. 3, p. 366. For other examples of such apologies see those listed by M. FEO in *Codici latini del Petrarca nelle biblioteche fiorentine: mostra 19 maggio - 30 giugno 1991*, a cura di M. Feo, Firenze, Casa editrice Le Lettere – Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, 1991, pp. 380-381.

[115] See E. CASAMASSIMA, *Un autografo petarchesco: la seconda epistola al pontefice Urbano V (*Senili*, IX 1) nel codice Riccardiano 972*, in *Miscellanea in memoria di Giorgio Cencetti*, Torino, Bottega d'Erasmo, 1973, pp. 235-255, developed more fully in ID., *L'autografo Riccardiano della seconda lettera del Petrarca a Urbano V (Senile IX 1)*, «Quaderni Petrarcheschi», III, 1986, pp. 1-175, which also includes a facsimile of the manuscript; and see too the *scheda* by V. FERA, in *Codici latini del Petrarca*, cur. Feo, cit., cat. 152, pp. 181-186.

[116] See *Res seniles* IX 1, cur. Rizzo with Berté, vol. 3, pp. 18-71. See too S. RIZZO, *L'autografo nella tradizione della* Senile *9, 1 di Petrarca*, «L'Ellisse», VI, 2011, pp. 21-52.

parchment, measuring 180 × 130 mm (with a writing area of 110 × 75 mm), in an elegant hand described vivdly by Casamassima as 'una scrittura che risolve in forme perspicue, cristalline, espressive, in un corpo piccolo, il *modus* e lo stile della migliore *littera textualis* moderna' (a script that settles the *modus* and style of the best modern 'littera textualis' into sharp, clear, expressive forms, in a small format).[117] This is a unique example of Petrarch choosing for an epistle: parchment, a small book format, and a formal 'semi-gothic' bookhand.[118] It is, however, precisely the format he adopts in autographs of the *Bucolicum carmen* and *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*.[119] And perhaps this format came to be associated with Petrarch, since it is adopted for a fifteenth-century copy of the Griselda translation in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 991.[120] The manuscript, which measures 180 × 125 mm (and a writing surface measuring 100 × 60 mm), is written in an elegant *littera antiqua* with elements of *textualis*, with a pen drawing on the opening page showing Petrarch and Boccaccio in

[117] CASAMASSIMA, *L'autografo Riccardiano*, cit., p. 28. For Casamassima the *modus* is either cursive or the more formal hand he calls *posato* 'poised', such as *textualis* (that is, the strokes of the letter-forms are more distinctive, being traced individually). See too M. SIGNORINI, *La scrittura libraria di Francesco Petrarca: terminologia, fortuna*, «Studi Medievali», ser. III, XLVIII/2, 2007, pp. 839-862 (esp. pp. 841-843).

[118] M. BERTÉ, *La forma e la funzione dell'epistola: due casi dallo scrittoio di Petrarca*, «L'Ellisse», XV/1, 2020, pp. 9-24 (p. 13).

[119] See Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3358, which measures 158 × 112 mm; and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS Hamilton 493, measuring 165 × 110 mm.

[120] See the *scheda* by G. ALBANESE in *Codici latini del Petrarca*, cur. Feo, cit., cat. 160, pp. 193-195; and for a facsimile see: FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *De insigni obedientia et fide uxoria. Il Codice Riccardiano 991*, a cura di G. Albanese, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 1998.

dialogue; blank spaces have been left elsewhere in the manuscript to accommodate a cycle of images, which have not been executed.

The penultimate book of the *Res seniles* counts amongst Petrarch's very last literary works. But contemporary with this prose experiment in translation is a sonnet exchange with Giovanni Dondi dall'Orologio, to whom Petrarch had shown intimacy and familiary by sending a letter thronged with corrections, discussed above. Dondi's sonnet 'Io non so ben s'io vedo quel ch'io veggio' prompts a reply from Petrarch in 'Il mal mi preme, et mi spaventa il peggio', which was amongst the last to be included in the *Rvf* (as number 244), some time between 1373 and early in 1374 (MS Vat. lat. 3195, f. 47r, a section written in the hand of Petrarch).[121] Its date of composition is more difficult to ascertain, but Antonio Daniele has argued convincingly for 1372-1373, in the context of hostilities between Padua and Venice and Petrarch's worsening health.[122] This is the very same war that interrupted the letters exchanged between Boccaccio and Petrarch, comprising *Res seniles* XVII. The incipit of Dondi's sonnet, 'Io non so ben s'io vedo quel ch'io veggio' recalls both Dante ('Io non so ben ridir com' io v'intrai', *Inf.* 1. 10) and Petrarch ('ch'i' medesmo non so quel ch'io mi voglio', *Rvf* 132, 13). Gianfranco Folena noted how Dondi's poem shows clear signs of the influence of Dante, which in Petrarch's response are 'tutti rigorosamente assenti' (all rigorously

[121] FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Canzoniere*, cur. Santagata, cit., pp. 999-1002, which includes the text of Dondi's sonnet, drawn from Folena's provisional edition in the essay cited below; cfr. FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Canzoniere: Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, cur. Bettarini, cit., pp. 1107-1110. For a detailed commentary on Dondi's sonnet see GIOVANNI DONDI DALL'OROLOGIO, *Rime*, a cura di A. Daniele, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1990, pp. 12-14.

[122] A. DANIELE, *Intorno al sonetto del Petrarca «Il mal mi preme et mi spaventa il peggio» (*R.V.F., *CCXLIV)*, «Giornale storico della letteratura italiana», CLXIII, 1986, pp. 44-62.

absent).[123] Even in a vernacular exchange, then, and at the very last stage of the *Rvf*'s development, may Petrarch's literary anxieties and resistances be said to remain close to the textual surface.

Chaucer's two visits to Italy in the decade of the 1370s offered him a crucial perspective on the negotiation and development of the literary reputations of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. The visits saw him first in a Florence where civic discussions were ongoing on Boccaccio's public lectures on Dante, whose *Commedia* was being avidly in the city; and subsequently in a Milan where Petrarch had been patronized by the powerful, despotic Visconti, a family with considerable resources for commissioning great books. The material contexts of Chaucer's encounter with the work of Boccaccio and Petrarch prompts some sharper reflections on the contours of this encounter. Given the highly restricted early circulation of the *Decameron* and the *Teseida*, for example, or of the *Rvf*, the scale and depth of Chaucer's knowledge and access is very striking. Indeed, in the fourteenth century, Chaucer's knowledge of the work of Boccaccio might be said to match that of a contemporary Florentine. The study of Chaucer's Italian sources must now take account of the fact that he read books as

[123] G. FOLENA, *Il Petrarca volgare e la sua «schola» padovana*, in *Medioevo e Rinascimento veneto, con altri studi in onore di Lino Lazzarini*, 2 voll., Padova, Antenore, 1979, vol. I, pp. 173-191, now in ID., *Culture e lingue nel Veneto medievale*, cit., pp. 337-352 (citing from p. 344). On the echoes of the *Vita nuova* in these correspondence sonnets see S. SARTESCHI, Amoris passio, voluptas lugendi*: fuoco, acqua, paesaggi, fluttuazioni e presentimenti dell'anima (*Rvf *241-50)*, in *Il Canzoniere: lettura micro e macrotestuale*, cur. Picone, cit., pp. 519-546 (p. 528).

well as texts, and that the material is imbricated in a range of social, cultural, political and literary questions.[124]

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