PAIN AS PERSUASION: THE PETRARCH MASTER
INTERPRETING PETRARCH’S *DE REMEDIIS*

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Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque fortune* was certainly one of the most influential books of the early modern period. From its publication in 1366 on, it was disseminated all over Latin-speaking Europe, and found its way in the libraries of a range of intellectuals, clerics and laymen.1 Much ahead of its time, it represents a very early example of Renaissance Neo-Stoicism (which is generally associated with sixteenth-century intellectuals such as Du Vair and Lipsius), and offers a manual of more than 250 meditative exercises that teach its reader how to master as many different situations in life. As the huge number of manuscripts, printed editions and translations demonstrates, the influence of *De remedies* even grew in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the sixteenth century, part of its tremendous success was due to the large set of illustrations (261 woodcuts), made in 1519–1520 by an anonymous artist from Augsburg in Southern Germany, the so-called Petrarch Master.2 The German *De remediis* editions with the Petrarch

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1 The Latin text was disseminated in an enormous number of manuscripts, of which more than 245 have been preserved, and a considerable number of printed editions. Cf. Mann N., “Manuscripts of Petrarch’s *De remediis*. A Checklist”, *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 14 (1971) 57–90 and Trapp J.B., “Illustrated Manuscripts of Petrarch’s *De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae*”, in idem, *Studies of Petrarch and his Influence* (London: 2003) 118–170. Moreover, the work was translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish and other languages. The translations were circulated in manuscripts and printed editions alike.

Master’s illustrations figure among the most intriguing bi-medial book productions of the early modern era.\(^3\)

The woodcuts have often been interpreted as being essentially in line with Petrarch’s text. For example, Fraenger and Scheidig see them as realistic genre scenes or *Schaubilder* that are meant to express Petrarch’s humanist and Renaissance world view. More recent interpretations by Raupp, Knappe and Wohlfeil-Wohlfeil argue that they should be read as *didactic images* or *Lehrbilder* that are intended to express Petrarch’s Neo-Stoic and humanistic doctrines.\(^4\) Detailed recent analysis, however, has cast doubt on these interpretations. Some two years ago, I made a first attempt to offer a new interpretation of the relationship between word and image. In the *Glücksbuch*, the *Von der Arztney bader Glück, des guten und des widerwertigen*, illustrated by the Petrarch Master, word and image operate within remarkably dissimilar discourses. While Petrarch’s text is situated in Christian Stoicism, the images participate in the discourses of the house book, moral satire (*the Narrenschiff*), of collections of proverbs and of political and religious polemics.\(^5\)

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\(^3\) For the relationship between word and image, see especially Enenkel, “Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters” and R. Falkenburg, “Speculative Imagery in Petrarch’s *Von der Arztney bader Glück*”, in Enenkel – Papy (eds.), *Petrarch and his Readers* 171–189.


\(^5\) Enenkel, “Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters.”