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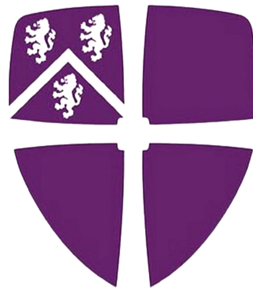
Editing the lyric self: Petrarch's use of vernacular and classical models in the final phases of constructing the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



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July 2022

Abstract

This thesis explores the intellectual concerns underpinning the final phases of Petrarch's construction of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta (Rvf)*. In building and editing the closure of his lyric sequence, Petrarch sought to counterbalance competing concerns in the presentation of his idealised self-portrait to the public and to posterity. Critics have hitherto primarily suggested that Petrarch's interventions in the sequencing of poems results in the presence of an intensified religious tone to the closure of the *Rvf*, as Petrarch explored whether his love of Laura might be reconciled with his desire for salvation. However, this thesis argues that in the final stages of revising the sequence, Petrarch was just as concerned with imitating the model of the classical lyric poetry collection: through the revisions to the sequencing of the final 31 poems of the Vat. Lat. 3195, the classicising element to the narrative and structure of the closure of the *Rvf* emerges more strongly. These competing religious and classicising concerns feed into the desire to curate an idealised autobiographical narrative, seeking to stabilise the *io lirico* and reconstitute the fragmented literary self. In the final years of his life, driven by his ever-growing preoccupation with the passage of time and his own mortality, Petrarch sought to create an unprecedented vernacular achievement in the *Rvf*. This is despite his apparent criticism of the vernacular language, which, as this thesis suggests, could be made more palatable through the imitation of the classical lyric collection. In heightening this sense of Latinity in the *Rvf* in the closing moments of its complex evolution, he shows that he was searching for a perfected literary achievement which could rival that of the ancients and surpass his vernacular contemporaries.

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Introduction

Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* is a work deeply concerned with the representation of the authorial self. In this sequence of poems, the whole of which constitutes more than the sum of its parts, Petrarch reveals his anxieties about the crafting of not simply an idealised biography, but also the perfect literary model in which to present this self-portrait to posterity. This portrait as left to us upon Petrarch's death is but one version, which evolved through layers of addition, removal and revision in the *Rvf* over the course of decades. Commencing from a nucleus of disparate poems in the vernacular, identifiable through fragmentary evidence and Petrarch's own drafts, such as those preserved in the Vat. Lat. 3196, the *codice degli abbozzi*,[1] the act of creating the *Rvf* in the so-called definitive form consumed a large part of Petrarch's life, attested to by manuscript witnesses which allow us to trace its genesis from the first nucleus to the partially-autograph manuscript of the Vat. Lat. 3195, the final witness to the shape of the sequence upon Petrarch's death.[2] Yet the creative process by which the *Rvf* evolves into the form transmitted to us is not just one of literary production, but also of editing. This editorial dimension is particularly strong in terms of the closing sequence, which undergoes multiple revisions at the end of Petrarch's life. Self-editing, this thesis contends, is also self-fashioning for Petrarch.

The precise nature of this self-fashioning in the *Rvf* is directed by competing literary and moral concerns. In the very final phases of the construction of the *Rvf*, there are three competing intellectual tensions which interact in a specific manner. The first concern is religious in nature, as Petrarch explores whether his love for Laura might be reconciled with his desire for salvation. Through the revisions to the sequencing of poems, he tests out different narratives through which he might direct himself towards the divine. The second element, closely linked to the first, is the search to create an idealised self-portrait through stabilising and reuniting the warring parts of the self, torn between love for Laura and desire for salvation, thus seeking to craft an idealised biography in which this fragmented self is reconstituted. The third aspect is literary in nature, as Petrarch seeks to impose the model of the classical lyric collection upon the *Rvf*,[3] a motivation which this thesis suggests emerges more clearly in Petrarch's

[1] Wilkins (1951) in his seminal work *The Making of the Canzoniere* proposes that the sheets of the Vat. Lat. 3196 *Codice degli abbozzi* comprised four 'reference collections', covering almost the entirety of Petrarch's creative life.

[2] Petrarch's copyist, Giovanni Malpaghini, started transcribing the Vat. Lat. 3195 in 1366 just after finishing the fair edition of the *Familiares*. Before he left Petrarch's service unexpectedly on 21 April 1367, he had copied 1–120, *Donna mi vene*, 122–178, 180–190 in the first part of the *Rvf*, and 264–318 in the second part. Petrarch himself completed the transcription of the *Rvf* in this manuscript after Malpaghini's departure (see Santagata 1992, pp. 257–259).

[3] Throughout this thesis I refer to 'love elegy' to designate the elegiac collections of Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid, as its own distinct genre. While as Grant (2019, p. 1) notes, Catullus does not exclusively write in elegiac metre, he has often been regarded as a 'proto-elegist' (see Wray's chapter in Gold (2012) for further discussion). I use the term 'classical lyric' as a broader designation so as to also include Horace as a lyric poet, but not an elegist. Despite not being an elegist, Horace's poetic books also share features with love elegy, for example the turn to

revisions to the closing sequence as attested in the Vat. Lat. 3195. Critics have primarily suggested that Petrarch's interventions in the order of the poems result in the presence of an intensified religious tone to the closure of the *Rvf*. However, this thesis argues that in balancing these three competing aspects, a stronger emphasis must be placed instead on viewing the closure of the *Rvf* as driven by the desire to impose the classical lyric model upon his lyric sequence, and thus create an unprecedented poetic achievement in the vernacular. Creating the idealised biography for Petrarch was not simply a matter of narrative, but also of form.

The extensive care that went into the curation of the narrative and form of the *Rvf* is evident in the editorial history of the work, which reveals that Petrarch was deeply concerned with the outward presentation of his lyric self. The *Rvf*, according to Wilkins (1948, p. 412), was not the result of a "single editorial effort" but is rather a "selective and ordered collection",[4] reflecting a lifelong process of composition, editing and systemisation which unfolded in accordance with the poet's evolving intellect and values. Santagata (2004, p. LXIV) has emphasised that this consisted of "un lungo e tormentato percorso",[5] whereby the sequence of 366 poems transmitted to us via the autograph MS Vat. Lat. 3195 represents the culmination of a complex, and not always intelligible, evolutionary process spanning decades. The *codice degli abbozzi* (Vat. Lat. 3196), containing draft material of Petrarch's poems, provides evidence that from at least the early 1340s he was beginning to consider the selective organisation of his vernacular lyrics into a sequence.[6] Next to *Rvf* 34, the sonnet *Apollo, s'anchor vive*

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poetic glory at the close of the *Odes*, or the complex formal organisational schema. This requires the use of a broader category than 'love elegy' when discussing features shared also with Horace, although he will receive a dedicated chapter (3.1) as his poetry is distinct from the elegiac tradition. When referring to classical lyric poetry, I use the term 'collection' to refer to the entirety of a work comprised of constituent books.

[4] Wilkins's theory in *The Making* (1951) postulates that it took Petrarch no less than nine distinct forms of the *Rvf* to achieve the edition presented in the V. L. 3195, and the creation of the V. L. 3195 itself is divided by Wilkins into six periods. However, as pointed out by Warkentin (2007, p. 63), and Del Puppo and Storey (2003, p. 296), Wilkins's emphasis is on empirical certitude, and based upon his observations of copies of manuscripts without direct scrutiny of the original manuscripts, meaning that his work lacks codicological evidence; only the Chigi form (L. V. Chig. 176) and the Vatican form (V. L. 3195) are directly attested to by manuscripts. Feo (2003, pp. 277–278), revises Wilkins's theory to propose that there are four 'editions' of the *Rvf*, eliminating the stages that are not attested by manuscript evidence. Instead, he starts with the Chigi as the first form, attested to by the MS L. V. Chig. 176 of the Vatican Libraries followed by the Malatesta form attested to by the MS Pl. 41. 17 of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (BML), then immediately following that the Queriniana form, attested to by the MS Quer. D. II. 21 of the Biblioteca Queriniana in Brescia, and finally the Vatican form attested to by the MS Vat. Lat. 3195. Pulsoni (2009), proposes slightly modified theory, replacing Feo's Queriniana form with what he calls the 'pre-Vatican' stage, attested to by the BML MS Pl. 41. 10, the MS Italiano 551 from the National Library in Paris, and the MS 1015 from the Biblioteca Trivulziana in Milan, reflecting the final stage before Petrarch's renumbering attested in the V. L. 3195.

[5] Santagata has been a fundamental scholar in the field: his seminal work *I frammenti dell'anima* (1992; 2004) considers the evolution of the *Rvf* from first nucleus to final edition, focusing on the redactional process of the work as crafting a moral discourse as part of an autobiographical project.

[6] The structuring of the *Rvf* has long commanded interest, due to the vast number of manuscript witnesses testifying to the evolution in various 'editions' of the work. Wilkins and his theory of the nine forms of the *Rvf* remained influential through the 20th century, though more recently it has been challenged by scholars seeking firmer philological ground, for example Pulsoni (2009) and Feo (2003) who sought to identify definite author ordered editions only where there is a securely attested manuscript form. Various work has been done on the

il bel desio, is noted "ceptum transcribi ab hoc loco 1342 Augusti 21, hora 6",[7] indicating the transcription of what Wilkins interprets as an early form of the *Rvf*,[8] likely orientated around the Ovidian myth of Apollo and Daphne. While the content of this "raccolta apollinea", as Vecchi Galli (2012, p. 209) terms it, is impossible to prove definitively as its hypothesised contents are largely conjecture, Santagata (2004, p. LXV) has underlined that it was likely to have "un ordinamento più tradizionale, di tipo tematico". Similarly, the contents of the Correggio form (1356–1358) are speculative. A note on the Vat. Lat. 3196 reveals that Petrarch apparently sent a working redaction of the *Rvf* to Azzo da Correggio,[9] which Wilkins hypothesised contained poems 1–142 of the first part (plus *Donna me vene*), and poems 264–292. While the note of "in ordine" on the *codice degli abbozzi* indicates the intention to organise poems into a sequence, this form is likewise not attested by a manuscript witness, so the contents cannot be independently verified.

The first redaction of the work to be attested by a manuscript witness is the Chigi form, preserved by the MS Chig. L.V. 176, which presents the "Liber fragmentorum" as Petrarch's friend Boccaccio recorded it ca. 1359–1363.[10] Of Wilkins's proposed nine forms of the *Rvf,* the Chigi form, along with the V. L. 3195, are the only two which can be directly linked to a manuscript witness.[11] Feo (2003) and Pulsoni (2009), in line with the more recent trend of focusing on philologically verifiable forms of the *Rvf*, and eliminating the stages not witnessed by manuscript evidence, identify this as the first concrete form in their models of the evolutionary stages of the work, challenging the speculative approach of Wilkins and his 'reference collections'. The intended bipartite division of the work at this point is clear in the manuscript, commencing with *Rvf* 264. The conclusion of the first part of the Chigi redaction already suggests that Petrarch had a strong sense of poetic self-awareness: the first part closes with three sonnets (*Rvf* 176, 177, 189) "dedicated to the allegory of life as a journey and navigation" (Marcozzi, 2015, p. 59), which Cachey (2005, p. 31) has seen as embodying a "moment of ideological and structural crisis", ending in the metaphor of a shipwreck in *Rvf* 189, with the poet unable to reach the port of his salvation.

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various editions, both those attested and unattested: for the Correggio form see Gorni (1978); for the Chigi form see Cachey (2005); Frasso (1997); for the Malatesta form see Pancheri (2008); Feo (2001). For the organisation of the transmitted version see Hainsworth (2015); Santagata (1992); Cherchi (2008); Morena (2005); Pacca (2004); Jones (1995); for the evolution of the lyric collection more generally see Santagata (1989).

[7] Vat. Lat. 3196, f. 9v. For studies on the MS see Pancheri (2013); Pancheri (2008); Paolino (1993); Jones (1985).

[8] Wilkins hypothesised that this form of the *Rvf* contained poems 34, 35, 36, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 58, 60, 64, 69.

[9] Petrarch notes on f. 7r next to poems 77 and 78 "Transcripti isti duo in ordine post mille annos. 1357. mercurii hora. 3. novembris. 29. dum volo his omnino finem dare, ne unquam amplius me teneant. et jam Jerolamus, ut puto, primum quaternum scribere est adortus pergameno pro domino Azone, postea pro me idem facturus."

[10] For more on the Chigi manuscript see De Robertis (1975), and for discussion of the form of the *Rvf* in the Chigi edition see Frasso (1997).

[11] The other forms consist of theorised forms reconstructed from what Wilkins terms 'reference collections' in the *codice degli abbozzi*.

This poetic self-awareness intensified in the final years of Petrarch's life, the period on which this thesis focuses, as Petrarch sought to craft his idealised literary self for posterity, as well as a perfected model in which to convey it. Scholars have been able to trace more closely the evolution of the *Rvf* in Petrarch's old age due to variants exhibited in manuscript witnesses testifying to forms of the work being circulated to his acquaintances, facilitating a more comprehensive picture of the final stages of the construction of his lyric sequence. The MS Pl. 41. 17 of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana witnesses the form supposedly sent to his friend Pandolfo Malatesta in 1373;[12] the next of Wilkins's forms attested to by a manuscript is the Queriniana (1373), recording the sequence as transmitted in the MS Quer. D. II. 21 of the Biblioteca Queriniana in Brescia.[13] The final witness to the evolution of the *Rvf* is the partially autograph MS Vat. Lat. 3195, on which Petrarch was working at the time of his death. Originally intended as a fair copy, it increasingly becomes what we might call a working copy, as Petrarch adds, removes, and amends material. In his final editorial intervention upon the manuscript, Petrarch amended the order of the final 31 poems of the sequence by means of a series of marginal numberings. This concluding intervention indicates that sequencing within the macrostructure was a matter of significant concern to the poet and, as shown by various layers of marginal erasures in the Vat. Lat. 3195, a problem over which he greatly laboured, with several attempts to systemise the sequence.[14] Thus the editorial process by which the *Rvf* reaches the final form is visible through the various redactions, and with each revision to the closing sequence, a different narrative is created, and a different version of the literary *io* is presented to the reader.

The resequencing of the closing poems of the *Rvf* in the Vat. Lat. 3195 therefore represents the final intervention in the curation of his own literary self-portrait before Petrarch's death. While the 1896 edition produced by Mestica was the first to act upon the resequencing of the closing poems in the Vat. Lat. 3195, the increasing emphasis on philological and codicological studies has seen the rearrangement brought to the fore in more recent years.[15] With the Malatesta, Queriniana and Vatican forms all prioritising in some way the group of sonnets which will eventually finish in the positions of 350–355,

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[12] Wilkins (1951) identified the apograph MS Pl. 41.17 as attesting to the form sent by Petrarch to his friend Pandolfo Malatesta, referenced by the *Seniles* 13.11, however there is no conclusive evidence to prove that the letter refers to the specific 'edition' attested in this manuscript. For a discussion of MS Pl. 41.17, its form, relationship with Pandolfo's letter, and implications for the 'forma Malatesta' see Feo (2001). Several supplements are added in different hands on the manuscript itself, but there is a substantial amount of disagreement over the nature of these, issued to the first and second parts of the *Rvf* in the Laur. 41.17, to be discussed in further detail in chapter 4.2.

[13] See footnote 4. While Feo (2003) has seen the Queriniana as the third of four forms of the *Rvf*, Pulsoni (2009) has suggested instead the substitution of the Queriniana form with a 'pre-Vatican' form, to be discussed fully in chapter 4.2.

[14] On erasure in the V. L. 3195 see Storey (2007). The multiple erasures in the rearrangement of the final 31 poems are also for Storey an implication of an experimentation on the part of Petrarch around possible closures for the *Rvf*.

[15] See, for example, Zamponi (2004, pp. 13–72), which documents the stages in which the V. L. 3195 was constructed and transcribed as a material product according to codicological and palaeographic evidence.

the revisions to the V. L. 3195 reposition the group of 360–365 to conclude the sequence before the Prayer to the Virgin. Evidently, Petrarch was greatly concerned about how to conclude the lyric project and how his self-portrait should be presented to posterity. It appeared that there was no one neat way to conclude the sequence, and this study argues that this was due to the presence of competing and diverse intellectual concerns which were pulling Petrarch in different directions.

Several of the emerging interpretative trends in Petrarch studies have begun to address individual elements contributing to these competing concerns which emerge in the construction of the closing sequence of the *Rvf*. The first of these trends examines Petrarchan subjectivity. Gragnolati and Southerden (2020) have recently argued that Petrarch, in a paradoxical manner, defies conclusion in the *Rvf*, through "an infinite process of retroaction" (p. 42), which prevents the *io* from moving forwards with any sense of linearity. This builds upon earlier studies on fragmentation and subjectivity, such as those by Zak (2010), who argues that the process of penning a narrative of virtue seeks to overcome fragmentation, Moevs (2009), who sees Petrarch as exploring the theme of failed conversion through attempts to stabilise an identity, and Barolini (1989), who argued that the *Rvf* combines fragmentation and sequentiality with the result of liquifying time and defying resolution. This notion of temporality as driven by the subjectivity of the *io* has been returned to more recently by Gragnolati and Southerden (2021), who have suggested that Petrarch collapses the distance between past and present with a refusal to give in to time. There has also recently been an increased focus on Petrarch in dialogue with his contemporaries, both in the lyric sphere (Gragnolati and Southerden, 2018; 2020; 2021), and beyond it (Barański, 2020; Candido, 2018; Eisner, 2013; Barański, Cachey, and Yocum, 2009), drawing attention to the complexity of the relations within the Italian literary community as authors both mediated and distinguished themselves from each other. When considering the evolution of the *Rvf*, and in particular its final stages, these critical trends raise several questions. Do the revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf* move the narrative towards conclusion? How does Petrarch position his own individual experience, both in his own idealised autobiography, and within the wider literary tradition, through his self-casting in the *Rvf*? How does the conclusion of the *Rvf* dialogue with the lyric tradition, not just in the vernacular, but also in the classical tradition which Petrarch is seeking to imitate? This thesis attempts to sketch the answers to these questions.

The scholarly debate around the evolution of the *Rvf* more specifically has in recent years leant towards philological criticism, in a push back against Wilkins's theories. This has seen the revisions more recently become primarily part of an empirical discussion on the chronology of the phases required to construct the Vat. Lat. 3195 as a material product, reflecting the movement in recent decades away from interpretation in favour of reconstruction in the debate around the evolution of the *Rvf*. Feo (2003) and Pulsoni (2009) have both proposed alternative four-stage models of the evolution of the *Rvf*, based

solely on forms witnessed by manuscripts.[16] Pulsoni (2009) has been critical of Wilkins's lack of interest in textual variants, and studies such Pancheri (2008) Cursi and Pulsoni (2010) and Pulsoni and Cursi (2009, 2013) have examined in greater detail the contemporary manuscript tradition of the *Rvf*, focusing on codicological evidence and textual variants to trace the evolution and circulation of the work. This is reflective of the trend in recent decades towards philological criticism of the *Rvf*, particularly in Italy, and the increasing focus on codicology and transmission, such as that exemplified in Zamponi et al. (2004) and their commentary on the facsimile edition of the V. L. 3195.

While the more recent focus on the closing stages of constructing the *Rvf* has been largely orientated in the philological sphere, there has also been some interpretative work upon the revisions to the closing sequence. In general, this has placed emphasis on a religious imperative as being the primary drive behind the alterations. Wilkins (1951, p. 189), in his chapter analysing the process of transcription in the V. L. 3195, comments that the repositioned 363–365 are "poems of repentance", which "give to the *Canzoniere* an impressive religious climax". This newly concluding group of sonnets, 361–365, is first documented in the so-called Malatesta edition of the *Rvf*, attested to by the BML Pl. 41. 17. Feo (2001, p. 129) identifies them as forming part of the supplement to the second part indicated in Petrarch's letter to Malatesta, and their inclusion in the *Rvf* is one of Petrarch's final additions of material. Bernardo (1974, p. 62) suggests that the reorganisation to prioritise this group of sonnets "sought to emphasize the tone of repentance and of religious conversion", and Jones (1995, p. 27) has also observed that through the revisions Petrarch subverts the human emotions for a "dominant theological flavour."

A more in-depth study of this question has been conducted by Santagata (1992, pp. 318–326) who focuses on the final eight poems of the closing sequence, and provides a reading of the resequencing on both a micro-sequential and macrostructural level. Setting the reorganisation in the context of the entire work, through emphasising Petrarch's desire to achieve "la chiusura del cerchio" (Santagata, 1992, p. 320), he suggests the presence of a "crescendo penitenziale" (Santagata, 1992, p. 322) created by the trio of *Rvf* 363, 364 and 365, which juxtaposes the "giovenile errore" of the proemial sonnet with "il testo della completa conversione" in *Rvf* 365 (Santagata, 1992, p. 324). He points out the parallels to be found between *Rvf* 264 and the *Secretum* which facilitate the closure of the circle as achieved by the rearrangement of the final poems, and the return of the emphasis on the *io* in the closing poems, which, strong in the proemial poems, had been subverted to make way for the celebration of the woman and the experience of the lover. While Santagata's assessment of the closing sonnets focuses upon the staging of a penitential return to the self as depicted in the proemial sonnet to bring the narrative to a full-circle, König (1983) has also in his reading of *Rvf* 365 emphasised the significance of the architectural function of this sonnet. As the penultimate poem, he argues that it generates formal

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[16] See footnote 4.

links with other architecturally significant poems to bring a sense of conclusion to the macrostructure, thus hinting at an aesthetic prerogative behind its revised placement in the sequence.

That there were different and competing tensions pulling Petrarch in different directions is evident in that it has also been suggested that the closing poems, even in their revised form, present a narrative of irresolution. Santagata (2014; 1992) and König (1985) have from different perspectives emphasised the closure of the *Rvf* as moving to the completion of a cycle initiated in the proemial sonnet and sustained through the macrostructure. Yet alternative interpretations suggest that the *Rvf* is inconclusive in nature. Bernardo has pointed out that as the reorganisation was a late intervention in the sequencing rather than the poet's original intention, and there are multiple erasures in the margins, there were still "spiritual, philosophical, and artistic misgivings" in the poet's mind about how he wished his lyric sequence to conclude (Bernardo, 1974, p. 63). He suggests that *Rvf* 365 demonstrates that there is still some residual justification of Petrarch's love of Laura, despite the revised numeration contributing to more repentant overtones.[17] Similarly, Tonelli's (2007) reading of *Rvf* 360–366 has suggested that in fact the internal conflict of the *io* remains unresolved, with the poet's will alone unable to resolve the impasse between love for Laura and desire for salvation. And in the *Rvf* at large, Gragnolati and Southerden (2020), Moevs (2009) and Barolini (1989) have emphasised the denial of narrative resolution. These interventions indicate that there is a level of disagreement about whether the revisions to the closing sequence present a true sense of closure and resolution to the oscillating narrative of the *Rvf*, or demonstrate an internal conflict truly resolved.

This study emphasises that the *Rvf* is not just concerned with the crafting of a narrative, but also presenting it in a perfected literary form, thus seeking to reconcile religious, autobiographical, and literary concerns in one unique lyric sequence. Thus far, scholarly debate around the revisions to the closing sequence has primarily discussed the religious aspect, which focuses on Petrarch's exploration of his dilemma about whether his love for Laura may be virtuous, and whether there is a conclusive movement from sin to virtue. Santagata (2014, p. 17) has suggested that the nucleus of the *Rvf* is "ideato nell'ambito del progretto autobiografico incentrato sulla conversione", that is the exchange of the mortal for the divine. As already established, it is true that the final version of the closing sequence left to us places more emphasis on the rejection of Laura, conveying a more Augustinian narrative in which Petrarch turns to God.[18] Indeed, Augustine's *Confessions* was one of Petrarch's most beloved

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[17] Bernardo (1974, p. 160) suggests that the new numbering reduces the residual justification of Laura, however some still remains as a result of the placement of *Rvf* 359 and 360 to open the closing sequence, which in many ways recall the poet's effort to rehabilitate Laura in the *Triumphi*.

[18] When discussing an Augustinian narrative, I refer to the model of a literary conversion narrative as posed in the *Confessions*, whereby the narrative is sustained by a focus upon the spiritual development of the author as he seeks to move away from earthly pursuits and towards the immaterial, facilitated through the contemplation of God. While this model overtly linear, the intellectual processes underpinning the conversion narrative are complex. Beecher (2004, p. 56) has stated that a key strand of Petrarch's thought is "the desire for the decisive transformation of mind states that constitutes conversion", indicating that a change in intellectual state is central

volumes,[19] and in Petrarch's dialogue, the *Secretum*, the two characters are named 'Augustinus' and 'Franciscus', suggesting a predisposition to Augustinian ideas in Petrarch's thought.[20]

However, narratives of spiritual ascent were already being explored in vernacular poetry, giving also a poetic precedent for Petrarch's spiritual dilemma in the *Rvf*. In particular, Guinizzelli and Dante were experimenting with a mortal beloved as a facilitator of spiritual ascent in their poetry. Guinizzelli depicts his lady in what Usher sees as "an ideologically connected sequence" (2008, p. 21), whereby the beloved acts in an intercessory capacity to direct the lover to virtue. However, given that Guinizzelli's poetry has been transmitted in lyric codices, rather than in an author-organised sequence, there is no sense of a narrative development constructed across poems by the author. This is opposed to Dante, who in the *Vita nova* is able to give a narrative shape to his lyrics, albeit with the insertion of prose to maintain the narrative. While certainly aligned in their treatment of the theologisation of the beloved, Dante takes the motif to its furthest extent, building on Guinizzelli's delineation of the beloved in an intercessory capacity and casting Beatrice in a uniquely positive role as a mediator between the *io* and the divine. In casting his own lyric sequence as a superior vernacular model, Petrarch would naturally need to dialogue with this emerging tradition, even if simply to set himself apart from it.

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to the Petrarchan concept of conversion. This transition in intellectual (and consequently spiritual) state is also central to Augustinian conversion: Vannier (2020, p. 64) has drawn attention to Augustine's focus on the dialectic between *aversio a Deo* and *conversio ad Deum*, which is explored in *De Genesi contra manichaeos*, *De Genesi ad litteram*, and the final three books of the *Confessions*, where the *conversio* is seen as a lifelong process, which leads to eternal stability. With regard to Petrarch's engagement with Augustinian conversion, Chiampi (1995) has drawn on the Augustinian concept of 'distentio', distraction, which he argues manifests in the Petrarchan 'desviare' and 'oblio' (p. 1). He suggests that attention fixed upon God is key to facilitating a conversion, which necessitates the rejection of "mundane distraction" (p. 3), which for Petrarch would include the worldly concerns of Laura and glory. Cervigni (2004, p. 126) has suggested that for Petrarch, as for Augustine, it is an "understanding of earthly and otherworldly realities" which constitutes conversion, although this interpretation would seem to suggest that Petrarch enacts a completed conversion, which as this thesis suggests in the final chapter is not the case. For more on Augustinian conversion and the *Confessions* see Vannier (2020); Kenney (2013); Dobell (2010); Stock (2001). With reference to Petrarch's engagement with Augustine see Lee (2012); Beecher (2004); Chiampi (1995); Luciani (1982).

[19] The *Confessions* has often been regarded as a model for Petrarch, informing his own autobiographical efforts. When referring to an Augustinian autobiographical narrative, this constitutes a self-reflexive narrative focused upon the transition of intellectual states, as exhibited in the *Confessions*. Petrarch's engagement with this model is evident in particular in *Familiares* 4.1, the famous letter detailing the ascent of Mont Ventoux, which Beecher (2004, p. 57) has argued is embedded in a "conversion structure". Indeed in the letter, Petrarch happens upon his volume of the *Confessions*, which reminds him of the importance of looking within, to the immaterial, rather than gazing on worldly beauty. See also Luciani (1982) for Augustine's *Confessions* in Petrarch's letters.

[20] At the opening of the *Secretum* (1.6), the character of Franciscus says that he has read the *Confessions* as if it were his own story, but without conversion, suggesting his own spiritual misgivings about his ability to follow directly in Augustine's footsteps. And at the conclusion of the *Secretum*, Franciscus states that his will is not strong enough to control his desire and thus follow Augustinus' advice, suggesting his own struggles with following the Augustinian model of conversion as exhibited in the *Confessions*. Saak (2020, pp. 271– 274) has gone so far as to suggests that Petrarch's treatment of the *Confessions* represents a "disappropriation" of the work, with Petrarch engaging with the text not as an authority, but rather as "a text to be wrestled with": the revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, which test out diverse narratives of closure, suggest that Petrarch was wrestling with his own literary conversion. The *Secretum*, and Petrarch's engagement with narratives of spiritual ascent, will be discussed fully in chapter 4.1.

That Petrarch was operating within existing poetic models to create the *Rvf* is substantiated by the central argument of this thesis, which argues that in the hierarchy of intellectual concerns directing the final phases of constructing the *Rvf*, greater emphasis must be placed upon the work in form as a piece of classical imitation, designed to secure glory in literary posterity. This thesis does not seek to dismiss the emphasis placed on the religious aspect of the revisions, but rather show that this need not be mutually exclusive with a classicising poetics. Scholarship has already placed emphasis upon Petrarch's work as a philosophical battleground which serves the exploration of competing tensions. For example, Zak (2010, p. 14) has seen three competing streams in Petrarch's work: the Stoic stream of searching for virtue through writing, Ovidian stream of keeping hope for eternal and changeless poetic glory alive, allowing him to overcome the passage of time, and the Augustinian stream which requires that writing be based on sacred models of text which can lead to virtue and overcoming self-fragmentation, suggesting tensions in differing modes of poetic creativity, and importantly tensions between classical and Christian models. This thesis likewise indicates the importance of balancing multiple intellectual tensions, but argues that in relation to the editorial choices in the final phases of the *Rvf*'s construction, more attention needs to be given to the classicising aspect, as opposed to the primary focus on the religious element. Rico (1988, p. 1103) has suggested that "el simple hecho de componer un "libro de poemas" es un acto de imitación clásica", and both Rico (1988) and Santagata (2014) have drawn attention to the classical inflection of the proemial sequence of the *Rvf*, which bears similarities to the opening of Horace's *Odes*, Ovid's *Amores* and Propertius' *Elegies*.[21] However, this study suggests that it is not just the opening of the *Rvf* which draws upon the classical lyric collection, but also the closure, which returns to classical lyric models.[22]

Petrarch, in calling his beloved Laura, indicates the fundamentally classical nature of his lyric sequence. Unlike Dante's Beatrice, the name does not have theological connotations, but rather poetic and classical ones, particularly given Laura's allegorical guise as the laurel. The beloved women of Roman love elegy which Petrarch sought to imitate had an increasingly metapoetic role, metaphorical of the collection and of poetry itself, in the case of Propertius' Cynthia and Ovid's Corinna. These beloveds were a means of obtaining fame for the poet, as through the lyric production that she generated, the author was granted fame. This model necessitated the abandonment of the beloved at the end of the love narrative, having served her purpose of generating poetic glory for the author: the poet's rejection of her at the close of the narrative is a declaration of glory obtained. As this thesis argues, the turn to

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[21] Rico (1988) discusses the Propertian, Ovidian and Horatian echoes of the proemial sequence; Santagata (2014, p. 31), argues that "Petrarca faceva implicito riferimento, dalle *Epistulae* e dai *Carmina* di Orazio alle elegie di Properzio, agli *Amores* di Ovidio".

[22] The authors of Roman love elegy, through the overall somewhat brief existence of the genre, devoted great attention to achieving literary perfection through employing increasingly intricate systems of patterning and connecting their poems within books, to be discussed in chapter 2. These techniques of organisation within books were also used in Roman lyric poetry more widely, and with particular relevance for Petrarch, in Horace's works.

reject Laura at the close of the *Rvf* is thus not entirely theologically motivated, but also a question of poetics, as Petrarch seeks to imitate the classical model, and likewise declare his own glory to posterity. This indicates that the decision to abandon Laura in the *Rvf* while her image is simultaneously being rehabilitated in the *Triumphi* is due to the conception of the *Rvf* as a project of classical imitation, as the very form of the work itself necessitates her abandonment for the project to be brought to a close.

Closely linked to this is Petrarch's concern with presenting an idealised self to posterity, rather than one that reflects reality. He wants to be seen to be virtuous, while still dedicating ample effort to literary concerns in the pursuit of glory. The *Rvf* is concerned with a form of self-exploratory and introspective poetry,[23] which is indicated immediately from the proemial sonnet, which presents a self-staging of the *io* rejecting its former travails to a public 'Voi', reflecting that the poetic journey which is about to be read has resulted in him partly transforming into an "altr'uom" (*Rvf* 1,4). The *Rvf*, like the *Secretum*, is deeply concerned with interior conflict and self-examination, as it opens immediately with an account of the fragmentation of the self in the true start to the narrative in *Rvf* 2, evident in "del quale oggi vorrebbe, et non pò, aitarme" (*Rvf* 2, 14), where the poet's virtue is not able to resist love's blow, resulting in the fracturing of the self into the loving part and the resisting part.[24] The fragmented nature of this poetic self is still apparent near the close of the sequence, as *Rvf* 360 presents the warring parts of the *io* debating in front of the Tribune of Reason, with one part arguing that love of Laura is a spiritual danger, and the other part arguing in favour of her salvific value.

As the *Rvf* evolved through its redactions, the self which is presented through the act of writing and sequencing undergoes a form of literary remodelling: Hooper (2016, p. 1226) follows Santagata (2004, pp. 243–272) in asserting that Petrarch "managed the release of its redactions in order to refine his author figure". Yet, this is not a one-way process: the literary self is not simply presented through the text, but the act of writing also functions as self-exploration,[25] as Petrarch tries out different guises of the literary *io* in the various revisions to the sequencing of the poems, revealing an acute anxiety about the way in which he wished to present his literary self to posterity. Hooper (2016, p. 1226) asserts that Petrarch is "the curator of an author's book that forms the definitive canon of his selfhood", and in this way the various redactions may represent the self at different points of its journey of interior exploration. However, the revisions represent a curated narrative, rather than one which is chronological

[23] For studies of the rise of the renaissance self, in relation to Petrarch, see Celenza (2005); Celenza (2004); Stock (2001); Noferi (2001); Burke (1999); Stock (1995); Quillen (1998); Oppenheimer (1989); Collili (1988); Trinkhaus (1979); Dotti (1978); Burckhardt (1958; 1860).

[24] Hooper (2016, p. 1233), has identified similar division in the self in *Rvf* 37, where the memory of the beloved causes a division in the lyric *io*. Physical distance is juxtaposed with the here and now, as in many other poems in the *Rvf*, creating a sense of the divided self which travels outside the body.

[25] Zak (2010, p. 13), has more recently emphasised that the process may not be one way, with the "crucial role of writing in caring for the self", as Petrarch emulates Roman Stoicism, in particular Seneca, whose letters exhibit an introspective moral aspect, and act as a model for Petrarch's parallel epistolary work the *Seniles*, which explores his morality in the closing years of his life.

or rigidly autobiographical. Indeed, the parallel autobiographical shaping which was occurring in the *Familiares* and *Seniles* indicates that there were different ways of exploring self-curatorial narratives, and while there are different narrative strategies employed in the prose collections, the anxieties of the editorial processes evolve from the same nucleus of concern about self-representation.

This self-portrait of the *Rvf* is but one part of the larger biographical project. The sequence of poems ostensibly presents an autobiographical narrative,[26] detailing the love of Petrarch for Laura, with the fictional chronology spanning from their first meeting on 6 April 1327 until 1358, after twenty-one years "ardendo" and another ten "piangendo" (*Rvf* 364, 1–2). The *Rvf* presents what Dotti (1978, p. 27) has termed "una ideale biografia aperta a sé e al mondo", and Petrarch's form of autobiography embraces inconsistencies both with reality and within itself, as the narrative is revised and altered through posterior interventions. This ill-defined relationship between reality and fiction crafts what Santagata (1992, p. 75) has emphasised as "la finzione autobiografica". In the *Seniles* (5.2) Petrarch represents both the vernacular and poetry as youthful preoccupations, when in fact he was still greatly attentive to the *Rvf* in later life, and particular with systemising its conclusion in his final years. Imitation of the classical lyric model is suited to this wider biographical casting: the elegiac collections of Propertius and Ovid are also cast as youthful lyric projects, before the poets make a transition to weightier modes and topics. For Ovid this is epic, and for Propertius is it a different style of elegy, exalting the glory of Rome.

However, with the revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, Petrarch was not simply replicating the model of the classical poetry book but repurposing it for a next new literary context. The *Rvf* comes at a time where the literary landscape is rapidly evolving, providing Petrarch with ample scope for a unique literary contribution. Poetry is developing from a medium which was set to music and sung to one which was penned for its circulation; the Italian vernacular has become established as a language of poetry; and the self-contained lyric sequence itself is beginning to emerge as textual form, the conception of which Petrarch himself was instrumental in codifying.[27] At this particular point in lyric history, Petrarch was seeking his own unique literary contribution to present to posterity: the

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[26] The notion of autobiography is in itself elusive in the Middle Ages, as the *Rvf* illustrates with its liberal relationship between reality and fiction to curate what As Kerby-Fulton (2010, p. 413), has outlined, autobiography in the modern sense as we understand it is a "rare species" in the medieval period, and "the culture of the Middle Ages did not encourage autobiography that stood alone". Introspective literary models did indeed exist, such as Boethius' *Consolatio*, and indeed Augustine's *Confessions* was so influential that Petrarch himself wrote his interior examination of the *Secretum* in dialogue with Augustine. Yet despite the formal ambivalence to a distinct 'genre' which we call autobiography today, there is however no shortage of works which incorporate elements of self-representation: "fragmentary self-comment appears all over in medieval texts: in prologues, letters, retractions, petitions, annotations, inquisitorial materials—and of course, most elusively, in poetry" (Kerby-Fulton 2010, p. 414). Oppenheimer (1989) has linked the origin of the modern consciousness to the invention of the sonnet in 13th century Italy, suggesting that as the first modern literary form intended not for performance, but for silent reading, that the sonnet's primary function is to explore the conflicted self and self-consciousness.

[27] For the evolution of the lyric sequence see Galvez (2012); Holmes (2000); Santagata (1989).

convention of the classical lyric collection to close with the poet's self-dedication to posterity offered the perfect model by which to do so. In the *Familiares*, Petrarch's theory of imitation is outlined and refined through a series of letters, 1.8; 22.2; and most thoroughly in letter 23.19 to Giovanni Boccaccio. McLaughlin (1995, p. 30) defines Petrarch's approach as one of *similitudo* rather than *identitas*, with a focus on nurturing one's own individual distinguishing features so that the work evokes the model indirectly rather than repeating it, thus forming a personal style in such a way that the work is both enhanced through the model, and the model is enhanced through the imitation. Imitation is the creation of something distinct, which Petrarch (*Fam.* 23.19.12) compares to seeing a father in the appearance of the son.[28] Cipollone (2009, p. 158) has observed that Petrarch's practice of imitation exhibits "un atteggiamento irrequieto, quasi riottoso" in his practice of imitation, and certainly the use and reuse of material is a point of anxiety for Petrarch, who in the *Familiares* (23.19.15) assures Boccaccio that if he were to ever accidentally slip into repeating something written by another, it would be an error: "siquid unquam, fili, tale meis in carminibus invenis, scito id non iudicii mei esse sed erroris."[29] The revisions to the closing sequence reveal a certain anxiety around imitating the classical model, as he seeks to maintain his own literary individuality in the creation of something new and unique, rather than mere replication.

That the *Rvf* does not constitute a simple imitation of the classical lyric collection is evident in Petrarch's choice of the vernacular language, as opposed to Latin.[30] The reasons for this, as this thesis will argue, are threefold. Firstly, the vernacular gives Petrarch more scope for uniqueness, and therefore to obtain his desired poetic glory, since the self-contained lyric book was a tried and tested format in the classical Latin tradition, but had no clear precedent in the vernacular (although elements feeding into the *Rvf* can be located in the work of Guittone, Dante, or Nicolò de' Rossi). Both the title itself of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* as well as the "rime sparse" (*Rvf* 1, 1) of the proemial sonnet hint at the instability of the vernacular tradition, which was fragmentary up to this point, that is with no consistent poetic models. Secondly, and closely linked to this, is that the imitation of the classical model in a vernacular project imposes a sense of Latinity upon the medium, therefore establishing a stability of form which existed in the coherent and self-enclosed formats of the classical poetry book but was elusive in the vernacular tradition. Petrarch's attitude towards the vernacular was ostensibly apathetic, even critical: Latinity, and the imposition of the classical model on the *Rvf* could render the medium more palatable for Petrarch, as well as giving him more scope for individuality in his lyric endeavours. Indeed, the choice of a Latin title for a vernacular lyric sequence indicates this, and likewise with the

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[28] 'similtudinem illam facit, que statim viso filio, patris in memoriam nos reducat'. 'seeing the son's face, we are reminded of the father's.' [all translations of the *Familiares* and the *Seniles* ,from Bernardo, 2005]

[29] 'If ever, my son, you discover anything of the sort in my poems, you may be sure that it was an unintentional oversight'.

[30] On Petrarch and language see Mallette (2015); Eisner (2013); Celenza (2005).

titling of the *Triumphi*. Thirdly, as mentioned above, the model of the classical lyric collection suited Petrarch's wider autobiographical project, as in the *oeuvre* of the Augustan poets with which Petrarch was familiar, love lyric was depicted as a youthful medium. Petrarch similarly presents vernacular experimentation and the medium of poetry as a project of youth,[31] and as a precursor to what he depicts as his more virtuous projects, namely his "Christian letters".[32] Classicising the vernacular tradition, and thus achieving a unique vernacular poetic model to present to posterity, at the same time as working towards systemising the wider autobiographical project, were central concerns in the editorial process of the *Rvf*.

This thesis is divided into four chapters, each split into two sections. The first chapter situates the *Rvf* within the vernacular context, with its first section arguing that Petrarch sought literary glory to surpass his contemporaries through the creation of a unique model of lyric poetry in the vernacular. While classical poets did organise their lyrics into books, the *Rvf* has no comparable precedents in the vernacular. Some macrotextual aspects of the work do, however, find precedent in the vernacular tradition: Guittone's poetry exhibits an Augustinian-style conversion narrative, but it is not a selective and author-organised sequence; Dante's *Vita nova* is an author-organised lyric sequence, but is still reliant on the insertion of prose to maintain the narrative; and Nicolò de' Rossi's *canzonieretto* is the first example of an author-ordered sequence of poems for a singular beloved entirely in verse, but it is not self-contained. This section argues that, as opposed to the conventional assumption that Dante's *Vita nova* is the closest precedent for the *Rvf*, Petrarch is in fact much closer to Nicolò de' Rossi. The second part of this chapter situates the interior conflict of the *Rvf* in the discussions on the nature of love occurring in the vernacular poetic tradition. The revisions to the *Rvf* dialogue with Petrarch's near-contemporaries, who provide models both for the rejection of the beloved to turn to the divine (for example Guittone) or reconciling a mortal love with the divine in a narrative of spiritual ascent (for example Dante). In bringing his sequence to a close, Petrarch explores both methods to achieve his own salvation. Petrarch, this thesis suggests, orientates himself within existing poetic trends in order to emphasise his own uniqueness from them, and in particular distance himself from Dante.

The second chapter argues that Petrarch sought to elevate the vernacular poetic tradition through reconciling it with the model of classical love lyric. I contend that self-fashioning aspect of the love narrative of the *Rvf* is anchored in the classical tradition to a greater extent than previously acknowledged, particularly with regard to the presentation of the beloved. Laura, like the *puellae* of the Roman elegiac tradition, has a metapoetic value in that she is symbolic of poetry itself, and is a textual construct through which the poet may obtain fame through his lyrics. This classical aspect to the narrative, where the beloved and poetry overlap, indicates that Petrarch was seeking to remodel the

[31] See for example *Seniles* 5.2.

[32] He terms his epistolary collections thus in the unfinished Letter to Posterity (*Sen.* 18.1).

classical lyric poetry book for the vernacular context, and therein secure earthly fame. The second part of the chapter argues that on a formal organisational level Petrarch's *Rvf* seeks to imitate the classical model, especially with regard to its poetics of opening and closure. I show that the central organisational feature of the classical poetry book, the ring structure, whereby correspondences between poems are generated in symmetrical rings between the beginning and end of a constituent book, and the collection more widely, is deployed in the *Rvf* with thematic and formal similarities to Ovid's *Amores* in particular. The conclusions of Propertius' *Elegies* and Ovid's *Amores* act as models of a narrative in which the beloved must be abandoned for the sake of closing the collection, as she has served her purpose of obtaining the poet's fame through his lyrics centred on her. Given Laura's classical connotations, the decision to reject her, rather than reconcile her with a narrative of ascent, is in this way not entirely driven by a religious concern, but is also a question of classicising poetics.

Having established that Petrarch was seeking to insert himself into the vernacular tradition, but create a unique poetic model by imposing the classical model on the *Rvf*, the third chapter turns to consider how this literary agenda is being reconciled with the desire to outwardly project a more virtuous self. Petrarch depicts himself as becoming increasingly preoccupied by the *fuga temporis* in his old age, and he explicitly attributes the development of this anxiety to Horace in particular in *Familiares* 24.10. Petrarch's self-confessed favourite work of Horace, the *Odes*, provides a model of a lyric collection which focuses intensely on the flight of time, both warning of its dangers, and in the conclusion of Book 3 asserting the apotheosis of the poet, who through his literary monument will outlive his mortal body and outwit the vicissitudes of time. This section argues that Petrarch saw a particular potential in the *Odes* as an alluring model of a lyric collection which could both convey a moral message adaptable for a Christian context, as well as act as a model for the creation of a lyric monument which secured glory for the poet. The second part of the chapter argues that Petrarch deliberately and self-consciously presents himself as exhibiting an intellectual evolution around the motif of the flight of time in the *Familiares* and *Seniles*. Through the careful curation of a fictionalised narrative, he paints a picture of his increasing preoccupation with his own mortality, showing that what was once a youthful scholarly concern with the *fuga temporis* in literature matures to become an increasingly personal burden in the final years of his life as his family and friends pass on. Petrarch presents these anxieties as resulting in a desire to present a more virtuous self, indicating that the revisions to the *Rvf* are (ostensibly at least) undertaken to create a more virtuous narrative. However, despite representing moral obligations as central at the close of his life, and therefore the reason for the revisions to the *Rvf*, the epistolary collections reveal that Petrarch was experimenting with literature as a vehicle for narratives of virtue, while still being preoccupied with literary concerns as part of the wider autobiographical project.

The final chapter examines the various revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, arguing that a classicising element, and the desire to seek poetic glory, was central to Petrarch's literary and

autobiographical strategy. The revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf* eventually settle upon a narrative which seeks to reject Laura in an Augustinian inflected narrative; however, this decision is just as much to do with classicising literary concerns as it is religious priorities. The first section of this chapter examines Book 3 of the *Secretum*, the imagined interior dialogue between the conflicted parts of the self represented in the characters of 'Augustinus' and 'Franciscus'. The debate over the spiritual value of 'Amor' and 'Gloria' as expressed in the *Secretum* is remodelled in poetic form in *Rvf* 264, and significantly *Rvf* 360, which commences the closing sequence and thus suggests the indecision present at a late moment in Petrarch's life. The revisions to the order of the final poems of the *Rvf* attempt to resolve the impasse of the *Secretum* by reconciling the moral imperatives to seek virtue with a compatible poetic model in the classical elegiac collection: in both, the woman must be abandoned. The final section carries out a close reading of the revisions to the closing poems of the *Rvf*, examining the concluding sequences of the Malatesta, Queriniana, Vatican and final forms of the work. I highlight that although Petrarch clearly wanted the closure of the *Rvf* to take a more religious tone, in line with the idealised autobiography that he was curating in the *Familiares* and *Seniles*, the desire to regenerate classical modes and seek poetic glory was still ever present. Creating a vernacular lyric first, and thus consolidating his place in literary history, was, for Petrarch, just as important as seeking virtue.

Chapter 1. The Vernacular Context

1.1 Crafting an unprecedented lyric sequence

The classical lyric tradition provided models for structured and author-organised collections comprising of poetic books, but there existed no clear precedents in the vernacular tradition. For the purposes of the present study, the vernacular context refers to both Italian and Occitan, the two traditions within which Petrarch positions himself in *Rvf* 70.[33] In his lyric endeavours, Petrarch sought to surpass his vernacular contemporaries and near-contemporaries in the complexity of his own poetic project. This involved the careful curation of the macrostructure of the *Rvf*, with the closing poems the final piece of the puzzle to draw the work together into a self-contained lyric sequence. There are some partial precedents for the *Rvf* in the vernacular tradition, although none of these consist of an author-organised lyric sequence in its entirety. This gave Petrarch ample scope for innovation within the existing lyric models. Firstly, this section deals with the poetry of Guittone, who provides a model of an Augustinian-inspired conversion narrative; then Dante, whose *Vita nova* provides the first definitive example of an author-ordered sequence in the vernacular, but one that mixed prose and verse; and Nicolò de' Rossi, who provides the first example of a love narrative sustained solely in lyrics in his *canzonieretto* for Floruzza. Commencing by outlining the existing debate around the nature of the poetic corpuses of these poets, this section then suggests, through a close reading of the closure of the *canzonieretto* of Nicolò de' Rossi, that Nicolò's work is the closest extant model to the *Rvf*, as opposed to the conventional observation that Dante's *Vita nova* was the most similar precedent. Petrarch in the *Rvf,* while adopting some existing vernacular features, creates a novel vision of what a collection of vernacular lyrics might be.

In the absence of a tradition of author-organised poetic books in the vernacular, Petrarch crafted a unique first in the *Rvf* through the imposition of the classical model upon vernacular lyrics. This brought a Latinate aspect to the medium in an attempt to stabilise the vernacular lyric form, that is create a standard for a poetic model which could be adopted and replicated in posterity. The title *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* alludes among other things to the fragmentary nature of vernacular poetry up until this point, in which there was no clearly established poetic models, and the concept of a poetic 'book' was not yet codified. That innovation was a priority for Petrarch is evident in *Seniles* 5.2, where he

[33] Holmes (2015, p. 161) has argued that the citations made in *Rvf* 70 show the context in which Petrarch wished his poetry to be read, but also that these were models which he sought to reject. As Gragnolati and Southerden (2020, p. 19) have noted, the tendency has been to read the *canzone* teleologically, with the citations working towards tracing a genealogy of the poetic tradition, at the culmination of which Petrarch places himself. Kay (2013, pp. 194–195) has taken such an approach, as has Santagata (2004, p. 349). More recently, Gragnolati and Southerden (2020) have suggested that the self-citation of *Rvf* 23 which closes *Rvf* 70 is indicative of "an infinitive process of retroaction" (p. 42) which characterises the non-linear nature of the *Rvf* more generally.

states that his vernacular compositions were a product of youth, motivated by his concern that there was less scope to be innovative in Latin. In the same letter he suggests that later in life he moved away from the vernacular and from poetry more generally, instead dedicating himself to the "stilus altior Latinus" (*Sen*. 5.2.23),[34] as he was concerned about the lower status of the vernacular and its misuse amongst the *vulgus*. However, what Petrarch says often contradicts in practice what he does: while he claims that his vernacular projects are youthful ones, he still dedicated great time to both the *Rvf* and the *Triumphi* throughout his life. And great efforts went into systemising the conclusion of the *Rvf* in the very final years of his life through a careful counterbalancing of competing priorities. As his interactions with Boccaccio in the *Familiares* and *Seniles* indicate, Petrarch's own apparent disdain of the vernacular could not prevent other authors from composing works in it: to prove his own literary credentials, he could not pass up the opportunity to outdo his contemporaries in the medium nonetheless.

Given the somewhat disparate nature of vernacular poetry before Petrarch, reconstructing macrotextual elements in the corpus of vernacular authors is challenging. Authors generally, up until Dante's *Vita nova*, did not organise their poems, and while some broader narrative elements may be extrapolated from the corpus of some authors, for example Guittone or Riquier, poetry was transmitted largely through anthologies rather than author-organised sequences. Troubadour poetry was intended for oral reception, performed in the moment and the context of the poems dependent on their delivery and reception, rather than their order in a sequence. Whereas Bossy (1991, p. 277) notes the plausibility that certain troubadours (the examples he gives are Peire Vidal, Ponç de la Guardia and Cerveri de Girona) may have intentionally organised their poems, Gröber's (1887) hypothesis regarding the prevalence of such purposeful structuring has been met with scepticism from more modern critics.[35] Holmes postulates that the first anthologies of troubadour poetry can be seen as "visual representations of oral texts" (2000, p. 3), and therefore cannot have the same narrative sense as an author-ordered sequence compiled as a self-contained entity.

The corpus that is most likely to have had some element of author-ordering is that of Guiraut Riquier (c. 1230–1292), one of the last Occitan poets. Bossy argues convincingly that there is a numerical organisation of poems which created various symmetries and inversions of ratios forming a cohesive entity centring around a "binary opposition of genres" (1991, p. 278).[36] Moreover, Holmes (2000, p. 103) notes that Riquier's *libre* is "explicitly autobiographical", with a chronological ordering of poems in terms of the events that it recounts. In Riquier's poetry, the main narrative strand is centred around the poet's relationship with the *belh deport*, with the mixing of love *cansos* with politically

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[34] 'Loftier Latin style'

[35] For more on Troubadour poetry collections see Lomonaco, Rossi and Scaffai (2006); Gaunt (1999); Topsfield (1978).

[36] See also Bertolucci (1978) on Riquier's *Libre*.

orientated *verses* setting the narrative in the context of the contemporary events. However, the presence of a seemingly autobiographical narrative does not mean that there was any intervention on the part of the author himself, nor does an overtly chronological narrative necessarily prove intentional organisation.

In the Italian vernacular tradition, Guittone's corpus has been seen to convey a conversion narrative, in which mortal love is rejected in favour of the divine, although there is no clear evidence of either a structure or author-ordering. Guittone's poetry is transmitted to us via two manuscript anthologies, the MS V. L. 3793 and the MS Laur. Red. 9 (henceforth 'L'). The witnesses are predominantly organised by genre and thus lack a complete macrostructural organisation. Consequently, as Holmes notes, the general tendency of editors has been to read Guittone's poetry in terms of its individual compositions, rather than in the context of an organised sequence, although more recently his poetic output has been conceived of as a macrotext, due to continuities and a narrative impetus across the corpus.[37] While we have no way to establish if the organisation of texts as in manuscript L was Guittone's own ordering, the ordering of the poems would seem to have an autobiographical rationale. Within the genre categories, poem sequencing and groupings demonstrate a strong rejection of sensual love in favour for the divine, demonstrating a sense of narrative progression. The apparent staging of a conversion along Augustinian self-reflexive lines implies that there is a significant narrative element to the poems, as well as the intent on the part of the author to move away from an earthly love to spiritual love in a palinodic narrative, one which rejects earlier actions and thoughts. Bowe has recently emphasised the importance of the delineation in the manuscript witnesses between the names 'Guittone' and 'Frate Guittone' as a means of testifying to the poet's literary conversion, but also to create a type of self-dialogue through the palinodic function of the post-conversion poems (Bowe, 2020, pp. 21–22). This simple division into the two Guittones also suggests an intention to organise the lyrics. Bowe (2020, p. 22) emphasises that "the relationship between the pre- and post-conversion poetry is not one of simple coexistence, but rather of inter-referentiality and, in fact, carefully constructed interdependence", which even negates the idea of a linear conversion narrative through self-referential voices. This division in the corpus creates a sense of 'then' and 'now', with the past-self to be rejected, in the same manner in which Petrarch seeks to reject his *giovenile errore* and distance his present self from the past self in the proemial sonnet of the *Rvf*.

The problem with attempting to construct a narrative from what is transmitted to us is that the poems are formally organised by genre rather than any form of chronology, and while there may be an implicit narrative, it is impossible to trace a complete and definitive binding macrostructure. Yet within the genres into which the corpus is transcribed in L, smaller cycles can be traced: Usher (2008, p. 16) has identified five cycles of sonnets which are linked by thematic and prosodic continuity, indicating

[37] This approach is taken by Bowe (2020, p. 23); Picone (2003, pp. 105–22); Holmes (2000, pp. 47–55).

some sort of intentional order within them as opposed to random groupings. Leonardi (1994) has also sought to demonstrate that the 86 love sonnets of L are linked by a series of formal and thematic connections, though given that the anthology is of non-authorial ordering, it is impossible to conclude that this derives from Guittone's own hand. It is clear certainly that the macrotext, broadly speaking, does provide a form of narrative in line with the Augustinian autobiographical model, yet the anthological groupings by genre and lack of evidence of author ordering beyond the division of the corpus into the 'two Guittones' makes it difficult to draw any clear evidence of macrostructural devices used in ordering and sequencing across the wider poetic corpus.[38]

The poets of the *dolce stil novo*, with the marked exception of Dante in his *Vita nova*, did not organise their poems. Guinizzelli's poetry was not author-ordered into a macrostructure, although it does have some thematic consistency in exalting the beloved, with the exception of his early Guittonian material and the sensual sonnet *Chi vedesse a Lucia un var capuzzo*. Similarly, while Favati (1957, p. 121) traced a "percorso ideale" in his edition of Cavalcanti's *Rime*, there is no evidence to suggest that the corpus as transmitted bears any signs of author-ordering,[39] and the various attempts by modern critics to ascribe an organisational system to Cino's poetry, which mostly focus on categorical ordering,[40] simply create a false sense of coherence which the author himself did not construct. Poems were generally transmitted in anthologies and organised by genre. In this context, Petrarch alludes to the uniqueness of his own lyric sequence through his mention of the "vario stile" (*Rvf* 1, 5) in which he is writing. Capovilla (1998, p. 7) has suggested with this reference "Petrarca esprime insomma la consapevolezza della assoluta originalità della propria scrittura lirica, laboriosamente modellata e calibrata nella sua varietà stilistica".[41] However, *variatio*, as chapter 2 discusses, is also a central organisational feature of classical poetry collections, and thus Petrarch also hints at the classicising nature of the *Rvf*.

[38] Santagata (1979, p. 137) has suggested that the Guittonian corpus contains "un fenomeno strutturale", in which "connessioni tra i testi poetici" contribute towards a method of maintaining narrative continuity also visible in Dante's *Vita nova*, which "appare inaugurato proprio da Guittone."

[39] Gorni (2001) has suggested that a series of nine sonnets in the *Vat. Lat.* 3214 may be the result of an authorial choice attributable to Cavalcanti himself.

[40] See for example Giunta (2014), in his edition of Dante's *Rime*, who suggests ordering them in terms of metrical genre, or in alphabetical order to create what he calls "nell'ordine il più oggettivo e asettico possibile" (p. LXIII). Barbi (1914) has proposed an attempt to arrange them chronologically, thus giving us the ability to align the poems into Cino's biography tradition, allowing the interpretation of his evolving poetic style; D. De Robertis (2002, p. 1144), suggests that the order of the earliest manuscripts be reproduced, with the hope that these anthologies respect the order given to them by the poet himself. De Robertis also suggests that the order of the anthology *Giuntina di rime antiche* (1527) approximates what would be expected for a collection of Italian love lyric of the period.

[41] Grimaldi (2014) has argued that the medieval idea of lyric poetry was characterised by metrical and stylistic variety, linking this to the "vario stile" of the proemial sonnet.

There is, up until Dante and his *Vita nova*, no concrete evidence of the authorial systemisation and dissemination of poems gathered into a sequence in an author-organised macrotext. The *Vita nova* thus constitutes a significant revolution in the story of the construction of the Italian poetry book.[42] Santagata (1979, p. 136) has argued that it is "il testo che più di ogni altro è stato indicato come "precedente" del canzoniere petrarchesco", however this interpretation overstates the importance of the vernacular tradition in the construction of the *Rvf*, the structure of which Petrarch models above all else on the classical lyric collection. In addition, as the final part of this section suggests, the *canzonieretto* of Nicolò de' Rossi appears much closer to the *Rvf*: Petrarch's deliberate apathy towards Dante, as discussed in section 1.2, would also indicate that the *Vita nova* was a model to reject rather than to follow.

That the *Vita nova* is not a true precedent to the *Rvf* is evident in that its narrative is not achieved through the lyrics alone, but through the accompanying self-exegetic prose in which Dante elucidates the "complex and subtle story it tells of Dante's youthful errors" (Harrison, 2007, p. 36). It stages a narrative which moves from the errors and misconceptions of youth to a more mature and philosophising form of love for Beatrice, which is elaborated upon by the accompanying prose, adopting the style of the troubadour *razos*. Despite the inclusion of prose, the work has predominantly been regarded as a compilation of lyrics, with Holmes attributing this to the fact that it appears to be principally transmitted in manuscripts which are conceived of as lyric anthologies. What Dante classes as a *libello* can be regarded in one of two ways, classified by De Robertis (1980): either a narration fragmented by poetry, or as a lyric collection accompanied by commentary. Stillinger (1992) however notes that the prose is aware of the poetry, but the poetry is not aware of the prose, and it therefore seems logical to conceive of it as a lyric collection, despite the uniqueness of the prose aspect having no precedent in the Italian lyric tradition.

Although the *Vita nova* is not a true precedent to the *Rvf* as it is a combination of poetry and prose, it is still the earliest extant example of a self-contained, author-ordered poetic book in the vernacular. As such, there have been various studies on how the *libello* is organised and the narrative sustained. While there is a structure of some sorts, its nature has been disputed, with studies placing emphasis on different aspects. Firstly, it has been examined from a macrostructural perspective, with symmetrical correspondences across the macrostructre identified as a means of structuring the work. Secondly, there has been focus on narrative, with scholars tending to argue that the work has a tripartite narrative structure, which functions in a linear manner. And thirdly, debate has centred upon the rapport between the verse and prose elements of the work, which has a self-exegetic function.

[42] For more on narrative and structure of the *Vita nova* see Santagata (2011); Scott (2004); Moleta (1994); Gorni (1992); Branca (1988); Picone (1987); Mazzotta (1983); Mazzaro (1981); Picone (1979); Picone (1977); Singleton (1977); Gilson (1974); de Bonfils Templer (1973); de Robertis (1970); Shaw (1929).

In terms of formal organisational elements, a symmetrical aspect to the *Vita nova* has been identified, which was first suggested by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1836, cited in McKenzie, 1903).[43] This use of symmetry is evident in the oneiric frame to the work, though it is difficult to make a case of it being an overarching organisational principle. At the beginning of the work, Dante speaks of his "visione" (*VN*, 1.20), which urges him to pen the first sonnet. Beatrice appears to Dante as "la gloriosa donna de la mia mente" (*VN*, 1.2), and in thinking of Beatrice he explains that "uno soave sonno, […] una maravigliosa visione" (*VN*, 1.14), overwhelmed him, revealing God, who feeds Beatrice Dante's heart. A further vision occurs to Dante following the final sonnet, "apparve a me una mirabile visione" (*VN*, 31.1), the contents of which are undisclosed, and lead the author to cease writing. This frame to the work also relates to the authorial process itself, with the visions presented as instigating and stopping the penning of the text, as the beloved has the power to move the poet to compose lyrics, but is also herself created through them. However, the aspect of the divinely-inspired vision indicates that, unlike in classical love elegy where it is entirely the beloved who moves the poet to song, there is now also a religious aspect which drives the creative process.

While initial approaches to the structuring of the *Vita nova* focused on macrostructural symmetry, the focus has shifted towards more holistic and thematic reading throughout the 20th century, focusing on the development of a narrative across the work. Federzoni (1902) adopts Rossetti's early proposed division of the *libello* into three parts, seeing each of the three parts to have a further three subdivisions. The first part has the announcement, awakening of love, vicissitudes of love; the second part the praise of Beatrice, presentiment of her death, and her death; the third part the love for the donna gentile, reawakening of the first love, and announcement of a grand vision. Santagata (2011, p. 70) highlights that like the *Commedia*, the narrative of the *Vita nova* follows an ostensibly autobiographical structure:

> secondo uno schema fisso definabile, in estrema sintesi, come passaggio dal negativo al positivo o, meglio ancora, dall'imperfetto al più compiuto. Nella *Vita Nova*, attraverso una serie di vittorie e di fallimenti, si libera da una concezione amorosa di impronta 'cortese' (amare per avere) e perviene a una concezione dell'amore come

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[43] Rossetti saw a symmetry emanating from the central *canzone* 'Donna pietosa'. He also noted that the first and last sonnets contain two visions, thus giving the book an oneiric frame. However, he gives the number of poems as 33, including Guido Cavalcanti's reply to the first sonnet, thus rendering such observations ineffective. Norton (1859) further highlighted the symmetrical structure of the book, giving weight to the theory that the *Vita nova* is not just organised in terms of the narrative expounded upon by the accompanying prose, but also by formal connections on a macrostructural level. While the scheme does reveal correspondences, the elaborate nature of the division and symmetries within does not exclude the possibility that these correspondences are chance ones, and it is of course notable that Rossetti equally found correspondences when using a larger number of poems than is now accepted by modern commentators today. McKenzie (1903) identifies and discusses the symmetrical groupings of the sonnets around the *canzoni*, and suggests that Dante would have seen the power of combining separate poems into a symmetrically organic whole as a mark of superiority over the existing Provençal models. Scherillo (1902), however, strongly criticised the argument of an over-arching symmetrical structure to the *Vita nova*.

> sentimento gratuito (*caritas*), concezione che, a sua volta, è la premessa di un possibile balzo verso l'amore assoluto.

More recently, Took (2020, p. 184) has suggested a similar tri-partite division: "a preliminary moment turning on the substance and psychology of love as a matter of acquisition, a phase culminating in the mockery of the poet by his own aspirations as a lover; of a further moment turning upon his redefinition of love in terms less now of *acquisition* than of *disposition*." Love is not something to be sought, a physical gain, but rather a state of mind which makes possible the itinerary towards God, and Dante's state of mind which makes this possible has been induced by Beatrice. The *Vita nova* in this way presents a narrative which moves away from the material possession of and desire for the lady into a discourse on the appropriate way to love, and the relationship between love of lady and love of heaven. This happens in a broadly linear fashion in the course of the narrative, showing that the Dantean exploration of spiritual ascent is very different from Petrarch's oscillating conflict in the *Rvf*.

This narrative progression of the *Vita nova* is however not entirely sustained by the lyrics themselves, but also by the rapport between the poetic and prose elements. Picone (1977, p. 122) has commented that in the lyric element there is "ben poco di sostanzialmente nuovo rispetto ai suoi contemporanei e predecessori", with the first section of the *Vita nova* having a Guittonian flavour, the second with its poetry of *loda* mirroring Guinizzellian poetics, and the third part, while it does take on an additional "significazione ultraterrena", has Guinizzellian and Cavalcantian echoes. The narrative progression is embellished by the element of prose, which is novel invention on Dante's part and allows the poet to conduct a deeper self-reflection upon his own lyrics: "penetra nelle profondità dell'anima, scopre nuove verità, indica nuovi orizzonti all'uomo" (Picone, 1977, p. 123). Picone's analysis of this central function of the prose places the emphasis on the author's need to deepen the investigation of the superficial truths presented in the verse. Furthermore, the structure of the *libello* relies not upon continuous narrative sequence, but rather the parallel expositions of prose and verse. As Picone (1977, p. 123) sums up, "La prosa può scoprire l'*iter*, ma perché questo è contenuto nella poesia. La prosa cioè è la faccia visibile della verità che si nasconde nella poesia". More recently, Gragnolati (2010, p. 128) has suggested that the rapport between the poetry and prose "goes beyond discovering, re-constructing, and re-presenting the author's journey according to an ideal pattern, and involves rather the creation of an author through language." This indicates that the text goes beyond simple self-exegesis, and moves towards self-creation through the combination of lyric and parallel prose exposition.[44] It is however not only self-creation, but also a process of self-presentation, with the prose clarifying and curating the

[44] Harrison (2007, p. 37), has also suggested that the prose is necessary to clarify that while the amorous language is directed at a mortal woman, this love is in fact a divine love, with God at its centre. He argues that Dante's use of "a language of sacrality" to describe Beatrice would have been seen as scandalous at the time. The novelty of such a perception of a woman would require a justification, and thus the prose serves to elevate the discourse and transfer the language of *caritas* to its real recipient, God.

representation of the autobiographical narrative as presented in the verse. The prose is not only a vehicle for self-analysis, in an introspective sense, but also for refining the image as presented to the reader.

Dante's *Vita nova*, while self-ordered, is not a purely lyric work, where the narrative is sustained by poetry alone. Nicolò de' Rossi provides the very first extant example of what is presumed to be an author-ordered lyric sequence, though his work has largely been overlooked in favour of the *tre corone*. Brugnolo (1974, p. 9) has, however, emphasised the singular importance of his *canzoniere*: it is "un'opera di singolare importanza storica: si tratta infatti della prima raccolta di liriche della letteratura italiana giuntaci in una edizione curata dall'autore stesso e in parte addirittura autografa." Rossi therefore creates a novel innovation in the Italian tradition prior to Petrarch, in particular the 'micro-*canzoniere*' to his beloved Floruzza, which as a lyric sequence composed exclusively in verse exhibits signs of author manipulation in its arrangement. The two manuscripts containing Rossi's work show that it was compiled between 1325 and 1338, several years prior to the first clear indications of Petrarch beginning to conceive of his own lyric sequence as indicated in the *codice degli abbozzi* (1336–1338). Rossi's corpus consists of over 400 poems, transmitted by two manuscripts, the *Colombino* 7.1.32, Bib. Capitular di Siviglia (S), which is the most complete witness, and to a lesser extent the *Barberino Lat.* 3953 (B). It is however unclear how far Nicolò himself was involved in the construction of either or both manuscripts. [45]

That the arrangement of the poems in the manuscripts is broadly chronological in terms of both the events it recounts and the order of the poems being written is suggested by both internal chronological reference markers and the development of poetic style. While Holmes (2000, p. 145)

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[45] The MS Barberino Lat. 3953 (henceforth 'B') has led to extensive discussions about the possibility of an author-transcribed and ordered sequencing, while also giving rise to the suggest that Rossi poached from the works of other authors in the ms, as the poems themselves regurgitate worn topoi. Lega (1905) has asserted that Rossi's poems in B had possibly been assembled from other poems of different authors also present in B. Brugnolo (1974) has repeated this suggestion, emphasising many of the poems' lack of originality. This assertion that Rossi's poetry derives from other authors relies on the implication that Rossi himself organised B. Lega's evidence in favour of this is four-fold. Firstly, when one of the principal hands starts transcribing material, it always begins with one of Nicolò's *canzoni*. However, it must be noted that this only occurs on three occasions, so this piece of evidence alone is not in the least conclusive. Secondly, and more convincingly, this is the same hand that writes the explicit on the *canzone* 'Color di perla' as "factum per me nicolaum de Rubeo". Thirdly, this same hand corrects mistakes made by other scribes, and fourthly it also fills in the ends of the fascicles left blank by others. These things taken individually are circumstantial, yet the crux of the argument hangs on the explicit of poem 'Color di perla' being written either Rossi himself or under his direct instruction, rather than an apograph, which is not possible to prove. The discovery of MS Colombino 7.1.32 of the Biblioteca Capitular of Seville (henceforth 'S') by Jole Scudieri Ruggieri in 1955 has however thrown up problems regarding the authenticity of the transcription of MS B, as the hand proposed as Nicolo's in B is not the same as the one which transcribes the *canzoni* in MS S, and a further hand makes corrections in both manuscripts. One of the hands in S is the same hand as in B, but the explicit of *Color di perla* is actually written in a different hand, thus undermining any argument about the author of the script on B. Corti (1966) has also proved that three sonnets in the supposedly authorial hand of B were written in *tenzone* in three different dialects by three different authors named in the texts, none of which were Nicolò. Furthermore, the hand that transcribes the three *canzoni* of Nicolò in B is not the same as the one that transcribes them in S. Most recently, Holmes (2000) has cast further doubt on the potential autograph nature of B, suggesting that the mistakenly attributed sonnets mean that he could not have been the immediate editor of either S or B, seeing as the same hand makes corrections in both.

asserts that the poems are organised in "an ostensibly chronological sequence", she expresses doubt over whether the sequence is genuinely chronological, or the result of deliberate manipulation. The first explicitly datable poem does not occur until poem 177, but Belletti (1971, p. 87) has noted that the references to political and historical events in the poems do occur in their order of chronological succession. Brugnolo (1974–77) has assessed the corpus in terms of the development of poetic style, analysing the earlier poems of the sequence and noting a maturation of style which moves away a more archaic style of writing in the late Guittonian mode and more towards a technically modern and stylistically expressive poetics. This seems to complement the assertion that the poems are ordered broadly chronologically.

However, there is also present a clear element of author-manipulation, as emphasised by Brugnolo (1974) and Holmes (2000). This is particularly evident in the self-contained *canzonieretto* for Floruzza which consists of the first 100 poems of Nicolò's corpus and implies a deliberate structuring on the part of either the author himself or the scribe under his direction. The first indication of this intentional manipulations is that there is a physical marker in the manuscript: after the group of 100, there is a printed "CENTUM" in MS S. Aside from this physical division, Floruzza's name is mentioned almost 30 times in these 100 poems, and after the first 100, there is no further mention of her. The narrative of the grouping also appears to follow an auto-biographical arc of the author's love, with a chronological development commencing in the apparition of the Lady accompanied by love, and her death in poems 98 and 99. Certain chronological markers are also present in the form of four anniversary sonnets, which each commemorate the passing of a year since the falling in love of the poet. This factors in combination all indicate that the *canzonieretto*, at least, is the probable result of authorial organisation.

This self-contained *canzoniere* within a *canzoniere* provides an important precedent for Petrarch's *Rvf*, more so than the *Vita nova*, as it contains the only transmitted example of apparent author-ordering in a solely lyric sequence. Holmes (2000, p. 151) suggests that Petrarch may have had the chance to get to know Rossi's work, as he was present at the papal court in Avignon in 1339, although this is not verifiable. Holmes focuses primarily on the four anniversary sonnets as structural, and chronological, markers in the organisation of the sequence, a use of anniversary poems which is remarkably Petrarchan and perhaps even a novel invention on Nicolò's part. The first anniversary sonnet, marking a year in love, is poem 24, in which the poet appeals for the same sense of faith and constancy in Floruzza as monks have in God, finishing with an appeal to Floruzza to remove him from the anxious state she has kept him in, now that he has proved his fidelity to her.[46] The second anniversary

[46] The depiction of Floruzza herself is hardly innovative, following tropes common to vernacular love poetry. Poem 1 opens with the image of love descending from the sky "en forma d'ançelo" (1, 2) with Floruzza described by Amore as "quest amia stella" (1, 10). The second sonnet picks up tropes consistent with the *stilnovisti*, exalting the singular beauty of his Lady: "ché le vertù che donna dé avere / per rason prova esser tutee n ela" (2, 7–8); "né

sonnet, poem 63, laments the pain caused to him by Floruzza, which does not compare to the combined strife in the world, and the third, poem 75, similarly begs Floruzza to release him from the pain which is now bordering on death, as in the first anniversary sonnet. Holmes notes that between the 2nd and 3rd anniversary sonnets, there appears to be a change of tone, as for example in poem 66 the poet exalts love, stating that he must now serve love as he is loved in return. However, the poet's love, being conditional on the reciprocation of Floruzza, does not represent a true and virtuous love, but rather seeks the possession of his beloved in a material sense. The quick reversal to his usual state of torment and suffering by the following anniversary sonnet emphasises that this change in view of love was impermanent.

Nicolò's use of the anniversary poems, which have a clear narrative function, is surprisingly close to Petrarch. As Dutschke (1981, pp. 83–101) has noted, there is a similar function of the anniversary poems in the *Rvf*, whereby they work both in unison and against each other, creating phases of conflict involving potential resolution followed closely by irresolution and the continued torment, particularly in the first part of the *Rvf*. As a result, they create temporal reference points which emphasise the stasis of the lyric self through contrasting its lack of linear forward progression with the continuous march of measurable time. While the commemoration of temporal markers did already exist in the Occitan tradition, the use of them as part of a sustained narrative sequence is quite original on Nicolò's part. If Petrarch had been familiar with Nicolò's work, he certainly may have borrowed the idea for the *Rvf*. In any case, it is clear that their use by Petrarch was not novel, although certainly, as chapter 3 explores, the passage of time was central in Petrarchan subjectivity.

The stasis implied by the anniversary sonnets is indicative of the sometimes overtly erotic love felt by Nicolò which is placed in severe dissonance with his desire to reach paradise. In poem 53, the poet asks God for entry to Paradise to be with Floruzza, promising that if he enters he will bite into her beautiful flesh as a man in extreme hunger, as a man biting into pheasant or a partridge: "cum y faro de quele belle carne" (53, 14). While Holmes (2000, p. 152) terms this a "comical promise", I suggest that the comic aspect rather accentuates the poet's inability to experience the divine through his Lady due to the erotic nature of the love. For Nicolò, Floruzza's beauty lies in her *belle carne*, which of course cannot exist in Paradise, only her spiritual form, exposing the fallacy at the heart of this purportedly divine experience. The poet is thus a slave to the desires of the flesh, and Floruzza no longer appears in a heavenly beatified form, but is rather an instigator of carnal desire in the poet, expressed in this uncommon, possibly unique phrase. Though Nicolò's more sexualised descriptions of Floruzza in heaven would never be considered appropriate for Laura, the visionary aspect of the *Rvf* also indicates

mai Amore messe en cosa humana" (2, 13). She has angelic appearance and singular beauty, "Rivato è Amore en forma humana; / la dolçe vista lo mostra en ela" (30, 5–6), and this causes torment to the poet.

the tension between the divine and earthly forms of the beloved. In *Rvf* 359, for example, Laura notes that what Petrarch is seeking is her mortal form, as he reimagines her physical attributes.

A sequential reading illuminates this tension further: the closure of poem 53 with the reference to *belle carne* is almost jarring considering the following poems, 54–59, are very solemn and religiously-inflected. Poem 54 immediately invokes God, "Patre nostro, vero Deo celestino" (54, 1), followed by Christ, "Cristo, oblïa gi nostri peccati" (54, 9), yet the invocation to God and Christ comes without reference to love or his lady, suggesting a stark dichotomy between two opposing forces. Poem 55 continues this intense focus on the divine with a solemn religious invocation, bringing together biblical language of the "santo corpo incarnato / e cosecrato pane" (55, 1–2), with the "peccato" and the "sangue beato" of Christ "en croçe tormentato" (55, 3–5), before evoking the Fall of Man in Eden, "dal primo falare" (55, 6), and addressing Christ as the salvation of man from his original sin. In the same way, the poet wishes Christ to save his soul from depravity, so that his soul can finish in God's embrace: "ne le to braçe lo mi' spirto sia" (55, 14). Thus oscillation, non-linearity and contrast between profane and divine are woven into the narrative of the *canzonieretto*.

The poetry of Nicolò de' Rossi has remained understudied, as Brugnolo himself noted, and very little close reading of the text has been carried out. This final part attempts to address this paucity by continuing to carry out a close reading of the closing sequence of the work, showing that the oscillating and non-linear narrative presents multiple points of contact with the *Rvf*. In the final poems of Rossi's *canzonieretto* the narrative continues to centre around a sense of conflict rather than drawing towards resolution. Rossi experience a crisis "contra rasone" (89, 3), as he has applied reason to his impasse and is unable to provide a solution to whether to serve Floruzza or the divine, in the same way in which Petrarch's poetic *io* goes unanswered by *Ragione* in *Rvf* 360. This sense of helplessness and inability to resolve the situation is accentuated in the following sonnet, as the poet appeals for help in the face of the fear that his life may be lost: "Se ne dovesse perdere la vita / e l'anima col corpo abissarmi" (90, 1–2). There is concern for the state of his soul, as he acknowledges that his focus had been concentrated on earthly rather than heavenly matters, thus rendering an ascent to heaven impossible. This fear results in a penitent turn, with a solemn Latin prayer to Christ in the following poem, invoking the "spes firmi rectoris" (91, 4). In response to this concern of the previous poem that his soul will be lost along with his body, the poet appeals to Christ to "Fac me, domine, recte penitere" (91, 9), so that he will not be led "in inferno" (91, 10). The imperative directed at God suggests that he is not capable of repenting his actions under his own will, suggesting a failure to exert control over the passionate appetites. In the following sonnets there is no tone of repentance, demonstrating the immovable nature of the poet's will by itself: he is unable to control his own desires, which present the barrier to his repentance.

The closing sequence incorporates both an intense oscillation between profane love for Floruzza and the desire for salvation, as well as a sense of stasis. The poet remains in torment, as without

Floruzza he admits that "Ne la mia vita non avrò conforto" (92, 1). This stasis is emphasised through lexical connections to the previous anniversary sonnet: "Floruça amore, per ti m'adevene / ch'a la mia vita non avrò conforto, / se no mi lo dài, che lo pòi bene" (75, 12–14). The verbatim repetition emphasises that despite the passing of the years, his love for Floruzza has not changed, and there is again a sense of intransigence on the part of the poet, who is caught in this predicament as a result of the nature of his love for her. Petrarch likewise in the *Rvf* draws attention to narrative continuities and shifts through lexical connections, which take on an increased narrative and structural function (see for example the contrasting incipits of *Rvf* 229 and 230).

In poem 93, Nicolò attempts to abandon Floruzza, as she causes him only "pena, tormento e çascun dolore" (93, 7), bidding goodbye: "Adeo, Floruça, adeo, adeo, adeo" (93, 9). The attempted abandonment of Floruzza is indicative of the self-focused nature of the poet, where the torment of the poet and the fear that he may be lost without Floruzza is behind his attempt to reject her, rather than a desire to alter his mode of loving to a more virtuous one. Nicolò's only option is to abandon his beloved completely if he is to free himself from torment, as he is unable to love her virtuously, suggesting an incompatibility between the two competing types of love in the same way in which Petrarch attempts to abandon Laura in *Rvf* 363 in order to resolve his own moral dichotomy. Nicolò's abandonment is, however, short lived, as the following poem is an anniversary poem which promises to always serve Floruzza: "ché l'alma e 'l corpo e lo mio disio / sempre serà, Floruç', a ti servire" (94, 13–14). The rapid nature of these oscillations between divine and carnal love paints a picture of a conflicted psyche, unable to resolve the dichotomy of desire, which is achieved through the sequencing of poems.

Unlike Petrarch and Dante, where the death of the beloved opens a new phase of relations with her and the divine, the Nicolò's *canzonieretto* concludes with the death of the beloved in poems 97 and 98. Poem 98 mourns that Floruzza has been removed from the earth by God, claiming that the world was not worthy of her: "de ti no degno" (97, 11). Poem 99 is on first glance a prayer to the Virgin, opening with the conventional invocation of "O madre beata, dolçe e bella" (99, 1), yet the imagery and address of the poem clearly refers to Floruzza, who is now beatified in heaven, and addressed as "o amor mio" (99, 4), and described as "Tu neta, tu pura, tu più che stella / adorna, e saça, caro disio" (99, 5–6). Thus she is blurred with the Virgin in heaven, as opposed to other invocations to the Virgin in the *canzonieretto* which are less ambiguous.[47] The rhetorical question "che ti uçise e mi à lasato?" (99, 11) expresses the poet's desperation that Floruzza has died, yet he has been left behind. Without her he is unable to live: "No posso più" (99, 12). The death of the beloved marks the end of the love narrative, as opposed to Dante and Petrarch, for whom the beloved's death marks a new, and more significant stage in the relationship with the beloved.

[47] For example this occurs in poem 49: "Matre excelente, vergene Maria" (49, 1).

The climax of the cycle in the 100th poem is a hypothetical musing on the nature of love and its demands through a *replicatio* recapping his experience of *Amor*. Nicolò sees the potential for *salute* in the worship of the Lady, yet that salvation remains unachieved through his love for Floruzza. She is mentioned no more after the closing of the *canzonieretto*: the story of his love for her finishes with her death, proving more strongly than anything else that his love for her was corporeal and transitory. He is not able to love her in a virtuous way, and her salvific powers, implied through the blurring of her image with that of the Virgin, therefore go untapped. Ultimately, the organisation of the poems does not present a consistent and linear narrative at the close of the sequence, but rather a conflicted representation of the poet's love for Floruzza, giving the sense of a poet unable to utilise love for a mortal in a virtuous manner. In this way, Petrarch is much closer to Nicolò than he is the linear narrative of Dante's *Vita nova*.

In conclusion, the disparate nature of the vernacular tradition shows that lyric was in the Duecento and Trecento a fundamentally unstable medium, and while the author-organised sequence was beginning to emerge in embryonic form, it was not yet codified. Guittone's corpus explored a transition in worldly view, in an Augustinian conversion which saw him reject mortal love completely in favour of a moralising and religious poetry, exalting God. Yet while betraying an autobiographical narrative, the corpus does not constitute an author-ordered macrotext. Dante's *Vita nova* is the first definite example of a selective and author-ordered collection of poems, with its self-exegetical prose setting a precedent for an introspective poetics, although the narrative is not sustained in verse alone. As emphasised by Brugnolo, Nicolò de' Rossi's *canzoniere* is certainly under-valued in terms of the contribution it makes in terms of being the first lyric sequence which exhibits probable author-ordering, although the self-contained *canzonieretto* is but a part of the larger corpus and does not stand independently. As such, the vernacular tradition provided no clear (extant) precedents for the *Rvf*, although Petrarch draws on elements which were starting to emerge at the time.

It is also clear that attention was increasingly being given to curating lyric sequencing in vernacular poetry at the time. Poetry was moving away from an oral medium, one which was recited, spoken or set to music and sung. In this climate, some poets were becoming concerned with systemising their lyrics in written form. Lyrics were no longer transient and ephemeral, experienced in the moment, but also intended for circulation in a material form, although orally performed poems were also recorded and transmitted. The transition to a written medium however offered the potential for posterior interventions on the part of the author, particularly with regard to manipulating the order of poetry in the recorded sequence. An author could reconsider the order of his poems, and intervene so that the work was transmitted in the form that he saw fit, as opposed to how others recorded it. Yet despite these developments, vernacular poetry before Petrarch had not explored the potential for a truly self-contained, author-organised and solely lyric sequence. This offered Petrarch great scope for innovation in the vernacular, which, as he himself had noted in the *Seniles*, would be easier to do than if he were

working in Latin. Consequently, in the *Rvf*, he sought to create a vernacular first: stabilising the medium through not just the imposition of a classical lyric model, but doing so to surpass the poetic achievements of his contemporaries.

1.2 Love in vernacular poetry

The revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf* are framed by vernacular poetic explorations of the nature of mortal love and its relationship with the divine, suggesting that Petrarch shows the uniqueness of his own lyric sequence by reconciling a classical model with contemporary poetic developments in the vernacular. In his revisions to the closure of the *Rvf*, we see a movement away from attempted reconciliation of Laura with aspirations of salvation to a narrative which attempts to reject her. This changing narrative dialogues with vernacular poetic explorations on the role of a mortal beloved in the relationship to the divine. Broadly there are two ways in which this relationship is approached in the vernacular tradition, within which Petrarch seeks to locate his own lyric endeavours. Firstly, this section explores the method of abandoning the mortal beloved entirely, seeing her as incompatible with divine love and a distraction from salvation, as is exhibited in Guittone's output. The second part focuses on the reconciliation of a mortal beloved with the divine, where she appears in an intercessory role in a narrative of spiritual ascent, evident in the increasing theologisation of the beloved in the *dolce stil novo* poetics of Guinizzelli and Dante. This two-part discussion, addressing existing scholarship on vernacular poetry, lays the framework for assessing the differing narrative conclusions postulated in the revisions to the *Rvf* in chapter 4.2.

In the Duecento and Trecento, poetry was becoming a vehicle for philosophical discussions on love rather than being merely an expression of erotic desire: Usher (2008, p. 12) suggests that Giacomo da Lentini's poetry is "characterised by a constant questioning about the nature of love", and the erotic desires for the beloved seem almost as pretexts for philosophical exploration. That Petrarch was deeply concerned with exploring moral concerns through poetic as well as prose mediums is evident in both the self-examination of the *Secretum*, to be examined in more detail in chapter 4.1, and its poetic counterparts in *Rvf* 264 and *Rvf* 360, two *canzoni* which initiate the second part of Petrarch's lyric sequence and the final micro-sequence respectively. *Rvf* 360 essentially restates the polarised debate of the *Secretum* and *Rvf* 264, with one part of the self arguing in favour of the salvific values of love for Laura, and the other part arguing that she is incompatible with his desired salvation. That this debate frames the second half of the *Rvf* indicates Petrarch's concern about resolving it in the final sequence. In *Rvf* 360, the two parts of the self present a case in front of the tribune of reason. The poetic *io* argues that mortal love is a distraction, and that it has diverted him from his moral obligations to both God and to himself: "Questi m'à fatto men amare Dio / ch'i' non deveva, et men curar me stesso" (*Rvf* 360, 31–32). In return, *Amore* argues in favour of Laura's salvific values, and that she can be a means of ascent to the divine: "da volar sopra 'l ciel li avea dat' ali, / per le cose mortali, / che son scala al Fattor" (*Rvf* 360, 137–139). Petrarch, at this late point in the *Rvf* was clearly conflicted about how to resolve the love narrative, and whether Laura was a foil to divine love or a facilitator of it.

As DellaNeva (1982, p. 202) has suggested, even a project conceived with a self-reflexive biographical intent must be situated within a literary tradition, if it is to convey meaning to the reader. Petrarch's conception of the *Rvf* engages with his near contemporaries in discussing the nature of love. In *Rvf* 70, Petrarch concludes each of the five stanzas with a citation from an incipit from an author from the vernacular tradition: Arnaut Daniel,[48] Guido Cavalcanti, Dante, Cino da Pistoia, and then finally a self-citation from his own *Rvf* 23. In the same way in which Ovid had self-inserted into the classical tradition by listing his predecessors in the *Tristia* (4.10, 51–4), Petrarch presents himself as the heir to the Occitan and Italian traditions. Holmes (2015, p. 161) has suggested that Petrarch cites these authors to suggest that they are in fact models to be rejected: that each citation is contradicted in the stanza which follows it indicates that they are influences which must be counteracted, rather than played into. However, I suggest that Petrarch is in fact playing into these influences, but only to illustrate his own distance from them. In terms of narrative, Petrarch certainly is not suggesting anything revolutionary in the *Rvf*, as models existed for both the rejection of the beloved, as well as reconciling love for her with the divine. It is the imposition of the classical lyric model upon a disparate tradition which is the novelty: Petrarch is working within a framework in order to prove his own distance from it, and to emphasise his own individuality with regard to his vernacular near-contemporaries through the creation of a unique literary model.

1.2.1 "Questi m'à fatto men amare Dio" (*Rvf* 360, 31): rejecting the mortal beloved

Petrarch in the revisions to the *Rvf* eventually settles upon a narrative which broadly attempts to reject his mortal beloved and in order to secure his salvation. In Occitan poetry, in which Petrarch was well-versed, partly perhaps due to his time in Avignon,[49] there emerged a trend of going beyond the courtly themes of unrequited and passionate love, and instead seeking to reconcile it with the divine aspirations of the poet, directing the poetic discourse towards love of the divine rather than love of the mortal. The courtly love of Occitan troubadour poetry, with its focus on the figure of the lady, combined the classical notion of the slave to love through mortal passions with a more religiously inflected sense of respect for the woman, extolling her virtues and beauty which inflamed passions in the poet.[50]

The poetry of Folquet de Marselha (c. 1150–1231) combines two elements: one motivated by a secular love, and one motivated by a divine love. This likely reflects his biographical experience, as he experienced a religious conversion around 1195, joining the Cistercian Order. The poems transmitted

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[48] A mis-citation, from a poem that Petrarch erroneously considered to have been written Arnaut Daniel.

[49] Holmes (2015, p. 162), goes as far to suggest that Petrarch perhaps even had a preference for Provençal poets over Italian ones.

[50] For general introductions to Troubadour poetry, see Gaunt (1999); Topsfield (1978). Holmes (2015, p. 155), argues that Petrarch consciously adopts the language and style of the troubadour *fin'amors*.

to us, which likely represent only a small part of his poetic output, in a biographical reading suggest a move away from the positive view of love expressed in the first nine poems in the sequence transmitted, through the five that present a negative view of love, and into the so-called Crusade songs which present a strongly religious climax to the poems. In his later compositions, we find a very defined sense of what Barolini (2007, p. 119) terms "the futility of earthly life and earthly love". This is particularly clear in the *planh* for Barral:

> Et er, qan foz plus poiatz,
> faillitz a guisa de flor
> que, qand hom la ve genssor,
> adoncs ill chai plus viatz;
> mas Dieus nos mostr' ab semblans
> que sol lui devem amar
> e·l chaitiu segl' azirar
> on pass' om com vianans,
> qu'autre pretz torn' en desonor
> e totz autre sense en folor
> mas de cels que fan sos comans. [51] (7, 45–55)

Barolini (2007, p. 120) argues that the *"planh* for Barral illuminates the spiritual condition required for conversion from human to divine love", which is the recognition that as passengers in a transitory world, the only sure knowledge is that of God. The central moral message is here that recognition of the state of man's condition is vital to understand the necessity of placing love in God alone. While stopping short, however, of an introspective poetics, the phrase "sol lui devem amar" shows the capacity of lyric to convey also a spiritual message. Likewise, Petrarch is aware of the primacy of loving God above all, when he states in *Rvf* 264 that he has prioritised "mortal cosa amar con tanta fede quanta a Dio sol per debito convensi" (*Rvf* 264, 99–100). The highest form of devotion, as Petrarch states, should be owed to God rather than a mortal being, indicating that for the internal conflict to be resolved, Laura must be rejected.

Folquet asserts that should man wish to serve God, then all else must be put aside, indicating that a mortal beloved should be rejected completely to devote oneself to God. In *canso* 19, the final poem, Folquet emphasises the primacy of service to God, for which man must put aside other concerns:

[51] 'And now, when you have most risen up, you fall down like a flower which, when one sees it as its most beautiful, then it falls the soonest; but God shows us with [such] examples that we must love only Him and despise the miserable world where man passes through as a voyager, for other worth turns into dishonor and all other understanding into madness, except [the understanding] of those who carry out his commands.' (Quoted from and trans. Barolini, 2007, p. 120)

Huemais no·y conosc razo

ab que nos puscam cobrir,

si ja Dieu volem servir.[52] (19, 1–3)

For Folquet, service to God requires the uncovering of the self, the discovery of inner knowledge which allows man to place his love truly in God, rather than in mortal forms of love. God is the only constant in man's transitory experience on earth, and faith must be placed unequivocally in Him. In this way, Folquet uses the medium of poetry to enact what appears to be a conversion narrative, turning away from a positive view of love to the rejection of mortal love as a necessity to serve God.

While Folquet's limited corpus provides little evidence for the treatment of the relationship between the beloved and the divine, Guiraut Riquier's poetry provides a model for the *Rvf* in many aspects, in particular the oscillating relationship between the lyric self and his *belh deport* as he seeks to explore the nature of his love for her. While it is impossible to prove author-ordering in the sequencing of the poems, Paden (2004, p. 38) links Guiraut Riquier as the Occitan poet closest to Petrarch in terms of the consistency of love for the singular lady: in *Pus sabers nom val ni sens* he confesses to have loved his lady for twenty years, been disenchanted for five, and now once again consumed with twice the pain: "eras ay de mal dostans" (23, 10).[53] Similarly, Petrarch's singular obsession with Laura is delineated by the presence of anniversary poems which chronicle the twenty one years spent in love with her, and the ten spent mourning (*Rvf* 364, 1–2). As Riquier is returned to the metaphorical shackles of the lover, so Petrarch vacillates between the varying degrees of passion and rejection of Laura, with his will torn and incapable of freeing itself from her.

Riquier's poetry shows an understanding of the fallible nature of physical love, thus betraying the sense of a conversion narrative. Shortly before his beloved's death, Riquier begins what Holmes (2000, p. 108) terms "a spiritual conversion away from his desire to physically possess his lady", indicating the intention to sublimate erotic desires. Unable to obtain the *belh deport*, he loses belief in the physical beauty which motivates his desire: "ia mais de tant nols creiria" (33, 4).[54] This suggests the fallibility of a love based in physical appearance, in mortal beauty, but also indicates that the beloved and her distracting qualities is an obstacle to be overcome, and that the mind must be unclouded to realise the distraction she poses. In essence, the beloved is the pivot around which the experience of spiritual conversion rotates, a means of testing the potential of mortal love for spiritual fulfilment and, once its inadequacy is realised, prompts the soul to search for a higher form of love.

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[52] 'Henceforth I know no reason, with which we can cover ourselves, if indeed we want to serve God.' (Quoted from and trans. Barolini, 2007, p. 118).

[53] 'now I have twice the pain' (Quoted from and trans. Holmes, 2000, p. 109).

[54] 'Never again will I believe in them' (Quoted from and trans. Holmes, 2000, p. 107).

As Riquier begins to realise the fallibility of physical love, he begins a redirection of the poetic discourse away from profane love. The *belh deport* is revealed to have died in poems 37 and 38, roughly two thirds of the way through the transmitted sequence: Bossy (1991, p. 284) argues that, as with Petrarch, the timing of the death of the beloved is strategical, with Riquier therefore providing a model for the death of Laura two-thirds of the way through the *Rvf*. Unlike Petrarch, whose reaction to the death of his beloved is intense grief, Riquier foregrounds the religious aspect of the *belh deport* to begin to deconstruct her image, and "enthusiastically redirects the discourse of the *fin'amors*" to the Virgin Mary (Boss, 1991, p. 285). Riquier's courtly love presenting a transferral of amorous intent to the Virgin reflects the increasing tendency of thirteenth-century Provençal poets to sing of the Virgin as the highest model of virtue, having discovered her as the pinnacle of the virtues exhibited in their earthly lady. In the *canso* "En tot quant", the imagery of the *belh deport* is sublimated into that of Mary; Bossy (1991, p. 285) argues that "Guiraut decisively renounces worldly pleasures and sublimates his love into pure devotion." Mary is shown in "pus ses lieys ges deport / non treup de Belh Deport" (40, 7–8) as the poet's new lady, who governs the 'good conduct' of all ladies, and thus by definition an extension of the *belh deport*, as the imagery of the poet's mortal Lady is exchange for that of the Virgin. In Riquier's type of love, it is not the lady's intercessory powers which will direct him towards the divine, but rather it is her failure as an object of desire which motivates the change.

For both Petrarch and Riquier, the attempted transition from the mortal beloved as intercessor to the Virgin involves a sublimation of amorous language in favour of the devotional. Many poems after the *belh deport*'s death subvert "commonplaces of love poetry to religious meanings", such as poems 44, *Gauch ai* and 49, *Kalenda de mes* (Bossy, 1991, p. 285). The former presents the dejection and elation of the lover, which evolves into the idea of the lover as a sinner who is hopeful of Mary's guidance towards a "temperate, rational and virtuous life" (ibid.). The poem closes with an invocation to the Virgin:

Verges, d'onor etz creyssensa

al human linhatge grans,

quar etz maires e pregans

del filh de Dieu ab honor

per nos: donc datz nos s'*amor*. (44, 51–55)

In contrast with the opening lines of the poem, which present the rejoicing lover, hoping that his experience with love would be "ricx e benanans" (44, 2), the closing invocation prays for a new kind of love, the love of Christ. The lady and object of love thus morphs from the human to the divine. Poem 49 similarly expresses the desire of the poet to have his lady turn him into a "veray amador", a true lover, wishing to be relieved from "ma folhor", my folly. The folly is that of placing love in a mortal

woman, and Riquier prays for the help of his Lady to help him towards being a *veray amador*, that is a higher, and religious form of love. This is opposed to "la belha qu'ieu ador" (49, 22), the beauty of the earthly *belh Deport* which is rhymed with *folhor* (44, 20), drawing attention to the folly of placing love in his mortal lady. This constitutes almost a binary opposition, with divine love opposed to mortal love in a dichotomy between truth and folly: to gain true love, mortal love must be rejected entirely.

However, the full sublimation of Riquier's sensual love is muted by the overlap in language between the *belh deport* and Mary; "la belha qu'ieu ador" (49, 22) is applicable to both ladies. This lack of clarity hints at a reluctance to move on from mortal love, in a similar way to which Nicolò had blurred Floruzza with the Virgin. Poem 27 highlights this ambiguity: while it starts with a rejection of his "folhia" which he called "amor", it concludes with a lexical ambiguity of referring to the Virgin as the *belh deport:* "Ma dona puesc nomnar ben per dever/ mon belh deport pois ay mon bon esper / quilh me fassa selh que razos messenha / per que la prec per merce quem revenha".[55] Holmes notes in her translation that while *revenha* here in the context of Mary means 'cures me', it also means 'returns to me'. Taking this further, the use of *belh deport* blurs the identity of the *belh deport* and the Virgin referred to under the same name, and thus the ambiguous lexicon of the final line can both represent the desire for salvation brought by the Virgin, as well as the return of his earthly beloved. In the *canso* to the Virgin, however, the attributes of the *belh deport* are plainly transferred to the Virgin. The Virgin rather than the *belh deport* is now "lauzada" (33, 25), the object of praise in lyric by the poet, and significantly she can "traire / nos de perilhos dezaire" (33, 8–9), take us away from perilous desire, thus acting as a foil to the sensual love felt for the *belh deport.* However, the identity of the *belh deport* remains blurred with that of the Virgin: "Ala verge degna maire damor / de quieu ai fag bel deport" (25, 45–46).[56]

Petrarch appears to be following a similar model in his Prayer to the Virgin, which also creates a lexical overlap between the Virgin and Laura, with the Virgin assuming many of Laura's characteristics, indicating that Petrarch has been misdirecting his amorous intent. *Rvf* 366 had been intended since the Malatesta form to be the concluding poem of the sequence, indicating the wish to have a religious climax to the *Rvf.* Unlike Riquier, Petrarch exclusively invokes the Virgin only in the closing *canzone*. Typical Marian imagery and epithets associated with the Virgin have previously been applied to Laura in the *Rvf*, thus creating a blurring of the boundary between the mortal figure of Petrarch's lady, and God's lady. The word "bella" is the most common adjective in the work, and thus the invocation of *Vergine bella* as the opening epithet immediately blurs the boundary between the

[55] 'I can certainly call my lady my Good Conduct, since I have my good hope that she make me such a one that reason may teach me, which is why I pray her for mercy, that she may cure me [*or:* return to me]' (Quoted from and trans. Holmes, 2000, p. 115).

[56] 'To the Virgin, worthy mother of Love, of whom I made Good Conduct' (Quoted from and trans. Holmes, 2000, p. 116).

former characteristics applied Laura, and the initial imagery of the Virgin. Similarly, many of the characteristics ascribed to the Virgin in the *canzone* have already been used of Laura, including *dolce* (*Rvf* 23, 69), her *pura fede* (*Rvf* 347, 7), and *benedetta* (*Rvf* 290, 12).[57] In this way, the Virgin becomes descriptively ambiguous in the same way as Laura, and the boundary between heavenly and earthly characteristics is revealed to have been blurred through the imagery of Laura as a heavenly object and virtuous object of love throughout the work.

However, Petrarch alters the language applied to Laura at the same time as he invokes the Virgin, indicating that at the close of the *Rvf* he is attempting to resolve the lexical ambiguities which have surrounded Laura in the intercessory role, and distance himself from existing models. Holmes (2000, p. 113) emphasises that in Riquier's poetry, "the transformation is not a complete one, however: the *belh deport* is never entirely banished, nor is the Virgin ever entirely present, but one gradually shades into the other." The language of both the *belh deport* and the Virgin is never distinguished even at the end of the sequence. Petrarch, however, as opposed to Riquier, also attempts to redefine his image of Laura at the same time as reassigning the former language of Laura to the Virgin. Thus, at the same time Laura becomes a "Medusa" who along with error "m'àn fatto un sasso" (*Rvf* 366, 111). Petrarch therefore creates in the closing poem a distinction between the two, which remains elusive in the poetry of Riquier: at the same time as transferring the language of praise from Laura to the Virgin, Petrarch attempts to deconstruct the image of Laura to create a new intercessory model with the Virgin at its centre. In the revisions to the closing sequence, the moving of *Rvf* 365 to precede the *canzone* to the Virgin, which describes Laura as a "cosa mortale" (*Rvf* 365, 2), serves to anticipate this transferral of language, as Petrarch attempts to replace the mortal with the divine.

That the *canzone* demonstrates a true and genuine desire to move beyond Laura is suggested by a letter from the *Seniles*, which lauds Mary as the one true intercessor embodying the highest virtue known to the human race:

> Quod si forte, qui per aulas mortalium dominorum creberrimus mos est, intercessione tibi opus apud Dominum esse credideris, prona semper ac facilis ad gratiam via est. Non eges pecunia, non dolis aut blanditiis, sed pietate ac fide. Est illi virgo mater, qua nil unquam mitius sol vidit, nil humanius nostra habuit natura; iam vero humilitas tanta est ut et eam celo Dignam fecerit et ad terram celi Dominum inclinare potuerit, quando hanc vel solam vel precipuam respexisse videtur Deus homo mox futurus, dum ydoneam genitricem nostra sibi de specie prepararet; denique omnis in hac virtus ita supereminet ut preter solam filii sui animam in nulla

[57] Other descriptions of Laura are used for the Virgin: *saggia, pura, intera, benedetta, santa, sola, dolce, chiare, sacra humana, nemica (d'ogoglio), unica*. Prier (1993, p. 51), suggests that this crossover between lexis demonstrates "the porosity of spiritual transformation" which is present in the work.

unquam alia tam excellens fuerit. Hec fidelium, licet peccatorum, preces filio porrigit et pia illis veniam poscit instantia;[58]

(*Sen*. 10.1.74–77)

All the virtues so stand out in Mary that, except the soul of her Son alone, they have never been so excellent in any other soul. Whereas Laura had previously been praised as having the highest virtue on earth, the "fior di vertù" (*Rvf* 351, 7) and "la radice / di mia salute" (*Rvf* 351, 13–14), the Virgin now occupies this position, assuming her traditional role of intercessor with God.

As the classical lyric beloved acts as a means of generating poetic glory for the poet through a reciprocal relationship with the concept of poetic production, so has Riquier's poetry been linked with glory created through the beloved: Mölk (1962) has suggested that *belh deport* is a representation of Riquier's efforts to gain recognition for his poetic talent. This applies also of the *Rvf*, where Laura is intrinsically connected with the laurel, meaning the concept of poetry itself is tied to the beloved, and lyric production is dependent upon her actions, as is to be discussed more fully from a classical perspective in the following chapters. The *belh deport*, in the same way as Laura, does not reciprocate the love of the poet, and thus as Holmes (2000, p. 108) points out, Riquier instead turns to his old Patron, Alfonso X, for the "grat e iauzir" (thanks and enjoyment) that he could not obtain from the *belh deport*. Near the end of the transmitted order, in *vers* 27, Riquier recapitulates the project of his *libre*, laments the loss of the power of his song, and rejects the conflicting emotions experienced in the poems:

Per que nom deu aver sabor
mos chans ques ses alegretat
mas dieus ma tal saber donat
quen chantan retrac ma folhor
mo sen mon gauch mon desplazer
e mon dan e mon pro per ver
qua penas dic ren ben estiers.[59] (27, 9–16)

[58] 'But if perchance, as very often is the case in the halls of mortal masters, you believe that you need an intercessor with the Lord, there is always a direct and easy path to His grace. You do not need money, nor trickery, nor flattery, but piety and faith. There is the Virgin Mother whose kindness has never been equalled under the sun, and whose gentleness has never been equalled in our entire race. Her humility is such that it made her worthy of heaven, and it was able to bend the Lord of heaven to earth, since God, soon to become man, seems to have considered her alone paramount while preparing for Himself a fitting mother from our species. Finally, all the virtues so stand out in her that, except the soul of her Son alone, they have never been so excellent in any other soul; she presents the prayers of the faithful, though sinners, to her Son, and with pitying insistence seeks forgiveness for them.'

[59] 'Therefore my song, which is without happiness, must have no savor for me, but God gave me so much wisdom that in singing I retract my folly, my sense, my joy, my displeasure, and my loss and my gain, truly, for scarcely do I say anything well otherwise.' (Quoted from and trans. Holmes, 2000, p. 117).

Holmes (2000, p. 117) argues that this *vers* also demonstrates an awareness of his own place in the lyric tradition, both through the lamentation "mas trop suy vengutz als derriers", 'but I came too late', and the following complaint that no one appreciates the "belh saber de trobar", beautiful knowledge of lyric composition.[60] Riquier's poetry therefore addresses the tension between the static medium of a written and organised anthology, with the temporal, and therefore narrative, power of the spoken lyric. The sequencing of the *libre* (although of unclear authorial intent) as presented in written form attempts to restore the narrative sense which has been lost through the performance of poems sequentially in moments of time, with the note of melancholy perhaps expressing the limitations of the capacity of the written word to express the temporal and transitory aspect of the sung lyric.

Yet the desire for worldly fame and the consciousness of one's own place in lyric tradition is tempered by the desire also for spiritual gratification, suggesting that seeking worldly fame and seeking virtue in tandem are not mutually exclusive, as Petrarch's revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf* will also indicate. Mölk (1962, p. 363) initially noted that the appeals for a courtly patron are not present in any songs in which Riquier turns to either God or Mary.[61] Building on this, Holmes (2000, p. 113) has argued that this signifies that the poet is "no longer seeking as reward the immediate material gratification or applause available in the performance situation, [which are] temporal goods that can be granted or denied him." Holmes in this way sees Riquier's anthologising of his works into a *libre* as a method of immortalising his words in time, thus making them available for the type of heavenly communion imagined by Augustine in *Confessions* 9.10 as being beyond temporal language. This is achieved by Riquier through his readdressing of his songs to the Virgin in the absence of his Lady's acceptance of his efforts: "quem a dalques distort / e fas comte distort / pus domnay quen ten sos / et motz".[62] The transferal of amorous intent to the Virgin in this way suggests that the production of written word in itself is important as means of communicating with the divine, in the dedication of the lyrics to the Virgin as intercessor.

Petrarch's *Rvf* offers many points of overlap with Riquier's *libre*. Although this does not suggest that Petrarch was seeking to imitate or engage specifically with Riquier's work, he was evidently setting himself within the emerging literary tradition. Riquier's beloved acts as a pivot around which he explores his own relationship with the divine, resulting in an oscillating conversion narrative in which the poet seeks to reject earthly love after realising the fallible nature of physical beauty. However, the blurred identity of the Virgin and the *belh deport* indicates that erotic desire is never truly

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[60] Holmes (2000, p. 117), suggests that the poet's use of the word 'barat', fraud, might be a reference to written composition, given the lament of the lack of worldly appreciation of *trobar*.

[61] However, Holmes (2000, p. 113), notes that Riquier's love for the divine is still a courtly one, as indicated by his address of God as "Dieus cortes" (Courtly God) in *vers* 15, "Mentaugutz". Likewise, Mary is still a courtly figure: "midons de cort es".

[62] "For she turned me aside from something else, and I consider myself saved since I have a lady who understands music and words" (Quoted from and trans. Holmes, 2000, p. 113).

sublimated: Petrarch, while adapting his lexis of Laura for the Virgin, takes care to redefine Laura's image at the same time as the Virgin assumes the lexis previously applied to Laura. Petrarch, this contribution has suggested, was aware of the importance of delineating the difference between the two ladies, in order to show that his will was ready to change through a transition to a new intercessory lady as mediator of Grace, but also made efforts to distinguish himself from existing models where the Virgin and beloved began to merge into one.

The capacity of poetry to facilitate a literary conversion narrative is also explored in the Italian vernacular through the poetry of Guittone, who provides a model for a lyrical "experimentation with a poetics of Christian morality" (Holmes, 2000, p. 138). Written prior to Riquier's *libre*,[63] his corpus provides a precursor to the poetic staging of a conversion away from sensual and erotic love, in the mode of Augustine's *Confessions*. Guittone's love poetry is home to several competing influences, namely the Sicilian School and Provençal poetry, which is apparent not only in the oscillating motifs but also his lexis which combines Sicilian vocabulary with Provençal translations.[64] As Usher (2008, p. 16) notes, Guittone was required to innovate in blending the two traditions, as the Sicilians provided no models for moral poetry with their "rarefied concentration on love phenomenology." The conversion away from erotic love towards spiritual and moral poetry also takes an autobiographical flavour, similar to Riquier: Guittone around 1265 underwent a religious conversion and abandoned his wife and three children to enter the lay Franciscan order of the *Milites Beatae Virginis Mariae* or *Frati godenti*. Following this, his poetry is characterised by what Bowe (2020, p. 21) terms "religious didacticism".

While again not an author-ordered macrotext, Guittone post-conversion rejects mortal love entirely, seeing it as a carnal love opposed to love of God, in an Augustinian style poetics. Usher (2008, p. 16) emphasises that "Guittone's ambitions for the medium were crucial in raising the intellectual status and territory of vernacular verse", as he blended Sicilian influence with the Provençal troubadour tradition to create a morally inflected poetry with narrative and religious aspirations. Key to doing so is the establishment of the two personages, the *Guittone* of the conventional love lyric, and the *Frate Guittone* of the moralistic and spiritual poetry, suggestive of the poetic and moral conversion enacted within his lyrics. This change is also given a temporal aspect in what is labelled his conversion poem, *Ora parrà s'eo saverò cantare*, with *Ora* indicating a past from which the poet has changed and rejected. While in general critics have called attention to the ideological continuity between the two "Guittones" of love poetry and religious poetry, the conflicts and oppositions typical of love lyric morph into the understanding of a conflict between two types of love which set the two in opposition to another. After Guittone's conversion from mortal love to the divine, he refers to love of women as "follore", and love

[63] Riquier comes very late in Provençal tradition, representing the last major troubadour poet whose work has survived to us.

[64] See Usher (2008, pp. 15–16) for more on Guittone's blending of Sicilian and Provençal.

of God as “savere”, the same pair of terms which Riquier reused in “mas dieus ma tal saber donat / quen chantan retrac ma folhor”.[65] The redefinition of mortal love as folly, or madness, which blurs the senses and prevents ‘knowledge’ of God is a key feature of the more religiously inflected vernacular poetry. Holmes (2000, pp. 55–56) notes also the allusions to the Augustinian distinction between *uti* and *frui* in the *canzone* ‘Vergogna ho, lasso’, a poem which stages the choice of God over material joys as a return from a period of straying to the original beloved.

The distinction between mortal love and love of God is made clearer through the microsequencing of poems, providing a model of how direct palinodic contrasts in sequence can make repentance more forceful and absolute. The *canzone* “O tu de nome amor guerra de fatto”,[66] emphasises in its incipit the deceitful nature of *amor*, which in disguise secretly wreaks *guerra* upon the poet, in a remarkably close anticipation of Petrarch’s *Rvf* 360 in which the poet will argue the same (although, as I argue in chapter 2, Petrarch’s version of the motif is predominantly classical). The following companion *canzone* repurposes this former love, which the poet now understands to be false and deceitful, to “O vera vertu vero amore” (29, 1). This rejection of the former love as false, followed by an invocation to what is now perceived as true love and virtue is labelled by Francesco Bruni (1995, pp. 89–123) as “risemantizzazione”, a redirection of amorous intent, as mortal love is inverted and sublimated into love of God. The rejection and repurposing of this *canzone* pairing is more forceful due to the strong repentance of the *canzone* preceding the pairing, in which Guittone claims one of his many follies was singing of love’s absence: “Fra gli altri miei follor fo, ch’eo trovai / de disamor, ch’amai” (27, 26–27). This implies that his former love poetry was in fact of *disamor*, thus a sensual and erotic love which was completely absent from virtuous love. Moleta (1976, p. 29) thus sees the *disamor* as a reference to Guittone’s entire production of love lyrics. The rejection of *amor* as *guerra* in the following *canzone* would apparently confirm this “revisionist interpretation” as Holmes (2000, p. 57) calls it, and coupled with the address to *vero amore* in poem 29 completes the rejection and repurposing of love as enacted in the preceding *canzoni*.

While organised by genre and it being unclear whether this is the author’s own ordering, Guittone’s poems shift their focus from carnal and erotic love towards the one true virtuous love, love of God, though Holmes (2000, p. 55) does note that profane authors and influences are never entirely subverted. The conversion is along Augustinian lines, in an autobiographical reflection of the conversion which Guittone underwent in his own life. Poem sequencing and groupings demonstrate a strong rejection of sensual love in favour for the divine, in light of *savere*, of gaining knowledge of God, which allows the poet to redefine his understanding of true love and virtue to repent and reject

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[65] ‘but God gave me so much wisdom that in singing I retract my folly’. (Quoted from and trans. Holmes, 2000, p. 117).

[66] Reference edition: Egidi (1940).

past amorous desires. The attempt to reject and overcome the discourse of the earlier poems betrays the underlying presence of a narrative, evoking the spiritual investigations of Augustine's *Confessions* as he makes the transition from Guittone d'Arezzo to Frate Guittone. While his lyrics were criticised by his near contemporaries on stylistic grounds,[67] Guittone's poetry shows a heightened capacity for a theological narrative, in an Augustinian drive to virtue. Poetic mediums could also be used to convey religious messages, thus providing a vehicle for expressing a narrative of conversion from a mortal beloved to the divine.

1.2.2 "scala al Fattor" (*Rvf* 360, 139): reconciling the beloved with the divine

In *Rvf* 70, Petrarch positions himself in the context of the *dolce stil novo* with citations from Cavalcanti, Dante and Cino da Pistoia. Guinizzelli, however, is notably absent, given that he is probably the more influential model for Petrarch, given Petrarch's apparent dislike of Dante. However, it is very much in Petrarch's nature to conceal his models, as explained in *Fam.* 23.19. While it is Dante who takes the *dolce stil novo* and the theologisation of the beloved to its furthest extent, Guinizzelli as the poetic father of the tradition counts the most for Petrarch's poets, as well as to a certain extent Cino. Cavalcanti does not deal so overtly with questions about the relationship between the beloved and the divine, and so in a narrative sense is a less influential model for the *Rvf.* That Petrarch was at least initially seeking to make his love of Laura compatible with the divine is evident in the pre-final versions of the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, which prioritised sonnets such as *Rvf* 350 and *Rvf* 352 extolling Laura's beauty and virtues. Even in the final version of the V. L. 3195, Laura appears in an intercessory role close to the end of the narrative in *Rvf* 362. This suggests that in the closing stages of constructing the sequence, Petrarch was attempting to reconcile Laura with his divine aspirations. However, the revisions to the closing sequence eventually settle on a narrative in which Laura is rejected, rather than reconciled with his salvation, although we do not see the completion of this process. As such, Petrarch suggests that the reconciliation of divine and earthly loves is not suited to his poetics: he wants to work within the emerging vernacular tradition in order to remodel it through his own views on what should constitute poetry. This is very much one which seeks to reform the vernacular in favour of imposing classical ideals.

[67] Guittone's spiritually motivated poetics were somewhat disparaged by his near-contemporaries in Italy. Dante in particular was disparaging on stylistic grounds of Guittone's efforts in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (*DVE*, 1, xiii, 1 & 2; vi, 8). As such, his poetics were only influential on his close contemporaries. Bonagiunta da Lucca claims Guinizzelli changed the lyric mode in their sonnet correspondence "Voi ch'avete mutata la maniera". Bonagiunta himself is dismissed on stylistic grounds along with Guittone in the *Commedia*: 'O frate, issa vegg'io,' diss'elli, 'il nodo / che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne / di qua dal dolce stil novo ch'i' odo!' (*Purg.* 24, 55–57). More recently Usher (2008, p. 18) has characterised Guittone's lyrics as "tortured".

Guido Guinizzelli, while initially stylistically Guittonian, presents a form of love for the mortal *donna* which is compatible with love of God, and in fact facilitates contact with the divine by directing man to virtue. The language of love deployed in his poetry constitutes what Ardizzone (1997, p. 456) sees a "recovery of the older Sicilian tradition", and in particular Usher (2008, p. 19) emphasises that the "concept of luminosity is central, for the emanation, reflection and perception of light are metaphors for the psychological effect of the lady on her lover". Guinizzelli's *canzone Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore* sets forth a poetic stance on love providing a theological basis for praise of the lady. In the *canzone*, Guinizzelli defines the noble heart as the natural home of love, which come together like torch and flame, in contrast with base love and the heart, which react like fire and water. Only a noble heart can be the home of love, yet it is not born noble, but must be made noble, by inclination to virtue. Ardizzone (1997, p. 457) sees the *canzone* as blending the concept of love as a natural law and theology: as God is represented in activities of light, such as "splende", his law governs all love and similarly the light of the lady.

The final two stanzas (*ACG*, 41–60) articulate the importance of the lady in terms of a divine aspect of love: Guinizzelli expands on his concept of love beyond the physical conditions needed for the noble heart to receive love, to God as the force which controls love and the lady as an angel capable of disseminating that love. The lady has "d'angel sembianza" (*ACG*, 58), and her light offers blessedness through shining in the eyes of the virtuous man, thus appearing in an intercessory role to God. While the comparison of the Lady to an angel had already been used throughout the Sicilian tradition, for example in the "Angelica figura" of Giacomo da Lentini, Guinizzelli's innovation is placing this into a wholly theological context, rather using the motif to laud his lady's physical appearance, and therein drawing together disparate images into a coherent narrative of spiritual ascent through the beloved's intercessory status. Love, as far as regards the noble heart of the virtuous man is thus not a base passion, but rather a spiritual and elevated love, rather than a sinful one. The final line of the *canzone*, "non me fu fallo, s'in lei posi amanza" challenges allegations that love for the lady being is *vano amor*, thus positioning the lady as the antithesis to temporal, earthly love. Here Guinizzelli appears to defend his form of love against the obvious moral objections from the religious point of view. He indicates that the lover must follow the beauty and virtue of his lady, as she is the means by which he may obtain passage to God, just as Petrarch sees the path to heaven through the luminous beauty of Laura's eyes. Unlike Guittone and Riquier, Guinizzelli's poetry does not seek to reject mortal love, but rather exalt it, as a means of achieving spiritual ascent through her intercessory status.

Likewise, Laura appears to have this intercessory power through her characteristic shining light which shows the way to God: "Gentil mia donna, i' veggio / nel mover de' vostr'occhi un dolce lume / che mi mostra la via ch'al ciel conduce" (*Rvf* 72, 1–3). Laura, like Guinizzelli's beloved, has the power to guide the poet towards God through her light which emanates from heaven, directing man towards virtue and God through her own divine virtue. For Petrarch, however, it is the Laura *in morte* which is

the more positive one: like Dante her death opens a new stage to the love narrative, one in which her incorporeal form should hold him more directly on the straight path. Indeed, *Rvf* 350, which in pre-final forms of the *Rvf* was part of the closing micro-sequence, sees Laura in such an intercessory light. In the sonnet, Petrarch outlines that physical beauty is "caduco e fragil" (*Rvf* 350, 1), and this awareness of its fallibility leads the *io* to instead "piacer a le sue luci santi" (*Rvf* 350, 14), bathe in Laura's sacred lights, thus seeing her as a manifestation of divine *sapientia* and as a means of glimpsing life in heaven.

Rvf 70, while not citing Guinizzelli, cites Cavalcanti, Dante and Cino da Pistoia. However, the first and third of these poets are less important for the development of the theologising aspect of the beloved: Cavalcanti in particular is far less concerned with the divine.[68] Petrarch shows himself to have had a particular attachment to Cino, writing a sonnet in the *Rvf* (92) lamenting his death, and the line cited in *Rvf* 70, "la dolce vista e 'l bel guardo soave", suggests the gentle and soft appearance of Laura is modelled with Cino's beloved in mind.[69] Looming over Petrarch's shoulder, however, omnipresent, is Dante. Petrarch deliberately behaves ambivalently towards Dante: in *Familiares* 21.15 to Giovanni Boccaccio, he famously claimed that he had never possessed a copy of the *Commedia* until Boccaccio sent him one, and that he wished not to be influenced by Dante and so had avoided reading him, although he is slightly more positive about him in *Seniles* 5.2.[70] Indeed, Petrarch's citation of Dante in *Rvf* 70 is not from either the *Vita nova*, or the *Commedia*, but rather the *rime petrose*. These in particular give a model of a more sensual poetry, and certainly the heat of the passionate lover contrasting with the cold icy landscapes filters into the presentation of Laura's icy hardness. Yet Petrarch's decision to cite the *rime petrose* is not so much about acknowledging their influence on him, but I suggest it rather draws attention to the deliberate omission of the *Vita nova* and the *Commedia* from Petrarch's version of vernacular literary history, though as Holmes (2015, p. 161) notes the latter is more frequently alluded to in Petrarch's poems. Indeed, the *Vita nova* represents the strongest assertion of the *stil novo* ideals, as Dante takes the beatifying role of the beloved further than any poet before him. In the *Commedia*, Dante even has Bonagiunta quote from his own *canzone* from the *Vita nova* in *Purg*. 24, 51, *'Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore'* as the exemplar of this sweet new style. In citing *the rime petrose* rather than the *Vita nova*, Petrarch appears reluctant to acknowledge the *Vita nova* as a genuine, albeit partial, precedent for the *Rvf*.

Dante takes the trend towards viewing the beloved as intercessor to its furthest extent: she now has a defined role in a narrative of spiritual ascent. The *Vita nova* views Beatrice in an intercessory light as the mediator of Grace, in a positive role which is very different to the beloveds before him. Santagata

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[68] Usher characterises Cavalcanti's writing as "a poetry of pathology" (1997, p. 23) by which the poet dissects and self-examines his own psychology, As love is beyond the capacity of human rationality, it causes intense suffering: this is in strong contrast with the overwhelmingly positive image of love which Guinizzelli presents.

[69] On the influence of Cino in *Rvf* 92 and the sonnet sequence which precedes it see Boggs (1979).

[70] For a more recent study on Petrarch's rejection of Dante see Barański et al. (2009).

(2011, p. 65) suggests that "a Dante è estranea l'idea della passione come fenomeno irrazionale e alienante", in that he views love as not something accidental, but rather something which is inspired by the soul striving towards higher matters, and a unique gift that has been given to him. However, in Dante's wider *oeuvre* it is not this clear cut, as exhibited by the donna di Petra, and Francesca in *Inf.* 5, who exhibit a more sensual type of passion.

Beatrice however appears in a uniquely positive role. Her intercessory status mediates between the *io lirico* and the divine, through a language of love which blurs her status as a mortal being with her heavenly nature. In the *Vita nova*,[71] Beatrice appears as an angelic divine being, who exceeds all earthly things in her exceptional beauty: "Dice di lei Amor: 'Cosa mortale / come esser pò sì adorna e sì pura?' / Poi la reguarda, e fra se stesso giura / che Dio ne 'ntenda di far cosa nova" (*VN* 10.15, 43–46). Beatrice's beauty and purity exceeds all known boundaries of any *cosa mortale*. God himself intended a new type of creation when he made her, a *cosa nova*, emphasising that she is unparalleled on earth, a new type of being who operates on a heavenly rather than mortal realm. In this way she is emblematic of *caritas*, moving away from the language of the troubadours and their earthly, physical delight, towards what Mazzotta (1983, p. 10) sees as a metaphoric and spiritualised language which dispels this corporeality and dematerialises the physical, sensuous and earthly in favour of luminosity and the radiant.[72] The culmination of this is the sonnet *Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare*, which describes Beatrice as appearing as a luminous apparition "da cielo", as "un spirito soave pien d'amore" (v. 13). The nature of this "miracol" (v. 8) is so pleasing to "chi la mira" (v. 9), indicating her beatifying presence for everyone, not just Dante. The poetic Beatrice has in this way evolved from a physical being to an ephemeral presence which invokes the "Sospira" (v. 14) in the soul of the beholder. Pertile (2008, p. 56) argues that Beatrice is Dante's "active consciousness", indicating that her role is to guide and direct the self towards salvation, suggesting that she is also a mediator of the self. While Guinizzelli had done much to unify disparate images of the lady into "an ideologically connected sequence" (Usher, 2008, p. 21) in a narrative of spiritual ascension, Dante goes much further in explicitly delineating Beatrice in this role of mediator of Grace: "Ancor l'ha Dio per maggior grazia dato / che non pò mal finir chi l'ha parlato" (*VN* 10.21, 41–42).[73]

In the *Commedia*, Beatrice returns to Dante as he meets her in Earthly Paradise, giving clarification on her role in Dante's life and his spiritual journey towards God. Dante's narrative of love as continued in the *Commedia* is linear in progression, constituting a model which Petrarch does not

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[71] On the incipit of the *Vita nova* see Casadei (2010); Malato (2010).

[72] Picone (1977, p. 121) also argues that Dante "specializza il suo linguaggio nel campo metaforico della religione sottoponendo fra l'altro a una forte lessicalizzione filosofica."

[73] Took (2020, p. 179), further considers Dante's "theologization" of his love for Beatrice, pointing towards her ability "not merely as a catalyst but a cause of love, a bringer forth of something from nothing" as suggested by *VN* 21.1, where Beatrice appears to be an instigator of love through her ability to inspire it where there is none.

follow in the *Rvf*. Williams (2007, p. 4) asserts that "the story of Dante's love is one of being led into an understanding of love from Beatrice's first appearance", indicating that the beloved is a central tool in keeping the soul on the straight path. In *Purgatorio* Beatrice states that during life she kept Dante on the straight path, "meco il menava in dritta parte vòlto" (*Purg*. 30, 123), but after her death he has strayed, and given himself to other things "questi si tolse a me, e diessi altrui" (*Purg*. 30, 126). Beatrice declares that as the highest and purest of beings worthy of love, with her death, Dante should have been able to maintain this straight path, seeing as there would no temptation able to exceed her in beauty or virtue. Her ascent from flesh to spirit only increased her "bellezza e virtù" (*Purg*. 30, 128), and thus Dante had the means by which to maintain his straight course, with her beautified heavenly form as his guide. Dante himself had however strayed from this right path after her death, leading to the Augustinian inflected message of the *Purgatorio*, that one must not be distracted from the straight course by temporal goods.[74] In contrast to the linear nature of Dante's conversion narrative, with Beatrice in a positive role, Petrarch's journey is in constant flux. As Williams (2007, p. 5) notes, "Petrarch cannot harmonize his love for Laura and his love for God in the way Dante does, and his failure is the cause of painful anxiety": Petrarch's narrative of love is dominated by contrasting emotions and an oscillating attitude to Laura, sometimes the means of his salvation and sometimes the means of his torture.

That Petrarch's love of Laura is very different in nature to Dante's relationship with Beatrice is evident in the *Secretum*. Petrarch's character of 'Augustinus' in the *Secretum* argues that Franciscus is hurrying himself towards death through the pursuit of mortal desires, preventing himself from regaining the straight path. However, unlike Dante who needed Beatrice's guidance to keep him on that straight path, and lost it after her death, requiring her return in the *Commedia*, Petrarch concedes that his abandonment of the straight path coincided with his meeting with Laura: "Profecto et illius occursus et exhorbitatio mea unum in tempus inciderunt" (*Secr*. 3.5.11).[75] This indicates that Petrarch's love for Laura is of a fundamentally different type than the love generated by Beatrice, and is one that *distracts* from virtue rather than facilitating it, as Riquier's beloved had done. While Dante is able to reconcile his love of Beatrice with divine love, Petrarch does not appear to be able to do the same, thus necessitating the attempt to reject her entirely in the *Rvf*. In the *Secretum* this is suggested to be due to the manner of loving, as while Franciscus argues that love of Laura has brought him closer to God, Augustine rebukes him, suggesting that he is captured by love for His creation rather than natural love for Creator; "tu contra, creature captus illecebris, Creatorem non qua decuit amasti, sed miratus artificem fuisti quasi nichil ex omnibus formosius creasset, cum tamen ultima pulcritudinem sit forma

[74] Other examples include Virgil's exposition in *Purg*. 15, 64–69.

[75] 'There's no doubt that my meeting with her and my going off course happened at the same time.' [all translations of the *Secretum* from Mann, 2016]

corporea" (*Secr*. 3.5.2).[76] Petrarch is not able to reconcile his form of love for Laura with love of God, as he must love her in God's light rather than in and of herself.

To conclude, Petrarch is consciously positioning himself within the existing contemporary poetic tradition in the *Rvf*, suggested by the choice of the vernacular language for his lyric sequence. However, the *Rvf* is in form very different from anything that had been produced in the vernacular, suggesting that he is very much working within this framework in order to prove his own distance from it, and the uniqueness of his own lyrics. While *Rvf* 70 positions Petrarch as a successor to the vernacular tradition, and in particular the *dolce stil novo*, the fact that he repeatedly attempts to close the *Rvf* with Laura in an intercessory role, but eventually moves towards rejecting her in the revisions to the V. L. 3195, suggests that he is seeking to distance himself from existing poetic models at the close of the sequence, and in particular that of Dante. Dante and Petrarch are unique in that the death of the beloved opens a new stage in relations with her: the dead beloved is more positive than the living one. However, Laura is very different (deliberately) to Beatrice, as one might expect given the theological implications of Beatrice's name as opposed to the classical and poetic implications of Laura's. Yet Petrarch is not posing anything new in a narrative sense: poetic models already existed for an Augustinian narrative, just as models existed for reconciling the beloved with salvation. The form itself of the *Rvf* is what is novel: in this way, Petrarch highlights the distinction of his own unique poetic exploration of his literary self, creating his own ideal of what a book of vernacular lyrics should look like.

[76] 'You have not loved God as you should, but were instead seduced by the creature, and have loved Him as her maker, as if she were the most beautiful thing that He ever created – whereas physical beauty is the lowest form of beauty.'

Chapter 2. A Project of Classical Imitation

2.1 Love in classical poetry collections: the self and poetry

This section proposes that Petrarch was consciously imitating the model of the classical poetry book in his conception of the *Rvf* as a sequence of lyric love poetry. Since the influential study of Burckhardt (1860), which suggested that the dominating feature of the Renaissance was the rise of the individual, Petrarch has often been considered as the father of this trend. While, as the introduction of this thesis indicated, Petrarch was indeed concerned with the careful curation of his authorial self, this section highlights that this is not a novel invention on the part of Petrarch, as is sometimes implied, but is in fact anchored in the classical tradition. Laura's role as a mediator of selfhood has been well established, yet this aspect of her character is classicising, in particular mirroring Propertius' Cynthia. The section part of this section addresses Laura's metapoetic role, arguing that she is designed in imitation of the classical lyric beloved in order to propel the poet to glory through his lyrics. This interest in the potential of the classical model is due to, as this chapter argues, Petrarch's intense awareness of the instability of his own lyric self could be countered by the recourse to a tried and test model which could situate that same self as a reference point in time and history. However, Petrarch is not seeking mere identity in his approach to love poetry, as he repurposes the classical source material for the Christian context in which he was operating, and reconciles it with the developments in narrative and form occurring in the vernacular. This imposition of a sense of Latinity upon his lyric sequence, and the situation of himself at the intersection of different literary contexts, indicates that Petrarch was seeking a new and unique model for posterity.

The *Rvf* is at heart a book of poetry, rather than a rigidly autobiographical description of love, sin and repentance, and its very nature as a structured and organised sequence points towards Petrarch's conception of it as a project of classical imitation. Indeed, in the *Triumph of Love*, Petrarch places himself as a successor to the classical lyric tradition, naming its key practitioners:

> l'uno era Ovidio e l'altro era Catullo,
>
> l'altro Properzio, che d'amor cantaro
>
> fervidamente, e l'altro era Tibullo. (*TC* 4, 22–24)

Ovid is here given primacy,[77] but Petrarch also refers to Catullus, Propertius and Tibullus as those who have sung fervently of love. In the *Triumph*, Petrarch positions himself as a descendent of the elegiac tradition, although the *Rvf* does also address classical themes other than love, for example the *fuga*

[77] For more on Ovid and Petrarch see Van Peteghem (2020).

temporis, which will be discussed in chapter 3.1 as a specifically Horatian influence on the work. Volk (2010, p. 39) has noted that classical elegy itself consists of "a distinct type of poetry with its own rules and with great scope for self-referential reflections", thus it therefore offers an ideal model of self-observant poetry to inform Petrarch's autobiographical efforts. However, as this section contends, it is not just the self-referential aspect of elegy which was particularly apt for adaptation in the *Rvf*, but also elegy's function as a vehicle for obtaining fame for the poet. With the beloved of love elegy acting in a metapoetic capacity, representing poetry itself, she was a means by which the poet was propelled to glory. In the same manner as Ovid, Propertius and Horace had secured everlasting glory through their poetic efforts, Petrarch sought the creation of his own unique literary model to present to the public and to posterity through the imitation of the model that they provided.

2.1.1 Laura and the *puella* of Roman love elegy

Love poetry, by nature, requires a beloved, an object which in the fiction of the narrative inspires the love of the author and moves him to song: as Miller (2013, p. 167) comments, "they are the pretexts around which are constructed elaborate poetic collections." In other words, the genre itself would not exist without the beloved, real or imagined. The fragmentary nature of Laura's figure has given rise to extensive debate on the nature of her role in the *Rvf*. She is of course representative of worldly attractions, of the two chains "Amor et gloria" of the *Secretum*, the former for Petrarch's mortal love of her, and the latter through the poetic inspiration she provides and the laurel of poetic glory which she symbolises, reincarnated in the *duo nodi* of *Rvf* 264. As Bernardo (1974, p. 1) states, there is no disputing the fact that Laura was one of the "most consistent sources of inspiration for his poetry", yet the nature of her figure, divided between the corporeal and incorporeal, heavenly and divine, real and fictitious, creates a strong sense of ambiguity over her reality, her image, and her function in the *Rvf*. Critical perception of her in the earliest commentaries on Petrarch's works "showed concern either for her identity or for her allegorical significance" (ibid.). However, in the 19th century, Laura became an object of interest of philological scrutiny, as well as an aesthetic object of love moving Petrarch to write lyrics. As Falkeid (2012, p. 65) notes, most critics within both the biographical and philological traditions have still viewed Laura as allegorical.[78] While the prevalence of the biographical investigation of Laura decreased after the publication of a biography by the Abbé De Sade, the philological tradition has still remained strong, especially in Italy. This strand, which includes Rico, Baron, Billanovich, Feo, Santagata and Pacca "seems to have developed from a need to render a more correct picture of Petrarch's intellectual as well as personal biography" (Falkeid, 2012, p. 65), using established methods

[78] See for example Bosco (1965, p. 28), who argues "quell'amore è nient'altro che il mezzo di cui il Petrarca si serve per concretizzare liricamente la complessità dei suoi sentimenti, il centro fantastico a cui fa convergere le linee fluttuanti di stati d'animo contraddittori."

of philological textual criticism. Yet the true identity of Laura, and her relationship to Petrarch, as Santagata (2014, p. 26) concludes, "non sapremo mai". As I shall discuss below, this ambiguity about her nature, and her identity, is characteristic of the classical beloved, particularly of Propertius and Ovid.

The modern North American tradition has sought to examine more thoroughly the role of Laura as a part of Petrarch's poetics, rather than questioning the truthfulness of his texts and representation of her. As a result, more recently Laura has been viewed as a "persistent psychological stimulus of a complex love drama" (Bernardo, 1974, p. 2). Bernardo (1974) conducted the first modern analysis of the evolution of Laura's purely poetic image, through evaluating the various forms of the *Rvf* and the Laura presented therein in tension with the image of her constructed in the *Triumphi*. Freccero (1975) places side by side Petrarch's laurel with the Augustinian fig tree, contrasting the two to argue that the laurel is not allegorical of Laura, but represents the relationship of poetic creation between *Laura* and *lauro*, the creation of Petrarch who in turn creates his poetic glory, a monument to Petrarch, rather than the woman herself. This theory, which states that Petrarch commits the sin of poetic idolatry, has been met with much scepticism, and for most critics Laura's elusive character negates this possibility.[79] Laura's elusive nature according to T. Greene (1982, p. 125), represents Petrarch's failed attempt to implement new Renaissance theories of imitation, concluding in a "sickness of his soul". However, this cannot be philologically verified, and Greene neglects to elaborate on the way in which the Laura of the *Rvf* relates to the self presented in the work.[80] Mazzotta (1978), instead, explores Laura's role in a textual sense, and rather than discussing her identity, he accepts the truthfulness of Petrarch's presentation of her in the *Rvf*. This approach focuses more substantially on the image of Laura as a creation of the poet, and in consequence the relationship between Laura the literary figure and the poet's desire for her as a manifestation of the exploration of the self, with Mazzotta suggesting that the quest to bring together the signs of Laura's elusiveness masks the poet's quest for poetic language to express his inner thoughts. Falkeid (2012, p. 69) concludes that these allegories are "ordering principles that keep *res* and *verba* together", and thus the language of Laura dictates her poetic reality and maintains her sense of unity despite being allusive.

More recently, attention has been drawn to the allegorical nature of Laura's figure, which in itself alludes to her nature as the classical beloved. Santagata (2014, p. 29) has noted that Laura's name represents "una serie di catene metaforiche che si espandono capillarmente per tutti i testi del Canzoniere". Unlike Dante with his Beatrice, Petrarch does not choose a name with theological connotations for his muse, but rather poetic ones, evoking the laurels of poetic inspiration and Apollo

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[79] See Falkeid (2012, p. 66).

[80] Falkeid (2012, p. 67), is very critical of Greene's theory, objecting to it on the grounds that it is an unverifiable hypothesis. The most central problem, in Falkeid's opinion, is that Greene completely ignores the relationship between writing and the self which is explored in the *Rvf*.

as god of poetry. *Rvf* 34, which Wilkins (1951, pp. 81–87; 146–150) and subsequent scholars have identified as consisting of the first poem of an early form of the *Rvf*, retells the Ovidian myth of Apollo and Daphne, and conflates the identities of the beloveds in "la donna nostra" (*Rvf* 34, 13), which Santagata (2004, p. 189) has suggested represents also the laurel being "insieme Dafne e Laura".

The lexical play based on her name, giving her various allegorical forms, does not cease simply at the laurel, but takes on many other guises throughout the work. *Rvf* 194, *L'aura gentil* opens the so-called 'ciclo dell'aura' where as Bettarini (2005, p. 896) notes, "il nome della donna del *Canzoniere* si dissolve in natura".[81] The triptych of sonnets, *Rvf* 196, 'L'aura serena', 197, 'L'aura celeste', and 198, 'L'aura soave' also embeds Laura's other lexical-metaphorical guises; the "verde lauro" of Apollo (*Rvf* 197, 1); the colour gold in "l'ambra o l'auro" (*Rvf* 197, 8) and "l'auro ch'Amor di sua man fila" (*Rvf* 198, 2). In this way, Laura's name acts as a generative metaphor which is deeply embedded throughout the *Rvf* and the lyric experience of the poetic *io*. As Bettarini (2005, p. 168) notes, "Il *verde lauro* è una costante sintagmatica petrarchesca", playing a central role in underpinning the unity of the lyric sequence through allegory and the metaphorical beloved. The discussion of the figure of Laura as a poetic stimulus and her allegorical links with the myth of Daphne and Apollo, and therein the poetic laurel, have broadly led to a consensus that within the *Rvf* she has a symbolic or allegorical function as part of the textual project, as well as creating a means by which the poet may weave his lyrics.

2.1.2 The beloved as a mediator of the self

While the trend has moved towards viewing Laura in an allegorical light, and as a textual stimulus for self-exploration, I suggest that this dynamic is owed in particular to the beloved of the Roman elegiac collection. Petrarch's *Rvf* is deeply concerned with notions of selfhood, exploring not just the means by which the divided self can be reunited, but also the appearance which the idealised literary self should take in its outward presentation. As I argue in this section, the elegiac collection provided an apt model for Petrarch to follow, because the beloved as a textual construct mediates the lyric self, as the lover's psyche and reactions are orientated around her actions. In this way elegy constitutes what Goold (1990, p. 9) has termed "escapist literature": the poet-lover seeks to assume various guises to obtain his beloved and win his conquest, each time constructing a new identity for himself. Gibson (quoted in Gold, 2012, p. 1) asserts that "the lover's primary concern is for himself and not for his beloved", and this is reflected in that the love narrative is essentially self-serving, as the purpose behind the continual ironies, witticisms and inversions see the lover attempt to satisfy his own needs, both on the narrative level of conquering love and the woman, but also in terms of his goal of fame through poetic self-fashioning. Petrarch's form of love for Laura is however not "escapist", as Goold termed that of the elegists, but

[81] For more on the 'sonetti dell'aura' see Agosti (1993); Chiecchi (1987); Segre (1983); Romanò (1953).

rather explorative, and in terms of the closing sequence deployed as a means of testing out the various narratives which might see the internal conflict resolved. With each revision to the narrative, the relationship to Laura at the close of the sequence is revised, and as a consequence the portrait of the self is also amended, presenting a remodelled version to the reader: the beloved herself is a pivot around which this self-fashioning process is orientated.

The nature of the love experienced by the elegists is primarily erotic: the lovers seek to seduce their beloved, possess her as a sexual object, and the struggle to obtain her induces conflict and torture in the lover as part of the self-exploratory process. This intense and carnal desire manifests itself strongly in emotional, and even physical, suffering and torment for the poet. Volk (2010, p. 45) suggests that "For the poet, his love is an overwhelming experience that replaces all other concerns and becomes, so to speak, a way of life […] Instead of dwelling on the pleasures of love, elegy concentrates on its sufferings." Likewise, the dominating form of love experienced by Petrarch is a destructive one, in which his love for Laura instigates a conflict within his self and induces torment and suffering. When Freccero (1975, p. 34) wrote that Petrarch's "moral struggle and spiritual torment […] are part of a poetic strategy", the exact same could be said of the torments and emotions experienced by classical love elegists. Yet at the root of this suffering is also a moral conundrum for Petrarch, instead of the struggle to obtain the beloved as a sexual conquest. As such, Laura is very different from Cynthia or Corinna, just as the *donna* of the *stilnovo* is different to the *puella* of love elegy. While Laura may be changeful and constantly inspiring conflicting emotions in Petrarch, unlike the *puella* she is not mischievous or problematic, that is to say, she does not misbehave morally or have affairs with other men. Laura is instead an exemplar of virtue, mediating the self also in terms of a Christian moral agenda. As such, there is no overtly erotic aspect present in the *Rvf*, as there was for the elegists, and the vernacular context in which he was operating required him also to deal with a more spiritualising form of poetry. Yet certain themes and motifs of elegiac poetry also sustained an ethical dimension, which Petrarch could exploit for his own moral context. These include the *servitium amoris* and *militia amoris*, to be discussed in this section, both motifs which Petrarch repurposes for the *Rvf* to explore his internal conflict and fashion his own lyric self.

In the *Rvf,* the relationship between love, poetry and selfhood is made explicit in *Rvf* 23, one of Petrarch's first compositions, which plays on Ovidian myths of transformation from the *Metamorphoses*. This *canzone* is profoundly engaged with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* rather than his lyric production, and in particular the Apollo and Daphne myth becomes a cornerstone of the relationship between the self and poetry in the *Rvf*. Petrarch, in line with his theory that the best imitation encompasses alteration rather than copying, however writes of *himself* being transformed into the laurel, rather than his beloved. As Gragnolati and Southerden (2020, p. 25) have recently highlighted, "This transformation of the poetic subject into the laurel confirms the extent to which the poem is about his transformation into a poet dominated by desire: the encounter with Laura is the encounter with poetry.

It is also an experience of dispossession of identity and loss of self". DellaNeva (1982, p. 198) has also linked this series of Ovidian transformations with the fragmentation of the poet's self, "With each successive transformation, the lover becomes increasingly less sure of his integrity as a whole and sound individual. His self-concept becomes ever more fragmentary". As Petrarch is unable to sublimate his mortal desires, the transformations "furnish a portrait of the lover's instability" (DellaNeva, 1982, p. 200). Love has caused a loss of stability and permanence, which is re-sought through the writing of his lyrics and the image of the evergreen laurel.[82]

However, I highlight that while the *canzone* overtly deals with the *Metamorphoses* as the intertext, Petrarch also shows himself to be interested in the relationship between textual production and selfhood more generally, which is characteristic of love elegy. DellaNeva (1982, p. 199) has underlined the connection between textual production and self-writing presented in the *canzone*: "The poet's persona in *Rvf* 23 often draws attention to the fact that he is narrating, singing or writing a poetic text. He therefore explicitly presents his story as an example of reflexive writing: a self-conscious, self-referential text that can be read on a metatextual level." *Rvf* 23 makes explicit the link between self-penning and the experience of a lover, when the *io* states "sia scripto altrove, sì che mille penne / ne son già stanche" (*Rvf* 23, 11–12): Petrarch's pen is put to paper to express and explore his travails in love. C. Freccero (2001) has explored how this poem simultaneously marks both the moment Petrarch first fell in love in his youth, and became a poet, commemorating his 'inflaming' by Laura along with the commencement of his poetic journey. This exploration of poetic selfhood through the processes of writing occurring in the *Rvf* more largely is anchored in the elegiac tradition. Indeed, with Petrarch writing *himself* as transformed into the laurel, as opposed to his beloved in *Rvf* 23, where does this leave Laura?

Laura is, as part of the self-exploratory project, modelled above all else on the *puella* of love elegy. Propertius' characterisation of Cynthia in the *Elegies* clearly provides an apt model for Petrarch's Laura. This extends in particular to her nature as a mediator of selfhood, as a poetic stimulus for self-exploration. Mann (2000, p. 27) has asserted that many aspects of the *Rvf* "owe something of their origins to Propertius", and the figure of Propertius' beloved Cynthia is dynamic in her capacity to instil and change moods in the poet in a similar way to the oscillations inspired in Petrarch by Laura. Johnson (2012, p. 43) calls the women of Ovid and Tibullus "dim beloveds" in comparison to Cynthia, who as Tonelli (1998, p. 253) has noted, immediately captivates the poet-lover with her eyes, triggering his first, and only, desire. Similarly, in *Rvf* 3, Laura's "be' vostr'occhi" (*Rvf* 3, 4) are the first thing which captivates Petrarch, triggering love's assault on him, although this motif is central also in the vernacular tradition and so is not an explicit reference to Propertius in itself. Tonelli (1998, p. 259) has however

[82] See for example *Rvf* 148, which describes the laurel overhanging the poet who is writing his lyrics underneath it.

suggested that out of the classical books, Propertius' *Elegies* provided the most apt poetic model for Petrarch, as "l'esperienza poetica nasce ed è indotta unicamente dall'incontro con l'amore", which occurs in the very first line of the opening book.

Cynthia has a figure which defies any static categorisation, and her characterisation evolves through the Propertian corpus, in a fragmentary manner reminiscent of Petrarch's Laura. Propertius' intense focus on Cynthia alone is more pronounced than the other elegists: he seems to have not tested out other genres, as only the *Elegies* survives to us, or transfer his lyrics between different muses. This singular focus on Cynthia makes her the muse most similar to Laura, however, Tonelli (1998, p. 255) notes that "Cinzia non è certo Laura". In Propertius' first book, while there are other topics of poems, Cynthia is the primary concern. The focus on her is magnified by the different perspectives from which the poet approaches her. Johnson (2012, p. 43) argues that "Cynthia means Poetry, Love Poetry, but she also means a free eroticism", that is the freedom to explore and map the poet's own experience of what it means to be a lover. Sharrock (2000, p. 267) has compiled the addressees of all the poems of the *monobiblos*, demonstrating that while all the poems (excluding the final three) are still about Cynthia, the varying recipients of the poems involve a variety of perspectives in approaching her, which "fragments the viewpoint and allows it to go in different directions, letting us see that there are different ways of looking."[83] Cynthia's figure takes on various guises depending on the perspective of viewing and the experience of the viewer. Similarly, Santagata (1992, p. 216) has suggested that there is not one but in fact "due Laure": the Laura of *Rvf* 23, "la donna che si nega gli appare la nemica, la guerriera", and the 'Laura stilnovista', who is "rasserenatrice, beatificante, addirittura salvifica". That different versions of the same beloved exist is indicative of the multiple ways in which she may be interpreted and approached by the *io lirico*, and indeed hints at the tension between profane and religious versions of her as Petrarch seeks to reconcile the traditions.

Vickers (1981, p. 266) has noted that "Laura is always presented as a part or parts of a woman", and this may be seen throughout the *Rvf* with repeated fragmentary descriptions of specific features including the "bel viso" (*Rvf* 85, 7), the "chiome bionde" (*Rvf* 197, 9), her "duo lumi honesti et belli" (*Rvf* 59, 13), her "dolce parlare et dolce riso" (*Rvf* 348, 4). Descriptions of Cynthia similarly see a fragmentary approach, with Propertius praising her "fulva coma" and "longae manus" (*Eleg.* 2.2, 5).[84] Book 2 concentrates and intensifies Cynthia's image, gradually moving towards what Johnson (2012, p. 42) terms her "perfected representation." Like Laura, Cynthia's beauty is second to none, as the poet-lover praises "her incomparable beauty, her amazing vitality" (ibid.) and emphasises her uniqueness

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[83] Sharrock suggests that the different friends to whom the poems are addressed are to some extent standing in for the reader, who is invited to observe from different perspectives. She suggests that through making ourselves aware of the way in which Propertius constructs Cynthia, then we may be able to see alternatives to that way of viewing Cynthia.

[84] 'auburn hair'; 'long hands.' [all translations of Propertius from Goold, 1990]

amongst Roman girls: "gloria Romanis una es tu nata puellis" (*Eleg*. 2.3, 29).[85] Similarly, Petrarch's Laura is unique in her exceptional beauty: "et à nome beltate, / non fu già mai se non in questa etate / tutto in un corpo" (*Rvf* 350, 2–4). The heavenly Laura of the second part of the *Rvf* is a "persona fatta in paradiso" (*Rvf* 348, 10), whom Petrarch envisages glorious in heaven. Cynthia likewise has a heavenly aspect, as Propertius states that the gods have granted her "caelestia munera" (*Eleg*. 2.3, 25),[86] and questions "cur haec in terris facies humana moratur?" (*Eleg*. 2.2, 3).[87] The heavenly beauty of the beloved in both cases diverts the lover from appreciating any other love; her unique perfection captivates and controls him.

Like Petrarch's love for Laura, Propertian love is indicative of a dependency on the beloved, whereby the poet is unable to master his own intellectual powers and maintain control over his will. Cynthia's figure itself is largely defined by "her capacity to fascinate and madden her poet by virtue of her limitless variety and the baffling spectrum of her caprices and moods" (Johnson, 2012, p. 40). The lover, as the poet claims, has his moods altered by single words: "alter saepe uno mutat praecordia verbo" (*Eleg*. 2.4, 21).[88] In a similar instance in the *Secretum*, Augustine chides Franciscus for having his mood completely dependent on Laura's whims: "Illius mutata frons tibi animum mutavit; letus et mestus pro illius varietate factus es" (*Secr*. 3.7.3).[89] Like Propertius, Franciscus is dependent on Laura, his own will hampered by his desires. In both instances, the lover has his own psyche moulded by his response to his beloved, creating a dynamic whereby the *io* is created and defined by the beloved's actions. The importance of the repurposing of Laura's image in the closing sequence, which also dictates the experience of the *io* through her nature as a creation of that same *io*, will be highlighted in chapter 4.2.

The Cynthia of Propertius' second book is dynamic in the emotions she inspires in the poet, suggesting the role of the beloved as stimulating the narrative of the psychological drama, and operating as a pivot for the literary self of the text. McDonnell (2006, pp. 165–205, cited in Johnson, 2012, p. 43) sees her as a way as inverting traditional moralities, a way of constructing male identity which runs counter to traditional methods of doing so. Her harshness in spurning him, her taking of another lover, cause jealousy to the point that he seeks to alter his poetic style (*Eleg*. 2.10), but immediately laments that if he is destroyed by love, no one will sing about "caput et digitos et lumina nigra puellae" (*Eleg*. 2.12, 23).[90] Straight afterwards, he immediately seeks once more Cynthia's approval of his poetry, and

[85] 'You were born to be the unique glory of Roman maidens.'

[86] 'celestial gifts'.

[87] 'Why does such beauty linger on earth among mortals?'

[88] 'a boy's heart is often mollified by a single word'.

[89] 'Any change of her expression changed your mood; you were made happy or sad according to her changes.'

[90] 'my sweetheart's face, her hands, her dark eyes.'

then imagines his own funeral, with his epitaph including one couplet stating his dedication to one love, Cynthia. The singularity of the focus of Book 2 on Cynthia is not indicative of homogeneity: the poet achieves so many differing perspectives on her that his conflicting emotions are always in turmoil, generated by her beauty, her rejection of him, and their reconciliation. At the start of Book 2, whatever Cynthia wears or does inspires Propertius to write a new poem, and thus the second book is born as a result of the inspiration generated by the actions of his beloved, as his poetic psyche is moulded by her actions.

The extent to which the beloved exerts control and power over the literary self, essentially dominating the will, manifests itself in a form of servitude for the elegiac poets. In Roman elegy the motif of the *servitium amoris* plays a crucial role in the exploration of the lover's psyche. Love of the lady is viewed as a type of slavery which the lover elects for himself, a self-serving slavery of desire, but nonetheless is a form of slavery which binds him and deprives him of liberty. Copley (1947, p. 27) first drew attention to this as what he terms a "doctrine of love" in Roman elegy: rather than being a mere figure of speech or poetic conceit, the language of servitude becomes an intrinsic part of the consciousness of the lover, part of the elegiac world which he constructs for himself. Consequently, it becomes a representation of "the lover's state or sense of degradation" as Lyne (1979, p. 117) terms it.[91] This suggests that the language of servitude is a central part of the self-fashioning element of classical lyric poetry, where the lover's psyche is moulded around the actions of the beloved.

This is particularly true of Propertius, who proclaims himself to have been a slave to one love only: "unius hic quondam servus amoris erat" (*Eleg*. 2.13, 36).[92] The singularity of this servitude to the one lady is restated in Book 3: "nec femina post te / ulla dedit collo dulcia vincla meo" (*Eleg*. 3.15, 9–10).[93] The description of his *vincla* as *dulcia* sees the metaphor dissociate from the reality of slavery: the poet delights in his chains, enjoying his degraded position generated by the mistress-slave metaphor.[94] Lyne (1979, p. 126) has suggested that the most dominant trait of Propertius' use of the love-servitude metaphor is "love's degrading effect on liberty of expression." This is evident in the opening poem of the first book, as the poet states "fortiter et ferrum saevos patiemur et ignes / sit modo libertas quae velit ira loqui" (*Eleg*. 1.1, 27–28).[95] This loss of the liberty of expression suggests that

[91] For more on the motif see Gold (1993); for slavery as ironic disguise see Greene, E. (1998). Studies have moved gradually away from the poetic effect of the motif within the text and the psyche of the lover towards examining the relationship between *servitium amoris* and Roman society more generally: see for example O'Rourke (2018).

[92] 'once was the slave of a single love.'

[93] 'nor since I met you has any woman cast sweet chains around my neck.'

[94] Lyne (1979, p. 118), has observed that both Tibullus and Propertius, while they stress different aspects to their situation, use this motif to express degradation, for the party that should be the dominant one. As Johnson (2012) suggests, we see an inversion of traditional moralities in Propertius' treatment of his lover, as his erotic ideology sees him as the slave, rather than master: Propertius repeatedly refers to Cynthia as *domina*.

[95] 'I shall bravely submit to the knife and cautery, if only I were free to utter the promptings of anger.'

"only the lover who surrenders the freedom even of his heart, his emotions, is going to be happy in the Propertian type of love" (Lyne, 1979, p. 126). Thus the lover has to accept servitude, even embrace it, in order to feel content in his position and with his beloved.[96]

However, while the Propertian form of the motif largely facilitates a self-fashioning aspect orientated around one singular beloved, Ovid's treatment of the *servitium amoris* also exposes an ethical dimension. Ovid explores the notion of what Sharrock (2012, p. 74) terms "the pose of inferiority as seductive rhetoric" in *Amores* 2.17. This poem "hints at the lie at the heart of *servitium amoris*" (ibid.), as the opening couplet jokes of his own disrepute brought on by his slavish behaviour owed to the lady, and the closing lines reveal his love for Corinna alone is what gives the poet the chance to show his wit. In another instance, he seeks to expose the fallacy inherent in the idea, by exploring something closer to the reality of slavery in *Am.* 2.7 and 2.8, where the lover, having had his way with a slave, Cypassis, restores the master-slave power dynamic by demanding how Corinna found out about their affair, and threatening to reveal their dalliance unless she complies to his wishes (*Am.* 2.8, 23–26). The realities of that power are put on display in Ovid's calling her "stulta" (*Am.* 2.8, 25), and "ingrata" (*Am.* 2.8, 23), as the poet-lover wields control over Cypassis, and exposes the fallacy at the heart of the trope. This hints at the potential for what existed as an erotic motif to be used to comment on societal realities, rather than merely as part of an erotic fantasy, and exposing an ethical dimension which could serve also for a moral comment.

Petrarch similarly saw the potential for adopting the motif to serve both a self-fashioning dimension as well as a moral one. In the *Secretum*, to be discussed in section 4.1, Augustinus characterises Franciscus as being bound by "adamantinis … cathenis",[97] which "nec de morte neque de vita sinunt cogitare" (*Secr.* 3.1.2).[98] The two chains are, as Augustinus explains, metaphorical for "Amor et Gloria" (*Secr.* 3.2.1), love and glory, both mortal pursuits, by which he is bound, and prevent him from spiritual ascent to the divine, thus setting his servitude into a moral context. Throughout the *Rvf*, the *io lirico* also experiences a type of servitude to *Amore*, who is depicted as his master, and Laura is the means by which this servitude is enforced. But, since Laura herself is symbolic also of poetic glory, Petrarch's servitude extends to the slavish search for glory through his lyrics singing of her. Bettarini (2005, p. 971) has suggested that the poet's reference to himself as a "Servo d'Amor" (*Rvf* 207, 97) situates Petrarch as a vassal of Love "secondo la terminologia feudale", hinting at the dynamic of

[96] Along with the motif of the *servitium amoris* also comes a dedicated lexis to metaphorise the concept. Copley (1947, p. 298), first identified three passages in which Propertius uses the word *servitium* without any context to literally mean *amor* (1.12, 18; 2.20, 19–20; 3.17, 41), thus exhibiting the development of a turn of phrase into a consistent and codified part of being a lover. Similarly, Ovid uses servire as amare: "Siquis erit, qui turpe putet servire puellae, / illo convincar iudice turpis ego!" (*Am.* 2.17, 1–2). Here, love and service are shown to be interchangeable through their shared lexis.

[97] 'adamantine chains'.

[98] 'prevent you from considering both death and life'.

subservience which evolves into tension between servitude and liberty as a central trope in the revised closing sequence. *Rvf* 312 demonstrates the debasing nature of this servitude, with love portrayed as service: "O' servito a signor crudele et scarso" (*Rvf* 320, 12). Very near the end of the sequence, in *Rvf* 360, one of the poetic counterparts to the *Secretum*, Petrarch is still struggling against his "dolce empio signore" (*Rvf* 360, 1), with his life spent "per servir questo lusinghier crudele!" (*Rvf* 360, 19).

Servitude to the beloved had also been a common motif in vernacular poetry, emblematic of unrequited love in the courtly tradition, though Petrarch's consistency in its application is suggestive of a classicising poetics in its self-fashioning aspect. Yet as Laura is very different from the mischievous *puellae* of elegy, so is different the nature of Petrarch's servitude, which is not erotic in nature for him. In the *Rvf*, Petrarch adapts the concept of servitude representing a state of degradation, also incorporating a moral dimension. The degradation experienced may be described as moral as well as emotional, as his servitude to *Amore* through Laura has made him abandon his proper moral obligations:

> Questi m'à fatto men amare Dio
>
> ch'i' non deveva, et men curar me stesso:
>
> per una donna ò messo
>
> egualmente in non cale ogni pensero. (*Rvf* 360, 31–34)

Regaining freedom from servitude has a dual purpose for Petrarch, focusing both upon the reunification of the self, as well as facilitating a spiritual redirection to the divine, which will eventually be realised in the "libertate, amara et dolce" (*Rvf* 363, 11) he finally obtains in *Rvf* 363. The self-fashioning element of the classicising tradition, where the motif of servitude served to contribute to the construction of the lyric psyche, in this way also sustains a self-exploratory aspect of the *Rvf*. Yet despite the more erotic aspect of the motif, Petrarch also evidently saw the potential for its redeployment in service of a moral agenda, a possibility hinted at by Ovid's treatment of it in particular. Petrarch's brand of servitude exploits both the self-fashioning dimension of the classical lyric tradition as well as its moral and ethical potential, as part of a narrative of spiritual ascent, and a foil to achieving salvation.

2.1.3 The elegiac *puella* and poetry

The figure of Laura in all its lyric complexity is modelled upon the classical beloved: the women represent poetry itself, and the poetic book in which the love narrative is contained. Like Petrarch's Laura, the *puellae* of Roman love elegy have long drawn discussion, whether it be around discerning their true identity, or around their role as poetic muses or literary constructs.[99] The relationship between

[99] For a general introduction on the topic see Gold (2012).

the beloved, the lover, and his poetry has been an area of key concern for scholarship. More recently, the rise of feminist criticism has generated interest in gender and female roles in Latin literature, and the elegiac genre offers "a complex and nuanced portrait of women's personal relations with men" (Keith, 2012, p. 300). In the past three decades many seminal works have dealt with the role of the female lover, both on a societal level as well as within the genre of elegy itself, and a variety of critical approaches have opened up new avenues of exploring Roman love elegy.[100] Like Laura, the women of Roman love elegy are, as Skoie (2013, p. 83) notes, "metaphors and muses, […] objects of male desire and of male poetry." Despite the fact that several have been identified with real women, the women as they exist in the collections themselves are distant from any reality: the scholarly consensus is that irrespective of identity, the textual woman exists as a poetic construct, and while more than an abstract symbol, they are also distinct from any real woman that inspired them. The poetic beloved as a textual creation therefore represents the conscious artistic choices of the poet, and therein an extension of his conception of her, allowing for a deeper view into his consciousness and artistic choices to construct his narrative of the pursuit of love. Similarly, the poetic Laura represents a series of choices taken by Petrarch as an integral part of the construction of the *Rvf* as a cohesive and organised whole, with the revisions to the closing sequence altering the dynamic of not just the narrative, but the relationship of the *io* to the beloved.

Laura, l'auro, l'aura, lauro: Laura's name in itself indicates that we are dealing with a beloved who is modelled upon the *puellae* of Roman love elegy. A central feature of the elegiac beloved is the pseudonym, which immediately blurs the realms of reality and fiction. While the Provençal *senhal* or Dante's Beatrice also suggest an allegorical dimension to the name of the beloved in the vernacular, Petrarch's choice of Laura suggests its classicising nature, as linked to the laurels and the myth of Apollo and Daphne. In the elegiac tradition, Catullus sets this precedent with his Lesbia, believed to be identified as the noblewoman Clodia.[101] However, the Lesbia of the poetry is still a textual entity, despite being the only of the women who has an "established extrapoetic identity" (Miller, 2013, p. 169). Her name speaks to the genre of lyric poetry more widely than had Catullus named his beloved as Clodia, evoking Lesbos and the poetry of Sappho from which Catullus drew inspiration.[102] Similarly, Propertius's Cynthia has been tentatively identified as Hostia, and Tibullus' Delia as Plania. As Johnson (2012, pp. 39–40) has stated, modern scholarship has turned away from questions of identity, and

[100] See for example Wyke (2002), who examines the women and love elegy more generally in terms of the poetic imagination which transforms personal experience into a fictive construction.

[101] Catullus' Lesbia is unique in that she is the only beloved who seems to be undoubtedly identifiable as a real person, and scholars of various perspectives generally agree on this consensus, e.g. Miller (2013); Veyne (1988). While Catullus does not strictly write in the elegiac metre, scholars such as Wray (2012) and Grant (2019) have read him as a precursor or proto-elegist.

[102] Certain elements of Catullus' poetry only function if we assume that Lesbia is Clodia, for example the reference of poem 79 to 'Lesbius': see Miller (2013, pp. 168–169).

revealing the reality behind the fiction, to the focus on the beloved in her poetic environment, as a construct, and he defines this as a shift from "actuality" to "textuality". The pseudonym in this manner obfuscates the distinction between the real identity of the poetic muse, and the fictional identity which the poet constructs around her as his love interest.

The name of the beloved takes on a more allegorical value in the poetry of Tibullus, where the light rural ease of the first book and the poet's love for Delia evolves into a more sinister form of love with Nemesis. Delia evokes the cult title of Apollo Delius, the patron of poetry, but the bucolic tones of the first book and Tibullus' lusting eroticism of his pursuit of Delia give way into the threatening and oppressive dynamics of the relationship with Nemesis, whom Miller (2012, p. 56) terms a "cold, calculating mistress" interested solely in money and riches. Nemesis, as the goddess of divine retribution, is the antithesis of Delia, and the poems in Book 2 tend to invert tropes presented in Book 1. As such, Miller (2012, p. 56) has identified Delia as the fantasised unity of *otium* and *negotium*, with Nemesis standing for the opposite: "poverty, labor, and public humiliation." This polarised form of love explores the experience of the lover through two contrasting experiences, to which the name of the beloved is central to the textual allegory. Propertius' beloved in the *Elegies*, Cynthia, also appears more allegoric than real, representing poetry itself, as discussed below. While identified as Hostia, by Apuleius, it seems impossible to align her existence as a textual entity with a real person.[103] But, even if the character of Cynthia was inspired by a real-world woman, within the text she exists as a creation of the poet.

Laura's very name indicates that she represents poetry and poetic inspiration, the means by which the poet will obtain literary fame. While the name is overtly a reference to the myth of Apollo and Daphne from the *Metamorphoses*, the allusion to the laurels and poetry also casts Laura in an elegiac light, as through the poetry of Propertius and Ovid in particular, the beloved increasingly is symbolic of poetry itself. Mann (2000, p. 41) has argued in favour of Laura's identity being moulded by Propertius: as the implications of the name could be used "as an object of desire and as an emblem of poetry", her identity becomes symbolic of his passion and lyric experience, but also of the act of writing poetry itself, in the same way as Cynthia. The story of a love affair in Propertius' *Elegies* is just one strand of the poetic project, in which Cynthia is both a character in a narrative but is also the lyric project itself. Miller (2013, p. 173) notes that ancient poetry books took their titles from their opening words, and as the *monobiblos*, the first book of the collection, opens with the phrase "Cynthia prima" (*Eleg*. 1.1, 1),[104] he identifies the wordplay as constituting both a narrative value, with Cynthia as the first woman with whom the poet falls in love, and a "metapoetic commentary", in which Cynthia prima

[103] For example, Goold (1990, p. 9) asserts "that Cynthia was Hostia and even more that Hostia was Cynthia we may confidently deny."

[104] 'Cythnia first'.

as the title of the first book also refers to the book itself. This metapoetic idea is much stronger than what may be seen in Catullus or Tibullus.

In the opening poem of *Elegies* Book 2, Cynthia's role as poetry is strengthened immediately in the first poem, building on the foundations laid in Book 1:

non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo.
  ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.[105] (*Eleg*. 2.1, 3–4)

It is not the muses, and it is not Apollo who move him to poetry, but it is solely the responsibility of Cynthia alone. She is here unnamed, creating the sense of her as a generic model object of love which inspires poetry rather than a real lady, alluding to her nature as a poetic construct. Indeed, Cynthia's repeated faithlessness and misbehaviour in Book 2 is emblematic of her relationship with the genre itself. When discussing Cynthia's essential role in the generation of the poems as presented in Book 2, Johnson (2012, p. 41) asserts that irrespective of their status as fact or fiction, "they exist for the sake of poetry." Thus in 2.10, Propertius attempts a change to the epic mode, claiming that his lady is written of enough: "bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est" (*Eleg*. 2.10, 8).[106] Towards the end of Book 2, he laments that he has been brought into disrepute because of his "noto […] libro" (*Eleg*. 2.24a, 1),[107] and that his Cynthia has been paraded around the forum: "et tua sit toto Cynthia lecta foro?" (*Eleg*. 2.24a, 2).[108] His poetry has brought him notoriety, and the Cynthia paraded around the forum is both the woman of the narrative, notorious for her mischief, and also the physical book of the poems, literally titled 'Cynthia', which has brought him infamy.

Propertius is not the sole model for this overlap between poetry and beloved, which "reaches new levels of complexity in Ovid" (Sharrock, 2012, p. 39).[109] Many of the poems in the *Amores* are open to what Sharrock (2012, p. 79) calls "poetological readings", where it impossible to distinguish between girl and poetry: in *Amores* 2.4, Ovid's love for a tall girl and a short girl is a witty reflection on the metre in which he is writing, the elegiac couplet. Lexically, the name Corinna is linked to the Greek "kore", meaning maiden, the counterpart to *puella* and therein hinting at her nature as a poetic construct. Scholars are therefore more or less agreed that Corinna was never a real person, but rather a "composite figure of the conventional elegiac mistress rather than a real historical woman" (Keith, 2012, p. 297). Her presentation therefore initially involves many stock characters and scenes, but elevates them to a more erotic and carnal level than Tibullus and Propertius through witty turns of

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[105] 'It is not Calliope, not Apollo that puts these songs in my mind: my sweetheart herself creates the inspiration.'

[106] 'henceforth I will sing of wars, since my girl's praises have been penned.'

[107] 'famous book'.

[108] 'and your "Cynthia" is read all over the forum?'

[109] The metapoetic role of the *puella* has been explored by Sharrock (2012), Wyke (2002) and Keith (1994) among others. See also on the *Amores* more specifically Boyd (1997); Keul (1989).

phrase and double-entendres. Whereas the presentation of Tibullus' and Propertius' beloved was highly fragmentary, focusing on individual aspects such as the hair or the eyes or the hands which were attractive to the poet, Ovid gives an unprecedented description of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5, focusing on the perfection of her figure. Keith (2012, p. 297) has pointed towards Ovid's "use of the diction of Latin literary criticism", which conflates the figure of the woman with the poetics used to express her. Her body thus corresponds to poetry. Ovid himself admits as much in *Amores* 3.12, when he bemoans the fact that his beloved is being prostituted, "prostitit" (*Am.* 3.12, 8), around the city, and questioning why people took his descriptions of her so literally.[110]

The fact that scholarship remains so divided about the autobiographical and fictional aspects of the beloved demonstrates the complex overlap of realities in which the poet's mistress exists.[111] For Ovid in particular the lyric works deal with questions of truth and falsehood, secrecy and publicity: they are "obsessed with faking and not telling the truth" (Keith, 2012, p. 77). Gibson has said that the reader of love elegy must always live with the suspicion that references to the beloved may also refer to the poetry itself,[112] and scholars have over the years repeatedly argued that the beloved is an allusion to the genre of love poetry itself. Yet Hallett (2012) has raised the point that if they are mere allusions, why make the autobiographical references at all?[113] Likewise, Laura in the *Rvf*, despite her having an evident allegorical role within the work itself, is also the subject of repeated autobiographical references, not least through the anniversary poems. Indeed, Mann (2000, p. 26) also notes the similarity between Petrarch's note on the flyleaf of the *Virgilio Ambrosiano*, stating the date of Petrarch's first sight of Laura and her death, and Propertius' opening Elegy celebrating Cynthia. This careful crafting of the fictive poetic world as both an extension of yet distinct from biographical reality indicates that beloved exists as a bridge between the world of the text and the world in which the poet seeks fame, and she becomes his means to achieve this.

Propertius' Cynthia and Ovid's Corinna are the means by which the author achieves his poetic goals, that is in terms of obtaining fame amongst his contemporaries and in posterity. At the close of the second book, Propertius finishes with a couplet proclaiming his lyric fame will be due to his writing of Cynthia, thus further cementing this overlap between woman and poetry: "Cynthia quin etiam versu laudata PROPERTI, / hos inter si me ponere Fama volet" (*Eleg*. 2.34, 93–4).[114] Cynthia, both in the sense of the book titled 'Cynthia', and the textual beloved as a narrative construct once more overlap, with the woman and the lyrics which she represents propelling the poet to eternal fame. Ovid similarly

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[110] Turpin (2014, pp. 419–421), argues that the poetic muse invoked in the last couplet is none other than Corinna.

[111] For Ovid's autobiographical references see Holzberg (1997).

[112] Gibson (2005, p. 166).

[113] Hallett (2012, pp. 269–284) argues for the importance of taking into account the autobiographical and realistic details.

[114] 'Yea, Cynthia glorified in the pages of Propertius shall live, if Fame consent to rank me with bards like these.'

proclaims at the start of the *Amores* “nos quoque per totum pariter cantabimur orbem, / iunctaque semper erunt nomina nostra tuis” (*Am.* 1.3, 25–26),[115] showing that through singing of his lady, his name will also be sung throughout the world. This claim made at the start of the work illustrates the intent of the poet to promote himself through the work, restated at the end of the first book “vivam, parsque mei multa superstes erit” (*Am.* 1.15, 42).[116] At the end of the third book of the collection, his own fame is confirmed through his work: “post mea mansurum fata superstes opus” (*Am.* 3.15, 20).[117] Concern of the poets in composing their books is therefore not centred solely around exploring the narrative of love or representing a reality, but also explores methods of obtaining fame through their lyrics.[118] The beloved is the construct which allows them to do this: as Ovid stated, Corinna’s name will be joined with his, thus enabling his own fame through his writing of her.

That Laura, and in her allegorical guise as *lauro*, motivates Petrarch’s lyrics in this drive to literary fame in the *Rvf* is clear throughout the work. Such a “poetological” reading of Laura as a classical beloved indicates the close relationship between the love narrative and the poet’s desire for literary glory, with her serving to secure the poet fame in literary posterity. The first anniversary poem, *Rvf* 30, explicitly links Laura, the laurel and Petrarch’s desire see his work last through the centuries. Petrarch marks the “sett’anni” (*Rvf* 30, 28) since his *innamoramento*, described as his “idolo […] scolpito in vivo lauro” (*Rvf* 30, 27). The carving of his idol refers to Petrarch’s idolatrous love of Laura, who is being sculpted as a textual construct within his lyrics, but also to the act of sculpting the book of poetry itself, which she as the poetic inspiration generates and embodies. That she is central to his desired success in literary posterity, as both the beloved of his lyrics and representative of his poetry itself, is made explicit at the end of the sestina, where Petrarch mentions that he writes “per far forse pietà venir negli occhi / di tal che nascerà dopo mill’anni, / se tanto viver pò ben cólto lauro” (*Rvf* 30, 34–36). Petrarch here wishes that his lyrics may be still read and inspire emotions in a thousand years time, should the laurel live so long, indicating the laurel, and therefore Laura, as a metaphor for his poetry itself. In *Rvf* 360, *Amore* claims that Petrarch’s fame is achieved because of his gift of Laura to him: “salito in qualche fama, / solo per me, che ‘l suo intellecto alzai*”* (*Rvf* 360, 93–94). His poetic fame is garnered through lyric success, which is dependent on the inspiration guided by the beloved. This indicates that despite his apparent ambivalence to the vernacular language as opposed to Latin, he still wished the *Rvf* to stand as a model to posterity, transmitting his own ideal of a lyric sequence as an act of classical imitation, informed by the classical lyric poetry book.

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[115] ‘You and I, too, shall be sung in like manner through all the earth, and my name shall be ever joined with yours.’ [all translations from Showerman, revised by Goold, 1990]

[116] ‘I shall still live on, and the great part of me survive my death.’

[117] ‘my work will live on when I am no more’.

[118] For the role of the poet in the *Amores* see Gauly (1990); Davis (1989).

In conclusion, Petrarch was consciously crafting the *Rvf* with the classical elegiac collection in mind. While Laura is in many ways very different to the *puellae* of Roman love elegy, she still acts as a mediator of the poetic self: as section 1.2 demonstrated, this mediatory role is repurposed for a vernacular poetic context, where it also serves to explore the relationship with the divine. Laura's very name, however, speaks to a poetic meaning rather than a theological one, unlike Dante's Beatrice. She is the laurels, she is poetic inspiration, and she is poetry itself: the shaping of Laura in imitation of the classical beloved confirms as much. In particular, the self-fashioning role of the elegiac beloved acts as a model for Petrarch's poetics to a greater extent than previously acknowledged. With Sharrock (2012, p. 79) arguing that the beloveds of classical elegy are open to "poetological readings", the same can be said of Laura, who is both Petrarch's inspiration and as well as his lyrics. This reading of Laura in a metapoetic role indicates that she as a textual construct is a means of achieving literary fame, as Ovid and Propertius had demonstrated with their fame obtained through lyrics singing of their beloveds. Having established that Laura is shaped as a classicising beloved with a metapoetic role, the model of classical elegy suggests that to bring the sequence to a close she must by necessity be rejected, as the following section is to argue.

2.2 Structuring the classical lyric collection

This section argues that Petrarch sought to imitate the model of the classical lyric collection for the macrostructure of the *Rvf*, thus necessitating that the beloved must be abandoned to close the lyric project. This suggests that the reason for Petrarch moving towards a narrative which rejects Laura in the revisions to the *Rvf* is not exclusively a religious choice, but one that also reflects a classicising poetics. Firstly, I address the issues pertaining to Petrarch's knowledge of classical collections, and the forms of those collections which he viewed. Secondly, I show that a central feature to the organisation of classical poetry collections, the ring structure, is adopted by Petrarch in the *Rvf*, with particular attention to imitating Ovid's *Amores*. Thirdly, I demonstrate that the ring structure is brought to a close in Ovid's *Amores* and Propertius' *Elegies* through the rejection of the beloved, and in accordance with her metapoetic role, love poetry itself. This not only serves as a declaration that fame has been secured through the poetic project, but also facilitates a transition to weightier poetic modes through the rejection of love elegy. This suggests that Laura's rejection in the *Rvf*, as opposed to her apparent redemption in the *Triumphus Eternitatis*,[119] also serves a poetic goal of obtaining glory, in a reflection of the classical poetry collection which it imitates. With the *Rvf* cast by Petrarch in the *Seniles* as a youthful project,[120] the rejection of Laura also represents a transition away from what Petrarch claims to be inferior (vernacular and lyric) modes, as he sets the *Rvf* into his idealised, and fictional, biographic arc.

In accordance with the lyric model it imitates, the move away from Laura at the close of the *Rvf* also serves a poetic goal rather than a solely religious one. Rico (1988, p. 1103) has emphasised that "el simple hecho de componer un "libro de poemas" es un acto de imitación clásica", and McLaughlin (1995, p. 35) has noted that in earlier versions of the *Rvf*, Petrarch appeared to focus also on classically inflected openings and closures, such as the choice to commence an early form of the work with the Ovidian *Rvf* 34, or close it with the Virgilian *Rvf* 353, in effect creating a classical frame. A classicising poetics has been pinpointed more strongly at the opening of the *Rvf*: Santagata (2014, p. 30) has suggested that the opening series of poems is by nature a "prologo classico", and that "Petrarca faceva implicito riferimento, dalle *Epistulae* e dai *Carmina* di Orazio alle elegie di Properzio, agli *Amores* di Ovidio" (ibid., p. 31), agreeing with Rico's assessment of the opening of the work as classical in nature.[121] In contrast, scholarly debate has drawn attention to the "tone of repentance and of religious conversion" (Bernardo, 1974, p. 62) in the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, ultimately suggesting that in the

[119] On the *Triumphus Eternitatis* see Gragnolati and Southerden (2018); Bernardo (1974).

[120] The *Seniles* is to be discussed in chapter 3.2.

[121] Rico (1988) discusses the opening three poems of the *Rvf*, focusing on the Horatian, Propertian and Ovidian echoes identified within them.

closing stages of constructing the sequence, the classicising poetics were being laid aside in favour of moral concerns, as Petrarch himself had claimed to be doing in the *Seniles*. However, this assumption perhaps takes Petrarch too much at face value: as this thesis contends, the classicising poetics was very much still present at the close of Petrarch's life, and as a result in the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, although he would seemingly very much like us to believe that his concerns in *senectus* were largely moral and spiritualising in nature.

That Petrarch is returning to an established classical model in the construction of the *Rvf* indicates a desire to impose a sense of Latinity upon a vernacular medium: it is not just a case of elevating source material for a new (Christian) context, but also to elevate the vernacular, of which Petrarch was outwardly dismissive, referring to his writings in it as "ineptiae" or "nugae". However, despite this ambivalence towards it, he appeared interested in the potential of the medium for his own literary and autobiographical agendas, which could be enhanced through the incorporation of a classicising aspect, both in terms of narrative and form. His own titling of the work as 'Rerum vulgarium fragmenta' hints at the instability of the vernacular, and a work which is by nature fragmentary rather than stable in form. Likewise, in the proemial sonnet, the positioning of the *Rvf* as 'rime sparse' suggests an incoherence of these fragments, which are scattered both in the sense of the process of constructing the sequence, as Petrarch adds, removes, and edits, but also in the sense of the disparate nature of the vernacular tradition before him. In suggesting the fragmentary and scattered nature of the vernacular, Petrarch hints at its inferiority, already declared by himself in his letters.[122] Through imposing a classical lyric model, which is in itself a stable medium, with established conventions both thematically and in form, Petrarch also sought to create a poetic monument.

2.2.1 Petrarchan problems and methodological challenges

When assessing the structuring of classical poetry collections and their influence on the *Rvf,* there are two key problems which must be held in mind. The first issue is the reliability of the collections as we read them today, that is the extent to which the extant witnesses actually transmit the collection as intended by the author. With the majority, there is a degree of debate about the 'original', that is the author-intended form, of the collection. The knottiness of this debate varies greatly between individual collections. At one end of the scale, Catullus' *Liber*, preserved in an anthology of 116 poems, is the most problematic in terms of its structuring, with scholarly opinion ranging from Schmidt's (1914) assertion that the collection as we read today is a wild chaos, to Claes' (2001) assertion that the

[122] For example, in *Sen.* 5.2, Petrarch claims that Latin was the loftier style, and that after a brief experimentation with the vernacular in his youth, he did not wish to engage any further with it due to the misuse of his compositions amongst the *vulgus*.

organisation is so subtle and precise that it cannot be any other than the author's own.[123] In the case of Propertius' *Elegies,* the presence of extensive variants in the chain of transmission is an issue. Heyworth (2012, p. 225) observes that "in every book the number of poems is in doubt", which makes it problematic to divide the corpus neatly, or even assume that what has been transmitted may represent for the most part the author's own work. In many cases it is impossible to tell where one poem stops or another ends, and there has been much debate over the nature of what has been transmitted as the second book, which is now generally considered to be two separate books.[124] At the other end of the scale, Horace's *Odes* appears to have been preserved relatively well: Tarrant (2015, p. 300) asserts that "among Latin poets, probably only the text of Virgil is more securely attested". Where the presence of author-ordering is in doubt, or there are inconsistencies in transmission, we must be cautious around making concrete conclusions over the nature of a structure.

This brings us to the second issue which is perhaps more problematic: discerning what Petrarch himself actually read. Where we can identify manuscripts owned by Petrarch, the problem of establishing the reliability of classical collections as transmitted to us today does not arise to the same extent, as we can be sure of the form of the collection that Petrarch actually consulted. However, the dispersal of his library means that it is in many cases unclear exactly what forms Petrarch owned. The first outline of Petrarch's knowledge of the Augustan poets was established by Pierre de Nohlac (1907, pp. 113–114), who detailed an initial, though now long outdated, list of 38 manuscripts he is certain were possessed by Petrarch, and hypothesised the existence of several more.[125] Over the years more evidence has come to light: Petrarch is known to have possessed a manuscript of Propertius through a request made for it by Coluccio Salutati, and more recently a consensus has been reached that marginal annotations in the MS BML Pl. 36. 49 belong to Petrarch.[126] Similarly, in the case of Horace, the MS BML Pl. 34.1, the MS Morgan M404, and the MS Harley 3754 provide a clear indication of the versions of the collections to which Petrarch had access. While the manuscript evidence for Petrarch's reading of Ovid is sparse,[127] his inclusion on Petrarch's list of favourite authors in the flyleaf of Cassiodorus' *De anima* and the extensive references to Ovid's works throughout his *oeuvre* show deep familiarity

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[123] A useful overview of the history of the scholarship is provided in Skinner (2007).

[124] See Heyworth (2007), x–xi, 152, 156–158 on the division of the second book into 2A and 2B. Many scholars have debated the exact location and nature of the division, e.g. Lyne (1999) who argues that 2.12 introduced the original third book (2b).

[125] Although a valuable first outline, some of de Nolhac's findings have been disputed, for example the extent to which Petrarch had first-hand knowledge of Propertius: see Bosco (1942, p.65); Ullman (1955, pp. 181–200). Naturally the list is incomplete as more manuscripts have come to light over the years.

[126] See for example Tonelli (1998, p. 261).

[127] An incomplete copy of the *Metamorphoses* (books 1–4) in the Harley 3754 has been attributed to Petrarch: see Van Peteghem (2020, p. 226); Marcozzi (2000, pp. 61–63).

with the *Metamorphoses*, the letters and the amatory poems, so in the absence of direct testimonies it has been supposed he had a copy of these works.[128]

However, for other authors, there is a lack of direct manuscript evidence to prove what form of the work was seen, or indeed textual references to suggest whether Petrarch was even familiar with the collection at all. For Catullus' *Liber* we have no evidence: despite Billanovich (1997) having argued in favour of a reading of the *Liber* at Verona in 1345, the lack of a manuscript means that scholarly efforts have largely focused on interpreting the echoes of Catullan verses in the *Rvf*.[129] Petrarch's knowledge of Tibullus has also been extensively challenged: Ullman (1955, pp. 181–200) confirmed de Nolhac's original hypothesis that Petrarch only knew Tibullus from a *florilegium*,[130] and investigations into the presence of Augustan authors, for example by Petrie (1983), have found no clear evidence of the presence of Tibullus in the *Rvf*, apart from the general themes of love and rural life, which are present also in the other elegists, as well as Virgil's *Eclogues*. Hence, while first providing a general overview of common features of the structuring of classical poetry collections, I have centred my discussion on those love poets we can be confident Petrarch knew best, that is Propertius and Ovid.[131]

2.2.2 Approaching classical collections: structural features

The structuring of classical collections has drawn a great deal of attention from varying methodological perspectives. Critics have largely approached the organisation of classical poetry books from two main perspectives; the first giving prominence to constructed formal features, focusing heavily on patterning in the macrostructure through formal connections and elaborate, often mathematically inflected structural schemes; the second approach focuses on sequential reading and generating meaning through narrative progression.[132] Schafer (2020, p. 27) has seen the methodology employed by scholars as falling into two broad categories: a "global" or "top down" approach as he terms it, or a "local" or "bottom-up" approach. These approaches may provide us with some initial observations of how the structuring of the *Rvf* is modelled upon the classical poetry book, as Petrarch seeks both in the sequential reading of the revised closure to imitate the elegiac abandonment of the beloved, but sets this into the classical model on a macro-structural level by deploying formal organisational methods utilised in

[128] See de Nolhac (1907, p. 176).

[129] See for example Nisi (2019); Di Benedetto (1987).

[130] See also Ullman (1928) for the circulation of Tibullus more generally.

[131] Horace does not feature in Petrarch's list of love poets in the *Triumphi* and as such will not be discussed extensively here, but will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.1.

[132] For examples of the first approach see Steenkamp (2011); Claes (2001); Dettmer (1988); Dettmer (1983); Mutschler (1974); Otis (1965); Skutsch (1963); for the sequential approach see for example Schafer (2020); Hutchinson (2008); Porter (1987); Collinge (1961).

classical poetry books, such as the ring structure, where beginning and end of individual books and the collection more widely are linked through formal or thematic means.

The top-down approach starts with the hypothesis that the corpus is ordered to fit into a planned artistic design and seeks to find patterns which prove it in the macrostructure of the collection. Formal links, such as patterning, metrical, numerical and lexical links can contribute towards the association of individual poems within the wider macrostructure, and draw our attention to connections the author wishes to emphasise, and certainly Petrarch in the organisation of the *Rvf* pays attention to macrostructural connections in poems which have both significant narrative and architectural importance, including in the closing sequence. Dettmer is the principal exponent of this methodology and has sought to emphasise that the ring principle is the dominant organisational structure in Augustan poetry books, both simple and interlocking.[133] This theory has a heavily mathematical emphasis, with attention to diagrams of counterparts and balances relating to formal aspects of poems. This approach has however at times been criticised for sacrificing poetics for patterns, minimising the importance of the substance of the lyrics themselves in favour of complex correspondences which may as much be down to chance than design. Despite this, structural schemes are still important features of organisation: Goold (1990, p. 7) has suggested that these elaborate schemes are "literary curiosities, but no less real for all that". They contribute to the poetry itself, and may enhance, but do not generate meaning, yet indicate the many interpretative possibilities that an organised lyric sequence may provide.

A core aspect of this approach is the emphasis on the ring structure, which Petrarch adopts for the *Rvf*, with particular emphasis on the connections between beginning and end of the sequence to frame the it as a self-contained poetic project. Tibullus would appear to be the first (extant) author to employ a framing ring to his first book,[134] and it is also used by Propertius, Horace, and Ovid. For Propertius, studies within individual books of the collection have highlighted the formal organisational structures used in addition to the wider macrostructure: Skutsch (1963) and Otis (1965) have focused on the symmetrical structures of Book 1; Woolley (1967) attempts to outline a symmetrical structure to Book 3.[135] Horace's *Odes* 1.1 and 3.30, to be discussed in chapter 3.1, exhibit clear thematic and formal correspondences, and in Ovid's *Amores,* Dettmer (1983, p. 49) has noted extensive links between the opening and closing poems of the collection. Hutchinson (2008, pp. 177-200) has convincingly demonstrated that the frame of the third book of the *Amores*, poems 1 and 15, contributes to the fluctuating narrative of Ovid's struggle with love and elegy, with 3.15 closing both the individual book

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[133] Dettmer (1983) conducts a survey of the major Augustan poetry collections and the methods used to structure them, before moving on to a detailed analysis of the *Odes*.

[134] Powell (1974, p. 109), building on Littlewood (1970), emphasises the intentional importance of the frame to Tibullus' first book, arguing that there are "too many echoes of *Elegy* 1 in *Elegy* 10, however, for these to be without importance".

[135] Courtney has approached Book 1 (1968) and then Book 3 (1970) through a more linear reading; and Juhnke (1971) has attempted a complex melding of the two approaches.

as well as the whole work; and for Horace, the closing poem of Book 2, 2.20, returns to the theme of poetic glory thus creating a parallel with 1.1 and 3.30. Thematic and formal markers in structurally significant locations in this way establish connections across not just the macrostructure of the work as a whole, but also within individual books, identifying key thematic markers or a narrative progression to which the author wishes to draw attention.

The bottom-up, or sequential approach to interpreting classical collections consists of interrogating each point in the transmitted sequence, establishing links from one poem to the next in order to prove that adjacency constitutes an artful chain through the appreciation of continuities within micro-sequences. Porter (1987, p. 3) emphasises the material form of the classical collection as requiring this method of reading: "Ancient books were intended above all for continuous reading or recitation, and the very manner in which they were written, on a *volumen* that was progressively unrolled from one hand, rolled up by another, invited attention to linear development even in a non-narrative genre".[136] Although this scrolling does not apply to the process of reading poetry in Petrarch's day, the function of sequential reading in organising vernacular poetry was starting to become clear in, for example, the *Vita nova* or the poetry of Nicolò de' Rossi. Sequential reading is integral to the reading of a collection not only on a consecutive level, but also in terms of identifying thematic and narrative progression across a collection as a progressive whole.

This includes, for example, the subtle thematic modulations occurring across Horace's Maecenas odes, or the transformation of Tibullus' wistful love for Delia into a more sinister form of love for Nemesis, developments which may be enhanced by patterning but are created by sequential narrative. Propertius' *Elegies* and Ovid's *Amores* when read sequentially present a fluctuating and dynamic impression of the constantly changing love affair, which is far more complex and oscillating than examining the start and end of the ring composition would indicate. Indeed, *variatio* is a common principle in the sequencing of classical poetry collections,[137] and in general Augustan poets did not order their collections so that the same theme, addressee or metre was used consecutively. This is a principle to which Petrarch is perhaps alluding in the conception of the *Rvf* as written in "vario stile" (*Rvf* 1, 5).

2.2.3 Connecting a collection between beginning and end: the *Rvf* and the *Amores*

Petrarch himself sought to engage with these methods of organisation in the *Rvf*. The classical poetics of the opening sequence of the *Rvf* have been well-established; as Rico (1988, p. 1085) observes, the

[136] Porter begins his discussion with a focus on the internal architecture of the *Odes*, namely the concentric patterns binding it together, before moving to the analysis of sequentially developing themes, motifs and moods.

[137] There are a few notable exceptions, for example Horace's Roman Odes.

opening allusions of the *Rvf* "se formula con las palabras del propio Ovidio a idéntico propósito", indicating a strong desire to operate a classical poetics from the start of the narrative.[138] However, in its very nature, the ring structure indicates that the proemial features should be returned to at the close of the book, and thus this study argues that greater emphasis must be placed on classical poetics also at the end of the narrative. With each of his revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, Petrarch alters the nature of the frame of the macrostructure. In the final version, as chapter 4 contends, the move away from Laura, and therein the abandonment of love poetry itself, draws upon the closure of Ovid's *Amores* as well as Propertius' *Elegies*, indicating that the desire to implement a classicising poetics was still at the forefront of Petrarch's mind even at the close of his life, despite his claims otherwise, and the tendency of scholars to focus on the repentant and devotional tones of the revisions in the V. L. 3195.

The *Amores* is an example of an author-organised collection which is a second edition, the result of authorial redesign and careful attention to the macrostructure across the whole work, the entirety of which was issued simultaneously, rather than sequentially in individual books.[139] Ovid's *Amores* by the author's own account was slimmed down from five books to three for the published version in the brief epigram of the work, exhibiting its nature as a selective and edited collection:

> Qui modo Nasonis fueramus quinque libelli,
>
> tres sumus; hoc illi praetulit auctor opus.
>
> ut iam nulla tibi nos sit legisse voluptas,
>
> at levior demptis poena duobus erit.[140]

The alleged first edition, if it existed, has not been attested, so we cannot be sure of its contents.[141] If we take Ovid at his word that what we have is a second edition, we can fairly confidently hypothesise that the redactional process was one of *removal* rather than of addition, as the slimming down from five to three books would mean that had the poet added more new poems, very little from the first edition would have remained, rendering it a very different collection entirely. Indeed, Ovid himself mentions in the *Tristia* (4.10, 59–62) that he destroyed poems about Corinna which he considered inadequate.

In revising a hypothetical first edition, sequencing and resequencing would have had to play a central role in the redactional process, as patterns developed in the original five book collection would

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[138] For comparative readings of the apertures of Ovid and Propertius' collections see: Tsomis (2009); Keith (1992).

[139] On the manuscript tradition of Ovid's love poetry see Kenney (1962).

[140] *Epigramma ipsius.* 'We who erewhile were five booklets of Naso now are three; the poet has preferred to have his work thus rather than as before. Though even now you may take no joy of reading us, yet with two books taken away your pains will be lighter.'

[141] See Barchiesi (2001, pp. 159–66); Holzberg (2002, p. 33), has even suggested that the epigram was even an act of wit rather than truth, design to reflect the Callimachean poetic principle of less being more.

have been broken with the removal of material. For example, Cameron (1968, p. 322) has suggested that the programmatic nature of poem 1.2 means it could have been one of the opening poems of the original five books.[142] The epigram indicates a conscious effort on the part of Ovid to fashion an outward-facing authorial self. But it is also suggestive of the greater control an author has through the revision of redactions: books issued in succession represent a single structural entity within themselves, and an author can only ever make connections backwards where books are released separately and sequentially. Ovid is not just consciously thinking about how his authorial self is presented, but is drawing the audience's attention towards the editorial process as a central part of creating the finished item, and a revised version of the poetic self. For Petrarch, the model of a lyric poetry book concerned with revising the poetic self would have been alluring, and certainly anticipates what he does with the *Rvf*.

As with the other love elegists, Ovid creates links between the first and last poems of both the collection as a whole and within individual books.[143] The *Amores* has a frame constructed around the motif of war, which offered a model for Petrarch to restyle in terms of his own interior conflict. For Ovid, this war begins at the opening of the collection, instigated by Cupid's assault, and closes with Ovid bidding goodbye to his unwarlike elegies at the close of the collection. The conflict is in this way not merely one of the passions, but also of poetic modes: love forces Ovid to write elegies, distracting him from weightier metres, which are for him the hexameters of epic. This suggests that for Petrarch the choice of vernacular for a lyric work can also be attributed to the subject matter, its thematic nature and poetic convention preventing him from turning to what he considers superior mediums, that is the Latin language. In *Familiares* 24.1, Petrarch specifically credits Ovid as the central influence in what he terms his passionate writings, indicating the importance of his poetry as a model for the *Rvf*, which as Zak (2015c, p. 147) has noted was considered by Petrarch as one of his "weak" writings. Petrarch styles his own ring structure in the *Rvf* around the motif of war in imitation of Ovid, staged as a conflict not just against *Amore* as an external force, but also internally. From the inception of the narrative of the *Rvf*, to Petrarch's final lament regarding his "guerra" (*Rvf* 365, 9), his conflict is presented as an internal war, and not just a spiritual one, but also one of poetic modes.

This motif of the *militia amoris* has its origins in Roman love elegy, in particular in Ovid's *Amores*, which was the central source for Petrarch.[144] The motif was already developing through the

[142] However, this idea has been met with some resistance: for a counterargument see Moles (1991, pp. 551–54). See also Oliver (1945) on the first edition.

[143] For the structure of the whole of the *Amores* see Weinlich (1999); Wille (1984); Lörcher (1975).

[144] Drinkwater (2013, p. 195), has identified three broad variant uses of the *militia amoris* as used in the poetry of Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid. The first is presenting love itself as a war and sex as a battle; the second opposes love to warfare, sometimes as a career or lifestyle choice; the third conflates the first two through triumphal imagery, with either defeat or victory in the lover's conquest of his girl. However, there is extensive overlap

poetry of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius: the dramatic opening of Propertius 1.1 introduces the metaphor of conflict and propels it to new heights. Cynthia "cepit" (*Eleg*. 1.1, 1) the lover, before Amor himself introduces the forceful images of "deiecit" (*Eleg*. 1.1, 3) and "pressit" (*Eleg*. 1.1, 4)[145] in what O'Rourke calls "the pose of a victorious combatant".[146] It is Ovid, however, who brings this trope to full fruition, and with its adoption contributing to Petrarch's styling of his love for Laura as a philosophical battle ground.[147] In all three books of the *Amores*,[148] Ovid's love is repeatedly styled in terms of the military life, whether as a soldier in a war, conquering the beloved, being conquered or taken captive. He opens the first book with a reference to epic, stating that as he was preparing to start with heavy fighting and violent war, Cupid distracted him, and as a result he is now writing elegies. Ironically, the following poem immediately takes up this motif of war and violence to describe the situation of the lover, wounded by Cupid in his own camp:

> nam, puto, sentirem, siquo temptarer amore.
> an subit et tecta callidus arte nocet?
> sic erit; haeserunt tenues in corde sagittae,
> et possessa ferus pectora versat Amor.
> Cedimus, an subitum luctando accendimus ignem?
> cedamus! leve fit, quod bene fertur, onus.[149] (*Am*. 1.2, 5–10)

Petrarch opens the narrative of the *Rvf* with a similar programmatic opening. In *Rvf* 2 and 3, which start the narrative proper following the prologue, Petrarch appears to reference this particular poem of the *Amores*. Describing love's first assault on him, Petrarch styles his account in an Ovidian manner, including his being struck by Cupid *celatamente*, secretly, in the same manner that the Cupid of the *Amores* is *tecta*, and as Cupid *nocet* Ovid, so does Petrarch cast Cupid "come huom ch'a *nocer* luogo et tempo aspetta" (*Rvf* 2, 4). This begins the narrative of the *Rvf* with the commencement of a conflict

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between the categories used, and variants within these broad group, and in particular the Ovidian use of the motif resists simple classification.

145 'captured'; 'hurled down'; 'crushed.'

146 O'Rourke (2018, p. 111).

147 For discussion of the motif of *militia amoris* in Roman love elegy, see Drinkwater (2013); Kennedy (2012); Gale (1997); Cahoon (1988); Lyne (1979); Copley (1947); O'Rourke (2018) seeks to view the topos in the context of a society in which violence was a quotidian reality.

148 The consensus is that in the *Amores* there are 15 poems in book 1, 20 in book 2, and 15 in book 3, although several amendments are needed to achieve this round number, based on the assumption that Roman poetry collections were typically organised in multiples of five. To achieve the round number in the *Amores*, there is the division into two of 2.9 and 3.11, and the removal of 3.5 which had been transmitted separately. Kenney (1969) has argued in favour of removing 3.5 due to its transmission and stylistic oddities, but it has been defended by Bretzigheimer (2001, pp. 263–72). Holzberg (2002, pp. 61–3), suggests retaining 3.5 but not divide 3.11 into two.

149 'For I should know, I think, were I in any way assailed by love. Or can it be that love is stolen into me, and cunningly works my harm with covered art? Thus it must be; the subtle darts are planted in my heart, and cruel Love torments the breast where he is lord. Shall I yield? Or by resisting kindle still more the inward-stealing flame that has me? Let me yield! Light grows the burden that is well borne.'

styled in military terms, whereby the interior dissidence of the *io* is reflected in the motif of love as a battle. The sonnet presents a description of the "primiero assalto" (*Rvf* 2, 9) of love, laden with military metaphors and language comparing the sudden strike of love as a man caught defenceless in a battle with heavily classical overtones drawing upon imagery of the god Cupid, as "Amor l'arco riprese" (*Rvf* 2, 3).[150] Various military metaphors underpin the sonnet: "difese" (*Rvf* 2, 6), "turbata nel primiero assalto" (*Rvf* 2, 9), and "prender l'arme" (*Rvf* 2, 11), all underline the inability of the poet to respond to the intensity of love's offensive. The military imagery is continued in the following sonnet, *Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro*, sustaining the conception of love as an undefeatable force inflicting destruction upon the poet, who is "del tutto disarmato" (*Rvf* 3, 9).

While the motif of war is a common one in vernacular love poetry, the specific lexical overlap with *Rvf* 2 and 3, and the fact that both works commence with this imagery, means that Ovid has been identified consistently as the particular influence here.[151] In the paired poems 2.9a and 2.9b,[152] Ovid criticises Cupid's attack on him, as he is unprepared and defenceless in the camp:

> O numquam pro re satis indignande Cupido,
> o in corde meo desidiose puer—
> quid me, qui miles numquam tua signa reliqui,
> laedis, et in castris vulneror ipse meis?
> cur tua fax urit, figit tuus arcus amicos?
> gloria pugnantes vincere maior erat.[153] (*Am.* 2.9a, 1–6)

As Ovid bemoans Cupid's lack of honour in *Amores* 2.9a, stating that there is greater glory in beating those who fight, Petrarch in *Rvf* 3 expresses the same idea: "non li fu honore / ferir me de saetta in quello stato, / a voi armata non mostrar pur l'arco" (*Rvf* 3, 12–14). In 2.9b Ovid, having felt that his ardour is dying, is propelled by an unseen force which disrupts his mind:

> 'Vive' deus 'posito' siquis mihi dicat 'amore!'
> deprecer—usque adeo dulce puella malum est.

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[150] For the motif of Cupid in Renaissance theology of love, see Hyde (1988).

[151] See Santagata (1992) and Rico (1988).

[152] Pair poems are an Ovidian innovation, dealing with what Booth (2009, p. 73) terms "successive phases of the same action". For more, see Booth (2009); Damon (1990).

[153] 'O nothing can express my indignation enough Cupid, at the way you idle around in my heart – Why annoy me, a soldier who's never left your standard, and let me be injured in my own camp? Why does your torch blaze, your bow bend against friends? There's more glory in beating those who fight.'

cum bene pertaesum est, animoque relanguit ardor,
nescio quo miserae turbine mentis agor.[154] (*Am.* 2.9b, 1–4)

There is no apparent source of the *turbine*, styled as an emotional upheaval, brought on from an uncertain source.[155] Similarly Petrarch styles his virtue as *turbata* by Cupid's attack (*Rvf* 2, 9), as he is caught unawares by Cupid's offensive. Whereas Propertius tends to style the motif in terms of a conflict between the lover and love, and considers the competing claims of love and war, Ovid, as Cahoon (1988, p. 294) points out, avoids this competing authority altogether from the beginning, by styling the lover simply as a soldier, and thereby negating the conflicting claims of love and war: "militat omnis amans" (*Am.* 1.9, 1).[156] Cahoon (1988, p. 294) sees Ovid's innovation of the trope in the context of not only going beyond Propertius in terms of the wit of it, but also because it suggests that "the love of the *Amores* is inherently violent and linked with the Roman *libido dominandi*". This suggests that the imagery of *militia amoris* is connected with the desire to view the lady as a conquest, a sexual object to be possessed, as are the spoils of war.

However, more recently Drinkwater (2013, pp. 194–195) has suggested that in Ovid's depiction of the lover as a soldier of *Amor* rather than of *Roma*, it can be perceived that the poets reject the notion of *Romanitas* itself, thus the motif exists also as a comment on society. For Propertius, Gale (1997) also highlighted discussion about the application of the motif as a way of the poet dissociating himself from conventional moral and social values and asserting poetry as a 'legitimate' career, as well as hinting at an irony which mocks the values of the Augustan establishment. Petrarch likewise does not redeploy the motif in a purely erotic sense, but also with a moral dimension: Cupid assaults his "virtute" (*Rvf* 2, 5), his virtue, thus preventing the poet from fighting against his love. He does not seek to conquer Laura or deploy the motif as part of a suggestive eroticism, but as *Rvf* 3 indicates, to illustrate his inability to resist as part of the oscillating conflict and spiritual battle ground between profane and divine.

However, the struggle is not yet intensely moral or spiritual in the early stages of the *Rvf*, but in *Rvf* 2 at least hints at an Ovidian-inspired playfulness. Indeed, it is also a "gioco di parole che produce il nome di Laura" (Vecchi Galli 2012, p. 105) in *Rvf* 5, as the allusions to the Ovidian myth of Apollo and Daphne are introduced for the first time. And the so-called "raccolta apollinea" (Vecchi Galli 2012, p. 209), more profane in its themes, opened with *Rvf* 34, a sonnet describing "il bel desio" which "infiammava" (*Rvf* 34, 1–2) Apollo, suggestive of the amorous pursuit of not just the beloved, but also the poetic laurels she represents. This anticipates the development of the conflict also in a moral sense, as across the course of its evolution the *Rvf* increasingly seeks a more spiritual love, a conversion *away*

[154] 'If a god said 'Live, and set love aside' I'd say 'no'! Girls are such sweet misfortune. When I'm truly weary, and ardour has died in my spirit, I'm driven on by who knows what force in my poor mind.'

[155] For more analysis of the use of the word *turbo* in this context see Weiden Boyd (2002, p. 99).

[156] 'Every lover serves as a soldier'.

from the profane love of Laura, rather than obtaining her, as Petrarch seeks to reimagine existing motifs within a new moral context.

With both Petrarch and Ovid styling the openings of their work in terms of the sudden onslaught of love as a war, the ring composition dictates that the motif must be returned to in a narrative closure at the end of the collection. In the final poem, Ovid bids goodbye to his 'unwarlike elegies', "inbelles elegi, genialis Musa, valete" (*Am.* 3.15, 19),[157] evoking the opening of the first book where he had been preparing to write of war with a fitting metre, "Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam / edere, materia conveniente modis / par erat inferior versus—risisse Cupido / dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem" (*Am.* 1.1, 1–2),[158] but suffered the war-like assault which Cupid had dealt him in the opening poems. Love had driven him to an inferior metre, but in bidding goodbye to it, he may turn towards more weighty styles. Likewise, Petrarch closes the *Rvf* with the desire to bid goodbye to his own "guerra" (*Rvf* 365, 9) in the final sonnet, seeking to close his life in peace. The entirety of the lyric journey, as Petrarch states in *Rvf* 360, has been dictated by the war into which *Amore* had thrust him: "e' mi tolse di pace e pose in guerra" (*Rvf* 360, 30). In a narrative sense the *guerra* to which the closing sequence returns remains one for the poet's virtuous end, for the grace of God, an internal struggle between the warring parts of the self. Yet like Ovid's war, it is also one against love poetry itself.

2.2.4 The abandonment of the beloved: an elegiac necessity

Given the metapoetic role of the beloved as poetic inspiration and poetry itself, the resolution of the war between modes necessitates the abandonment of the beloved and elegy as one, thus anticipating a return for Ovid to weightier modes. The Ovidian tones to the frame of the *Rvf* also suggest that with the close of the sequence, Petrarch is also staging a turning away from vernacular poetry to what he regards as more superior literary forms, which is part of the wider idealised autobiographical project to cast vernacular poetry as a youthful pursuit. In the *Amores*, the sequencing of the books themselves provides a narrative progression through the experience of a lover, from the moment of first being struck by Cupid's arrow, to the point of release and abandonment of both the beloved, and the genre of elegy itself. Holzberg (2002) argues that there are two linear threads binding the collection, which Booth (2009, p. 73) has classed as "one essentially mimetic (through fictive), and the other essentially semiotic". The first is a love story, which is visible in a three-part progression through Book 1's suspicions of his girl's infidelity, Book 2's aspirations to seduce other women, and Book 3's acceptance of the loss of his original love. The semiotic element is the metapoetic conception explored in the

[157] 'Goodbye, unwarlike elegies, congenial Muse.'

[158] 'Arms, and the violent deeds of war, I was making ready to sound forth – in weighty numbers, with matter suited to the measure. The second verse was equal to the first – but Cupid, they say, with a laugh stole away one foot.'

relationship between poetry and the beloved. Booth notes that the narrative element may be read in parallel to the journey of the lover, "first committing to love elegy (Book 1), then toying with the idea of defection to other genres (Book 2), and finally bidding love elegy farewell (Book 3)" (Booth, 2009, p. 73). Likewise, Hainsworth (2015, p. 40) has suggested that the narrative of the *Rvf* is directed by three signal events: falling in love, Laura's death, and the abandonment of earthly love. In the *Amores,* the moment of falling in love is also the committal to elegy; and the abandonment of the beloved is also the abandonment of the genre. Read through an Ovidian lens, the frame of the *Rvf*, with the narrative directed by the falling in love with Laura and Petrarch's desire to turn to the divine, imitates this structure, whereby the inception of love is the inception of poetry, and the abandonment of the beloved signifies the close of the collection and abandonment of the lyric genre.

This section argues that Petrarch's movement to reject Laura in the revisions to the closing sequence indicates that he was seeking poetic glory in imitation of this model, where the beloved was abandoned at the close of the work, along with the poetry she represented, in tandem with a declaration of glory obtained. Overtly, at least, this might seem incompatible with Petrarch's statements elsewhere: while the classical model suggests that the abandonment of Laura in the *Rvf* was a means of seeking glory, the *Triumphus temporis* seems to contradict this, indicating that the death of the laurel as witnessed in *Rvf* 363 signifies the vain and illusory nature of fame. In the Triumph, he states:

> Tutto vince e ritoglie il Tempo avaro;
>
> chiamasi Fama, et è morir secondo;
>
> nè più che contra 'l primo è alcun riparo.
>
> Così 'l Tempo trionfa i nomi e 'l mondo. (*TT*, 142–145)

This is not to say that the *Triumphi* disprove the narrative of the *Rvf* or vice versa, but rather demonstrates that Petrarch was testing out different narrative strategies in different works, which requires embracing contradictions across different literary models. Petrarch did not necessarily seek uniformity in vision and viewpoint across his works, and in fact his concerns, which are as much literary as anything else, require the exploration of different narrative strategies in line with the genres and models he was working with. As will be explored in chapter 3, Petrarch still sought to ensure the lasting nature of his poetry lived on after his death, through following the model of Horace's *Odes*, in a bid to counteract the passage of time and secure earthly fame. Horace, in the final poem of Book 3 of the *Odes*,[159] claims "non omnis moriar multaque pars mei / vitabit Libitinam" (C. 3.30, 6–7),[160] as through

[159] While there are four books of the *Odes*, Book 4 was published ten years later, whereas the first three books are regarded as belonging to one unit, issued at the same time.

[160] 'I shall not wholly die, and a large part of me will elude the Goddess of Death.' [all translations of Horace from Rudd, 2004]

his poetry he will continue to exist to posterity, at least as long as Rome does. Although in the *Triumphi* Petrarch has Fame defeated by Time, Horace provides, as chapter 3 will show, a model which runs counter to this: fame may overcome death, as it does in the *Triumphi*, and although fame may not be everlasting in eternity, it is more capable than anything else of counteracting time's passage (apart from virtue in a Christian context).

This abandonment of the beloved, together with the poetic project, through tying up both the narrative and macro-structural elements to bring the work to a close is characteristic of elegiac poetry. The conclusion of the third book of the *Amores* has a dual-function of closing both the individual book as well as the whole collection itself. Hutchinson (2008) has convincingly demonstrated that the frame of the third book, poems 1 and 15, present the poet making and keeping the decision to abandon love-elegy, with the inset poems presenting an indecisive and fluctuating amorous journey to poetic freedom. In this way, it "resists an overall plot for the lover; it also resists a plot for the poet" (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 196). This sense of fluctuation negates a simple linear progression, indicating the changing emotions and experience of the poet, similar to Petrarch's continuous oscillations in the *Rvf*. However, the closing poem, 3.15, does carry out what was promised in the first poem of the third book, leaving behind Venus and Elegy. Booth (2009, pp. 73–74) notes that for Ovid "the poet's retention of control over his elegiac brief pulls against the lover's threatened loss of control over the beloved – a tension resolved only at the end of Book 3 with the ultimate relinquishing of both." This suggests that the abandonment of the beloved could facilitate the stabilisation of the lyric self, thus permitting the work to draw to a close. With the *io lirico* of the *Rvf* ultimately fragmentary and unstable, Petrarch may have seen the potential of the classical model as a means imposing a sense of stability that was lacking in his own subjective narrative.

The final poem of the *Amores*, 3.15, sees Ovid gaining fame for posterity, which is confirmed through a self-declaration: "post mea mansurum fata superstes opus" (*Am*. 3.15, 20).[161] This closing statement connects formally and thematically to the closing poem of the first book, in which Ovid states: "vivam, parsque mei multa superstes erit" (*Am*. 1.15, 42).[162] Here, the poet declares that his initial efforts in love elegy will be enough to ensure his lasting existence, with the lexical connection of "superstes" drawing attention to the thematic connection. Through these thematic and formal echoes, Ovid reminds us of his original goal in the first book of the collection, and the reason for his writing of love lyrics, that is the desire for glory. The structural frame created through macro-textual links in this way works in tandem with the literary goal of poetic glory to aid the closure of the narrative, with the correspondences in the final poem of the collection linking back not just to the first poem of the final

[161] 'My work will live on when I am no more.'

[162] 'I shall still live on, and the great part of me survive my death.'

book, but also back to the frames of the previous books, thus bringing to a close the frame of the collection as a whole.

For Ovid, the rejection of elegy itself and therein the beloved is enacted in the final poem of the *Amores*, paving the way for a return to weightier modes (i.e. epic). The closing poem of the first book elaborated that the poet sought eternal glory through his work: "Mortale est, quod quaeris, opus. mihi fama perennis / quaeritur, in toto semper ut orbe canar" (*Am.* 1.15, 7–8). Indeed, this is in response to envious criticisms of him, which he suggests might be due to the fact he had not chosen a life of military service, as a lawyer (a profession which Petrarch notably rejected himself), or as an orator. Those professions, he argues are to do with mortal matters: through poetry he may have eternal glory. In the closing couplet of the final poem of the collection, he bids goodbye to elegy, which he labels "imbelles elegi" (*Am.* 3.15, 19). He claims that this work will continue to exist beyond his death, and that he will be to the Paeligni what Virgil was to Mantua, or Catullus to Verona, thereby consecrating the poetic fame which he had desired in Book 1. When Cupid had forced him to write his unwarlike elegies, he was distracted from the epic he was attempting to produce: "Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam / edere, materia conveniente modis" (*Am.* 1, 1–2). In bidding goodbye to the elegiac genre, he indicates the turn toward other poetic modes: "corniger increpuit thyrso graviore Lyaeus: / pulsanda est magnis area maior equis" (*Am.* 3.15, 17–18). Indeed, Propertius had also said "bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est" (*Eleg.* 2.10, 8),[163] likewise indicating that love poetry was perceived as a precursor to weightier modes. With the beloved abandoned, and the elegiac mode rejected, Ovid may resume where he left off with his preparations to sing of war in a fitting metre. The abandonment of the poetic project and the turn away from the beloved is thus a declaration of the desire fame having been achieved, paving the way for a turn to different modes.

The concept of relinquishing both the beloved and the poetic mode together is one of the key narrative strands of the revised closure of the *Rvf*, to be discussed fully in chapter 4.2. *Rvf* 363 stages the regaining of freedom from Laura, as he both celebrates and mourns his newfound freedom from captivity of his beloved: "mi trovo in libertate, amara e dolce" (*Rvf* 363, 11). The symbol of the laurel returns, only to be extinguished, as Petrarch says "spenti son i miei lauri, or querce e olmi" (*Rvf* 363, 4). For the majority of commentators, the transition from the evergreen laurel to the oaks and elms, non-evergreen, represents the change of the positive inspiration of Laura in life to her loss in death. However, Santagata (2004, p. 1404) has underlined the importance of exploring deeper meanings, linking the transformation into more humble plants with efforts to subvert the poetic sacrality of the laurel, and therein where death has not only destroyed Laura's body, but also "la simbologia legata al nome (e con essa i valori della poesia amorosa)." The laurel as the metaphorical symbol of unity between poetry and beloved is extinguished: 'spenti' being also the word used to describe Laura's eyes darkened by death,

[163] 'henceforth I will sing of wars, since my girl's praises have been penned.'

governs also the poetic laurels, as without the beloved his poetry is also gone, alluding to her metapoetic role.

This dual abandonment of both the beloved after her death, and of poetry itself, subverted for more humble, quotidian practices as indicated in the oaks and elms, results in the poet turning back to God at the close of the sonnet: "et al Signor ch'i'adoro […] torno" (*Rvf* 363, 12–14). This has an obvious religious significance, as the earthly is rejected in favour of the divine. Indeed, at the end of his life Petrarch indicated in the *Triumphi* that Fame (represented in the laurel and the literary pursuits it allegorises) is conquered by Time, and then Eternity, suggesting its impermanence. Yet despite the death of the laurel suggesting the illusory and vain nature of fame, the rejection of the beloved in itself can also signify that poetic glory has been achieved, in accordance with the Ovidian model. Ovid's abandonment of his fictive beloved is in itself a declaration of glory obtained: she has served her literary purpose of propelling the poet to fame, and as a result is rejected as the poet moves to different poetic modes. This suggests that according to an Ovidian reading of the *Rvf*, the rejection of Laura is also a declaration of the project completed and fame secured.

Ovid abandoned his beloved at the end of the *Amores* as she has fulfilled her function of bringing him his desired glory. Likewise, Propertius bids goodbye to Cynthia at the close of Book 3 of the *Elegies*, establishing this as a necessity for bringing the love narrative to a conclusion in the genre which Petrarch was seeking to imitate. Mann's (2000, p. 27) assertion that many aspects of the *Rvf* "owe something of their origins to Propertius" applies not just to conceptions of the beloved and her metapoetic role, but has been also assessed on a structural level, by Tonelli (1998), who sees that Petrarch's *Rvf* exhibits many structural as well as thematic parallels with Propertius' *Elegies.*[164] Petrarch is known to have possessed a copy of the *Elegies*, and a consensus has been reached that marginal annotations in the MS BML Pl. 36. 49 belong to Petrarch (Tonelli, 1998, p. 250): the manuscript itself preserves the *Elegies* in four books, with clear sectional divisions between the books.[165] The *Elegies*, as this final section argues, provides a further model of closure for the *Rvf*, whereby after an oscillating love affair, the poet must turn away from the beloved to focus on weightier matters. For Propertius this consists of matters of state, whereas for Petrarch this consists of his search for virtue, and more virtuous literary modes.

Propertius' opening, closure and narrative inform Petrarch's poetics: Tonelli (1998, p. 258) suggests the Petrarch's *Rvf* and the *Elegies* share "i *markers* strutturali, incipitari e terminali" as well as the shared theme of love. In terms of the poetics of aperture, there is a strong programmatic opening of both. Rico (1988, p. 1079) has explored the parallels between the apertures of the *Elegies* and the *Rvf*,

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[164] On Petrarch and Propertius, see also Grant (2019).

[165] See Butrica (2016, p. 223) for detail on the manuscript. The manuscript itself is accessible in digital form at: http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWOIfRXKI1A4r7GxMIRE#/book , last accessed 16 June 2022.

observing that "hasta Cintia, ninguna mujer había logrado conquistar a Propercio, de igual modo que, antes de Laura, Petrarca, con un corazón «ove solea spuntarsi ogni saetta», había infligido «mille offese» a Cupido." Petrarch had successfully deflected all of Cupid's attacks on him, until Laura appeared before his eyes, in the same way as Cynthia is presented is the one and only woman able to conquer Propertius. This is coupled with the parallel between Propertius' "miserum me" and the immediate state of desolation which Petrarch finds himself in upon being struck by Cupid's arrow, as well as both women captivating the lover with their eyes.

As with Ovid, Propertius' three books trace a larger narrative thread: Book 1 relates Propertius' first falling in love with Cynthia, and explores his feelings for her, before Book 2 moves towards creating Cynthia's "perfected representation" (Johnson, 2012, p. 42), although the relationship becomes more strained as Propertius' emotions are thrown into ever increasing turmoil. Book 3 marks a transition away from Cynthia: Goold (1990, p. 10) notes that by the end of the book, "he is no longer the abject slave of Cynthia, but a national poet with a priestly status." Tonelli (1998, p. 255) has suggested that "Non doveva sfuggire a Petrarca l'inequivocabile progressione dal «nullo vivere consilio» del proemio (I, 1, 6) all'esemplarità assoluta della matrona romana cui «natura dedit leges a sanguine ductas» (IV, 11, 47)". However, the other thing that surely did not escape Petrarch's notice is that the end of Book 3 exhibits a deliberate abandonment of Cynthia, and the shift away from her is consolidated in Book 4, which, written after her death, turns to deal with other, 'grander', themes, principally of exalting Roman glory. In this way, the rejection of the beloved and the closure of the love narrative anticipates a change in modes.

While the thematic connection of love alone is undoubtedly not enough to prove any deliberate intention on the part of Petrarch to model the structure of the *Rvf* on Propertius, Propertius' poetics of opening and closure also exhibit multiple parallels with the *Rvf*. Tonelli (1998, pp. 268–273) identifies a series of Propertian echoes in the *Rvf*, and goes so far to suggest that these are not coincidental, but rather refer to elegies which are particularly significant for the narrative sequencing and their "collocazione topografica" (ibid., p. 273). Of particular significance are the Propertian echoes in *Rvf* 359 of the nocturnal apparition of Cynthia (*Eleg.* 4.7) and *Rvf* 360, which being paired together in the *Rvf* are "decisivo del finale evolversi del libro" (ibid., p. 308). As regards *Rvf* 360, Tonelli identifies a series of parallels with the opening elegy of Book 4, a book which takes a separate direction from the previous three, dedicating itself, at least overtly, to exalting Roman glory. She notes the parallel between Horos' argument in 4.1, that Propertius' glory is dependent upon his love poetry for Cynthia, with *Amore*'s argument that Petrarch's fame is linked to his poetry and consequently his love for Laura, as well as the same "contrapposizione fra vita forense o di corte" (ibid., p. 309). Horos suggests to Propertius that despite the fame he could garner through his lyrics for Cynthia, this is no means a guarantee of gaining Cynthia herself, who will always escape him.

Given the fourth book of the *Elegies* takes such a new direction after the death of Cynthia, Petrarch may perhaps also be suggesting the staging of a new poetic direction in *Rvf* 360, through the echoes of Propertius 4.1. Up until Book 4, Propertius is dedicated to Cynthia: she is his sole lyric endeavour, until her death. It is only after she dies that he turns away to different topics, to the exaltation Roman glory, a theme which is in itself very humanistic.[166] While *Rvf* 360 is overtly suggestive of stagnation, as the poet is unable to resolve the conflict between opposing parts of the *io*, the Propertian echoes suggest that Petrarch is setting the stage for a similar poetic redirection. Certainly, Petrarch's fame through his lyrics is generated through his love for Laura, and the evocation of the parallel argument of Horos in elegy 4.1, which opens a book in which love for Cynthia is put *aside* in favour of more serious subject matters seems to suggest that Petrarch himself is about to put his love of Laura aside in favour of greater things. In a narrative sense in the *Rvf* that is a turn to God and the divine, as Petrarch seeks to present a more virtuous self in the final version. But in terms of the greater autobiographical project, which stages the closure of the *Rvf* in 1358, this turn away from Laura in the closing sequence of the *Rvf* is also the abandonment of vernacular poetry, in favour of what he perhaps regarded as superior literary modes, and certainly depicted as projects of later life. Indeed, he claims in the Letter to Posterity (*Sen*. 18.1), to be discussed further in chapter 3.2, that poetry was a preoccupation of youth, and that the later parts of his life he devoted himself to Christian letters. As Propertius turns to more serious topics, and Ovid bids goodbye to his unwarlike elegies, so does Petrarch set the stage for a turn to not just more serious topics, but also to more serious literature.

Indeed, the revised closing sequence of the *Rvf* has a particularly Propertian flavour. Jacobson (1976, p. 172) has assessed the closing sequence of *Elegies* Book 3, which stresses "the sense of finality" to the culmination of the love affair. Through analysing the sequence of 3.21 to 3.24, he demonstrates that that it provides a linear progression through the abandonment of love elegy, and Cynthia herself, with the sequencing of the poems contributing to a sense of uncertainty and conflict before his abandonment of Cynthia. Tonelli (1998, p. 257) has emphasised the close connection of this group of poems to Petrarch's own closing sequence, as in 3.24 Propertius exhibits what she has labelled a type of 'conversion': "E la "conversione", si badi, precede la morte di lei, è tutta voluta e ben motivata nelle elegie conclusive del libro terzo: Properzio, dopo aver bruciato di indegno fuoco amoroso, per il quale era divenuto oggetto di riso presso il volgo, raggiunge il porto con la sua nave e getta l'ancora." Propertius represents his return to his senses as a boat reaching port: "ecce coronatae portum tetigere carinae, / traiectae Syrtes, ancora iacta mihist" (*Eleg*. 3.24, 15–6),[167] a metaphor which Petrarch himself adopts in the *Rvf*.

[166] Dante and Petrarch are unique also among the vernacular poets, as the deaths of their beloveds open a new phase of poetry, as opposed to the more typical *planh* and then moving on.

[167] 'But, lo, my garlanded ship has reached harbour, the sandbanks are passed, my anchor dropped.'

While of course the idea of the traveller lost in the sea of knowledge had already been an Odyssean motif of the *Commedia*, the motif of the port of salvation is woven throughout the *Rvf*. It is given particular architectural importance: *Rvf* 189, which describes the *io* lost in a storm at sea unable to reach port, as the two guiding lights of "la ragion et l'arte" (*Rvf* 189, 14) are obscured, closed the first part of the Chigi form of the *Rvf*.[168] Likewise, the second part of the *Rvf* opens with *Rvf* 264, the *canzone* of interior debate, in which Petrarch refers to his "barchetta […] 'nfra li scogli" (*Rvf* 264, 82), and laments the loss of the pathway which leads to the "buon porto" (*Rvf* 264, 121). The closing poems of the final version also place emphasis on this metaphor, with *Rvf* 365 seeing the poet pray that he may "mora in pace et in porto" (*Rvf* 365, 10), with the Virgin as the "stella, d'ogni fedel nocchier fidata guida" (*Rvf* 366, 67–68), to save him from the sea.[169] Unlike Propertius, however, Petrarch has not yet reached his port at the close of the *Rvf*, suggesting that the conversion is not complete, and that Petrarch is distancing himself within the model once again to show his own uniqueness.

Having reached the metaphorical port, Propertius in 3.24 stages a return to his senses. His life has been consumed by the storm of love:

> nunc demum vasto fessi resipiscimus aestu,
> vulneraque ad sanum nunc coiere mea.
> Mens Bona, si qua dea's, tua me in sacraria dono! [170] (*Eleg*. 3.24, 17–19)

Here Propertius presents himself as having healed the wounds caused by the storm of love, and, now exhausted, invokes 'Mens Bona', the personification of reason, and the rational faculties of man which has enabled him to escape the yoke of love. While Tonelli has linked this 'conversion' away from the beloved at the close of the book to the closing sonnets of the *Rvf*, the invocation of 'Mens Bona' is also suggestive of *Rvf* 360, where Petrarch appeals to the tribune of reason. However, unlike Propertius, who praises Mens Bona after he is released from his tempestuous love for Cynthia, Petrarch pleads with *Ragione* to resolve his dilemma over his love before he is released from it. *Ragione*'s reluctance to pronounce a verdict indicates that being in a state of love weakens the power of reason, and to fully deploy rational faculties, mortal love must first be put aside. Reason is not able to regulate the passions of the soul, and thus is impotent when it comes to arbitrating the interior battle of the self's opposing desires. Indeed, in *Amores* 1.2, Ovid also mentions the personified 'Mens Bona' as being led away, with her hands tied behind her back, as a result of Cupid's assault, suggesting that this motif in *Rvf* 360 is not just religious, but also classicising.

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[168] See Cachey (2005) on the sonnet and its importance in the construction of the *Rvf*.

[169] cf. Bernardo di Chiaravalle's *Sermo II in laudem Virginis Matris:* "se insorgono i venti delle tentazioni e ti incagli tra gli scogli delle tribolazioni, guarda alla stella, invoca Maria".

[170] 'Now at last, weary from the wild surge, I have recovered my sanity, and my wounds have now closed up and healed. Good Sense, if goddess indeed you are, I dedicate myself to your shrine!'

Tonelli has argued that the most significant link between the closing sequence of both works is that elegy 3.24 parallels closely the sentiments of the final sonnet of the *Rvf*, "I' vo piangendo i miei passati tempi", both of which exhibit a withdrawal from the flames of love and a turning towards divinity.[171] However, the closing sequence of the *Rvf* more generally also dialogues with the closure of Book 3. In elegy 3.25, Propertius marks the amount of time passed in love for Cynthia, presented as a type of service "quinque tibi potui servire fideliter annos" (*Eleg*. 3.25, 3).[172] Propertius here exhibits a backward glance, looking back to the moment he first fell in love with Cynthia and thus providing a cyclical link with the opening of the work which marked his first love, in the same way in which Petrarch's *Rvf* 364 "Tennemi Amor anni ventuno ardendo" marks the final anniversary of his captivity by Laura. Furthermore, the juxtaposition "et se la stanza / fu vana, almen sia la partita honesta" (*Rvf* 365, 10–11) echoes precisely the sentiment from 3.21, "seu moriar, fato, non turpi fractus amore; / atque erit illa mihi mortis honesta dies" (*Eleg*. 3.21, 33–34).[173] Tonelli (1998, p. 314) concludes that these parallels signify that the structuring of the *Rvf* "continua a funzionare col recupero capillare di Properzio". These parallels do appear too strong on many levels to be coincidental: excluding the general thematic parallels of the conversion away from the beloved, the verbal echoes of the closing sequence of Propertius' third book resound strongly in the concluding the pair of *Rvf* 364 and 365 in the *Rvf*.

Building on Tonelli's observations, Petrarch in *Rvf* 364 and 365 stages a return to his senses, in the same way in which Propertius does at the close of the *Elegies*. The elusive nature of truth for the lover, who has his vision blurred by the beloved and thus remains blind to all else, is highlighted by Propertius in his final conversion, when he states "mixtam te varia laudavi saepe figura, / ut, quod non esses, esse putaret amor" (*Eleg*. 3.24, 5–6).[174] Propertius often praised Cynthia's varied beauties, because love made her seem that which she is not. This moment of recognition is replicated in *Rvf* 364, where Petrarch states "i' conosco 'l mio fallo" (*Rvf* 364, 14), and in *Rvf* 365 the self deception is confirmed as he realises that all along that time spent loving a "cosa mortale" (*Rvf* 365, 2) distracted him from what was inside all along: "senza levarmi a volo, abbiend'io l'ale / per dar forse di me non bassi esempi" (*Rvf* 365, 4–5). Although this turn is in a narrative sense religious, anticipating the appeal to God and a proclamation of his own repentance, the "bassi esempi" are also suggestive of a turn towards a different type of poetry, fitting in with the Propertian model. At the close of the *Rvf*, Petrarch

[171] Tonelli (1998, p. 314) also suggests that in the second part of the Chigi edition of the *Rvf,* poems 293 and 304, the concluding poem of this form, exhibit a progression characteristic of the Propertian mode.

[172] 'For five years I managed to serve you faithfully.'

[173] 'or if I die, it will be naturally and not laid low by a shameful love: in either case the day of my death will be bring me no dishonour.'

[174] 'Often I praised you as combining all manner of charms, so that my love fancied you to be what you were not.'

moves away from the low style of the vernacular, presenting himself as turning towards a more lofty literary style, as stated in the fictional biography presented in the *Seniles*.

Given that *Rvf* 364 and 365 were not originally in the penultimate positions before the final form, the revisions have led to the closing sequence of the *Rvf* gaining a more 'Propertian' flavour. Mann (2000, p. 27) goes as far to say that similarities with Propertius show that "the *Canzoniere* is far from being the autobiographical narrative that some would wish it; indeed it is now abundantly clear that in form and content, and even in its apparently historical grounding, it is of a distinctly Propertian mould." However, the autobiographical aspect of the work and the concept imitating a classical model need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, the nature of the elegiac genre, whereby the beloved acts as a mediator of the self and launches the poet towards his desired glory, would seem rather to complement the autobiographical aspect of the *Rvf*, in which Laura acts as a mediator of the poetic self in the mould of the classical beloved. In this way, Petrarch shows himself to be achieving a complex melding of classical models and fictionalised autobiography, carefully curating the lyric self-portrait he wished to present to posterity and thus solidify his literary fame.

2.2.5 Conclusions

Viewing the *Rvf* through the lens of the classical poetry book upon which it is modelled indicates that the narrative and form eventually settled upon by Petrarch for the closing sequence is also a question of classicising poetics. Classical lyric poets dedicated great effort to the structuring and organisation of their collections. This occurred firstly on a macrostructural level, in terms of geometric patterning and correspondences established between structurally significant poems, particularly the openings and closures of individual books and the whole collection. Secondly, organisation on a sequential level was central, which for Ovid and Propertius creates the sense of fluctuation and continually changing emotions in the narrative of the love affair, with the oscillating closure of the third book of Propertius' *Elegies* in particular acting as a model for the closure of the *Rvf*.

In the *Rvf*, the classical lyric model is imposed in two ways: structuring on a macrotextual level, and organisation on a sequential narrative level. On the macrostructural level, Petrarch uses the ring structure to frame the work, in particular reflecting Ovid's *Amores*, but reinterpreting the motif of war for a new moral context as well as adopting the concept of war of modes for his wider autobiographical project. As I discuss in chapter 4.2, with each amendment to the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, macrostructural links are broken and reconstituted: Petrarch through his revisions gradually moves towards a stronger frame to his work in an aesthetic sense, concerned both with architectural links and geometric neatness in the manner of the classical lyric collection. The classical principle of *variatio* on a sequential level is also an important aspect, which Petrarch himself hints at in the "vario stile" (*Rvf* 1,

5) of the opening sonnet. The very fact that Petrarch intervenes in the sequencing of the closure multiple times indicates that he is greatly concerned with sequential narrative, and chapter 4.2 suggests that the non-linear nature of the final closing sequence, and that each poem deals with different themes in varying capacities, alludes to this principle.

As well as the formal aspects of following the classical model, Petrarch also moves towards a classicising narrative through the attempted rejection of Laura. From a narrative perspective, the collections of Ovid and Propertius both abandon the beloved as an elegiac necessity. Abandoning the beloved signifies both that poetic glory has been achieved, as through her metapoetic role as poetry itself she has served her purpose of obtaining lyric glory for the poet. However, as indicated by the model, her abandonment also serves to enable a change in poetic mode: she, and love poetry, must be rejected, in order to turn to more serious topics or metres. This indicates that the conclusion of the *Rvf* and the abandonment of Laura was not merely driven by a religious impetus, but also a poetic one: for the project to close, the muse must be abandoned. In doing so, the poet declares that his desired poetic glory has been obtained and may turn to weightier topics. In Petrarch's case this is a return to Latin mediums, and in particular Christian letters, as he claims in the *Seniles*. Thus, he may also curate a more virtuous narrative to the wider autobiographical project, with youthful lyric passion paving the way for moralising and spiritual letters. This does, however, not reflect reality, as the letters and the *Rvf* were being redacted in parallel in the final decades of Petrarch's life, indicating the desire to present an idealised version of the self to posterity.

Chapter 3. A Poetics of Urgency: Moral and Literary Priorities

3.1 Petrarch and Horace

This chapter argues that under the particular influence of Horace, Petrarch was seeking to craft a poetic monument as a means of neutralising the passage of time. Building on existing studies that have emphasised Petrarch's fascination with Horace, and Petrarch's own attitude to time, which he seeks to stall and liquify, I suggest that Horace's *Odes* served as a model of a lyric collection in which time could be counteracted through the presentation of a lyric model to posterity. This chapter is split into three sections. The first part surveys the extensive work carried out by scholars on Petrarch's knowledge of Horace, in particular the *Odes*, through Petrarch's manuscript possessions and his praise of Horace in *Familiares* 24.1, which exhibits a detailed knowledge of the *Odes* in particular. Secondly, I build on existing scholarship showing that the *fuga temporis* was a Horatian theme of particular concern to Petrarch, driving his focus on human mortality and the consequent necessity to prepare the soul for death (and by extension his literary self). Thirdly, I contend that Petrarch saw the potential for the closing sequence of the *Odes* to serve as a model in which the passage of time could be counteracted by the creation of a literary monument for posterity.

As noted by Tonelli (1998, p. 251), Horace is not included by Petrarch in the canon of the four Roman love poets in the *Triumphus amoris*, indicating that Petrarch's debt to Horace took a thematic form: in his letter to Horace, Petrarch explicitly names this as the *fuga temporis*. While Petrarch was clearly taking from Ovid and Propertius in terms of his conception of Laura and her relationship with poetry, the *Rvf* also draws upon a Horatian poetics for the conception of both the form and the narrative. In the *Odes*, Petrarch's preferred work of Horace, we observe not just the omnipresent motif of time's passage, but also a larger literary goal of counteracting the passage of time, which for Horace is achieved by securing everlasting literary glory through a poetic monument left to posterity. There has been a great deal of work done on the presence of Horatian influences in Petrarch's writings,[175] and the theme of time in Petrarch's works more generally.[176] The preoccupation with the flight of time has been labelled as "intensamente petrarchesco" (Bettarini 2005, p. 170), indicating the strength of this motif as appearing in Petrarch's works, which goes far beyond the use of it by his contemporaries. While Taddeo

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[175] Numerous studies and commentated editions of the *Rvf* identify countless verbal echoes and Horatian allusions in the *Rvf*. The overview provided by Feo (1998) in the *Enciclopedia oraziana* remains the standard, presenting various examples of references to Horace's work in the *Rvf*. Petrie (1983) discusses various Horatian echoes (amongst other Augustan poets) in thematic chapters, and commentated editions such as Bettarini (2005), Santagata (2004) identify allusions and references on a poem-by-poem basis. On Petrarch an Horace more generally see Friis-Jensen's (2015) chapter 'Petrarch and the Medieval Horace'.

[176] For scholarship on the flight of time in Petrarch's works see: Sbacchi (2014); Barolini (2009); Van Den Bossche (2006); Longhi (2003); Folena (2002); Picone (1993); Barolini (1989); Getto (1981); Quinones (1972).

(1982; 1983) suggests that the theme is more present in Petrarch's Latin works, it is also key in the *Rvf* itself: Barolini (2009, p. 43) has even gone so far to suggest that "Petrarch makes time the protagonist of his book of poetry". Gragnolati and Southerden (2021) have asserted that time is an integral part of Petrarch's own experience of lyric subjectivity: here I build on these ideas by arguing that Petrarch also saw the potential of the *fuga temporis* to serve a greater literary goal, that is the establishment of an everlasting poetic 'monumentum', thus neutralising time's passage.

Horace's work was already of particular interest in the medieval tradition for its moral aspects as reinterpreted in the Christian context,[177] and indeed Petrie has suggested that Petrarch considers Horace as a moral philosopher.[178] The *Odes* themselves are cited in the *Secretum* and the *Seniles* as part of Petrarch's ethical discussions, indicating that even a lyric collection such as the *Odes* could still convey a moral message. The medieval commentary tradition also tended to see a moral arc to Horace's *oeuvre* in a similar manner to the Christian notion of the spiritual ascent: the "Sciendum" commentary on Horace's *Satires*, available to Petrarch in the BML Pl. 34.1, which although erroneously presupposes that Horace's works were written in the order that they most commonly appear in the manuscripts, sees Horace's works reflect a moral arc relating to the circumstances in life in which they were written, from the youthful *Odes* focusing on mortal pleasures to the *Epistles* which "uiciis extirpatis uirtutes superseminauit", having rooted out vices sowed virtues.[179] Certainly, the representation of Horace's *oeuvre* as reflecting a movement from youthful lyric poetry to more mature moralising poetry would have been alluring for Petrarch, and reflects how Petrarch himself is trying to cast the *Rvf* as a youthful project in his idealised biographical arc in the *Seniles*. Friis-Jensen (2015, p. 181) has gone so far to suggest that the "*Canzoniere* would then be Petrarch's counterpart to Horace's collection of *Odes*",[180] both governed by *varietas* and presented as products of the poets' youth, indicating the importance of considering the organisation of the *Rvf* with the *Odes* in mind as an intended literary counterpart. Indeed, metrical and formal *variatio* rather than consistency in patterning is a key feature of the *Odes*, highlighted by Günther (2013, pp. 214–215), as it is in other classical collections. This suggests that Petrarch's "vario stile" (*Rvf* 1, 5) is also alluding to a project of classical imitation and an experimentation with the bounds of lyric possibility.

As such, Petrarch's treatment of Horace encompasses both moral and literary aspects, as he expounds the value of examining Horace's approach to the *fuga temporis* for the consideration of his

[177] For an overview of Horace's reception in the medieval period see Friis-Jensen (2015).

[178] Petrie (1983, p. 15), argues that Petrarch actually considers Horace a type of moral philosopher, evidenced by Petrarch's critique of Aristotle's *Ethics* in *De ignorantia* where he opposed not only Cicero and Seneca to Aristotle, but also Horace as a moralist. Petrarch's inclusion of Horace amongst the moralists suggests that poetry could also be a vehicle for providing a stimulus to the reader whose concern is leading a moral life.

[179] See Friis-Jensen (2015, pp. 178-179) for discussion of the commentary.

[180] For a detailed discussion see Friis-Jensen's (2015) chapter 'Petrarch and the Medieval Horace'.

own moral state as well as his literary endeavours.[181] McLaughlin (1995, p. 27) has suggested that "Petrarch's practice is to use other writers' words to improve his life not his literary style", although as I seek to demonstrate in this thesis, these two aspects are not mutually exclusive, and certainly Petrarch did seek to imitate the classical model on a literary level as well. As the commentary tradition interpreted a Christian moral arc to Horace's works, so does Petrarch reinterpret Horace's work in terms of not only the importance of aesthetic goals of the *Rvf* as a model to commit to posterity, but also the moral impetus to present the appearance of a resolved internal conflict to achieve Christian salvation in a narrative of spiritual ascent. Consequently, there is what we may term a Christianisation of Horace's message of the importance of paying attention to the *fuga temporis*, read through the lens of the Christian God and the divine. This is coupled with the literary aspect of presenting a lyric model to posterity, in the same way in which Horace presented his 'monumentum' of C. 3.30: literary concerns and moral ones did not need to be incompatible.

3.1.1 Petrarch's knowledge of Horace

Horace is, after Virgil, the author most cited by Petrarch (Feo, 1998, p. 405), and is important enough to be cited in the opening sonnet of the *Rvf* itself: Petrarch's "favola fui gran tempo" (*Rvf* 1, 10) echoes the Horatian "fabula quanta fui" (*Epod.* 11, 8). While the opening sonnet in itself has been identified as having many Horatian aspects,[182] it is not simply concerned with a classical poetics, but also a Christian one. Horace is cited alongside Augustine, whose "vana spes" (*Conf.* 3.4.7) [183] is present in Petrarch's "vane speranze" (*Rvf* 1, 6). Referring to hope placed in mortal passions, Petrarch uses Augustine to indicate that placing hope in the transient and the earthly is wasted, and therefore a foil to appropriate fruition of man's short years, considering that life is a "breve sogno" (*Rvf* 1, 14). This establishes from the outset that the *Rvf* also addresses the tension between profane and Christian concerns, which more specifically are the desire for literary glory and the need to follow a proper spiritual path in a religious context, all in the knowledge of life's brevity. Petrarch's juxtaposition of these two competing streams becomes increasingly clear in the *Seniles*, in the assertion of the desire to correct "non solum quod vite defuerit, sed etiam quod scripture" (*Sen.* 17.2.44),[184] indicating that both the reorientation of the moral compass as well as the completion of his literary endeavours is central in the final years of his life.

[181] As Eisner (2014, p. 762) has noted, Petrarch was not exactly novel in reading for moral instruction: Seneca had already done so with Virgil's *Georgics*, an extract which Petrarch himself notes next to his copy of the *Georgics* in the *Virgilio Ambrosiano*.

[182] For more on the Horatian aspects of the proemial sonnet see Friis-Jensen (2015, p. 182).

[183] It is also redeployed in the *Secretum* as "inanes spes" (*Secr.* 2.2.5).

[184] 'Not only what is missing from my life, but also my writings'.

In Petrarch's 1359 letter to Giovanni Boccaccio (*Fam*. 22.2.12–13), Horace is declared to be among a small group of authors read not "semel…sed milies", although he clarifies that his own originality is just as, if not more important than imitation of Horace, indicating that the Horatian model will be a point of departure, rather than a constraint. This fascination with Horace extends in particular to the *Odes*; in the flyleaf of his manuscript containing Cassiodorus' *De anima* and Augustine's *De vera religione*, Petrarch's catalogue of his "libri peculiares", Horace's name comes accompanied with the clarification "presertim in odis" (BnF MS Lat. 2201, f. 58v),[185] indicating Petrarch's preference of the work. Petrarch's predilection towards the *Odes* is also hinted at in the *Familiares* 24.10, the letter to Horace where Petrarch not only praises him as the king of lyric poetry, but also composes the letter in the first asclepiad, the metre which is unique to C. 1.1 and 3.30, indicating a conscious reference to the *Odes* as the lyric masterpiece of Horace and a personal preference on the part of the author.[186]

Petrarch's knowledge of Horace is evident on a literary level: many of Horace's key concerns in his own work, including first and foremost the passage of time, are to be found directly cited in the *Rvf*. Petrarch's "pallida morte" (*Rvf* 332, 29) recalls Horace's "pallida mors" (C. 1.4, 13); in *Rvf* 360 Petrarch draws extensively upon Horace's C. 2.4 for the construction of the 7th stanza; and Horace's C. 1.22, in which he professes his love for Lalage,[187] is drawn upon extensively throughout the *Rvf*, including in poems 145, where *ponmi* structures the entire sonnet, based upon *pone me* of C. 1.22, in *Rvf* 159, where C. 1.22, 23–24 is cited in the explicit, and in *Rvf* 176, which alludes to the Lalage poem in the imagery of the inhospitable wood and the singing poet.[188] Petrarch's fascination with the Lalage poem in particular can perhaps be put down to Horace's self-representation as a practitioner of love poetry, indicating that despite Horace's omission from the canon of love poets in Petrarch's *Triumphus amoris*, the *Odes* were amenable to adapting in the context of a sequence of love lyrics like the *Rvf*.

Petrarch's intense study of Horace can be traced directly through manuscript witnesses from Petrarch's own lyric sequence. De Nolhac, in his outline of Petrarch's manuscripts, identified the Plut. 34.1, held by the BML in Florence, as the primary manuscript demonstrating Petrarch's knowledge of Horace. While this is certainly still Petrarch's "più importante e venerando" (Feo, 1998, p. 405)

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[185] *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*. Digital copy, available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8442835r, last accessed 16 June 2022. The dating of Petrarch's list is uncertain: Feo (1998, p. 405), follows the suggestion of Ullman (1955) that places it at 1333, however Rico (1976) has also suggested 1335 as a possible date for the census.

[186] Petrie (1983, p.3), suggests that Horace's choice of metre shows a distinct preference for the *Odes* as his preferred work of Horace.

[187] The Lalage poem has been the subject of various interpretations, with the most common view seeing it as a dramatisation of the role of the lyric poet: for this position see Zumwalt (1975); McCormick (1973); Commanger (1962). A more metapoetic reading has been proposed by Davis (1987) who suggests that the wolf represents iambic poetry and Lalage the Horatian lyric poem, thus establishing the superiority of lyric over iambic. Lowrie (1997, pp. 189–194), has taken a similar approach.

[188] As a group these poems have been assessed by Maggini (1950), and also mentioned by Petrie (1983, pp. 94); 104; 203. There are also echoes of C. 1.22 in *Rvf* 72, 74; 177, 5; 183, 4; 210, 1; 212, 2.

manuscript of Horace, further manuscripts of Horace's work owned by Petrarch have come to light since the time of Nolhac's survey, namely the MS Morgan M404 of the Morgan Library, New York,[189] and the MS Harley 3754 of the British Library, London. The discovery of multiple manuscripts of Horace owned by Petrarch has allowed us to build up a fuller, although still incomplete, picture of Petrarch's rapport with the Augustan poet.[190] The most important of these manuscripts, the BML Pl. 34.1, dates to the late 10th century, and contains in the following order the *Carmina; Ars poetica; Iambi; Carmen saeculare; Epistulae; Satirae*. The MS M404, written in approximately five different periods between the end of the 11th century and the 13th century, contains the *Carmina; Iambi; Carmen saeculare; Ars poetica; Satirae; Epistulae*; the *Virgilio Ambrosiano*, dating to the end of the 13th century or early 14th century, among its contents contains just four odes (C. 2.3, 2.10, 2.16, 4.7); and the MS Harl. 3754, dating to the 14th century includes among its contents the *Carmina; Iambi; Carmen saeculare; Satirae; Ars poetica; Epistulae*. These manuscripts provide us with irrefutable evidence of their ownership through the many *postille* in Petrarch's hand which can be traced on them; in the M404 there are approximately 30, the BML Pl. 34.1 contains 250, and while the Virgilio Ambrosiano has no *postille* next to the four odes it transmits, there are approximately 50 *postille* elsewhere which mention Horace.[191] In this regard, the Harl. 3754, which was attributed to Petrarch's library by de la Mare (1994), is probably the least significant manuscript, as there are no *postille* to be found in the section containing Horace, and they are extremely sparse elsewhere.

The *Virgilio Ambrosiano*, while the most famous of Petrarch's Latin manuscripts, contains only four *carmina*, and therefore cannot in isolation speak to questions of macrostructure.[192] However, the

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[189] The reading of this manuscript has long been dogged with controversy over a marginal note of Petrarch's on f. 16r next to Horace's 2.9 reading "facit pro eo quod scribemus in libello", which has been prone to conflicting interpretations both of the reading of the whole note itself, and its interpretation. Billanovich (1966) asserts that this is an allusion to an early project of the *Rvf*, indicating that Petrarch had conceived of the project many years earlier than widely accepted, in the late 1330s. Petrie (1983, pp. 197–198), sees an echo of "nec rapidum fugiente solem" (C. 2.9, 12) in *Rvf* 50, 1–3, suggesting that these lines of Horace were intended to relate to a version of the *Rvf*, however Fiorilla (2006, p. 321), notes that the context of the verbal parallel in the *Rvf* is completely different to that of the original line in the ode. Feo (1998, p. 423), also disagrees that this note refers to a specific collection. Fiorilla (2006, p. 329), concludes that it is not possible to ascribe the 'libello' to a Petrarchan work known to us today, and the future tenses unusual to Petrarch's *postille* of scribemus/agetur indicate that the libello was a potential future project, to be written at an as of yet undefined point, one which was likely never realised. The debate, however, remains unresolved: it cannot definitively be proven what else exactly the 'libellus' might refer to.

[190] For an overview see Feo (1998) who details the manuscript evidence, tracing Petrarch's interactions via *postille* in his manuscripts, before discussing Horatian references and influences in each of Petrarch's works.

[191] These largely consist of Petrarch's notes on intertextual connections with Horace's work, and several explaining Horatian citations made by Servius.

[192] There is no indication in the manuscript of the reason for which only four odes were transcribed, or why these four odes in particular. It is unclear when the manuscript came into Petrarch's possession, and there has been tense debate over the provenance of the manuscript. Sabbadini (1906a) identifies on f. 52r, incorporated into Servius' commentary, the declaration "Petrus Parentis florentinus… hoc modo volumen instituit", and Mercati (1931) demonstrates that Pietro di Parenzo is the father of Petrarch. Casamassima (1988, p. 128), dated this note to XIII ex. – XIV in. and Feo (1998, p. 407), has traced the composition of the manuscript to the friendship between ser

four odes in question explore very Petrarchan themes: 2.3 on the equalising nature of death, which consumes all equally whether rich or poor; 2.10 on the importance of restraint and wisdom in the face of adversity; 2.16 on the importance of moderation to live contently, rejecting material possessions; and 4.7 on the finality of death, ever approaching with the constantly passing time. The BML Pl. 34.1 came into Petrarch's possession on the 28th November 1347, attested by a small autograph note on folio 2r: "*Emptus Ian 1347 Novembris 28*".[193] Earlier still, the M404 reached Petrarch's library around 1325 (Feo speculates perhaps from the library of Cinzio Arlotti), providing a witness to the note in the list of *libri peculiares* from the MS 2201 of Paris that by the mid-1330s a manuscript of Horace's work was already a most treasured possession of Petrarch. However, as Feo (1998, p. 405) notes, it is reasonable to suppose that Petrarch's first interactions with Horace happened through a different manuscript, earlier in his youth.

The extent of this study of Horace's works is apparent in the most direct literary interaction Petrarch has with Horace, in letter 24.10 of the *Familiares*, the letter to Horace.[194] Composed in the form of the Horatian ode, the letter, which reveals an extensive and intimate knowledge of Horace's work, imagines Horace at rest in rustic countryside, bestowing upon him the title of "Regem" of lyric poetry. Theme and form come together: the subject matter of Horace, containing approximately 60 references to Horace's work (Feo, 1998, p. 414), is complemented by Petrarch's choice of metre, the first asclepiad.[195] This is also the metre of C. 1.1 and 3.30, which as the first and last odes of Horace's original contemporaneous issue of Books 1–3 are connected on both a formal and thematic level by the idea of poetic immortality. Houghton (2009, p. 171) has noted that in the letter "the language and imagery are impeccably Horatian", emphasising that Petrarch in the letter is "entirely directed towards the eradication of distance between himself and Horace", indicating that "Petrarch and Horace have blended into one". Rather than simple homage to his favourite lyric poet, Petrarch indicates a great debt owed to Horace in the development of his own poetic style. While the letter is itself a Latin composition, Houghton (2009, p. 166) has also underscored the prevalence of parallels between the letter and

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Petracco and Dante Alighieri. Billanovich in multiple studies (1966, 1981, 1985), however, maintains that the manuscript was constructed by Petrarch himself, while in Avignon in 1325, due to the rapport between the four odes present in the *Virgilio Ambrosiano* and the same in the M404, which came into Petrarch's possession in Avignon in 1325. Feo (1998, p. 408), has suggested that while the Ambrosiano certainly aligns with the Morgan in multiple transcription errors, and the medieval commentary which accompanies them both is without doubt the same, the Ambrosiano presents several correct readings in comparison to errors found in the M404, indicating they both depend upon a common father.

[193] Digital copy available at http://mss.bmlonline.it/catalogo.aspx?Collection=Plutei&Shelfmark=Plut.34.1, last accessed 16 June 2022.

[194] Houghton (2009, p. 170), has suggested that the letter is not merely a homage to the classical poet, that Horace of *Fam*. 24.10 appears fashioned in Petrarch's own image, but only "because he himself has already moulded Petrarch's own self-consciousness as a lyric poet in the *Canzoniere*". For more on the letter, see Friis-Jensen (2015); Houghton (2009); Feo (1998, pp. 414–416).

[195] The correspondence in metre of this letter and the odes has been long noted, for example Petrie (1983, p. 3).

passages elsewhere in Petrarch's literary output, particularly the *Rvf*, which suggests that Petrarch was bringing a classicising and Latinate aspect to the *Rvf*.

In the closing lines of the letter Petrarch reveals the extent to which he is indebted to Horace, who is ascribed the role of lyric guide and mentor:

> Ut vidi, invidiam mens vaga nobilem
>
> Concepit subito, nec peperit prius
>
> Quam te per pelagi stagna reciproci,
>
> Perque omnes scopulos monstraque fluctuum
>
> Terrarumque sequens limite ab indico
>
> Vidi solis equos surgere nitidos,
>
> Et serum Occeano mergier ultimo.
>
> Tecum trans Boream transque Notum vagus
>
> Iam seu fortuitas ducis ad insulas
>
> Seu me fluctisonum retrahis Antium
>
> Seu me Romuleis arcibus invehis
>
> Totis ingenii gressibus insequor.
>
> Sic me grata lyre fila trahunt tue
>
> Sic mulcet calami dulcis acerbitas.[196] (*Fam.* 24.10, 125–138)

Petrarch confesses to have conceived an "invidiam… nobilem" for Horace, but to have not 'birthed' this until having walked all the roads of the world. Feo (1998, p. 415) has concluded that the imagery of a pilgrimage is a metaphor for the devoted study of Horace, but the reference to the birth is open to multiple readings, which could refer simply to the production of this letter itself as the product of the devoted study of Horace; or it could allude to an imitation of the Horatian mode more generally, as the letter reveals an intense admiration of Horace rather than a simple jealousy.[197] Ludwig (1993, p. 322) has similarly suggested that the "invidiam… nobilem" hints at a desire to emulate Horace's work, and

[196] 'When I beheld all this, my eager mind suddenly fell prey to a noble desire that spared me not till I had followed you o'er the waves of the double sea and among the reefs and monsters on land and sea, till on the confines of India I saw arriving the gleaming steeds of the Sun, and in the evening plunging into the distant ocean. With you I shall roam with eager mind across the shores of the North Wind and the regions of the South Wind, whether you lead me to the Fortunate Isles, or drag me to wave-resounding Anzio, or take me to the citadels of Romulus; so do the pleasing strains of your lyre attract me, so does the sweet bitterness of your pen soothe me.'

[197] For further discussion of these lines see Friis-Jensen (2015, pp. 187–188).

Petrarch's mention of following in Horace's footsteps alludes to the pursual of a spiritual or philosophical path under Horace's guidance.

That this lyric influence extends to the vernacular work in the *Rvf* is strengthened by Houghton's reading of the final line of the ode, a line which more generally has caused quite an interpretative conundrum, as the phrase is unparalleled in Horace's own work. Houghton (2009, pp. 171–172) suggests that the concluding line is in fact not designed to be a Horatian reference, but is a phraseology instead characteristic of Petrarch's own work, deployed with the intention to be indicative of Petrarch's style in the *Rvf* rather than Horace's, therein showing that this lyric influence extends to the vernacular *Rvf*. Indeed, the 'dulcis acerbitas' of the letter is ubiquitous as the 'dolce amaro' of the *Rvf*, which characterises Petrarch's love for Laura.[198] In this way, Petrarch concludes the letter with an indication that his own literary output is moulded by his imitation of Horace, including his vernacular lyric endeavours in the *Rvf*.

3.1.2 Petrarch and Horace's *fuga temporis*

While Petrarch's fascination with Horace more generally has been well established, this self-conscious imitation of the Horatian mode extends in particular to the *fuga temporis*, and more specifically to the theme as explored in the *Odes*, which this study suggests acts as a model of a collection which defuses time through the presentation of a literary monument to posterity. The flight of time was a ubiquitous motif in classical literature more generally, but the importance of Horace in particular for Petrarch is evident in the letter to Horace, which points to him as the specific catalyst for drawing Petrarch's attention to the necessity to consider the passage of time:

> Hirpinum profugi temporis admones,
>
> Torquatum et parili carmine Postumum;
>
> Dum noctes celeres et volucres dies,
>
> Obrepens tacito dum senium gradu,
>
> Aut vite brevitas ad calamum redit,
>
> Aut mors precipiti que celerat pede.[199] (*Fam.* 24.10, 87–92)

[198] See for example *Rvf* 129, 21: "questo mio viver dolce amaro"; *Rvf* 229, 14: "sí dolce è del mio amaro la radice"; *Rvf* 240, 2–3: "dolce mia pena, / amaro mio dilecto"; *Rvf* 296, 3–4: "del dolce amaro / colpo"; *Rvf* 358, 1: "Non pò far Morte il dolce viso amaro"; *Rvf* 363, 11: "mi trovo in libertate, amara et dolce".

[199] 'When you warn Hirpinus of the flight of time, and Torquatus and Postumus as well in a similar ode; or when you write of the passing nights and flying days or of old age stealing upon us with silent step, or the brevity of life, or death that hastens us with flying footsteps.'

Here Petrarch redeploys traditional Horatian motifs, including contrasts between night and day, life and death, the deceptive nature of time and its swiftness, as well as directly citing Horace's "volucres dies", a verbatim echo of C. 3.28, 6, which indicates the poet's keen awareness of the fragility and brevity of mortal life. Petrarch here indicates that Horace plays a didactic role in the formation of his own poetic ideas: "admones" suggests an instructive function and that there is moral message to be extracted from the work.

Three odes are directly invoked through the name of their addressee, as Petrarch points toward Hirpinus (C. 2.11, *Ep.* 1.16), Torquatus (C. 4.7, *Ep.* 1.5) and Postumus (C. 2.14): a trio of characters to which his poetic addresses, as he explains in the letter, express concern over the flight of time. While Hirpinus and Torquatus are also mentioned in the *Epistles*, it is the three odes in which the preoccupation with the passage of time is clear: the two epistles do not explicitly treat it as a subject matter, indicating that again it is the *Odes* to which Petrarch is paying his respect. The ode to Hirpinus (C. 2.11) brings to the fore the finite nature of life by juxtaposing youth and beauty with old age, and drawing upon images intrinsically embodying the passage of time, the blooming of flowers and the waxing and waning of the moon, drawing on concerns of seasonality and the continuous cyclical nature of time:

fugit retro
levis iuventas et decor, arida
pellente lascivos amores
canitie facilemque somnum.

Non semper idem floribus est honor
vernis neque uno luna rubens nitet
voltu: quid aeternis minorem
consiliis animum fatigas?[200] (C. 2.11, 5–12)

The preoccupation with the passage of time is intensified in the ode to Postumus (C. 2.14), which follows three places later in the sequence:

Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,
labuntur anni nec pietas moram

[200] 'Smooth-faced youth and beauty disappear quickly into the past, and our dry grey hair drives off wild love affairs and easy sleep. The beauty of spring flowers does not last forever, nor does the moon always shine with the same glowing face. What's the point of wearing out your brain (which isn't up to it) with plans that stretch to infinity?'

rugis et instanti senectae
adferet indomitaeque morti [201] (C. 2.14, 1–4)

Here Horace describes the years slipping away, which hastens man towards old age and unconquerable death. The phrase "fugaces… labuntur anni" appears to have particularly struck Petrarch, who echoes it widely throughout the *Rvf*,[202] and specifically cites it in his letter to Philippe de Cavaillon (*Fam.* 24.1), the opening letter of the final book of the *Familiares*, as part of his own increasingly philosophical ruminations on the ramifications of time's flight for his own life.[203] In the opening lines of C. 2.14, the transition found in C. 2.11 through the juxtaposition between youth and old age is intensified through the arrival at the next stage in life, that of the movement from old age to death. This intensification is more striking in a sequential reading of the *Odes*, where the reader is taken swiftly through images of youth, old age, and finally death, forcing the reader to confront the quick passage of life in the face of invincible death. The odes singled out by Petrarch provide warning of a moral concern about the brevity of man's life and the inevitability of death.

The third ode cited in the letter, C. 4.7 to Torquatus, as well as being copied in the *Virgilio ambrosiano*, is cited by Petrarch in his *Secretum*, the fictive dialogue between the warring parts of Petrarch's will represented in the characters of 'Augustinus' and 'Franciscus', the conflict between which is to frame the second part of the *Rvf.* Augustinus uses this citation in Book 3 of the *Secretum* to emphasise to Franciscus the importance of redirecting his desires from the temporal to the spiritual, as opposed to the enjoyment of the present which Horace himself urges in his lyrics. Indeed, in this passage Petrarch cites Horace for the purposes of reinforcing a Christian moral imperative, as Augustinus tells Franciscus he must put aside his works if he is to reconstitute himself:

> His igitur posthabitis, te tandem tibi restitue atque, ut unde movimus revertamur, incipe tecum de morte cogitare, cui sensim et nescius appropinquas. Rescissis velis tenebrisque discussis, in illam oculos fige. Cave ne ulla dies aut nox transeat, que non tibi memoriam supremi temporis ingerat. Quicquid vel oculis vel animo cogitantis occurrit, ad hoc unum refer. Celum terra maria mutantur; quid homo, fragilissimum animal, sperare potest? Vicissitudo temporum suos cursus recursusque peragit, nunquam permanens; tu si permanere posse putas, falleris. At, ut eleganter ait Flaccus:

[201] 'Ah Postumus, Postumus, the fleeting years slip by, nor will piety check the onset of wrinkles, old age, and invincible death.'

[202] e.g. *Rvf* 30, 13; 32, 3; 56, 3; 128, 97-99; 264, 75; 355, 1; 366, 132.

[203] This letter will be fully discussed in the following section.

damna tamen celeres reparant celestia lune; nos ubi decidimus …. [C. 4.7.13–14][204]

(*Secr.* 3.17.6–8)

Here Augustine explains to Franciscus the importance of meditating on death, which is approaching without Franciscus' knowledge. To underscore this, C. 4.7 is cited, the lines of which in full read:

Damna tamen celeres reparant caelestia lunae:
nos ubi decidimus
quo pater Aeneas, quo dives Tullus et Ancus,
puluis et umbra sumus.
quis scit an adiciant hodiernae crastina summae
tempora di superi?
cuncta manus avidas fugient heredis, amico
quae dederis animo.[205] (C. 4.7, 13–20)

Horace urges the full fruition of man's time, as the finality of his fate as "pulvis et umbra" is drawn into sharper relief when accounting for the unknown length of time allocated to him. This phrase is itself cited in *Rvf* 161, 13, "nude ombre et polve", and in *Rvf* 294 when Petrarch states "Veramente siam noi polvere et ombra" (*Rvf* 294, 12), underlining the fleeting nature of man's existence. That man cannot know the future, or how much time is left to him, necessitates the appropriate fruition of the present, which for Petrarch's Augustinus necessitates not only contemplating death, but also the need to constantly be aware of time's impermanence: "Vicissitudo temporum suos cursus recursusque peragit, nunquam permanens; tu si permanere posse putas, falleris". Being in ignorance of the swiftness of time's passage is a form of self-deception, as it prevents one from making the appropriate preparations for death in light of the fleeting nature of life. The typically Horatian juxtaposition of the fleeting nature of time and imminent death is recalled by Augustinus, who reminds Franciscus "Nunc vita fugiente umbra mortis extenditur" (*Secr.* 3.17.8),[206] that he must be ever aware of death's shadow over his brief

[204] 'Once you have put off these works you can put yourself together again; and, if I may go back to where we started from, begin to mediate on death which is gradually getting closer without you realising it. Rip off the veils and dispel the darkness: fix your gaze upon it. Make sure that no day or night goes by without your being mindful of the final day and judge everything that you see or think as you meditate in that context alone. The sky, the earth and the seas all change: what hope is there for man, that most fragile of animals? The succession of the seasons runs through its cycle time and again, never remaining still; if you think that you can remain still, you are deceiving yourself. As Horace puts it so well: 'the swift returning moons repair the damage to the heavens, yet when we fall…'.

[205] 'Yet the quickly changing moons recoup their losses in the sky; we, when we have gone down to the same place as Father Aeneas, as rich Tullus and Ancus, are dust and shadow. Who knows whether the gods above will add tomorrow's span to the total of today? Everything you give to your own dear heart will escape the greedy hands of your heir.'

[206] 'now life is running out and the shadow of death is spreading'. This is a typically Horatian juxtaposition, with tandem concepts of fleeting time and the imminence of death, occurring in for example C. 1.4; 1.11; 2.16; 3.29.

stay on earth. Petrarch is here paying homage to Horace as the central influence for his awareness of the *fuga temporis*, but also indicating that a pagan source text may be repurposed for a Christian moral context: the two are not incompatible.

3.1.3 The *fuga temporis* in the architecture of Horace's *Odes:* a model for the *Rvf*

The importance of Horace's *fuga temporis* and the *Odes* in particular in the formation of Petrarch's thought has in this way been drawn attention to both directly and indirectly by Petrarch himself, overtly for a Christian moral context of seeking virtue to prepare the soul for death. While Ovid and Propertius had provided models by which a love narrative centred around a beloved might obtain fame for a poet, and as a consequence necessitate her rejection at the close of the collection together with the elegiac mode, Horace provides a model for a type of poetry that could also convey a moral message suitable for appropriating in a Christian context. Yet, as the closing ode declares, the very act of creating the collection has also secured glory to posterity for the poet, thus defusing the passage of time. Petrarch, ever obsessed with the passage of time as he was, perhaps saw the potential in the *Odes* to act as a model where fame may also counteract the passage of time.

Questions of structuring in the *Odes* commence from relatively solid ground in terms of the integrity of the text. There has been little debate over the integrity of the collection as a whole, and no scholar has extensively questioned that the order is (a) original or (b) Horace's own, due to any lack of variants or lacunae in the manuscripts.[207] Indeed, the complete manuscripts of Horace's *Odes* known to be possessed by Petrarch, the BML Pl. 34.1; the Morgan M404; and the Harley 3754, do not diverge from the order accepted today. Variant readings occur at the poem and verse level, providing localised interpretative and editorial conundrums, rather than leading us to question the integrity of the macrostructure of the collection and the sequencing of poems within it. Scholarship has treated the contemporaneously published Books 1–3 as a unit, with Book 4 as a later addition, published ten years later. That Book 4 was a later addition would have also been clear to the medieval reader: Horace himself writes "Intermissa, Venus, diu / rursus bella moves" (C. 4.1, 1–2)[208] in the opening ode of the book, and in Petrarch's copy in the BML Pl. 34. 1, the parallel commentary confirms the "maximo int[er]vallo" between the "tertiu[m] libru[m] carminum co[m]plere" and "hunc quartu[m] scribere" (f. 47v).[209] Just as modern scholarship tends towards considering the first three books as one entity and the

[207] Draheim (1900) had suggested that there could be two poems missing from book 1, which contains 38 poems, as the other books contain 20 and 30 poems. He suggested that two odes may have been lost in transmission, thus bringing book 1 up to a neater 40 poems. Given that there are no candidates for these two 'missing' poems, this suggestion is no more than conjecture.

[208] 'Are you making war again, Venus, after so long a truce?'

[209] 'the largest interval between compiling the third book of poems and writing this fourth one.' [trans. my own]

fourth as a later addition which did not feature in the original structure, the medieval reader was also aware of the divide between Books 1–3, and the later fourth book. Certainly, Petrarch would have been aware that the first three comprised the original structure, and consequently the arrangement of the first three books will form the basis of the analysis present here, as it has done through the medieval period to modern day.

As with the organisation of other Augustan poetry collections, scholarship has taken competing, and not always complementary, approaches towards discussing the structuring of the *Odes*, which expose some of the tensions Petrarch himself explored in his balancing of macrostructural concerns with microsequential ones. These approaches to the structuring of the *Odes* can be divided into four broad categories, which from different methodologies seek to investigate two main questions: the nature of the design itself, and how the design enhances the reader's appreciation of the whole lyric collection. Firstly, there was the more biographically-orientated historicist approach prominent in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century, grounded in traditional German philological methods, which sought to see the collection in line with the biography of the poet.[210] The historicist approach was, however, challenged as the dominant methodology in the second half of the 20th century, with more recent approaches seeking to focus on text over context, rather than proving questions of biography or chronology.[211] The first of these was influenced by New Criticism, and focuses on lexical patterning and formal techniques as key in generating sequence of thought within the *Odes* and enhancing intra-poem reading. The first key work to take this approach was Collinge (1961), who attempts to classify the various types of lyric design in the *Odes*, focusing on words and images in a methodology strongly redolent of linguistic theory, including structures such as responsive and non-responsive, static and progressive as methods of lyric design, with the methodology subsequently developed by Commager (1962). However, this approach was met with much criticism due to its over-zealous focus on individual words and phrases, and fell out of fashion relatively quickly.[212]

Two approaches remain in favour today, and will inform my assessment of both the *Odes* and the *Rvf*, demonstrating that there were competing artistic and structural tensions to deal with in the construction of the macrotext. Firstly, the cyclical or geometric approach, which was prominent in the

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[210] The historical approach, which was the prominent methodology of the 19th Century German philologists, remained influential up to and including Fraenkel's (1957) work on Horace.

[211] This does not, however, mean that texts can be considered completely separately from the historical context in which they were produced, and the use of a historical framework can produce some useful suggestions regarding sequencing. More recently, Hutchinson (2002) has produced one such attempt for the *Odes*, using internal evidence from the poems themselves to establish connections with contemporary events.

[212] While these arguments do provide resistance to the biographical approach which had been so dominant up until Fraenkel's work, they focus too precisely on the effect of individual words and turns of phrase at the expense of thematic and narrative sequencing. Harrison (2013, p. 48) notes that the emphasis on formal linguistic connections "can sometimes seem overdone", and Clarke (1963) has suggested that Commager's focus on linguistic tensions as generators of meaning in cases takes us beyond what is plausibly evident in the text.

latter half of the 20th century, and sought to establish macrostructural connections based upon symmetry and geometric patterning either in the entirety of work or into subdivided 'cycles' or books. It seeks more generally to identify macro-structural patterning or structures, seeing that the author imposes a design upon the macrotext and seeks to organise the individual components into a broader frame, typically a ring structure where first and final poem are connected, second and penultimate, and so on. This approach has drawn attention to the cyclical nature of formal patterning, both in the macrotext as well as in individual books of collections. Dettmer (1983, p. 473) concludes that Horace was "pushing the principles and characteristics of poetic arrangement […] [Horace] exploited mathematical symmetry in a way unparalleled in other Augustan poetry books." While "recognition of the correspondences enhances appreciation of individual poems" (Dettmer, 1983, p. 478), the implication that certain poems are not intended to be correlated simply because they do not fit into the structure does not fully appreciate the richness of the work. The sequential approach has sought to explore this, demonstrating that various motifs are developed throughout the books in a linear fashion.[213] Santirocco (1986) is the first major exponent of sequential reading as key for the organisation of the *Odes*, arguing that each poem has a particular relationship with the one either side of it, which can only be generated by reading them in sequence.[214] Fundamentally, the predisposition to mapping correspondences ignores the simple fact that this is a work intended to be read sequentially, and such correspondences should serve to complement the sequential reading, rather than supplant it.

In this context, I outline how Horace treats the motif of the passage of time in the architecture of the closing sequence of Book 3 of the *Odes*, with particular focus on how sequencing drives the narrative to conclusion. More generally, the *fuga temporis* is a thematic thread which binds the entire collection together: it plays a key role in motivating the poet to enjoy the present, and eventually exceed the bounds of mortal temporality through literary glory and the subsequent self-presentation to posterity. From the first book, Horace emphasises the need to slow time and counteract its passage: "dum loquimur, fugerit invida / aetas: carpe diem" (C. 1.11, 8).[215] As Barchiesi (2007, p. 154), following Traina (1986, pp. 227–52), has emphasised, the common translation of 'seize' misconstrues the sense of the phrase, which "conveys not rushed pleasures, but the attempt to slow down the present, as if by plucking or grazing", indicating the desire to stall time's progress through living in the moment. This line is itself cited in the *Rvf*, where Petrarch states "mentre ch'io parlo il tempo fugge" (*Rvf* 56, 3), but

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[213] Across the collection, certain narrative arcs are dictated by sequential reading: Santirocco (1986, p. 166), argues that the Maecenas odes present a "subtle modulation from patron to poet" demonstrating a progression operating outside any static ring architecture. Likewise, Silk (1969) demonstrates that the Bacchus odes present a pattern of conversion in three stages through the three books, from initial skepticism (1.18) to sudden revelation of the god's power (2.19) and enthusiastic acceptance and ecstasy (3.25).

[214] He suggests (1986, p. 4), that "elaborate patterns also raise the question of probability" and "Sequential reading also fulfils an important aesthetic function: the creation of momentum to carry the reader forward from one poem to the next" (p. 148).

[215] 'While we speak, hostile time flees: seize the day.'

the omission of "carpe" indicates a reduced emphasis on seizing transient and momentary pleasures, suggesting an alteration to the context and application of the motif.

Petrarch exhibits a similarity to Horace in his treatment of time in terms of a comparable attempt to resist its passage and stall it: Barolini (1989, p. 17) has highlighted that while the anniversary poems serve to mark time, they also show resistance to its passage, aiming to liquidate time through countering and defusing each other. This attitude to time in the *Rvf* closely mirrors what Barchiesi (2007, p. 153) has highlighted as Horace's unique treatment of time: the emphasis on the interplay between "the subjective perception of individual experience" and the public passage of time, that is marked by external calendrical factors. This may equally be said of Petrarch's anxieties towards time in the *Rvf*, with the public passage of time marked by the anniversary poems, which Dutschke (1981) has emphasised creates a sense of stasis, and Barolini (1989) has argued contribute towards denying linearity and closure. Gragnolati and Southerden (2021) have also shown that Petrarch attempts to collapse time into a continuous present which he may manipulate and own. Adding to these studies, this thesis suggests that Petrarch sought to neutralise time entirely through the stabilisation of his lyric self within a literary monument to posterity: Horace provided a model through which this could be achieved.

In each of the Malatesta, Queriniana and Vatican forms of the *Rvf*, the *canzone* to the Virgin is always preceded by a sonnet which presents time as a foil to salvation. However, as the *Odes* provide a model for, time may be outwitted by obtaining fame for posterity. The final odes of Horace's first three books all concern themselves in some way with time's flight: in C. 3.28, the speaker encourages the faster fetching of wine from the cellar in the light of the "volucris dies" (C. 3.28, 6); in C. 3.29 he urges the abandonment of mortal concerns, including riches and politics, as a result of the "fugiens… hora" (C. 3.29, 48); and in the final component he presents himself outliving the "annorum series et fuga temporum" (C. 3.30, 5), series of years and flight of time, through his poetry which has become an everlasting monument to posterity.

C. 3.28 initiates this strong focus in the closing sequence on the passage of time and the need to live life in the moment, describing a celebration of the Neptunalia. The central exponent of the geometric approach, Dettmer, acknowledges the opening five poems of Book 1 and the closing five poems of Book 3 do not form a pure ring structure, but rather the expected correspondences of C. 3.27 and 3.28 are switched around. This suggests that necessities on a sequential level must have dictated their need to be ordered such rather than fitting neatly into the ring composition: indeed, C. 3.28 has an important sequential function of establishing that the narrative is coming to a closure in its anticipation of C. 3.29 and 30. Petrarch had already cited this ode in his letter to Horace, echoing the 'volucris dies' in "Dum noctes celeres et volucres dies" (*Fam*. 24.10, 89). Commentators on this ode have emphasised that "The poet is vividly aware of the shortness of life and love" (Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, p. 341), and here time is presented as an opponent to enjoyment, with its swift passage enforcing the traditional

Horatian ‘carpe diem’ concept of time, as Horace urges Lyde to fetch wine from the cellar to enjoy that night:

Inclinare meridiem

sentis ac, veluti stet volucris dies,

parcis deripere horreo

cessantem Bibuli consulis amphoram?[216] (C. 3.28, 5–8)

Time, and its passage, acts as an incentive to enjoy the present in this ode, and the characterisation of the day as “volucris dies” urges the addressee, Lyde, to live in the moment, with the question format prompting the audience to consider the necessity of the call to action in the face of time’s swift flight. Santirocco (1986, p. 147), in his sequential reading of the second half of Book 3, has emphasised the presence of an aura of finality in this ode, which effectively commences the conclusion of the collection itself in a drive to closure to satisfy the reader’s expectations of a stable and satisfying ending. His evidence lies in the concluding reference to the “summo carmine” (C. 3.28, 13), the final song of the celebration, coupled with the imagery of the night drawing in, which suggests that the poetic endeavours are drawing to a close. Horace, therefore, before we have reached the close of the work itself, appears to be sowing seeds indicating that we are arriving at the final destination.

These hints of a wending towards a close are accompanied by a heightened activity generated by an awareness of the passing hour: the necessity of rushing to fetch the wine is induced by the awareness that the day is dying (inclinare meridiem), and that night is approaching. The closing phrase of the ode, “merita nox quoque nenia” (C. 3.28, 16), that night also deserves a song, indicates closure through the more specific meaning of ‘nenia’ as a song of lament, or a funeral song. That this sense of closure commences in parallel with the increase in anxiety around the passage of time, which will be intensified in the following poem, suggests that the drive to a satisfactory and cohesive poetic closure is intensified by the preoccupation with time. That the poetic apotheosis is imminent is hinted at further in the reference to the ‘oloribus’, swans, of Venus, with whom the song is to finish. This recalls the closing ode of Book 2, which in an allusion to his future goals of poetic immortality describes Horace’s becoming ‘biformis’ (C. 2.20, 2), through his mutation into a white bird, the swan. C. 3.28 also recalls C. 2.20 through the lexical echo, ‘nenia’ (C. 3.28, 16; C. 2.20, 21), which in C. 2.20 is used in the context of the request in the final stanza that there may be no laments, no grieving or elegies at Horace’s insubstantial funeral, and that the tomb will be superfluous, indicating the wish instead for him to live on in an alternative form through his poetic metamorphosis. This anticipates the juxtaposition of the death of the mortal body and the survival of the version of the self dedicated to posterity in the literary

[216] ‘You can see the noonday sun is on its way down, and yet, as if the winged day stood still, you are chary about grabbing a jar of Bibulus’ consulship from the cupboard.’

project: in C. 2.20 the finality of his mortal death may be exceeded through his song, which through his second form, that of the swan, will in its flight of fame surpass the existence of the mortal body. Yet at the close of Book 2, the transformation into the swan is not complete: the lexical and thematic recalls of C. 3.28 indicate however that this journey of poetic metamorphosis is coming to its final stages, spurred on by the lateness of the hour, and driving us towards the end of the narrative.

Horace intensifies the preoccupation with time's flight further in C. 3.29. The penultimate poem of the *Odes*, it commences by the poet inviting his patron Maecenas to the countryside, before elucidating a series of images expressing the unpredictable nature of life, and the importance of living in the moment in the face of being unable to influence the future. Horace, in a departure from his usual emphasis on being present in the moment as a motivator of sympotic concerns, exhibited for example in the previous component C. 3.28, elaborates more fully on the transient nature of the time and the immutability of fate:

> ille potens sui
> laetusque deget cui licet in diem
> dixisse: 'Vixi': cras vel atra
> nube polum Pater occupato
>
> vel sole puro; non tamen inritum,
> quodcumque retro est, efficiet neque
> diffinget infectumque reddet
> quod fugiens semel hora vexit.
>
> Fortuna saevo laeta negotio et
> ludum insolentem ludere pertinax
> transmutat incertos honores,
> nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.[217] (C. 3.29, 41–52)

Horace suggests that man can only be his own master if he uses his days to the fullest, acknowledging that the 'Father' may control what comes tomorrow. He emphasises the fickleness of Fortune, which may be cruel or may be kind, but it is impossible to predict. The fundamental message of this ode is that man must therefore be driven to fruition of the present, and to live in the moment as the future is uncertain. The interlinear notes for the ode in Petrarch's manuscript also demonstrate a focus upon the strong sense of the fleeting nature of the passage of time, as above 'fugiens' we find noted 'transiens',

[217] 'That man will be master of himself and live a happy life who as each day ends can say "I have lived." Tomorrow let our Father cover the sky in dark cloud or bright sunshine, he will not cancel whatever is past, nor will he render null and void what the flying hour has once carried away. Fortune, revelling in her cruel business, and determined to play her high-handed game, switches her fickle favours, kind now to me, now to someone else.'

and above 'hora' is noted 'tempus' (BML Pl. 34.1, f. 47r) and the duality of the immutability of the past and the uncertainty of the future is also highlighted in the accompanying commentary: "Quod iam transiit … ia[m] n[on] poterunt immutari qua[m]vis futura incerta sint" (f. 47r).

This ode is cited by Petrarch himself in the first book of the *Seniles*, referring to it as "divinum […] illud Flacci carmen" (*Sen.* 1.7.55), the divine poem of Horace. The choice of this ode in particular to redeploy in a Christian moral context is perhaps due to its shift away from the typical Horatian tone around the flight of time. Nisbett and Rudd (2004, p. 346) have highlighted that the unusual aspect of this poem is its "sustained ethical dimension", suggesting a moral message conveyed in the ode; the need to live life to the fullest in knowledge of future uncertainty. Petrarch, citing this ode in the *Seniles*, sees it as a source of moral guidance in a Christian context, where he reminds us that if anyone is uneasy about the future, he may look to God for support, citing the lines:

> prudens venturi temporis exitum
>
> calignosa nocte premit Deus
>
> ridetque si mortalis ultra
>
> fas trepidat.[218] (C. 3.29, 29–32; quoted in *Sen.* 1.7.55)

In the citation of this ode in the *Seniles* we observe a reinterpretation of the lines in a Christian moral context, read through the lens of the Christian God and the divine to provide moral guidance. The 'Pater' and 'Deus' of Horace's ode is interpreted as the Christian God, as Petrarch uses these lines as evidence that man should place faith in God, stating that otherwise he is following a pathless journey at night without light. Man must put aside his own anxieties, and await what God has planned for him, and indeed hurry to meet God unencumbered by mortal preoccupations, arguing that man should not worry himself over the future, nor indeed is that desirable, as everything is certain in God, and one should not allow mortal anxieties to doubt faith in Him. This spurs Petrarch to consider death as inevitable, in fact even something to be hastened towards, but only if one has faith in God and abandons mortal concerns. In this way, Petrarch consciously signposts the closure of the *Odes* as containing a moral message applicable for living in line with man's obligations to God.

As well as exhibiting a strong moral and ethical dimension, which lends itself to reinterpretation in a Christian context, this ode also fulfils an important architectural function in the collection: Günther (2013, p. 218) notes that C. 3.29 balances not only 3.1 but also 1.1, indicating its importance in binding different sections of the collection together in a cohesive frame. C. 1.1 and C. 3.29 are both Maecenas

[218] 'God in his providence hides future events in murky darkness, and laughs if a mere mortal frets about what is beyond his control.'

odes, connected through the formal addresses to the patron,[219] creating a frame for the entire collection which then leads into the declaratory *sphragis*, that is deliberate self-identification with a programmatic value, of C. 3.30. The *Rvf* adopts a similar frame, whereby poems 1 and 365, through lexical, thematic and formal links create a frame to the macrostructure before the declaratory prayer to the Virgin. That this frame in the *Rvf* is likewise orientated around the importance of paying heed to time's flight is evident in the final sonnet, where the incipit draws to attention the improper use of the poet's "tempi passati" (*Rvf* 365, 1) as wasted in mortal pursuits, and sets this in the context of Christian salvation. Petrarch prays that "se la stanza / fu vana, almen sia la partita onesta" (*Rvf* 365, 10–11), and as Horace's lyrics had emphasised to the character of Augustine in the *Secretum* the need to 'de morte cogitare', meditate on death, the *io lirico* of the *Rvf* emphasises the necessity of prayer for an honest departure from this life. The urgency of these preparations is highlighted through the lexical echo of 'vana', which recalls the proemial sonnet, in which Petrarch suggested the futility of his earthly desires as "vane speranze e 'l van dolore" (*Rvf* 1, 6), made all the more pointed through the fleeting nature of mortal pleasures, which is but a "breve sogno" (*Rvf* 1, 14). That Petrarch had Horace's C. 3.29 in mind also in his formal frame is hinted at through a further lexical parallel with 'vano', as on Petrarch's manuscript of the *Odes*, we find the note "vanum" next to "irritum" (C. 3.29, 45), in the context of Horace arguing that time will not render the past vain. While the past may not be changed, the future is yet uncertain, as highlighted in the *postille* of Petrarch's copy of the *Odes* on the BML Pl. 34.1, f. 47r: "Quod iam transiit … ia[m] n[on] poterunt immutari qua[m]vis futura incerta sint".[220] Certainly, Petrarch is hyper-aware in the closing sonnets of the *Rvf* that he may repent the past, and although he may not alter those vain desires of his youth, his actions in the present may help him secure his future salvation.

The final component of the *Odes*, C 3.30 brings the narrative to a close with the poet having exceeded the bounds of mortal time through his construction of a 'monumentum' to posterity in his poetry, which will endure through the ages. As well as providing the culmination to the sequential narrative surrounding the *fuga temporis* on a localised level, it also completes the cyclical structure initiated in the opening component of Book 1.[221] Petrarch himself had drawn attention to the metrical connection between C 1.1 and 3.30, which have a uniquely shared metre, the first Asclepiad, through choosing it as the metre for his letter to Horace in the *Familiares*. However, the metrical correspondence in the two odes does not stand alone, but rather serves to highlight also their shared theme, which

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[219] In the incipit of 3.29, Maecenas is invoked as "Tyrrhena regum progenies", paralleling the incipit of 1.1 'Maecenas atavis edite regibus'.

[220] 'Things which have happened may not be changed, although future things are uncertain.' [my trans.]

[221] Several scholars have sought to build upon the structural frame by expanding upon the relationship between C. 1.1 and 3.30 to emphasise the relationship between the opening and closing of the collection as well as its individual books more generally. Willi (1948) initially noted the thematic parallels between the opening and closing groups of poems in Book 1; Mutschler (1974) saw Willi's arguments as lacking in textual evidence, and explored in greater detail the formal and lexical correspondences between the opening and closing poems of Book 1.

exposes a narrative anxiety around the desire to obtain of poetic glory and in doing so counteract time's effects on the mortal body.[222]

The opening poem, taking the form of a priamel,[223] expresses Horace's desire for (the as of yet unobtained) poetic glory in a dedication to his patron, Maecenas, and is a justification of Horace's occupation as a poet, revolving around Horace's devotion to his own vocation, poetry, in the context of other professions.[224] It concludes with a reference to Horace's hypothetical, as of yet unobtained poetic glory: "Quod si me lyricis vatibus inseres, / sublimi feriam sidera vertice" (C. 1.1, 35–6).[225] Having closed C. 1.1 with an appeal to his patron Maecenas to secure Horace's divine aspirations with "dis miscent superis" (C. 1.1, 30),[226] C 3.30 returns to the theme of poetic immortality. However, 3.30 represents a shift in thought, from "justification of Horace's occupation as a poet to a declaration of the immortality of himself and his poetry" (Dettmer, 1983, pp. 143–144) demonstrating a thematic progression and continuing where the first ode left off:

> Exegi monumentum aere perennius
> regalique situ pyramidum altius,
> quod non imber edax, non Aquilo inpotens
> possit diruere aut innumerabilis
> annorum series et fuga temporum.
> Non omnis moriar multaque pars mei
> vitabit Libitinam; usque ego postera

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[222] The correspondence between C 1.1 and 3.30 has been well noted, for example in Günther (2013, p. 218); Dettmer (1983, p. 120), or for the significance of the metrical link to Petrarch's *Fam.* 24.10 see Petrie (1983, p. 3). There have been various attempts to demonstrate that the *Odes* as a whole is underpinned by a metrical scheme of organisation. Riese (1865) notes that the second half of Book 3 (3.16 to 3.30, excluding the final triad) is organised into a triadic structure based upon the inclusion of one poem in each of the Sapphic, Alcaeic and Asclepiad metres; Draheim (1900) uses metre as the basis of his theory for the structuring of Book 1; Ludwig (1961) notes the metrical interplay of 2.1–11. However, there is however no obvious consistent metrical organisation running throughout the entirety of the *Odes*, and the focus on metre has also over-emphasised the importance of form over content. Where individual sequences share metrical features, metre acts to complement thematic connections. For example, the so-called 'Roman Odes' are bound by a common theme and shared alcaic meter. However, the metre merely accentuates the thematic connections which exist across the sequence.

[223] A type of poem where a series of foils to the main subject is listed, eventually revealing the main subject or idea at the end, in Horace's case the desired poetic glory.

[224] For studies on the opening ode which discuss its role as a priamel and Horace's attitude to the other professions listed in the context of his own occupation as a poet, see Dunn (1989); Pomeroy (1980); Ghiselli (1972); Shey (1971); Vretska (1971); Schönberger (1966); Musurillo (1962).

[225] 'But if you rank me among the lyric bards of Greece, I shall soar aloft and strike the stars with my head.'

[226] 'puts me in the company of the gods above'.

crescam laude recens, dum Capitolium
scandet cum tacita virgine pontifex.[227] (C. 3.30, 1–9)

The first line reveals that Horace's poetic mission has been achieved: he has created a 'monumentum' in his work. A transition from the future conditional "inseres" of C 1.1, where Horace's divine aspirations are not only hypothetical, but conditional on the will of his patron Maecenas, morphs into "Exegi", I have constructed, and "crescam", I will grow, a concrete certainty linked to the creation of his collection. This narrative progression is reinforced by the imagery of the two poems themselves which also reflects the narrative progression: Horace's ivy wreath of C. 1.1, 29 "hederae", becomes the laurel, "lauro", of 3.30, 16. This alludes to the literary dichotomy established in the *Ars poetica* between *ars* and *ingenium*, represented here in Bacchus and Apollo, demonstrating Horace's successful journey to embrace the poetic superiority of Apollo.[228] In this way the correspondence between the first and final odes presents a modulation of the relationship between patron and poet, and a narrative progression whereby Horace turns from a grateful beneficiary to an immortalised master of poetry.

C. 3.30 marks a shift in thought, describing the future result of Horace's present self as his poetic efforts in life ensure the transcendence of death as his poetry survives to posterity. In this closing ode, Horace defines his poetry as a 'monumentum', which will exist beyond his lifespan on earth, more everlasting than bronze and higher than the pyramids.[229] Gibson (1997, p. 312) suggests that this comparison reminds us that "Horace's poetry will surpass such physical and transient memorials", which are "subject to the destructive natural forces from which Horace exempts his own commemoration." As a result, this component emphasises "that the poet's proper role is to seek immortality through poetry" (Gibson, 1997, p. 314), a message which is generated through the pervasive use of contrasts: "death against growth, transience against permanence, temporal against literary power" (Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, p. 366). This urgency to create a lasting poetic monument is viewed through the lens of time's passage: the goal of immortality is achieved through surpassing the limitations of the human lifespan on earth. This is demonstrated by Horace through a series of future certainties which are achieved through his poetry: "non omnis moriar", "vitabit", "crescam". Horace demonstrates that he will be "perennius", everlasting, having spent his time ensuring that least a part of him will survive beyond death, which is achieved 'In letteraru[m] laude', through literary praise, which as the

[227] 'I have finished a monument more lasting than bronze, more lofty than the regal structure of the pyramids, one which neither corroding rain nor the ungovernable North Wind can ever destroy, nor the countless series of the years, nor the flight of time. I shall not wholly die, and a large part of me will elude the Goddess of Death. I shall continue to grow, fresh with the praise of posterity, as long as the priest climbs the Capitol with the silent virgin.'

[228] The relationship between Bacchus, whom the ivy wreath symbolises, and Apollo, whom the laurel symbolises has been considered by Batinski (1991) who sees that Horace establishes a reciprocity between the two gods, by identifying them with dual aspects of the poetic process, *ars* and *ingenium*, which Horace also attests to as a literary dichotomy in *Ars Poetica*. Putnam (1973) sees Bacchus as the source from which poetry comes, but ultimately is inferior to Apollo's authority.

[229] For analysis of this particular ode see Woodman (2012).

accompanying commentary to Petrarch's copy notes will give the author eternal praise: "Per eternitate[m] carminis auctori dat laudem" (BML Pl. 34.1, f. 47r, note on 'non omnis moriar').

Crafting an everlasting poetic monument, or at least one which will last as long as Rome does, is therefore an antidote to time's passage, which enables the poet to counteract and neutralise its flight through ensuring that a part survives beyond mortal death: the impermanent may become permanent, therefore collapsing past, present and future. The poet is preoccupied with overcoming the entrapments of earthly time, by surpassing the most everlasting physical monuments, achieved through an exploration of the tension between physical existence, subject to temporality, and a form of existence which is not subject to time's passage in the same way as a living creature. While the mortal body may die, the lyric 'self' created through the poetry lives on, and is presented publicly as a conscious act to posterity. Yet as in the *Triumphi*, Fame may conquer Death, but Fame is still eventually conquered by Time: Horace's poetry may only last as long as Rome does. However, it is fame more than anything else, more than any temporal objects, which may counteract the passage of time, if not conquer it entirely. Certainly, while Petrarch was aware that virtue should be sought in order to secure the eternal salvation of the soul, fame could still ensure the longest existence for him on earth, more so than anything else. The closing sequence of the *Odes* provides a model for a narrative driven by time's passage, moving from a concern with the brevity of life and enjoying the day in C. 3.28, to the moralising approach regarding the transience of time and uncertainty of the future in C. 3.29, and finally to the poet's having surpassed the limits of mortal existence in C. 3.30 through his literary production, achieving his goal of counteracting the swift passage of time through the creation of an idealised lyric narrative to present to posterity.

In conclusion, Horace's *Odes* provided an apt model for Petrarch to adapt for the *Rvf*. Miller (2019, p. 127) has argued that the beauty of the *Odes* and its true monumental value for posterity is the "collection's continuing capacity to produce new meanings for new people in new contexts", and Petrarch shows through his interactions with Horace to have been particularly struck by the *fuga temporis*, which he reshapes for use in the *Rvf*. This theme appealed in particular to him as it could serve a dual purpose. Firstly, it could be adapted in a Christian moral context to emphasise the importance of meditating on death for the necessity of directing the soul to virtue and the divine. However, the *fuga temporis* was also closely linked to the desire for fame: as Horace showed (and Ovid indeed declared at the close of the *Amores*), through creating a lyric monument for posterity the passage of time could be counteracted and defused. This hints at the potential for the stabilisation of his own individual and fragmented subjectivities through the positioning of himself within the literary canon and the creation of his own poetic monument. Petrarch sought to craft a lyric sequence which could reconcile both the moral imperative to direct the self to virtue, as well as facilitate the creation of a comparable poetic model to present to posterity and secure eternal fame.

3.2 The *fuga temporis* in Petrarch's letters: a model for the *Rvf*

This section argues that Petrarch's self-casting in his letters has a particular function of representing the self as becoming increasingly virtuous, while simultaneously facilitating his literary activities in the search for perfected literary models. Firstly, I deal with the nature of the epistolary genre as self-reflexive, acting as a vehicle for introspection. With the *Rvf* by nature a poetic project, the letters may provide us with not merely a parallel witness to Petrarch's changing intellectual priorities, but one with a greater introspective potential, not bound by poetic models or convention. In turn, this gives Petrarch greater scope for the manipulation of the presentation of his authorial self. Turning to the text, I examine a pair of letters from the *Familiares*, 1.3 and 24.1, both discussing the passage of time, arguing that what has been described as an intellectual maturation (Dotti, 1978) in the latter letter is also a deliberate heightening of rhetoric as part of an idealised intellectual arc across the macrotext. Next, I examine the *Seniles*, in which Petrarch presents himself as having an intensifying concern about his own mortality and increasing anxieties surrounding the passage of time. While the *fuga temporis* apparently drives a focus on the search for virtue at the close of Petrarch's life, I highlight that this occurs in tandem with careful consideration of how to present his literary models, and therein his self-projection, to posterity. Literary models, this section suggests, could also be vehicles for virtue, rather than distract from it.

To this end, Petrarch constructs a carefully curated intellectual arc in the letters to present himself as becoming more virtuous in his mature years, claiming that this is driven by increasing preoccupation with the passage of time. At the start of the *Familiares*, Petrarch represents himself as a youthful scholar, concerned with studying the classics in order to develop skills of language and eloquence. At the close of the *Familiares*, reflecting on his youth, he reveals that he is moving away from the study of the language used to convey the *fuga temporis* to contemplating the philosophical implications of the swift passage of time for his own life, or at least that is how he wishes his readership to view it. This arc is further developed in the *Seniles*, where the passing of his family and friends induces a sense of moral crisis, with the author becoming vividly aware of the proximity of his own death and the unpredictable nature of the time left to him, resulting in a drive to virtue, both in his own life and in his works. This intellectual self-portrait, curated in parallel with the *Rvf*, reveals that in the closing stages of his life, Petrarch was concerned with not just his moral path to virtue, but how this was presented in his works and therein to posterity. The intellectual development presented in the letters is particularly apparent in the treatment of the *fuga temporis*, which directs Petrarch's introspective efforts. While the *fuga temporis* has been consistently identified as a theme in the *Rvf* itself, Taddeo (1982, p. 55) has suggested that the language of Latin makes Petrarch's epistolary more suitable for the

discussion of philosophical ideas, and consequently the Latin works show a stronger predisposition to debating the implications of the *fuga temporis* than the *Rvf*.[230]

3.2.1 A self-reflexive genre

The importance of the letters as a philosophical filter for the *Rvf* lies in the self-reflexive nature of the epistolary genre, affording a deeper insight in the portrait of the self as curated by the author. While Kerby-Fulton (2010, p. 414) has suggested that representations of the self are found "most elusively in poetry", the portrait of the self as presented in the *Rvf* is complemented by the presentation of the literary persona of the author in his letters, as Petrarch crafts his internal thoughts for an external audience. Historically, epistolary has been a vehicle for self-representation. Fantham (2016, p. xxiii) has noted that the "Hellenistic manual *On Style* attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum singles out letters for their effectiveness in representing a personality: 'The letter, like the dialogue, should abound in glimpses of character (*ethos*). It may be said that everybody writes a letter as the image of his soul. In every other genre of writing we can discern the writer's character, but in none so clearly as the epistolary'". Epistolary is a means of presenting the self in written form to others: curated both as the thoughts of the author, but also presented in the knowledge of its dissemination to an external audience, whether to a specified individual, or of open nature to a wider public. Epistolary in this way allows us to build a fuller picture of the literary persona of the author.

Petrarch himself had ample models upon which to draw in the construction of his own letter collections, which reveal their effectiveness at not only representing the self, but also writing as a means of introspection. As a means of conveying the interior thoughts and ruminations of the author, the importance of these models lies in their self-reflexive nature, which is evident in many of the classical epistolary collections dear to Petrarch, in particular those of Cicero and Seneca.[231] As Hoffer (2007, p. 87) has suggested, "in some of Cicero's letters to Atticus we can sometimes track the writer's thoughts and manner of expression from day to day, even hour to hour", indicating the genre's efficacy at recording and representing the author's character, life and thoughts. Seneca, who himself is cited liberally throughout the *Familiares* and the *Seniles*, provides a model of a deeply introspective narrative with the aim of achieving self-improvement.[232] Fantham (2016, p. xx) has suggested that the titling of Seneca's collection as the *Morales* indicates that "their purpose and dominant theme is to reinforce

[230] Gibson and Morrison (2007, p. 9) have also highlighted, "there was a well-established ancient literary tradition of treating philosophy in epistolary format", emphasising the genre's efficacy as a vehicle for philosophical explorations.

[231] For more on ancient letter collections see: White (2010); Morello and Morrison (2007); Stowers (1986); Altman (1982).

[232] For more on Seneca's epistolary see: Schönegg (1999); Edwards (1997); Hachmann (1995); Lana (1991); Abel (1981); Maurach (1970); Reynolds (1965).

Lucilius' struggle to achieve the wisdom and serenity of a man uninfluenced by worldly emotions — desires and fears, and angry or envious reactions to others." This illustrates the nature of his letters as a vehicle of literary self-creation, with the binding of component letters together into a collection acting to create a whole greater than a sum of its parts and the creation of a literary persona through the letters in order to achieve the literary goal of self-exploration, or indeed a bettered self. Given that Griffin (1992) has established that the correspondence with Lucilius is fictitious, Inwood (2007, p. 137) concludes that "Self-consciously, then, Seneca writes his letters", and indeed Seneca's epistolary output may be read in terms of a reflection on the self, and as a means of exploring and enacting self-transformation, a model which is omnipresent in Petrarch's letters, not just in citations, but in the careful self-fashioning of the author.[233]

This also indicates that the process of penning the text itself is central to the moral exploration. Zak (2010, p. 14) has convincingly argued that the process of writing itself is integral to the exploration of the self: "the Stoic stream in Petrarch's works consists mainly of following Seneca's model, using writing as a tool to ignite the writer's desire to imitate exempla of virtue and as a vehicle for an examination of conscience (among other uses), asserting that these practices can lead to the overcoming of flux and fragmentation by leading us back to our "true self " – reason and virtue – the state in which we have established full control over our passions." Seneca, in a section from the *Epistles*, quoted by Petrarch in the *Familiares*, notes that he, as he writes, is continuously changing: 'Ego ipse dum loquor mutari ista, mutatus sum' (*Epistles*, 58.22–23).[234] Writing the letters as a self-explorative process leads to a changing state of intellect, or at least that is how Petrarch wishes the reader to see it: I draw attention to the risks of taking Petrarch at face value, emphasising that while he depicts himself as being driven to virtue, he was still concerned with the fashioning his literary projects for posterity.

The careful curation of the self outwardly presented to the public and to posterity, indicated in the 'Voi' of the proemial sonnet of the *Rvf*, is but one part of the greater autobiographical project. Santagata (1992, p. 103) has noted that "Il Canzoniere rimanda alle raccolte epistolari per la sua stessa morfologia e per le esterne vicende redazionali", drawing attention to both the similarities in the planned structuring of the works, as well as the redactional process undertaken in order to create "la finzione autobiografica" (1992, p. 75). Dotti (1978, p. 21) has even more strongly asserted that "il Petrarca latino e il Petrarca volgare, l'epistolario e il canzoniere sono una cosa sola", that is that they represent prose and verse expressions of the same self-reflexive autobiographical genre. Yet Dotti's assertion must be further clarified, as while the works both stem from the same autobiographical nucleus of self-presentation, they are fundamentally different genres, and as such they are sustained by different

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[233] cf. Edwards (1997, pp. 23–38).

[234] 'I myself, while I speak about this change, have changed.' Compare also to Horace "Dum loquimur, fugerit invida aetas" (C. 1.11, 7–8), also cited in 24.1; and Ovid "Dum loquor, hora fugit" (*Met*. 2, 242).

narrative strategies. Indeed, as a poetic project, the narrative of the *Rvf* is sustained just as much by sequencing as it is by the content of individual poems. In the letters, however, the narrative strategy is very different. While a narrative may still be constructed by reading the letters in sequence, there is much more potential for formal connections to be made outside of that sequence, or for different and unrelated narratives to be interweaved through variation on themes and in correspondents, and indeed returning to them. Within the epistolary the different narratives are sustained in a more fragmentary manner, with greater scope for internal contradiction and interplay, for picking up a topic and returning to it later. As such, the difference in narrative strategy necessitates caution in reading the letters and the *Rvf* in parallel, with less emphasis placed on the sequencing of letters, and more placed on reconstructing the narrative generated through internal references and thematic connections. However, both the *Rvf* and the letters, as I argue, are working towards the same literary goal, of presenting a more virtuous self and in tandem achieving literary fame, simply by different means.

Dotti (1978, p. 86) has argued that the *Seniles* more generally presents the "storia di una maturazione ideologica", however given that Ascoli (2015, p. 123) has asserted that the *Familiares* and the *Seniles* "are constructed so as to constitute a kind of "mega-macro-text" between them",[235] this intellectual development applies to both collections as a whole. Traditionally, scholarship on Petrarch's letters has followed three strands of approach, as summarised by Ascoli (2015, pp. 121–122). Firstly, as part of the "Humanist" project "of recovering and reproducing the classical past"; secondly, as a source of biographical and historical information, primarily by Petrarch's biographers; and thirdly, the isolation and celebration of individual texts, such as the famous Ascent of Mont Ventoux. More recently, as Ascoli notes, interpreters such as Bernardo (1960), T. Greene (1982) and Mazzotta (2009) have laid more focus on the collections as "projects", examining the relationship of individual texts to the whole within the macro-structure. As I argue here, this aspect of the macro-textual "project" must also be extended to the *Rvf*, which similarly represents itself at the close of the sequence to be moving towards virtue, while still being concerned with literary glory.

The *Familiares* was conceived, as most scholars believe, in the years shortly after 1345, inspired by Petrarch's discovery of Cicero's letters in 1345.[236] It was not until 1350 that the collection began to take shape formally, with the dedicatory letter *ad Socratem suum* (Ludwig Van Kempen), which although revealed by an intermediate redaction was composed "Patavii, ydibus januariis, 1350", is used as the preface to the collection which in the fictional chronology commences in 1336.[237] As with

[235] Ascoli (2005, p. 124) also notes that the symmetry of the first collection, which presents a return to the classics, with the second collection, where he presents himself as a 'classic-to-be' indicates the necessity to read the collections as one entity. There are, however, differences, particularly among the organisational principles of the collections. The *Familiares* contains many allusions to a Homeric enterprise, not least its division in 24 books. It is more difficult to ascertain what the generic precedent is for the 18 books of the *Seniles* in terms of the structure.

[236] For example see: Vasaly (2018, p. 105); Santagata (1992, pp. 44–45).

[237] See Vasaly (2018, p. 106) for further detail on the letter and the *Familiares*.

the evolution of the *Rvf*, the curation of the *Familiares* involved the letters being “riviste, ripulite, in gran parte riscritte” (Santagata, 1992, p. 44): Petrarch himself admits in *Fam.* 1.1.31–32 to having redacted, “detraxi”, parts of the collection. The composition and careful organisation of the letters therefore cultivates what Dotti (1978, p. 27) has termed a “ritratto della propria esistenza intellettuale”, in which the author manipulates reality through his redactions in order to create “una propria ideale biografia aperta a sé e al mondo” (ibid.). While the 350 letters of the *Familiares* were composed between 1325 and 1366, Petrarch systematically redates and rearranges then to create a fictionalised chronology. The redactional work on the collection, which was intended to be what Santagata (1992, p. 46) terms an “opera aperta”, that is accompanying and biographizing the entire life of Petrarch, is completed by 1366, the year in which Petrarch’s copyist Giovanni Malpaghini completed the transcription of the full 24 books. Chronologically, the *Familiares* concludes in 1361, the year of the death of its dedicatee Ludwig Van Kempen, although the final systemisation of the collection was not completed until 1366, when Petrarch added several more letters to bring the total up to 350, and organised them in 24 books. In 1361, owing to Van Kempen’s death that year, and by Petrarch’s own admission the ever-bulging number of letters in the *Familiares* (*Sen.* 1.1), he begins the organisation of the *Seniles*, dedicated to Francesco Nelli. The composition and systemisation of the collection continued until Petrarch’s death in 1374, with the final letter of the collection, the Letter to Posterity, remaining incomplete. Santagata (1993, p. 76), notes that its first draft was composed sometime between 1351 and 1355, but it was later collocated to the *Seniles* in 1370–71, suggesting Petrarch’s focus on self-fashioning and crafting an idealised biography was a priority even well before the end of his life.

In parallel to the construction of the *Familiares* and the *Seniles* as a macro-textual ‘project’, Petrarch also conceived of the *Rvf* and took it through the various redactional stages. The *Rvf* was conceived prior to the *Familiares*, as indicated by the note on the *Codice degli abbozzi*, “ceptu trascribi et incep. ab hoc loco 1342. Aug. 21, hora 6”, next to *Rvf* 34, suggesting that it began to take form several years prior to the conception of the *Familiares* in the late 1340s. In this year, marking the end year in the fictional chronology of the *Familiares*, Giovanni Malpaghini was transcribing the earlier sections of the *Rvf* in the Vat. Lat. 3195, consisting of 1–120, *Donna*, 122–178, 180–190 in the first part of the *Rvf*, and 264–318 in the second part of the work. In the final decade of Petrarch’s life, while the *Seniles* was being organised and redacted, the transcription of the Vat. Lat. 3195 was well underway by Petrarch’s own hand, as Malpaghini had ceased his work as Petrarch’s scribe on 21 April 1367. Upon Petrarch’s death in 1374, the bulk of the *Seniles* was stabilised, with the concluding Letter to Posterity left unfinished, in an indication that Petrarch was carefully considering how his wished both his life and his works to be presented in his literary afterlife. However, while final stages of the editorial process of the two works are occurring contemporaneously, they are not intended to be presented as parallel counterparts. The narrative of the *Rvf* ostensibly pretends to be concluded in 1358, thus casting the poetry as relating to an earlier part of life than the *Seniles*, although in reality they were being redacted

in parallel. A high degree of caution is therefore needed when treating Petrarch's biographical or intellectual positioning, which is a matter of self-casting rather than reality.

3.2.2 The *Familiares*: from scholar to philosopher

Petrarch indicates from the first book of the *Familiares* that the narrative will be concerned with enacting an idealised intellectual shift from the youthful study of language to the more mature philosophising of ideas. In the first book of the *Familiares*, he argues that "Animi cura philosophum querit, eruditio lingue oratoris est propria" (*Fam.* 1.9.1),[238] that caring for the self is the business of a philosopher, while language is for an orator. This indicates that his interaction with classical works will be governed by two strands: the study of language, and the study of substance, with his concerns evolving from the former to the letter. This intellectual maturation from study of language to philosophical concerns is evident in a structurally significant pair of letters from the *Familiares*: letter 1.3 to "Venerando seni Raimundo Superano iuriconsulto, de flore etatis istabili",[239] and letter 24.1 "Ad Philippum Cavallicensem epyscopum, de inextimabili fuga temporis."[240] This pair of letters from the first and final books, marking points thirty years apart, are connected by the shared theme of the passage of time. Petrarch draws attention to the intended correspondence between the two letters through the use of an internal reference, beginning letter 24.1 to Philippe de Cavaillon with a temporal marker referring back to the letter to Superano:

> Ante hos triginta annos – ut etas furtim labitur! – qui michi in tergum verso dum cunta simul intueor, vix dies vixque hore totidem, at dum singula metior et meorum cumulos laborum explicare incipio, totidem secula videri solent, scripsi ad venerabilem et egregium illum senem Raimundum Superanum. [241]
>
> (*Fam.* 24.1.1)

Dotti (1978, p. 30) has argued that the recollection of letter 1.3 in 24.1 is to emphasise the poet's new-found intellectual maturity, as the earlier letter is "esplicitamente richiamata dopo trent'anni nella prima familiare del ventiquattresimo libro, quasi a misurare il cammino percorso e la raggiunta maturità." Yet while it overtly draws our attention to the construction of an intellectual maturation, it also draws

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[238] 'The care of the soul requires a philosopher, proper use of language an orator.' [all translations from Bernardo's edition]

[239] 'To the venerable elder Raimondo Subirani, Attorney at Law, on the fleetingness of life.'

[240] 'To Philippe, Bishop of Cavaillon, concerning the incredible flight of time.'

[241] 'Thirty years ago – how time slips secretively by! – and if I look back to consider them [the years] all together, the days and hours seem so many, but when I consider them individually, and I begin to disentangle the masses of my labours, it seems to be centuries since when I wrote to that venerable and worthy elder, Raimundo Superano.'

attention to Petrarch's self-casting in relation to the idealised biographical project more generally. In the *Familiares* and the *Seniles*, the concept of time's passage is itself integral to the structuring and progression of the project: the very chronological nature of the epistolary collection is dependent on the passage of time towards death, a prospect marching ever closer, and continuously measured by dates and temporal markers. Time may be manipulated for literary and aesthetic purposes.

Taddeo (1982, pp. 55–56) has hypothesised a two-fold aspect to Petrarchan time, dividing it into the astronomical sense, that is measurable time such as *hora, dies, annus*, parts of the day, and into the human sense, that is phases defined by the human experience such as *presens, futurum, memoria, spes*, and stages of the human life.[242] Petrarch attempts to delineate a present self distinct from the past self, which is strengthened in the *Familiares* by his positioning of his intellect in reference to these stages of human life. In letter 1.3, which placed at the beginning of the collection, on 1 May 1336, Petrarch establishes his own youthful aspect, as he presents himself as a young man in the flower of youth writing to an old and venerable man, "Venerando seni […] de flore etatis istabili", and he is desirous of reaching old age graciously and with praise. From his youthful viewpoint he admits a desire to enter *senectus*, which may be reached with merit as a result of reading classical authors: "ita ad optatam senectutem merita" (*Fam.* 1.3.4).[243] The adjective *optatus* here indicates that old age is something he desires, as with it comes wisdom beyond youthful study of eloquence, which is to be gained through a changing attitude to interpretation of classical works and philosophical matters. In 24.1, he is a man in his *senectus* writing to another old man, juxtaposing the mention of measurable time in the 'triginta annos' which have passed with the context of time applied to the human experience and the personal experience of aging. In this way, *senectus* is presented as the stage in which the most significant intellectual development is occurring.

The aging from *adolescentia* to *senectus* is accompanied by a curated maturation from a youthful enthusiasm for scholarly interest in classical expositions on the *fuga temporis* to a more mature philosophical contemplation of these ideas themselves. Letter 1.3 deals with Petrarch's concerns in young age, which focus on the study of ancient authors for the learning of eloquence and style. In letter 24.1, Petrarch recalls letter 1.3, stating that "Erat in oculis michi etas florentissima "lumenque iuvente purpureum", ut ait Maro; sed legebam apud Flaccum" (*Fam.* 24.1.2).[244] Here Petrarch explains that in his first youth, while writing his early letter to Superano, his intellect was stirred by the words of Virgil, and the work he was reading of Horace. Young age, as Petrarch had written in letter 1.3, is a time at

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[242] The stages of human life include *adolescentia,* ending at around 25 years of age, *iuventus,* from 25 to 45 years of age, *senectus*, from 45 to 70, and then *senior* after 70, with these periods referenced also in the parallel verbs, including *adolescere* and *senescere* (cf. Dante, *Convivio* 4.24).

[243] 'thus I may reach welcomed old aged deservedly with praise.'

[244] 'The most blossoming age was in my eyes, the "youthful purple shine" in Maro's words, but I was reading Horace too.'

which one must be concerned with learning eloquence from the study of authors, in fact "nichil videatur in adolescente formosius" (*Fam.* 1.3.4).[245] Yet despite being young in letter 1.3, Petrarch does not wish to read and have the capacity to cite authors merely for eloquence's sake: he testifies that "lego non ut eloquentior aut argutior sed ut melior fiam" (*Fam.* 1.3.8),[246] that he wishes to become *better* rather than more eloquent, implying a also moral value to be extracted from his readings. As we saw in the previous chapter, Petrarch's reinterpretation of Horace's C. 3.29 in a Christian moral context in the *Seniles* indicates that in old age he will achieve this desire of reading authors with an eye to becoming *better* rather than simply more eloquent. However, 'melior' in itself is quite an ambiguous word: better in what sense? The implication is one of leading a more moral and virtuous life, however the deliberate ambiguity suggests that this is not to be his sole purpose in old age.

In letter 1.3, however, Petrarch presents his youthful state as preventing him from yet achieving philosophical contemplation of ideas, as he recalls in 24.1. At the end of letter 1.3, he expresses a wish to strive achieve this more mature attitude to the contemplation of ideas, quoting a couplet which he attributes to Virgil:

> collige, virgo, rosas dum flos novus et nova pubes,
> et memor esto aevum sic properare tuum.[247] (*Fam.* 1.3.10)

The couplet has a 'carpe diem' attitude, ordering the maiden to collect flowers while she is still young, being mindful of how life is rushing onwards. He notes that Virgil's comment is surprisingly astute, given his youthful age, indicating that a man in his youth should be usually concerned more with eloquence of expression, rather than wisdom itself. Petrarch himself, however, notes that his youthful age prevents him from fully contemplating the implications of the concept as expressed by Virgil: "et quamvis nondum plene possim, cogito tamen ut possum, et in dies ut profundius possim, nitor" (*Fam.* 1.3.11).[248] He expresses a wish to strive for the ability to reflect upon the philosophical implications of the ideas, which his youthful intellect does not yet have the capacity to completely understand. There is however a of hint of doubt about whether this level of intellectual contemplation is something that he can achieve at this point in the fictional biography: he suggests that his younger self was far from the finished intellectual product, thereby setting the stage for the establishing a narrative of self-improvement.

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[245] 'Nothing appears more becoming in adolescence.'

[246] 'I read not that I may become more eloquent or more astute, but so that I may become better.'

[247] 'Collect, maiden, roses while the buds are new and you are still fresh and young, and be mindful of that your life rushes away quickly.' This citation is now more commonly attributed to Ausonius.

[248] 'And although I am not yet able to contemplate them fully, every day I strive so that I may be able to contemplate them more deeply'.

In letter 24.1, Petrarch recalls the intellectual activities of his younger self, claiming that in his youth he was concerned with the study of language and style, a recollection which serves to highlight the changed focus as he enters *senectus* to contemplating the substance of ideas. In this letter, he discusses his youthful study of classical works, in particular concerning the *fuga temporis*, stating that his annotations on his manuscripts indicate his priorities at that youthful time: "libelli indicant qui michi illius temporis supersunt et signa mee manus talibus presertim affixa sententiis" (*Fam.* 24.1.8).[249] This is a reference to the annotations made as an "adolescens quanto his interlegendis ardore flagraverim" (ibid.), as a youth inflamed with burning desire. *Postille* to which Petrarch is referring are located in the *Virgilio Ambrosiano*: next to the line "Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus" (Virgil, *Georgics* 3.284),[250] Petrarch cites a letter from Seneca to Lucilius (*ad Lucilium,* 108.25), which discusses the use of the verb *fugit* in the context "de celeritate temporum", of the speed of time, as a specifically Virgilian technique.[251] Seneca's letter (*ad Lucilium*, 108) cites the three same quotes of Virgil that Petrarch does in his letter to Phillipe, drawing attention to the interpretative features it is necessary to tackle if a man is to become a scholar.[252] According to Seneca, it is not enough to interpret the line "Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus" in the sense of time always slipping away, moving constantly forwards and taking man with it, but rather to pay attention to Virgil's specific use of 'fugit' as a stylistic device used to describe the swiftness of time's passage.[253]

This same letter of Seneca is also cited by Petrarch on the *Virgilio Ambrosiano* next to the a further citation from the third Georgic, also cited in *Familiares* 24.1, "Optima queque dies miseris mortalibus evi / Prima fugit, subeunt morbi, tristisque senectus, / Et labor et dure rapit inclementia mortis" (*Georgics* 3.66-68, cited from *Fam.* 24.1),[254] again drawing attention to the stylistic devices used by Virgil.[255] These youthful annotations to which Petrarch refers, apparently confirm that in his

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[249] 'my books indicate what was predominant at that time, especially my marginal notations fixed next to certain passages.'

[250] 'But meanwhile time flees, irrecoverable time flees.'

[251] Seneca, Letter to Lucilius 108.24, which is cited in a Petrarchan annotation on the *Virgilio Ambrosiano* next to Georgics 3.284, "Sed fugit interea, fugit inreparabile tempus", the line also cited here in the *Familiares* 24.1.5.

[252] The three citations given are from *Georgics* 3.66–68; *Aeneid.* 10.467–8; *Georgics* 3.284.

[253] Seneca, *ad Lucilium* 108.25. "'Numquam Vergilius' inquit 'dies dicit ire, sed fugere, quod currendi genus concitatissimum est, et optimos quosque primos rapi: quid ergo cessamus nos ipsi concitare, ut velocitatem rapidissimae rei possimus aequare? Meliora praetervolant, deteriora succedunt.'" 'He [the philosopher] says: "Virgil never says time [dies] goes, but time flies, because it is the swiftest type of movement, and the best things are always first to be seized: why, then, do we cease to rouse ourselves, so that we may be able to keep pace with the swiftest of things? The better things fly past and the worse things replace them.'

[254] 'The best days of life are those which flee first for miserable mortals, disease and sad old age creep up, and suffering, and the cruelties of bitter death snatch [us] away.'

[255] Seneca, in the section of the letter cited by Petrarch on the *Virgilio Ambrosiano*, inquires "Quare optima?", asking why Virgil uses the term 'the best' days for the 'first' days, and immediately answers "quia quod restat incertum est", because what remains is uncertain. Seneca interprets these verses as ensuring that youth is spent at

youth he was concerned with learning the art of language and style, rather than considering the implications of the ideas. In letter 24.1, Petrarch highlights that this 'plucking' of quotes from classical texts is a youthful preoccupation rather than mature one: "puerile potiusquam senile studium "flosculos" decerpere" (*Fam.* 24.1.8).[256] However, as exhibited in the *Seniles*, this practice is something that he evidently continues doing into his old age, suggesting that Petrarch's representation of reusing classical quotes as a purely youthful activity is to serve a greater narrative purpose, rather than to reflect reality. Indeed, the recollection of his youthful scholarly activities, serves to highlight that we are about to observe a change in intellectual priority, delineated through a carefully crafted 'then' versus 'now' model.

Having outlined the 'then' of this past self and his youthful practices in which he was engaged during the time in which letter 1.3 was penned, letter 24.1 presents through its intense focus on the *fuga temporis* the result of this study of classical authors through the eyes of an aged and matured man, who is now focusing on contemplating the philosophical as opposed to the stylistic. Dotti (1978, pp. 29–30) has emphasised the importance of Petrarch's citations of classical authors in this letter, "agli Orazio e ai Virgilio, che non a caso sono constantemente richiamati come modelli ed esempi", however the mode of interaction with these classical citations has now changed, as Petrarch indicates that he is now using them not in the capacity of learning eloquence and language, but rather to consider the implication of the *fuga temporis* for his own moral state. Petrarch will in his letter to Horace confess that it was the study of this particular that instigated his focus on time's flight, yet in letter 24.1 he indicates that this preoccupation is further intensifying, as he states "Nimis apud Flaccum moror" (*Fam.* 24.1.6),[257] and emphasises that also Virgil himself was barely able to draw adequate attention to the motif: "vix satis fugam temporis exprimere posse videbatur irreparabilem iacturam, nisi sepius repetendo" (*Fam.* 24.1.5).[258] However, it is not just that Petrarch's focus on the passage of time is intensifying, but also that the nature of his preoccupation with it is changing, or at least that is how he is presenting it.

That Petrarch is now claiming to be moving towards the capacity for a more mature contemplation of substance rather than of style is suggested when he now states that he was approaching the citations for the moral value extracted for his own state: "ex quibus eliciebam et supra etatem ruminabam presentem futurumque illico statum meum" (*Fam.* 24.1.8).[259] In letter 1.3 he had expressed

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work, exercising body and mind before they succumb to the whims of time, and man can only assign a value to days which have happened, not those which are yet to come, and the value of which is not yet quantifiable.

[256] 'childish rather than mature to pluck little flowers.'

[257] 'I shall not stop myself with Horace.'

[258] 'Scarcely did he appear able to express adequately the flight of time and its inevitable pursuit, unless by repeating it very often.'

[259] 'My writings indicate those things which survive from that time, and my marginalia attached to certain passages, from which I would elicit thoughts and ruminate in that place upon both the present and future state of my age.'

an attempt to consider the sentiments expressed by classical authors regarding the passage of time, but his youthful aspect prevented him from truly contemplating the ideas.[260] However, after the passage of 30 years, and his own entry into *senectus,* he is now capable of extrapolating and ruminating upon the various aspects of the motif apply it to his own state of existence:

> misere scilicet vite huius angustias, brevitatem velocitatem festinationem lapsum cursum volatum occultasque fallacias, tempus irreparabile, caducum et mutabilem vite florem, rosei oris fluxum decus, irrediture iuventutis effrenem fugam et tacite obrepentis insidias senectutis; ad extremum rugas et morbos et tristitiam et laborem et indomite mortis inclementiam implacabilemque duritiem.[261]
>
> (*Fam.* 24.1.9)

Taddeo (1982, p. 56) suggests that this extract has a "maggiore tensione espressiva (…), imessa in un'ampia, eloquente modulazione del tema esistenziale". In this list, Petrarch draws out the core parts of the motif, presenting an intensifying crescendo as time's flight moves him ever closer to death. Upon entering "optatam senectutem" (*Fam.* 1.3.4),[262] he presents his intellect as unclouded, realising the implications of the passage of time for his own state. This deliberate heightening of the rhetoric, which brings together all the various aspects of the *fuga temporis* in one place, indicates that Petrarch is representing himself as growing more concerned with the preoccupation around the passage of time. However, this is achieved not through the statement of any new ideas, as such, but rather through the use of language to amplify these concerns.

In this way, the pair of letters 1.3 and 24.1 demonstrate the imposition of a macro-textual narrative structure to the collection, designed for the purpose of not only highlighting the importance of the passage of time, but also Petrarch's changing intellectual attitude towards it. As the letter to Philippe is the only letter of Book 24 not to be dedicated to a classical author, Petrarch indicates the singular importance of the motif of the *fuga temporis* in relation to his treatment of literary posterity. This moment of realisation in 24.1 of the importance of time's flight and the need to ruminate on it for the security of one's own present and future state is also central to the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, which sees in its various stages an evolving focus upon the passage of time. Bettarini (2005, p. 1549) in her commentary notes the parallel in the classical modelling between *Familiares* 24.1 and *Rvf* 355, a

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[260] However, he does attempt to draw attention to the ideas, despite his as of yet undeveloped intellectual powers to tackle the substance of them: "Notabam certa fide non verborum faleras sed res ipsas" (*Fam.* 24.1.9). 'I was noting with certain trust not the skills of the words, but the ideas themselves'.

[261] 'The miseries of this short life, its brevity, speed, hurrying, slipping, rushing, flying and hidden deceits, irrecoverable time, the perishable and changeable flower of life, the changing beauty of a rosy face, the unbridled flight of unreturning youth and the deceits of the silently stealthy old age; finally, the wrinkles, diseases and sadness and toil and the implacable harshness and cruelty of unconquerable death.'

[262] 'desired old age.'

component which focuses explicitly on the passage of time. *Rvf* 355 was added into the Pre-Malatesta form between 1369 and 1372, in the years shortly after the systemisation of the *Familiares* and the alleged date of composition of the letter to Philippe, though the exact date of the sonnet's composition is unknown. In the Malatesta and the Queriniana forms of the *Rvf*, this sonnet is the final poem before the Prayer to the Virgin, meaning it sets the narrative tone leading into the prayer.[263]

As letter 24.1 of the *Familiares* indicates a moment of realisation triggered by entry into old age and the intellectual maturation, Bettarini (2005, p. 1549) has commented that *Rvf* 355 likewise exhibits "una presa di coscienza", with the intention of refocusing Petrarch's view on that which is able to endure beyond temporal scope, that is beyond material and transient delights and passions. This sonnet describes the poet's realisation of the deceitful nature of time, and he chastises himself for keeping his eyes fixed on mortal distractions, and therein missing the opportunity to turn himself towards his salvation in heaven. As Petrarch had presented letter 24.1 as reflecting an epiphany in "video nunc tantam et tam rapidam vite fugam" (*Fam*. 24.1.12),[264] so does the sonnet suggest a parallel realisation when Petrarch states "ora *ab experto* vostre frodi intendo" (*Rvf* 355, 4). Here, Petrarch claims he has fully begun to understand the ramifications of time's flight, as 'ora' implies a new-found realisation of the importance of the passage of time for his own state, which in this sonnet leads to the self-chastisement of the poet who has kept his eyes fixed on exterior worldly delights rather than the self within. The unique Latin intrusion in the *Rvf* of 'ab experto' indicates that his own unique experience which has led to his epiphany has occurred in the introspective process in the Latin letters, with the intellectual exploration then central to the creative and editorial processes occurring in the *Rvf*.

Rvf 355 indicates an altered philosophy through the conception of intellectual development in light of the *fuga temporis*. R. A. Greene (1991, p. 50) has suggested that Petrarch's ideas of temporality in the *Rvf* are expressed in a narrative sense of 'then and now', as each present poem looks back to the past: he asserts that Petrarch uses "each *now* to name the present as a traceable extension of that visible past". This is equally applicable to the epistolary, as 24.1 serves as an extension of 1.3, drawn into a frame for the collection through the 'then' versus 'now' model, with ideas of temporality serving to delineate an altered sense of selfhood. This parallel in content between a topographically significant component opening the final book of the *Familiares* and the penultimate component of the *Rvf* in the Malatesta and Queriniana forms indicates that Petrarch was attempting to reproduce the macro-textual aspect of staging a journey of intellectual progression also in the *Rvf*. However, concluding the narrative

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[263] However, the uncertain nature of the 'supplements' on the BML Pl. 41. 17 and the note next to *Rvf* 366 stating it should be placed at the end of the sequence prevent us from knowing definitively whether this was intended at the time.

[264] 'Now I see how great and so rapid the flight of life is'.

of the *Rvf* in the Malatesta and Queriniana forms, *Rvf* 355 presents a moment of realisation, but not one of reform, suggesting continued stasis at the point.

3.2.3 The *Seniles*: moving towards introspection and virtue

With *Rvf* 355 deemed ultimately unfit to conclude the *Rvf*, Petrarch indicates that this moment of realisation of time's passage is not the terminus in the fictionalised presentation of the self, but that the moral development is to continue. As the intellectual arc of the *Familiares* feeds into a pre-final form of the *Rvf*, so does the self-exploration of the *Seniles* feed into the revisions to the closing sequence in Petrarch's final amendments to the work. The deeply introspective nature of the *Seniles* outlines Petrarch's increasing preoccupation with moral betterment and virtuous behaviour in the light of his own impending mortality. Dotti (1978, p. 124) has suggested that "è nelle *Senili* che va cercato il risultato artistico più maturo di questo cammino petrarchesco verso l'introspezione", and in Book 1 of the *Seniles* there is a stronger sense of this mature introspection than at the close of the *Familiares*, as the author's concerns are brought into sharper relief due to his own aging aspect. Likewise, Vecchi Galli (2012, p. 1244) has more recently agreed that in comparison to the *Familiares*, there is in the *Seniles* the accentuation of "i toni riflessivi, con la meditazione sul fluire del tempo e l'insensatezza delle vicende umane, sulla necessità di migliorarsi interiormente, attraverso lo studio e una continua vigilianza su se stessi". The intensifying focus on Petrarch's own moral state in the *Seniles* in this way betrays a drive to self-improvement through literary self-examination, which may be traced not just to individual letters but also in terms of the macrostructural narrative which reveals that the introspective process results in the direction of the soul towards virtue, not just in Petrarch's life, but also in his works.

The drive to summary and closure in the *Seniles* as suggested by Ascoli is propelled by a sense of moral crisis induced as early as Book 1, the letters of which Ascoli (2015, p. 125) has noted contain a strong thematic coherence and "focuses intently on death and old age". Petrarch had already emphasised his own increasing rumination on the various manifestations and implications of the flight of time in *Familiares* 24.1, claiming to have moved beyond youthful concerns of scholarship, towards more mature contemplation of the substance of the ideas. This need for more erudite philosophical contemplation of ideas as opposed to study of language and eloquence is also in retrospect highlighted in *Seniles* 1.3: "levis est enim solius lingue disciplina, philosophandum nobis et rebus est, si re ispa salvi esse cupimus" (*Sen.* 1.3.33).[265] Here Petrarch suggests that the study of language is lacking seriousness, literally 'light', as opposed to the weightier and more consequential ideas of philosophy

[265] 'The study of language alone is inconsequent for us, we must be philosophical in deeds if we desire to be saved.'

itself. He explicitly links philosophy with salvation, as in order to achieve salvation one must concentrate on substance rather than study of mere language or style.

The first letter of the *Seniles* makes use of internal chronological markers to create a structural parallel with the first letter of the *Familiares*, as Petrarch refers back to the inception of the *Familiares* and recalls his proemial letter to 'Socrates' lamenting the year 1348 which had deprived him of many friends. Bernardo notes this as a means of adding artistic concerns into the parallel structuring of both epistolary collections: as the *Familiares* opens with "a reference to loss of friends in the plague of 1348, in the same way *Sen*. 1.1 opens with a similar reference to the loss of friends, particularly Socrates himself, in the current plague" (Bernardo, 2005, p. xvii). This backward glance which specifically refers to time elapsed between the years of 1348 and 1361 does not only provide structural coherence between the two collections, but also highlights a changing intellectual focus. With thirteen years having passed, and the deaths of his friends brought in closer proximity due to his own aging self, the opening letter of the *Seniles* takes a more melancholic tone. Petrarch recalls his laments to Socrates of the year 1348, however noting that this sense of loss has now intensified as he commences this new collection: "Quid nunc primo et sexagesimo faciam anno, qui cum cetera ornamenta ferme omnia, tum id quod carissimum unicumque habui, ipsum michi Socratem eripuit?" (*Sen*. 1.1.2).[266] Petrarch himself has aged, but his companions and friends have fallen to the vices of time, and in this way the sense of loss has become more acute, more personal. In fact, Petrarch states that the year 1361 has surpassed all other years in terms of the sadness and lamentation: "annus hic pestilens (…) non equavit modo, sed vicit (…) ceteras" (*Sen*. 1.1.3).[267] The burden of human mortality is increasingly visible in this letter, made more acute by his advancing years which rip his nearest and dearest from him.

This theme of human mortality, subject to the vicissitudes of time, is intensified throughout the first book, which increasingly constructs a sense of moral crisis, as in old-age Petrarch begins to keenly feel the loss of friends. Time's passage is no longer abstract, an object of philosophising, but its effects are real and present. In letter 1.3 to Francesco Nelli, an expression of appreciation for his condolences on the death of his son, Petrarch focuses on two principal thoughts: the insecurity of the future given the frailty of man's life, and the wretchedness of old age dragged out in the constant loss of friends. Dotti (1978, p. 40) has argued that "la tematica morale delle *Senili* si fa più commossa e convincente proprio in quanto, come alla fine di un'esistenza, il "filosofo" si incontra più spesso con l'"uomo"", and the increasing overlap between man and philosopher is particularly pointed in how Petrarch laments the loss of his friends and his lonely existence in old age throughout the *Seniles*. The loss of Petrarch's

[266] 'What shall I now do in the sixty first year of this century which has snatched away nearly every other treasure I had, and then that which was most dear to me, Socrates himself?'

[267] 'This year of plague has not only equalled, but defeated the rest.'

friends leaves him lonely, “ecce iam vie fessus et prope iam solus” (*Sen*. 1.3.20),[268] feeding into the exhaustion he feels as the metaphorical road of life becomes tiresome to him. These losses induce concern about his own fortune, “Nec ulla michi adversus fortunam meam gravior querela est quam quod amicis ante diem ablatis” (*Sen*. 1.3.24),[269] with the reference to his friends being taken away “ante diem”, suggesting the unpredictable nature of time and human mortality. The second idea central to this letter is the recognition that man has no power in deciding the time allotted to himself, which is in God’s hands. When referring to both his deceased son and to ‘Socrates’, Petrarch acknowledges “Utrique suum vite tempus impletum: nostra nobis implenda sunt sequendique quos premisimus” (*Sen*. 1.3.33).[270] Despite their early deaths, their stay on Earth was considered completed, having returned to their Maker at His will, as “qui dedit abstulit” (*Sen*. 1.3.30).[271] Man’s stay on Earth is conditional on the grace of God, who governs all beings, and may not be altered by any mortal action or desire and, indeed, in *Rvf* 362 Petrarch is informed that his stay on Earth is already determined: “è ben fermo il tuo destino” (*Rvf* 362, 12). Santagata (2004, p. 1402) has suggested that “destino” refers “alla beatitudine”, but Petrarch’s more general reference to his destiny as opposed to specifically his salvation indicates that this could include more than just a Christian connotation, referring also to his earthly literary fame as generated by his literary efforts in the *Rvf* and his other works.

In letter 1.3 of the *Familiares*, Petrarch had highlighted his desire to read classical authors so that he ultimately might become *better:* “lego non ut eloquentior aut argutior sed ut melior fiam” (*Fam*. 1.3.8).[272] Whereas his youthful self had focused on eloquence and language, the reuse of classical citations in the *Seniles* demonstrates a changing attitude towards interacting with source texts. In *Seniles* 1.5 he cites from Virgil’s *Aeneid* Book 10, “stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreparabile tempus / omnibus est vite, sed famam extendere factis / hoc virtutis opus?” (*Aeneid* 10, 467–469, quoted in *Sen.* 1.5.84). These lines had been similarly cited in *Familiares* 24.1, as part of a list of citations from classical authors to highlight the importance assigned to the flight of time and to emphasise the need to ruminate its consequences. However, in *Sen.* 1.5, Petrarch after deploying this same citation clarifies that “Factis, inquam, non tenuem fame sonum aucupantibus, sed virtutem ipsam, que necessario e se vere glorie umbram iacit” (*Sen*. 1.5.84).[273] Here, Petrarch modifies Virgil’s statement, suggesting that he has moved away from desiring fame achieved through deeds, which Virgil indicates is man’s route to glory and

[268] ‘Now, look [I am] tired of the road and almost alone’.

[269] ‘Nor is there any other more serious complaint against my fortune than that my friends were carried off before their time’.

[270] ‘The span of life was completed for them both: ours is yet to be completed, following those we have sent ahead.’

[271] ‘He who gave takes away’.

[272] ‘I read not that I may become more eloquent or more astute, but so that I may become better.’

[273] ‘Through deeds, I say, that seek not the weak sound of fame, but virtue itself, which by necessity casts the shadow of true glory.’

virtue, but rather Petrarch seeks "virtutem ipsam", virtue itself. To achieve the desired literary glory, then, must a narrative of virtue be imposed on the self which is presented to posterity.

In this way, the moral crisis induced by the proximity of human mortality drives an intensifying search for virtue. From letter 1.5, Petrarch shows early indications that he will increasingly concern himself with a dual drive to closure, in which he seeks to reform his life in a virtuous manner, and also to bring his literary projects to a satisfactory conclusion, in line with his bettered self. Augustinus in the *Secretum*, with his citation of Horace's *Odes* as ammunition, had already suggested the importance 'de morte cogitare', to meditate on death (*Secr*. 3.17.6).[274] This urgency of spiritual reformation to prepare for death is hinted at in 1.5, where Petrarch states that he must reform his life in order to remove fear of death: "quod, ut trahi possit, vitari utique nisi virtutis et misericordie ope non potest, sed nec trahi quidem. Non mors itaque metuenda, que frustra metuitur, sed corrigenda vita est, que res una ne mors sit formidolosa prestabit" (*Sen*. 1.5.69–70).[275] One must correct their life, as this is the only way to prevent that death will be feared, and Petrarch continues that it is necessary to have "familiaritas", familiarity, with not just the "nomen", name, of death, but also with the "rei ipsius extimatio at imago", the contemplation and image of death itself. This focus on the contemplation of death as a means of spurring the self to serve out the remainder of life virtuously is strengthened in the final letter of Book 1, to Francesco Bruni. There, Petrarch once more emphasises the importance of substance over style:

> Sane supervacua disceptatio verbi est, ubi de re convenit. Loquendi morem preferat quisque quem volet, dum meminerit diem hanc vicinam vel stantem adeundam magno animo vel ad nos venientem festinantemque pari animo expectandam. [276]
>
> (*Sen.* 1.7.61–62)

He claims that debate should not be about the words themselves or the manner of expression, but rather the substance of the ideas, representing himself as moving away from focusing on youthful concerns to

[274] Augustine himself in the *Confessions* (6.11.19) indicates the importance of preparing the soul for death: 'Pereant omnia et dimittamus haec vana et inania: conferamus nos ad solam inquisitionem veritatis. vita misera est, mors incerta est. subito obrepat: quomodo hinc exibimus? et ubi nobis discenda sunt quae hic neglexiumus? ac non potius huius neglegentiae supplicia luenda? quid si mors ipsa omnem curam cum sensu amputabit et finiet?'. 'Everything perishes, may we dismiss these vain and empty things: may we concern ourselves solely with the discovery of the truth. Life is miserable, death is uncertain. If it suddenly creeps up, in what state shall we depart? And where shall we learn what we have here neglected? And should we not pay the penalty for this neglect? What if death cuts off every care along with sense and ends all?'

[275] 'This may be postponed, but it may not be avoided except with the help of virtue and mercy, indeed it may not be postponed. It is not death therefore that must be feared, which is feared in vain, but life must be reformed, which alone will prevent that death is to be feared.'

[276] 'Surely it is futile to argue about the words when there is agreement about the substance. Let each man choose the way of speaking he likes, provided he remembers that the day is near; if it is set, we must go to it with courage, and, if it is approaching and hastening towards us, we must await it with equanimity.'

more mature philosophising ones. This sets the stage for the intellectual maturation of the *Seniles* more widely, as Petrarch is to present his concerns as becoming more philosophical in old age.

The imperative to serve out the remainder of life in a moral manner, presented in the drive to live a virtuous life with the aid of God, intensifies in Book 8 of the *Seniles*, a book which reflects Petrarch's careful positioning of his ideals of selfhood in relation to the human experience. Ascoli (2015, p. 131) has pointed towards Book 8 as a book which addresses the motif of the *fuga temporis*, as "its thematic burden of confronting one's mortality and reflecting back over one's life is reinforced by a number of other letters in book VIII, especially 3, 4, and 5." Yet the importance of Book 8 lies in not just its focus on the passage of time, which is the dominant theme, but also Petrarch's casting of his literary self as a reference point in history and time, which this thesis argues is sought in the *Rvf* through the experimentation with existing literary models. The book is bookended by two letters to Giovanni Boccaccio – a recipient who throughout the *Seniles* increasingly becomes a reference point for Petrarch's own life, as many of his friends succumb to death, and Boccaccio becomes one of his few remaining correspondents.[277] Representing a calendar year of Petrarch's life, the book shows the individual experience of the self as is its own reference point in time and collective history. Petrarch in this way reaffirms his individuality in respect of the human experience, as well as presenting the mutability of time and the individual's own subjective experience within it as a catalyst for his changing spiritual compass.

Both 8.1 and 8.8, the bookend letters, focus on the theme of human mortality: the first on what is called the critical time in life, as Petrarch approaches his 63rd birthday, and the last on his 64th birthday, having survived the 63rd year of life. In the first letter, 8.1, Petrarch expresses his apprehensions about entering the 63rd year of life, referring to it as "ille horrendus tertius et sexagesimus". He explains that this year is a climacteric one, stating that its infamy as a bringer of loss, death and disease was noted by even the Greeks and the Egyptians, who viewed the 63rd year with disdain. In doing so he sets his own individual experience in the context of history. While acknowledging at the start of the letter that physical aging does not always correlate with intellectual, and that authors have assigned various ages to the entrance into *senectus*,[278] Petrarch presents himself as being struck with a sense of intense distress at his own having reached this notorious year which is the downfall of so many in old age, and fears for his own life. However, in the face of his potential impending mortality, he turns his hope to God: "Ego igitur ista non metuo, illi fidens qui me ignarum in hanc vitam induxit" (*Sen.* 8.1.52).[279] Uncertainty around the end of one's life necessitates faith placed in God, rather than transient mortal pleasures, and

[277] For more on Petrarch and Boccaccio see Barański (2020); Candido (2018); Zak (2015a).

[278] Petrarch references that Cicero places it at 46, others place it at 50 and Augustine places it at 60.

[279] 'I therefore do not fear these things, having faith in Him who brought me unknowing into this life.'

this is reflected in the concluding word of *Rvf* 365, "speranza" (*Rvf* 365, 14), which is at the close of the sequence to be placed in God.

In the final letter of the book, 8.8, Petrarch recalls letter 8.1. In this letter he presents an altered perspective on this now-reached age of the 63rd year, which, as he now concludes, had ill-founded infamy, and had in fact passed joyfully for him. In this way, his own individual experience is elevated above the collective trends of history, emphasising the importance of the individual consciousness above the collective, and that his ultimate worldview is to highlight the importance of the self. His concerns are now focusing on making the most appropriate use of his time left in the optimal spiritual state, as he closes the letter with a prayer to God, that he might pass the time remaining to him not merely with his friends, but "multo maxime animarum nostrarum felicissimo statu" (*Sen.* 8.8.12).[280] The impermanent nature of time must be counteracted by the virtue, that is carrying out one's moral obligations to God.

However, despite his anxiety about his 63rd birthday, Petrarch presents old age as the most profitable time of life, where the most substantial intellectual growth is occurring, as those who "animus quoque senuerint" (*Sen.* 8.2.41),[281] are the most suited to pass judgement on every age. In letter 8.2 there is a precise reference made by Petrarch to the link between aging and intellectual development which contributes towards a changing attitude to mortal passions. Petrarch suggests that his new-found 'freedom' from youthful love must be attributed not simply to the grace of God, but also to *senectus* itself:

> Tibi uni post Deum tribuo quod preduris compedibus et tristi carcere relaxatus liber tanem meique iuris esse incipio. Sera quidem, fateor, at quo serior eo gratior libertas. Hec perdita mestam michi iuventutem fecit, hec reddita senectutem letam facit.[282]
>
> (*Sen.* 8.2.100–102)

Petrarch directly addresses old age, 'tibi uni', claiming that after God it is the thing which frees man from the prison of mortality and grants him mastery over his own self. This suggests that the grace of God alone was not enough for Petrarch to gain his freedom from his youthful passions and the mortal prison, but rather the process of aging and the accompanying intellectual evolution was necessary to achieve the desired moral transformation. This is drawn into sharper relief through Petrarch's

[280] 'above all in the happiest state of our souls.'

[281] 'have grown old in their souls'.

[282] 'To you alone, after God, am I grateful because you release me from my heavy shackles and from my gloomy prison, allowing me at length to begin feeling free, my own master. My freedom comes late, I confess, but the later, the more welcome. Its loss made my youth sad, its recovery makes my old age joyful.'

recollection of his adolescence, making use once more of the 'then' versus 'now' model to emphasise the intellectual change:

> Adolescentiam michi iuventamque curis gravem ac subtristem fuisse notum est, quippe pugnantibus inter se anime partibus et dissensione perpetua ac civilibus velut bellis vite statum pacemque turbantibus. Magnarum opum valde avidus nunquam fui, sed mediocritatem, quam amare iam didici, nondum ferre didiceram et iuvenilibus aliis urebar ardoribus atque ipse michi pondus et labor et supplicium factus eram, ut nil penitus voto meo magis adversum sit quam redire, etsi liceat, ad illas animi tempestates unde evasisse salva puppe me gaudeo et divinum munus agnosco.[283]
>
> (*Sen.* 8.2.106–107)

As opposed to the liberty gained through the grace of God and the entrance into *senectus*, Petrarch characterises his youth as one of war, with "pugnantibus inter se anime partibus". Evoking the structurally significant components of *Rvf* 264 and 360, which in poetic form explore the conflict between the warring parts of the self, Petrarch explains that the means of resolving the internal conflict are not just faith placed in God, but also entry into old age. Yet given the revisions to the narrative of the *Rvf* at the end of his life, putting an end to this internal conflict clearly remains a project rather than achieved, indicating the projection of a neat biography which does not reflect reality. This suggests that the parallel project of the *Rvf* will also lay importance on presenting the internal war as one of youth, with the aging process acting to stabilise the self and drive it towards moral change.

That entrance into old age is central to resolving the interior conflict of the *Rvf* in tandem with the grace of God is reflected in the 'definitive' closing sequence of the *Rvf*, whereby the pair of sonnets *Rvf* 361 and 362 present the physical and spiritual aspects of the *mutatio vitae* respectively, indicating that the entry into *senectus* must precede the spiritual redirection to virtue in Petrarch's idealised biographical arc. *Rvf* 361 describes the poet awaking from his long sleep upon viewing his aging aspect in the mirror and realising the swiftness of life's passage. *Rvf* 362 pairs the physical maturation with the spiritual, in a vision of Laura where she leads him to God, thus reinstating the appropriate hierarchy where Laura is viewed in God's light, with Him as terminus of the journey. Bettarini (2005, p. 1595) has linked *Rvf* 362 to letter 8.2 of the *Seniles*, through the praise of the *veneranda senectus* with which Laura approaches Petrarch. Laura explains that "Amico, or t'am'io et or t'onoro / perch'à' i costumi varïati, e 'l pelo" (*Rvf* 362, 7–8), indicating that the parallel intellectual and moral development which

[283] 'It is well known that my adolescence and youth were saddened and laden with cares, for parts of my soul were at odds with each other and in continual discord; and in a state of civil war, so to speak, they would upset my life and my peace. I never longed for great wealth; I had already learned to love moderation, but not yet to endure it; and I burned with other youthful fires, and became a burden, a toil, a punishment to myself so that absolutely nothing is further from my wishes than to return, even if I could, to those tempests of the spirit, from which I rejoice to have escaped with sound keel – and I recognise the favour of God in this.'

has occurred alongside the aging process is now worthy of respect, permitting her to lead Petrarch to her Maker. Letter 8.2 elaborates that it is this old age, with the order that it imposes, operating in tandem with God's grace which allows the soul to direct itself towards virtue.

Exploring the connection between old age and intellectual development which allows for freedom from passions, Petrarch links *senectus* with *ratio,* reason, indicating that man's rational faculties are not fully developed until old age. He suggests that the cause of old age's ability to restore and enjoy 'libertas', freedom, is that with time the power of reason grows, and restrains man growing out of his "annos libidinum amicos" (*Sen*. 8.2.110), years propitious to lustful passions. Reason alone was not enough to conquer his youthful passions, but rather needed the assistance the experience of a man who has been aged by time: "quosque in me ratio, quoniam sola non poterat, postquam tempore adiuta compescuit" (*Sen*. 8.2.111).[284] The development of man's rational faculties through aging is suggested as key to this process, indicating that growing old tempers the passions and only in old age can man truly master reason and his rational capacity. This indicates that failure of reason to pronounce in the dichotomy of *Rvf* 360 is that reason alone cannot resolve the dilemma, but there is also needed a man aged not just in appearance but in his soul, and indeed Petrarch emphasises that old age may be a disease of the body, but is the health of the soul, highlighting the disparity between the two: "ut dicatur senectus morbus corporis sanitasque anime" (*Sen*. 8.2.83).[285] To dispel the passions of the *giovenile errore* (*Rvf* 1, 4) and restore the health of the soul, man cannot rely on reason and study alone, but necessary is the wisdom gained from old age and the intellectual development which occurs upon entering *senectus*.

In Book 17 of the *Seniles*, the penultimate book before the unfinished Letter to Posterity, there is both a drive to draw together the collection into a cohesive literary model, as well as an attempt to cast the literary self in light of Petrarch's literary contemporaries. All four letters of Book 17 are addressed to Boccaccio, who is himself central to Petrarch's self-casting amongst the Italian literary community and as an author: Petrarch in general seems to view Boccaccio in the role of disciple. The interlocutions between the two as presented in Petrarch's letters indicates that Petrarch was carefully considering his place in the literary tradition: Mazzotta (2018, p. 283) has suggested that Boccaccio perceived Petrarch as a thinker who pondered the "power of the individual consciousness to confront and shape the world in which he is situated." This shaping of history according to one's subjective experience is however not just how that consciousness perceives reality, but how that version of reality is presented for the public and to posterity.

[284] 'These [passions] which reason alone was not able to dispel, was able to do so with the help of time.'

[285] 'As it is said, old age is a disease of the body, but a health of the soul.'

Ascoli (2015, p. 133) has suggested that in Book 17, the penultimate book of the collection, the "drive to summary and closure appears in many ways, including overt recalls of earlier letters". In the opening letter of the *Seniles* it is acknowledged that only death will put an end to Petrarch's letter writing,[286] and as death approaches, the increasing preoccupation with the passage of time and human mortality renews in Petrarch both the desire to live out his remaining years in virtue as well as an increasing sense of urgency to bring to a conclusion his literary works. As Ascoli (2015, p. 132) suggests, "Book XVII deliberately presents itself as the culmination of most of the principal themes and problems of the *Seniles* and even the *Familiares*", and the desire to tie up the loose ends to curate a finalised and cohesive collection bound by macrotextual connections is increasingly urgent in Book 17: in letter 17.4, Petrarch concludes saying "Valete amici, valete epistole" (*Sen*. 17.4.18),[287] in a conscious reference to literary closure before his Letter to Posterity.[288] The letters of Book 17 reveal that Petrarch represented his old age not as a time to be ceasing his literary activity, but rather as a reason to be continuing it. His literary efforts comprise of two strands: the establishment of virtue, and the attempt to revive the classical modes.

Letter 17.2 is written as a reply to Boccaccio, who seemingly complained to Petrarch about his financial woes, and advised Petrarch to slow down his pace in later life. In his reply, Petrarch emphasises the superiority of spiritual concerns over the temporal in response to Boccaccio's financial worries, and reiterates his determination to attend to his works with greater vigour than ever. The necessity to take a virtuous turn at the close of life and conclude literary projects in line with man's moral obligations to God is mentioned in letter 17.2, when Petrarch cites Ambrose: "Beatus plane qui vel in senectute surrexit ab errore, beatus qui vel sub ictu mortis animum avertit a vitiis" (*De obitu Val.* 10).[289] Here Ambrose suggests that old age does not preclude one from reaching the virtuous path, and that it is never too late for man to turn away from vice, presenting the moral imperative to present a reformed self in time for death. This thought spurs Petrarch to be ever more concerned with utilising his remaining time appropriately, as he goes on to state: "His horumque similibus expergiscor, ut favente Deo emendem, sero licet, in me non solum quod vite defuerit, sed etiam quod scripture, quam ab initio neglexisse videri poterat fortasse consilium; nunc quid nisi senilis torpor et ignavia videretur?" (*Sen*. 17.2.44).[290] As he outlines, he is to reform what was missing not just from his life, but also his writings. In *Secretum* (*Secr*. 3.17.5), as chapter 4.1 will explore, Augustinus had emphasised that in the

[286] It is mentioned repeatedly in the first book of the *Seniles*, including letters 1.1 and 1.3.

[287] 'Farewell, dear friends. Farewell, dear letters'.

[288] On Book 17 of the *Seniles* see Berté and Rizzo (2014).

[289] 'Truly blessed is he who even in old age has risen above sin; blessed is he who even on his deathbed turns his mind away from vices'.

[290] 'With these and like thoughts I am aroused, however late, to correct with God's favour what was missing not only from my life, but also from my writings. To have been slovenly in them at first could perhaps seem deliberate, but now what would it seem but senile numbness and laziness?'

face of the swift flight of time Franciscus needed to abandon his books rather than his self.[291] However, the *Seniles* indicates that Petrarch is trying to render his literary creations compatible with the virtue that must be sought in life, rather than neglecting them entirely.

Indeed, the following letter, 17.3 demonstrates that Petrarch is not just concerned with being virtuous, but also literary pursuits, which he demonstrates can be a vehicle for virtue, rather than distracting from it. Petrarch's translation of Boccaccio's Griselda novella in 17.3, sent as proof to Boccaccio that his literary efforts are not to be hindered by old age, shows that Petrarch was focused on textual remodelling.[292] The translation of what is a vernacular text into Latin indicates that Petrarch is attempting to bring a Latinate aspect to what is a novella – a genre which is not classical by nature, bringing what he considered a superior language upon the work, indeed one which would open the text up to a wider readership in Europe. The relationship between the vernacular and Latin languages was a particular point of contention between Petrarch and Boccaccio: while typically cast in the role of disciple, Boccaccio pushed back at Petrarch about his dismissal of Dante's *Commedia*, indeed sending him a copy in 1359, the same year in which Petrarch sent Boccaccio a copy of his own vernacular efforts in the *Rvf*, then titled *Liber fragmentorum*, preserved in the Chigi manuscript. Zak (2015a, p. 144) notes that Petrarch seemed quite apathetic towards Boccaccio's Latin works, from which he never quoted.

In his revision of the Griselda story, Petrarch makes many omissions and amendments, which Zak (2015a, p. 150) has suggested have the purpose of turning "Griselda into an ultimate embodiment of his ideal of virtue", both eliminating elements which detract from her as a stoic ideal, and adding elements to accentuate her virtues. Mazzotta (2018, p. 272) has gone further in his assessment, suggesting that "the narrative becomes a metaphysical allegory of the soul's surrender to God". That it is also more spiritual than Boccaccio's original demonstrates that in parallel with the Latinate aspect, Petrarch was also imposing a narrative of virtue, thus bringing together the religious and classical strands. Albanese (1994) has argued that Petrarch's translation of the story is a reflection of his belief in the power of narrative to shape character. In doing so, Petrarch remodels Griselda's persona, showing that through the editing of the text, an improved version of a character may be presented.[293] That he revises the narrative to present a more pious and devout character, as well as the classicising of the novella form, indicates that Petrarch saw that vernacular mediums also as a potential vehicle for his

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[291] "Te ipsum derelinquere mavis, quam libellos tuos". 'You'd rather abandon yourself than your little books'.

[292] On the translation of the Griselda novella, see Mazzotta (2018); Zak (2015a); Zak (2015b); Bessi (2004); Albanese (1994).

[293] Zak (2015a, pp. 151–152), has suggested that in the final letter to Boccaccio, Petrarch represents himself as not quite living up to his stoic ideal of virtue in his praise of the more emotional Paduan response to his Griselda translation. Zak (2015b) has also suggested that the positioning of the Griselda translation within the narrative of Book 17 hints at the possible limitations of Petrarch's project in the literary culture of the time, noting the irony of Griselda's model of virtue being juxtaposed by the biographies of Boccaccio and Petrarch, who do not live up to her standard.

intellectual projects, but that they would have to be amended in line with his desire to impose both Latinity and ideals of virtue.

That the authorial self can also be remodelled in a more virtuous light in an ideal portrait for public presentation is clear in the unfinished Letter to Posterity. Whereas the final book of the *Familiares* had concluded with what Bernardo terms a "look toward antiquity", indicating a backwards glance to the past to which Petrarch owed so much for his artistic style, the final letter of the *Seniles*, the incomplete Letter to Posterity, "casts his glance towards the distant future" (Bernardo, 2005, p. xviii), and the poet's own self-presentation to posterity. This reiterates the consistent desire to present a curated and carefully managed collection to not just the present reader, but also to the future one. Zak (2015a, pp. 144–145) suggests that Petrarch may have drawn upon Boccaccio's *De vita Petracchi* (1341–42) for the composition of the letter, but that even if he did so it was to amend and revise the public image of him presented by Boccaccio. While Boccaccio had focused on Petrarch's literary achievements, Petrarch in his most overtly autobiographical self-representation amplifies instead the spiritual aspect of his life at the opening of the letter, claiming that he was misled in his adolescence, but that God had restored him to the right path.[294] He airbrushes his love for Laura, claiming that it was a "most intense but constant and honourable love", and that a "premature but expedient death extinguished the flame that was already cooling" (*Sen*. 18.1). While acknowledging that he was not yet entirely free of love for her at this point, he claims to have thrown it off completely when he was almost forty years of age. Yet clearly the internal conflict was still raging even at the time of his death, as the various revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf* show: the Letter to Posterity however shows that he wished to be seen to be more virtuous in later life than he perhaps was in reality.

Petrarch also represents himself as spurning poetry later in life, a medium he depicts as inferior to the epistolary genre. In the Letter to Posterity, he states that in his youth he was "especially inclined to moral philosophy and poetry" but abandoned poetry when he "found delight in sacred letters", which contained a "hidden sweetness, once despised" (*Sen*. 18.1). He states that in later life poetry was for "embellishment only", suggesting that he turned away from poetic mediums to the epistolary genre. Indeed in *Seniles* 5.2, Petrarch had already (falsely) stated that his vernacular compositions were a product of youth, and motivated by his concern about the lesser potential to be innovative in Latin, but due to their misuse amongst the *vulgus*, decided to devote himself to the "stilus altior Latinus" (*Sen*. 5.2.23).[295] In contrast, in his old age he represents himself as dedicating himself to his letters, praising them in *Sen*. 17.2: "omnium terrestrium delectationum ut nulla literis honestior, sic nulla diuturnior,

[294] *Sen*. 18.1. 'Adolescence misled me, youth swept me away, but old age set me right, and taught me by experience that truth I had read before: that adolescence and pleasure are vain; or rather, it was the Creator of all ages and times who set me right.' [trans. Bernardo]

[295] 'Loftier Latin style'

nulla suavior, nulla fidelior" (*Sen*. 17.2.123).[296] Yet clearly he was in his *senectus* still greatly occupied with his vernacular poetic efforts, indicating that while he sought to present himself as carrying out what he states are more virtuous literary projects in the letters, he was still concerned about the narrative and form of the *Rvf*. What Petrarch says often contradicts what he does in practice.

The macrostructure of the *Seniles* reveals an increasing preoccupation with geometric neatness and patterning in its organisation, indicating that Petrarch's concerns were not just to do with crafting a narrative of virtue, but also an idealised literary model in which to present it. Rizzo (2006, p. 11) has illustrated that the *Seniles* makes use of a larger number of organisational devices in comparison to the *Familiares*, such as "la presenza di libri composti di lettere indirizzate tutte allo stesso dedicatario" and "anche libri monotematici", as well as focusing on openings and closures: "è inoltre evidente la volontà di aprire e chiudere i singoli libri con le lettere più rilevante per importanza di destinatario, argomento e impegno della scrittura" (Rizzo, 2006, p. 11). In addition to the attention to patterning within individual books, Ascoli (2015, p. 126) notes that "Alternations between books with one or two longer letters and books with more, and generally much shorter, letters reinforces the strong sense of a structural design internal to the text and independent of chronology (or rather, since that design generally highlights the inevitable march to mortality, thematizing the chronologies it deploys), and also suggests a careful plotting of the sequence of books". As observed, Book 1 had been thematically bound by the motif of time's passage and human mortality; in Book 8, as well as the thematic coherence we see the book bound by a self-contained frame delineating a year-long account of the 63rd year of Petrarch's life; and in Book 17 all the letters are addressed to Boccaccio and look towards the theme of literature and literary closure. These formal and aesthetic aspects of organisation show that Petrarch's preoccupations were not just moral, or at least that the depiction of moral improvement should not come at the expense of literary concerns. McLaughlin (1995, p. 23) has observed that Petrarch's "imitative strategy has a coherence in practice which embraces both his Latin and his vernacular works", indicating that increasing literary preoccupations in the *Seniles*, which considers models and forms Latinate in nature, would also be reflected in the *Rvf*.

In conclusion, the *Familiares* and *Seniles*, taken together as a "mega-macro-text" (Ascoli, 2015, p. 123), show that Petrarch is representing himself as having undergone a change in intellectual priorities across the course of his creative life. This narrative is however heavily curated, reflecting the portrait of himself which Petrarch wished to present publicly, rather than a truthful depiction. The letters present an intellectual shift, driven by the *fuga temporis*, which broadly occurs in a four-step model. At the beginning of the *Familiares*, while Petrarch is in the flower of youth, his concerns are depicted as scholarly in nature, focusing on deploying citations of classical authors, studying their style, and using

[296] 'of all earthly delights, just as none is more noble that letters, so none is more enduring, none sweeter, none more faithful.'

this to inform his own literary efforts. By the end of the *Familiares*, Petrarch claims he is moving towards the philosophical contemplation of the ideas themselves, ruminating on them to consider their implications to better his own life. At the beginning of the *Seniles*, as he observes the consequences of human mortality with the deaths of his friends and loved ones, he undergoes a moral crisis where the vicissitudes of time are laid bare, which then, through the intellectual faculties gained in old age, is transformed into a drive to construct the idealised self, both in a moral capacity, and in the literary form in which this self is presented.

However, Petrarch's intent was to present an idealised self, rather than a biographically accurate one. The *Seniles* ostensibly casts Petrarch as becoming more virtuous later in life, with this more moralising attitude depicted as driven by the increasing awareness of the passage of time. Yet it is not just virtue which Petrarch seeks for his self-portrait, but also a satisfactory literary form in which to present it outwardly and to posterity: for the *Rvf*, this form was modelled upon the classical lyric collection. The closing books of the *Seniles* reveal that literary concerns still played a central role in his intellectual processes at the end of his life, despite his apparent focus on seeking virtue. The Griselda translation in particular suggests that Petrarch was trying to make literary projects a *vehicle* for virtue, rather than abandoning them completely. Indeed, the more virtuous flavour to the revisions of the closing sequence of the *Rvf* suggest the same was happening in that work too. Yet the casting of the *Rvf* (as both vernacular and poetry) as a youthful activity, indicates that it can still be concerned with youthful themes and modes, essentially rationalising the classical and vernacular poetic practices with which it was occupied, and indicating that it sought to reconcile these with the moralising concerns of *senectus*.

Chapter 4. Constructing the Closing Sequence

4.1 Love, Glory and Virtue in the *Secretum*: an impasse for the *Rvf*

While the *Seniles* implied that Petrarch was seeking to make literary projects a vehicle for virtue, in the *Secretum*, the competing desires of virtue and “Amor et Gloria” (*Secr.* 3.2.1)[297] are pitted against one another, as Petrarch seeks to establish a way in which he may counterbalance his competing intellectual desires. In the three-part dialogue, the two characters of Franciscus and Augustinus[298] debate the nature of virtuous love; whether Laura may play a role in the desire for spiritual ascent; the values of Franciscus’ pursuit of study; and whether the pagan classics may play a role in a Christian narrative of ascent. Their contentious, and frequently bellicose, dialogue explores two divergent ways of thinking and how to live, expressing the interior dissidence of the author. In fashioning the idealised autobiography in the *Rvf*, this section argues, Petrarch sought to render compatible what he presents as two diametrically opposed points of view in the *Secretum*: the indecision evident in the revisions to the *Rvf* is directed by Petrarch’s conflicting ideas around narratives of ascent, and how these may be rendered compatible with the classicising model he was imitating in the *Rvf*.

The first part of this section establishes the importance of examining the *Secretum* for the closing sequence of the *Rvf*. Although the relationship between the *Rvf* and the *Secretum* has already been well debated, this final chapter shows that the imposition of the classical lyric model in the *Rvf* could aid in reconciling the competing desires as presented in the *Secretum*. The second part discusses as in the *Secretum* whether love of Laura is compatible with salvation; the third part discusses the value of the pursuit of literary fame, arguing that Petrarch was seeking to render compatible the search for earthly fame with his desire for Christian salvation. It is, as Giuliani (1977, pp. 9–10) notes, impossible to “determinare chi dei due interlocutori sia il vero portavoce del pensiero dell’autore”, or more accurately rather which of the interlocutors will triumph after the irresolution of the dialogue, given that they both appear to carry the conflicting thoughts of the author. I argue that the movement towards the abandonment of Laura in the *Rvf* is driven by the desire to reconcile these two competing viewpoints of the *Secretum*, finding a way in which earthly fame can be achieved without compromising the pursuit of virtue, rather than trying to choose one over the other. The final stages of constructing the *Rvf* demonstrate that Petrarch is blending a Christian imperative with a compatible poetic model in the classical lyric collection to seek poetic glory: in both, the beloved must be abandoned.

[297] ‘gloria’ and ‘fama’, glory and fame, appear to be used interchangeably by Petrarch. While it is conceived of as ‘gloria’ here in the *Secretum*, it is ‘fama’ in the *Triumphi*.

[298] I refer to the character of the *Secretum* with the Latin name ‘Augustinus’ in order to distinguish him from Augustine the Saint.

4.1.1 The *Secretum* and the *Rvf*

While the *Rvf*, and indeed the letters, are strands of the autobiographical project intended for public consumption, the *Secretum* is ostensibly a private work: "de secreto conflictu", about the private conflict, of Petrarch's interior thoughts. However, given Petrarch's tendency to contradict in practice what he says he is doing, the representation of the *Secretum* as a private work is questionable, although it still illuminates the interior debates over which Petrarch cast himself as deeply conflicted, and which resurface in the *Rvf*.[299] The nature of the work however constitutes a very different narrative strategy to lyric medium of the *Rvf* (as well as to the letters). The Ciceronian-style dialogue by nature requires a contradictory discourse, which proceeds by direct addition and contradiction in a linear sense, rather than permitting a fragmentary approach with the narrative sustained by the relationship between individual components. In the *Rvf*, Petrarch is required to work within the existing framework of the vernacular lyric tradition, but the dialogic nature of the *Secretum* gives him greater freedom for interior exploration in a continuous manner, to explore the ideas through to a conclusion, or rather inconclusion as it will turn out.

That the resolution of the interior conflict in the *Rvf* is closely linked to the debate of the *Secretum* has already been established by the fact that two structurally significant *canzoni*, *Rvf* 264 and 360, revisit the arguments of the *Secretum*. The third dialogue of the *Secretum* opens with Augustinus stating that Franciscus is held to earth by two chains, "Amor et gloria" (*Secr*. 3.2.1), which prevent spiritual ascent to virtue. The two chains of the *Secretum* are reimagined as the "duo nodi" of *Rvf* 264, a *canzone* which has been described as "the poetic equivalent of the third book" (Wilkins, 1961, p. 47) and "sets forth a psychological analysis of Petrarch's two dominant passions in a way very similar to that given in the third book" (Baron, 1985, p. 47). The *canzone* stages the inner debate of the poet; "L'un penser parla co la mente"; "Da l'altra parte un pensier dolce et agro" (*Rvf* 264, 1, 55), suggesting

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[299] Critics have fallen into two main groups regarding the period in which the *Secretum* was composed. Wilkins (1961) argued that it was written in 1342–1343, a viewpoint which was later restated by Martinelli (1985) among others. The second group, headed by Rico (1974b) and Baron (1985), asserts that the *Secretum* was penned in 1347 and then extensively revised in 1353, a hypothesis based upon textual comparisons with the *Familiares* and the *Rvf*. This hypothesis sees several passages from the *Secretum* as reflecting Stoic views and reflecting a move away from Augustine's *De vera religione*, which had broadly lost its appeal by 1353, thus necessitating a later date at least in part: see Rico (1974a, pp. 350–352). For reviews of Rico (1974b) see Bruni (1976); Martellotti (1976); Phillips (1977); Ponte (1977). Rico and Baron's proposals have been met with much scepticism, stemming from the fact that a reliance on parallel texts and autobiographical details cannot be definitively dated. Critics such as Martinelli (1985) and Ponte (1990) have offered a defence of the earlier date, rejecting several autobiographical details proposed by both Rico and Baron. Their disagreement regarding the later date lies in the fact that they view the chronology of Petrarch's intellectual development somewhat differently, with the stoic element entering earlier. As Lee (2012, p. 72) notes, "the problem of identifying the date of Petrarch's transition from one mode of thought to another partly fuels the continuing debate over its composition". Further revisions are hypothesised by Wilkins (1961, p. 162) and Baron (1985, p. 72) to have occurred in 1358 following a rereading of the dialogue by Petrarch, the same year in which the fictional chronology of the *Rvf* comes to a close. However, there is no indication that Petrarch intended them to seem contemporaneous, since Laura appears to still be alive in the *Secretum*.

a subversion of the self as the interior conflicting thoughts dominate the poet's will, leaving him powerless. Baron points out that towards the end of the *canzone*, Petrarch appears to acknowledge that the more significant of the two chains of the *Secretum* is *Amor,* rather than *gloria*:[300]

> Ma quell'altro voler di ch'i'son pieno,
>
> quanti press'a lui nascon par ch'adugge (*Rvf* 264, 73–74)

The 'altro voler' is *Amor*, with 'pieno' suggesting that this is the stronger of the two chains with which Petrarch is bound. This is clear when the poet states:

> ché mortal cosa amar con tanta fede
>
> quanta a Dio sol per debito convensi,
>
> piú si disdice a chi piú pregio brama. (*Rvf* 264, 99–101)

This key argument of the *canzone* postulates that love for a mortal is inferior to love of God, and that God is owed the highest form of love, from which Laura is distracting him. Given that the *Rvf* consists predominantly of love lyrics, it would be expected that the *Rvf* would give greater precedence to exploring this aspect of the conflict, at least overtly in content, although Augustinus claims in the *Secretum* that *gloria* is the "maiorem morbum" (*Secr*. 3.14.1).[301] While overtly *Amor* might be the greater priority for the *Rvf,* this section argues that *gloria* is also in fact still driving the revisions to the closing sequence in the search for a perfected literary model.

Moevs (2009, p. 228) has noted that the closing sequence of the *Rvf* is set up by implicitly evoking the *Secretum*, as the dichotomy is revisited in a polarised form in *Rvf* 360. The lyric *io* argues that *Amore* has deceived him, distracted him from his moral obligations to God and to himself, inflicting pain and suffering in the process, while *Amore* argues that Laura was the greatest gift, and is a means of spiritual ascent. The lyric *io* turns at the end of the *canzone* to the tribune of *Ragione*, who is unable to pronounce on the matter. In *Rvf* 360, Petrarch's *io* takes up the arguments elaborated by Augustine in the *Secretum* and *Amore* takes up those of Franciscus, as "Augustine as a model of spiritual and literary introspection informs Petrarch's own quests" (Schildigen, 1996, p. 162). The materiality of the arguments remains fundamentally the same in *Rvf* 360 as in the *Secretum* and *Rvf* 264, presenting both the personal value of Petrarch's love, and the dangers of it, as Baron (1985, p. 58) argues. The late inclusion of *Rvf* 360 in the *Rvf*, one of the supplements to the Malatesta form identified as transmitted

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[300] Barolini (2009, p. 43) agrees that the central thesis of *Rvf* 264 is that "mortal creatures should not be loved more than their Creator even when they are inherently good precisely because they are, in the end, always mortal, contingent, transitory, subject to the passing of time."

[301] 'greater sickness'.

in the BML Pl. 41.17, suggests that Petrarch was still struggling with this dichotomy between mortal and divine love in the final phases of constructing the *Rvf*.

4.1.2 *Amor*: Does Laura have a place in a narrative of spiritual ascent?

The Christian spiritual ascent follows a predictable pattern, moving from physical desires to love found in God. Man's salvation is obtainable through spiritual ascent towards God as the highest form of beauty, moving away from the corporeal desires of the flesh, and conceptualising love as the force which drives man away from the sensible world towards contemplation of God and the immaterial. Broadly, the spiritual ascent is to occur in four stages, which provides a framework for how Petrarch is to achieve his salvation, at least as Augustinus puts it to Franciscus in the *Secretum*. The lowest form of beauty is physical. Once man moves beyond physical beauty, he recognises the beauty of the soul, which drives him to higher things. In the Guinizzellian and Dantean poetics of the *dolce stil novo*, the beloved acts to facilitate this stage, by her virtuous angelic nature which directs the soul towards virtue. The third aspect of the ascent, as emphasised particularly in Augustinian thought, is knowledge, which leads to the perception of divine truth.[302] The importance of Augustine's beliefs about knowledge is emphasised by Petrarch himself, who in the *Seniles* (15.6.49) discusses the *De doctrina Christiana*, and how knowledge of God is the highest form of knowledge to which all other knowledge is subservient.[303] The fourth and final stage is the ultimate direction of man's soul to God as a result of this ascent, and in doing so achieve salvation.

That a religious inflection to the closing sequence is not irreconcilable with a poetic one based on the classical model is hinted at in Petrarch's blending of classical and Christian impetuses in his thoughts about narratives of spiritual ascent, suggesting that he was more generally seeking to reconcile the two strands of thought. Khan (2015, p. 100) has suggested that Book 3 of the *Secretum* in particular "stages a complicated debate between Christianity and classical culture", particularly concerning the value of the study of pagan works for the Christian. Elsewhere in his work, Petrarch had already

[302] In the *Confessions* (10.35), Augustine states "ubi enim inveni veritatem, ibi inveni deum meum, ipsam veritatem, quam ex quo didici non sum oblitus". 'Where I found truth, there I found my God, Truth himself, truth which from the moment I learned of it, I did not forget.' [all translations from Hammond (2016)]. Augustine demonstrates an *intellectus fidei*, an attempt to understand Christian mysteries through philosophy, which had begun with the *Contra Academicos* where he attempts to prove that human intellect can attain truth. In *De libero arbitrario* (2.3.7 – 2.15.39), he continues to demonstrate the existence of God from reason, and represents the spiritual ascent as an ascent from sense knowledge, which is dependent on the human perceptive experience, to God himself and divine knowledge, which is immutable, unlike the human intellect which is mutable and moulded by its individual experience. Truth itself, or that which is higher than absolute truth, is God. For more on Augustine's theory of knowledge see King (2014). On spiritual ascent through study and knowledge of scripture see Kenney (2013).

[303] Study of the scripture, according to Book 2 of *De doctrina* precedes the soul extricating itself from captivity by mortal desires and turning towards eternal love.

suggested that the study of classical works had a moral value to the devout Christian. For example, in *Fam.* 4.1.27–28, upon happening upon an extract from Augustine's *Confessions* 10, which reminds him not to be distracted by the beauty of the view from atop the Ventoux at the expense of leaving himself behind, he reminds himself that the concept that physical beauty is inferior to the soul is something he ought to have learned from the classical philosophers: "qui iampridem ab ipsis gentium philosophis discere debuissem" (*Fam.* 4.1.28).[304] In the *Seniles*, Petrarch also professes the worth of Plato and Cicero for the study of God and the soul:

> Sed parum michi videntur correctores mei seu hec pauca que diximus seu philosophica illa multorum, ante alios platonica et ciceroniana relegisse, quibus si nome desit auctoris, ab Ambrosio sive Augustino scripta iuraveris, de deo, de anima, de miseriis et erroribus hominum, de contemptu vite huius et desiderio alterius.[305]
>
> (*Sen*. 2.1.125)

By Petrarch's own admission, the pagan philosophers bore many similarities with Augustine regarding beliefs about the soul.[306] Here he states the value of examining classical texts for the devout Christian, establishing the link between the writings of Plato and Cicero and the teachings of Augustine and Ambrose in the discussion of the soul and its salvation.[307] Petrarch laments in the margins of his copy of Plato's *Timaeus* that Plato had come so far on the path to Christian truth, seeing him as the pagan philosopher most aligned with Christian philosophy.[308] Indeed, the classical, that is Neo-Platonic model of spiritual ascent was central in informing Augustine's own ideas of ascent, providing a model for the reconciliation of classical philosophy with Christian doctrine.[309]

As examined in chapter 1.2, the poetic tradition provided two differing models of spiritual ascent: one which saw the beloved act as a facilitator of ascent, as in Guinizzelli and above all Dante,

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[304] Ascoli (2015, p. 126), suggests that *Fam.* 4.1.28, the ascent of Mont Ventoux "stages an incomplete Augustinian conversion from worldly concerns to faith" as opposed to Petrarch's brother's monastic vocation.

[305] 'But my critics seem to me to have studied too little either these few passages I have mentioned or those by many philosophers, particularly Plato and Cicero, about God, the soul, the miseries and sins of men, scorn for this life, and longing for the next; if the author's name were missing, you would swear they were written by Ambrose or Augustine.'

[306] The intersection between classical philosophical thought and early Christian doctrine has been emphasised by Van Fleteren (1999, p. 67): "Certainly Augustine saw the ascent to God in Plotinus and Porphyry, with its remote origins in Plato, as adaptable to Christianity. *Platonici* could be Christians, if only a few words were changed (*De vera religione*)."

[307] Petrarch had extensive knowledge of Plato, by his own writing. In the *De ignorantia*, he claims to have 16 or more of Plato's books in his library (though he cannot remember the names of them all).

[308] See Garin (2008, pp. 145–146) for further discussion. On 19 November 1355 Petrarch annotated in the codex containing his copy of the *Timaeus* "felix miser, qui haec sciens, unde ista nescisti" (fortunate unhappy soul, who knowing these things, does not know from where they come).

[309] Van Fleteren (1999, p. 64) asserts that Augustine attempts to "harmonise Christianity with the ideal of the ancient pagan sage", demonstrating a synthetization of classical ideas with Christian theology.

or one in which she was a foil to it, and must be rejected, as in Guittone. The two interlocutors of the *Secretum* set their camps broadly within this framework: Augustinus argues that to achieve salvation, Laura must be rejected, while Franciscus argues that through Laura he may become closer to heaven and learn of God. Franciscus argues that his love for Laura was virtuous, and thus capable of facilitating a narrative of ascent. To evidence this, he elaborates upon the distinction between love for a "infamem turpemque mulierem" and a "rarum aliquod specimen virtutis" (*Secr*. 3.2.5),[310] suggesting that love for a virtuous woman is in itself virtuous due to the nature of the beloved. He also claims he loved Laura for her soul, and because of this his love was in fact for the immortal rather than the mortal:

> neque enim, ut tu putas, mortali rei animum addixi; nec me tam corpus noveris amasse quam animam, moribus humana transcendentibus delectatum, quorum exemplo qualiter inter celicolas vivatur, admoneor.[311]
>
> (*Secr*. 3.3.11)

Franciscus' argument lies in the distinction between the soul and body, through a Platonic type cosmological dualism which distinguishes between spiritual and material, or interpreted along more Augustinian lines, heavenly and earthly. He considers his attraction to Laura to be love for the immaterial due to the immortal nature of the soul, and therefore a virtuous love.

In pre-final versions of the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, Petrarch initially appeared to be placing emphasis on Laura's intercessory capacity, as advocated by Franciscus. In particular, the group of sonnets constituting *Rvf* 350–352, which in various orders formed part of the closing micro-sequence in the pre-final versions,[312] prioritise redeeming Laura as a model of virtue, who has the power to direct the soul to virtue as part of a narrative of ascent. Franciscus suggests that through Laura he has learnt of life in heaven, alluding to her intercessory potential, seeing that she has brought him closer to God: "Deum profecto ut amarem, illius amor prestitit" (*Secr*. 3.5.2).[313] Petrarch himself also indicated in *Rvf* 350, the antepenultimate sonnet of the BML Pl. 41.17, that in the absence of Laura's physical form he was able to bathe in her heavenly light, suggesting that his love was not purely material as Augustinus claimed. *Rvf* 351 focuses extensively on Laura's virtues, with Petrarch asserting that she has the capacity to remove all base desires from him: "ch'ogni basso penser del cor m'avulse" (*Rvf* 351, 8). This closely reflects Franciscus' statement that Laura's rejection of him held him back from committing more

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[310] 'a shameful and scandalous woman'; 'a rare specimen of virtue'.

[311] 'I've never surrendered my mind to a mortal thing, as you suppose, and know that I have not loved a body so much as a soul, but was captivated by a character transcending the human, from which I learned how life might be in heaven.'

[312] To be discussed fully in the following section.

[313] 'There's no doubt that love of her has led me to love of God.'

shameful actions: "Illa iuvenilem animum ab omni turpitudine revocavit" (*Secr*. 3.4.6).[314] The crux of Franciscus' argument lies in the belief that a chaste love is virtuous because the soul is distracted from other mortal matters which could weigh it down, and Petrarch in the pre-final versions of the *Rvf* seems to be searching for a narrative which explores a method of ascent in which Laura plays an intercessory role in driving the *io* to virtue.

On the other side of the debate in the *Secretum*, Augustinus argues that love of Laura is damaging for two reasons. Firstly, she is a mortal, and secondly, Franciscus loves her in an inappropriate manner. In a narrative of ascent, the lowest form of beauty is physical: in the *Secretum*, Augustinus states that physical beauty, which attracts Franciscus to Laura, is the "ultima pulcritudinum" (*Secr.* 3.5.2), the furthest or last type of beauty, meaning the furthest removed from God. He argues that the very act of loving a mortal being is in itself a shameful action: "pudebit animum immortalem caduco applicuisse corpusculo" (*Secr*. 3.3.4).[315] This draws on the Augustinian concept that love should be placed in that which cannot die or fail: in the *Confessions*, Augustine states that the soul feels the distress of loss so strongly "quia fuderam in harenam animam meam diligendo moriturum acsi non moriturum" (*Conf.* 4.8).[316] For the same reason, Augustinus asserts, Franciscus' love for Laura will ultimately fail, as she is mortal:

> O cece, necdum intelligis quanta dementia est sic animum rebus subiecisse mortalibus, que eum et desiderii flammis accendant, nec quietare noverint nec permanere valeant in finem, et crebris motibus quem demulcere pollicentur excrucient.[317]
>
> (*Secr.* 3.3.10)

Augustinus suggests that loving a mortal destabilises the self, as the constant change and unpredictability of such a love torments the lover. Indeed, the continued revisions to the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, in which Petrarch eventually moves towards rejecting Laura amidst the continued instability of his lyric self, suggests that he was aware of this and attempting to counteract this instability through turning towards a more Augustinian narrative as a reference point.

Augustinus also emphasises that it is not just the nature of the object of the love which dictates whether love is virtuous or not, but rather the manner of the love itself which may be indecent: "Etiam pulcra turpiter amari posse certum est" (*Secr.* 3.2.9).[318] He argues that Franciscus' error cannot be

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[314] 'She restrained my youthful mind from any shameful action.'

[315] 'You will be ashamed of having dedicated your immortal soul to a perishable little body.'

[316] 'Because I had poured out my soul on the sand through loving something mortal as if they were immortal.'

[317] 'How blind you are! You don't even understand how crazy it is to make your heart dependent on mortal things which inflame it with desire and cannot calm it, yet have no lasting value and which torture it with constant changes precisely when they promise to sooth it.'

[318] 'And yet there's no doubt that even beautiful things can be loved in a shameful way.'

justified or absolved by her virtue, "Ingens tamen eius virtus minimum tibi ad excusationem erroris conferet" (*Secr.* 3.4.1),[319] as in order to access her intercessory powers, she must be loved in a way appropriate to her virtues: "neutrum te satis sobrie, neutrum amasse qua decuit" (*Secr*. 3.5.6).[320] Indeed, while Franciscus' own virtue may have been preserved by Laura's chastity, this is independent of his desires, which are in fact what has led him astray. He believes that a virtuous object engenders virtue in the eyes of the beholder, when in fact the *mode* of loving is just as significant as the object itself: while perhaps not overtly as sensual as Augustinus contends, his still has the capacity to be a material love. *Mode* of loving is just as important as *object*.

The crux of the issue lies in the fact that Augustinus is advocating for a love which starts at God, and Franciscus is defending the possibility of a love which starts with a mortal and leads to God. Essentially, Augustinus sees that Franciscus has inverted the proper hierarchy of love as mandated by the spiritual ascent, arguing that Laura has turned his love from Creator to creature: "Ab amore celestium elongavit animum et a Creatore ad creaturam desiderium inclinavit" (*Secr*. 3.5.2).[321] As a result, Augustinus instructs Franciscus that he must reverse this hierarchy: "at pervertit ordinem" (*Secr*. 3.5.2).[322] This reflects the distinction made in *Confessions* 2.2 between *caritas*, in which the soul loves things created in God, and *cupiditas,* in which the soul craves created things for their own sake.[323] Augustinus believes Franciscus' love for Laura is *cupiditas* rather than *caritas*, as he loves Laura as a creation, rather than in God as her Creator. The nature of this love espoused by Augustinus has its roots in the Augustinian idea that the one true love is found in God, and all other beings worthy of love emanate from that love, rather than leading to it:

> beatus qui amat te et amicum in te et inimicum propter te. solus enim nullum carum amittit cui omnes in illo cari sunt qui non amittitur. et quis est iste nisi deus noster, deus, qui fecit caelum et terram et implet ea, quia implendo ea fecit ea? te nemo amittit nisi qui dimittit, et quia dimittit, quo it aut quo fugit nisi a te placido ad te iratum? nam

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[319] 'her great virtue will still only give you the slightest of excuses for your error.'

[320] 'You didn't love either of them moderately or decently enough.'

[321] 'She has removed your mind from love of heavenly things and instead turned your love from Creator to creature.'

[322] 'But that's the wrong way around.'

[323] Dante in *Purgatorio* 17, 91–93 also distinguishes, through the mouthpiece of Virgil, between natural and elective love. Natural love is love which the creature feels for its creator, that which humans have for God, through their nature as His creations rather than a conscious choice. Love 'd'animo' on the other hand is a choice, love which man feels when he is drawn to something outside of him and desires it. This distinction reflects the Augustinian dualism of love for the material versus love for the immaterial, with material love preventing perception of the true light of God.

ubi non invenit legem tuam in poena sua? et lex tua veritas et veritas tu.[324]

(*Conf.* 4.9)

Augustine explains that to be blessed, and therefore happy, a man should love *in te* and *propter te,* emphasising that a thing should be loved not on account of its own merits, but rather loved insofar that it is *in God*, part of God, and on account of His hand in its creation.

While overtly grounded in Augustinian thought, Augustinus' position is, however, lacking nuance when it comes to the poetics of the *Rvf*. The Augustinus of the *Secretum*, while modelled upon Augustine the Saint, is a simplified version, lacking the nuance of Augustine's theological ideas. He is a Petrarchan literary construct, and therefore also serves a literary purpose, rather than a genuine theological discourse. The character of the *Secretum* interprets anything mortal as harmful, and divine as beneficial, underappreciating the complexity of the relationship between the two. He argues that Franciscus' love for Laura is also a question of lack of moderation or decency, yet in the *Rvf* the figure of Laura, and the descriptions of her, are neither sensual nor immoderate. The exception is perhaps *Rvf* 22 and 238, which are *sestine*, the form thought to have originated with Arnaut Daniel, whose poetry is more openly sensual, and so this aspect would be expected in Petrarch's experimentation with the form. In the *Rvf* more generally, however, Laura's image is composed of fragments, with the main features being her eyes, hair, voice and hand, and lacking an overtly sexualised aspect. As such, Augustinus is perhaps too bluntly assuming that any mortal love must be a sinful one: as Dante had shown, this was obviously not the case.

This debate between competing methods of spiritual ascent is reflected in Petrarch's revisions to the sequencing of the *Rvf*, showing his continuing indecision about the form of the narrative which might reconcile religious and moral concerns with literary and classicising ones. *Rvf* 359 and 360 indicate that at a late stage in the work Petrarch's love for Laura is still physical, suggesting that his manner of loving her is incompatible with a narrative of ascent in an Augustinian sense. Laura herself express as much in *Rvf* 359, where she states Petrarch had loved her for her physical form: "quel che tu cerchi è terra, già molt'anni" (*Rvf* 359, 59). Laura *in morte* should be the more positive figure in terms of guiding him towards salvation, like Beatrice had explained to Dante in *Purgatorio*. Without a physical form, and enhanced in virtue and beauty as a formless soul in heaven, Petrarch should be able to see her in an intercessory light. Yet at this close point to the end of the sequence, Petrarch still focuses

[324] 'Blessed are those who love you, and love their friend in you and their enemy because of you. Only those who hold everyone dear, in the One who can never be lost, never lose anyone dear to them. And who is that One if not our God, who made heaven and earth and who fills them, because by filling them he has created them? No one loses you unless they reject you; and because they reject you where can they go or flee except away from a kindly you to an angry you! Surely they find your law is everywhere in their own punishment? And your law is truth, and you are Truth.'

on her physical traits: "Son questi i capei biondi, et l'aureo nodo" (*Rvf* 359, 56). This is despite Laura's reminding him that she is a spirit in heaven: "Spirito ignudo sono" (*Rvf* 359, 60).

The materiality of Petrarch's love for Laura is confirmed in *Rvf* 360. At the close of the *canzone* the dichotomy remains unresolved, with *Ragione* unable to pronounce a verdict on the case. The conclusion of the *canzone* however indicates that at this point Petrarch's desire for Laura is still mortal and unbridled in nature, suggesting that she cannot play a role in his narrative of spiritual ascent. After hearing the arguments presented by *Amore*, Petrarch has a sudden outburst about *Amore* having taken Laura away from him:

> A questo un strido
>
> lagrimoso alzo et grido:
>
> – Ben me la die', ma tosto la ritolse. (*Rvf* 360, 152–154)

Bernardo (1974, p. 196) argues that when "the poet accuses Love of having removed Laura from this life, and Love counters with the reminder that it had been God, it becomes clear even at this late stage the poet's love was still physical rather than spiritual". Dante's Beatrice had informed him in *Purg.* 30 that with her death Dante should have kept the straight path, as there was nothing mortal of greater beauty or virtue which could distract him on earth. The absence of the physical form of the beloved should direct the soul to higher matters, as part of a narrative of spiritual ascent.

This sudden outpouring of grief indicates that Petrarch has lost confidence in Laura as a means of salvation, as he is unable to move beyond the loss of her physical form: Laura's existence, and death, has only caused him suffering. He is unable to utilise her in a positive way to move towards God: in her death, he is unable to use her exemplary virtue to inspire him towards moving to a higher form of love, still enchanted with her earthly form. It is not just the outburst in *Rvf* 360 which indicates that his love for Laura is still physical at this stage, but also *Ragione's* failure to pronounce on the case. As Gesualdo (1533, p. 763) explains, *Ragione* was considered to have the power to redirect the "sensuale appetito… e puogli à Sommo bene indirizzare". *Ragione*'s failure therefore indicates Petrarch's inability to exert control over his sensual appetite for Laura, demonstrating that his amorous desires and passions still control his being. Laura is a being which provokes in him a physical passion so strong that reason is unable to prevail, suggesting that it is impossible to use her as a means to salvation or a higher form of love. In the final version of the *Rvf*, the two *canzoni* precede a narrative which seeks to reject Laura, suggesting an eventual turn towards an Augustinian narrative, as urged by Augustinus in the *Secretum*, indicating that for Petrarch's brand of love, seeking a narrative of virtue would necessitate a rejection of the beloved.

4.1.3 In defence of *Gloria*

The nature of the *Rvf* as a sequence of love lyrics means that overtly, at least, the dilemma over the value of love for Laura is the aspect of the *Secretum* most present in the narrative of the work, particularly in the final stages of the second part. However, Petrarch was still very much concerned with literary glory in the creation of the *Rvf*, evident in his modelling of the work upon the classical lyric collection, which by nature declares poetic glory achieved at its close. In the second half of Book 3 of the *Secretum*, Franciscus and Augustinus move on to debate the value of Franciscus' study of the pagan classics, and his desire for literary glory. Khan (2015, p. 108) has suggested that Book 3 of the *Secretum* illustrates that "literary fame is more important than Laura", and that more generally Petrarch seeks to defend poetry in this dialogue. Building on this idea, this section suggests that while there a clear moral imperative to completely abandon the desire for earthly glory, Petrarch is still trying to justify his search for fame, which is also apparent in the final phases of constructing the *Rvf*.

In Book 3 of the *Secretum*, Augustinus presents Franciscus' desire for glory as the most serious of his conditions: "Nullum profecto maiorem tibi morbum inesse noveris, etsi quidam forte fediores sunt" (*Secr*. 3.14.1–2).[325] Franciscus acknowledges that he is unable to control this desire: "neque hunc appetitum ullis remediis frenare queo" (*Secr.* 3.14.1).[326] Augustinus in the *Secretum* presents fame as distracting from eternal concerns, indicating that it is just as harmful to Franciscus' desire to obtain salvation, if not more, especially given the unknown nature of the future and the number of years left to man. He suggests to Franciscus that even ancient memory is incomparable with eternity:

> Quid nunc de fame mortalium brevitate deque temporalibus angustiis loquar, cum scias, quorum vetustissima memoria est, eternitati collocata quam brevis quamque recens sit?[327]
>
> (*Secr*. 3.16.7)

With Augustinus countering that any kind of mortal fame is ultimately transitory, he cites what he derogatively calls Franciscus' "versiculos", little verses:

> libris equidem morientibus ipse
>
> occumbes etiam; sic mors tibi tertia restat [328] (*Secr*. 3.16.11)

[325] 'You have to recognise that none of your other sicknesses is as serious as this one, even if some are more repugnant'.

[326] 'I cannot restrain this ambition by any means'.

[327] 'What's the use of speaking of the brevity of men's renown, or the constraints of time, if you know how brief and recent even the most ancient memory is when compared with eternity?'

[328] 'when books die, you too will succumb: and thus a third death awaits you.'

As Augustinus, citing Petrarch himself, argues, time will ultimately overcome earthly fame, and render dust even the eternal glory claimed by the classical poets. The very citation of this couplet would, however, seem paradoxical: Augustinus has been arguing that literary projects are inferior to matters of the eternal and the soul, yet deploys Franciscus' own poetry to convey a moral message, indicating that it could indeed have a value in facilitating the contemplation of spiritual concerns. Later in Petrarch's life, the *Triumphi* provide a model where Time does conquer Fame, suggesting that Petrarch is indeed aware of the vain and illusory nature of earthly glory. However, the fact that he was aware of a moral imperative to abandon his compositions did not necessarily mean he would obey it. That he was still working on his literary projects up until his death, including the much-derided vernacular ones, indicates that he was not prepared to put them aside to prioritise spiritual concerns in practice.

Franciscus in response to Augustinus argues that while still on earth man should strive for all the fame he can garner, stating that that man's first concern should be mortal things, which can then progress to eternal rather than transitory concerns: "Itaque istum esse ordinem, ut mortalium rerum inter mortales prima sit cura; transitoriis eterna succedant, quod ex his ad illa sit ordinatissimus progressus" (*Secr*. 3.15.10).[329] Franciscus acknowledges fame's inferiority to eternal matters of the soul, but that he strives for fame amongst mortals in the knowledge that that too is mortal: "Itaque gloriam humanam sic expeto, ut sciam et me et illam esse mortales" (*Secr*. 3.15.4).[330] Franciscus in this way suggests that his literary projects have a place in an autobiographical arc of spiritual ascent, being a precursor to eternal concerns. While as the *Triumphi* indicates, Time followed by Eternity will eventually conquer Fame, Franciscus' argument suggests that earthly glory can be sought prior to concentrating on spiritual matters.

The fictional biography as presented in the *Seniles* however indicates that Franciscus' approach to glory is deployed by Petrarch in the wider autobiographical self-portrait. As we saw in chapter 3.2, in the *Seniles*, and in particular the unfinished Letter to Posterity, Petrarch presents his poetic efforts as a youthful preoccupation, and his more mature years dedicated to above all what he terms Christian letters (although the epistolary collections are also clearly classicising in nature). He presents his works in later life as being increasingly concerned with moral matters, and searching for virtue. The *Rvf,* then, can be concerned with achieving earthly fame in the presentation of an idealised poetic model to posterity, because it is (falsely) represented as being merely a youthful project, as a precursor to the more virtuous modes he will later pursue, in line with the argument that Franciscus makes, that earthly fame can be sought as a precursor to eternal concerns.

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[329] 'So this is the right order: among mortals let the first concern be for mortal things, then let eternal ones replace what is transitory with an entirely orderly progression from one to the other.'

[330] 'Therefore I strive for fame among men, knowing that both I and the fame are mortal.'

Augustinus does state that he would never suggest rejecting fame entirely: “Ut inglorius degas nunquam consulam, at ne gloriam studium virtuti preferas identidem admonebo” (*Secr*. 3.17.1).[331] However, he clarifies that true fame is only cast in the light of virtue, rather than through intellectual works. This causes Franciscus to question whether he should leave his works unfinished, or hurry to put the finishing touches to them, so that he might reach higher things more quickly. Augustinus explicitly tells him to abandon his epic, “Dimitte Africam” (*Secr*. 3.17.6),[332] a work which indeed was left unfinished. Augustinus also asserts that Franciscus would rather abandon himself than his “libellos” (*Secr*. 3.17.5),[333] and while Franciscus indicates that he is aware of the moral imperative to abandon his search for fame, he proclaims himself not strong enough to change his will: “sed desiderium frenare non valeo” (*Secr*. 3.18.7).[334] Indeed, in the final years of his life, Petrarch still repeatedly intervened in his literary projects, indicating that he was not prepared to put them aside in pursuit of virtue, even the vernacular projects which he claimed to regard as inferior. Instead, he sought to use them as a means of projecting virtue, showing that literary pursuits did not always have to detract from virtue, but rather that the two could still be compatible: literary pursuits for Petrarch could facilitate virtue. In this way, he can be seen to be prioritising virtue, through the imposition of a more virtuous narrative to his works, but have this contained within a literary model which by its very nature sought glory.

To conclude, in the *Secretum* the process of continual contradiction provides no narrative resolution: as Augustinus says at the end, the two characters finish exactly where they started, with Franciscus’ will unchanged. And, as Moevs (2009, p. 153) has noted, the inconclusion of the *Secretum* indicates that there will be no lasting religious conversion, suggesting that the desire for virtue will ultimately not conquer Petrarch’s pursuit of Laura and earthly fame, or at least not entirely. As a result, Petrarch’s *Rvf*, the closing sequence of which is set up through the evocation of the *Secretum*, seeks to explore how these competing desires might be reconciled, although the continued revisions to the sequencing indicate that there was no easy way to do so. In examining the closure of the *Rvf*, however, this thesis contends that Petrarch was not just concerned about exploring the lyric self from a position of seeking virtue, but also in finding the ideal literary form in which that self was to be conveyed, and the classical lyric model could speak to both concerns. Glory could still be sought, as long as it was not at the expense of virtue: Petrarch was seeking both.

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[331] ‘I would never advise you to live without fame, yet I will continue to warn you not to give the pursuit of fame preference over that of virtue.’

[332] ‘Have done with Africa.’

[333] “Te ipsum derelinquere mavis, quam libellos tuos”. ‘You’d rather abandon yourself than your little books’.

[334] ‘But I haven’t got the strength to curb my desire.’

4.2 Moving towards the ideal book of poetry

This final section of the thesis provides a close reading of the final poems of the *Rvf*, showing that the revisions to the closing sequence in the final years of Petrarch's life explored three strands: the desire to impose a narrative of virtue; the attempt to stabilise the *io* through exerting control over the self as part of the self-exploratory project and the curation of the idealised autobiography; and the imitation of the classical songbook in order to present a comparable model to posterity. The balance of these competing priorities changes through the final phases of constructing the *Rvf*, as Petrarch strengthens the classicising element. As the previous chapters have shown, while Petrarch sought to depict a more virtuous self in his idealised autobiographical narrative, he was very much still concerned with the form of the *Rvf* as modelled upon the classical lyric poetry collection. The revisions to the closing sequence, as this thesis argues, may be concerned with *depicting* a narrative of virtue, but in the background, Petrarch is still seeking glory and a perfect literary model.

Scholarly debate remains divided as to whether the final version of the *Rvf* embodies a truly resolved narrative or remains inconclusive: while studies such as those by Santagata (1992) and Cherchi (2008) have seen the closing sequence as driving towards a completed conversion and a closure of the narrative arc, others such as Tonelli (2007) and Stroppa (2014) have argued that there are elements of inconclusion and we do not see a soul truly absolved from his error, and Gragnolati and Southerden (2020) have emphasised the presence of continuous retroaction in the *Rvf* which negates linear closure. However, that there are multiple competing tensions feeding into the final stages of constructing the *Rvf* indicates that the reason for disagreement about whether the sequence is concluded or not is because Petrarch is being pulled in different directions. Resolution to the narrative could take a different form depending on which priority was at the forefront of Petrarch's mind in any given version: there was no one single way to conclude the project in a neat manner. Building on these studies, this section argues that Petrarch was crafting a conclusion which could speak to multiple modes and concerns. To do so, he strengthened the classicising aspect, thus allowing him to speak to both religious and poetic concerns in the quest for the stability of the lyric self and his search for literary glory through lyric experimentation.

This chapter examines the so-called 'Malatesta', Queriniana and Vatican closures to the *Rvf*, before discussing the amended sequencing of the Vat. Lat. 3195. The forms prior to the final one allow us to trace the evolving nature of Petrarch's intellectual concerns in the years immediately prior to his death, which centre both on attempting to reconstitute the self through the pursuit of virtue, but also testing the limits of aesthetic neatness in his poetic model in imitation of the classical lyric collection. While Wilkins's methodologies for his proposed nine forms of the *Rvf* have been extensively challenged, four forms can be linked directly to manuscript evidence: the Chigi (L. V. Chig. 176),

Malatesta (BML Pl. 41. 17), Queriniana (Quer. D. II. 21) and Vatican (V. L. 3195). As a result, Feo (2003, pp. 277–278) has proposed these as the four editions of the *Rvf*.[335] Since these manuscripts (with the exception of the Chigi) reflect the final stages of constructing the *Rvf*, this thesis likewise focuses on those final forms which are attested to by manuscript evidence. The Malatesta form of the *Rvf*, as identified in the Laur. 41.17 concludes with 342, 340, 351–354, 350, 355, 366; the Queriniana form concludes 342, 340, 350–352, 354, 353, 355, 366; the original Vat. Lat. 3195 order concludes with 360–365, 351, 352, 354, 353, 366; and the renumbering on the V. L. 3195 moves the group of 360–365 to directly precede the *canzone* to the Virgin. The *canzone* to the Virgin was intended to conclude the *Rvf* in all of these forms: what is changing is what comes before it. With varying order, the pre-final forms prioritise the group of sonnets which finish in positions 350–355 in the final renumbering of the Vat. Lat. 3195, until the group of 360–365 replaces them.

The three competing intellectual concerns each emerge in varying capacities in the different versions of the closure of the *Rvf*, indicating that Petrarch was searching for a conclusion to the work in which they could be reconciled. As already mentioned, the first aspect is religious, as Petrarch seeks to present a more virtuous narrative in the closing sequence. This is the element onto which scholars have placed most emphasis, with Wilkins (1951), Bernardo (1974), Santagata (1992; 2014), and Jones (1995) all commenting on the increased tones of repentance in the revisions which create a more theologically inflected narrative, moving towards an Augustinian conversion narrative in which the mortal is rejected in favour of the divine. Petrarch had himself stated in the *Seniles* that with the end of his life approaching he sought to amend "non solum quod vite defuerit, sed etiam quod scripture" (*Sen.* 17.2.44), indicating a desire to design a more virtuous self to present to posterity through his writings, in line with the virtue he intended to seek in life. However, while Petrarch wished to present a more virtuous narrative, this did not mean it reflected reality. This thesis does not seek to reject the conventional wisdom that Petrarch was seeking a more virtuous autobiography, but rather to enrich our understanding of the *Rvf* through highlighting that there were other competing priorities also feeding into the editorial process.

As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, Petrarch conceived of the *Rvf* in imitation of the classical lyric poetry collection. The *Rvf* is at heart a work of poetry rather than a philosophical treatise or a meditative text, and therefore exists as part of a poetic tradition: Petrarch sought to intersect the vernacular and classical traditions to create a unique poetic model. On a formal level, this classicising is apparent in the conception of the *Rvf* as a structured and organised lyric sequence, as already noted by Rico (1988), who drew attention in particular to the classical elements at the beginning of the sequence. However,

[335] Pulsoni (2009) has similarly proposed eliminating the forms of the *Rvf* not directly linked to a manuscript, but instead of the Queriniana form, proposes a 'forma Pre-Vaticana', reflecting the final stage before Petrarch's renumbering attested in the V. L. 3195. This is attested to, he argues, by the BML Pl. 41. 10, the MS Italiano 551 from the National Library in Paris, and the MS 1015 from the Trivulziana Library in Milan.

this must also be extended to the closure of the sequence, where the classical element is still present despite the heightened devotional tones. Indeed, this section will show that Petrarch was increasingly concerned with macrostructural neatness in the various revisions to the closing sequence, as he strengthens the frame to the work through formal and thematic links.

The narrative of the *Rvf* also has a classicising dimension, as the rejection of Laura serves both a religious function and a literary function. In abandoning her, according to the classical model, Petrarch may both bring to a close the lyric venture which she represents, as well as make a declaration of glory having been obtained through his singing of her. Propertius and Ovid provide a model for necessitating the abandonment of the beloved in order to turn to weightier modes, and Horace provides a model where the declaration of poetic glory to posterity is also compatible with the communication of a moral message. Petrarch sought to render these models compatible with the vernacular context in which he was working. This thesis does not seek to dismiss the importance of the religious aspect to the closure of the *Rvf*, but show that this was operating in tandem with a classicising poetics: Petrarch wanted to be seen to be virtuous, thus fulfilling his moral obligations, while still seeking poetic glory as a consequence. As suggested by Franciscus in the *Secretum*, glory could still be sought, as long as it was not at the expense of virtue: this could be achieved through the imposition of the classical model.

The religious and classicising elements both feed into the same goal, and the third and final aspect to be discussed in this section: the desire to present an idealised self-portrait to posterity, through exploring the relationship between the selfhood of the *io lirico* and its quest for stability, and testing out means by which the project may reunite the warring parts of the self. This indicates that Petrarch was interested in the potential of the classical model to stabilise the lyric self, through grounding it in literary history through recourse to an established model. As indicated in the lyric discourse of classical poetry books, in particular that of Ovid, constructed narrative does not simply track authorial reality, but poetry itself also acts as a means of exploring selfhood through the various guises and experiences explored by the lyric lover to test out facets of his own identity to be presented in the self-portrait to posterity. This indicates the reciprocal nature of the creative process, in which poetry may reflect the psyche which pens it, but also the act of writing itself is a vehicle of self-exploration. This also takes on a moral dimension in Petrarch's works: the centrality of the process of literary production in guiding the self towards virtue in Petrarch's works has been convincingly argued by Zak (2010, p. 12), who sees that the act of literary production is intrinsically connected with caring for the self, as "through writing, Petrarch leads himself and his addressee to the pursuit of virtue", with the imposition of a narrative leading to virtue ultimately seeking to overcome self-fragmentation. Writing in this way does not simply track the self in an autobiographical sense, but as a process guides the author towards the achievement of a state of virtue, which aids in the reconstitution of the self and therein the counteraction of time's incessant passage through the achievement of salvation.

With regard to the closing sequence of the *Rvf*, however, the idea of seeing the process of writing as reciprocal with selfhood must be refined, as in the Vat. Lat. 3195, we are no longer dealing with a scenario of *production* but rather of *editing*. And it is not the content of the poems which is altered, but rather their positions in the sequence. Even the last group of poems to be introduced into the sequence, 360–365, which are first attested to as a supplement in the BML Pl. 41.17, were likely composed at least several years previously, perhaps even as early as 1358 (Santagata, 2004, p. 1049). This process is particularly visible in the V. L. 3195, where the final 31 poems are renumbered: marginal erasures on the manuscript indicate that Petrarch made multiple attempts to revise the sequence before settling on that left to us. For the *Rvf*, then, it is just as much the editorial process which explores the means of shaping the self as it is the process of writing the lyrics themselves. And, indeed, it is not simply a case of writing and editing being a means of guiding the self to virtue, but the processes are also means of guiding Petrarch towards the achievement of a perfect literary model in which to present his idealised literary self to posterity.

4.2.1 The 'Malatesta', or Laurenziana, form

This form, named after Petrarch's correspondent Pandolfo Malatesta and referenced in *Seniles* 13.11, was identified by Wilkins as corresponding to the form of the *Rvf* transmitted in the BML Pl. 41.17. However, as Feo (2001, p. 140) and Pancheri (2008, p. 59) suggest, to speak of this form as the Malatesta form is misleading: this manuscript cannot definitely be linked to the copy sent to Malatesta and is certainly not a direct witness in any case. Feo notes that in the more recently discovered *postscriptum* of the letter to Pandolfo, Petrarch complains that his scribe left no space for additions, which as a result means that that it cannot be the copy sent to Pandolfo, and Feo casts doubt over whether it could even be directly descended from Pandolfo's copy. However, the adjective Malatestan has now come to be used for the family of manuscripts exhibiting features similar to the form transmitted in the Pl. 41.17.

There has been much disagreement about the exact nature of the form as intended by Petrarch as transmitted by the manuscript itself, which is compiled by multiple hands, and also appears to contain multiple supplements to the initial form of the sequence circulated. Wilkins based his Malatesta form on the poems copied by the first hand: 1, 3, 2, 4–79, 81–82, 80, 83–120, 122, *Donna*, 123–198, 199, 200–227, 228, 229–238, 239–242, 121, 243 in the first part, and in the second part 264–326, 327, 328–336, 337–339, 342, 340, 351–354, 350, 355, 366, 359, 341, 343, 356. However, there has been much disagreement over possible amendments to Wilkins's proposed form, as multiple hands contribute to the transcription of the poems, and groups of poems are added in alternating hands following the *canzone* to the Virgin, next to which on the manuscript there is a note stating that it is to be put at the

end of the book: "in fine lib[ri] pon[atur]" (BML Pl. 41.17, p. 64r).[336] The first hand, which transcribes as far as the *canzone* to the Virgin also copies the group of 359, 341, 343, 356 after the second hand intervenes with 344–345 following the *canzone*, with successive supplements in a second hand added after the group written in the first hand.[337] Given the lack of clarity about whether the four sonnets written in the first hand were added after the transcription of the sequence up to *Rvf* 366 or not, I take *Rvf* 355 as the final poem before the *canzone* to the Virgin, although it should not be discounted that the group of four poems written in the first hand were intended to directly precede the *canzone* at this point.[338]

It is important to acknowledge that *Rvf* 366 was intended to close the lyric sequence at least as early as the Malatesta form, as indicated by the note "in fine lib[ri] pon[atur]". Clearly Petrarch was already sure at this point that he wanted to conclude the work with a devotional tone: seeking virtue, or at least representing himself to be seeking virtue, was to be central at the close of the sequence, as acknowledged by scholarship thus far. However, that virtue for a purely religious objective was not Petrarch's sole preoccupation is also hinted at by Malipiero's *Petrarca Spirituale* (1536), a rewriting of the *Rvf* with an increased religious tone: had Petrarch truly wished the *Rvf* to be concerned with devotion and virtue, these elements could have been greatly strengthened, as Malipiero demonstrated.

The narrative generated in the poems preceding the *canzone* to the Virgin in the BML Pl. 41.17, *Rvf* 351–354, 350, 355, indicates that at this point, Petrarch was focusing on his search for virtue with Laura as intercessor. *Rvf* 350 and 355, directly before the prayer to the Virgin, are a pair of sonnets which conclude this form of the work with Laura still central to Petrarch's strategy of salvation. *Rvf*

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[336] Accessible online at: http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWOIfE7_I1A4r7GxMIIY#/book, last accessed on 16 June 2022.

[337] In the second part, 264–326, 327, 328–336, 337–339, 342, 340, 351–354, 350, 355, 366 are written in hand one. Then 344–345 are written in a second hand, before the first hand writes out 359, 341, 343, 356. The second hand then copies 346–349, 357–358, 361–365, 360. Feo (2001) argues that the group of 359, 341, 343, 356 are a supplement, through comparing the BML Pl. 41.17 to the Quer. D. II. 21, where the group is written in a second hand, as if a supplement. Pulsoni (2007, pp. 62–70), rejects the view that the final four sonnets in the first hand should be reduced to a supplement, as it presumes that the sonnets were definitely transcribed afterwards, which according to palaeographic evidence analysis is not definitely the case. He believes the importance of the second hand has been understated, however Pancheri (2008, p.56), criticises this argument as it leans more towards the first and second hands as a unitary project, rather than as two distinct phases of transcription. The second hand also copies the successive supplements, including the group of poems 361–365 which will eventually form the closing sequence of the *Rvf*. Feo (2001, p. 129) asserts that *Rvf* 360, which is transcribed as the final poem in the BML Pl. 41. 17, is written in a third hand. Through a comparison of the BML Pl. 41. 17 and the Quer. D. II. 21. he asserts that the final group of four sonnets in the first hand of the BML Pl. 41.17, which are in a second hand in the Quer. D. II. 21, must have been a first supplement, then the poems of the second hand of the BML Pl. 41.17 consist of a second supplement, with 360 in the third hand representing a final supplement. There remains ambiguity about what Petrarch intended for 344–345, written in the second hand immediately following the *canzone* to the Virgin, but before the group of four written again in the first hand.

[338] The group of 359, 341, 343, 356, while written in the first hand in BML Pl. 41. 17, are in a second hand in Quer. D. II. 21. indicating that they are a supplement. However, it is unclear what placement in the sequence Petrarch intended for them in the BML Pl. 41.17.

350 focuses on Laura, discussing two types of beauty: earthly, or corporeal, beauty, which is always ultimately lost to the winds of time, and a second type of beauty which exists outside of the bounds of the temporal and transient world. The sonnet begins by praising Laura's extraordinary corporeal beauty: while nature by rule does not impoverish some to make richer the beauty of others, Laura is the exception, with the beauty of "questa etate" (*Rvf* 350, 3) concentrated "tutto in un corpo" (*Rvf* 350, 4), in her physical form. However, the poet sees her beauty existing also in atemporal fashion, a beauty which exists beyond the bounds of her mortal existence on earth, claiming that "Non fu simil bellezza anticha o nova" (*Rvf* 350, 9). Laura is in this way exalted as the perfect being, beautiful both in body during her earthly existence and unrivalled in eternity.

This beatified perfection of the beloved presents a type of love consistent with that of the *stilnovisti*, as the conclusion of the sonnet elevates her to intercessory status:

> Tosto disparve: onde 'l cangiar mi giova
>
> la poca vista a me dal cielo offerta
>
> sol per piacer a le sue luci sante. (*Rvf* 350, 12–14)

While the poet despairs at Laura's early departure from the terrestrial world, he realises that her true guiding light is that which emanates from her in heaven: it is with the removal of the mortal Laura from his *vista* that the poet is able to perceive a higher form of beauty. Beatrice had similarly informed Dante that upon her death her guiding pull should have only been stronger for him, enough to resist all other worldly pleasures: "Quando di carne a spirto era salita, / e bellezza e virtù cresciuta m'era" (*Purg*. 30, 127–128). The beauty of the beloved in her earthly guise is incomparable with the greater beauty and virtue her heavenly aspect offers, and in this way the lover is drawn towards the divine through the intercessory powers of the lady in heaven. At this point in the construction of the closing sequence, Petrarch is engaging with the vernacular tradition for the creation of his narrative of love, which provided existing models in which he could operate to explore his relationship with the divine. Indeed, the classical lyric tradition provided no models for a spiritual love, focused on profane love as the poets were.

However, the language of Laura's beauty in *Rvf* 350 also constitutes an appropriation of language applicable for the divine rather than a mortal beloved, indicating the misdirection of amorous intent present at this late stage of this form of the *Rvf*, and Petrarch's inversion of the proper divine hierarchy of love as explained by the character of Augustinus in the *Secretum*. While Petrarch's Augustinus takes a rather extreme stance on the dualism of material and immaterial, seeing love for any form of mortal object as incompatible with divine love, the language of this sonnet, and the fact it was in the following form moved to be earlier in the sequence, indicates that Laura could not be part of his strategy of salvation, at least at this moment. In the sonnet Laura's timeless beauty is dictated by the

form in which she existed on Earth: the claim "Non fu simil bellezza anticha o nova" (*Rvf* 350, 9) refers to her Earthly beauty, which having been concentrated in her 'corpo' makes her unparalleled in the past or the future. Petrarch here cites Augustine's description of God's beauty in *Confessions* 10.38, "pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova". Applying this idea to Laura's corporeal form, this misinterpretation of divine lexicon mistakes the beauty of creature for that of the Creator. Augustine's message that God as the highest source of all love and beauty exists atemporal, is redeployed in the service of praising the beloved, rather than in service of God. This draws attention to the fact that while Petrarch is attempting to see Laura in the mode of the *stilnovisti* as a beloved compatible with love of God, he misappropriates language of the divine. At this point, Petrarch is prioritising the pursuit of virtue, through following the vernacular, specifically the Guinizzellian and Dantean inspired poetics of the *stil novo*.

That Petrarch's attempt to access Laura's intercessory potential in *Rvf* 350 was fruitless is demonstrated by the following sonnet, *Rvf* 355. In *Rvf* 355, he realises that his desired salvation is still unachieved at this late hour, his hope extinguished by the swift passage of time and the brevity of man's stay on Earth: earthly beauty is not eternal. His failure to turn to the divine reinforces the interpretation that his praise of Laura in *Rvf* 350 was a misappropriation of divine lexicon, indicative of his incorrect mode of loving her. But it also implies a criticism of Laura at this stage, as she has failed to aid him to love her in a manner compatible with divine love. *Rvf* 355, which is the penultimate poem of the sequence in the BML Pl. 41.17,[339] was introduced into the *Rvf* in what Wilkins calls the Pre-Malatesta form at some point between 1369 and 1372 (Bettarini, 2005, p. 1549). This sonnet focuses intensely upon an increased awareness of the vicissitudes of time, with the poet chastising himself for wasting time fixed upon "mali" (*Rvf* 355, 7), the material delights with which he has been consumed. The incipit, which invokes the fluctuating and everchanging nature of time, reflects Petrarch's increasing anxiety towards the end of his life about counteracting time's swift flight, which is apparent in the intellectual maturation observed across the course of the *Familiares* and *Seniles*, and indicates that in these final revisions to the *Rvf* Petrarch was acutely aware that his time on Earth was running out. The positioning of such a sonnet at the climax of the sequence suggests that at this stage of systemising the order of poems, Petrarch was yet unable to amend his moral course, despite an awareness of the spiritual degradation of his state and the nearness of death.

Rvf 355 presents a turning point whereby the importance of following proper moral obligations is thrown into sharp relief through first-hand experience of the vicissitudes of time. Bettarini (2005, p. 1549) has highlighted that *Rvf* 355 exhibits "una presa di coscienza", with the intention of refocusing Petrarch's view on that which is able to endure beyond temporal scope. As observed in chapter 3.2, this sonnet bears similarities with *Familiares* 24.1, which had likewise indicated a moment of epiphany:

[339] The final sonnet copied before *Rvf* 366 in the manuscript, which is then followed by various supplements.

"video nunc tantam et tam rapidam vite fugam" (*Fam.* 24.1.12).[340] The sonnet exhibits a newfound awareness of the deceitful nature of time when Petrarch states "ora *ab experto* vostre frodi intendo" (*Rvf* 355, 4). This realisation of life's brevity results in the awareness that at this final point in the narrative the pivotal hour has passed to turn himself to heaven: it is too late for the desired self-reform. Moral concerns, and his search for virtue, are represented at this stage to be his primary concern. Petrarch concludes that he has missed the opportunity to end his trouble and turn to heaven:

> Et sarebbe ora, et è passata omai,
>
> di rivoltarli, in piú secura parte,
>
> et poner fine a li 'nfiniti guai. (*Rvf* 355, 9–11)

The reason is that he has directed his sight at "mali" (*Rvf* 355, 7) which have generated only "vergogna et dolor" (*Rvf* 355, 8). Remaining fixated on transient objects, he has remained blind to the passage of time, which instead of wasting in frivolous mortal pursuits should have been spent concentrated on "studio" to direct the soul away from "suo mal" (*Rvf* 355, 13) in the search for higher virtue. Left in stasis and destined to remain in the troubles caused by his own spiritual malaise, the poet chastises himself, "me stesso riprendo" (*Rvf* 355, 5), indicating the sense of spiritual stagnation apparent at the close of this version of the sequence. With this sonnet the final poem before the *canzone* to the Virgin at this stage of the systemisation,[341] Petrarch suggests that he is uncertain of achieving his desired virtue.

While the search for a narrative of virtue is the most prominent element in this version of the closure, there are hints that Petrarch is moving towards a classicising poetics. The unique Latin intrusion into the *Rvf* of *ab experto*[342] recalls the proemial sonnet's *per prova*, of which it is a translation. In the opening sonnet the phrase refers to the experience of love, the hopes and grief of being a lover, informing us that the narrative will centre around the theme of love. While the vernacular of the *Rvf* is more suited to exploring this theme, Petrarch, with this self-translation, reminds us that Latinity is central to his literary endeavours, including the vernacular *Rvf*. Indeed, the revisions to the closing sequence go on to impose an increased sense of Latinity upon the work, through imitating the classical lyric model. Yet vernacular poetry lends itself more aptly to exploring questions of love than Latin poetry does, especially with regard to the relationship with the divine: classical lyric collections provided no model for this, espousing a more openly erotic type of love, with no divine aspect. The classical lyric collection provided a model for an exploration of the trials and tribulations of love, but a pagan one, which Petrarch sought in the final version of the *Rvf* to reconcile with the vernacular

[340] 'Now I see how great and so rapid the flight of life is'.

[341] It is unclear at what stage the note of 'in fine lib[ri] pon[atur]' next to *Rvf* 366 in the BML Pl. 41.17 was added; that is whether it was added at the point of transcription of the *canzone*, or after supplements were issued.

[342] The other Latinism being the 'miserere' of *Rvf* 366.

tradition. The lexical recall also indicates that Petrarch is thinking about macrostructural links, to bring the *Rvf* to a close with a recollection of the opening sonnet, establishing a frame to the sequence as employed by the classical lyric poets. As the proemial sonnet recalls those who have experienced love through its trials, *Rvf* 355 reveals that the most important lesson learned through the course of the narrative is that of the brevity of time: something which he had learnt from more than anything from the classical authors, and in particular Horace. This indicates that in the pre-final versions Petrarch was already thinking about bringing the *Rvf* together in a ring structure in imitation of the classical lyric collection, the presence of which as this chapter argues will be further strengthened through the revisions to the V. L. 3195.

With no time left at the close of the narrative to enact the desired moral reform and piece together the scattered parts of his self fractured by mortal love, another narrative direction is needed to enact the turn to virtue, necessitating further revisions. The conclusion of the Malatesta form sees Petrarch attempt to see Laura in an intercessory light, in the manner of the *stilnovisti*, but also reveals that this method of achieving virtue and the desired salvation is to be unsuccessful. *Rvf* 350 demonstrates that Petrarch is not able to see Laura's beauty in the light of God, as he appropriates the language of the divine for her corporeal beauty, loving her as a creation rather than God as her Creator. With the failure to either restore the correct hierarchy or abandon Laura completely, *Rvf* 355 with its realisation of the lateness of the hour indicates that the way of loving Laura exhibited in *Rvf* 350 is incompatible with his salvation: she embodies his 'mali'. His strategy has not led to virtue and therein salvation, but rather to spiritual neglect through the fixation on transient pleasures. The conclusion of this form leaves the narrative in stasis, with the 'giovenile errore' unrepented. The conclusion of this form is at odds with the intent stated in the proemial sonnet: following the vernacular model of spiritual ascent, where the beloved is compatible with the divine, is proving fruitless for Petrarch.

As already mentioned, there is a lack of clarity about whether the group of 359, 341, 343, 356 consists of a supplement in the BML Pl. 41.17, or part of the intended form recorded in this manuscript, before supplements were successively added. Should *Rvf* 356 have been intended to conclude the sequence before the Prayer to the Virgin, or even conclude the form in itself, the narrative would have concluded with a final vision of Laura, who remaining silent, is both a source of comfort and of torment to the poet. It presents a negative view of love: Laura's "guardo amoroso" was the start of his "tormento" (*Rvf* 356, 5–6), very different to, for example, Dante's form of love, for whom Beatrice is a source of spiritual elevation rather than torment. The sight of Laura provides respite to Petrarch, yet his suffering continues in the waking world as well as the dream world. The sonnet also conveys the dissociative effects of Laura upon the self: his mind is conquered by grief (*Rvf* 356, 12), and he is angry at himself, with the interior dissidence and dissociative state emphasised by the repeated pronouns: "seco s'adira" (*Rvf* 356, 13); "se stessa ritorna" (*Rvf* 356, 14). Laura is still a source of disruption, causing an imbalance of the self which cannot control its own whims. While it is hypothetical that this sonnet may have ever

concluded the sequence, it reflects the recurring problems prioritised within the revisions to the order of the closing poems: the value of Laura to the poet's salvation, and the impotence of the self. Irrespective of whether it was ever intended to conclude the work, clearly the same issues were recurring for Petrarch in the pre-final phases of constructing the closure of the *Rvf*.

4.2.2 The Queriniana and Pre-Vatican forms

The form of the *Rvf* contained in the BML Pl. 41.17 is a key witness to the evolution of the *Rvf*, despite the uncertainty over the nature of the supplements. Another pre-definitive form to be witnessed by a manuscript is the Queriniana form, attested by the manuscript Quer. D. II. 21 of the Queriniana library in Brescia.[343] Feo in his theory of the four forms of the *Rvf* eliminates the stages of Wilkins' doctrine of the nine forms of the *Rvf* not witnessed by manuscript evidence, making the Queriniana form the third of four forms for him. While Feo's proposed amendments to Wilkins's theory asserts the Chigi, Malatesta, Queriniana and Vatican forms to be the four evolutionary stages, as attested by manuscript witnesses, Pulsoni (2009, p. 266) has proposed an alternative four forms of the *Rvf*, replacing Feo's Queriniana form with what he terms a "Pre-Vatican" form. He argues this form to be attested by manuscripts reflecting the original order of transcription of the V. L. 3195, before Petrarch revised the numeration of the final 31 poems. As examples of manuscripts attesting to this form, he suggests the MS 1015 from the Trivulziana Library in Milan, the MS Italiano 551 from the National Library in Paris, and the MS Pl. 41. 10 from the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence.

While these manuscripts reflect a pre-final stage of constructing the V. L. 3195, there also exist manuscripts attesting to variations in the sequencing of the closure, showing that there is a great degree of uncertainty in how we reconstruct the stages as circulated by Petrarch. For example, the Manuscript Segni 2 held by the Laurenziana, dating to the fourth quarter of the fourteenth century, exhibits the characteristics of the Malatesta family, being arranged in the following sequence: 1, 3, 2, 4–79, 81–82, 80, 83–120, *Donna mi vene*, 123–242, 121, 243–263, 264–339, 342, 340, 351–354, 350, 355, 359, 341, 343, 356–58, 360–64, 351–354, 365–366.[344] Pancheri (2008), building on Storey and Capelli's observations on the manuscript, has argued that marginal lettering and numbering from ff. 63–69 establishes characteristics unique to the revised Vatican form, but alien to the Malatesta form, suggesting that this reflects a snap-shot of the pre-final stages of ordering the poems.[345] Indeed Feo

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[343] The manuscript is partially mutilated, but the missing sections can be reconstructed through its two derivative manuscripts: Quer. VII B. 21 and Ambr. I, 88 *sup*.

[344] Unusual features of this manuscript, which are shared with the Riccardiano 1097, include the absence of poems 344–349, and the doubling of the group of 351–354 between 364 and 365.

[345] Pancheri (2008, p. 64) identifies the following letters and numbers added to poems: 339, e340, f341, g342, h343, i344, k345, l346, m351, n352; p356; u361, x362, y363, *3* 364, *4* 356, *5* 366, *6* d121 d146. He suggests this

(2001, p. 125) has traced 53 manuscripts leading back to the BML Pl. 41.17, with none being identical in content. This indicates the difficulty of identifying neat stratifications of the final phases of the *Rvf*, and that even within the established framework, there is significant uncertainty.

In the Queriniana manuscript, the sequence is slightly amended in comparison to the BML Pl. 41.17: the concluding sequence reads 342, 340, 350–352, 354, 353, 355, 366. The block of poems about which there was a lack of clarity in the Pl. 41.17 (359, 341 343, 356) are written in a second hand, which for Feo (2001, pp. 133–134) means they are a supplement: he argues that this comparison between the BML Pl. 41.17 and Quer. D. II. 21 indicates that the same group is a supplement in the Pl. 41.17, even though they are in the first hand.[346] Feo (ibid.) asserts that the Queriniana manuscript attests to an edition released immediately after that of the Pl. 41.17. However, this, along with Feo's assertion that it was compiled while Petrarch was still alive, is difficult to prove. Yet the manuscript attests to a further pre-definitive edition to the *Rvf*, one that is closely linked to that transmitted by the Pl. 41.17, but which exhibits some differences in sequencing.

Compared to the Malatesta form, *Rvf* 354 and 353 have been inverted, and *Rvf* 350 is moved five places earlier in the sequence. The amendments suggest that Petrarch was still trying to locate a narrative of virtue in this version of the sequence. *Rvf* 350 is moved five places earlier in the sequencing in this form, indicating that Petrarch wished to place a lesser emphasis on Laura's beauty, particularly as the language used in the sonnet constitutes an appropriation of language reserved for the divine. After all, *Rvf* 355 had indicated afterwards in the BML Pl. 41.17 that this focus on a mortal beloved was the very reason for which his salvation had been put off, and which it was now too late to achieve. That both the BML Pl. 41.17 and the Quer. D. II. 21 have *Rvf* 355 as directly preceding the prayer to the Virgin indicates with relative certainty that this poem was at one stage the penultimate poem, despite the uncertainty around the pre-final forms and the nature of the supplements. The Queriniana form sees *Rvf* 355 remain as the final sonnet before the *canzone* to the Virgin, indicating that despite the shuffling of poems prior to it, the poet still feels that it is too late for him to achieve the desired spiritual redirection. Prioritising Laura, and seeing her in a beatifying light, as a positive force, has still proved fruitless for him in crafting a more virtuous narrative.

4.2.3 The Vatican form

While there is no clear consensus on the nature of the pre-final forms of the *Rvf*, the autograph V. L. 3195, provides us with some certainty. There are no supplements to speak of, and the manuscript is a

is remarkable as it establishes the 340–46 succession present in the revised Vatican form, both before and after the final reordering, but alien to Wilkins's Malatesta family.

[346] Pulsoni (2007, pp. 62–70) on the other hand has argued that this group should not just be reduced to a supplement in the BML Pl. 41.17.

direct witness to an authorial form, written partially under Petrarch's direct supervision, and partially autograph after Malpaghini's departure in 1367. We are on firmer ground, with a clear author-ordered sequence, which is then amended by the same author, resulting in a snapshot of before and after, as opposed to the uncertainty surrounding the pre-final forms.[347] Thus far, this chapter has argued that Petrarch is trying out different conclusions to the *Rvf*, with the aim of seeking virtue, which he is at this point trying to achieve through Laura in an intercessory role. Yet, as indicated by the presence of *Rvf* 355 at the close of both the BML Pl. 41.17 and Quer. D. II. 21 witnesses, this approach characteristic of vernacular poetics, in particular the *Stilnovo*, has proved unsatisfactory to him.

In the V. L. 3195, *Rvf* 355 is removed from its position as the penultimate poem, with poems 351, 352, 354, 353 now concluding the sequence before the prayer to the Virgin. In *Rvf* 355, Petrarch had realised the significance of time's passage, but only in the final moment of the narrative in the forms transmitted in both the BML Pl. 41. 17 and the Quer. D. II. 21. The repositioning of this sonnet indicates that he intended to give himself the narrative space to complete this redirection to virtue, or at least counteract the prominence of time's passage for the narrative to lessen its effect. As Horace had sought to counteract time's passage with the completion of his own poetic monument, Petrarch's epiphany of *Rvf* 355 leads the poet to likewise attempt to defuse the flight of time, realising that through the resequencing of the closure and therein the redirection of the narrative, he may outwit time through the generation of his own 'monumentum' and more virtuous version of the self to present to posterity. Petrarch evidently wished his lyric sequence not to end on a note of regret, or the sense of time having run out, but to present this moment of realisation as occurring earlier in the narrative, thus giving himself the space to redirect the soul to virtue. In this intervention, Petrarch indicates that searching for virtue is at the forefront of his mind in this stage of systematizing the closure of the *Rvf*.

The original sequence of the Vat. Lat. 3195, however, still has at its heart a desire to rehabilitate the image of Laura: the poet appears to be using his heightened awareness of the limited time remaining to him to attempt to bring to completion the strategy of reconciling love of Laura with his salvation in the manner of the *stilnovisti*. This indicates that in this version of the closing sequence, despite the suggestion in the Malatesta form of the narrative generated by the sequence of *Rvf* 350 and 355 that the form of love espoused by the *stilnovisti* was incompatible with Petrarch's form of love for Laura, Petrarch is making renewed attempts at a narrative of virtue which still has Laura at its centre. This final attempt to seek salvation through Laura as intercessor commences with *Rvf* 351, which focuses on Laura's virtue, which the poet sees as being the root of his salvation. The sonnet is indicative of the *poesia della loda*, as Laura exhibits "somma cortesia somma honestate" (*Rvf* 351, 6), is a "fior di vertù, fontana di beltate" (*Rvf* 351, 7), and has a "gentil parlar" (*Rvf* 351, 5) and a "divino sguardo" (*Rvf* 351, 9). Laura's virtues in themselves, however, do not consist of "la radice di […] salute" (*Rvf* 351, 13), but

[347] Although the multiple erasures on the manuscript indicate various different sequences were tried out.

as Petrarch explains it is her "casto amore" (*Rvf* 351, 2), her rejection of him, which although initially seemed to be harshness, was for his good as it tempered his desires: "le mie infiammate / voglie tempraro" (*Rvf* 351, 3–4). The poet claims, reflecting Franciscus' argument from the *Secretum*, that Laura with her chaste exemplar of virtue removed every base desire from his heart: "ch'ogni basso penser del cor m'avulse" (*Rvf* 351, 8). At this point in the pre-final closing sequence, Petrarch is very much trying to resolve his internal conflict through his love for Laura as an exemplar of virtue, following a vernacular poetic model, rather than a classical or Augustinian one.

The following sonnet in the sequence, *Rvf* 352, continues to focus on Laura's angelic qualities, as Petrarch recalls her "non come donna, ma com'angel sòle" (*Rvf* 352, 7), elevating her mortal form to the status of a heavenly being, and thus by necessity raising heavenly aspirations for himself. Vecchi Galli (2012, p. 1145) has compared the Laura of this sonnet to Beatrice, as both women render death sweet,[348] indicating that Petrarch is at this point tending towards a narrative of love in tune with the *dolce stil novo*. However, in this sonnet Petrarch's love appears still earthly in nature: he imagines Laura's physical presence, as she is "più che mai presente" (*Rvf* 352, 8), and she lives on as an earthly memory in his mind: "vive ch'anchor mi sonan ne la mente" (*Rvf* 352, 4). Despite these continuous recollections, Laura is not present, and Petrarch's imaginings of her do not reflect a divine epiphany, but rather an earthly image based in memory, as her recalls her mortal aspect. That he has inverted the appropriate hierarchy of loving from an Augustinian perspective is clear from his claim that love vanished from the world, "partí del mondo Amore" (*Rvf* 352, 12), at the same time as Laura left her "soave velo" "in terra" (*Rvf* 352, 11). At her departure from life, Petrarch can no longer see any love in the world. Neglecting the idea that love is everywhere, in God's things with Him as Maker, Petrarch sees Laura as a source of earthly love, rather than in God's light.

Rvf 354 which follows in the original closing sequence of the Vat. Lat. 3195 further lauds Laura's incomparable beauty, through a dialogue with *Amore*, without whom the poet cannot express in words enough praise for his beloved. The two quatrains pray to Love for words sufficient for "le sue lode" (*Rvf* 354, 6), while the two tercets imagines a response from Love which praises Laura as his most beautiful creation since Adam opened his eyes, claiming that no creature has been so perfect since the original moment of creation. The uniqueness of her beauty is emphasised in "tutto fu in lei" (*Rvf* 354, 11) and "Forma par non fu mai" (*Rvf* 354, 11) restating Petrarch's belief in her timeless beauty which can never be paralleled, and further highlighted in "se vertù, se beltà non ebbe eguale" (*Rvf* 354, 7), praising her for both her virtue as well as her beauty. This focus on Laura's beauty echoes that of *Rvf* 350, with both sonnets emphasising that her beauty is unequalled not just in her own age, but will never again be paralleled. The similarity of the ideas expressed suggests that despite the repositioning of *Rvf* 350 earlier in the order, Petrarch cannot quite yet bear to conclude the sequence without a final poem

[348] cf. Dante's *Donna pietosa* (*Vita nova* 14, 17–28, vv. 73–75).

in praise of Laura's beauty. That *Rvf* 354, which expresses almost identical praise of Laura as *Rvf* 350, fills the same place in the sequence as *Rvf* 350 had done, suggests that despite the tinkering of the sequence which has occurred, the narrative has up until this point broadly remained similar, showing continued attempts at securing his salvation through the beloved.

The final sonnet before the *canzone* to the Virgin in the Vatican form, *Rvf* 353, focuses on Petrarch's grief for the loss of Laura. The lamenting poet addresses a little warbling bird, imagining the shared grief between the two as he mourns the loss of Laura as metaphorical day in fading in the final season of life. Forming part of what Stierle (1996, p. 242) terms "un gruppo della più intensa malinconia", *Rvf* 353 imagines Petrarch's grief caused by his lost love to be "un dolore talmente universale da essere condiviso anche dalla natura" (Vecchi Galli, 2012, p. 1160). Bozzola (2016, p. 43), following Soldani (2007), has emphasised that in this sonnet the weeping is "per definizione un pianto d'amore", suggesting that the emotions are not of regret, but rather of loss. Coupled with the emotional support he seeks, the poet also expresses a need for physical connection to alleviate his grief, "verresti in grembo" (*Rvf* 353, 7) indicating a reliance on the material world for comfort and support, instead of spiritual guidance provided by faith in the immaterial. The intense grief which recalls the distancing of the lost love sees the singing of the bird transform into weeping, in an imitation of Petrarch's similar vacillating between singing praise of Laura and mourning her which occurs throughout the sequence, and an indication of the emotional turmoil which dictates his experience of love.

This sonnet confirms that the lyric *io* has not achieved of the goal of resolving the internal conflict, as it remains destabilised through the grief he feels for the loss of Laura and the failure to achieve the desired spiritual redirection to the divine at the close of life. It is deeply concerned with notions of selfhood, as the opening word 'Vago' reflects the poet's own state, suggesting that his sense of self is derailed by the grieving process of losing Laura. Stierle (1996, p. 233) has suggested that the use of the word 'Vago' as the opening word recalls the *vagus Aeneas*, mimicking the circuitous wanderings of the Virgilian hero, with the *io lirico* subject to its "perpetuo errare nello spazio interiore o in un paesaggio solitario", with the errant wandering of the bird reflecting the hero subject to the whims of fate and having to "muoversi inquieto e senza progetti." This inability to exert control over the self and direct it towards virtue is caused by the mourning induced for Laura. Destabilised by the concrete and final loss of Laura, which more than anything indicates the continued mortal nature of Petrarch's love for her, the *io* is unable to generate a sense of purpose, causing it to wander in space and time akin to the warbling bird. This loss of selfhood is generated by the impermanence of the object of love, preventing the reconstitution of the self to resolve the internal conflict over the appropriate manner and object of love, leaving him errant at this final point in the narrative in this form. The consolation provided by the bird is not enough to help him recover from Laura's loss.

The opening of *Vago* however does not simply invoke *vagus Aeneas*, but also Petrarch's own use of the term to describe himself following in the footsteps of Horace in *Familiares* 24.10. In the letter to Horace, Petrarch had described how his "mens vaga" (*Fam.* 24.10, 125) conceived a noble envy of Horace, as well as detailing his promise to wander "vagus" (*Fam.* 24.10, 132) wherever Horace might lead. This suggests that the fragmented experience of individual subjectivity can perhaps be stabilised by looking to the ancients, and the models that they conveyed. The mention of the word *vagus*, which underscores the instability of the self and the loss of purpose, is made more potent through the conclusion of the sonnet setting Petrarch's grief in the context of time's flight through "la stagione et l'ora men gradita" (*Rvf* 353, 12), reminding us that should he find himself errant, he should look to Horace for guidance, and pay heed to time's swift flight. In the metaphor of life, winter is approaching, and the final hour is arriving as the poet rushes towards death, consumed in passion and grief for his beloved, unable to check the incessant passage of time. Stierle (1996, p. 239) suggests that in the sonnet time becomes a space in which the *io* is able to wander in memory, indicated by the *vago* of the incipit, governing both the little bird as well as the poet himself. The *io lirico* in this way attempts to traverse the past through memory, as indicated by "membrar de' dolci anni et de li amari" (*Rvf* 353, 13).[349] Reliving Laura through memory cannot, however, restore her mortal form, an impossible endeavour which leaves the *io* blind to his present moral failings. This is despite an awareness of the impetus to achieve moral change, which is made more pointed through the reflection on the lateness of the hour.

In this way, the Vatican form concludes with a sense of irresolution, a poet consumed with grief for a transient love, and a self lost in the winds of time. Petrarch in this form prioritises the search for virtue through Laura, although a classicising element does also appear in *Rvf* 353. The general narrative of the Vatican conclusion conveys a final attempt to unlock Laura's salvific powers in *Rvf* 351, 352, and 354, engaging with vernacular poetic traditions. However, *Rvf* 353 suggests that the poet's love and praise were dedicated to a transient earthly love, rather than a love capable of predicating spiritual ascent in the manner of Guinizzelli or Dante. In order to resolve the conflict in these final stages of organising the sequence, he tries to reinterpret the dynamic of the relationship in a different light, in order to locate in it the nucleus of his salvation, rather than changing his manner of loving. Laura, however, is always at the centre: in the BML Pl. 41.17, the Quer. D. II. 21 and in the original Vatican sequence we see a sonnet exalting her beauty followed by a sonnet realising the power of time and the transient nature of earthly desires. Reading these pre-final forms in parallel exhibits a cyclical process of stasis, whereby the poet attempts to tap into the virtues of Laura as a means of reaching his salvation, but realises that this approach is not compatible with the transient nature of life of earth, and as a result revises the sequence, only for the outcome to remain the same. Following a narrative which reconciles a mortal

[349] Garin (1965, p. 15) has asserted that the humanistic 'discovery' of man is linked precisely with the rediscovery of antiquity for the reason that gaining knowledge of the past meant that man made a comparison between antiquity and himself, but also began conceiving of the sense of human creation through time and memory.

beloved with the divine was evidently not proving satisfactory for Petrarch. Perhaps this is due to it being too close to the poetics of the *stil novo*, and in particular Dante: as this thesis has suggested, the adoption of the classical model was to prove his individuality from existing vernacular models, rather than succumb to them.

4.2.4 The revised closing sequence: moving towards virtue and poetic glory

The narrative thread exhibited through the revisions to the closing sequence indicates a general structural instability, and a wavering verdict on the value of Laura to the spiritual pathway which must be undertaken to secure salvation. Thus far, the strongest of the three priorities in the narrative has been that of seeking virtue, which Petrarch has been attempting to do through the means of Laura as an exemplar of virtue, driving him to strive for higher things. Having kept Laura central to his strategy of salvation in the previous versions of the closing sequence, but always realising at the final moment the futility of this approach for his brand of loving, the revisions in the Vat. Lat. 3195 respond to the increasing awareness that time is running out to secure salvation by attempting to direct the narrative towards a more virtuous form of love, one in which Laura must be rejected and the control over the self re-established. While the concern about locating the pathway to virtue has been predominant in the revisions thus far, there is also exhibited an impotence of the self, most clearly in *Rvf* 353, which the revisions in the V. L. 3195 seeks to counter. However, despite the narrative seeming to focus on virtue, literary concerns, and in particular classicising ones, are still very present. This is reflected in the decision to move towards the rejection of Laura in the final version, following the Ovidian and Propertian model, as well as strengthening the frame to the macrostructure on a formal level. In this final section, I analyse the sequence of *Rvf* 360–366, arguing that while on the surface Petrarch presents virtue as his primary concern, a classicising poetics is still at the forefront of his mind. He wants to be seen to be virtuous, but underlying literary concerns remain.

In the final version of the *Rvf*, the group of sonnets now constituting *Rvf* 361–365 are moved to directly precede the *canzone* to the Virgin in the revisions to the V. L. 3195. This group is first documented in the BML Pl. 41.17, being the final group of supplements added: after the first hand copies up to *Rvf* 366, the pair of 344–345 are added in a second hand,[350] followed by 359, 341, 343, 356 in the first hand, and then in the second hand the further groups of 346–349, 357–358, 361–365, and 360.[351] That *Rvf* 361–365 were released as a supplement to the form initially copied in the BML Pl. 41.17 has meant that manuscripts characteristic of this family often place them at the end of the closing

[350] Feo (2001, p. 129), agrees with Quarta (1938) that the second scribe mistakenly started copying the supplements into a gap left by the first scribe.

[351] Feo (2001, p. 129) suggests against the consensus that *Rvf* 360 is actually written in a third hand.

sequence, prior to *Rvf* 366, and Pulsoni (2009) has suggested that the sequence of 342, 340, 351–354, 350, 355, 359, 341, 343, 356, 344–349, 357, 358, 360–366 reflects the characteristics of this manuscript family. However, this group was placed at the end of the BML Pl. 41.17 by virtue of its nature as a supplement, rather than Petrarch necessarily intending them to be at the end of the sequence at that stage. Indeed, while the BML Pl. 41.17 and Quer. D. II. 21 both attest that this group was Petrarch's final release of supplementary material, they were copied originally in the V. L. 3195 in an earlier position. This suggests that Petrarch in the pre-final stages of constructing the *Rvf* did not wish to conclude the sequence with them, even though they were the final supplement to be released, except for *Rvf* 360. He was not yet prepared to finish the narrative on a note of repentance.

The revised closing sequence, consisting of *Rvf* 360–366, prioritises the reconciliation of the three competing priorities: constructing a narrative of virtue, imitating the classical model, and reconstituting the self as part of the idealised autobiographical project. As this section has shown, pre-final versions of the *Rvf* are predominantly concerned with securing a narrative of virtue in dialogue with the vernacular tradition, although the classical aspect of the ring structure was starting to emerge, and there are intensifying signs of the impotence of the self. However, even in the revised sequence, there is not a neat and linear narrative: each poem places emphasis on different aspects of Petrarch's competing intellectual concerns. *Rvf* 360 is clearly concerned with notions of selfhood, and the poet's ability to exert control over his competing desires, in order to locate the means by which he might achieve virtue. *Rvf* 361 and 362 as a pair of sonnets are concerned with introspection as a means of achieving a narrative of ascent, demonstrating that to find virtue, the self must also be examined. In a narrative sense, *Rvf* 363 prepares the way for the classicising poetics, as the final exploration of the *lauro* and its abandonment, relinquishing poetry and the beloved together in the manner of the classical lyric collection. While *Rvf* 364 and 365 are thematically concerned with repentance and the regaining of control over the self, they also work in a formal sense to reinforce the ring structure adopted from the classical lyric collection, establishing macrostructural links back to both the start of the *Rvf* and the start of the second part.

While *Rvf* 360 ostensibly commences the closing sequence, the group of 360–366 examined here does not by any means exist as a self-contained narrative entity. Indeed, *Rvf* 359 also provides a counterbalance to *Rvf* 360, with the contrast between the two evident in their opening lines: in *Rvf* 359, Laura is "soave […] conforto" (*Rvf* 359, 1), while *Rvf* 360 opens with the harsher image of the "dolce empio signore" (*Rvf* 360, 1). The two *canzoni*, as with the rest of the poems in the closing sequence, and indeed the *Rvf* as a whole, have quite an ambiguous relationship, with no clear sense of narrative progression between them, although the opening lines generate contrast when placed in sequence. Both, however, have Propertian imagery: the Laura of *Rvf* 359 is modelled upon the dream Cynthia of Propertius' 4.7, who like Laura descends to sit upon the corner of the poet's bed. And as we observed in chapter 2.2, Tonelli has argued that *Rvf* 360 is modelled upon Propertius 4.1, essentially signalling a

new beginning, as might be apt for a change in tone for the revised closing sequence, but also anticipating a movement away from love poetry more generally. As with the other poems of the closing sequence, and indeed the *Rvf* more generally, the relationship between them is quite complex in its ambiguity: while there may be points of overlap or contrast in both content and style, there is no clear narrative progression. Indeed, the lack of a progressive narrative to the *Rvf* is what allows such scope for the moving around of poems. With each sequencing, a new narrative is created, rather than the movement of poems compromising an intended linear progression.

Rvf 360, which commences the revised closing micro-sequence, recapitulates the polarised interior conflict as espoused in the *Secretum* and *Rvf* 264, whereby one part of the self argues for the salvific values of Laura, seeing her as a potential intercessor, and the other part of the self argues that she must be completely rejected as she distracts from the search for divine love. The *canzone* suggests that the exertion of control over the will is paramount if the *io* is to impose the desired narrative of virtue on the closing sequence. This pre-empts the *io* re-emerging more strongly in the revised closing poems, in particular in *Rvf* 364 and 365, as opposed to *Rvf* 353 in which it is errant. While it has been argued that *Rvf* 360 does not in fact suggest anything 'new',[352] there is one argument posed by the *io* in this *canzone* which was not present in *Rvf* 264: the damaging effects of love upon the self. When the *io* of *Rvf* 360 argues that love for Laura has been a destructive force, he focuses on mortal desires having upset the correct balance of the meaning of *amare*:

> Questi m'à fatto men amare Dio
>
> ch'i' non deveva, et men curar me stesso:
>
> per una donna ò messo
>
> egualmente in non cale ogni pensero. (*Rvf* 360, 31–35)

Already acknowledged in *Rvf* 264 is that love for Laura has caused him to forget his obligations to God, supplanting Him, as Petrarch states that he has loved a mortal thing with such faith as only God should be owed: "mortal cosa amar con tanta fede / quanta a Dio sol per debito convensi" (*Rvf* 264, 99–100). Vecchi Galli (2012, p. 900) has noted that it is here in *Rvf* 264 that "risuona finalmente la consapevolezza dell'errore messo in luce da sant'Agostino, cioé amare la creatura più del suo Creatore". In other words, it is only at the opening of the second part of the *Rvf* when there is the first clear acknowledgement of what constitutes the "giovenile errore" of the proemial sonnet. While *Rvf* 360 restates this same idea, a further novelty is added: it is not only man's obligations to God that have suffered as a result of his love for Laura, but also that he has neglected to properly care for the self. In

[352] For example, Santagata (1992, p. 321) suggests that "L'orazione è lunga, ma nessun argomento è nuovo: Agostino li aveva già tutti opposti a Francesco."

order to bring the narrative to a close, it is not just spiritual redirection to the divine which needs to occur, but also a self-examination to care for the self's defects.

In the *Secretum*, the damaging impact of mortal passions upon the self had already been indicated by Augustinus when he stated "Dei suique pariter oblivionem parit" (*Secr.* 3.7.11), they [mortal passions] induce one to forget God and oneself at the same time. Augustine had explained in the *Confessions* that the discovery of God was to be enacted through the introspective process of looking within: "Et ecce intus eras et ego foris, et ibi te quaerebam" (*Conf.* 10.38). Petrarch indicates in the *Secretum* and *Rvf* 360 that to gain knowledge of God, one must also have knowledge of oneself, suggesting a duality to the process whereby self-knowledge and knowledge of God operate in tandem. Petrarch, however, in *Rvf* 360 takes this concept beyond mere self-knowledge, suggesting that he has not *cared* for his self: "men curar me stesso". The destabilising nature of Petrarch's devotion to Laura on his own sense of selfhood had already been indicated in *Rvf* 268, where his ability to love his own self had been completely dependent on Laura: "senza / lei né vita mortal né me stesso amo" (*Rvf* 268, 29–30).[353] While the moral epiphany of the closing sequence is induced by the self-observation in the mirror of *Rvf* 361, recognition of the degraded state of his soul does not equal caring for it. This aspect of self-care is explored through the revisions, which involve imposing a more virtuous narrative conclusion upon the *Rvf* and the literary self, resulting from, as Petrarch had stated in the *Seniles*, amending his writings in line with his moral endeavours in life.

However, along with the two narrative elements of working towards virtue and exerting control over the self, the importance of which are highlighted in *Rvf* 360, Petrarch was also becoming increasingly concerned about the structuring of his sequence, that is its form. The position of *Rvf* 360 in the revised closing sequence indicates that Petrarch was moving towards structural patterning and neatness in the revisions to the closure of the *Rvf*, showing an increased concern around formal aspects and seeking macrostructural neatness in the manner of classical poetry collection. The *canzone* itself has been labelled as a turning point in the narrative of the *Rvf*: Santagata (2014, p. 193) sees it as the opening of the final sequence, "come una sorta di rilancio, di secondo inizio", and Cherchi (2011, p. 171) sees that "in questa canzone accade qualcosa di risolutivo", indicating its architectural importance in the closure of the sequence. *Rvf* 360 is connected on a formal level with *Rvf* 366, both of which have ten stanzas, a medieval number of perfection. In the revised sequence, with the two *canzoni*, *Rvf* 360 and 366 as bookends, we find a series of six poems to close the *Rvf*, the number of Laura, initiated by the return to the interior debate of *Rvf* 360. While the micro-sequence does not exist in isolation, the numeric neatness in the structure would have been appealing to Petrarch.

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[353] *Rvf* 292, which concluded the hypothesised Correggio form also stated that the sight of Laura had divided Petrarch's self: "Gli occhi di ch'io parlai sì caldamente, / e le braccia e le mani e i piedi e 'l viso, che m'avean sì da me stesso diviso" (*Rvf* 292, 1–3).

This numerical patterning is also complemented by macrostructural links. Recapitulating the arguments of the *Secretum* and *Rvf* 264, *Rvf* 360 returns to the dichotomy and interior arguments expressed in the opening *canzone* of the second part of the *Rvf*. Marking the final appearance of *Amore* personified in the work, it recalls the start of Petrarch's love experience: while Santagata (2004, p. 1384) notes that *antiquo* to describe *Amore* operates on a dual level, both in terms of the length of time which Petrarch has been under Love's influence, and the ancient nature of Love, it is of course also ancient in the sense of the narrative of the *Rvf* itself, where in *Rvf* 2 *Amor* is presented as an interfering deity, just as Ovid had done in the second poem of the first book of the *Amores*. *Rvf* 360 reevokes not only this opening sequence with its opening presentation of *Amore* as *antiquo,* but it also recalls the start of the second part of the *Rvf*, in the same conflicting arguments of *Rvf* 264, repeated almost verbatim through the personas of the poetic *io* and *Amore*. This dual structural function of recalling both the beginning of the work and the beginning of the second part serves to emphasise the stasis of the poet: his situation is unchanged, and the moral dilemma is unresolved.

The *canzone* has largely been assessed in terms of its relationship to the *Secretum,* and from a religious sense in its role in the internal dichotomy about the value of Laura in a narrative of spiritual ascent. Tonelli (2007, p. 803) has however suggested that the opposing arguments of *Rvf* 360 consist of "due elementi che niente hanno a che vedere con un percorso di conversione", and that the conflict centres around a narcissistic element of releasing the poet from his own suffering. This in itself is very classical: the elegiac poets sought freedom from the suffering and torment resulting from their love. The macrostructural connections back to the start of the narrative also evoke the similar frame used by Ovid in the *Amores*, in which the narrative is staged around a conflict with *Amor*. As explored in chapter 2.2, this Ovidian frame is redeployed by Petrarch in service of his internal conflict between mortal and divine. However, it is important to remember that *Ragione* is not just a Christian concept, man's particular gift to regulate the appetites. Personified, it is also a classical figure, and has particular importance for the inception of the Ovidian narrative of the *Amores*: in poem 1.2 of the *Amores*, Ovid speaks of 'Mens Bona', who has her hands tied behind her back and is being led away as a captive in the conquest of love's war. Likewise, at the close of *Elegies* Book 3, Propertius thanks 'Mens Bona' for his release from the storm of love, as his ship reaches port, in an image anticipating Petrarch's use of the metaphor of safe port. The inability of *Ragione* to arbitrate is not just a religious comment, but also a poetic motif: Petrarch chose images which speak to multiple literary concerns, not simply religious ones.

4.2.5 The physical and the spiritual: *Rvf* 361 and 362 in a narrative of spiritual ascent

As *Rvf* 360 was moved closer to the end of the sequence in the revisions, the irresolution of the conflict is intensified at this late moment, intensifying the urgency for spiritual redirection to virtue. The *canzone*

had indicated that for the internal conflict to be resolved, the self needs to be cared for, the first step of which must be recognising its defects, if they are to be resolved. In *Rvf* 361, we see the introspective process initiated, thus paving the way for the self to re-exert control and direct the narrative to virtue in the closing sequence. In this sonnet, the poet looks into his mirror and observes “l’animo stanco, et la cangiata scorza” (*Rvf* 361, 2). As the poet recognises his altered appearance and aging, he also realises he cannot contend with the of flight of time, resulting in his awaking from the “lungo et grave sonno” (*Rvf* 361, 8), and leading to the parallel spiritual ascent in *Rvf* 362. The pair of sonnets show that a drive to virtue, triggered by time’s passage, is at the forefront of Petrarch’s mind: or at least that is how he wants it to seem at the close of the narrative. As discussed in chapter 3.2, the *Seniles* had likewise presented an intensifying concern for spiritual redirection, driven by the *fuga temporis*. Petrarch is harmonising the individual works of the wider autobiographical narrative.

Rvf 361 shows an intense awareness of the effects of the passage of time, driving an introspective process and propelling the desire to impose a narrative which ultimately leads to virtue, which as Zak (2010, p. 12) notes is “the only state, as we have seen in *Fam.* 24.1, in which the incessant passage of time is checked, and in which, as we shall see, every other form of fragmentation is overcome”. Petrarch recognises that both his spirit as well as his physical appearance have altered in his old age, leading to “la scemata mia destrezza et forza” (*Rvf* 361, 3), a weakened agility and strength. In denial of the passage of time, and not respecting its laws ever bringing man closer to his death, the poet has been carried into old age in denial of his impending mortality. The reflection in the mirror speaks to the *io*, suggesting that he has been attempting to deny the aging of his soul and body: “Non ti nasconder piú: tu se’ pur vèglio” (*Rvf* 361, 4). Rather than contesting the laws of nature, the poet realises it is better to obey Nature, rather than attempting to “contender con lei il tempo” (*Rvf* 361, 6). Once raised from his sleep, the poet comprehends the swiftness of the flight of time, rushing man towards the end of his life: “veggio ben che ’l nostro viver vola” (*Rvf* 361, 9). With his eyes opened to his aging and weakening body, the poet is able to recognise how swift the passage of life is, and “ch’esser non si pò piú d’una volta” (*Rvf* 361, 10), that man’s stay on earth is temporary. *Rvf* 361 in this way marks the “prima volta ha la percezione realistica del proprio essere” (Cherchi, 2008, p. 151), as he understands that the torment which he had been undergoing was the result of his love of the flesh, and the failure to realise the physical body facing him in the mirror to be subject to the whims of time. This dispels his conviction that Laura’s mortal body can still prevail, as he alludes not just to his own impermanence, but that of the human body and therefore of Laura. A concern which is first and foremost Horatian in nature, which drove the introspective self-casting of the letters, is serving the same narrative goal in the *Rvf*.

In *Rvf* 361, as a result of the realisation that both himself and Laura are subject to the passage of time, Laura is presented in a positive role, and love of her finally appears compatible with love of God. As Stroppa (2008, p. 626) notes, Petrarch in *Rvf* 361 has an “anima *deformata* dal tempo, ma non

ancora *riformata*": he must still seek the moral reform necessary for his salvation. This occurs through a repurposing of Laura's image throughout the following sonnets, and an increasing focus on repentance. In this sonnet, Petrarch's awakening from his "lungo et grave sonno" enables him to realise that Laura is "dal suo bel nodo sciolta" (*Rvf* 361, 12). This condition of beatitude, which allows Petrarch to see her in heaven with God in the following sonnet, sees the poet separate her spirit from her body, as encouraged by his vision of Laura in *Rvf* 359, who had reminded him that her body is dust and that she is a "spirito ignudo" (*Rvf* 359, 59). Her incorporeal form in this sonnet inspires a message in the heart of the *io*: "e 'n mezzo 'l cor mi sona una parola / di lei" (*Rvf* 361, 11–12). There is disagreement over what this *parola* refers to. Santagata (2004, p. 1399) has suggested that most commentators agree that it is the words that Laura says in the following sonnet; Cherchi (2008, p. 152) has emphasised Christian, even Thomistic sentiments in this line, underlying what he argues is an "istintuale" message, which appears as if "un'illuminazione", reflecting the idea that Christ never wrote in ink because his teachings existed in the hearts of men. However, Petrarch is anything but a Thomist, and indeed does not stick strictly to any form of Christian doctrine, so this interpretation seems somewhat far-fetched. I add an alternative suggestion: Petrarch is reminding us that Laura, in her metapoetic role, is also the inspiration for the lyrics. The *parola* that she inspires within is also poetry: where a Christian sense may be seen, so equally may be a classicising one. This is not to say that there is no religious sense here: Petrarch leaves it open to multiple interpretations.

This sonnet presents the idea that divine love is to be found by looking within, that is through introspection. Contemplation and reflection are consistently emphasised in both classical philosophy and Christian theology as the precursor of spiritual ascent in order to abandon mortal love to reach the divine, as highlighted by Petrarch himself through citations of Augustine, Seneca and Cicero in the letters and in the *Secretum*.[354] Through the focus on introspection in the mirror, *Rvf* 361 closes one the debates of the *Secretum*, demonstrating that there has been a meaningful move away from the impasse at which the dialogue is left. In the *Secretum*, Augustinus asks Franciscus whether he has observed himself in the mirror recently, and Franciscus replies that he has, but the only change which he has witnessed is physical:

[354] In the *Seniles* (2.1), Petrarch cites Seneca: "Iste autem 'Initium' inquit 'est salutis notitia peccati'", "The philosopher, too, says, 'Recognition of sin is the beginning of salvation'" [Seneca, Ep. 28.9–10]. In the *Secretum* (3.11.1), Augustinus explicitly links reflection with driving love from the mind through citing Cicero: "ut ait Cicero, que ab amore animum exterrent: satietas, pudor, cogitatio". 'There are three things, according to Cicero, that drive the mind from love: a satiety, shame and reflection.' Augustine (*Conf.* 10.38) underlines the importance of looking inside oneself to discover God, rather than to external things: "Et ecce intus eras et ego foris, et ibi te quaerebam; / Et in ista formosa quae fecisti deformis inruebam. mecum eras, et tecum non eram. / Ea me tenebant longe a te, quae si in te non essent, non essent." 'And look! You were within me, and I was outside myself: and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created: you were with me, but I was not with you. Those created things kept me far away from you: yet if they had not been in you, they would have not been at all.' (Trans. Hammond).

Aug. Dic, precor, bona cum venia. Vidisti ne te super in speculo?

Fr. Quid hoc, queso sibi vult? Ut soleo quidem.

Aug. Utinam neque crebrius neque curiosius quam sat est! Quero autem ex te: nonne vultum tuum variari in dies singulos et intermicantes temporibus canos animaadvertisti?

Fr. Putabam te singulare aliquid velle dicere. Ista vero comunia sunt omnibus qui nascuntur: adolescere, senescere interire. Animadverti in me quod in coetaneis meis fere omnibus. Nescio enim quomodo senescunt homines hodie citius quam solebant.

Aug. Neque aliorum senectus iuventutem tibi, neque aliorum mors immortalitatem tribuet. Ceteris igitur omissis ad te redeo. Quid ergo? mutavit ne animum ulla ex parte corporis conspecta mutatio?

Fr. Concussit utique, sed non mutavit.[355]

(*Secr*. 3.11.5–6)

When Franciscus is unable to conduct a deeper examination of his appearance in the mirror, Augustinus proclaims: "Non minus enim vos et mole corporum et dulcedine rerum temporalium sepulti estis" (*Secr*. 3.12.3).[356] Petrarch has spent his years in pursuit of temporal goods, objects subject to the passage of time. This attachment was such that he had been unable to perceive the true nature of his soul in the mirror, distracted by worldly desires which prevent anything deeper than a superficial, visual, rendition of the reflection in the mirror. In *Rvf* 361, Petrarch now realises what Augustinus had intended with his question, with mortal desires driven from the mind through observation of the interior rather than the exterior: he now no longer merely sees the physical, but rather also his "animo stanco". He is required to look beyond the physical reflection, seeking that which is immaterial and invisible. That the moral epiphany occurs as a result of introspection indicates that for Petrarch self-knowledge is central to the transformative process, that is the recognition of man's own state, rather than the intercessory powers of the beloved.

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[355] '*Aug*. Please don't take offense at this question, but have you looked at yourself in the mirror recently? *Fr.* What's this all about? Yes I have, as usual. *Aug*. I hope that you haven't done so more often, or more attentively, than was necessary! But now let me ask you: haven't you noticed that your face changes from day to day, and that white hairs are beginning to show on your temples? *Fr*. I thought you were going to say something unusual. But this is the common lot of all who are born: growing up, growing old and dying. I've observed in myself what I see in almost all my contemporaries. I don't know why, but these days men grow old more quickly than they used to. *Aug*. Other people's old age won't give you back your youth, nor will their death make you immortal. Let's leave the others alone and come back to you. Tell me: didn't the sight of the changes in your body change your heart in some way?'

[356] 'You too are buried under the weight of your bodies and the pleasure of worldly things.'

The moral epiphany of *Rvf* 361 instigates a sublimation of mortal love in favour of the divine, which is demonstrated in *Rvf* 362, *Volo con l'ali*, which pairs the physical mutation of the body of the poet with the parallel spiritual ascent. In *Rvf* 362 this physical aging is shown to be the catalyst of the parallel spiritual transformation, as the poet's "costumi variati, e 'l pelo" (*Rvf* 361, 8) enable Laura to extend the love of *caritas* to him: "Amico, or t'am'io et or t'onoro (*Rvf* 362, 7). Thus Laura addresses him as *Amico*, in a reference to the common bonds of mankind's *caritas*, love of other, through love of God, rather than as an object of mortal desire: he has abandoned the sensual in favour of the platonic, loving her through God and in His light. A vision of ascent to heaven, Petrarch sees Laura, asking her to see also the face of God. Tonelli (2007, p. 810) sees Laura as the object of *pregando* in this sonnet rather than *Signor*, resulting in the implication that it is Laura who is able to reveal the *volto* of God, thus implying the discovery of her true intercessory status. Petrarch here shows that he has finally found the correct balance in his love, as emphasised by Augustinus in the *Secretum,* who stated that "creatum omne Creatoris amore diligendum sit" (*Secr*. 3.5.2).[357] This is evidenced through the contrast drawn with another sonnet of heavenly ascent, *Rvf* 302, *Levòmmi il mio penser*. Similar to *Rvf* 362, it describes a vision of ascent to heaven, however the result of the heavenly journey is very different: *Rvf* 302 presents "the *donna* as terminus of the journey" (Olson, 1958, p. 156), while in *Rvf* 362 the terminus is God, reached with the aid of Laura: "Menami al suo Signor" (*Rvf* 362, 9). Laura appears here to be in a true intercessory role. This reconfiguration of the location of love as proper to Creator rather than creature means that Petrarch now sees Laura in the light of God, recognising Him as the true origin of all love, rather than love for Laura as an object of creation: his 'bottom-up' view of love is becoming 'top-down'.

4.2.6 Freedom and grief in *Rvf* 363: Laura's abandonment as a poetic strategy

While *Rvf* 361 and 362 indicate that Petrarch was prioritising religious concerns at the close of the sequence, or at least depicting as much, *Rvf* 363 takes a somewhat surprising narrative turn, given that Laura has just been viewed in what appears to be a genuine intercessory role. In the sonnet, the laurels are extinguished, Petrarch celebrates his newfound freedom, bitter yet sweet, and he turns towards God. The pre-final versions of the closing sequence had all attempted to see Laura in an intercessory light, reconciling her with the divine in a narrative of spiritual ascent. Yet when Laura now makes her last appearance in the *Rvf* finally in a positive role, she appears to be rejected immediately afterwards. While linearity is certainly not built into the fabric of the *Rvf*, this turn indicates that her role is not purely to facilitate a narrative of spiritual ascent, or even distract from it. As this thesis contends, the reason for this rejection is part of Petrarch's strategy of imitation, which ultimately seeks poetic glory through the

[357] 'every creature must be loved for the love of God'.

creation of a new model in the vernacular. Laura, a classical beloved in nature, must be rejected, as Propertius and Ovid had rejected their beloveds.

There have already been many interpretations of the reason behind turning away from Laura in *Rvf* 363. Tonelli (2007, p. 813) sees this turn away from Laura in the sonnet as expressing a conversion to God "perché Amore lo ha lasciato". In this interpretation, Petrarch does not voluntarily turn to God, but rather does so due to the failure of his love for Laura as a means of salvation. She argues that there is a causal relationship: "Petrarca si rivolge a Dio perché lei è terra, il suo unico signore, Amore, lo ha lasciato libero e *di conseguenza* torna a Dio" (2007, p. 812). As a result the experience is "amara" because freedom from *Amore* is a negative state of existence for the poet without his Laura, which forces his hand in the turn to God. This interpretation is however flawed in its suggestion that Petrarch is forced to turn to God due to the failure of Laura as a means of salvation. After all, Laura has just been viewed in a salvific light in *Rvf* 361 and 362, thus vindicating the arguments of Amore in *Rvf* 360. Stroppa (2008, p. 630) poses an alternative: that Petrarch's freedom is bitter precisely because that freedom cannot be the same as his former freedom, because "la presenza di lei ne ha indirizzato i passi e guidato la volontà". This means that he has been changed by his experience of love for Laura: he is not untouched by mortal love as before, and the "altr'uom" of the proemial sonnet takes on a double meaning: he is no longer the man conflicted by mortal passions, but he is also no longer the same as he was before those same passions.

A third reading of the abandonment of Laura in *Rvf* 363 has viewed the sonnet through the tension between the profane desires of classical mythology and the desire for Christian redemption. As the Laura-sole and the laurels are extinguished in the first quatrain of the sonnet, and the narrative moves towards a more devotional flavour in its concluding moments, Bernardo (1974, p. 193) suggests the presence of "a deeper meaning of the Apollo-Daphne myth as viewed through the eyes of a highly learned Christian humanist", in essence the reading of the myth through the lens of the tension between earthly passion and redemption. Laura has befallen the same fate as all mortal things, extinguished by death, and along with her the "spenti … lauri" (*Rvf* 363, 4) lose their vibrancy, becoming the "querce et olmi" (*Rvf* 363, 4). Bettarini (2005, p. 1601) notes the strongly terrestrial, functional connotations of these trees, in opposition to the evergreen laurels symbolic of divinity and poetic glory, thus indicating the poet's recognition and consequent loss of confidence in his love for Laura as a means of divine ascension, and indeed as the inspiration to his poetry.

This interpretation suggests that the extinguishing of the laurel itself indicates that desire for earthly goods, mortal passion and poetic glory, are incompatible with Christian salvation, and the laurel becomes symbolic of this tension between the competing desires. Bernardo (1974, pp. 193–194) argues that the death of the laurel ultimately counterbalances the strongly pagan *Rvf* 34, which commenced an early form of the *Rvf* transcribed in 1342, indicating that the Apollo-persona of the poet must be put

aside to achieve his desire salvation, and with that the Laura-Daphne identification deconstructed along with her value as poetic inspiration for his love lyric. However, this interpretation perhaps takes Petrarch a little too much at face value: Petrarch's actions often contradict his words. He claims that pagan studies are a practice of his youth, but then also he claims poetry and the vernacular was only a youth preoccupation, when evidently it was also mature. To suggest that the laurel, and poetic glory, is incompatible with Christian salvation, and the religious tones at the close of the *Rvf* are to counterbalance the classicising early form of the work, understates the presence that literary concerns, and in particular a classicising poetics, still have at the close of the *Rvf*: it is after all an imitation of the classical model in its very conception, and he is trying to reconcile the religious and classicising aspects, rather than sacrifice one for the other.

These interpretations place too much emphasis on seeing the conflict in a Christian or moralising light: the rejection of Laura should also be viewed as a declaration of fame achieved and a consequent transition in literary modes, in imitation of the classical lyric collection. Of course, the Christian and classicising elements are not mutually exclusive, but Petrarch was being very deliberate in choosing images that could speak to multiple concerns. As discussed in chapter two, the very metaphor of the *lauro* itself speaks to Laura's relationship with poetry, in imitation of the classical beloved. Unlike Dante, Petrarch does not choose an allegorical name for his muse with a theological value, but rather one which alludes to a poetic function. For Ovid and Propertius, the beloved is by necessity rejected, along with the love lyric that she represents in her metapoetic guise, in order to facilitate a change in poetic modes. Chapter 2.2 showed that Ovid sought "fama perennis" (*Am.* 1.15, 7) through his lyric project, which he declared himself to have achieved in the closing poem: elegy (and the beloved) is abandoned as glory has been achieved. Through the classical lens, the rejection of the beloved is not caused by her failure as an object of love, but it is rather a declaration that fame has been achieved, facilitated by her. Laura, like Cynthia or Corinna, is no longer needed, as the poet has been elevated to fame through his singing of her: she has served her poetic purpose.

This reading also fits into Petrarch's wider autobiographical strategy, which represents the *Rvf* as a youthful project, paving the way for a turn to more lofty literary modes in later life, namely what he terms as his Christian Letters (although the letters are clearly of classical conception as well). For Ovid, elegy had been a distraction from the epic he had been preparing to write, and in the closing poem he bids farewell to his "imbelles elegi" (*Am.* 3.15, 19), as he turns back to greater literary modes. Likewise, Propertius, while not making a change to a different genre, moves towards a different type of elegy after the rejection of Cynthia. His abandonment of her, and the love lyric she represented, paves the way for a change to a more serious poetry, one exalting the glory of Rome. The death of the laurels in *Rvf* 363 is not merely the abandonment of the desire for fame, but rather a statement that fame has been achieved, as per the classical model, and anticipates the change to more weighty poetic modes and themes. The abandonment of Laura thus serves multiple literary purposes.

However, this narrative presented in the *Rvf* is at odds with that presented in the *Triumphi*, where not only does Laura appear to be redeemed in the *Triumphus Eternitatis*, but Fame is also conquered by Time, showing that it too is transitory. Bernardo (1974) has attempted to show that there is still residual justification of love for Laura even in the revised closing sequence of the *Rvf.* Yet this presupposes that Petrarch was seeking coherency across his works. The reason for the apparent divergence, I argue, is once again a question of poetics: different genres, and consequently different narrative strategies, permit different narrative outcomes. Viewing the *Rvf* through the model of the classical lyric collection necessitates that Laura should be abandoned at the close of the sequence, as Ovid and Propertius did with their beloveds, who had been mediators of fame and served in a meta-poetic role as poetry itself. Yet the *Triumphi* are not a collection of love lyrics, and their metre is *terza rima*, that most closely associated with Dante's *Commedia*. This alludes to the potential for a more Dantean style of love, one where the beloved is central to the narrative of ascent in a linear fashion, as Petrarch revels in the potential to see Laura in eternity: he was not necessarily seeking uniformity in vision.

Similarly, while in the *Triumphi* Fame is conquered by Time, Franciscus had argued in the *Secretum* that although only divine concerns are eternal, on Earth man could still pursue earthly fame, as a preamble to the eternal. Time is defeated by Eternity, and as exhibited in the letters this necessitates a drive to virtue to outwit the *fuga temporis*, but glory is still clearly being sought by Petrarch while on Earth: even while presenting poetry as a product of youth in the *Seniles*, perfecting his lyric sequence was still an end-of-life preoccupation. And as Horace had shown, fame more than anything else was able to counteract the passage of time: it might not last forever, but certainly would see a part of him survive longer than anything else could. While the moral imperative existed to put aside the desire for fame via literary pursuits, the simple fact that Petrarch was still intervening in his projects at the close of his life indicate that he was not prepared to do this in reality. This continued tinkering with the *Rvf* shows that abandoning poetry was something he seemingly found impossible to do. Thus, the melancholic tone of *Rvf* 363 hints also at the sadness of seeking to abandon lyric poetry itself. This is expressed in the "libertate, amara et dolce" (*Rvf* 363, 11), which is in itself a classicising image, as mentioned in *Fam.* 24.10 where Petrarch closes the letter to Horace with the phrase "dulce acerbitas", sweet bitterness, a commonplace oxymoron in classical literature.

The abandonment of Laura in *Rvf* 363 serves a further narrative purpose: suggesting a reengagement with the self. Gragnolati and Southerden (2020, p. 25) have highlighted that in *Rvf* 23 "the encounter with Laura is the encounter with poetry. It is also an experience of dispossession of identity and loss of self", which is explored through the various metamorphoses the poet undergoes, and most symbolically that of the laurel through which the self must also be reconstituted. As the lyric *io* rediscovers his potential for introspection in *Rvf* 361, the means of engaging with the self are rediscovered. The second quatrain of *Rvf* 363 focuses on the newly found absence of Laura as an

external stimulus: "Non è chi faccia et paventosi et baldi / i miei penser', né chi li agghiacci et scaldi, / né chi li empia di speme, et di duol colmi" (*Rvf* 363, 6–8). Without an external force directing him, as a result the *io* emerges much more strongly in the final two sonnets of the sequence. Laura is no longer needed as a means of exploring the relationship with the divine, as the self has uncovered its own capacity to do so, or as a stimulus for his lyrics, and as the poetic project is nearing an end, so must she be relinquished.

As this shows, one narrative act can serve multiple purposes. There was clearly always the intent to present a more virtuous self through the editorial process, as per the moral imperative to seek virtue over glory debated in the *Secretum*. But, as long as virtue is not at the expense of glory, Petrarch is still free to obtain glory by extension. This indicates that the stronger focus on establishing a narrative virtue on the pre-final forms of the *Rvf* is due to Petrarch trying to systemise the element of virtue first, to ensure that he still had time to give attention to the work as a lyric model for posterity. Reconciling the classical model with an Augustinian conversion narrative however allowed this: in both, the beloved must be abandoned. In the Augustinian narrative, she is abandoned for a moral imperative, and in the classical model she is abandoned for a poetic reason, which is as a declaration of glory obtained and the consequent transition to other literary modes. Glory can thus be sought, without compromising the virtuous appearance he wishes to outwardly present.

4.2.7 Repentance and hope: *Rvf* 364 and 365

The final two sonnets of the sequence which precede the *canzone* to the Virgin indicate that Petrarch was moving towards not only imposing a narrative of virtue, but ensuring that this was compatible with the classical model, therein crafting his own model of a lyric sequence to present to posterity. After the classicising narrative turn of *Rvf* 363, this pair of sonnets addresses the question of the classical model on a formal level, through strengthening the ring structure which frames the work. The sonnets demonstrate that Petrarch was attempting to bring three strands of concern together at the close of his lyric sequence; the religious; the strengthening of the *io* as part of the idealised autobiography; and the project of classical imitation. For the religious aspect, the two sonnets take a strongly penitential tone, repenting the poet's error of mortal love, and suggesting the desire to impose a more virtuous conclusion to the lyric sequence, one in line with a more Augustinian narrative of spiritual ascent. For the aspect concerned with re-exerting control over the self, they stage a return to the senses and an attempt to bring the *io* to the fore; and in terms of imitating the classical model, the placement of *Rvf* 365 in particular highlights that Petrarch was not only concerned with narrative, but also macrostructural patterning. It has often been seen, following Cochin's (1898, p. 146) hypothesis, that *Rvf* 364 and 365 form two

distinct parts of a single prayer, explaining their coherence in lexis and message.[358] However, while the two sonnets do address God and pray for his aid, they are still poetic in form. Given Petrarch's competing classicising and Christianising impulses, reading them straightforwardly as prayers in a devotional context is problematic.

Rvf 364 is the final anniversary poem of Petrarch's lyric sequence, marking the terminus of the fictionalised chronology, although its supposed date of 1358 should not be taken at face value, and could also be taken also in a past sense. As explored in chapter 3.2, temporal markers are key in Petrarch's positioning of his evolving intellect, as he creates a sense of 'then' versus 'now' to highlight his changed intellectual priorities. *Rvf* 364 is no different, as Petrarch commences by recalling the length of time spent under the yoke of love, "Tenemmi Amor anni ventuno ardendo […] dieci altri anni piangendo" (*Rvf* 364, 1–4), in order to intensify the repentant turn which he is about to take. Dutschke (1981, p. 86) has suggested that the anniversary poems throughout the *Rvf* function cyclically, operating on cycles of conflict and resolution. While overall throughout the *Rvf*, and emphasised through the impasse of *Rvf* 360, this suggests a general sense of stasis, *Rvf* 364 "signals a lessening of the conflict and a movement towards divine resolution" (ibid.). The past time frame of the opening quatrain suggests that the poet has moved beyond his period of servitude to love, opening a new stage in his moral development. A language of penitence is then deployed throughout the sonnet: "reprendo / di tanto error" (*Rvf* 364, 5–6); "alto Dio, a te devotamente rendo" (*Rvf* 364, 8); "pentito et tristo" (*Rvf* 364, 9); "conosco 'l mio fallo" (*Rvf* 364, 14). Even though we are not quite at the conclusion of the sequence, the many verbal echoes of the proemial sonnet (error/errore; duol/dolore; pentito/pentersi; conosco/conoscer; piangendo/piango) suggest that the cycle is being brought to a close on a movement towards the divine, rather than the focus on Laura evident in the earlier versions of the closing sequence. The macrostructural frame, in imitation of the classical model, is becoming stronger, driven by these intensified lexical and thematic recalls.

The attempt to repent the "giovenile errore" is brought to a height in *Rvf* 365, which in being placed as the penultimate poem in the sequence renders more emphatic the rejection of mortal love and the desire to turn to the divine. Both *Rvf* 364 and 365 are structured to reflect a turn to the divine, with the strongly penitential tones reflecting the fact that repentance is a certain way of securing God's favour, as confirmed by Petrarch in the *Seniles:* "qui contemnentem ac peccantem non deseruit,

[358] Santagata in his edition (2008, p. 1406), follows Cochin (1898 p. 146), who reads 364 and 365 as two distinct elements of the same prayer, and thus extends 1358 as the likely date of composition, based upon internal evidence in 364 which as an anniversary poem is self-dating. König (1983, pp. 243–247) remains sceptical of dating the composition of poems using this method, maintaining there is nothing more than anecdotal evidence from the sonnet itself to confirm its date of writing. Such a date would indicate that Petrarch stopped writing in 1358, which seems unlikely. He does not propose an alternative date of composition, but instead suggests that he re-wrote poems composed earlier to bring the *Rvf* to a close.

penitentem ac de se sperantem, se amantem precantemque non deseret" (*Sen*. 8.1.52).[359] In order to secure God's favour and achieve salvation, hope must be placed in Him, and sins be repented. *Rvf* 364 begins with the reference to Petrarch's imprisonment by mortal love in the incipit, explaining that *Amor* held him in the fires of passion, and moves in the course of the sonnet towards the address to the divine, with *Signor* commencing the final tercet, as Petrarch prays to God for aid and acknowledges his mistake. Similarly, *Rvf* 365 structurally reflects a turn to the divine, where in the opening couplet Petrarch presents an emphatic rejection of mortal love:

> I' vo piangendo i miei passati tempi
>
> i quai posi in amar cosa mortale (*Rvf* 365, 1–2)

As Gesualdo (1533, p. 779) notes, the word *amar* encapsulates not the act of love itself, which is to be valued, but rather Petrarch's unrestrained mode of love: "il che sfrenamente & oltre misura intendiamo". Petrarch's ills resulted from his inability to love Laura in the proper manner, and failure to reconcile that love with divine love of God. This perhaps even casts the *io lirico* in the mould of the classical lover, whose love was of a more erotic nature: in the opening sonnets of the *Rvf* Petrarch had already cast himself as the Ovidian lover.

As a result, the sonnet presents a turn away from these youthful (elegiac) passions in favour of the divine, as the closing couplet contrasts with the opening of the sonnet:

> et al morir, degni esser Tua man presta:
>
> Tu sai ben che 'n altrui non ò speranza. (*Rvf* 365, 13–14)

Here the focus has turned to God with the appeal for divine grace, with the structuring of the sonnet reflecting the desired turn from mortal love to hope placed in the divine. The sonnet concludes with the idea of hope placed in God, which as Petrarch states in the *Seniles* is the only appropriate form of hope: "In illo spes fixa sit: in se sperantes non frustrabitur" (*Sen*. 6.4.6).[360] In *Rvf* 363, Petrarch had stated that in Laura's absence, there is no one who fills his thoughts "di speme" (*Rvf* 363, 8), and similarly in *Rvf* 364 he refers to having held himself in misery for hope in Laura: "nel duol pien di speme" (*Rvf* 364, 2). Yet in the final sonnet of the *Rvf*, *speranza* is placed in God, rather than in a mortal creature, in the same way that Mazzotta (1983, p. 4) has suggested that at the end of Dante's *Vita nova*, the goal of the poet is sustained by the verb of hope, *spero*.

Petrarch's attempted rejection of his mortal love for Laura is made more forceful through his use of lexical and thematic links to topographically important poems in his lyric sequence. In particular,

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[359] 'He did not abandon me when I was haughty and sinful, will not now that I am repentant, now that I hope in Him, love Him and pray to Him.'

[360] 'Let your hope be anchored in Him; He will not disappoint anyone who hopes in Him.'

like *Rvf* 364, *Rvf* 365 links to *Rvf* 1 and *Rvf* 264, which as the opening poems for both parts of the *Rvf* indicate that Petrarch was attempting to create a macrostructural frame to the sequence, replicating the methods used by classical lyric poets to organise their collections. König (1983, p. 239) has demonstrated that *Rvf* 264 and *Rvf* 365 are intended to be related in a precise manner, with the sonnet having a double function of closing the second part and being an epilogue to the entire work. However, *Rvf* 365 does not conclude the sequence, so its function is not strictly that of an epilogue, but rather draws different thematic and formal elements together in preparation for the closing *canzone*. König (1983, p. 250) identifies the formal gerundial construction in the incipits of both poems as unique in the *Rvf*, 'I' vo pensando' and 'I' vo piangendo', which means the second part forms a chiastic structure, with the opening quotation a common method of allusion in Troubadour poetry. Other formal connections identified between *Rvf* 264 and 365 include the use of rhyme words mortale/ale, also a troubadour method of allusion, and the lexical link of "amar cosa mortale" (*Rvf* 365, 2) and "mortal cosa amar" (*Rvf* 264, 99). The recall of this phrase acts to emphasise the turn to the divine, in line with Jones' (1995, p. 27) conclusion that "the second arrangement consequently has a very different emphasis from the first and is more medieval in its implications, intentionally subordinating the bond of personal relationships to religious issues and stressing in their place the poet's relations with his God". In *Rvf* 365, Laura as the object of his love is rendered as an abstract 'mortal cosa', while at the same time the turn to the divine is made evident in the numerous invocations: "Tu che vedi" (5); "Re del cielo" (6); "tua gratia" (8); "Tua man" (13); "Tu sai ben" (14).

However, while it is true that certain macrostructural links present in *Rvf* 365 do create a neat architectural symmetry, König's suggestion that this sonnet was composed purely for architectural purposes fails to explain why it was not placed in the final position from its first introduction, if that was what Petrarch intended. Rather, the decision not to place it there when it was first introduced into the sequence suggests that in the pre-final arrangements there was still an attempt to redeem Laura as a means of salvation in terms of constructing a narrative of virtue, which would not necessitate such a forceful rejection of her at the close of the narrative. The similar, albeit not identical, gerundial structure in the opening couplet of *Rvf* 353, "over piangendo, il tuo tempo passato" (*Rvf* 353, 2), echoes closely the incipit "I' vo piangendo i miei passati tempi" (*Rvf* 365, 1), suggesting that Petrarch was interested in macrostructural neatness through the generation of cross-collection links and a cyclical poetics in the pre-final form, even though he could not quite yet bear to conclude the *Rvf* on the note of rejecting Laura completely.

The repurposing of Petrarch's hope in a shift from Laura to God is made more pointed through the lexical links back to the proemial sonnet, which are here reconstituted in a more structurally significant position to render more emphatic the attempted redirection of love at the close of the sequence. R. A. Greene (1991, p. 49) has noted that the proemial sonnet is "the longest backward glance of all" in the *Rvf*, looking back from a time contemporary to the reader back to the inception of the

poetic biography, and in this way the work is staged as a journey of self-reform, of which *Rvf* 365 must then represent the apex. The *speranza* placed in God in *Rvf* 365 evokes "le vane speranze e 'l van dolore" (*Rvf* 1, 6) of the proemial sonnet, which combined with the Augustinian reference of "vana spes" (*Conf.* 3.4.7), redeployed in the *Secretum* as "inanes spes" (*Secr.* 2.2.5), reminds the reader that hope placed in mortal and ultimately fallible desires is always false. In fact, the citation of Augustine's "vana spes" in the proemial sonnet hints at Augustinian inflected form which the eventual narrative of the sequence will take with the final set of revisions. The "vane speranze e 'l van dolore" of the proemial sonnet is also recalled in Petrarch's wish that "se la stanza / fu vana, almen sia la partita onesta" (*Rvf* 365, 10–11). Petrarch is reminding the reader that a life spent in pursuit of mortal desires is in vain, as is hope placed in them, rather than in God. This renders more absolute the redirection of the spirit to God through the macrostructural frame generated through lexical recalls, suggesting that the structuring of the sequence, and indeed placement of individual poems in structurally significant positions, is designed to underscore the narrative thread.

The importance of macrostructural coherence in the light of the *Rvf* as a lyric sequence modelled upon the classical poetry book is further reinforced through the aligning of the proemial sonnet with *Rvf* 365, in terms of the desire to reconstitute the fractured self through staging a regaining of self-mastery: like the poets of Roman love elegy, Petrarch's conception of selfhood is no longer orientated around his beloved at the close of the narrative, as he seeks to move beyond her. *Voi ch'ascoltate* is a public staging of the inner thoughts, a projection of the result of his self-scrutiny through the rejection of his "primo giovenile errore" (*Rvf* 1, 3), and significantly, the realisation of the transitional process which his self has undergone throughout the course of narrative of the *Rvf*. The sonnet, addressed both to the "lettore contemporaneo [e] quello della posterità" (Vecchi Galli, 2012, p. 96), projects a version of the self contemporaneous to that achieved in the conclusion of the narrative; as Mazzotta (1978, p. 272) points out, the proemial sonnet is a "deliberate self-staging… the voice of a public self who finally confesses past errors and disavows them".[361] Petrarch's statement that "era in parte altr'uom da quell ch'i' sono" (*Rvf* 1, 4) juxtaposes the two versions of the self which exist in the past and in the present, projecting the pivotal desire to "pentersi" (*Rvf* 1, 13). At the other end of the sequence, the proemial sonnets reads as "detta come presente, ma vista come passato" (Noferi, 1974, p. 23),[362] and this interplay between different temporal spaces in the narrative aligns *Rvf* 365 align with the publicly presented self of the proemial sonnet. However, there is no public element in *Rvf* 365, with the focus being on securing

[361] Mazzotta (1978) proposes a redefinition of the terms of the self and its unity in terms of Petrarch's fragmentary and oscillating poetics. Using examples of shifting perspective, he demonstrates the insubstantiality of Petrarch's poetic voice which prevents the self from fully emerging from its own fragmentation.

[362] The interplay between different temporal planes in the sonnet has been well noted; see Noferi (1974, p.23), Vecchi Galli (2012, p. 96), and König (1983, p. 249), who discusses the importance of temporality in *Rvf* 365 as a method of establishing the intensity of the conflict Petrarch has undergone through formal recourse to the beginning.

grace, suggesting that Petrarch is trying to present a more virtuous self, less concerned with public presentation, although his continued interventions in his literary projects clearly contradict that in practice. As the proemial sonnet projects the desire to repent, so do the concluding sonnets now express repentance. The desire to bring the final sonnet in line with the proemial indicates that the revisions are not simply indicative of a narrative of spiritual ascent, bearing in mind that these poems were already in the Vatican form, just earlier in the sequencing, and are just as much poetic to bring the narrative to a structurally neat close.

This changed sense of self which is hinted at in the proemial sonnet is central to the revisions to the closing sequence. With *Rvf* 365 in its 'definitive' position, it provides a macrotextual counterpart to *Rvf* 264, and is the conclusion to the micro-sequence which commences with *Rvf* 360. As Santagata (1992, p. 335) notes, the closing poems in their new sequence recall *Rvf* 264, as the "dibattito interiore fra «pensieri» contrapposti nella 264" corresponds with "un dibattimento davanti al tribunale della Ragione nella 360", and indeed both are reflective of the "esame interiore del *Secretum*". In *Rvf* 264 we observe the subversion of the *io*, which establishes the poet's perceived dominance of external forces as determining his fate. Here, the self is subverted to allow the poet's conflicting thoughts to converse with his heart and mind; "L'un penser parla co la mente" (*Rvf* 264, 19), "Da l'altra parte un pensier dolce ed agro… preme 'l cor di desio" (*Rvf* 264, 55–58). This testifies to the poet's incapability to establish control over his self to determine his direction in the journey of life. When the *io* is re-established in the fourth stanza it serves merely to highlight its own impotence, and demonstrates the poet's awareness of that same passivity;[363] this is demonstrated clearly in the closing line of the *canzone* "et veggio 'l meglio, et al peggior m'appiglio" (*Rvf* 264, 135).

In contrast to this, *Rvf* 365 presents the *io* as dominant, allowing the poet to bring the narrative full circle by re-establishing its agency, although the Grace of God is still required achieve the desired salvation. In the first quatrain of *Rvf* 365 Petrarch uses five different pronominal forms to indicate the regained agency of the self: *I', miei, levarmi, abbiendo'io,* and *me*, echoing the strong self-awareness of the proemial sonnet in "di me medesmo meco mi vergogno" (*Rvf* 1, 11). There is therefore a strong formal emphasis on the *io* as agent, in complete contrast with *Rvf* 264 where the *io* is a passive element in the internal conflict. In its revised position, *Rvf* 365 therefore prioritises the rediscovery of autonomous agency through resolving the role of the self in the abandonment of mortal desires and the pathway towards salvation. Significantly, the poet realises that it is only through his own actions that his salvation may be achieved: "senza levarmi a volo, abbiendo'io l'ale, / per dar forse di me non bassi exempi" (*Rvf* 365, 3–4). Here, Petrarch acknowledges that it is not through the means of any external

[363] Galbiati (2004, p. 114) agrees that in *Rvf* 264 "Petrarca dichiara la stessa impotenza dell'io, pur lucidamente consapevole."

force by which the ascent to heaven is made, but by the ability of the self to determine its own destiny, indicating that Laura was a distraction to ascent, rather than a facilitator.

The use of litotes hints at a classicising style still present even in this devotional sonnet, and a classical aspect is still also present in the phrase: "s'io vissi in guerra et in tempesta, / mora in pace et in porto" (*Rvf* 365, 9–10). While this image has a clear religious significance, metaphorical of the port of his salvation, it also alludes to classical motifs. The phrase has commonly been traced to Seneca in particular: Petrarch cites Seneca's *Epistles* 19.2 to Lucilius, "in freto viximus, moriamur in portu", in the *Familiares* (8.4.23). As we saw in 2.2, Propertius' third book also concludes with the image of the poet having escaped the metaphorical storm of love. Given the lyric context, and that we are at the close of the sequence, Propertius would seem to be the more apt model in this particular case. However, unlike Propertius, Petrarch has not yet escaped his storm: there is a hint of a conversion anticipated rather than one enacted, suggesting the continued irresolution of the narrative.

The movement of the group of sonnets comprising *Rvf* 361–365 to directly precede the *canzone* to the Virgin establishes more visible sequential connections across the closing micro-sequence, as well as strengthening the narrative arc of repentance at the close of sequence. This both accentuates the plea for salvation in a narrative sense by emphasising the redirection of the will in the concluding poems, but the newly established macrostructural connections also indicate that Petrarch is following the classical model of framing his lyric project. Whereas the sequence of 360–365 had not originally been intended to be the final sequence of the *Rvf* in the Malatesta, Queriniana, or Vatican forms, *Rvf* 366 had since its inclusion in the Malatesta form been intended to conclude the sequence. A solemn religious invocation to the Virgin, and consisting of ten stanzas, the medieval number of perfection and a counterbalance to the ten stanzas of *Rvf* 360 which initiates the closing sequence, the *canzone* appeals for aid via the intercessory powers of the Virgin. The stronger religious inflection to the revised sequence provides a narrative arc more suitable for preceding such a prayer, indicating that the poet is truly "disposto a sollevarmi dalla terra" (*Rvf* 360, 29), although we do not necessarily see the completion of this process. The palindonic tone of the *canzone* is accentuated through the recent anniversary sonnet in the closing sequence in *Rvf* 364, which mentions the 21 years spent burning in love for Laura: the Virgin is invoked 21 times, one for each of those years in love. *Rvf* 366 is certainly more devotional than it is classicising: clearly, seeing as the *canzone* was from an earlier stage intended to conclude the sequence, there had been for a while the intention to finish with a religious tone, especially as the Christian themes are also established in the opening sonnet, written as an epilogue. However, the closure of the narrative is not just dependent on the content of the closing poem, but also on the sequencing of the poems preceding it: the *canzone* now concludes a narrative which rejects Laura, rather than one which exalts her.

The numerous lexical and thematic links between *Rvf* 365 and 366, as well as the proemial sonnet, emphasise the intensified palinodic function of the final poems. 'speranza', the final word of *Rvf* 365, used to appeal to God, again recurs in an almost identical context in *Rvf* 366, "Vergine, in cui ò tutta mia speranza" (*Rvf* 366, 100). Its location on the 100th line of the *canzone*, 100 being a perfect number,[364] reflects changed hope of salvation, an indication of the poet's willingness to place his hope exclusively in the divine, rather than in Laura. The references to the poet's *error* in the closing sequence, "tanto error" (*Rvf* 364, 6), "l'error mio" (*Rvf* 366, 111), recall the "primo giovenile errore" (*Rvf* 1, 3), thus completing the cycle in a ring structure through linking back to the opening sonnet. As the proemial sonnet presents a changed man, now desirous to repent his error of mortal love, so does *Rvf* 366 build on the regained sense of self established in the preceding sonnets. Petrarch draws direct contrasts between his former self versus a changed present self: "ch'almen l'ultimo pianto sia devoto, / senza terrestro limo, / come fu 'l primo non d'insania vòto" (*Rvf* 366, 110–112). The temporal contrast between *ultimo* and *primo* in these lines delineates the desire to change the object of his tears, moving from tears of love for Laura to tears of regret, in the same way that both the proemial sonnet in "piango" (*Rvf* 1, 5) and the closing sonnet in "piangendo" (*Rvf* 365, 1) link lexically to establish that the man formed at the close of the narrative weeps tears of regret, rather than tears of love.

Rvf 366 establishes a new mode of femininity, which is intensified through the deconstruction of Laura's image in the sonnets newly preceding it. Chapter 1.2 argued that as with Guiraut Riquier's Virgin, the language of Laura and the language of the Virgin constitute an interchangeable lexis. However, as the Virgin assumes the lexis of Laura in *Rvf* 366, Petrarch repurposes the language of love to redirect love away from the mortal woman and towards the divine. In *Rvf* 365 she is reduced to a "cosa mortale" (*Rvf* 365, 2), and in *Rvf* 366 he emphasises her earthly and petrifying nature, as "tale è terra" (*Rvf* 366, 87), she becomes the "Medusa […] m'àn fatto un sasso" (*Rvf* 366, 111) and "poca mortal terra caduca" (*Rvf* 366, 121). This reflects Augustinus' assertion in the *Secretum* that "pudebit animum immortalem caduco applicuisse corpusculo" (3.3.4),[365] suggesting that Petrarch is moving towards a more Augustinian narrative. Throughout the *Rvf* the language of love used for Laura is indicative of her physical beauty, whereas in the *canzone* this language is repurposed for the Virgin as a divine love, demonstrating that Petrarch is attempting to rise from physical to spiritual love. The adjective *bella* now no longer refers to Laura's physical beauty, but rather the perfection of the divine. Indeed, Laura is now repurposed as the Medusa, a classical image indicative of her petrifying effects on Petrarch as beholder. This "sublimation of the language of love", as Vecchi Galli (2012, p. 1209) terms it, does not only create overlap between the figures of Laura and the Virgin. In reassigning terms previously used for Laura for the Virgin, Petrarch reconfigures the nature and location of his love,

[364] The number 100 also features centrally in the work of other vernacular poets; 100 is the number of sonnets Nicolò de' Rossi writes for his love Floruzza, and also the number of *canti* in Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

[365] 'You will be ashamed of having dedicated your immortal soul to a perishable little body.'

exchanging the mortal for the divine, and the physical for the spiritual. In this way, the Virgin offers a revised mode of femininity, and a spiritual form of love, rather than an earthly one. Whereas Laura's beauty and perfection induced pain and suffering, the Virgin offers the prospect of release and ascent.

However, on a narrative level the closing sequence expresses a conversion desired rather than one carried out. Laura may have been rejected and the process of repentance begun, but as *Rvf* 364 and 365 show, divine aid is still sought and indeed required to achieve the desired salvation. *Rvf* 366 also suggests that from a narrative point of view, the process is not yet complete. In particular, the use of the *passato prossimo* suggest that his spirit has still not yet been reformed: "Mortal bellezza, atti et parole m'ànno / tutta ingombrata l'alma" (*Rvf* 366, 85–86); "Medusa et l'error mio m'àn fatto un sasso" (*Rvf* 366, 111). He is still in a state of spiritual malaise, although he has now recognised the extent of the problem through the introspection of *Rvf* 361 and started to address it through repentance. There is also a hint of unsureness of how to move beyond Laura, and express his love for the Virgin as he prepares to enter a new stage of self-governance: "Che se poca mortal terra caduca / amar con sì mirabil fede soglio, / che devrò far di te, cosa gentile?" (*Rvf* 366, 121–123). This suggests that at the close of the sequence there is still some ambiguity: Petrarch is perhaps more concerned with opening up rather than bring the work to a close. The multiplicity of ways in which the images of the closing sequence may be read also hints at this openness and the possibilities of the lyric mode. Many have both religious and classicising connotations, indicating that Petrarch is certainly speaking to multiple modes and traditions in the creation of an unprecedented lyric endeavour.

Indeed, the *Rvf* lacks a definitive sense of narrative conclusion, and unlike the *Commedia* there is no vision of God, no clear end point to the narrative. With *Rvf* 366 intended from a relatively early point to close the work, Petrarch was perhaps not even seeking clear closure in any case, at least not in a religious sense. And indeed, why would he need to bring the work to a complete narrative conclusion, when he represents it as concluding in 1358? A completed turn to virtue is not necessary, as the *Rvf* is but one part of the greater (fictional) autobiographical project, and in the letters he represents his more virtuous phase as occurring in later life, beyond the end point of the *Rvf*, although this clearly does not reflect reality. In fact, the ambiguous relationship between openness and closure that we find at the end of the *Rvf* reflects the classical lyric collection more than anything else. As Propertius and Horace showed, it was possible to bring a collection to a close through a ring structure, both on a formal and thematic level, but then return with a fourth book. Even though for both authors, the first three books represent a self-contained structure, there was still the possibility to return to the work. Obviously with Petrarch, the significance of the number 366 means that it was unlikely further poems would have ever been added,[366] but there was still the possibility of further interventions in sequencing, or exchanging

[366] See Santagata (1992, pp. 310–314) for the significance of the number 366, and above all its relationship with the number 6, Laura's number. Santagata (p. 312) suggests that "I testi sono 366 perché Petrarca voleva chiudere circolarmente la storia e il libro."

of poems (like the late removal of *donna mi vene* and its replacement with *Rvf* 121). That there were multiple attempts to systemise the closing sequence, and indeed probably many more than we will ever be aware of, as there were multiple layers of erasures in the marginal renumbering of the V. L. 3195, indicates that closure was not easy to come by for Petrarch.

Conclusion

Self-editing, as this study has argued, was indeed self-fashioning for Petrarch. The Petrarchan form of self-editing was, however, a complex process, driven by the careful counterbalancing of competing concerns, and indicating that Petrarch was torn over the manner in which he wanted his idealised self to be presented to posterity. But what exactly drove this anxiety of crafting an idealised closure to the *Rvf*? How do the revisions to the closing sequence dialogue with the classical and vernacular literary traditions? Why imitate the classical model in a vernacular project? And how does this one piece of the literary jigsaw fit into Petrarch's wider autobiographical project? To answer these questions, this thesis has argued that Petrarch sought to experiment with literary models for the purpose of creating his own perfected model in which to present the idealised self to posterity: form was just as important as narrative in the *Rvf*. Self-editing in the *Rvf* is not just the self-fashioning of an image of the author, but also of the literary model in which it is conveyed.

This thesis has emphasised the extent to which this poetic model is rooted in the classical tradition, even in the final stages of constructing the *Rvf*. Interpretations of the revisions in the V. L. 3195 have tended to see the amendments as part of Petrarch's desire to add a more religious flavour to the close of the *Rvf* and redirect the divided self towards an Augustinian inflected conversion narrative. However, this study would warn against taking Petrarch at face value. Despite Petrarch's own claim that his primary concern in *senectus* was seeking virtue in his life and his works, there is no definitive moment of closure in the *Rvf*, no completed conversion, just as the narrative of the *Secretum* is left at an impasse. The revisions to the *Rvf* certainly anticipate a conversion, moving gradually towards the resolution of the warring parts of the self as expressed in the *Secretum*, but it is never enacted in full. In the wider biographical context, with the *Rvf* represented as concluding in 1358, Petrarch did not necessarily need or want the narrative to conclude definitively. Despite claiming in the *Seniles* that the *Rvf* was a youthful project, Petrarch seemed more concerned with opening it up than he was with finishing and moving on from it. Indeed, despite the more virtuous tones to the revised closing narrative, there is also a strongly classicising element still present: Petrarch was seeking to craft a lyric sequence which spoke to multiple modes and concerns, and this perhaps negated the possibility of a neat and precise closure.

As this thesis has shown, the apparently Augustinian narrative of the revised closing sequence also serves a poetic goal, as Petrarch stabilises his lyric sequence and self within literary history. The degree to which Laura's classicising aspects are grounded within the classical lyric model has been underestimated, especially given the overt links of her name to the *Metamorphoses* rather than Ovid's lyric output. Yet her role as a mediator of the lyric self is particularly anchored within the classical tradition, as is her metapoetic role as poetry itself. Her abandonment at the close of the *Rvf* imitates the

classical lyric model, specifically engaging with the elegiac collections of Ovid and Propertius, who reject their beloved and love poetry itself at the close of their third books. Ovid's rejection of Corinna serves a poetic goal of declaring that glory has been achieved through the lyrics that she has inspired. This indicates that the extinguishing of Petrarch's laurel therefore has a dual purpose: while it overtly suggests the inferiority of earthly fame to eternal concerns, thus contributing to constructing a narrative of virtue, it also serves a poetic function of declaring that fame has in fact already been achieved. Likewise, for Horace in the *Odes*, earthly fame had been the most effective means of counteracting the passage of time, even if not in eternity, and the collection concludes on this note of self-apotheosis through literary fame. Creating a perfected poetic model could be a means of securing glory, and in love lyric this was dependent on the beloved as inspiration for lyrics, but also upon her abandonment once her purpose of securing glory for the poet had succeeded, thus enabling him to turn to what he regarded as weightier matters and modes.

The repeated amendments to the closing sequence of the *Rvf* indicate that Petrarch was torn between different ways in which to conclude his lyric self-portrait. In fact, religious, literary, and autobiographical concerns were pulling him in different directions as he was exploring the best manner in which to conclude his lyric sequence, suggesting that there was no one clear way in which to do so. But when we talk about closure or resolution, are we placing our own value judgement about what conclusion can and should look like? Was the *Rvf* meant to seem thematically inconclusive? If so, does that mean it is finished? Petrarch, perhaps, was not seeking conclusion as he claimed to be, but was rather exploring the possibilities of lyric openness, the potential to intervene and continue pushing the boundaries of the lyric mode. In his search for a unique literary model, Petrarch probed the possibilities of lyric poetry, thus securing his glory for posterity and regenerating classical modes for a new context. In doing so, Petrarch crafted a literary work which has as much to do with potentiality as it does with closure and looks just as much to the future as it does the past. We might wonder to what extent it is the open nature of the *Rvf* that has made the work so appealing to future generations. Certainly, the *Rvf* became a model praised and imitated through the centuries, indicating that this openness encouraged adaptation and imitation. While Petrarch seemed to be trying to bring his works to a close, thus securing his fame for literary posterity, it was perhaps precisely the opposite that contributed to its success in posterity.

The shaping of the narrative of the *Rvf* in accordance with the genre of the model it imitates suggests that Petrarch was experimenting with different narrative strategies in different literary forms. Indeed, apparent discrepancies across Petrarch's wider *oeuvre* indicate that greater emphasis must be placed on the place of the genre and form of the work in the shaping of its narrative. In the *Triumphi*, Laura appears redeemed at the close of a narrative which is linear in nature. Yet the closure of the *Rvf* moves towards rejecting Laura, which on the surface seems incompatible with the narrative of the *Triumphi*, suggesting a conflict across the works. Likewise, the classical lyric model suggests that a

lyric collection could obtain eternal glory for the poet, and Petrarch through the revisions to the *Rvf* indicates the similar pursuit of literary glory through the imitation of this model in his own lyric sequence. Yet the *Triumphi* also suggest that fame is a vain allusion and will ultimately be conquered by time. Placing greater weight on literary form can explain these discrepancies, and also raises the risks of using evidence taken in one work to explain another, or attempting to align works which may not have been designed to operate in tandem. This is especially true when considering that Petrarch appears to be concerned more with experimentation and pushing the bounds of literary forms, rather than adhering to any strictly ideological agenda or programme. Indeed, while the nucleus of his autobiographical projects may stem from the same concern of self-representation, Petrarch's experimentation with different literary models and narrative styles indicates that narratives of self-representation needed to be balanced with the desire to create and systemise models for diverse literary forms.

This indicates that creating a unique lyric 'monument' to surpass his vernacular contemporaries and rival the ancients was for Petrarch not just a matter of individual self-narration, but also of experimenting with literary models, and that the closure of the *Rvf* is anchored in the classical tradition to a greater extent than previously acknowledged. This study has not provided an exhaustive account of the classicising aspects of the *Rvf*, and certainly further questions remain about the precise nature of the interaction between vernacular and classicising elements in the work, as many of the images of the closing sequence speak to multiple concerns. How did the relationship between the two models change in the *Rvf* as Petrarch took it from the first nucleus to the pre-final forms, and what can this tell us about Petrarch's evolving intellectual concerns over the breadth of his life as opposed to his final years? And how does Petrarch balance classical models with non-classical ones in his wider *oeuvre*? While this study has focused on the closing sequence of the very final forms of the *Rvf*, these questions raised also relate to Petrarch's literary output more widely.

Further questions remain about the relationship between literary forms and the subjectivity of the lyric self. By drawing on an established literary form for his autobiographical narrative, one which was tried and tested in the classical lyric collection, Petrarch suggests that perhaps at least in part he could counteract the continued instability of the lyric self by drawing on a stable literary model, thus presenting his unique narrative as a reference point in wider literary history. Subjectivity without reference points can indeed be chaotic, and further inquiry is needed to explore whether Petrarch's adoption and adaptation of existing literary conventions lends stability to the *io* or detracts from it. Indeed, the revisions to the closure of the *Rvf* remind us that Petrarchan self-fashioning was rooted in existing models and literary contexts, and to push the bounds of the lyric mode, and to frame his idealised self for the future reader, he anchored it in the past.

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