



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Project Title: Petrarch Commentary and Exegesis in Renaissance Italy (c. 1350-c. 1650)

This post is one of two postdoctoral Research Fellowships within the AHRC-funded research project “Petrarch Commentary and Exegesis in Renaissance Italy (c. 1350-c. 1650).”

This is a collaborative research project, funded for 3 years by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project officially started in January 2017.

In general, the project aims to reconstruct the corpus of Italian Petrarch commentary and exegesis, by cataloguing the relevant materials and providing analysis in terms of genres, contents (including paratextual materials), readerships, and contexts in a variety of settings – academies, courts, universities, coterie of scholars, the print shop. The project proposes to create the first freely available on-line census that will offer a searchable catalogue of all the Italian language commentaries and other main kinds of exegesis on Petrarch between 1350 and 1650. The project will also create an on-line digital library containing digital facsimiles of all the relevant items held in the Special Collections of the University of Manchester.

The intention is that the electronic census will provide an essential resource to allow us to ask a variety of research questions and offer preliminary analyses that will lay further foundational bases for future work on reading and interpreting Petrarch in Italy and outside. Amongst the research questions proposed are such topics as (1) the genres, overall approaches and specific modes of reading developed in vernacular exegesis on Petrarch; (2) the relationship between commentaries on Petrarch and other forms of commentary (both vernacular and classical); (3) the place and function of philosophical sources in commentaries and lezioni; (4) the place of Italy in the development of criticism on Petrarch in comparison to France, Spain, Germany and England; (5) the extent to which single poems or groups of poems in the Canzoniere are treated separately; (6) the relationship between reading Petrarch through commentaries and writing Petrarchist poetry; (7) the place and function of paratextual devices and supplements in editions and commentaries of Petrarch.

The database, which lies at the core of the project, and underpins the establishment of the research field, is provisionally planned to be made up of five main strands: (1) print commentaries; (2) manuscript commentaries and sets of glosses; (3) print editions that contain exegetical material; (4) public and private lectures; (5) interpretative activity at Italian courts. The database will be published on-line as a searchable and freely accessible database with indications of author, title (with variations), incipit, explicit, manuscript shelf-mark, and a listing of all known printed editions. We will also provide information about each work's content, paratextual elements (e.g., dedications, prefaces, annotations), format, place of composition (when known) and printers – all of which are important for reconstructing significant aspects of Renaissance print culture for vernacular works. Frontispieces and other notable features (e.g. woodcuts, portraits, maps) will, where possible, be photographed or provided by library partners.

While compiling the census, the fellow will undertake close analytical work on either the diffusion of the various works through manuscript and print, offering insights into the mechanisms of circulation and the interests of particular printers or else the major genres of critical discussion (e.g. public readings, commentaries, dialogues), in order to determine the extent to which the content and strategies used in the discussion differed by genre. The fellow will also study the interactions between several major commentators and exegetes, both with one another and with other relevant classical and vernacular authors, as well as their philosophical interests and citational practices.

The project is assisted by an advisory board that includes prominent Renaissance specialists, historians of the book, Petrarch specialists, experts on the commentary genre, and librarians: Professor Zygmunt G. Barański (Cambridge/Notre Dame); Professor Lina Bolzoni (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa); Professor Theodore Cachey (Notre Dame); Dr Rhiannon Daniels (University of Bristol); Dr Paul Gehl (Newberry Library); Professor Bernhard Huss (Free University of Berlin); Professor William J. Kennedy (Cornell); Professor Massimo Lollini (Oregon); Professor Luca Marozzi (Roma 3); Professor Brian Richardson (University of Leeds); Dr Andrea Torre (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa); Professor Jean Balsamo (Reims); Professor Juan Miguel Valero Moreno (Salamanca).