



## Petrarch and his places

public presentation of the volume

*Petrarca e i suoi luoghi. Spazi reali e paesaggi poetici alle origini del moderno senso della natura*

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010, 6pm**

in the framework of the Landscape Study Days 2010 on *The concept of place*.  
dedicated to Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009)

auditorium of palazzo Bomben, Treviso, via Cornarotta 7a

Speakers will include the editors, **Domenico Luciani** and **Monique Mosser**,  
**Carmen Añón** (University of Madrid, ICOMOS) and **Ugo Dotti** (Italianist,  
University of Perugia). Some of the authors will also be present.

*Petrarca e i suoi luoghi. Spazi reali e paesaggi poetici alle origini del moderno senso della natura* [Petrarch and his places.

Real spaces and poetic landscapes at the origins of the modern sense of nature]

edited by **Domenico Luciani** and **Monique Mosser**,

Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche with Canova,

Treviso 2009, XIV-262 pages, 41 colour illustrations and 37 in black and white,  
ISBN 978-88-8409-227-4, 28 euros (Memorie, 13).

For Francesco Petrarch space and time assume precise shape and extent in his solitude and work. His homes, his gardens, his landscapes have once again become an irresistible gravitational centre for our European culture. They are tangible places, endowed with an immense philological heritage accumulated over seven centuries and charged with a ceaseless metamorphosis of their myth.

This publication represents a joint effort to take critical stock of an amalgam of the ideas, sciences and arts of landscape and gardening and to delineate a sort of atlas that will provide guidance in what Andrea Zanzotto calls the «collection of secure houses where one can settle, “quiet doors” that will be available everywhere», which the poet has organized in the course of his life. If we exclude, therefore, experiences that nevertheless mark inevitable stages in the construction of the idea of landscape in Petrarch, places that we should at least have mentioned, like Mont Ventoux, Mont Sainte Baume and the Ligurian Riviera, which made such a deep impression on him at the age of eight, Baia and the Phlegraean Fields, the Monginevro Pass and the sources of the Adige, the collection of quiet (and unquiet) doors of a free spirit *peregrinus ubique*, does in any case present open confines. When should we start? At Incisa, in the first six years of his life? At Pisa, when he was a seven-year-old? Immediately afterwards, at Avignon and Carpentras? In the places of his early youth, of his many years of study in Montpellier and Bologna, which must have been vivid in his memory? In the house where he stayed at Lombez, which he often described nostalgically? Then, of course, come the places he himself designated

as embodying the home-garden-landscape trinity status. So Vaucluse, and the fulfilment, at the age of thirty, of an ambition he had had since he was eleven. The two homes in Parma, one in the city and the other in the mountains at Selvapiana. The three homes in Milan, at Sant' Ambrogio, Garegnano and San Simpliciano. And other houses, perhaps no more than staging posts, in familiar cities like Pavia e Verona. And after oscillating between the centre of Padua and Riva degli Schiavoni in Venice, he spent the last five years of his life at Arquà in solitary study and gardening, a much loved and universally praised 65/70-year-old. Our wish, in short, is to stimulate the reader to want to go, or return, to the "places" of Petrarca's life (and his works, (for the literary historian "place" designates a precise textual reference), steering clear of dry academicism to dialogue with a figure who continues to challenge our sense of nature, our ways of measuring space and time and our conceptions of the shape and life of places, all with the immediacy and pathos of someone who could be our contemporary.

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### **The editors**

**Domenico Luciani.** Architect and landscape expert, deeply involved in the battle of ideas concerning the natural and cultural heritage. He directed the Fondazione Benetton from its founding in 1987 until 2009 and now coordinates its landscape research and experimentation activities, including the International Carlo Scarpa Prize for Gardens; together with Lionello Puppi, he directs the series entitled "Memorie" and edits the volumes with joint authorship, such as *Luoghi. Forma e vita di giardini e di paesaggi* (2001). He has been a member of various international scientific committees associated with important European experiments in the transformation of post-industrial and post-mining sites. He has published essays and articles in a number of Italian and foreign journals.

**Monique Mosser.** Historian of art, architecture and gardens. A leading figure in support of measures to safeguard the cultural heritage in Europe. Lecturer at the School of Architecture of Versailles. Researcher at the CNRS (Centre André Chastel, Paris). Author of a vast body of original work, with articles, essays, and monographs on historic gardens and landscapes, including *L'architettura dei giardini d'Occidente dal Rinascimento al Novecento* (1990, with Georges Teyssot), translated into several languages and reissued many times. She works with important landscape designers and architects and is a member of ICOMOS-IFLA; she is a member of various scientific committees, including that of the Fondazione Benetton, and of a number of juries, including that of the International Carlo Scarpa Prize for Gardens.