

FRANCESCO PETRARCA [FRANCISCUS PETRARCHUS], *Canzoniere*, *Triunfi*

In Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Italy, Florence, c. 1430-1450

169 ff., apparently complete (collation: i7, ii-v8, vi-xiv10, xv8, xvi-xvii10, xviii11), written by two different (although coherent) hands: Hand A, ff. 8-50, in a rounded humanistic script, Hand B: ff. 1-7 and ff. 51-169 in a calligraphic mercantesca script, in brown ink on up to 34 lines (justification: 160 x 85 mm.), parchment ruled in plummet, catchwords, rubrics and numbering of sonnets (Roman numerals in right hand margins) in bright red (ff. 8-50) to pale red (ff. 51-169), paragraph marks in red or blue, first letters of each verse set off to the left and often stroked in yellow, painted blue or red initials with opposing red or mauve filigree penwork, 2 illuminated decorated initials in blue with white tracery on gold grounds with green, blue and pink scrolling leafy and floral designs, gold disks and filigree penwork extending in the margin (f. 8 (5-line high, with a butterfly) and f. 136 (3-line high)), frontispiece (fol. 8) originally with illuminated arms painted in the lower margin [now effaced] surrounded by gold disks on hairline stems, colored flowers and two butterflies, a few marginal inscriptions and/or corrections (e.g. fol. 16v). Bound in a later (18th-century) red velvet binding over pasteboard, smooth spine, Thomas Phillipps shelfmark number pasted at the foot of spine on a small paper label, gilt edges (Some stains to parchment, effaced illuminated arms on fol. 8, ink a bit faded in some parts, but overall a nice copy). Dimensions 255 x 175 mm.

Copied by two hands, this codex contains the two major vernacular poetic works of the "Father of Humanism." Although unsigned, the second hand in this copy bears comparisons with the calligraphic mercantesca script attributable to Bese Ardinghelli, a money-changer and scribe active in Florence in the 1430s and 1450s who signed a number of elegant humanistic codices and at least two other Petrarch works. Manuscripts of Petrarch's Italian verses are not common on the market and all present interesting textual and formal variants.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Italy as suggested by style of decoration and linguistic features. The decoration in this codex bears comparison with manuscripts illuminated in Florence. A formulaic colophon at the end reads: "Qui scripxit scribat semper cun domino vivat. Vivat in celis semper cun domino felix" (f. 169). Two distinct hands copied this manuscript, that is Hand A, ff. 8-50; Hand B: ff. 1-7 and ff. 51-169. Hand B might well be that of the Florentine money-changer and scribe Bese (or Besse) Ardinghelli, who is recorded in Bénédictins du Bouveret, *Colophons des manuscrits occidentaux...*, Fribourg, 1965, vol. 1, no. 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229. Bese (or Besse) Ardinghelli was active in Florence in the 1430s and 1450s; the manuscripts he copied and recorded in Bouveret are dated respectively 1432, 1442 and 1455. Compare the identical and characteristic calligraphic mercantesca script found in Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Strozzi 174, which also contains Petrarch's *Triumphs*. Another manuscript that offers points of comparison is Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Med. Pal. 72, signed Bese Ardinghelli and dated 1442, a copy of Dante's *Commedia* and Petrarch's *Trionfi*. In the present copy, Bese Ardinghelli probably finished a work in progress. The Table of contents that precedes Hand A is by Bese Ardinghelli as well.

Arms painted on first leaf of *Canzoniere*, in lower margin, unfortunately abraded and effaced, rendering impossible the identification of the first owner of this codex.

2. Charles James Fox (1749-1806), his armorial bookplate pasted on the front pastedown: "The Honorable Charles James Fox." One of the most colorful figures in eighteenth-century politics, he was a prominent British Whig statesman whose parliamentary career spanned thirty-eight years. Notorious for his excesses in his private life, Fox spent almost the entirety of his political career in opposition; he became noted as a campaigner and a leading parliamentary advocate of religious tolerance and individual liberty.

3. Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872), MS 2963, his paper label with shelfmark on spine, and his shelfmark in ink and with ink stamp on second front flyleaf "Sir T. P. Middle Hill. 2963." Sold to Phillipps by Thomas Thorpe (Rodd and Thorpe, London) in 1820. Listed in *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum in Bibliotheca Phillipica* (1824), no. 2963 "Petrarcha, ch[artae], saec. XV", p. 33; and again *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum in bibliotheca D. Thomae Phillipps* (1837), p. 33. On Phillips as a collector, see A. N. L. Munby, *Portrait of an Obsession. The Life of Sir Thomas Phillipps, the World's Greatest Book Collector...*, London, 1967.

4. Charles Filippi, French bibliophile, his bookplate on the verso of the first flyleaf; see *Bibliothèque Charles Filippi. Première partie, L'Italie de Pétrarque à Stendhal*. Vente, Paris, Hôtel George V, 21 octobre 1994, Paris, P. Meaudre-Librairie Lardanchet, 1994, lot. 15.

5. European Continental Collection.

TEXT

ff. 1-7, List of incipits for the Sonnets (*Canzoniere*), alphabetically-arranged: "A pie decolli ove labella vesta..."; last incipit, "Cephire torna el bel tempo rimena";

f. 7v, blank;

ff. 8-135v, Francesco Petrarca, *Rerum vulgarium Fragmenta* [*Canzoniere*], Sonnets numbered in Roman numerals I-CCCLXVII, incipit, "Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono..."; ff. 133-135, Sonnet numbered here CCCLXV (366 in Savoca ed.), "Vergine bella che di sol vestita..."; last sonnet (f. 135v), "Il mal mi preme et mi spaventa il peggio..." (244 in Savoca ed.); Ballad by Petrarch, "Donna mi viene spesso nella mente..." (as found in MSS including Chigi MS L.V. 176); last verse, "Di che forte mi sdegno gl'el consente"; colophon, "Qui finiscono tucte le cançone sonecti di messere francesco petrarcha poeta fiorentino" [numerous editions, we refer here to G. Savoca ed. *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, Florence, L.S. Olschki, 2008 (based on Codice Vaticano Latino 3195, Autograph by Petrarch)].

Petrarch referred to his Italian lyrics as the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* or *Rime sparse*, but they have been called since the Renaissance in Italy the *Canzoniere*. As with the *Triumphs*, it is a collection made over the long years of Petrarch's life: "It is a selective and ordered collection, the fashioning of which, begun in his youth, continued to the day of his death" (E.H. Wilkins, *The Making of the "Canzoniere."* p. 145). The definitive collection consists of 366 poems, 317 sonnets, 29 canzoni, 9 sestine, 7 ballads, and 4 madrigals, divided in two parts: "In vita di

Madonna Laura" (Poems 1-266) and "In morte di Madonna Laura" (Poems 267-366). Most of the poems relate to the Platonic and life-long love of the poet for Laura, a woman of beauty and excellence. The central theme of the *Canzoniere* goes well beyond Petrarch's love of Laura: it is the expression of the eternal conflict between the human and the divine in Human nature.

Numbered here in the margin in pale red are 366 sonnets and one ballad. However, there seem to be some inversions in the canonical order of the sonnets: for example sonnet 244 "Il mal mi preme..." is numbered 366, shifting the entire numbering from 243 onwards, so that sonnet numbered here 244 is actually 245, and so forth. Also the present copy numbers the Ballad "Donna mi viene spesso nella mente..." as 367, bringing the total count to 367 sonnets, rather than the canonical 366. In earlier versions of the *Canzoniere*, the *Donna* Ballad is placed in varying places, often between sonnets 121 and 122. Otherwise the present version of the *Canzoniere* is close to the version of the text found in Vatican, Cod. Vaticano 3195 (Wilkins, 1948, "The Vatican family"). This is the final form of the *Canzoniere*, the version left by Petrarch at his death in 1374. Vatican manuscript is a partial autograph since the transcription of the poems was begun by a secretary and finished by Petrarch himself. There is the presence of the *Donna* ballad in a position that cannot be that of the previous versions of the *Canzoniere*, in particular the "Chigi" family, the "Malatesta" family, or the "Quiriano" family and the present "Vatican" or final form (the *Canzoniere* was released in four forms). On the complicated manuscript tradition of the *Canzoniere* and the formal and textual evolution of the text (in particular the order of the sonnets), see Wilkins, 1948, pp. 433-451. His inquiry is based on some 96 codices (other than Petrarch's partial autograph copy in the Vatican).

ff. 136-169, Francesco Petrarca, *Triunfi*, rubric, in capitals, INCOMINCIANO I TRIUMPHI DI MESSERE FRANCIESCO PETRARCHA P[OETA] FIORENTINO;

ff. 136-139, [Triumph of Death II], incipit, "La nocte che segui l'orribil caso..."; explicit, "...Tu starai in terra sença me gran tempo" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 309-346);

ff. 139-141v, [Triumph of Fame I (a)], incipit, "Nel cor pien d'amarissima dolceçça..."; explicit, "... Poi alla fine vidi artu et karlo" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 555-584);

ff. 141v-144v, [Triumph of Love II], incipit, "Stanco gia di mirar, non satio ancora..."; explicit, "...et d'un pomo beffata al fin Cidippe" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 97-128);

ff. 144v-147, [Triumph of Love I], incipit, "Al tempo che rinova i miei sospiri ..."; explicit, "Vien catenato giove inançi al carro" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 48-90);

ff. 147-150, [Triumph of Love III], incipit, "Era si pieno il cor di maraviglie ..."; explicit, "... Et quale il mel temprato colassentio" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 135-176; there are 4 supplementary verses here, not in Pacca and Paolino, whose explicit is "che poco dolce molto amaro appaga" (Triumphus Cupidinis III, v. 184));

ff. 150-152v, [Triumph of Love IV], incipit, "Poschia che mia fortuna in forza altrui"; explicit, "... Chel pie va inançi et l'occhio torna in dietro" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 183-220);

ff. 152v-155v, [Triumph of Chastity], incipit, "Quando ad un giogo et in um punto quivy..."; explicit, "...Fra quali altri vidi Ypolito et Joseppe" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996 (reprinted in 2000), pp. 227-264);

ff. 155v-158, [Triumph of Death, I], incipit, "Quella leggiadra et gloriosa donna..."; explicit, "...Morte bella pareva nel suo bel viso" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 271-300);

ff. 158-160, [Triumph of Fame I], incipit, "Dappoi che morte triumpho nel volto..."; explicit, "...Come adviene ad chi vertu relinque" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 353-388);

ff. 160-162v, [Triumph of Fame II], incipit, "Pien d'infinita et nobil maraviglia..."; explicit, "...Magnanimo gentil constante et largo" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 393-428);

ff. 162v-164v, [Triumph of Fame III], incipit, "Io non sapea da tal vista levarme..."; explicit, "...Qui lascio et puidilor non dico avante" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 433-470; there is one supplementary verse here, not in Pacca and Paolino, whose explicit is "...che tira al ver la vaga opinione" (Triumphus Fame III, v. 120));

ff. 164v-167, [Triumph of Time], incipit, "Dell'aureo albero con l'aurora inanzi..."; explicit, "...Cos'il tempo triumpho I nomi e'l mondo" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 477-504);

ff. 167- 169, [Triumph of Eternity], incipit, "Dappoi che sopto'l ciel cosa non vidi..."; explicit, "...Or che fia duncque ad rivederla in cielo" (ed. Pacca and Paolino, 1996, repr. 2000, pp. 511-538); followed by a formulaic colophon, "Qui scripxit scribat semper cun domino vivat. Vivat in celis semper cun domino felix";

f. 169v, blank.

As with his *Canzoniere*, Petrarch worked on the *Trionfi* over his lifetime, beginning in 1338 and completing the work just before his death in 1374. Petrarch's Triumphs, written in *terza rima*, followed the allegorical works of Dante, setting out a triumphal procession of the allegorical figures Love, Chastity, Death, Fame, Time, and Divinity. The poet describes the effect of each on his beloved Laura with imagery drawn from his encyclopedic knowledge of ancient history, including the fall of Carthage, the march of Xerxes into Greece, and the legends of Perseus, Andromeda, Pygmalion, and Camilla and her Amazons. Chastity triumphs over Love, and finally Divinity triumphs over them all, and the poet is united with his love in eternity.

The public fame of Francesco Petrarch (1304-74), the celebrated scholar and composer, father of Renaissance humanism and friend of Boccaccio, was based on these poems. Despite the widespread dissemination of his works in Latin, it was his Italian verse (and notably these compositions) that gave him a vast public following in Italy. They form part of the corpus of poetry composed after Petrarch had given up his vocation as a priest and after he supposedly caught sight of Laura on Good Friday 1327 in the church of Sainte-Claire in Avignon. He was struck with a lasting passion and pursued her, only to be rebuked as she was already married (if she existed then she may in fact have been Laura de Noves, the wife of Count Hugues de Sade, and the ancestor of the infamous Marquis de Sade). They had little contact after that, and he channeled his energies into the writing of love poetry until her sudden and early death in 1348.

In the sixteenth century, Pietro Bembo based his model for the modern Italian language principally on these vernacular works of Petrarch.

The Triumphs of Petrarch are not uncommon in manuscript, and they were also extremely popular in print in the incunabular period. Over 300 manuscript copies are recorded (see McGowan, p. 319), most of them in European libraries. DeRicci and Wilson listed only 23 copies in North American Collections (Wilkins, 1947, p. 23), a number that has grown in the last half century. Ullman and Jasenas include a more up-to-date list. The census conducted by D. Dutschke (printed in 1986 and online as of 2004) expands the count to 46 codices in American collections. The earliest manuscript is the *Canzoniere* is dated c. 1390 (Yale, University, Beinecke Library, Marston MS 99). Intact copies are infrequent and expensive. An illuminated humanist copy of Florentine origin sold in London, Sotheby's, 6 July 2000, lot 30, for 69,000 GBP. A richly illuminated humanist copy of Petrarch's Triumphs, along with other texts, made approximately 570,000 USD in November 2009 in London, at Christie's, lot 5.

There are many spelling and other textual variants, including the internal order of the sections of the Triumphs, with published editions of the Triumphs. The present manuscript reflects the extended evolution of the text and contains elements from different stages of Petrarch's composition: for example the Triumph of Fame I (a) opens on f. 139 with "Nel cor pien damarissima dolceza," the chapter that Petrarch discarded in favor of that opening "Da poi che Morte triumpho del volto," which follows much later on f. 158. The manuscript thus merits further study for this and other variants by Petrarch scholars.

LITERATURE

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Wilkins, Ernest Hatch, trans. *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Two codices with scripts attributed to Bese Ardinghelli

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Strozzi 174, Petrarch, *Trionfi*

http://www.bml.firenze.sbn.it/animalifantastici/LaBibliotecainMostra/Schede_ing/strozzi_174.html

Arezzo, Biblioteca Città di Arezzo Ms. 403, Trattati volgarizzati (sec. XV med.)

http://www.bibliotecarezzo.it/patrimonio/MS_403_3v_img.php

Canzoniere, 366 sonnets

<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/Petrarchhome.htm>

Triumphs in Italian

<http://www.classicitaliani.it/petrarca/poesia/trionfi01.htm>

The Petrarch Timeline

<http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/timeline.html>

Online Exhibition: Petrarch at 700 (in 2004)

Census of Petrarch Manuscripts in the United States

<http://scriptorium.columbia.edu/petrarch/toc.html>

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