

Petrarch and Portraiture (8 Jun 18)

University of Cambridge, Old Library, Pembroke College, Cambridge, Jun 08, 2018

Ilaria Bernocchi, University of Cambridge

Petrarch and Portraiture, XIV-XVI Century

The symposium investigates the interplay between Petrarch's writings and later Petrarchan literature with portraiture.

Through his works in both Latin and in vernacular Petrarch made crucial contributions to the establishment of new models for representation and self-representation, both in literature and in the visual arts. Portraiture – the visual celebration of the individual – offers a particularly appropriate vantage point from which to investigate this influence. Throughout Petrarch's extensive corpus, the reader engages with diverse types of portraits. In *De viris illustribus*, for instance, Petrarch presents literary depictions of many of the most important scriptural and classical personalities. The text inspired the tradition of portraits of famous men and women depicted as examples of conduct in private homes and studioli, a tradition that culminated in Paolo Giovio's *Musaeo* of portraits on Lake Como. In the *Letters* and the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch fashions a literary portrait of his poetic alter-ego. His engagement with portraiture culminates in *Rvf* 77 and 78, which are dedicated to a portrait of Laura painted by Simone Martini. By weaving together the notions of literary and visual portraiture, the poet touches on issues such as the dialogue with the effigy of the beloved, the perceived conflict between the soul and the veil of appearances, and the dynamic relationship between word and image. These aspects of Petrarch's work influenced subsequent reflections on the limits of art and literature in representing the complex nature of the individual. Literary texts dedicated to portraits became an extremely popular genre during the Renaissance, and contributed to the debate on *ut pictura poesis*.

If, as John Pope-Hennessy wrote, the modern portrait 'reflects the reawakening interest in human motives and the human character, the resurgent recognition of those factors which make human beings individual', Petrarch's intellectual legacy becomes a central reference for scholars.

Convenors: Ilaria Bernocchi (History of Art, University of Cambridge), Nicolò Morelli (Italian Studies, University of Cambridge)

Keynote Speaker: Dr Federica Pich, University of Leeds.

Respondent: Dr Abigail Brundin, University of Cambridge.

FREE ENTRY - REGISTRATION IS NOT NECESSARY

PROGRAMME

9.00: Registration and Welcome

9.30

PANEL ONE – Chair: Nicolò Morelli

Dr Alexander Lee, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, University of Warwick

Portrait of a Soul in Torment: Petrarch, Laura, and Simone Martini

Prof. Rodney Lokaj, University of Enna

Petrarch's Portrait: Altichiero between Homage and Citation in Memoriam

Dr Cristiano Guarneri, University of Padua

Petrarch in the Study, Architecture and Iconography: A Reconstruction of Petrarch's Study in Arquà

11.00: Coffee break

11.30

PANEL TWO – Chair: Dr Alexander Marr, University of Cambridge

Prof. Paolo Zublena, University of Milan 'Bicocca'

An Intertextual Reading of Giovanni della Casa's Sonnets on a Portrait by Titian (Rime, 32-33)

Dr Joaneath Spicer, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

Two Lost Portraits: Petrarch's Laura and That of the Venetian Noblewoman Caterina Corner as a Prospective Bride (c. 1467)

Martina dal Cengio, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa

Imagini in Pietra: The Presence of Marble Portraits in Venetian Poetry of the Renaissance

13.00: Lunch break

14.00

PANEL THREE – Chair: Ilaria Bernocchi

Prof. Laura Camille Agoston, Trinity University, Texas

Laura's Michelangelo: Mourning Florence's Absent Beloved

Dr Selene Maria Vatteroni, Freie Universität Berlin

Painting, Poetry and Immortality in Benedetto Varchi's Sonnets

Daniel Fliege, Université Paris Sorbonne / Universität Hamburg

Reinterpreting Petrarch's Sonnet Rvf 78: Vittoria Colonna and St Luke Drawing the Virgin

15.30: Tea break

16.00

PANEL FOUR – Chair: Dr Irene Galandra Cooper, University of Cambridge

Dr Giacomo Montanari, University of Genoa

From Plutarch to Petrarch: Ideal Portraits and Aristocratic Celebration in 16th-Century Genoa

Alice Roullière, University of Cambridge

Literary Portraits of Deceased Lovers in Ronsard's Petrarchan Poetry

17.00: Short break

17.15

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Dr Federica Pich, University of Leeds

Speaking (to) Portraits: Rvf 77-78 and Renaissance Portraiture

18.00: RESPONSE - Dr Abigail Brundin, University of Cambridge

18.20: Closing remarks

Reference:

CONF: Petrarch and Portraiture (8 Jun 18). In: ArHist.net, Apr 18, 2018 (accessed Sep 16, 2026),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/17895>>.