

PhD Dissertation Defense

Isabella Magni

The Digital Reconstruction of  
Petrarch's *Fragmenta*.

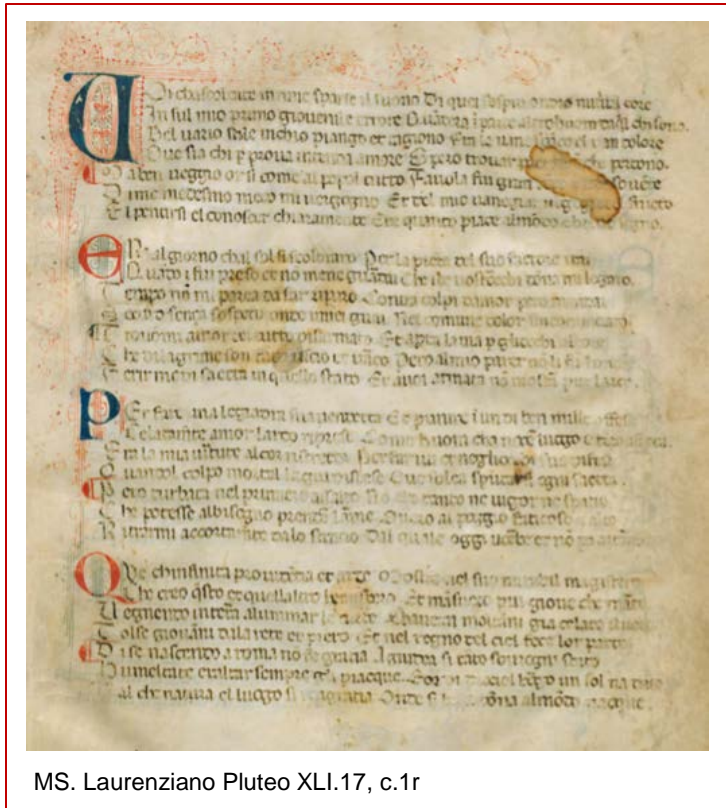
9:00 am, Thursday, December 15, 2016  
Sassafras Room  
Indiana Memorial Union

**Summary:** The working principles of my dissertation originate with my collaboration with Storey and Walsh's *Petrarchive*, an innovative digital edition based on a new "rich-text" approach to Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, maintaining both the textual-material and the digital aspects of my experience. The

*Fragmenta* is an icon in the Italian literary tradition and more broadly in the Western culture. After following for decades the milestone work of Wilkins (1951) on the "building" of Petrarch's *Fragmenta*, recent research has demonstrated the need for a radical re-thinking of the way we treat and present this iconic work. Starting from the materiality of primary sources, the manuscripts, I propose an in-depth material and historical investigation of the genesis of Petrarch's songbook, de-constructing Wilkins' widely accepted theory of the nine "forms", and focusing in particular on the alleged "Malatesta form". By studying graphic reforms and variants of witnesses of the early manuscript tradition and analyzing historical documents such as letters and chronicles, I conclude that we have no material evidence of the very existence of such a "form". Indeed we have no proof of any "form" of the *Fragmenta* that pre-dates Boccaccio's MS Chigiano L.V.176. From these material and historical conclusions, I expand my research to the digital realm, proving how innovative digital methods offer new dimensions in investigating and representing the intricate construction of Petrarch's work. Carefully studied encoding allows a more authentic representation of the *Fragmenta* not only in its textual components but also in its visual and material aspects. The bridge between material philology and digital encoding, deeply rooted in the basic issues of the representation of texts, is still a partially unexplored field but is already changing the way we read and interpret this icon of the Italian literary tradition.

**Committee Members:**

- Prof. H. Wayne Storey, French & Italian (Committee Chair)
- Prof. Marco Arnaudo, French & Italian
- Prof. Andrea Ciccarelli, French & Italian
- Prof. Massimo Scalabrini, French & Italian
- Prof. John A. Walsh, Information and Library Sciences



MS. Laurenziano Pluteo XLI.17, c.1r

If you wish to attend, please contact Professor Storey at [hstorey@indiana.edu](mailto:hstorey@indiana.edu).