



# Re-materialising the Incunable Petrarch

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**Guyda Armstrong, Re-materialising the Incunable Petrarch: Ernest Hatch Wilkins and the Politics of Bibliographical Description, *Italian Studies*, 75.1 (2020)**

**Abstract**

This article re-evaluates the editions of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* and *Triumpho* printed between 1470-1500, re-reading not only the book-objects themselves, but also the two fundamental bibliographical articles on the incunable Petrarch written by Ernest Hatch Wilkins, which have shaped the field for the past eighty years. I argue that we should approach this corpus via book-historical, material-textual approaches, viewing the editions as individual, localised textual productions, and as social texts, rather than considering them simply in terms of their genealogical interrelations and from the particular perspectives of Petrarch studies. A re-examination gives a much more complex and varied picture of the material incunable Petrarch than previously noted, while an exploration of the bibliographical studies demonstrates the necessity of enlarging our study to read these, too, as discursive texts in their own right, and thereby taking account of the scholarly contributions of other, hitherto less-recognised figures such as librarians to the construction of meanings around the early printed book.

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## Re-materialising the Incunable Petrarch: Ernest Hatch Wilkins and the Politics of Bibliographical Description

The early printed editions of Petrarch have received significantly less critical attention than those of Dante and Boccaccio, the other two *corone* with whom he is habitually placed. The critical energy evidenced around the 2004 anniversary has revitalised the field of Petrarch studies, for example, with the publication of important new editions of primary works, new scholarly journals, and distinctive collaborative research projects, yet there still remain significant gaps.<sup>1</sup> Over more or less the same period of time, premodern Italian studies has been vastly enriched by new material-textual approaches to the historic literary text, which draw deeply on the so-called material turn in literary studies, and which have been facilitated by the mass digitisation of historic manuscript and early printed books in library collections worldwide, including the major national libraries, and increasingly, many university collections. Within Petrarch studies in Italy, in particular, the past two decades have seen a revived interest in philological and palaeographical approaches to the Petrarchan manuscript tradition, and the textual trajectories of Petrarch and ‘Petrarchan’ lyric within the wider literary system, including a new critical edition and commentary to the 1904 facsimile edition of the semi-autograph Vatican manuscript, and Roberto Leporatti’s project on the *Rime disperse*, to name but two.<sup>2</sup> However, this re-evaluation of the manuscript Petrarch has not as yet translated into a similarly sustained interest in the materiality of early *printed* textual Petrarch productions, although work is advancing in this area.<sup>3</sup>

With this in mind, it is a timely moment to approach afresh one particular part of the material Petrarch corpus, the editions of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (*Rvf*) and the *Triumph* printed in the last three decades of the fifteenth century, from the first edition of 1470 through to the Zani edition of 1500, the last edition to be printed before Aldus Manutius’s famous repackaging of the text in 1501. The books produced during these thirty

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<sup>1</sup> The ongoing scholarly neglect of Petrarch’s reception, in comparison to that of Dante and Boccaccio, was one of the prime motives for our AHRC-funded project, ‘Petrarch Commentary and Exegesis in Renaissance Italy, 1350-1650’, which has classified hundreds of commentarial responses in both manuscript and print in the *PERI* database, and made digitisations of some 84 printed editions held in the University of Manchester’s collections available online. I gratefully acknowledge the help of two of the librarians of the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester, Julianne Simpson and John Hodgson, both for their expertise on the incunable editions and for our conversations about the politics of bibliographical description. This article would not have been possible without them.

<sup>2</sup> *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, ed. by Gino Belloni, Furio Brugnolo, H. Wayne Storey and Stefano Zamponi, 2 vols (Rome and Padua: Antenore, 2003-2004); *Le ‘Rime disperse’ di Petrarca: l’altra faccia del Canzoniere*, University of Geneva, <<https://www.unige.ch/petrarca/it/homepage/>> [accessed 1 November 2019].

<sup>3</sup> The renewed interest in the material has led to new facsimile editions, e.g., Francesco Petrarca, *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta: Anastatica dell’edizione Valdezoco, Padova 1472*, ed. by Gino Belloni (Venice: Regione del Veneto; Marsilio, 2001); Francesco Filelfo, *Commento a ‘Rerum vulgarium fragmenta 1-136’: Edizione anastatica dell’incunabolo Bologna, Annibale Malpigli, 1476, con introduzione e indici*, ed. by Michele Rossi (Treviso: Antilia, 2018).

years range in design terms from fairly simple books containing a small number of textual elements (mostly published in the first few years of printing), through to exceedingly complex editions of Petrarch's verse printed in the last decade of the fifteenth century. Previous studies, going back to the key bibliographical articles by the American Petrarchist Ernest Hatch Wilkins, have tended to emphasise chronological genealogies of transmission and a teleological progression towards ever more sophisticated editions over these three decades. However, in this article I will argue that we should approach this corpus of early printed books, instead, as a discontinuous efflorescence of individual textual productions, produced in particular locales at specific times, which are none the less linked to each other in important editorial dependencies. A considerable amount of work has been done in describing these books, both by Petrarch scholars and bibliographers and librarians, but this has not always made its way into the wider scholarship, which has historically been more concerned with the interpretation of the Petrarchan text than with its vehicles. To date, moreover, these descriptions have for the most part been read uncritically as simply informational documents, and not approached as discursive texts in their own right, with the effect that the models and occasional misapprehensions of their authors have been transmitted through the scholarship and have taken on a canonical status in the understanding of this corpus.<sup>4</sup> The field's reliance on third-party bibliographical accounts is of course a function of the historic difficulties of actually viewing these editions in person and gaining a conspectus of the corpus as a whole, with the few surviving copies of these books dispersed in special collections libraries, primarily in Europe and a few research libraries in North America.<sup>5</sup> Reproductions of some (but certainly not all) of these Petrarch editions are available in various print and digital media, but again, to date these have also been partial and dispersed.<sup>6</sup> The overall effect on scholarship is that the incunable Petrarch remains for the most part vaguely appraised and relatively little discussed.

This article will therefore address this problem by proposing a new perspective on this small corpus of editions, via a careful re-reading not only of the book-objects themselves but also of Wilkins's bibliographical articles, which have shaped the field of study for the past eighty years. It will argue for a fundamental attentiveness to the material, rather than a regurgitation of the historiographical tradition, and thus for the necessity of a new way of seeing, whereby we look *past* the conventions of Petrarch studies, and the particular perspectives of this discipline area, and instead through the lens of book-historical, material-textual approaches, in an attempt to return afresh to the book-object as a discrete cultural product of late fifteenth-century Italy. Viewing the early print Petrarch edition primarily

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<sup>4</sup> Rare books catalogues, library records, and handlists often provide detailed bibliographical descriptions, but in their specialist terminology can be opaque for the general reader, and as a rule the material dimension of the printed editions remains unexplored in the secondary literature.

<sup>5</sup> The *Incunable Short-Title Catalogue (ISTC)* <[https://data.cerl.org/istc/\\_search](https://data.cerl.org/istc/_search)> [accessed 1 November 2019] provides locations for all the editions held in publically accessible libraries, with links to digitisations where available and to other online bibliographical resources.

<sup>6</sup> These range from the zincographic facsimiles of the late-nineteenth century, via microfilm and early image repositories on CD-ROM such as the *Illustrated ISTC (IISTC)*, commercial digital platforms such as Proquest's *Early European Books*, and increasingly, library online digital collections.

through the accounts of monumental Petrarchists such as Wilkins means that our understanding of the print traditions has necessarily (and unconsciously) followed his highly stylised models of genealogical derivations; however, we can now take a fresh look at the corpus, drawing on newer material-textual approaches and aided by online resources such as the digital library of fully-digitised early modern editions of Petrarch built as part of the *Petrarch Commentary and Exegesis* project (*PERI*).<sup>7</sup>

A further aim of this study is also to take account of the many different communities of practice around the book: not just the premodern text-agents who contribute to its production and reception, but also later readers who interact with it in various professional capacities, describing and authorising it in library catalogues and scholarly studies. Any study of the book-object through time implicitly casts light on the ways in which it is used socially, from the readerships of its originating context and early reception, right through to the function it serves in scholarly legitimisation and publications. And while much has been written about the many agents involved in book production and the features of the books they made (indeed, for centuries, this has been the primary, perhaps only focus of historical bibliography), very much less has been said about the other agents who come into contact with the book in its afterlife, and how their interactions with it are recorded and give value in the written record. This study thus intersects with the intellectual history of libraries, the struggle for the professional recognition for librarians, and necessarily and implicitly, the intersectional dimensions of this. I will thus attempt to enlarge the Petrarchan scholarly universe by inserting into it the fundamental contributions of bibliographers and librarians, whose work underpins all the scholarly studies on the early printed tradition, but is rarely foregrounded as a valuable primary source in its own right; thereby combining an attentiveness to the material Petrarch with a similar attentiveness to the conditions of its construction through bibliographical and scholarly study.

### **Wilkins and the Construction of the Incunable Petrarch**

The fundamental studies on the incunable lyric Petrarch remain — startlingly — two short articles published by the American Petrarch scholar Ernest Hatch Wilkins (1880-1966) in 1942 and 1943, which were republished with some minor cosmetic edits in his 1951 book *The Making of the 'Canzoniere' and other Petrarchan Studies*.<sup>8</sup> Although written almost eighty years ago, Wilkins's work on the early printed editions of the *Rvf* and *Triumph* continues to

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<sup>7</sup> The *PERI* Petrarch digital library can be accessed via the Manchester Digital Collections, <<https://www.digitalcollections.manchester.ac.uk/collections/petrarch/1>> [accessed 1 November 2019]. It includes all the Manchester copies mentioned in this article.

<sup>8</sup> Ernest Hatch Wilkins, 'The Separate Fifteenth-Century Editions of the Triumphs of Petrarch', *The Library Quarterly*, 12.3 (1942), 748-51, republished as 'The Separate *Quattrocento* editions of the Triumphs', in *The Making of the 'Canzoniere' and other Petrarchan Studies* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1951), pp. 403-06 (Chapter 25); 'The Fifteenth-Century Editions of the Italian Poems of Petrarch', *Modern Philology*, 40.3 (1943), 225-39, republished as 'The *Quattrocento* editions of the *Canzoniere* and the Triumphs', in *The Making*, pp. 379-401 (Chapter 24), both described as 'slightly abbreviated' when republished.

cast a long shadow across the study of the material early printed Petrarch, and to date, his proposed genealogies of transmission between the different printed editions have never actually been formally re-examined as a whole. The lack of critical attention to Wilkins' assessment of the early print Petrarch is especially striking when one considers the major critical reappraisals of Wilkins's work on the redactional stages of the *Canzoniere* in manuscript which have taken place over the past two decades. One very important contribution to this is the 2007 collection of essays, *Petrarch and the Textual Origins of Interpretation*, edited by Teodolinda Barolini and H. Wayne Storey.<sup>9</sup> During his long scholarly career, Wilkins was professor at Oberlin College, and then the universities of Chicago and Harvard, also serving as sometime president of both the Modern Language Association of America and the Medieval Academy of America.<sup>10</sup> He was unarguably the most influential Anglophone Petrarch scholar of his and several subsequent generations, and indeed can be quite properly described as the unchallenged dominant voice in twentieth-century Petrarch studies in the Anglophone world. But Wilkins's most influential and long-lasting contribution to Petrarch studies, that is, his contention that the *Rvf* was composed in nine redactional stages (what Barolini terms, provocatively, in the title of her essay 'Wilkins' doctrine of the nine forms of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*'), has now been almost completely dismantled by the application of new palaeographical and philological methods.<sup>11</sup> The issue, briefly put, is that Wilkins' proposed model of the nine compositional stages was so confidently professed in his writing, that what was initially presented as a hypothesis, became understood by many readers to be unassailable fact.<sup>12</sup> So in a sense it is not Wilkins who imposes his reading on the subsequent generations of *petrarchisti*, but rather that *petrarchisti* found his model so authoritative that it became enshrined as fact, and in this way informed Petrarch scholarship for many decades. Even in Italy this elaborate model was

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<sup>9</sup> Barolini and Storey argue forcefully for a radically material-textual approach to Petrarch's works, and thereby a stripping-back of the interpretative and narrative cruces around the composition of the *Rvf* which persisted unchallenged in the decades since Wilkins's work until very recently. The essays in their book offer an excellent English-language introduction to the new revisionist stance on Wilkins (whose interpretations have endured in particular in Anglophone Italian studies), and point also to the key Italian work in this area: *Petrarch and the Textual Origins of Interpretation*, ed. by Teodolinda Barolini and H. Wayne Storey (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007). Other important assessments of Wilkins' method, beyond those included in the Barolini-Storey volume, include Luca Carlo Rossi, 'Avventure editoriali della "Formazione del Canzoniere" di Ernest H. Wilkins', in *Liber*, 'Fragmenta', *Libellus* 'prima e dopo Petrarca: in ricordo di D'Arco Silvio Avalle. Seminario internazionale di studi, Bergamo 23-25 ottobre 2003 (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2006), pp. 459-70, and Carlo Pulsoni, 'Il metodo di lavoro di Wilkins e la tradizione manoscritta dei *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*', *Giornale di filologia italiana*, 61 (2009), 257-70.

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed, materially-inflected account of Wilkins's scholarly practices and limited engagement with Petrarchan primary sources, see Germaine Warkentin, *Infaticabile maestro: Ernest Hatch Wilkins and the Manuscripts of Petrarch's Canzoniere*, in Barolini and Storey, pp. 45-65 (p. 47).

<sup>11</sup> Teodolinda Barolini, 'Petrarch at the Crossroads of Hermeneutics and Philology: Editorial Lapses, Narrative Impositions, and Wilkins' Doctrine of the Nine Forms of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*', in Barolini and Storey, pp. 21-44 (pp. 32-33).

<sup>12</sup> Barolini, 'Petrarch at the Crossroads', p. 33.

largely taken on trust, following the inclusion of Chapter 9 of Wilkins's book as part of Remo Ceserani's translated edition of Wilkins's Petrarch biography *La vita del Petrarca e la formazione del Canzoniere* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964).<sup>13</sup>

With the so-called material turn in scholarly studies, Wilkins's manuscript method has been found significantly wanting. The main critique of the conjectures and associated inaccuracies found in his work derives from the fact that he never directly consulted his primary sources in Italy, relying instead on photographs of the manuscripts and written correspondence with colleagues in Italy.<sup>14</sup> While his work on the manuscripts thus seems to have been undertaken at one or several removes from the physical objects of study, his work on the incunable editions does evidence a more direct encounter with the book-objects. His first 1942 article on this subject, which lists nine separate incunable editions of the *Triumphs* together for the first time, is essentially a bibliographical handlist, compiling information from other catalogues and scholarly studies, and within it he attempt to devise a model for the genealogical transmission for the later editions. However, despite the fact that his observations must have been done (even if only in part) by eye, there is no material description of the books beyond the fact that 'All appear to be properly classifiable as quartos'; his aim is simply 'to provide an accurate list of these nine editions, giving the basic references, references to the best descriptions, and, in some cases, supplementary data'.<sup>15</sup> We learn more about his method in his second article on this topic, the longer 1943 study in which he discusses the 'twenty-five editions containing both works', that is, both the *Rvf* and the *Triumphs*.<sup>16</sup> Wilkins tells us that in the course of preparing the article, he travelled twice to the Fiske Collection at Cornell University, which held 23 of the 25 editions of the paired *Rvf* and *Triumphs*, and thus was able to view and directly compare them so as to map their textual interrelations. He was unable to view the other two editions — the [c. 1475] edition printed in

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<sup>13</sup> Storey, 'A Note on the Application of Petrarchan Textual Cultures', in Barolini and Storey, pp. 13-19 (p. 15, n. 6), and Pulsoni, pp. 259-60.

<sup>14</sup> Wilkins's method, and his reluctance to travel to Italy to view primary sources, is explored by Warkentin, esp. pp. 48-55. Her article is especially insightful in showing that the material analysis of textual practices is equally illuminating for the historiography of Petrarch when applied to the documents of the very recent past and individuals still in living memory. Although Wilkins never travelled to continental Europe after 1903, he did attempt to view Petrarch manuscripts in continental North America, claiming to have seen 29 of the 31 manuscripts known to him (although these of course were not the manuscripts inherent to his model of the nine redactional stages, since both of those were held in the Vatican): Warkentin, pp. 48, 53.

<sup>15</sup> Wilkins, 'The Separate Fifteenth-Century Editions of the Triumphs', p. 749 (henceforth 'Triumphs'). There are now known to be two more incunable editions of the *Triumphs*, not included in Wilkins's census. Both were printed in Florence, the first by Bartolommeo dei Libri around 1485 (ISTC number ip00394500), and the second by Lorenzo Morgiani and Johannes Petri de Magontia, about 1490 (ISTC number ip00396300), and were noted for the first time in Peter Amelung's essay, 'Die Florentiner "Trionfi"-Ausgaben des 15. Jahrhunderts', in *Ars impressoria: Entstehung und Entwicklung des Buchdrucks. Eine internationale Festgabe für Severin Corsten zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Hans Limburg, Hartwig Lohse, and Wolfgang Schmitz (Munich: Saur, 1986) pp. 251-65.

<sup>16</sup> Wilkins, 'The Fifteenth-Century Editions of the Italian Poems', pp. 225-26 (p. 225) (henceforth 'Poems').

Northern Italy, and 1477 Naples edition — due to there being no copies of either in North America.<sup>17</sup> The essay also evidences his debts of scholarly gratitude, noting the Cornell work was possible only ‘through the kindness and efficiency of the librarian of the University, Dr Otto Kinkeldey, and the curator of the collection, Professor T. G. Bergin’, and also acknowledging ‘courteous replies’ from six other American libraries, Professor Sherman of Oberlin, and Mr Wilfred Allard, a graduate student at Cornell working ‘under the direction of Professor Bergin’.<sup>18</sup>

In the same note, Wilkins also acknowledges a book, the Cornell University *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection bequeathed by Willard Fiske*, compiled by Mary Fowler, in which ‘[d]etailed collations of the twenty-three editions and much interesting information about them are to be found’.<sup>19</sup> The casual, if passingly positive, mention of Fowler’s catalogue does not do justice to what a remarkable piece of work her catalogue is, and her detailed descriptions of the Cornell books invisibly permeate Wilkins’ article. The quality of her scholarship is not surprising, given her professional expertise as the University Library’s official curator of the Fiske Dante and Petrarch collections at the time of her writing, and as a Petrarch scholar in her own right — although her professional standing and curatorial expertise are nowhere deemed worthy of note by Wilkins, though his social and intellectual transactions with male colleagues are.<sup>20</sup> The minimisation of Fowler’s contribution in the scholarly record, at least as written by Wilkins, is emblematic of the longstanding erasure of the work of other agents of the books in academic writing, such as library cataloguers and curators (who, perhaps not coincidentally, are more likely to be female or from other marginalised groups, and excluded from the academic networks of power by virtue of their sex and status as ancillary para-academic workers); while scholars will

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<sup>17</sup> Wilkins, ‘Poems’, pp. 228, 229. Both these editions are held in the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, shelfmarks Rylands 9464 and 18520, and have been digitised.

<sup>18</sup> Wilkins, ‘Poems’, p. 226, and p. 226, n. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Wilkins, ‘Poems’, p. 226, n. 7. *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection bequeathed by Willard Fiske*, by Mary Fowler (London: Oxford University Press, 1916); the Petrarch incunables are at pp. 71-84. The catalogue was updated and reissued in 1974: Mary Fowler and Morris Bishop, *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection in the Cornell University Library*, 2nd edn (Millwood, NJ: Kraus-Thomson, 1974).

<sup>20</sup> Digitised documents from Cornell University’s archive fill out more details of the life of Fowler, who held the post of curator of the Fiske Italian collections from 1907-1920. Born in 1856, she graduated from Cornell in 1882, and worked at the library from 1890 until her retirement in 1922; she died six years later in 1928 (‘Obituaries’, *Cornell Alumni News*, 30.29 (1928), p. 368.) In 1911, the *Cornell Alumni News* records that she published an article in *The Library* (s3-II, Issue 5 (1911), 61-100), on ‘The Autographs of Petrarch’s *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*’, which traces their biography from manuscript through print (*Cornell Alumni News*, 13.21 (1911), p. 1), while the 1919-1920 *Report of the Librarian* records that: ‘The curator of the Dante and Petrarch collections, Miss Mary Fowler, has found it necessary because of ill health to give up her work with this fiscal year.’ Luckily, ‘Copy for the supplement to the Dante catalogue is ready for the printer and provision made for printing it, and it is hoped that when the necessary proof-reading begins, Miss Fowler will be able to do this work’ (p. 8). Fowler’s first publication on the Petrarch autograph manuscripts coincides with Wilkins’s first academic appointment at Harvard in 1910 (Warkentin p. 50), but is published in a bibliography journal, *The Library*, rather than in a literary studies outlet.



diligently note their reference works, they tend to dialogue in writing primarily with those they consider their peers, that is, the authors of published scholarly works and fellow (I use the term advisedly) colleagues.<sup>21</sup> Fowler's method is quite as scholarly as Wilkins's a generation later, yet she is not recognised in the homosocial networks of scholarly reciprocation, and accordingly is more or less lost to the record.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Wilkins does not accord her the status of a named reference in his article for each listed Petrarch edition, unlike the other reference works which he notes at the start of each item description.<sup>23</sup> However, we should acknowledge that elsewhere in his work he does sometimes mention the work of another female Petrarchist, albeit one who was his own doctoral student: Ruth Shepard Phelps, whose dissertation on the redactional forms of the *Rvf* he supervised in the 1920s.<sup>24</sup>

### Re-Examining the Incunable Corpus

Wilkins's work with the editions at Cornell, as we have seen, was fundamental to the description — and thus creation— of this incunable Petrarch corpus, but his method, very much of its time (and deliberately or not, it is hard to tell), emphasised in particular the contributions of certain agents, while minimising or erasing the expertise of others. In the same way, at a distance of almost eighty years from Wilkins's studies, it is necessary to revisit this incunable corpus itself, in order to propose a post-Wilkins re-evaluation of it. In

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<sup>21</sup> As Michelle Warren has noted (albeit in relation to editing rather than bibliographical description), 'Labor itself, in quite material terms, constitutes an important aspect of the politics of textual scholarship': 'The Politics of Textual Scholarship', in *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, ed. by Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 119-33 (p. 129).

<sup>22</sup> Fowler give an insight into the conditions of her labour in her introduction to the Cornell Petrarch Catalogue, framing the catalogue as a fulfilment of the donor Fiske's intention to publish a successor to his own 1888 handlist, based on a card catalogue prepared at his behest, and also incidentally mentioning the two distinguished male academic predecessors who failed to complete the project before it eventually landed on her desk. Fowler, *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection*, p. v.

<sup>23</sup> 'References are given, for each of the several editions, to the corresponding entries in Hain, Copinger, Reichling, the *Catalogue of the books printed in the XVth century now in the British Museum* [...] and the admirable Stillwell *Census*': Wilkins, 'Poems', p. 226. Fowler's immense work is recognised in Amelung (p. 260, n. 21) as a 'vorzügliche Katalog' (exquisite catalogue), and her contribution is finally acknowledged by name in the 2002 synoptic bibliography by Klaus Ley and others, which excerpts her entries for the individual editions: Klaus Ley, with Christine Mundt-Espín and Charlotte Krauß, *Die Drucke von Petrarca's 'Rime' 1470-2000* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> Warkentin, p. 52. Barolini considers Phelps's work to be superior to that of Wilkins: 'Since the contributions of Ruth Shepard Phelps, the author of an important 1925 study of the Chigi form titled *The Earlier and Later Forms of Petrarch's 'Canzoniere'*, have been obscured by Wilkins' subsequent work, it gives me pleasure to note that "Miss Phelps" (as Wilkins refers to her) provides a much more sophisticated reading [...] than either her predecessors or her successors': Barolini, p. 32. Dr Phelps, of course, possessed very different academic capital to Miss Fowler, largely conferred by her association with Wilkins himself.

the simplest terms, we are talking about a collection of about 50 books printed between the years 1470 and 1500 inclusive. There has of course been some significant work done on these since Wilkins's two articles, but very little on the incunable Petrarch in its totality. Apart from Dionisotti's classic study (which is not itself concerned primarily with the print history), studies have tended to focus on the micro, edition-level study, or on the macro, looking at the genre of poetic publication as a whole.<sup>25</sup> Newer handlists and catalogues have provided much useful information, but have inconsistencies between them, and are not always referenced.<sup>26</sup> Very few scholars have thus read across the corpus, and, most importantly, have looked at more than a few of the physical books together, and for this reason misreadings and important category errors have persisted for generations. While Wilkins in his two articles conceived of these editions by making a basic distinction between editions of the *Triumphs* as a free-standing text, and editions containing both the *Triumphs* with the *Rvf*, this still does not give a proper sense of the range of variation covered in these two broad categories. It has also led to a good deal of confusion in various later bibliographies and repertories, issues which have been foregrounded in recent years by scholars such as Maria Gioia Tavoni and Leonardo Francalanci, who have sought to clarify our understanding of the features of some of these editions, as we will see.<sup>27</sup>

It is more productive to consider this corpus in terms of their actual and rather varied contents, and in terms of their material forms, which evidence a much greater variation of textual productions in these thirty years than Wilkins's studies and authoritatively expressed stemmatics might suggest. I therefore propose the following five categories:

- i) editions of both the *Triumphs* and *Rvf*, without commentary (11 editions);
- ii) editions of both the *Triumphs* and *Rvf*, with commentary (29 editions);
- iii) complete editions of the *Triumphs* alone, without commentary (8 editions);<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Carlo Dionisotti, 'Fortuna del Petrarca nel Quattrocento', *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 17 (1974), 61-113; see also Michele Carlo Marini, 'Il paratesto nelle edizioni rinascimentali italiane del *Canzoniere* e dei *Trionfi*', in *Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, e il paratesto: Le edizioni rinascimentali delle 'tre corone'*, ed. by Marco Santoro (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2006), pp. 51-76 (pp. 51-57 on the incunables); Nadia Cannata, *Il canzoniere a stampa (1470- 1530): Tradizione e fortuna di un genere fra storia del libro e letteratura* (Rome: Bagatto, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> For example, Barolini and Storey do not cite Ley's 2002 bibliography; while in the handlist of editions in *Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, e il paratesto*, Ley is cited, but the reference numbers are out of sync from the 1488 edition onwards (p. 111): Marco Santoro, Michele Carlo Marino, and Marco Pacioni, 'Commedia, Canzoniere/Trionfi, Decameron: Short-title 1465-1600 delle edizioni italiane', in Santoro, pp. 99-135 (Petrarch pp. 109-27). Ley is the most thorough catalogue, but also includes suppositious works.

<sup>27</sup> Maria Gioia Tavoni, 'Elementi del paratesto delle edizioni dei *Trionfi* con il commento dell'Ilicino (secoli XV e XVI)', in *Il Petrarchismo: Un modello di poesia per l'Europa*, ed. by Loredana Chines, Floriana Calitti, and Roberto Gigliucci (Rome: Bulzoni, 2006), pp. 349-71; Leonardo Francalanci, 'I "Trionfi con il commento di Bernardo Ilicino" o il "Commento di Bernardo Ilicino ai Trionfi"? Alcune riflessioni metodologiche dalla periferia del canone petrarchesco', *Petrarchesca*, 3 (2015), 75-87.

<sup>28</sup> I follow Ley in listing 8 uncommented *Triumphs* here.

- iv) complete editions of the *Triumph* alone, with commentarial aids but not including a formal commentary (1 edition);
- v) editions of part of the text of the *Triumph*, with commentary (3 editions).

The first category are all editions containing both the works, which all tend to be bound as single volumes, and which run from the *editio princeps* of Petrarch's vernacular poetry, first printed in 1470 in Venice by Wendelin of Speyer, through to 1482.<sup>29</sup> No further uncommented editions of this type are then printed until the small-format Aldine edition of 1501. The second category, comprising editions of both the *Triumph* and *Rvf*, with commentary, is by far the most complex of these categories, and also the category whose complexities have not always been captured in previous accounts. All but one of these editions are printed as two separate volumes, with one volume for the *Triumph* and one for the *Rvf*, and following Tavoni, I count these here as a single edition per work (so two editions for each of the fourteen pairs). The only exception to this is the 1477 Venice edition, which contains commentary to the *Rvf* only, and where the *Rvf* and *Triumph* are printed as a single volume and conceptualised as a single poetic collection, 'li Sonetti. Ca[n]zone. & Triu[m]phi'.<sup>30</sup>

Within this category, we can point to no less than four distinct textual moments in the commentarial history, each with their own transmission trajectory: Bernard Ilicino's commentary to the *Triumph*, written in 1468-69 and first printed in 1475 in Bologna; Francesco Filelfo's partial commentary to the *Rvf*, printed as a companion volume to the 1475 commentary to the *Triumph* the year after (1476), by the same Bologna print consortium; thirdly, the publication of the continuation to Filelfo's commentary, completed by Girolamo Squarzafico and which was first printed in 1484; and finally, the 1477 Venice single-volume edition of the *Rvf* and *Triumph*, which contains an entirely different commentary to the whole *Rvf*, by Pseudo-Antonio da Tempo. The third category is that of the editions which contain the *Triumph* alone, and which do not contain a commentary; eight separate editions of these are

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<sup>29</sup> The fact that volumes are currently bound as a single volume does not of course preclude the fact that they might have been printed as two separate volumes, but more work needs to be done to establish this with security for each edition.

<sup>30</sup> This edition was also probably originally printed as two separate volumes, but the crucial separation is between the poetic texts and their commentary, rather than between the two poetic texts. The Manchester copy (Incunabula Collection 18163) is bound as a single volume, but contains two versions of the Life of Petrarch by Pseudo-Antonio da Tempo (attributed to him in the volume), the first printed at the start of the commentary section (fols. A1v-A5v), immediately after Domenico Siliprandi's Latin dedicatory letter to Federico Gonzaga, and another one at the conclusion of the *Triumph* (fol. [z]3r-[z]6r), which suggests that the Life was included as an essential paratext in both volumes. The book only has one dated colophon located at the end of the backmatter of Pseudo-Filelfo's commentary to the *Rvf* ('Venetiis. viii. Maii. M. cccclxxvii. '; fol. I4v), placed at the end of the dedicatory letter, and a number of other explicits and colophons for other parts of the book. Interestingly, Wilkins seems to consider the commentary volume a separate item in this case, rather than as a core part of the edition, noting that '[a] companion volume, printed also in 1477, contains a commentary on the *Rvf* attributed (wrongly) to Da Tempo': 'Poems', p. 230.

printed in Tuscany, seven in Florence and one in Lucca, between 1473 and c. 1490.<sup>31</sup> In 1499, a new edition of the *Triumphus* is printed in Florence; in design this follows the general format of the previous *Triumphus*, but contains new paratextual elements informed by the innovations of the commented editions of the combined *Triumphus* and *Rvf*, and thus I count this too as a separate category (category iv). The final group consists of extracts from the *Triumphus*, published with a commentary, and there are two textual traditions here as well: the edition published in Parma by Portilia in 1473, containing extracts from the *Triumphus Amoris*, *Pudicitie*, *Mortis* and *Fame*, with a commentary by Pseudo-Filelfo, and editions containing the ‘Nel cor’ section of the *Triumphus Fame*, commented by Jacopo da Poggio Bracciolini.

Wilkins’s treatment of the editions in his two seminal articles, by contrast, does not make such distinctions between the different kinds of textual productions, and thus the continued predominance of his studies as a primary point of reference has led to an ongoing misapprehension of the material record of Petrarch in early print. Furthermore, his construction of the textual interrelations of the incunable Petrarch editions implies several problematic assumptions, which have for the most part been absorbed without critique by the discipline, but which require unpacking if we are to acquire a more materially-informed understanding of the situation.

Two scholars in particular have recently made important interventions in the debate around the nature and status of the commented editions of the *Rime*, identifying issues which go beyond Wilkins. Tavoni’s essay in the 2006 *Petrarchismo* volume foregrounds both the fundamental problem of the Petrarchan bibliographical record (as recorded in databases such as the IISTC), and the scholarly misconceptions which have arisen from this. Tavoni argues that while the documentary scholarship has consistently presented the dual-text commented editions as paired volumes, the material evidence captured in the actual book-objects suggests we should instead understand each volume as a separate, individual textual entity, with their own production histories and textual afterlives.<sup>32</sup> And this is as true for subsequent ‘combined’ editions as it is for the first editions of the two commented texts, which were printed respectively in 1475 (*Triumphus* commentary) and 1476 (*Rvf* and commentary), and which were erroneously combined in the 1998 IISTC into a single bibliographical entry (and have been described as a joint production for much longer, at least back to Wilkins). Instead, she shows that these editions were nonetheless conceived of as also being available for individual purchase, with independent circulation.<sup>33</sup> The presumption (and perhaps even the projection) of a unified editorial intention has meant that these editions have generally been seen primarily as paired companion volumes and therefore as a unified enterprise. This, in combination with the uncritical reading of the misleadingly seamless models of textual

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<sup>31</sup> The seven Florence editions are the subject of the article by Peter Amelung, in which he adds two further editions to those listed in Wilkins’s 1942 article (one of which is a previously unknown edition).

<sup>32</sup> Tavoni notes that while Wilkins did the first survey of the editions, ‘non aveva operato distinzioni tra testo e relativi commenti’ (p. 350).

<sup>33</sup> Tavoni, p. 351.

families and genealogical transmission proposed by Wilkins, has thus created a false and over-orderly impression of what is actually a disorderly and discontinuous textual reality.<sup>34</sup>

Leonardo Francalanci has likewise taken a fresh look at the situation. By formally questioning what we understand the Ilicino edition to be, he argues that it should be treated first and foremost as Ilicino's commentary *to* the *Triumphs*, rather than as an edition of the *Triumphs* text with accompanying commentary (the type of presentation which would be exemplified, for example, by the first edition of Dante's *Commedia* with commentary, which would appear two years later, printed in Venice by Wendelin of Speyer in 1477).<sup>35</sup> Indeed, to refer to it casually as a *Triumphs* edition is quite misleading, since the text of the poem is deeply buried within the commentarial text, and not distinguished in any way typographically in the first printed edition.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the presentation of the text as a more or less continuous prose (in the first 1475 edition, at least), means that in no way can it be seen as a designed example of a text with related commentary mapped onto it. In a very fundamental way, we are therefore already approaching this edition from the wrong direction if we see it as such. Our conventional description of this edition as the *Triumphs* 'con commento' reinforces the idea of an autonomous text which could be appended ('giustapposto') to the *Triumphs*;<sup>37</sup> however, in fact an examination of the manuscript and printed tradition shows that there is and can be no Ilicino 'Commento' circulating without the *Triumphs*, with the inevitable conclusion that the Ilicino edition has to be understood as 'un'opera unica — il *Commento ai Trionfi* appunto — all'interno del quale si amalgamano in una successione ben precisa frammenti poetici e brani del commento'.<sup>38</sup> In the 1475 first edition, at least, the Petrarchan primary text is deeply buried within the analysis, and (almost) deployed to demonstrate the commentary argument, rather than the other way round.<sup>39</sup> As an exegetical text, the commentary is highly structured, arranged as a sequence of analytical units around each passage for elaboration from the *Triumphs*: first, an introduction which paraphrases the passage, followed by the *terzine* themselves, and finally the corresponding commentary; the sequence begins again with the paraphrase of the next section. Visually, the Petrarchan *terzine* are virtually indistinguishable from the commentary in the first edition of 1475, although attempts are made to separate them out in subsequent printings; and it would be completely impossible for the reader to access the *Triumphs* text as a continuous reading opportunity via the Ilicino edition.

If we go back to Wilkins's construction of the tradition, we can see how his assumptions have muddied the critical waters. First and foremost, with the division of his

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<sup>34</sup> Tavoni bases this thesis on her examination of a small number of editions, held in Bologna (the 1475 Bologna *Triumphs* and 1476 *Rvf*, the 1486 Venice editions printed by Pasquali; and the 1490 Venice editions printed by Pietro de' Piasi). In each of these cases the two editions evidence independent foliation and pagination, as well as separate colophons (p. 351). Meanwhile the independent afterlives of the editions is testified by the fact that they survive in libraries both as individual volumes and with the two editions bound together as a single object.

<sup>35</sup> Francalanci, pp. 77-78.

<sup>36</sup> Francalanci, p. 78.

<sup>37</sup> Francalanci, p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> Francalanci, p. 79.

<sup>39</sup> Francalanci, p. 79.

work on the early printed editions into two distinct articles, he enacts a basic separation of the free-standing *Triumph* editions from the editions of the collected *Rime* (i.e. editions which contain both the *Triumph* and the *Rvf*). In both groupings (*Triumph*, and *Triumph* + *Rvf*), he mixes editions of the primary texts alone with editions of commentaries (which may or may not contain the primary Petrarch texts as apprehensible components),<sup>40</sup> and, in the case of the *Triumph*, includes both the ‘complete’ text of the poem, and shorter extracts with commentary, such as in the case of the two editions of Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini’s commentary to the first chapter of the *Trionfo della Fama*, which are simply listed as part of the overall total.<sup>41</sup> The contents of the commentaries themselves do not seem to be of much interest to Wilkins, or at least not as much as their status as documented bibliographical examples of Petrarch printing; the point is no more and no less than chronology and comprehensiveness, with the overriding teleological aim of the creation of orderly, linear, (mental) entities with which to restrain the disorderly mass of actual historical book productions. The issue here is not that Wilkins is not attentive to the objects on the micro level, as he so clearly is — for example observing that the 1475 edition of Ilicino’s commentary to the *Triumph* was more of a commentary than an edition of the poem, as Francalanci argues 60 years later — but that his conceptual structuring of his model is such that the specific details of the objects are lost in his panoptic overview.<sup>42</sup> Just as we have seen for his now-notorious ‘doctrine of the nine forms of the *Canzoniere*’, the interpretative fault is not that of Wilkins himself, but in the subsequent presumptions of those who have simply followed his authoritative genealogical model, without problematising it or, indeed, going back to the books themselves.

Both these studies impose a referencing system of Wilkins’s own invention on the editions. In his *Triumph* article, the editions are numbered 1 to 9, in chronological order, from the [1473?] Florence edition printed by Johannes Petri (‘1<sup>st</sup> T’), through to the 1499 illustrated edition, also printed in Florence by Lorenzo de Alopa and Andrea Ghirlandi (‘9<sup>th</sup> T’).<sup>43</sup> The numerological harmony of the ‘nine *Triumph*’, and its resonance with the ‘nine forms’ of the *Rvf* has never before been noted, but must surely be a factor in the creation of this particular corpus of editions, two of which (let us not forget) are not even authored by Petrarch but by Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini.<sup>44</sup> But Wilkins’s simple chronological listing of

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<sup>40</sup> Tavoni herself observed that Wilkins ‘non aveva operato distinzioni tra testi e relativi commenti’ in his survey (p. 350).

<sup>41</sup> This fundamental category error is corrected, for example, in the *ISTC*, which attributes these two editions instead to Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini: *Sopra il Trionfo della fama di messer Francesco Petrarca* [Rome: Apud Sanctum Marcum (Vitus Puecher), before 15 Oct. 1476], *ISTC* no. ip00851000; *Sopra il Trionfo della fama di messer Francesco Petrarca* (Florence: Francesco Buonaccorsi, for Alessandro Varrocchi, 24. Jan. 1485/86), *ISTC* no. ip00852000.

<sup>42</sup> ‘This edition, which gave rise to so long a series of descendants, impresses one as being rather an edition of the commentaries than of the texts concerned – particularly since the type used for the commentary is the same as the type used for the text.’: Wilkins, cited in Francalanci, p. 82. The Wilkins quote is at p. 231 in ‘Poems’.

<sup>43</sup> Wilkins’ ordering now differs in some respects from the most recent dating, which can be found in the *ISTC*.

<sup>44</sup> Barolini refers to the ‘nine forms’ as a ‘narrative conceit’ on the part of Wilkins: p. 34.

the *Triumph* ordering is a very straightforward affair in comparison with the complex genealogical stemma of the printed editions of the two poetic texts which he advances in his 1943 article, and which has been repeated virtually unchanged and uncontested ever since:

[T]he twenty-five editions that contain both works fall into four families which are independent of one another, except in minor instances which will be noted below. The four families will be designated by the letters A, B, C, and D; and the several editions by the numerals I, II, III, etc., in accordance with their presumable chronological order. Except as noted below, all the twenty-three editions are folios, and all are in Roman type. No commentary appears in any of the editions of the first three families (except that in one case, [...] a commentary appears in a companion volume). ('Poems', p. 226)

The article concludes with a diagrammatic representation of the interrelations and textual dependencies of the editions ('Chart I'). The families are lettered A-D across the top line, with the individual editions, each represented by their roman capital letter, running down the page in chronological order. The diagram, viewed as a whole, implies a clear and logical progression from edition to edition, moving diagonally from top left to bottom right down the page in what is suggested to be a highly systematic and orderly progression from outlier 1470 *princeps* in family A at top left, down to the final edition at the bottom of the page, presented as the culminating edition of the most populous family (and perhaps by implication, the most authoritative one, due to its visual predominance): family D, the commented editions. The diagram does allow for some cross-contamination between the families, with dotted lines showing the 'horizontal' transmission of elements between families, but as a visual representation its usefulness is limited — and also potentially misleading —, since its contents can only be properly apprised through careful cross-referencing back to the individual entries for each of the editions. Wilkins singles out the individual *Triumph* and *Rvf* companion volumes as distinct points on the charts for only two of the editions (XXI, 1494 Venice; and XXIV, 1497 Venice), with all the other editions presented as single units (implying a formal paired volume in each case).

The assured verbal explanation of the textual families and pseudo-scientific visualisation diagram of the transmission model, which at first glance appears uncontested and all-encompassing, actually skates over some important features of the actual material record of the incunabular Petrarch. In his concern to make the editions fit his model, Wilkins stretches the 'minor instances' and exceptions almost to breaking point. His basic thesis — that there are four main 'families' of editions, and distinct lines of editorial influence and transmission — is plausible and uncontroversial, and he even allows that there are 'minor instances' where textual interrelations (such as the adoption of a paratextual element from another family) can be observed between the families.<sup>45</sup> Wilkins's work is solid, and in many ways anticipates late twentieth- and twenty-first century material-textual criticism, but it is

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<sup>45</sup> The dependencies are shown by solid or dotted lines in the Chart: 'The genealogy of the several editions may be indicated by Chart I, in which solid lines indicate general derivation and dotted lines indicate a borrowing of editorial material' (p. 238).

always undertaken with the aim of proving rational, empirical transmission vectors and an orderly and hierarchical system. But in the light of newer trends in book history, with our more relativised view of historical book circulation, there is nothing at all surprising about the fact that book-producers might reproduce paratextual elements from a number of different earlier books, themselves produced in different printing centres and time periods. If anything, the corpus is misrepresented by enforcing a rigid model of transmission in which every book has a locatable antecedent.

Wilkins' totalising statements as expressed in his model and the 1943 article thus present a distorted and artificially homogenised perspective on the incunable editions. For example, by no means are all the Petrarch editions folios, and likewise they are *not* all in roman type, even though Wilkins' formulation implies that this is strongly the case. In fact, there is a very wide range of formats and sizes, with quarto editions as popular as folio until the advent of the commented Bologna editions in 1475 to 1476, and much variation in size within these. The very first edition of 1470 is a quarto, as is the second edition of 1471.<sup>46</sup> We know that Wilkins did not see two of the editions in person: the edition printed somewhere in Northern Italy by the Printer of Jacopus di Forlivio around 1475, and the 1477 Naples edition, printed by Arnaldus de Bruxella.<sup>47</sup> From my direct comparison of the editions held in the John Rylands Library, it is notable that the unviewed editions are actually two of the four smallest editions of the *Rime* to be printed in the fifteenth century; a fact which may have been missed or not emphasised by Wilkins. The [c. 1475?] edition, in particular, is highly idiosyncratic, the only edition to be printed in octavo until the Aldine, and which resembles no other of the incunable Petrarchs in its typeface, which is a gothicised roman, much maligned in the bibliographical descriptions.<sup>48</sup> The Naples 1477 edition, meanwhile, is a very small folio, in size roughly halfway between the smallest two editions to be printed, the [1475?] and Venice 1477 editions.<sup>49</sup> Working only from prior bibliographical descriptions for these two volumes, the unusualness of these two volumes relative to the rest of the editions might not have been so apparent to Wilkins. (The exceptional quality and fullness of the

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<sup>46</sup> The *ISTC* erroneously records the 1471 as folio, as does Fowler, although Wilkins himself notes it correctly as quarto.

<sup>47</sup> Described in Wilkins, 'Poems', pp. 228-29.

<sup>48</sup> Ley 5 (pp. 12-13). Ley dates this edition to [1473?] but also gives the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke (GW)* and *ISTC* date of [c. 1475] in relation to the reference to the Manchester copy. Wilkins quotes bibliographical sources to especially emphasise the crudeness of the printing in his description, possibly to denigrate its importance relative to the more splendid editions he has seen at Cornell ('Poems', pp. 228-29). The page of the Manchester copy measures 193 x 141 mm.

<sup>49</sup> We should not forget, of course, that the final size of the volume is generally determined by a binder, and so these may not be empirically the smallest copies of these editions. While paper was generally made in different size categories, the relative sizes may well have varied between cities, so this could have been a standard Naples paper size, but smaller than a Northern Italy folio. On the complex question of paper sizes and their relation to book formats see, Paul Needham, 'Format and Paper Size in Fifteenth-century Printing', in *Materielle Aspekte in der Inkunabelforschung*, ed. by Christoph Reske and Wolfgang Schmitz (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), pp. 59-107. See also Brian Richardson, *Printers, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 11-13.



Cornell holdings, too, might have given him an overly homogenous sense of the corpus.) In addition, three other editions, seen at Cornell and described by Wilkins in his article are also smaller than the Naples edition: these are the Rome 1471 edition, printed by Lauer, the Rome 1473 edition, printed by Lignamine, and the 1477 Venice Siliprandi, all of which are also quarto editions.<sup>50</sup> All but the Siliprandi edition are located in his family B; the group of editions whose contents can be traced back to the 1471 Rome Lignamine edition. Thus in fact what we have here (although this is never foregrounded in Wilkins's master model), is a discrete group of editions produced away from the printing (and Petrarchan intellectual) centre of Venice, which are explicitly designed as editions which are smaller, cheaper, and in less scholarly formats, for presumably less scholarly readerships.<sup>51</sup> In addition to the group of quartos, the folio editions are not by any means homogenous (the elision of this point perhaps once again provides evidence of Wilkins's lack of interest in the material object and design features), with, for example, the 1482 Venice edition printed by Filippo di Pietro in an unusually long and narrow agenda-book format.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, the constraints of Wilkins's model (i.e. that family D is the only family to include commentaries to the two texts) lead to him to say that: 'No commentary appears in any of the editions of the first three families (except that in one case, [...] a commentary appears in a companion volume)'.<sup>53</sup> The edition in question is the previously mentioned 1477 Venice edition printed by Siliprandi, which contains the *Rvf* and *Triumph* together, alongside a second volume of commentary by Pseudo-Antonio da Tempo. This is a notable outlier in the corpus, being the only edition to contain this commentary to the *Rvf* (and significantly, published one year after the Bologna edition which was the first printing of Filelfo's partial commentary up to poem 136). The editorial intention may well have been to offer an alternative commentary to the *Rvf* as a whole. Moreover, it is the only two-volume edition where the volumes are split between poetic texts and commentary, and the first commented edition of the *Rvf* to be printed in a format smaller than folio. Wilkins, casuistically, does not quite tell us that it is not a folio, observing instead that '[t]his is the smallest of the fifteenth-century editions: it is an approach to the Aldine format'.<sup>54</sup> In fact, it is exceptionally small relative to the others (the page of the Manchester copy measuring approximately 194 x 129 mm). In format it is much more like the Tuscan *Triumph* in quarto, the first of which was published in Florence in 1473 by Johannes Petri, with a second edition published in the same year as this one in Lucca by Bartholomeus de Civitali (it is not clear which edition is printed first: the Lucca edition is dated 14 May, but the Siliprandi *Rime* only gives the year in the colophon). This 1477 edition — C11 in Wilkins's taxonomy, and one of only three editions to

<sup>50</sup> Wilkins notes they are quartos in his entry for each, but only makes any further mention of the smaller format in relation to the 1477 Siliprandi edition.

<sup>51</sup> One edition in the B family is in folio, the 1473 Venice edition printed by Gabriele di Pietro (B5); the decision to publish in folio is probably governed by the fact that this is only the second Petrarch *Rime* to be printed in Venice, and so it follows the format of the *princeps*.

<sup>52</sup> Venice: Filippo di Pietro, 1482. Manchester Incunable Collection 18313. The Manchester copy measures 307 x 170 mm. Wilkins notes only that 'the pages are tall, admitting three sonnets' ('Poems', p. 230).

<sup>53</sup> Wilkins, 'Poems', p. 226.

<sup>54</sup> Wilkins, 'Poems', p. 230.

be printed after the monumental paradigm shift marked by the Bologna Malpigli commented editions of 1475 to 1476 (family D in the model) — could alternatively be seen as expressive of another trend in Petrarch print publishing, which to that date had been seen only in the smaller-format *Triumph* volumes, that is, the portable reading edition, and perhaps even a deliberate response to the unwieldiness of the folio commentary editions. After this edition, the model of the smaller *Rime* does not seem to have been repeated until the Aldine edition fourteen years later, the print market in the intervening years being dominated by the monumental folio editions, with only two more editions printed in folio but without commentary until then (Naples 1477 and Venice 1482). The increasing dominance of the folio commentary *Triumph* and commented *Rvf* in the decades to come might even have led to the numerous text-only, uncommented *Triumph* in quarto which were printed in Tuscany from 1477 onwards. (However, we cannot completely discount the possibility that more smaller-format editions of the *Rime* were produced, but were read to death and did not survive, a theory which Amelung has advanced to explain the long gaps in publication between the free-standing *Triumph* editions).<sup>55</sup>

We can observe similar generalising impulses in Wilkins' treatment of the Quattrocento *Triumph* editions in his 1942 study. He finds 'at least nine separate editions of the Triumphs', but as noted above, this is misleading, since the implication here would be that they contain the whole text: in fact two of these are commentaries on a single chapter written by a third party, and a third is a commented edition of a larger selection from the text. Noting earlier bibliographical descriptions of the *Triumph*, Wilkins is careful to note that the Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini commented editions are not entered to Petrarch, but this does not stop him counting them as 'Triumphs editions' for the purposes of his list.<sup>56</sup> Likewise he announces that 'All appear to be properly quantifiable as quartos', but makes no further observation as to size and genre. In terms of format, this too is rather misleading: the two editions of Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini's commentary to the chapter 'Nel cor' of the *Triumphs Fame* are indeed both quartos, but of very different sizes: the Rome first edition ('3<sup>rd</sup> T' in Wilkins) is a large quarto, while the Florence edition printed a decade later ('6th T') is much smaller.<sup>57</sup> As dense prose commentaries, their page design is directed towards scholarly exegesis rather than the reading of poetry, with the text block filled with the commentary, and the verse set apart from the prose on a separate line, with a blank line before and after to frame it in white space. In page design they also recall that of the first commented edition of the *Triumph*, the 1473 edition of Pseudo-Filelfo's partial commentary, although their use of blank space before and after the *Triumph* text distinguishes the verse more from

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<sup>55</sup> There are long gaps between the *Triumph* editions, but Amelung argues that it seems unlikely these editions would satisfy demand; he suggests that it is therefore likely that additional editions were printed, which are now lost or wait to be discovered in private libraries (p. 265).

<sup>56</sup> 'The [British Museum Catalogue] includes but five (two of them, rightly enough, under Poggio); the Stillwell *Census* lists but five (two of them, rightly enough, under Poggio)': pp. 748-49.

<sup>57</sup> The Rylands copy of the Rome edition measures 279 x 194 mm, while that of the Florence edition measures 206 x 135 mm, some 7 centimetres shorter in height than the first edition.

the commentary than in the Parma edition.<sup>58</sup> And the mise-en-page of all of these commented editions is very distinct from the editions which contain the *Triumph* only, which follow the format established in the joint *Rvf* and *Triumph* editions of a single long column of verse running down the page.<sup>59</sup>

The final edition of the *Triumph* to be printed in the Quattrocento, the 1499 Florence edition printed by Lorenzo Alopa and Andrea Ghirlandi for the publisher Pietro Pacini, shows instead a reciprocal influence of the combined *Triumph* + *Rvf* editions on the presentation of the poem.<sup>60</sup> This edition is quite distinct from all the other editions of the poem, but has features which recall both the format of the ‘free-standing’ *Triumph* editions (category iii in my revised listing), in that it too is a slim volume in quarto format, and also contains paratextual elements familiar from the commented editions of the *Triumph* (category ii), in the form of six full-page woodcuts, and marginal glosses, concluding with Bruni’s life of Petrarch at the end of the volume.<sup>61</sup> Further work remains to be done to establish the exact relationship between this edition and the preceding smaller-format *Triumph*, and between its paratextual elements and those present in the commented editions, but it is immediately clear that the woodcut sequence is inspired by those which became common in commented editions of the poem from the Novimagio edition of 1488 onwards, although the woodcuts in this Florentine edition are a new set and not copies of any of the three preceding woodcut sequences.<sup>62</sup> This small edition represents a new departure for the market, in its combination of high aesthetic and visual values, alongside a scholarly supporting apparatus, and must have been successful, since it was republished by Pacini in 1508, and by his son Bernardo again a decade later, in 1518.

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<sup>58</sup> Francesco Petrarca, *Trionfi* (Parma: Andreas Portilia, 6 Mar. 1473), ISTC no. ip00398000: the Rylands copy measures 209 x 146 mm, some half a centimetre taller and a centimetre wider than the second Poggio edition.

<sup>59</sup> The formats of the *Triumph* editions are described in detail in Amelung.

<sup>60</sup> The edition is described in a 1903 article by D. Ciampoli, ‘Un’edizione rarissima de’ *Trionfi*’, *La Bibliofilia*, 5, 7-8 (1903), 211-22; it is also described briefly in Wilkins, ‘Triumphs’, pp. 750-51 and Amelung, pp. 263-64. The Ciampoli article contains reproductions of each of the six woodcuts.

<sup>61</sup> Wilkins, ‘9<sup>th</sup> T’; Ley 42; ISTC no. ip00397000. I have not been able to consult a physical copy of this very rare edition; only two copies are extant, held in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome and Cornell University library (the latter lacking the woodcuts), and thus I have worked from the 1891 facsimile edition, *I Trionfi di Francesco Petrarca. Facsimile foto-zincografico della edizione stampata a Firenze ad istanza di Piero Pacini l’anno M. CCCC.LXXXIX conservata in esemplare unico nella Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele in Roma* (Rome: Genua & Strizzi, 1891).

<sup>62</sup> Amelung, pp. 263-64. Three different sets of woodcuts are used in the first illustrated editions of the *Triumph* printed between 1488 and 1492-93, appearing first in the Venice Bernadinus Rizus edition of 1488, with a new set prepared for the 1490 Venice edition printed by Pietro de’ Piasi, which were in turn redone for the 1492-93 edition printed by Giovanni Capcasa. The Florence set are most similar to the second and third sets in composition, although they have been entirely redrawn; Wilkins, following Essling, suggests that the 1490 set was inspired by a set of Florentine copperplate engravings of the *Triumph*, and so it may well be that a trajectory can be traced between those and the 1499 Florence *Triumph* woodcuts: Wilkins, ‘Poems’, p. 234, and Victor Masséna Essling, *Les livres à figures vénitiens de la fin du XVe siècle et du commencement du XVIIe*, 7 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1907-14), I, 82-96 (p. 90).

A close examination of the printed book-objects produced during the last three decades of the fifteenth century therefore shows a much more complex and varied picture of the material incunable Petrarch than has hitherto been noted. Wilkins' pioneering bibliographical studies remain important, and will continue to be so, but the all-encompassing models first implied in his *Triumph* article, then actualised in the diagrammatic representation in his study of the combined *Rime* editions must now be read in a more nuanced, historicised, and critically inflected way. This essay has shown that from the very beginning there was considerable variation in Petrarch textual productions, in both the physical forms of the books and the texts (authorial, commentarial, visual) contained within them. The diversity of products, especially in the first decade of print, suggests that there was both demand for the vernacular Petrarch across a wide geographic area, and a desire on the part of the text-producers to also tailor and direct their publications to different readerships and purposes. A synchronic, decade-by-decade view, rather than the diachronic, genealogical perspective proposed by Wilkins, demonstrates this very clearly. The 1470s have the widest range of editions, including combined editions of the *Rvf* and *Triumph* printed together or in companion editions, in formats ranging from large folio to small octavo, printed with and without accompanying commentary, which could be by several different commentators; and slim free-standing editions of the *Triumph* without commentary, and also extracts from the *Triumph* with commentary, all of these latter printed in quarto but with great variation in size and layout. It is important to stress that of the 14 different editions printed in the 1470s (I count the paired editions as a single one for the purposes of this count), no less than 7 are in quarto, with one more in octavo, and so we are very far from Wilkins's implication that they are for the most part in folio. In the 1480s the huge variation of the book-objects of the previous decade gives way to more standardised trends in publishing, with the predominance of the two-volume paired editions of the commented *Rvf* (with the addition of the Squarzafico continuation after 1484, and woodcuts after 1488), and the Illicino commentary to the *Triumph*, all of which are printed in folio; there is one final uncommented combined edition, in a tall and narrow agenda-book folio format in 1482; a number of free-standing editions of the *Triumph*, all uncommented, in quarto; and a small quarto edition of Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini's commentary to the *Triumphus Fame*, as well. By the 1490s, the market is entirely dominated by the two-volume folio paired commented editions of the *Rvf* and *Triumph*, with the *Triumph* woodcuts now a standard feature, and with further free-standing quarto *Triumph* editions at the start and end of the decade, with the 1499 edition containing its own set of woodcuts and exegetical tools for the reader for the first time.

It is therefore no longer tenable to simply reproduce Wilkins's model without acknowledging the material specificity of the various editions, and their varying contents, including the contributions of the many book-agents who contributed to them, whether as author, editors, publishers, printers (and all those other people working in the print shop), and artists, and without likewise taking account of their individual production contexts and subsequent trajectories. This article represents a first step in this re-materialisation of the incunable Petrarch; it is now time to revisit Wilkins' families of genealogical transmission, and undertake more granular work on (para)textual interrelations, via the direct comparison of physical editions. This is work which Francalanci has already pointed out needs to be done for the Illicino commentary, so as to relate it to the tradition of the genetics of the authorial

text, but it could also usefully be extended to all of the incunable editions in their myriad variety. In this re-materialisation and renewed attentiveness to the object, we need, too, to read the page as much as the text, and therefore to analyse the early printed Petrarch book as a designed reading-object. The increase in digitised editions, and the extensive digital library of early printed editions produced as part of our *PERI* project will be invaluable in advancing these aims.

Furthermore, the essay has shown that we must also enlarge our study of the incunable Petrarch as a social text, by also taking account of (indeed, ‘seeing’, for perhaps the first time) the scholarly contributions of other, hitherto less-recognised, figures such as librarians to the construction of the meanings of the early printed book, and explicitly integrating their expert writings into the wider system of meanings attached to these text-carrying objects. As Sarah Neville has recently noted, ‘Like all other forms of human pursuit, editorial [and I would add here bibliographical] activities work within the technological affordances of their particular historical moments’.<sup>63</sup> With this in mind, I have tried to situate Wilkins’ work on the incunable Petrarch within his own intellectual context, as the defining Petrarch scholar of his generation, who attempted to create his own unifying theory of the genealogies of the *Rvf* in manuscript and print, and also within his material practices of study, working carefully with the books in the Cornell Special Collections and constructing his descriptions with the aid of a community of fellow (largely male) academics, and the expert writings of an almost invisible female curator, named only by Wilkins in his bibliographical reference to her catalogue. In the almost-eight decades since publication, Wilkins’ authoritative pronouncements have become the first port of call for Petrarch scholars working on the incunable Petrarch; yet beyond them there is a whole ecosystem of careful, detailed, bibliographical descriptions of the objects existing in the form of library records, handlists, catalogues and databases, which shape every readerly encounter with these books. Scholars may reference these rigorously, and even engage with them dialogically, but these bibliographical texts, too, are not always ‘seen’ — at least outside the world of book history and information studies — as constituent parts of the meaning-making ecosystem around the text. What is the status of the bibliographical description within the literary field? Without a doubt it is highly meaningful, and certainly in relation to premodern books, it is probably the single most important document to mediate the reader’s encounter with and interpretation of the book-object. The description shapes interpretation and the subsequent narratives written about the history of the text, just as profoundly as would a critical edition or scholarly monograph, yet its hermeneutic after-effects are rarely recognised as such. I have therefore tried to show how Wilkins’ hierarchical and orderly models for the genealogies of the incunable Petrarch were overtly *constructed*, rather than simple accounts of bibliographical facts (despite his best efforts to present them as such), and in the service of this have mustered other bibliographical texts, such as Mary Fowler’s seminal catalogue of the Fiske Dante and Petrarch collections, more recent catalogues such as the *ISTC* and *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, and the new enhanced library records prepared for the John Rylands Petrarch editions as part of our project.

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<sup>63</sup> Sarah Neville, ‘Rethinking Scholarly Commentary in the Age of Google: Some Preliminary Meditations on Digital Editions’, *Textual Cultures*, 12.1 (2019), 1-26 (p. 2, n. 2).

The invisibility of the bibliographical record as site of intellectual enquiry into the mediation of the text is illustrated (if indeed a negative can be illustrated) by its total absence from the seminal study of the *hors-texte*, Gérard Genette's *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*.<sup>64</sup> Here Genette advances his theory of a system of mediation for the literary text as it interacts with its contexts, classifying various types of paratext both internal and external to the book.<sup>65</sup> Most of his attention is devoted to the paratexts found within the book-object (which he classifies as 'peritext'), but his model does also allow for external texts which are related to the primary text, authored by third-parties, which he defines as 'allographic epitexts'. For Genette, even the external paratext, or 'epitext' is defined by its service to the author (indeed, he defines such agents as 'allies'), and it is therefore surely possible for this term to be extended to encompass the bibliographical description of the Petrarch book-object, especially by figures such as Wilkins who are so deeply invested in the figure of Petrarch, or those who compile specifically Petrarch-oriented catalogues and bibliographies, such as Mary Fowler, or Klaus Ley and his colleagues. Yet the library record and scholarly description is nowhere to be found in Genette, even though he devotes a substantial amount of space to discussing the format and material features of premodern books and their expressive capacities in Chapter 1, information he has presumably retrieved himself from bibliographical documents.<sup>66</sup> As we have seen articulated so explicitly by Wilkins in his note of thanks to his helpers, work around the prized rare-book as object is an emblematic opportunity for position-taking in the field,<sup>67</sup> and thus the creation of bibliographical allographic epitexts — and the description of this process in these documents, in their internal paratexts or peritexts — is an important part of this dynamic. Just as Wilkins thanks his peers, the Cornell librarian Dr Kinkeldey, and the curator of the collection, Professor Bergin, in the main text, with further thanks to other (lesser) correspondents and helpers in the footnote; so does Mary Fowler in her preface outline the journey of this immense cataloguing project from the desk of the collection's original owner, through those of the professors subsequently charged with it, until it is completed by her.

This article thus concludes with a call to acknowledge and document the expert curatorial contributions which are so often passed over in this kind of historical bibliographical work, and instead to recognise them as critical parts of the scholarly landscape and the wider sociology of the Petrarchan book. Within the disciplines of book history, and digital humanities, this work to recover the contributions of hitherto marginalised groups is

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<sup>64</sup> *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretations*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>65</sup> For an excellent critical overview of Genette's text and its development across disciplines, see Kathryn Batchelor, *Translation and Paratexts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); my summary here draws on her introductory chapter, pp. 9-14.

<sup>66</sup> Genette is primarily concerned with 'publishers' as the producers of meaning in the book-object, and is extremely careful to maintain a distance from book historians in his work: *Paratexts*, p. 16.

<sup>67</sup> I draw here on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of position-taking as an expression of the power dynamic between agents in the field of cultural production: Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), pp. 231-34.

well underway, but still has some way to go in the wider field of premodern Italian studies.<sup>68</sup> But the technological affordances of our electronic text-delivery ecosystems, and their potential as containers of new forms of the book, now give us a new means to register and foreground the contributions of all those who work with the historic book object within the rare-books library, and therefore to capture new dimensions of the object as a social text. The University of Manchester's new digital image viewer, which contains the Petrarch Digital Library, allows us to attach bibliographical description (itself a form of primary research) to a digital image of the historic material object, and to record, and thereby authorise, all those who have contributed to it. Just as we have learned to reconfigure the agents of early print as collective authors of the book-object, as Rhiannon Daniels shows us in her article in this mini-special issue,<sup>69</sup> so too can we expand the authors and co-producers of the re-presented digital heritage object, to include curators, researchers, photographers, and software developers alongside the author and historic text-producers. Additionally, the digital medium allows the co-location of information: on the verso the digital image, on the recto the bibliographical description prepared by an expert cataloguer, and viewing it the reader herself, who can see a visual reproduction of the historic artefact and assess it against the metadata. In addition, with the built-in Mirador viewer, it is possible to compare the images of the Manchester books with other digitised images of the same edition in other institutions. While Wilkins had to go to Cornell to attempt to assemble the corpus as best he could for his descriptions, and corresponded by post with colleagues in other libraries, we can now bring the library to our desk and see for ourselves the objects, and ideally, also the bibliographical historiography, which has shaped our interpretation.

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<sup>68</sup> An excellent example of this trend is described in a recent article: Cait Coker and Kate Ozment, 'Building the *Women in Book History Bibliography*, or Digital Enumerative Bibliography as Preservation of Feminist Labor', *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 13.3 (2019) <<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/13/3/000428/000428.html> > [accessed 1 November 2019].

<sup>69</sup> Daniels, 'Printing Petrarch in the Mid-Cinquecento: Giolito, Vellutello, and Collaborative Authorship', *Italian Studies*, 75.1 (2020),