

**POLITICAL PETRARCHISM:
THE RHETORICAL FASHIONING OF COMMUNITY
IN EARLY MODERN ITALY**

Steve Baker

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2013

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Abstract

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Engaging with a variety of literary and historical sources, in both prose and verse, including letters, chronicles, treaties and the neo-Latin epic, this dissertation examines the centrality of the classically-informed, philosophical idea of friendship (*amicitia*) in the community-building discourse of Francesco Petrarca's Italy. The first chapter examines Petrarch's treatment of Scipio Africanus as humanistic leader and idealized friend in the *Africa*. The second chapter proposes a reading of Cola di Rienzo as the first "political Petrarchist" and contextualizes his epistolary campaign to unify mid-fourteenth century Italy. The third chapter explores Petrarch's politics of *familiaritas* in the letters he addressed to leaders of prominent Italian city-states attempting to reconcile old friends. This study presents an analysis of the rhetorical strategies underlying Petrarch's career as public intellectual, diplomat and poet.

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Of Poets and Princes: The Poetics of Petrarch's Politics

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| A Cultural Revolution | 1 |
| Manifesto of European Humanism | 5 |
| The Coronation and its Aftermath | 11 |
| The Poetics of Petrarch's Politics | 17 |
| Aim, Method, Scope | 18 |
| Paradoxical Petrarchism | 23 |

Chapter Two

***Pronus amicitias amplectere:* The Sentimental Education of the Statesman in Petrarch's Africa**

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Ad altra vita et a più belle imprese</i> | 28 |
| The Poetics of Petrarch's Pedagogical Project | 31 |
| An Overview of the Africa | 32 |
| In Defense of the Commonwealth | 34 |
| The True-Hearted Friend | 43 |
| <i>Amicitia</i> as Political Alliance | 51 |
| Scipio's Cult of Friendship | 57 |
| <i>Iunctis animis, corporibus separantur</i> | 59 |

Chapter Three

The First Political Petrarchist: Cola di Rienzo's Politics of *Antiqua amicitia*

| | |
|--|----|
| Cola di Rienzo's Petrarchan Politics | 65 |
| <i>Ad antiquam amicitiam renovandam</i> | 72 |
| The Language of Coalition Building in 14th Century Italy | 75 |
| The First Political Petrarchist | 80 |
| The Reception of Cola di Rienzo's Epistolary Politics | 81 |

Chapter Four

Ad comunis epystole lectionem:

Pan-Italian *Familiaritas* and Petrarch's Community of Friends

| | |
|--|-----|
| The <i>Iugum</i> of Friendship | 92 |
| <i>Florentinum ac parthenopeum decus</i> | 96 |
| A Rhetoric of <i>Familiaritas</i> | 100 |
| The "Birds of a Feather" Model | 111 |
| The <i>Propinquitas</i> Model | 114 |
| <i>Amicitiae memoria</i> | 116 |

Chapter Five

Mediator pacis:

The Petrarchan Humanist from Psychological Self-Control to Political Self-Rule

| | |
|--|-----|
| Petrarchan Politics and the Rhetoric of <i>Humanitas</i> | 121 |
| <i>Calcar alienae industriae</i> | 125 |
| The Mediator of Political and Psychological Peace | 130 |
| Affective Petrarchan Diplomacy | 137 |

Epilogue

| | |
|--|-----|
| From <i>Parlar indarno</i> to <i>Inutilis orator</i> | 143 |
|--|-----|

Appendix 1

Petrarch's 1373 Venetian Oration

| | |
|---|-----|
| Translation from the <i>Cronica volgare carrarese</i> | 151 |
|---|-----|

Appendix 2

Petrarch's *Familiare*s

| | |
|--|-----|
| Analytical Chart Highlighting Political Themes | 153 |
|--|-----|

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Works Cited | 184 |
|--------------------|-----|

List of Abbreviations

Works of Petrarch

| | |
|------------------|---|
| <i>Rvf</i> | <i>Rerum vulgarium fragmenta (Canzoniere)</i> |
| <i>Fam</i> | <i>Rerum familiarium libri (Le familiari)</i> |
| <i>Sen</i> | <i>Rerum senilium libri (Le senili)</i> |
| <i>De Viris</i> | <i>De viris illustribus</i> |
| <i>Africa</i> | <i>Africa</i> |
| <i>Sine Nom.</i> | <i>Liber sine nomine</i> |

Other Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>RIS</i> | <i>Rerum italicarum scriptores</i> |
|------------|------------------------------------|

Acknowledgments

This study had its origin in my first encounter with Cola di Rienzo. I was particularly struck by one aspect of Cola's meteoric career as Roman tribune, namely, his mid-fourteenth century attempt to unify Italy. As I dug deeper I was surprised by the extent to which the poet and humanist Francesco Petrarca was either implicated or directly involved in virtually every stage of Cola's formation, rise and tragic fall. What drove the self-proclaimed solitary singer of Laura to intervene in the revolutionary politics of his time? As I immersed myself further in Petrarch's writings in Latin, particularly his letters, the outlines of a dynamic diplomat, adviser and correspondent began to emerge.

Many beloved mentors also emerged over the course of writing and researching this dissertation. I am particularly grateful to Kathy Eden for her friendship and support through all of our collaborations over the last several years. I treasure all the intellectual and personal joys she has brought into my life, but I am especially indebted to her insights into the rhetorical tradition and the rediscovery of intimacy in the Renaissance. I am also grateful to Jo Ann Cavallo for her patience and encouragement every step of the way; to Alan Stewart for his camaraderie and careful attention to detail as a reader of my work; to Paolo Valesio for enriching my life with poetry; and to Jim Mirolo for being such a joyous and enthusiastic interlocutor.

I feel fortunate to have been graced with so many talented peers and graduate student mentors during my time at Columbia: Stefan Pedatella, Zane Mackin, Patrizio Ceccagnoli, Gian Maria Annovi, Davide Bolognesi, Akash Kumar, Julie Van Peteghem, Juliette Nussbaum, Saskia Ziolkowski, Lynn Mackensie and Seth Fabian. It has been my distinct pleasure to grow in the

unique light of each and every one of you. I would also like to thank Lani Muller and the rest of the faculty of the Department of Italian at Columbia University not only for their administrative support but also for the academic stimulation they have provided me over the years. Teodolinda Barolini, Luciano Rebay, Andrea Malaguti, Flora Ghezzeo, Barbara Spinelli, Maria Luisa Gozzi and Paola Nastri, my thoughts turn to all of you and the wonderful memories we share.

I extend a special thank you also to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University for the opportunity to pursue such a profoundly rewarding experience of inner-personal and intellectual growth. I remain forever changed.

A huge debt of gratitude I owe to my loving mother for instilling a passion for books and reading in my life from an early age and to my dear father for engraining into the core of my very being the drive to always finish everything I start.

None of this would have been possible, however, without the love and support of my wonderful partner in life and in art, Denise Filauero. For her dedication to our common cause, I dedicate this to her.

*Alla mia poetessa,
perché tutto è poetabile.*

Chapter One

Of Poets and Princes: The Poetics of Petrarch's Politics

A Cultural Revolution

Much has been made – and much will be made here – of Petrarch's momentous discovery of Cicero's collection of familiar letters to his friend Atticus, the so-called *Ad Atticum*.¹ Uncovered in 1345 in Verona, it undoubtedly marked a turning point in the development of both Petrarch's thought and the subsequent evolution of Renaissance humanism.² Yet, at the same time, relatively little has been made of Petrarch's analogous discovery in 1333 of the Roman orator's famous oration in defense of the poet Archias, the *Pro Archia*.³ The importance of this early discovery cannot be overstated.⁴ Stumbling upon the neglected manuscript in a monastery library in Liège, the twenty-nine-year-old recent law school drop-out struck upon not only an impassioned validation of his decision to pursue a life in letters but also a platform from which to launch the cultural revolution of Renaissance humanism.⁵

¹ On Petrarch's discovery of *Ad Atticum* in 1345, see Kirkham, "A Life's Work" in *Petrarch: A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, p. 21 ff.: "As a 'born-again' ancient, Petrarch made his greatest manuscript discovery in the Verona cathedral library, the sixteen books of Cicero's *Ad Atticum* along with two minor collections, to the Roman orator's brother Quintus and to Brutus. From these, which the classics detective excitedly transcribed over several weeks in the spring of 1345 (a period when he also came to know Dante's son Pietro Alighieri), Petrarch took the tremendous idea of collecting his own letters." See also Billanovich, "Dall'Epystolarum mearum ad diversos liber ai Rerum familiarium libri XXIV," pp. 1-55.

² On the influence of the *Ad Atticum* on Petrarch and Renaissance letters, see Witt, "Medieval *Ars Dictaminis* and the Beginnings of Humanism: A New Construction of the Problem"; Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy*, pp. 49 ff.; and Fantazzi, "General Introduction" in Vives, *De conscribendis epistolis*.

³ On Petrarch's discovery of the *Pro Archia*, see *Seniles* XVI, 1. During a grand northern European tour he took under the aegis of his Colonna patronage in 1333, Petrarch made a detour to visit a monastery in Liege (Belgium) reputed to be rich in manuscripts. It was there that he found and quickly copied two

In just the first few pages of Cicero's defense of the poet Archias, Petrarch found what would become the blueprint for much of his long and illustrious career.⁶ With its themes of the "elevating influence of poetry" (III, 6), the role of friendship and patronage in Archias' life (III, 6), the question of pan-Italian Roman citizenship under the *Lex Iulia* and the *Lex Plautia Papiria* (IV, 6-7), and its praise of the study of the classics (VI, 12-14), the *Pro Archia* resonates in far-ranging ways through Petrarch's humanistic project, from his literary works to his epistolary politics, from the *Africa* to his support for Cola di Rienzo's quixotic attempt to resurrect the Roman republic and unify Italy.

hitherto unknown Ciceronian orations, the *Pro Archia* and the apocryphal *Ad milites romanae*, one of which he quickly copied and had a friend copy the other. Since Petrarch's travel expenses were covered by the Colonna, Wilkins (*Studies in the Life and Work of Petrarch*, pp. 5-8) assumes that he probably also served in some kind of official way, either as messenger or cultural attaché or diplomat. Regarding Petrarch's service as "capellanus continuus commensalis" to the Colonna family, see Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca*, pp. 28-47.

⁴ See Pastore Stocchi, *Petrarca e i potenti della terra*, pp. 49-50; Pastore Stocchi, *Introduzione in Petrarca, Opere latine*, pp. 15-17; and Guglielminetti, *Petrarca e il petrarchismo*, pp. 33.

⁵ See Cicero, *Pro Archia*, II, 4: "Nam ut primum ex pueris excessit Archias atque ab eis artibus quibus aetas puerilis ad humanitatem informari solet, se ad scribendi studium contulit." ("As soon as Archias had left behind him his boyhood, and those influences which mould and elevate his boyish mind, he applied himself to the pursuit of a literary career.") All translations of the *Pro Archia* are from the Loeb edition translated by Watts. On the origins of humanism, see also Kristeller, "Humanism and Scholasticism"; Weiss, *The Dawn of Italian Humanism*; Witt, "Medieval Italian Culture and the Origins of Humanism as a Stylistic Ideal," pp. 29-70.

⁶ The symphonic opening sentence of the oration validates the value of literary pursuits in the legal profession (Cicero, *Pro Archia*, I, 1): "Si quid est in me ingeni, iudices, quod sentio quam sit exiguum, aut si qua exercitatio dicendi, in qua me non infitior mediocriter esse versatum, aut si huiusce rei ratio aliqua ab optimarum artium studiis ac disciplina profecta, a qua ego nullum confiteor aetatis meae tempus abhorruisse, earum rerum omnium vel in primis hic A. Licinius fructum a me repetere prope suo iure debet" ("Whatever talent I possess (and I realize its limitations), whatever be my oratorical experience (and I do not deny that my practice herein has been not inconsiderable), whatever knowledge of the theoretical side of my profession I may have derived from a devoted literary apprenticeship (and I admit that at no period of my life has the acquisition of such knowledge been repellent to me), – to any advantage that may be derived from all these my friend Aulus Licinius has a pre-eminent claim, which belongs to him almost of right").

At the center of the brief oration is Cicero's encomium of literature, an eloquent disquisition on the vital role that the liberal arts – and poets like Archias, as well as public figures like the great orator himself, who devote their lives to enriching civilization through their studies – play in civilized society.⁷ The *Pro Archia* is not so much a defense of an individual poet as a panegyric on the importance of the liberal arts (*artes liberales*, also called the *artes bonae* or *optimae*) and those who cultivate them.⁸ The value of humanistic studies, according to Cicero, lies in their usefulness in matters of state and the expansion of its sphere of influence: “literature exalts the nation whose high deeds it sings.”⁹ In praising poets for the benefit they

⁷ Cicero, *Pro Archia*, VI, 12: “Ego vero fateor me his studiis esse deditum: ceteros pudeat, si qui se ita litteris abdiderunt ut nihil possint ex eis neque ad communem adferre fructum, neque in aspectum lucemque proferre” (“I am a votary of literature, and make the confession unashamed; shame belongs rather to the bookish recluse, who knows not how to apply his reading to the good of his fellows, or to manifest its fruits to the eyes of all”).

⁸ Cicero, *Pro Archia*, I, 2: “Etenim omnes artes quae ad humanitatem pertinent habent quoddam commune vinculum et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur.” (“Indeed, the subtle bond of a mutual relationship links together all arts which have any bearing upon the common life of mankind.”) The way Cicero phrases the common bond that all arts have with each other is richer than Watts’ English translation here suggests. In the original: “quasi cognatione quadam,” in English literally means: “as though by a kind of kindred relationship,” or “by a sort of, as it were, blood relationship.” Cicero qualifies *cognatione* with both *quasi* and *quadam* because he is using the term, which technically describes a familial, blood relationship, metaphorically (see, also, *quoddam commune* above and *quasi divino quodam spiritu*, further down in the passage). These are the exaggerated signposts he is deploying in order to make it clear that he is asking his audience to indulge him as he uses in his defense a new style of speaking (“*novum genus dicendi*”), one suited more to the nature of his client, a poet, than to a court of law. On the usefulness of literary studies, see also, Cicero, *Pro Archia*, VI, 13: “[...] ex his studiis haec quoque crescit oratio et facultas, quae quantacumque in me est, numquam amicorum periculis defuit” (“[...] my devotion to letters strengthens my oratorical powers, and these, such as they are, have never failed my friends in their hour of peril”).

⁹ See Cicero, *Pro Archia*, X, 23: “Propterea quod Graeca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus, Latina suis finibus, exiguis sane, continentur. Qua re si res eae quas gessimus orbis terrae regionibus definiuntur, cupere debemus, quo manuum nostrarum tela pervenerint, eodem gloriam famamque penetrare: quod cum ipsis populis de quorum rebus scribitur, haec ampla sunt, tum eis certe, qui de vita gloriae causa dimicant, hoc maximum et periculorum incitamentum est et laborum” (“Greek literature is read in nearly every nation under heaven, while the vogue of Latin is confined to its own boundaries, and they are, we must

bring to the nation by spreading the news of its glory as well as to the life of the republic and its citizens by incentivizing them with the promise of immortality for their deeds, Cicero's *Pro Archia* presents the deep affiliation between politics and literary or artistic production that Petrarch seems to have found extremely suggestive, judging from the level to which so many of the cultural values espoused by this brief text came to permeate his own cultural and political project.¹⁰ His encounter with the poet Archias through Cicero, when Petrarch was still a young man, will forever assure a place for poetry at the center of the vocation of the humanist, seeing that it also inspired the address he delivered when he was crowned poet laureate on the Capitoline Hill in Rome on Easter Sunday in 1341.¹¹

grant, narrow. Seeing therefore, that the activities of our race know no barrier save the limits of the round earth, we ought to be ambitious that whithersoever our arms have penetrated there also our fame and glory should extend; literature exalts the nation whose high deeds it sings, and at the same time there can be no doubt that those who stake their lives to fight in honor's cause find therein a lofty incentive to peril and endeavor").

¹⁰ See Pastore Stocchi, *Petrarca e i potenti della terra*, pp. 49-50: "Ma un'esaltazione della poesia come quella che il Petrarca scoperse e divulgò, a partire dal 1333, con l'orazione ciceroniana *Pro Archia*, ammetteva appunto un'accezione più ampia, per la quale la persona stessa del poeta era esaltata e consacrata come augusta e influente. D'altro canto, le biografie di Orazio o di Virgilio, ma anche, per esempio, di Aristotele, rilette in questa luce, apparivano confermare una speciale attitudine del poeta e del filosofo a definirsi quale *amicus principis* per eccellenza, potenzialmente affiancabile ai potenti terreni in una sorta di diarchia: illusione carezzata ancora, fino alla morte di Lorenzo de' Medici, dal Poliziano e da altri intellettuali della cerchia medicea. Ma se mai questa illusione egemonica, che a un certo numero di umanisti affermati non accordò mai se non qualche cancellierato e molte cadute in disgrazia, poté sembrare vicina a realizzarsi per davvero, questo avvenne con il Petrarca: primo e probabilmente unico letterato moderno cui sia stato così universalmente riconosciuto un primato anche sociale, non per la 'gratia Dei' che incoraggiava Dante a parlare, ma per il carisma della sua intelligenza e del suo sapere."

¹¹ See *Fam.* IV, 8 to Barbato da Sulmona: "Idibus Aprilis, anno etatis huius ultime millesimo trecentesimo quadragesimo primo, in Capitolio Romano, magna populi frequentia et ingenti gaudio, peractum est quod nudiustertius de me rex apud Neapolim decreverat: Ursus Anguillarie, comes ac senator, prealti vir ingenii, regio iudicio probatum laureis frondibus insignivit" ("On the Ides of April, and in the 1,341st year of this age, on the Roman Capitoline, in the presence of a large multitude and with great joy, there occurred what the King of Naples had decreed for me the day before yesterday; Orso dell'Anguillara, a friend and senator, a man of lofty talents, honored me with the laurel crown as

Manifesto of European Humanism

Deemed the “first manifesto of the Renaissance” by Ernest Hatch Wilkins, Petrarch’s *Collatio laureationis* (*Coronation Oration*) is a classically inspired treatise that valorizes the role of the poet in society.¹² The focus of the speech is on two types of mediation: the first, between poetry and politics; and the second, between then and now. It is peppered with citations and explicit references to the *Pro Archia*: “Take not my word for this, but Cicero’s, who in his oration for Aulus Licinius Archias has this to say of poets: ‘We have it upon the authority of the most learned men that whereas the poet attains through his very nature, is moved by the energy that is within his mind, and is as it were inspired by a divine inbreathing – so that Ennius fairly calls poets sacred in their own right, since they appear to be commended to us by the possession of a divine gift.’”¹³ In this first occurrence Petrarch invokes the authority of Cicero regarding the nature of poetic inspiration.

approved by the King’s judgment”). A majority of book IV of the *Familiars* is dedicated to recounting the vicissitudes surrounding the coronation though he never describes many of the specific details of the event itself.

¹² For the manifesto pronouncement, see Wilkins, “Petrarch’s *Coronation Oration*,” p. 300. For a reconstruction of the events surrounding the coronation, see Tatham, *Francesco Petrarca: The First Modern Man of Letters (His Life and Correspondence: A Study of the Early Fourteenth Century 1304-1347)*, II, pp. 104-52; Wilkins, “The Coronation of Petrarch.” See also Pastore Stocchi, *Petrarca e i potenti della terra*, pp. 50: “Il riconoscimento, cioè, dell’umanista quale titolare di uno *status* eccezionale, che delle sue competenze trae vantaggio per collocarlo ai vertici del corpo sociale. Era, certo, un’utopia effimera, nutrita a sua volta di altre più antiche utopie accreditate dalla tradizione classica con argomenti più or meno speciosi.”

¹³ Petrarch, “The Coronation Oration,” (trans. Wilkins), p. 301. For the original Latin, see Hortis, “Arrenghe inedite di Petrarca” in *Scritti inediti di Petrarca*, pp. 312-3: “Non mihi sed Ciceroni credite qui in oratione pro Aulo Licinio Archia de poetis loquens verbis talibus utitur. Ab eruditissimis viris atque doctissimis sic accepimus, ceterarum rerum studia et ingenio et doctrina et arte constare, poetam natura ipsa valere et mentis viribus excitari et quasi divino quodam spiritu afflari ut non inmerito noster ille Hennius suo quodam iure sanctos appellet poetas quod deorum munere nobis commendati esse videantur, hec Cicero.”

The second explicit reference occurs toward the end of the oration where he instead emphasizes the function and value of the poet's work: "Certain illustrious men, foreseeing such a possibility, have kept poets with them and held them in high honor, so that there might be someone who would hand down their praises to posterity – a matter carefully set forth by Cicero in his oration for Aulus Licinius Archias, to which I have already referred."¹⁴ Petrarch draws on classical model for the relationship between poetry and politics that he momentarily found in the Ciceronian oration that he found so early on in his career.

In addition to mentioning Cicero's oration twice by name, Petrarch also quotes its famous anecdote regarding Alexander the Great before the tomb of Achilles:¹⁵

Hence comes that famous exclamation of Alexander of Macedon, of whom it is related that when he came to the tomb of Achilles he sighed, and said: "Oh fortunate youth, that didst find so great a herald for thy valor!" – referring to Homer, the prince of poets, who is known to have conferred fame upon Achilles by his noble songs. (Petrarch, 309)¹⁶

¹⁴ Petrarch, "The Coronation Oration," p. 308. For the Latin, Hortis, *Scritti inediti*, p. 322: "Vixere multi fortes ante agamenona sed omnes illacrimabili nocte premuntur et sequitur ratio carent quia vate sacro, quod providentes quidam ex illustribus viris secum in magno honore habuere poetas ut esset aliquis qui eorum laudes transmictere posset ad posteros. Quam ob rem M. Tullius in oratione prefata pro Aulo Licinio Archia."

¹⁵ On the link between poets and princes, see Cicero, *Pro Archia*, 24: "Quam multos scriptores rerum suarum magnus ille Alexander secum habuisse dicitur. Atque is tamen, cum in Sigeo ad Achillis tumulum astitisset: 'O fortunate,' inquit, 'adulescens, qui tuae virtutis Homerum praeconem inveneris!' et vere: nam nisi Ilias illa exstitisset, idem tumulus qui corpus eius contexerat nomen etiam obruisset" ("We read that Alexander the Great carried in his train numbers of epic poets and historians. And yet, standing before the tomb of Achilles at Sigeum, he exclaimed, – 'Fortunate youth, to have found in Homer an herald of thy valour!' Well might he so exclaim, for had the *Iliad* never existed, the same mound which covered Achilles' bones would also have overwhelmed his memory"). Petrarch widely quotes this passage in the *Collatio laureationis*, 10, 17 (cited here); *Africa* IX, 51-7; *Fam.* IV, 3, 13; *Ryf.* 187, 1-4: "Giunto Alexandro a la famosa tomba / del fero Achille, sospirando disse: / O fortunato, che sì chiara tromba / trovasti, et chi di te sì alto scrisse!"

¹⁶ Hortis, *Scritti inediti di Francesco Petrarca*, p. 323: "Et nimirum hinc exclamatio illa est Alexandri Macedonis, qui, cum ad sepulcrum Achillis venisset, dixisse fertur suspirans: 'O fortunate adolescens, qui talem tue virtutis praeconem invenisti!' Homerum signans poetarum principem, quem Achillis famam

Like Cicero in the *Pro Archia*, among other places, and Ennius before him, Petrarch places poets in league with princes – not least of all because the same laurel wreath adorns both poets, when crowned with literary glory, and princes, in the victorious pomp of a triumphal military procession.¹⁷ It is in line with the Roman tradition, in other words, that Petrarch casts poets and princes in a relationship of interdependence, by which account it was Homer who conferred glory on Achilles. Otherwise the great warrior may well have suffered oblivion like so many other illustrious men in history. Their mutual reliance on one another is due to a profound symbiosis, despite differences in their skill sets. The prince needs the poet in order to ensure that the glory of his deeds will endure long into the collective memory of posterity.¹⁸ The poet needs the prince for such favors and privileges as patronage can provide, namely, the protection of the very *otium* necessary to produce such timeless works of commemorative art.¹⁹

constat egregiis nobilitasse carminibus.” All translations of Petrarch’s “Coronation Oration” are by Wilkins.

¹⁷ On Petrarch’s linking of poets to princes by means of the honor of the laurel crown, see Wilkins, “The Coronation of Petrarch,” pp. 155-97; for an analysis of his oration, see especially pp. 172-9. See also Petrarca, *Rvf.* 321 and 322 and the companion piece by Giacomo Colonna congratulating him on the coronation cited in the notes of most editions of Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* (*Rvf.* 322), “Se le parti del mio destrutte.” See also Petrarca, *Collatio inter Scipionem Alexandrum Hanibalem et Pyrrum* in Martellotti, *Scritti petrarcheschi*, pp. 321-46.

¹⁸ Petrarch, “The Coronation Oration,” p. 308: “Many mighty men and warriors, and others who have deserved eternal memory have passed into oblivion simply because they had not the good fortune to be recorded by capable authors, as Horace says so well in his *Odes*: “Many mighty men lived before Agamemnon, but all are buried in a tearless night,” and the reason follows: “since they lack an inspired bard” (Horace, IV 9, 25-28). *Certain illustrious men, foreseeing such a possibility, have kept poets with them and held them in high honor*, so that there might be someone who would hand down their praises to posterity – a matter carefully set forth by Cicero in his oration for Aulus Licinius Archias, to which I have already referred.”

¹⁹ As Luisa Secchi Tarugi rightly emphasizes, Petrarch wavers between literary *otium* and political *negotium*, between withdrawn study and social engagement, fully aware of the fundamental role of the intellectual in society. The idealized image of his humanist hero is a paradoxical mix of seemingly

In the *Coronation Oration*, Petrarch focuses more on the figure of the poet in terms of his ideal personality traits, the challenges of his profession and the role he is meant to fill than he does on the specific product of his art.²⁰ Like Cicero at the climax of the *Pro Archias*, then, Petrarch focuses not on the particular poet but on the figure of the poet more generally. Petrarch casts himself not only as Archias, the poet at the center of public controversy entrenched in civic life, but he also plays the role of Cicero, the bold proponent of a new cultural program that grants poetry pride of place in the fabric of the modern city. Petrarch plays the role of both Archias and Cicero combining the political and the poetic.

Projecting the image of the engaged public intellectual, the poet laureate lays out the three primary objectives that drive his desire to benefit society at large.²¹ Classicizing ideals of public honor, personal fame and cultural renewal enable him to overcome the various challenges he faces in his work.²²

And here it is to be noted that just as the difficulty has been shown to rise, as it were, from three roots, so the disposition of the spirit which is victorious over that difficulty rises also from three roots, which are, first, the honor of the Republic; second, the charm

contradictory qualities, action and contemplation, public virtue and private diligence. Just such a figure makes an appearance in texts as early as his coronation oration of 1341. See Secchi Tarugi, *Petrarca e l'umanesimo*.

²⁰ In terms of the personality type of the individual best suited to these sorts of endeavors, Petrarch draws on a description from Juvenal. See Petrarch, "The Coronation Oration," p. 302-3: "But the good poet, whose line is not commonplace, who does not deal in the reworking of old stuff, nor stamp his songs in a common mint (I cannot show him to you, I can only imagine him) must have a spirit free from anxiety, untouched by any bitterness, eager for the woods, and ready to drink at the fountain of the Muses. For none can sing in the Pierian cave or wield the thyrsus who is oppressed by sad poverty and lacks the coin to meet the body's daily and nightly needs." This whole passage, derived in its entirety from Juvenal's *Satire*, VII, 53-62, is quoted verbatim in the oration.

²¹ In addition to evidence in the *Collatio*, see also *Fam.* I, 9 and *Sen.* XVIII, 2. On the need for the intellectual to be useful to society, see Senca 8, 1-6; 64, 7-10.

²² Looney, "The Beginnings of Humanistic Oratory," p. 138.

of personal glory; and third, the stimulation of other men to a like endeavor. (Petrarch, "Coronation Oration," p. 304)

The threefold motivations of the Petrarchan humanist are first, public (to honor and serve to the republic); second, personal (to seek fame for himself); and third, pedagogical (to teach and lead others to carry the torch in his footsteps):

As to the third point, namely the stimulation of the activity of others, I will say only this: while there are some who think it shameful to follow in the footsteps of others, there are far more who fear to essay a hard road unless they have a sure guide. Many such men I have known, especially in Italy: learned and gifted men, devoted to the same studies, thirsting with the same desires, who as yet – whether from a sense of shame, or from sluggishness, or from diffidence, or, as I prefer to think, from modesty and humility – have not entered upon this road. Boldly, therefore, perhaps, but – to the best of my belief – with no unworthy intention, since others are holding back I am venturing to offer myself as guide for this toilsome and dangerous path; and I trust there may be many followers. (Petrarch, "Coronation Oration," p. 306)

The desire to establish a program of cultural renewal in Italy under his fearless tutelage spurs him on.²³ In other words he wants to become a guide for others to follow in the same sorts of public intellectual pursuits.²⁴

In the *Coronation Oration*, Petrarch is aware of his role as community builder. At the moment in which he gives his foundational speech, the poet laureate seems emboldened by the prospect of becoming a model and guide to all others who will be inspired to undertake similar challenging endeavors following in his footsteps. It is perhaps the paradox at the heart of stoic

²³ Remarkably, in his coronation oration Petrarch renews such Roman Republican customs as the office of the poet laureate, and he theorizes such characteristic points of his later work as the concept of an *amor patriae* directed at a hitherto nonexistent entity known as Italy.

²⁴ See Petrarch, "The Coronation Oration," p. 304: "[...] after the reference to the toilsome ascent '*per ardua Parnasi*' there follows the mention of the effective cause of that ascent: '*dulcis raptat amor.*' And here it is to be noted that just as the difficulty has been shown to rise, as it were, from three roots, so the disposition of the spirit which is victorious over that difficulty rises also from three roots, which are, first, the honor of the Republic; second, the charm of personal glory; and third, the stimulation of other men to a like endeavor." The theme of serving as a figurehead to a movement of humanist intellectuals recurring right up to the last years of his life; see *Sen.* XVII, 2 to Boccaccio.

wisdom that the private labors of the intellectual are intended to subsequently reap public results in the world at large.

The theme of poets and princes is not only central, then, to Cicero's defense of Archias, but it also takes center stage in the brief Latin oration Petrarch gave before the Roman people on the Capitoline hill.²⁵ When read in light of the political motivations behind his arduous ascent to the peaks of fame and the heights of mass public acknowledgement of his literary and intellectual worth, the whole coronation affair starts to look like an event staged to inject the figure of Petrarch's poet into the public imagination: a new form of public intellectual, who is at once part stoic sage and part learned advisor, part pedagogue and part courtier.²⁶

²⁵ In his *Collatio* (Hortis, p. 323; Petrarch, "The Coronation Oration," p. 309), Petrarch says: "Laurea igitur et Cesaribus et poetis debita est; sertum ex fronibus laureis intextum licet poeticum illud interdum ex mirtho, interdum ex edera fieret... quas omnes diversitates ego ipse in epistola quadam his duobus versiculis collegi: 'Nunc tamen et lauri mirtusque hedereque silentur / Sacraque temporibus debita vitta tuis'" ("This crown, the due reward of Caesars and of poets, is a wreath made of the leaves of the laurel – though the poet's sometimes a simple fillet, variations which I have brought into one of my epistles in these two lines: 'But laurel now and myrtle and ivy are still, and the sacred fillet that your brows should bear"). See Carrera, *Studi Petrarqueschi*, pp. 14-15, n. 2; and Tommasini, *Petrarcha redivivus*, X. Many of the themes treated in his oration also resonate in Book IX of *Africa*. See also Martellotti, *Stella difforme*, pp. 403-18.

²⁶ The political and cultural implications of uniting the pen to the sword figures prominently in the first of the *Canzoniere's* three famous political canzoni. Dating to 1333, the same year of the discovery of Cicero's defense of Archias and poetry, "O aspectata in ciel" (*Rvf*, 28) conjures an idealized leader who will embody the humanistic values of eloquence and wisdom coupled with military prowess. On the surface the poem calls for another crusade, but the themes are deeper and also more local than that. The pen is meant to conjoin with the sword, all in the person of one man. See also Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries*, pp. 27-44.

The Coronation and its Aftermath

Petrarch was thirty-six years old at the time of his coronation on April 8, 1341. What he had written to date was hardly enough to warrant such a prestigious honor.²⁷ On all counts Petrarch's career was just beginning, since at the time of his coronation, he was really only known for the fifteen Latin poems that had circulated among his friends, mostly in the form of metrical epistles. The *Africa*, which was explicitly to be his "crowning" glory, was as yet and would remain unfinished – never to circulate even among his friends during his lifetime. It is unlikely that his lyrical poetry in the vernacular, to which he would later owe much more of his fame, would have been taken into account in assessing his merits as a poet. In any case, at the time he had only written a fraction of the poems that would slowly crystalize over the course of his life into the *Canzoniere* as we know it today.²⁸ In this regard, we can see his self-crafted coronation as a major self-promotional platform from which to launch his career as a new breed of public intellectual who had suddenly burst onto the scene.²⁹ His use of so many themes

²⁷ Regarding the date of the ceremony, which Petrarch revises to align it with the anniversary of his encounter with Laura, see Carlo Godi's introduction to his edition of "Collatio sue laureationis," pp. 1-7.

²⁸ See Looney, "The Origins of Humanistic Oratory," p. 134: "One of his selves is that of the humanist, the scholar devoted to the recovery, study, and promulgation of texts in the classical tradition. If Petrarch is deserving of the award for poet laureate, it is more for his accomplishments as a humanistic scholar devoted to the cultural recovery of antiquity than for what he has actually done up to this point in his poetic career."

²⁹ In his campaign to earn this honor, Petrarch forged a public role for himself. On the self-styling of his own legend, see also De Vendittis, *Petrarca, accorto demiurgo del proprio mito*, p. 16; and Dotti, *Petrarca civile. Alle origini dell'intelletto moderno*. On the vanity of seeking the laurel wreath, see *Fam.* IV 6 (Bernardo, p. 192): "You ask why so much trouble, enthusiasm and care. Will the laurel make me the more learned or better? You say I will become perhaps more famous and therefore more exposed to envy; that the mind is the seat of knowledge and of virtue which find their proper seat there and not in leafy branches like little birds. 'To what purpose therefore this pomp of foliage?' What will I answer, you ask? What else except these words of that learned Hebrew: 'Vanity of vanities, all is but vanity'? Thus are the ways of men. Farewell, and do let your thoughts accompany me with favor." On his retrospective regret, see *Sen.* XVII, 2, his final letter to Boccaccio in which he says he would not have sought the crown

derived from the *Pro Archia* bespeaks his self-conscious desire to create an audience for himself, thus attempting to shape the cultural milieu, with concomitant hopes that political change would follow.

Only in the wake of the grand spectacle of his coronation ceremony does his output increase. As his reputation grows, his fame serves to disseminate the cultural program he represents on an international level.³⁰ His correspondence takes on a life of its own as his contacts in the political realm of Italy and Europe increase, though he had always been relatively well-connected.³¹ Within just the first few years after his coronation, by the mid-1340s, he will unearth Cicero's aforementioned *Ad Atticum*, which will serve as his model for assembling his letters into a fragmentary, quasi-autobiographical epistolary epic, following also the Homeric twenty-four book structure. In addition to returning to the *Africa*, Petrarch composes the *Rerum memorandarum libri*, the *Secretum*, the *De vita solitaria*, the *De otio religioso*, as well as the *Bucolicum carmen* and most of the letters in the collection of exclusively political epistles, the *Sine nomine*, during this period. It could be considered his most productive and also among the most turbulent time in his life, as he navigated the tumultuous world of Italian politics, surviving

had he known better; *Sen.* XVIII, 1: "Laurea scientie nichil, plurimum vero quesivit invidie" ("My laurels did not bring me wisdom but rather a great deal of envy from others"); and Carrara, "L'epistola *Posteritati* e la leggenda Petrarchesca," pp. 6-9.

³⁰ In *Sen.* XVII, 2 (Bernardo, p. 648), Petrarch reflects on the influence he exerted on a generation of writers: "Of course, I am not refusing the praise you bestow upon me for having inspired the minds of many throughout Italy – and perhaps beyond Italy – to these studies of ours, neglected for many centuries. For I am the oldest of almost all of those who now pursue these studies among us." See also, Godi, *Il Petrarca «inutilis orator» a Venezia*, p. 404.

³¹ Petrarch's four epistolary anthologies constitute a total of 563 letters addressed to a broad European community of 150 recipients. A considerable portion of them is explicitly politically. See Appendix 2 of the present study for a chart illustrating the percentage of letters with political content.

associations with Azzo da Correggio and the siege on Parma, the Cola di Rienzo debacle and the disintegration of his relations with the Colonna family.

It is also only after his coronation – on his ascent to the peak of fame and productivity – that Petrarch begins his immersion into the arena of Italian political affairs, mostly as a moral advisor who makes it his business to inject a certain level of discourse, certain values, a certain quality of thought, certain antiquarian attitudes that are meant to recover the prestige of the past and renew its pertinence to his present day.³² Petrarch frames the coronation discourse in the metaphor of the poet's ascent of Mount Helicon in search of inspiration.³³ The fame he sought as the direct result of his solitary endeavors would thrust him into social circles with the richest and

³² Mazzocco, "Un'idea politica italiana in Petrarca?", p. 13: "[...] l'unico e solo scopo del Petrarca è la restaurazione antica di Roma e dell'Italia, e che, perciò, il procedimento politico in cui essa viene effettuata è irrilevante." For a further discussion of the constants in Petrarch's political project, see also Feo, "Politicità del Petrarca"; Bayley, "Petrarch, Charles IV, and the Renovatio Imperii," pp. 339-41. Mazzocco, "Un'idea politica italiana in Petrarca?", p. 14: "Che l'unità italiana fosse effettuata da un politico di indole repubblicana, qual'era Cola, o da uno statista di indole monarchica, qual'era Carlo IV, essa era realizzabile solo se abbinata alla ricostruzione della grandezza della Roma antica."

³³ On the theme of coronation in Petrarch's lyrics, see also Picone, "Il tema dell'incoronazione poetica di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio," pp. 5-26, esp. pp. 14-20. A comparison of the language in the Capitoline address of 1343 to the language and rhetorical tropes of *Fam.* IV, 1 reveals a whole set of interesting parallels in terms of finding one's calling and ascending to positions of prominence and power as a result. The famous ascent of Mount Ventoux provides the substance of the first letter of the book of the *Familiars* that recounts the coronation chapter of his life. When read in the context of the rest of book IV of the *Familiars* the link between ascent to literary fame and the rise to political influence are very clearly paralleled. The letter that immediately follows the ascent of Mount Ventoux is a congratulatory letter to a friend who has just ascended to a role of political prominence in the court at Naples. *Familiars* IV, 3-8 then trace the courting of Paris and Rome as well as the conferring with Colonna lords and King Robert as he decides how and where to stage the event most effectively. For a complete list of Petrarch's texts that treat the coronation, see *Epyst.* II, 1 to Giovanni Barrili; *Fam.* II, 9, 18; *Fam.* IV, 5; *Fam.* IV, 6, 5-7; *Fam.* IV, 9, 1; *Fam.* XI, I, 6; *Fam.* XIII, 7, 16; *Secretum*, III, p. 198; *Sen.* XVII, 2.

most powerful men of his day, making him a widely respected and recognizable name, thus enabling him to serve the glory of the republic.³⁴

In fact, he seems to have saved his first intervention into the politics of his native Italy for after his coronation. While his first embassy to Naples in 1341 – though official in nature – largely served the personal ends of securing the laurel wreath, his second visit in 1343 was occasioned by a diplomatic mission arranged by Pope Clement VI. With the death of King Robert of Anjou, his beloved and admired Neapolitan patron and protector, on January 26 of that year, the papal court in Avignon oversaw the transfer of power to his daughter, Queen Joanna of Naples, who was an adolescent at the time of her father's death. Petrarch was chosen to lead the legation. The Naples he found in King Robert's absence would have a profound effect on his moral and political worldview. "With the death of its king the face of the kingdom has changed and with the soul of a single man the vigor and resolution of everyone seem to have vanished," writes Petrarch to Barbato da Sulmona in *Fam.* VI, 5 (Bernardo, p. 319), a few years after the fact reflecting back on the death of the good King Robert of Anjou and the degeneracy of the situation in Naples as a result.³⁵ This would be the beginning of his rich and varied diplomatic career.

Once in such a prominent position, his aim was generally a modest one. Driven by a profound conviction in the power of eloquence to tame the wild beast at the core of our common humanity, his intention was nothing more than to raise the level of public and political discourse.

³⁴ Whether lamenting his love for Laura or singing the illustrious deeds of Scipio, the toil and tears he invested in his poetry were always seemingly aimed at political accomplishment. His fame would afford him the opportunity to intervene in matters of state.

³⁵ See Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca*, pp. 120-3.

In the trenches of social and political life was precisely where all of his studious leisurely pursuits could bear their fruit:³⁶

The study of eloquence requires much time. If we did not need it, and if through its own power our mind could silently display its good traits without the support of words, great toil would yet be necessary for the sake of those with whom we live. For without doubt, *our conversations would be of great assistance to their minds.* (Fam. I, 9; Bernardo, p. 48)³⁷

This is where the active and the contemplative lives collide. The idealistic young Petrarch nurtured a sturdy conviction in the power of eloquence and its ability to positively influence the world.³⁸ He believed that those with a firm foundation in the liberal arts and rhetorical training –

³⁶ See the letters he positioned around the Ascent of Mount Ventoux, especially the one that immediately precedes it, *Fam.* III, 22 (Bernardo, p. 169): “But the Africani and the Caesars aside, that prince of philosophers, Plato, was able to win over Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse; as the poet, Euripides, did Achelaus, the king of Macedonia; *the unbending, tyrannical spirit of the first and the barbaric excess of the latter could not resist, and the hardness of both was softened by talent and eloquence.* The orator, Antonius, offers another example of this kind, one which surpasses all wonders, for *he held in check with a flattering speech the cruel executioners* sent to kill him when they had already drawn their swords. His *eloquence conquered their cruelty* except that one of them, not having heard him speak and arriving after the others had left, like an asp not hearing the voice of the enchanter, struck him with the venom of his wicked deed.” Emphasis mine.

³⁷ *Fam.* I, 9: “Que si nobis necessaria non foret et mens, suis viribus nisa bonaque sua in silentio explicans, verborum suffragiis non egeret, ad ceterorum saltem utilitatem, quibuscum vivimus, laborandum erat; *quorum animos nostris collocutionibus plurimum adiuvari posse non ambigitur.*” Emphasis added.

³⁸ For an example from his political poetry of the conjunction of eloquence and political power, the pen and sword, see *Rvf.* 28, 61-75 (Durling, p. 78): “Dunque ora è ’l tempo da ritrare il collo / dal giogo antico, et da squarciare il velo / ch’ è stato avolto intorno agli occhi nostri, / et che ’l nobile ingegno che dal cielo / per gratia tien de l’immortale Apollo, / et l’eloquentia sua virtù qui mostri / or con la lingua, or co’ laudati incostri: / perché d’Orpheo leggendo et d’Amphione / se non ti meravigli, / assai men fia ch’ Italia co’ suoi figli / si desti al suon del tuo chiaro sermone, / tanto che per Iesú la lancia pigli; / che s’ al ver mira questa anticha madre, / in nulla sua tentione / fur mai cagion’ sí belle o sí leggiadre” (“Therefore it is time to withdraw our neck from the ancient yoke and to rend the veil that has been wrapped over our eyes; let you noble mind, which you hold from Heaven by grace of the immortal Apollo, and your eloquence now show their power both through speech and through praiseworthy writings. For if reading of Orpheus and Amphion you are not amazed, the marvel will be even less when Italy with her sons

the famous conjunction of philosophy and eloquence – could benefit society at large.³⁹ Without skillful speech, all of our studies in the liberal arts would be wasted. And so Petrarch envisions a new public dimension for the intellectual to assume. The work of the poet-humanist is reconfigured in the form of “a politically engaged new poetry inspired by the classical examples of Cicero and Virgil.”⁴⁰

Ernest Hatch Wilkins attributes the importance of Petrarch’s oration-manifesto to “its mingling of elements old and new.”⁴¹ Petrarch effectively resuscitates the values of antiquity, thus renewing their pertinence for his audience in the present. From his perch on the Capitoline Hill, the memory of the Roman past would have been alive for his audience.⁴² The coronation address functions as the description of a past with a renewed importance to posterity by exerting its importance on the audience.

awakes at the sound of your clear voice, so that she takes up her lance for Jesus: if this ancient mother looks for truth, in none of her quarrels were there ever reasons so lovely and so gay”).

³⁹ For the classic definition of Renaissance humanism as the signature conjunction of philosophy and eloquence, see, just to name a few, Streuver, *The Language of History in the Renaissance: Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism*, pp. 5-30; Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla*, pp. 3-30; and Seigel, “Ideals of Eloquence and Silence in Petrarch.”

⁴⁰ For an overview of Petrarch’s “new tradition for the poet in the city,” see Looney, “The Beginnings of Humanistic Oratory,” p. 136.

⁴¹ See Wilkins, “The Coronation of Petrarch,” p. 172-5.

⁴² On his choice of Rome over Paris for the site of his self-constructed coronation ceremony, see *Fam.* IV 4 (Bernardo, p. 188), where he explains that the decision to do it in Rome represents his “reverence for antiquity,” which is significant in our attempt to decipher the forces motivating his coronation campaign.

The Poetics of Petrarch's Politics

There has been a tendency to look for a coherent set of political principles in Petrarch's vast body of work.⁴³ Scholars who dismiss him for a seeming lack of consistency completely neglect the fundamentally paradoxical nature of Petrarchan poetics, which is laden with oxymora and contradictions. In fact, as we will see in the chapters that follow, his definition of what it means to be human is based on the very same paradoxical principles that drive the poetics of the "icy fire" that has become so quintessentially associated with his lyrical legacy in the form of European Petrarchism.⁴⁴ The poetics of Petrarch's politics rests on specific instances of word choice and the use of certain rhetorical figures and strategies, including paradox, antithesis and oxymoron. Petrarch's idealized figure of the poet as public intellectual brings together the role of the stoic sage with that of the teacher. The sphere of influence of such a figure encompasses that of the statesman as much as it serves as a model for likeminded artists, scholars and scribes to follow.

The Petrarchan humanist is an autonomous individual. He navigates the social and political world in which he lives by means of his multi-faceted personality endowed with grace

⁴³ Another tendency in the reception of Petrarchan humanism has been to elide the poet's political discourse in order to render less problematic the work of such a foundational figure in the history of Italian identity, language and culture. The same issues have plagued Dante's reception as well. For a study of the problems of reception of the *tre corone* and the role of literary culture in the formation of Italian identity, see Barolini, "Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture," pp. 245-78. This tendency is apparent in some of the earliest editions of Petrarch, the most iconic example of which is Alessandro Vellutello's widely popular sixteenth-century edition of Petrarch's vernacular lyrics, in which he reorganizes the order of the poems as they appear in the author's original sequence. Completely neglecting the complex intricacies of the intended order, he rearranges the unified whole of Petrarch's sonnet cycle by breaking it up into three rather than two sections so as to unencumber the plot of the love story with Laura in life and then in death by relegating all political and occasional pieces to a separate section at the end. For a study of Petrarch's early editors see Kennedy, *Authorizing Petrarch*.

⁴⁴ On the centrality of paradox and contradiction in the Petrarchan *forma mentis*, see Forster, *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism*, pp. 1-59.

and charm. His goal is not to rule but to educate.⁴⁵ He is the sort of teacher who teaches in part by putting forth exemplary models for his pupil-patrons to follow, in part by helping to promote the powerful by projecting “flattering self-images” of the ruling classes. Petrarch largely attempts to enact his moralizing – or perhaps it is more fitting to say “humanizing” – role by engaging the powerful in civil, affective and affectionate discourse.⁴⁶ This engagement is essentially the core of Petrarch’s discourse of community, friendship and togetherness. We will go on to look at a series of specific articulations and actions that derives from this humane and civil core.

In his engagement with the powerful lords and rulers by means of which he injects the values of humanistic *familiaritas* into the general tenor of political discourse, he is also able to lead by example. Once Petrarch has the attention of his interlocutor, his correspondent, his audience, his reader, he is then able to model the mental activity of the kind of individual he wishes to educate, the fluctuations of thought and the kind of intellectual processes he wants to see instill in the minds of the actors on the social stage, the basic values of reflection he desires to see behind every act of self-expression.

Aim, Method, Scope

This study will explore how Petrarch attempts to mediate the present through the revival of terms that had fallen out of use in his own day.⁴⁷ His language is already mediated since the speech acts he revives from antiquity are not his own.⁴⁸ An understanding of Petrarch’s own particular approach to the mediation of meaning – through his philological scholarship, his

⁴⁵ On the humanist as educator, see Heller, *Renaissance Man*, pp. 127-38.

⁴⁶ See Tinkler, “Renaissance Humanism and the *genera eloquentiae*,” p. 294; see also Martines, *Power and Imagination*, p. 283.

interest in classical antiquity, the public image he projects and the words on which he bestows particular emphasis – will shed light on the humanist’s formation, the nature of his political project and its influence on the cultural moment of the mid-fourteenth century in Italy.⁴⁹

This study aims to recover the historical moment of several Petrarchan interventions in the cultural and political life of mid-fourteenth-century Italy, when he was at the height of his literary and political career, many aspects of which have been elided in the critical and popular reception of Petrarch’s life and work. The goal is to restore his political action to the larger context of the language of alliance, the state of community-building discourse that was current at the time. This study addresses the paradoxical phenomenon of how from out of the “worldlessness” – to use Hannah Arendt’s expression – experienced by someone who spent his entire life in exile, the dream of new worlds was born, along with new definitions of

⁴⁷ See Pocock, *Political Thought and History*, p. 38: “Humans communicate by means of language, and that language consists of a number of already formed and institutionalized structures. These embody and perform speech acts, but they perform the intentions of the user only through words formed by sedimentation and institutionalization of the utterances performed by others whose identities and intentions may no longer be precisely known.”

⁴⁸ See Pocock, *Political Thought and History*, p. 38-9: “There is a double sense, then, in which the words that perform my acts are not my own: in the first place, they are words used by others and only borrowed by me, and in the second place, they have been institutionalized to the point where they cannot finally be reduced to the speech acts of known individuals. My acts, therefore, have been preinstitutionalized; they must be performed by institutionalized means. But language-structures which have been institutionalized are available for use by more than one person, operating with more than one purpose and in more than one situation; they are never free from ambiguity in the sense that they can never be reduced to the performance of any one person’s intention. To perform my speech act I must borrow another’s, and he was in exactly the same predicament; all verbalized action is mediated.”

⁴⁹ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 5: “The concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that *man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun*, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning. It is an explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical. But this pronouncement, a doctrine in a clause, demands itself some explication.” Emphasis added.

togetherness, more inclusive unities, and larger, though largely imaginary, communities.⁵⁰ Reassessing the project of Petrarchan humanism, the present study sets out to delineate the poetics of Petrarch's politics, which is ultimately rooted in specific diction or word choice, signature persuasive strategies and rhetorical figures.⁵¹

The method I have employed is primarily exegetical. Drawing out the underlying assumptions of the discourse at hand, I have also attempted to indicate internal implications and connections with other texts, across genres and between authors in the context of contemporary discourse. As a consequence, my approach has its foot in two camps: literary exegesis, even when non-literary texts are in question, and philology, inasmuch as I have sought to historicize contemporary rhetorical practice. Special attention has been paid to the use of language, living language as it was exchanged and charged, imitated and developed in the context of a specific set of circumstances.

This study is analytical throughout, that is, it puts forth an analysis that attempts to pierce the very recesses left intentionally obscure by Petrarch himself, who was notoriously hyper-aware of his own relationship to posterity, that is, "radically posthumous."⁵² My intention is not, however, to differentiate an historical Petrarch from the rhetorically constructed one that

⁵⁰ In his essay "Un'idea politica italiana in Petrarca?", Angelo Mazzocco notes that, in fact, Petrarch's fixation on the notion of a unified Italy, which was nothing more than an abstraction for many of his contemporaries, possible only in the dreams of poets, was actually the product of the itinerant life he led in exile from start to finish: "L'idea politica italiana del Petrarca è dovuta per la maggior parte alla sua vita itinerante. È probabile che se il poeta fosse cresciuto a Firenze sarebbe stato mosso da forti movenze municipali e da vincoli campanilistici, come avvenne ad altri celebri fiorentini, e che, perciò, non gli sarebbe stato possibile formulare la sua visione panitaliana" ("Un'idea politica italiana in Petrarca?", p. 14). For Hannah Arendt's discussion of the condition of exile, see *Men in Dark Times*, pp. 11-17.

⁵¹ All of the keywords that will be the object of study in the pages that follow are abstract nouns whose meanings are determined by the context in which they acquire new sometimes even totemic valences for the communities that invest them with their special meaning.

⁵² See Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch*.

Petrarch himself so skillfully crafted and left for us in his tirelessly edited and self-consciously compiled body of work, from the vast collections of letters to the architecture of the *Canzoniere*.⁵³ The present study is concerned, rather, with how meaning emerges from the negotiation between the individual utterance in a specific moment and its historical development in other places and at other times. Consequently, the emphasis here is not only on historical origins and developments of any given utterance but also on its use in the present by Petrarch and his contemporaries.⁵⁴

Each chapter explores a different historical moment of Petrarch's involvement in the political vicissitudes of his day over the course of his career, though the coordinates of the role of the poet as teacher to the prince or statesman and guide to the culture at large remain a constant throughout the study. In every instance a community-related concept of one kind or another plays a decisive role. The first chapter is a survey of the vast semantic field of the Latin term *amicitia*, or friendship, particularly in Petrarch's neo-Latin epic, the *Africa*. This chapter is a case study of Petrarch's practices in the mediation of meaning through usage at the intersection between poetry and politics. By isolating the different ways in which he uses the word and its concomitant concepts, my analysis attempts to home in on what Petrarch means when he talks about friendship.

Chapter Two turns to one specific real world application of the word *amicitia* in an explicitly political context. Cola di Rienzo, the infamous populist revolutionary turned self-

⁵³ There are studies, like Marco Santagata's *Frammenti dell'anima*, in which biographical details are read against the highly constructed image of the author that comes across in the legend-making power the author exerts through the meticulous manipulation of his work.

⁵⁴ Far from seeking to pigeon hole Petrarch to a consistency unknown to him, the attempt is to interpret seemingly heterogeneous statements and trains of thought, actions and words, in the direction of a substantially common basis rooted in the pursuit of certain fundamental conceptual interests.

proclaimed Roman tribune, excavated from his readings in antiquity his own use of the concept of friendship – as political alliance – and invested it with a special importance by placing it at the center of his legendary bid to unite Italy.⁵⁵ Cola waged an epistolary campaign in which he invited the city-states of central and northern Italy, as we know it today, to conceive of a broader, more inclusive community of interests as a renewal of “*antiqua amicitia*,” or ancient friendship, harking back to Roman Republican legislation, like the *Lex Iulia*, that granted universal citizenship to all inhabitants of the peninsula. This chapter extends the frame of reference by incorporating the use of the discourse of friendship in a range of extra-literary texts and legal documents, including peace treaties and city chronicles, in order to better understand the ideological implications of friendship in the political discourse of the time.

Chapter Three looks at Petrarch’s deployment of a Ciceronian poetics of *familiaritas* in his attempt to reconcile differences between two prominent friends from different parts of Italy yet serving in the same court, whose friendship has greater ramifications within the general political economy of the Italian peninsula. In contrast to the broad ambitions of Cola’s campaign to unify Italy, Petrarch’s actions on this particular occasion are much more localized and intimate. This chapter takes a closer look at the rhetorical strategies of friendship when applied to interpersonal relations between two individuals.

Finally, the conclusion is a meditation on the role of Petrarch’s rhetoric of *humanitas* in the context of the larger project of Petrarchan humanism. The central object of analysis is an

⁵⁵ Cola musters his effort beneath the banner of a politics of *amicitia* not unlike such similar mantras of the French Revolution as “*liberté, égalité, fraternité!*” or the Pythagorean-inspired formulation of friendship “*e pluribus unum*” that informed one of the guiding principles of the Founding Fathers of the American political and social experiment. His idiosyncrasy is based not on his turn to the political-philosophical discourse of friendship *per se* but rather the pan-Italian scale on which he sought to extend such a tenuous extra-legal bond as *amicitia*.

oration the consummate *mediator pacis* gave at the end of his life in a diplomatic spectacle of power in Venice – yet another often overlooked testament to the fact that he remained true to his mission right up to the end of his long and illustrious career. This chapter ends with a brief assessment of the political legacy Petrarch left to posterity, as an addition to his more canonically paraded lyrical and literary fame.

Paradoxical Petrarchism

Petrarchan humanism's most basic desire to reconcile contraries leads Petrarch into many incongruities that have been amply noted by the scholarly reception of the great humanist's political activity, in large part because so much of his reception has almost exclusively emphasized only one of the many hats he wore, namely that of the vernacular lyrical poet, which constitutes the minority of his output. In order to most thoroughly reconstruct the social, political and ethical dimensions of Petrarch's aesthetic project, this study will give only scant attention to Petrarch's vernacular lyrics. Our primary interest here will be dedicated to his work in Latin. The great variety and seeming disjointedness of Petrarch's writings usually, and to some extent justly, explain the divergent and often contradictory ways in which he has been received.

The illumination of these incongruities is not the objective of this study, precisely because one of the central tenets of Petrarch's pedagogical projects aims at the creation of his ideal of a sage in whom contradictions coexist peacefully, contrasts coincide, and the dialectical divide is surmounted. Instead, this study aims to reintegrate long-neglected aspects of Petrarch's political career into the canonical understanding of Petrarchan humanism in order to do justice to the thoughts and theories that run parallel and are usually cited as contradictory.⁵⁶ Antithesis,

⁵⁶ Angelo Mazzocco, Michele Feo and Ugo Dotti, in their various publications cited throughout this work, are the scholarly forebears to such a study of Petrarch's politics.

oxymoron and paradox play not only a fundamental role in his poetics but they are also omnipresent in his very worldview, beginning with his definition of man, that is to say, those aspects of our nature that make us human, the core of our humanity, which is characteristic of the notion of *humanitas* we find throughout his thought.

Petrarch's vision of the human individual consists in restless activity, dynamic contradiction, dialectical struggle and progress. For Petrarch the formation of the "*humanissimus*" or enlightened individual was a great romance of construction through the reconciliation of constant conflict within. The vast and varied body of Petrarch's work extensively attests to the courage and imagination that went into his efforts to create new values that might aid early modern subjects to navigate their way through the perils of the world in which they lived.

What is potentially modern about Petrarch's distinctive voice is its imaginative richness, its ability to fashion the new from the old, its readiness to turn on itself, to question and to negate all it has said, to transform itself into a great range of harmonic or dissonant voices, to express a world where everything is pregnant with its contrary. In the chapters that follow, one of the many productive paradoxes that will come to the fore is that of the individual who is both politically engaged and reclusively solitary.⁵⁷ The spirit of reconciliation and reintegration are hardwired into the very essence of Petrarchan humanism. As a result, I argue, Petrarch's political

⁵⁷ For the unfortunate perils of coronation, see *Fam.* XIII, 7 (Bernardo, p. 202): "And I fear lest the laurel leaves that I plucked too eagerly and prematurely from their branches caused false dreams to emerge from the ivory portals for me and for many others in the darkness of an autumn night, even though they are said to make dreams come true. But it is as it should be; I am being punished for my own crimes. I seethe in my own home, scarcely daring to go out in public." See also *Sen.* XVII, 2 to Boccaccio where he expresses a similar regret.

involvement is the natural expression and the logical extension of the principles embodied in his humanistic project.



Petrarch's Coronation

Rome, Capitoline Hill, April 8, 1341 – Petrarch crowned poet laureate by Robert D'Anjou



Robert I D'Anjou

Miniature (ca. 1340) by Anonymous

Detail from *The Anjou Bible: A Royal Manuscript Revealed (Naples 1340)*. Lieve Watteuw and Jan Van Der Stock, eds. Leuven: Peeters, 2010

Chapter Two

Pronus amicitias amplectere: The Sentimental Education of the Statesman in Petrarch's *Africa*

Ad altra vita et a più belle imprese

The idea to write a neo-Latin epic poem about the exploits of Scipio Africanus during the Second Punic War came to Petrarch while wandering through the mountainous landscape of Valchiusa on Good Friday in 1338.¹ A portentous day, it also marked the eleventh anniversary of his fateful first encounter with Laura. The occasion is commemorated by the sonnet “Padre del ciel,” in which the poet expresses a distinct longing for a conversion “ad altra vita et a più belle imprese,” to a new life and more illustrious enterprises.² Whether the conversion he seeks is poetic, from lyric to epic, or personal, from provincial *capellanus* to *consigliere* of the lords of

¹ See *Sen.* XVIII, 1, the *Posteritati*: “Illis in montibus vaganti, sexta quadam feria maioris hebdomade, cogitatio incidit, et valida, ut de Scipione Africano illo primo, cuius nomen mirum inde a prima michi etate carum fuit, poeticum aliquid heroico carmine scriberem – sed, subiecti de nomine, *Africe* nomen libro dedi, operi, nescio qua vel sua vel mea fortuna, dilecto multis antequam cognito – quod, tunc magno ceptum impetu, variis mox distractus curis intermisi” (“As I wandered those mountains on a certain Good Friday, the idea gripped me to write something poetic in heroic verse about Scipio Africanus the Elder, whose name had been wonderfully dear to me since my earliest childhood. But having taken this on with great enthusiasm, I soon dropped it because I was distracted by various tasks; I entitled it *Africa* from its subject, a work which, through some kind of luck, either its own or mine, was loved by many before they ever saw it”). For further discussion of the poem’s origin, see Festa, *Saggio sull’Africa*, pp. 2-21; Fenzi, “Dall’*Africa* al *Secretum*: Il sogno di Scipione e la composizione del poema,” p. 311.

² See Petrarch, *Rvf* 62, 5-6: “piacciati omai col tuo lume che io torni / ad altra vita et a più belle imprese” (Durling, p. 140: “let it please you at last that with your light I may return to a different life and to more beautiful enterprises”). One reading sees a veiled reference to the nascent heroic poem in these “*belle imprese*.” For this reading of *Rvf* 62, see Calcaterra, *Nella selva del Petrarca*, p. 243.

Italy, the decision to write a heroic poem about the founder of Roman power and the liberator of Italy from the invasion of Hannibal was, nevertheless, a defining moment in his career.³

For Petrarch, the figure of Scipio Africanus represents much more than a mere artifact of historical interest. In his Letter to Posterity (*Sen.* XVIII, 1), Petrarch claims that Scipio had been “*mirum carum*” (“wonderfully dear”) to him since his earliest childhood. Petrarch speaks of his illustrious hero as an old friend, with whom he seems to identify very intimately as well as empathize.⁴ There is a sort of textual friendship, based not on direct contact but intense study and deep reading. Through the work of many of his favorite classical authors, like Cicero and Livy, Petrarch became acquainted with the great Roman general, Scipio Africanus, who came to embody so many of the social and political values that Petrarch admired, including the defense of the patria and the valorization of friendship.

In the pages that follow, I will survey Petrarch’s archeological excavation of the values of community leadership and the ideals of friendship as exemplified by the figure of Scipio Africanus, to whom Petrarch dedicated not only an heroic poem, the *Africa*, but also the *Vita*

³ His coronation on the Capitoline in Rome on Easter day three years later in 1341, as well as the international notoriety he subsequently attained, was nominally born of the singular, though largely symbolic, achievement of the *Africa*. I say symbolic because it was admired though it was never read. See *Sen.* XVIII, 1, quoted in n. 1 above: “through some kind of luck, either its own or mine, [the *Africa*] was loved by many before they ever saw it.”

⁴ In light of Petrarch’s profound identification with his hero, the poet’s motivations for undertaking this project can perhaps be gleaned from the characterization of the driving forces behind Scipio’s convictions given in this passage early in the poem (*Africa*, I, 145-51): “*Urgebat vindicta patris pietasque movebat / Ut ceptum sequeretur opus. Nam sanguine sevo / Cesorum cineresque sacros umbrasque parentum / Placari, atque Itala detergi fronte pudorem*” (*Africa*, I, 198-204: “*Revenge and filial love moved Scipio / to carry on the task he had begun / and by horrendous slaughter to appease / the sacred ashes of ancestors slain / and cleanse of shame the face of Italy*”). Both the poet and the general were driven by the same piety for the patria they loved: Italy. One is weary from defending its interests and expanding its influence; the other, from singing its glory and spreading its fame. Since they are driven by the same concerns, the poet projects something of himself and his own personal struggle into the figure and vicissitudes of the great military hero at the heart of his epic story.

Scipionis, an extensive biographical portrait, the longest of the *De viris illustribus*.⁵ According to Quentin Skinner, “to understand a given idea, within a given culture at a given time, we have to study all the various contexts in which the words were used.”⁶ Thus, to more fully understand the ideas Petrarch appropriates from his classical sources, I have not only surveyed specific instances in which *amicitia* and the concomitant constellation of community-oriented concepts appear in the humanist’s own imitative works on Scipio, but I have also taken care to trace the multifaceted web of intertextuality between his primary sources and other texts in the tradition, from Livy and Cicero to Virgil and Macrobius.⁷ This chapter thus serves as a case study of the

⁵ In addition to the *Africa*, Scipio appears in the *Canzoniere*, the *Trionfi*, the *Secretum*, the *De vita solitaria*, the *De otio religioso*, the *Rerum memorandarum libri* and two of the *Invective*. He is cited in exempla in the *Epistolae metricae*, the *Familiares* and the *Seniles*. Petrarch also dedicates the most extensive biographical sketch to him in the *De viris illustribus*. For a survey of his many appearances throughout the works of Petrarch, see Bernardo, *Petrarch, Scipio and the Africa: The Birth of Humanism’s Dream*; and Fenzi, “Scipione e la *Collatio ducum*,” pp. 365-78.

⁶ See Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume 1: Regarding Method*, p. 84: “If we wish to understand a given idea, even within a given culture at a given time, we cannot simply concentrate à la Lovejoy on studying the terms in which it was expressed. For they are likely to have been used, as my example suggests, with varying and incompatible intentions. We cannot even hope that a sense of the context of utterance will necessarily resolve the difficulty, for the context itself may be ambiguous. We cannot even hope that a sense of the context of utterance will necessarily resolve the difficulty, for the context itself may be ambiguous. *Rather we have to study all the various contexts in which the words were used – all the functions they served, all the various things that could be done with them.* Lovejoy’s mistake lies not merely in looking for the ‘essential meaning’ of the ‘idea’ as something that must necessarily ‘remain the same,’ but even in supposing that there need be any such ‘essential’ meaning (to which individual writers ‘contribute’) at all.”

⁷ Considering the fact that *philia*, the Greek equivalent of *amicitia*, has been a key term in political philosophy at least since Thucydides, the semantic field of the discourse of friendship presents a particularly tricky terrain. In Latin the word *amicitia* first and foremost means “friendship.” However, the range of significance that can and has been assigned to it is by no means limited to this univocal meaning. In no way is this meant to be an attempt to arrive at some kind of essential meaning of *amicitia*. Rather, the aim of this chapter is to pave the way toward an understanding of the general lay of the land, in which ambiguity and idiosyncrasy are accommodated, and the problem of subjective use remains. On the history of the discourse of friendship in political philosophy, see Digeser, “Friends Between States,” p. 323-4.

poet's role as teacher to the statesman or politician with a particular emphasis on Petrarch's deployment of the political-philosophical discourse of community and the language of *amicitia* in his treatment of the historical figure of Scipio Africanus in the *Africa* and its many intertexts.⁸

The Poetics of Petrarch's Pedagogical Project

Petrarch lays out the guiding principles behind the composition of his historical epic in a passage found at the end of the poem. He puts his reflections on poetic license and truth in the mouth of the early Latin epic poet Ennius, who appears in book IX of the *Africa* where we find him accompanying Scipio on his return to Rome after a monumental Roman victory in northern Africa against the Carthaginian forces. Petrarch's Ennius says of the poetics of historical epic:

[...] one who would plan a poem must lay down
 a firm foundation of the truth whereon
 he then may build a cloud-like structure, sweet
 and varied, veiling the foundation. Thus
 he will prepare for those who choose to read
 a lengthy, tranquil, and rewarding labor.
 So, as the meaning harder is to seek,
 the sweeter is the finding. All such things
 as trials that history records, the ways
 of virtue, lessons taught by life,
 or Nature's secrets – all such matters are
 a poet's substance, not to be exposed
 as elsewhere, but to be disguised beneath
 a covering cloak, or better, a light veil
 which tricks the watcher's eye and now conceals

⁸ On method, see Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume 1: Regarding Method*, p. 86-7: "The understanding of texts, I have suggested, presupposes the grasp of what they were intended to mean and of how that meaning was intended to be taken. To understand a text must at least be to understand both the intention to be understood, and the intention that this intention be understood, which the text as an intended act of communication must have embodied. The question we accordingly need to confront in studying such texts is what their authors – writing at the time when they wrote for the specific audience they had in mind – could in practice have intended to communicate by issuing their given utterances. It seems to me, therefore, that the most illuminating ways of proceeding must be to begin by trying to delineate the full range of communications that could have been conventionally performed on the given occasion by the issuing of the given utterance."

and now discloses underlying truth. (*Africa*, IX; Bergin, 124-39)⁹

Using Ennius as his mouthpiece, Petrarch describes his poetics in architectural terms. The poet likens his work to the construction of castles in the air, though these are no ordinary cloud-like structures. The Petrarchan poet is engaged in building palaces of truth.¹⁰ His pedagogical project recognizes first and foremost the truth with his poetics of the veil. He takes as his subject matter the lessons that history has to teach to those living in the present. In his poetics we glimpse the larger dynamics of the figure of the Petrarchan poet whose work is intended to bear pedagogical fruit for the statesman and society at large, whether or not this particular work successfully found its way to those audiences or not. Petrarch's task is the mediation of meaning between past and present.

An Overview of the *Africa*

Largely overlooked and underappreciated, the *Africa* is an epic poem written in Latin hexameters that chronicles the private contemplation, diplomatic missions and militaristic actions carried out by the great Roman general, Scipio Africanus, at the climax of the Second Punic War. Though it earned him great fame and was the main cause for his coronation, the work

⁹ *Africa*, IX, 92-108: “Scripturum icuisse prius firmissima veri / Fundamenta decet, quibus inde innixus amena / Et varia sub nube potest abscondere sese, / Lectori longum cumulans placidumque laborem, / Quesitu asperior quo sit sententia, verum / Dulcior inventu. Quicquid labor historiarum est / Quicquid virtutum cultus documentaque vite, / Nature studium quicquid, licuisse poetis / Crede: sub ignoto tamen ut celentur amictu, / Nuda alibi, et tenui frustrentur lumina velo, / Interdumque palam veniant, fugiantque vicissim.” All translations of the *Africa*, unless otherwise noted, are from the Thomas G. Bergin and Alice S. Wilson edition.

¹⁰ For Petrarch's further remarks on the relationship between poetry and history, see also *Collatio laureationis*, p. 9; for Wilkins' English translation, see Petrarch, “Coronation Oration,” p. 307: “Poetry, furthermore, is all the sweeter since a truth that must be sought out with some care gives all the more delight when it is discovered. Let this suffice as a statement not so much about myself as about the poetic profession.”

did not circulate during Petrarch's lifetime; and while it reaches a proper conclusion at the end of the ninth book, it remains unfinished with demonstrable lacunae throughout, especially evident at the end of book IV.

The narrative arc of the nine books of Petrarch's *Africa* covers the period from the end of the Roman military campaign in Spain (205 BCE) to the Battle of Zama in Libya (202 BCE), which corresponds to the sequence of events narrated by Livy in his History of Rome from book 21.61 to the end of book 30.¹¹ While Petrarch follows relatively faithfully Livy's account of the action featured in the last seven books of the *Africa* (III-IX), the first two books of the poem are almost entirely indebted to the *Somnium Scipionis*, the celebrated epilogue of Cicero's *De re publica*.¹² Known in English as the *Dream of Scipio*, Cicero's *Somnium* recounts the allegorical dream vision of Scipio Aemilianus, the conqueror of Carthage in the Third Punic War and adoptive nephew of Petrarch's protagonist, the elder Scipio Africanus. In a dream, Scipio the Younger visits the Milky Way, the circle of heaven reserved for virtuous defenders of the commonwealth. There he meets his illustrious ancestor Scipio Africanus, who, playing the role

¹¹ For an analytical summary of the poem, see Mustard, "Petrarch's *Africa*," p. 99 ff.; and Carlini, *Studio sull'Africa di Francesco Petrarca*, pp. 57-128.

¹² Petrarch's primary source for Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* was Macrobius' commentary on the text, the *Commentariorum in Somnium Scipionis*. See Lord, "The Uses of Macrobius," p. 4: "Petrarch was an especially avid reader of Macrobius. One of his most treasured possessions was his manuscript of Virgil, now known as the Codex Ambrosianus Sala dal Prefetto Scaf. 10, no. 27, *olim* A. 49 *inf*. This manuscript, dating from 1325, was the gift of Petrarch's father, Petracco di Parenzo, who commissioned its production. Its principal texts are the works of Virgil, in the order of the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*, surrounded by the commentary of Servius. It also contains a part of the *Achilleid* of Statius, four odes of Horace, and two medieval commentaries on the third book of the *Ars Maior* of Aelius Donatus. Petrarch extensively annotated this prized manuscript of his. Up through to the end of *Aeneid* 6, as many as twenty-five of his marginal notes are passages copied from Macrobius or referring to him. A majority of his glosses are derived from the *Saturnalia*. But several important passages are glossed in reference to the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*."

of teacher, indoctrinates him to the mysteries of the universe and the rewards that await him in the afterlife.¹³

In Defense of the Commonwealth

Cleverly adapting Cicero's *Somnium* to his own ends in the first two books of the *Africa*, Petrarch shifts his highly imitative version of this famous dream vision back to Scipio Africanus, the hero of the Second Punic War. The poet fashions a scenario in which his protagonist is finally able to rest after many sleepless nights of battle against Carthaginian forces in Spain.¹⁴ He falls into a deep sleep, and in his dream experiences a cryptic indoctrination into the mysteries of the universe in the form of a guided tour virtually identical to the one he gives to his adopted nephew in Cicero's precursor text.¹⁵

¹³ See Mustard, "Petrarch's *Africa*," p. 118: "Such, then, is the general argument of Petrarch's poem. That is, the first two books are a very clever adaptation, and development, of Cicero's Dream of Scipio, while the remainder of the poem follows very closely the narrative of Livy. The Fifth book and the Ninth are the most original of the lot. The Fifth book works out the tragic story of Sophonisba, with a wealth of imaginative detail which could have had no place in Livy's prose, and the Ninth is really a sort of epilogue to the whole poem. But there are other original features, even in the other books. A good many of the speeches are Petrarch's own; and he has inserted a good many short similes, which are always apt and effective."

¹⁴ For Petrarch's description of Scipio's state of mind when we first encounter him, see *Africa*, I, 152-3: "Anxia nox, operosa dies, vix ulla quietis / Hora duci: tanta indomito sub pectore virtus!" (*Africa*, I, 207-9: "Nights without rest and days of ceaseless toil / allowed no respite to the general / within whose spirit dwelt such fervent zeal"). Developing further the parallel Petrarch perceives between himself and the great general, he recounts in *Fam.* XIII, 7 that once he acted on the inspiration to write the *Africa* his enthusiasm for the project turned out to be all consuming. He tirelessly applied himself to the poem until his friends compelled him to take a ten-day vacation from it since he was working himself to exhaustion.

¹⁵ For a meditation on the role an allegorical episode of this sort plays in a political tract, see Macrobius, *Commento al 'Somnium Scipionis,'* 1.1.3-5, p. 34 (Stahl, pp. 81-2): "Sed quid vel illi commento tali vel huic tali somnio in his potissimum libris opus fuerit, in quibus *de rerum publicarum statu loquebantur*, quove attinuerit inter gubernandarum urbium constituta circulos orbis globosque describere, de stellarum motu, de caeli conversione tractare, quaesitu dignum et mihi visum est; [...] Rerum omnium Plato et actuum naturam penitus inspiciens advertit in omni sermone de rei publicae institutione proposito

Indeed, in Cicero's version of the dream journey, the elder Scipio Africanus gives his descendant a lesson in the values that one must uphold and the kind of action that one must take in order to attain eternity in this blessed place:

'Sed quo sis, Africane, alacrior ad tutandam rem publicam, sic habeto, omnibus, qui patriam conservaverint, adiuverint, auxerint, certum esse in caelo definitum locum, ubi beati aevo sempiterno fruuntur; nihil est enim illi principi deo, qui omnem mundum regit, quod quidem in terris fiat, acceptius quam concilia coetusque hominum iure sociati, quae 'civitates' appellantur; harum rectores et conservatores hinc profecti huc revertuntur.' (Cicero, *De re publica*, VI, 13)

'But, Africanus, be assured of this, so that you may be even more eager to defend the commonwealth: *all those who have preserved, aided or enlarged their fatherland have a special place prepared for them in the heavens, where they may enjoy an eternal life of happiness.* For nothing of all that is done on earth is more pleasing to that supreme God who rules the whole universe than the assemblies and gatherings of men associated in justice, which are called 'States.' Their rulers and preservers come from that place, and to that place they return.'¹⁶

infundendum animis iustitiae amorem, sine qua non solum res publica sed nec exiguus hominum coetus, ne domus quidem parva constabit. Ad hunc porro iustitiae affectum pectoribus inoculandum nihil aequae patrocinaturum vidit quam si fructus eius non videretur cum vita hominis terminari. Hunc vero superstitem durare post hominem qui poterat ostendi nisi prius de animae immortalitate constaret? Fide autem facta perpetuitatis animarum, consequens esse animadvertit ut certa illis loca nexu corporis absolutis pro contemplatu probi improbe meiti duputata sint ("The reason for including such a fiction and dream in books *dealing with governmental problems*, and the justification for introducing a description of celestial circles, orbits, and spheres the movements of planets, and the revolutions of the heavens into a discussion of the regulations governing commonwealths seemed to me worth investigating; [...] With a deep understanding of all human affairs Plato advises throughout his discussion of the establishment of a republic that a *love of justice must be instilled in men's minds*, without which it is impossible to maintain not only a *state*, but *human fellowship* and *family life* as well. He realized that in order to implant this fondness for justice in an individual nothing was quite so effective as the assurance that one's enjoyments did not terminate with death. But how could Plato show that these continued after death except by demonstrating the immortality of souls? After he had created a belief in the immortality of souls he drew the obvious conclusion that the souls, upon being released from their bodies, had definite places allotted them according to their deserts"). Emphasis added. See also Gallagher, "Metaphor in Cicero's *De re publica*"; and Barlow, "The Education of a Statesman in Cicero's *De Republica*."

¹⁶ Cicero, *De re publica*, VI, 13. This Ciceronian passage is explicitly quoted with some frequency in Petrarch's letters, often paired with a Christian gloss on its meaning, see *Fam.* II, 1 (Bernardo, p. 61): "Certainly Marcus Tullius, whose being a pagan is both well-known and lamentable, was not of this opinion believing that *the soul was immortal and that famous spirits would find a heavenly dwelling place after this life*. Otherwise he would never have introduced Marcus Cato the elder in his book which he now

Conservare, adiuuare, augere: to *preserve*, to *aid* and to *enlarge* are the operative verbs in the portrait of the ideal statesman present in the *Somnium Scipionis*. Cicero's political-theological vision of the afterlife features a place of privilege reserved for those who dedicate their lives to the preservation, assistance and growth of their homeland.¹⁷ The god of Cicero's cosmos holds

calls *Cato the Elder* with the following words so full of hope: 'Oh blessed day, when I shall depart for that assembly and meeting of divine souls, and when I shall depart from this tumultuous crowd! I shall be departing not only to join those men about whom I have precious spoken, but to join my Cato, than whom no better man has ever been born, and no one is more distinguished in dutifulness'; *Fam.* III, 12 (Bernardo, p. 146; addressed: "To Marco Genovese, that even those who serve the state can love piously and honestly and can also aspire to the silence of a loftier life above the din of the active life"): "Heavenly is that saying of my Africanus in Cicero's work: '*For all those who have preserved, assisted and supported their fatherland, there is certainly a definite place in heaven where the blessed experience joy eternally.*' Well known also is what follows: '*There is nothing that may be done on this earth that is more acceptable to that supreme God who rules over all this world than the assemblies and meetings of men united by law and forming what is known as states.*' The time will doubtless come, my friend, which you long for, when you can raise yourself from the ground not so much as did Maro or Ennius but like Ambrose or Arsenius with wings powerful enough for flight." Emphasis added.

¹⁷ Cicero's conception of the afterlife would exert an enormous influence on Petrarch's thinking on the subject, especially in his intellectual and spiritual commerce with those men of power in his own day. Imagery from this Ciceronian passage features prominently, for example, in Petrarch's famous *speculum principis* he addressed to the patron of the last phase of his career, Francesco da Carrara of Padua, see *Sen.* XIV, 1, 13 (Bernardo, p. 525), where he quotes this particular passage from the *Somnium* verbatim: "Ante tamen quam aggrediar quod institui, verbum unum Ciceronis ipsius tibi, ut arbitror, non ignotum inseram, quo avidius audias qualis esse debeat rei publice gubernator, cum prius audieris quam et ipse deo carus quamque deo cara sit ipsa res publica. Ille ergo *Reipublice* libro sexto: '*Quo sis, Africane, inquit, alacrior ad tutandam rem publicam, sic habeto: omnibus qui patriam conservaverint adiuverint auxerint, certum esse in celo diffinitum locum, ubi beati evo sempiterno fruuntur.* Nichil est enim illi principi deo qui omnem mundum regit, quod quidem in terris fiat acceptius, quam concilia cetusque hominum iure sociati, que civitates appellantur. Harum rectores det conservatores hinc profecti huc revertuntur.' Erat autem fictum illud in celi arce colloquium. Quis igitur nisi valde duri cordis et virtutis osor felicitatisque contemptor non hos appetat labores et hec premia? Quamvis enim paganus sit qui loquitur, non abhorrens tamen est a cristiana veritate ac religione sententia, etsi in creatione hominum sive animarum diversus sit eorum loquendi modus et noster" ("Before getting into the subject I have undertaken, I shall insert one passage from Cicero himself which I believe is not unknown to you, whereby you may hear with greater delight what the ruler of a state ought to be, when you have first heard how dear he is to God, and how dear the state itself is to God. Here then is a passage from the sixth book of the *Republic*. 'Africanus said, '*So that you may be more eager to protect the republic, know that all those who have upheld, aided, and*

nothing in higher esteem than the civil society of men united in their service to just laws. Thus, he rewards those who participate in maintaining the peace and civility in these societies.

The passage corresponding to this one in Petrarch's *Africa* is worth quoting at length because it brings together the statesman, the poet and the teacher:

‘But for the short span while the members still
are vigorous, do you my counsel heed.
Hold sacred rites and faith and justice dear.
Let piety abide within your hearts
a holy guest, aye and a partner too
in all your acts. *This is [what] to your sire you owe
and to your country more, but above all
to the all-highest God.* A life adorned
by practice of this virtue will *assure
the way to Heaven*; hither will it bear you
when the last day relieves you of the weight
of flesh and bears off your ethereal soul.
And I would have you know that *there is naught
more pleasing to the Lord of earth and sky,
our Father and our King, than cities built
on righteous laws and human covenants
on justice founded.* And a citizen
who has advanced his country by his art
or when it is oppressed has lent his strength
in bearing arms, may rightfully expect
for all eternity a place secure
within this tranquil kingdom and so reap
the merited rewards of a good life.
This is the law of God's own justice which
leaves naught unpunished, naught unrecognized.’
He spoke, and his attentive nephew's heart

increased the fatherland have a special place reserved for them in heaven, where they may enjoy blessedness forever. For there is nothing done on earth more pleasing to that supreme God who rules over the entire world, than the councils and gatherings of men united by law, which are called states; the rulers and guardians of these have set out from up here and will return here' [VI.1.13]. This conversation, however, was imagined to be in the vault of heaven. Who, therefore, except the utterly heartless, who hate virtue and scorn happiness, would not seek such exertions and such rewards? For although it is a pagan who speaks, still the thought is not contrary to Christian truth and religion, even if our way of speaking is different from theirs on the creation of men and of the soul"). Emphasis added.

was stirred within by goads and flames of love. (*Africa*, I, 663-89)¹⁸

As in the Ciceronian model for this passage, Petrarch casts Scipio's guide as a teacher figure. In this case that role is filled by Scipio's father, who is depicted as giving counsel. What is to give counsel but to teach? His lesson touches on the duties of the citizen and the rewards that await those who virtuously carry out those duties. The passage closes with a description of the effect of teaching on the student. All of the same propositional content is present in Petrarch's imitative rendition of the Ciceronian material. His dilation comes in the form of the examples he uses to illustrate the activity of the divinely favored leaders and protectors of the commonwealth (Cicero's "*rectores et conservatores*"), namely, those who preserve, aide, enlarge (*conservare, adiuvere, augere*) the fatherland. Petrarch divides the responsibility of Cicero's three sacred civic activities between two broadly defined figures that most closely resemble the spheres of activity and influence of the prince and the poet, two of his favorite public figures.¹⁹

The figure corresponding to the category of the general or the warrior that we might broadly associate with the prince or statesman in Petrarch's equation is described as he who when the patria is oppressed "has lent (*adiuverit*) his strength / in bearing arms." Here Petrarch uses *adiuvere*, one of the three key verbs used in the Ciceronian original, to describe the activity

¹⁸ See *Africa*, I, 481-500: "Sed dum membra vigent – brevis est mora –, suscipe nostri / consilii quid summa velit. Tu *sacra fidemque / Iustitiamque cole*. Pietas sit pectoris hospes / sancta tui morumque comes, que debita virtus / magna patri, patrie maior, sed maxima summo / ac perfecta Deo; quibus exornata profecto / *vita via in celum est*, que vos huc tramite recto / Tunc revehat cum summa dies exemerit istud / Carnis onus pureque animam transmiserit aure. / Hoc etiam monuisse velim, nil gratius illi, / Qui celum terrasque regit, dominoque patrique, / Actibus ex nostris, quam iustis legibus urbes / Conciliumque hominum sociatum legibus equis. / Quiquis enim ingenio patriam seu viribus alte / Sustulerit sumptisque oppressam adiuverit armis, / Hic certum sine fine diem in regione serena / Expectet vereque petat sibi premia vite, / Iustitia statuente Dei, que nec quid inultum, / Nec pretio caruisse sinit." Sic fatus amoris / Admovitque faces avido stimulosque nepoti."

¹⁹ The imitative strategies Petrarch applies to his source material demand to be more closely analyzed than the present occasion allows.

of the powerful prince in possession of military might. The virtuous activity of the poet or artist more generally speaking is the figure whom we glimpse in the depiction of the “citizen / who has advanced (*sustulerit*) his country by his art.”²⁰ Though he does not explicitly use either of the other two verbs from the Ciceronian passage, Petrarch’s choice of the verb “*sustulerit*” – from “*suffero*,” to bear up from underneath, to uphold, here translated as “to advance” – nevertheless, carries a good deal of the same conceptual valence as all three of the key verbs in Cicero’s original formulation: to preserve or protect, to aid or assist, to enlarge or expand the fatherland. As he insists in the *Coronation Oration*, for example, the poet who sings of the glory of his country not only serves to broadcast the news of that glory abroad, thus enlarging its scope of influence, but also serves to inspire its citizens to commit even greater deeds since the promise of immortality awaits those whose virtues are worthy of record (as well as pleasing to God).

The language Cicero uses to describe the *civitas*, or “state,” that so pleases God above all else is also worthy of note. He speaks of the “*concilia coetusque hominum*,” the assemblies and communities of men, that are “*iure sociati*,” bound together by law, or “associated in justice,” to use Keyes’ translation. The same word, *coetus* – also written *coitus*, the past participle of the verb “*coeo*, *coire*,” which means “to come together, to be united into a whole” – is used just a few sentences later in the *Somnium* (VI, 16) to describe the assembly of souls in this heaven of the blessed. They form a celestial unit.

In his imitation of this part of the passage Petrarch closely follows the original: “*urbes conciliumque hominum sociatum legibus equis*,” (“cities and the assemblies of men associated by just laws”). Petrarch maintains Cicero’s language almost verbatim, that is, with the exception of the word *coetus*, which is absent. In fact, the broader sphere implied by Cicero’s “*civitas*” –

²⁰ The mention of “art” here also extends beyond poetry, especially in the context of Virgil’s parallel passage where it even includes the “art” of inventors and creators of new technologies.

translated here as “state,” though not in the modern sense of the word – is perhaps narrowed down by Petrarch’s use of the more circumscribed “urbs,” which can mean simply “city.” At the same time, however, in classical Latin *urbs* could refer quite literally to the city of Rome as well as metonymically to the whole of the Roman Empire. It is a word choice with implications that cut both ways.

Petrarch’s meticulous reconfiguring of the Ciceronian passage has been refracted through the lens of Macrobius’ *Commentariorum in Somnium Scipionis*, not least for the verse from Virgil that he links to this point in his commentary.²¹ The verse Macrobius cites is derived from Virgil’s vision of the afterlife in *Aeneid* VI, 664: “*They have won remembrance among men.*” It touches on the fate of those who performed works and carried out deeds worthy of memory among men. In addition to poets and princes, Virgil’s extended treatment of these illustrious individuals includes warriors, priests, inventors and other innovators of the art of civilization. The following is the larger context for the verse from the *Aeneid* in the Mandelbaum translation:

Here was the company of those who suffered
wounds, fighting for their homeland; and of those
who, while they lived their lives, served as pure priests;
and then the pious poets, those whose songs

²¹ See Macrobius, *Somn. Scip.* 1.8.6-8 (Stahl, p. 121-2): “et sunt politicae hominis, quia sociale animal est. his boni uiri rei publicae consulunt, urbes tuentur: his parentes uenerantur, liberos amant, proximos diligunt: his ciuium salutem gubernant: his socios circumspicere prouidentia protegunt, iusta liberalitate deuinciunt: hisque ‘sui memores alios fecere merendo.’ [...] iustitiae seruare uni cuique quod suum est de iustitia ueniunt innocentia amicitia concordia pietas religio affectus humanitas. his uirtutibus uir bonus primum sui atque inde rei publicae rector efficitur, iuste ac prouide gubernans humana, non deserens” (“Man has political virtues because he is a social animal. By these virtues upright men devote themselves to their commonwealths, protect cities, revere parents, love their children, and cherish relatives; by these they direct the welfare of the citizens, and by these they safeguard their allies with anxious forethought and bind them with the liberality of their justice; by these ‘*They have won remembrance among men.*’ To have political justice, one must safeguard for each man that which belongs to him. From justice comes uprightness, friendship, harmony, sense of duty, piety, love, and human sympathy. By these virtues the good man is first made lord of himself and then ruler of the state, and is just and prudent in his regard for human welfare, never forgetting his obligations”).

were worthy of Apollo; those who had
made life more civilized with newfound arts;
and *those whose merits won the memory*
of men; all these were crowned with snow-white garlands.²²

In this passage from Aeneas' descent into the Underworld, Virgil touches on the fates of such blessed souls as poets, artists and inventors who enrich civic life through their arts, as well as the priests and warriors who achieve immortality through the injuries they sustained in defense of the patria. Not only are these similar to the categories that appear in Petrarch's dilated imitation of the *Somnium*, but some of the details he uses in his extended illustration of these categories are also explicitly Virgilian.²³ By means of an intertextual genealogy that passes through Macrobius' commentary, Petrarch incorporates Virgil into his synthesis of the Ciceronian text.

Thematic repetition and variation of the eternal blessedness that awaits all virtuous defenders of the State are found throughout Petrarch's work.²⁴ Dating back to some of his earliest lyrics, one of the most famous cases is the 1333 incipit of *Rvf* 28, "O aspectata in ciel," in which the feminine singular noun that is "awaited in Heaven" is the "anima," or soul, of the blessed leader to whom the composition is addressed.²⁵ In a Ciceronian fashion that he has

²² Virgil, *Aeneid* VI, 660-4 (Mandelbaum, 874-81): "hic manus ob patriam pugnando uulnera passi, / quique sacerdotes casti, dum uita manebat, / quique pii uates et Phoebos digna locuti, / inuentas aut qui uitam excoluere per artis / quique sui memores aliquos fecere merendo."

²³ See also Billanovich, "Il Virgilio del Petrarca," pp. 20-23.

²⁴ In addition to the verses "O aspectata in ciel" (*Rvf* 28, 1) and "volando al ciel colla terrena soma" (*Rvf* 28, 78), see also "il bel viso dagli angeli aspectato" (*Rvf* 41, 14); "[Laura] aspettata al regno delli dèi" (*Rvf* 248, 7); "al ciel, che lei aspettata et brama" (*Rvf* 261, 8); "il ciel n'aspetta..." (*Rvf* 330, 12). The conflation of the affective register with the political in this as well as other political poems demands to be studied in further detail on another occasion.

²⁵ In a brilliant bait and switch move that is highly characteristic of other political poems in the *Canzoniere* (*Rvf*), the incipit sets up the readers' expectations for amorous subject matter only to find that the feminine adjective actually refers to a masculine agent who is invoked not in the interest of love, but

effectively Christianized, Petrarch dangles a heavenly motivation before the eyes of this particular leader. In exchange for his virtuous defense of the commonwealth – or, in the case of this particular political canzone, his Crusade on behalf of Christian Europe in the Holy Land – he will earn eternal salvation.²⁶ Once freed from the prison of the body, the proper use of his personal gifts in military action and eloquence will earn him a spot in something akin to the Scipionic circle of heaven. Petrarch uses political-theological themes and imagery from Cicero to concisely and authoritatively express the aspirations that the ruler of a state ought to cultivate, which he couples with a description of the reward that awaits the attainment of such ideals. As

of war, a new Crusade to be exact. The conflation of the political and the erotic registers is worth noting and demands further analysis on another occasion.

²⁶ See *Rvf* 28, 61-75: “Dunque ora è ’l tempo da ritrare il collo / dal giogo antico, et da squarciare il velo / ch’è stato avvolto intorno agli occhi nostri, / et che ’l nobile ingegno che dal cielo / per gratia tien de l’immortale Apollo, / et l’eloquentia sua vertú qui mostri / or con la lingua, or co’ laudati incostri: / perché d’Orpheo leggendo et d’Amphione / se non ti meravigli, / assai men fia ch’ Italia co’ suoi figli / si desti al suon del tuo chiaro sermone, / tanto che per Iesú la lancia pigli; / che s’al ver mira questa anticha madre, / in nulla sua tentione / fur mai cagion’ sí belle o sí leggiadre” (“Therefore it is time to withdraw our neck from the ancient yoke and to rend the veil that has been wrapped over our eyes; let your noble mind, which you hold from Heaven by grace of the immortal Apollo, and your eloquence now show their power both through speech and through praiseworthy writings. For if reading of Orpheus and Amphion you are not amazed, the marvel will be even less when Italy with her sons awakes at the sound of your clear voice, so that she takes up her lance for Jesus: if this ancient mother looks at the truth, in none of her quarrels were there ever reasons so lovely and so gay”). English translation follows: Petrarch, *Petrarch’s Lyric Poems: The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*, p. 78. In addition to sounding a clarion call for a new Crusade, Petrarch also explicitly encourages the unidentified addressee to join his skill with the pen to the might of his sword in order to best achieve his goal of forging a united Christian front against the religious ‘other’ in the Orient. For a discussion of the key Petrarchan theme of joining pen with sword and action with contemplation in *Rvf* 28, see Berlan, *Parma liberata dal giogo di Mastino della Scala addì 21 maggio 1341*, p. 9: “[...] nell’*O aspectata in ciel* scorgi proclamata la necessaria consociazione delle forze del mondo cattolico, del prete col laico, della penna colla spada, per la tutela dei grandi interessi dell’umanità e della religione (anno 1333).” See also Bernardo, *Scipio and the Birth of Humanism’s Dream*: “In the highly significant recurrences of Scipio everywhere in Petrarch’s works, and from the insights that such a perusal would afford into Petrarch’s poetics, a reader of the *Africa* would readily see that in the poem’s lofty glorification of Scipio Petrarch had tried to present a message that could be called the birth of humanism’s dream: the world of letters inextricably merged with the world of *deeds* and the world of the *spirit*.” Emphasis added.

Macrobius puts it: “a love of justice must be instilled in men’s minds, without which it is impossible to maintain not only a state, but human fellowship and family life as well.”²⁷ The teacher is the one who instills a love of justice. Petrarch’s variation on the same sentiment places the emphasis less on the love of justice and more on the values of human fellowship.

The True-Hearted Friend

Toward the end of the initial dream sequence (*Africa*, I-II), Petrarch imitates another Ciceronian passage that reiterates the same lesson regarding the obligations required of the powerful if they want to live in such a way that their souls will follow the road back up to this eternally happy, privileged perch in heaven.²⁸ The operative passage in the *Somnium Scipionis* reads as follows:

“Sed sic, Scipio, ut avus hic tuus, ut ego, qui te genui, *iustitiam cole et pietatem*, quae cum magna in *parentibus* et *propinquis* tum in *patria* maxima est; *ea vita via est in caelum* et in hunc coetum eorum, qui iam vixerunt et corpore laxati illum incolunt locum,

²⁷ Macrobius, *Commento al ‘Somnium Scipionis,’* 1.1.3, p. 34 (Stahl, pp. 81): “infundendum animis iustitiae amorem, sine qua non solum res publica sed nec exiguus hominum coetus, ne domus quidem parva constabit.”

²⁸ For other instances of this same Ciceronian imagery, though formulated in different words, which appears elsewhere in Petrarch’s letters, see *Fam.* IV, 12, 16 (Bernardo, pp. 205-6): “If justice, if faith, if devotion, if charity clear the path that leads above; if the mind set free from earthly fetters is borne upward in freer flight; *if heaven is the ultimate and eternal abode of good and well born spirits, we can be sure that your brother has ascended there.* And unless some contamination of our mortality should be impeding him, which I certainly do not believe, he is on his way and now hastens freely and cheerfully to his fatherland”; *Fam.* XV, 14 (Bernardo, p. 288): “I praise him as *a successful sailor* of the world who has *cast his anchor in the heavenly port*”; *Fam.* XXIII, 5, 4 (Bernardo, p. 270): “Let us imagine a more generous fortune who is friendly until death, who lets her revolving wheel come to a halt as a result of some special favor: nevertheless, even then, death, which cannot be touched by such liberality, forces empires to be abandoned, wealth to be laid aside, and *us to return naked whence we came naked.* But neither fortune nor death can hold sway over your spirit, which will accompany you to the end and beyond, *raising you on the wings of virtue to heaven, whence it came*”; *Sen.* III, 1 (Bernardo, p. 78): “*But the spiritual part of both of them has gone to heaven. [...] Such souls cannot go elsewhere, for the ruler of heaven delights in lofty and gentle spirits.*” Emphasis added.

quem vides.’ Erat autem is splendidissimo candore inter flammas circus elucens. ‘Quem vos, ut a Graiis accepistis, orbem lacteum nuncupatis.’ (*De re publica*, VI, 16)

“But, Scipio, imitate your grandfather here; imitate me, your father; love justice and duty, which are indeed strictly due to *parents* and *kinsmen*, but most of all to the *fatherland*. *Such a life is the road to the skies*, to that gathering of those who have completed their earthly lives and been relieved of the body, and who live in yonder place which you now see’ (it was the circle of light which blazed most brightly among the other fires), ‘and which you on earth, borrowing a Greek term, call the Milky Circle.’”

Cicero puts forth the importance of cultivating justice and duty (*iustitiam cole et pietatem*), and he emphasizes then the three parties toward whom justice and piety, or duty, are to be demonstrated, namely, the triad of family (*parentibus*), “kinsmen,” also understood as neighbors, namely those who are near in blood or in space (*propinquis*), and fatherland (*patria*).²⁹ He places a specific emphasis on the last of these three: *in patria maxima est*. “Love justice and duty, which are due to parents and kinsmen, but *most of all to the fatherland*.” The fatherland takes pride of place, not only in terms of the hierarchy but also syntactically as it comes last in the clause. In Cicero’s value system, self-abnegation on behalf of the fatherland is the path to heaven.

Petrarch makes verbatim use of this passage in a letter (*Sen. XIV, 1*) written in the last year of his life. In much the same way that he dangled the promise of salvation before the eyes of his Crusading addressee in the political canzone “Aspectata in ciel” (*Rvf 28*), written in 1333 when he was a much younger man, so he encourages Francesco da Carrara to embrace these very same Ciceronian values in order to achieve eternal blessedness. Those values include practicing those skills by means of which love and good will can be gained from one’s peers, subjects and fellow statesmen.

They [these skills] are not only a ladder to glory, but to heaven, wherefore that good father, in speaking to the best of sons, said, “*Cherish justice and loyalty, which is*

²⁹ For a similar sort of political theology of the afterlife, see also Virgil, *Aeneid* VI.

important with regard to parents and relatives, but most of all to your fatherland; and that life is the road to heaven.” What lover of heaven would not love the road that leads to heaven? (*Sen. XIV, 1; Bernardo, p. 529*)³⁰

In this passage from the *speculum principis* Petrarch addressed to his final patron in the form of a letter, the aging humanist yet again draws his lesson from Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*, which he quotes outright, maintaining even the original order of the hierarchy.

Petrarch’s imitation of this passage in the *Africa* remains relatively faithful to the spirit of the source material, but he adds a reconfiguring touch of his own to the words in which he re-expresses it:

‘[...] Insuper id moneo, memorique hoc imprime menti:
Post studium recti patrieque parentis amorem
Proxima de caris tibi cura supersit amicis.’ (*Africa* II, 510-2)

“[...] One further thing I urge
upon you—and heed well my counsel here:
after the love of justice and that due
the fatherland, let your most tender care
be for your cherished friends.” (Bergin, 654-8)

All the same elements are present in Petrarch’s rendition of the passage, a love of justice owed to the fatherland – which comes first this time – and family, with friends mentioned last.³¹ Petrarch runs a slight variation on this trio of values: he emphasizes friends in a way that is only minimally treated or even mentioned in Cicero, both in this instance and in the *Somnium* more generally. In the original version of the passage in question, Cicero lumps friends in with the category covered by the Latin word *propinquis*, which could be translated either as kinsmen or neighbors, namely those with whom we co-exist in spatial proximity as well as those closest to

³⁰ The quote within this quotation is from Cicero, *Republic*, 6.16.

³¹ The English translation here rather loosely captures the sense of sense of the original. A glance at the Latin, however, reveals the presence of both *patria* and *parens* in its formulation, the latter of the two is not rendered in the English.

us. Petrarch, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of friendship as part of the process of salvation for virtuous leaders. *Amicitia* lingers this time as the most poignant element of the sacred triad both by making explicit mention of friends, or *amici*, as a category and by placing them syntactically at the end of his articulation of the lesson.

Petrarch's formulation of this very same hierarchy of obligations in these specific terms echoes a similar sentiment in Cicero's *De officiis*: "We are not born for ourselves alone, to use Plato's splendid words, but our country claims for itself one part of our birth, and our friends another" (*De Off.* I, 7, 22).³² Petrarch's particular fondness for the lesson contained in this passage from Cicero's *De officiis* is evident in the fact that he reintroduces a version of it to his imitation of a passage from a completely different text. Petrarch also sought to propagate its message in other forms as well, since he often quotes this very same sentiment in several of his letters.³³

³² For the complete quote, see Cicero, *De Off.* I, 7, 22: "Sed quoniam, ut praeclare scriptum est a Platone, non nobis solum nati sumus ortusque nostri *partem patria vindicat, partem amici*, atque, ut placet Stoicis, quae in terris gignantur, ad usum hominum omnia creari, homines autem hominum causa esse generatos, ut ipsi inter se aliis alii prodesse possent, in hoc naturam *debemus duces sequi, communes utilitates in medium adferre, mutatione officiorum, dando accipiendo, tum artibus, tum opera, tum facultatibus devincire hominum inter homines societatem*" ("We are not born for ourselves alone, to use Plato's splendid words, but *our country claims for itself one part of our birth, and our friends another*. Moreover, as the Stoics believe, everything produced on the earth is created for the use of mankind, and men are born for the sake of men, so that they may be able to assist one another. Consequently, we ought in this to follow nature as our leader, *to contribute to the common stock the things that benefit everyone together, and, by the exchange of dutiful services, by giving and receiving expertise and effort and means, to bind fast the fellowship of men with each other*"). Emphasis added. Petrarch quoted this passage in various forms throughout his career.

³³ For the recurrence of this quote from *De Officiis* in Petrarch's letters, see *Fam.* VIII, 10, n. 6: "Alas, wretched friend unaware of your destiny and safer anywhere except in your homeland, where do you hasten, where are you rushing so pitiably? Those verses befit you which say, 'your piety deceives heedless you,' *your piety about which Cicero says, 'as great as it may be toward your acquaintances and neighbors, it will be even greater for your homeland.*' It was that piety which without doubt drew you on, being as attached as you are to your native soil"; *Fam.* XII, 2, 15 (Bernardo, p. 135): "After God and after

But what exactly do Cicero and Petrarch mean by friends (*amici*) and friendship (*amicitia*) in this instance and other references in passages like this one? Are they literally referring to an individual's intimate acquaintances? Or are we meant to think of friendship as a relationship of patronage between poet and patron, after the manner of Horace's use of the term in his *Odes*? Is Cicero conjuring a form of *amicitia* as political weapon in the system of patronage and clientism of Republican Rome?³⁴ Does Petrarch have in mind the model of "friendship" that he encouraged Francesco da Carrara to practice, namely, a sort of altruistic generosity demonstrated on behalf of a lord toward all of his or her subjects?³⁵

With its vast semantic field of possible meanings and applications, *amicitia* comes up again and again throughout Petrarch's *Africa* and is used in a variety of different ways, as we will soon see. The analysis that follows will take a closer look at the variety of ways in which

virtue let him hold nothing dearer than friendships"; here it appears with a Christian gloss: *Fam.* XVII, 3, 7 (Bernardo, p. 11): "We should listen to Cicero's advice that all the while '*we cultivate justice and practice a piety that is good when directed toward our parents and neighbors, but finest when directed toward our homeland since this is a way of life that leads to heaven.*' What does he mean by these words if not, as our own writers state, that *we are wayfarers who must climb to our native land in heaven on the wings of good works and with the steps of good thoughts*?"; *Fam.* XXII, 1, 8 (Bernardo, p. 209): "[...] *your family, your homeland, and your friends demand something else of you; [...]* since you were born for your country, for your relatives, and for your friends in Plato's esteemed opinion." Emphasis added.

³⁴ We know from historical research today that *amicitia* in the political and social arena of the historical Scipio Africanus' Rome tended to refer first and foremost – in the civic sphere – to the kinds of personal political alliances individuals of different classes and family backgrounds would form and maintain. Friendship was the glue that held the civic – though not always civil – fabric of the city together. See Scullard, *Scipio Africanus: Soldier and Politician*, p. 164: "In view of the strong Roman feeling for family ties and *patria potestas*, the rival groups which developed within the nobility would tend to rest upon the family or *gens* or groups of families allied by kinship, by marriage or by political convenience. Such groups did not develop into anything like modern political parties because their leaders did not normally proclaim political programmes when seeking election but rather appealed for personal backing and formed personal political alliances (*amicitiae*)."

³⁵ This is the kind of *amicitia* Petrarch will go on to propose some 30 years later in *Seniles* XIV, 1, the *speculum principis* addressed to Francesco da Carrara in 1373.

Petrarch deploys the terminology and semantic field of reference of friendship to better understand the range within which he and perhaps also some of his contemporaries might put the term to use.

In this particular occurrence of the term in book two of the *Africa*, Petrarch clarifies what he means by friendship:

‘Pronus amicitias amplectere, quas tibi Virtus
Conciliat, partasque cole; hoc da, nate, roganti.
Rebus in humanis nil dulcius experiere
Alterno conuictu et fido pectore amici. [...]’ (*Africa* II, 513-6)³⁶

‘Aye, treasure well
the friendships that true virtue offers you.
There is naught sweeter in the lot of many
than intimate exchange of trust and faith
with a true-hearted friend. [...]’ (Bergin, 658-62)

Friendship is here defined as intimate familiarity between two people, the familiar exchange of trust and faith with a true-hearted acquaintance. The intimacy of this form of friendship is depicted with very specific language drawn from the semantic register of human affections and physical intimacy: *pronus amicitias amplectere*, that is, “be inclined to embrace friendships,” which Bergin renders in his translation: “treasure well / [...] friendships.” Choosing the verb “to embrace,” Petrarch deploys the language of love in his discussion of the importance of friendship for the head of state’s eternal salvation. Petrarch conflates the affective with the social and the political.

In that same passage Petrarch goes on to specify the name of this idealized, “true-hearted friend,” and that name is Laelius:

³⁶ Though it is only apparent in the Latin, the choice of the verb “*colere*” in this passage is also significant with its cultivation connotations inasmuch as a similar agricultural semantic field is invoked in Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*. The virtuous statesman reaps what he sows. The verb for reaping in VI, 13, quoted above, is “*fruor*.”

‘Est equidem e multis tibi nunc certissimus unus
Lelius. Archani sit conscius atque minister
Ille tui, rogat affectus pectusque profundum
Cernat inaccessum reliquis.’ (*Africa*, II, 517-20)

‘And happily
one such stands with you now, the firmest, he,
of all your company. May Laelius share
and counsel your most secret thoughts and guide
your habit and be free to scrutinize
your deepest mind, from other men concealed.’ (Bergin, 662-67)

Though it is not the same Laelius made famous in Cicero’s *De amicitia*, for that Laelius was the “true-hearted friend” of Scipio the Younger, the kind of friendship to which he is referring comes across as interpersonal intimacy between individuals who share a relationship of trust, exchange secrets, advise, guide and scrutinize one another.³⁷

The mere mention of the names of such illustrious friends as Scipio and Laelius serves as a reminder that it is nevertheless not a stretch to add the dimension of friendship to the Ciceronian discourse of the political, in light of the centrality of their friendship to Cicero’s famous dialog on the subject.³⁸ When it comes to the salvation of illustrious political souls,

³⁷ The value of friends and the importance of cultivating friendships return throughout Petrarch’s writing, especially when it comes to his counsel to the lords of Italy whom he will eventually advise in subsequent phases of his career. Petrarch’s deviation from his Ciceronian source material is consistent with concerns found in the rest of his work, thought and worldview. *Amicitia* is a prominent theme in both *Fam.* XII, 2 and *Sen.* XIV, 1, the epistles written in the genre of the *speculum principis*. It also appears as a thematic line of argument in his various campaigns for peace and reconciliation between the warring lords of the peninsula, one instance of which is under analysis in a later chapter of the present study.

³⁸ In the variant manuscript de Nolhac presents for Petrarch’s *Vita Scipionis* in the *De viris illustribus* there is a passage in which he draws attention to the parallels between the two famous pairs of friends with the same name, namely those memorialized in Cicero’s *De amicitia*. See de Nolhac, *Notices des manuscrits*, p. 85: “In amicos vero qualis fuerit, nota Scipionis et Lelii testatur amicitia, quamvis famosa illa et inter pauca amicorum paria numerata, de qua Cicero librum scripsit, non inter hunc Scipionis et Lelii cuius crebra in superioribus est mentio, sed inter huius et illius, quantum augurio assequor, nepotes, horum cognomines et fama similes ac virtute, biguerit. Non minus tamen viguit inter istos, et est duplicis amicite nomen unum et felicia in amicitiiis nomina Lelius et Scipio. Unde et de hoc Scipione in Hispania

however, the issue of interpersonal intimacy at this point in Petrarch's poem is only part of the equation, particularly because his source material only treats *amicitia* peripherally.³⁹

res agente scribitur, quod sine Lelio nichil maioris rei agere vel aggredi volebat. Ita quidem se res habet, quamvis e duobus his paribus illustrium amicorum Cicero et fama novissimum celebrarit, et hec quoque pro discussione parvi huius ambigui dixerim; amicitiam enim Scipionis et Lelii norunt omnes, quorum vero non ita." The two corresponding pairs are blended into one – an identical match. The same meditation will later enter into the *Africa*, II, 520-30 (Bergin, 668-81): "[...] Post tempore multo / Lelius alter erit domui claroque nepoti / Carus et eximio *pariter coniunctus amore*. / Hinc olim multi errabunt, parque omnibus unum / Lelius et Scipio celebrabitur inter amicos / Quos tulit extrema veniens ab origine mundus, / Cum duo sint paria, nec, sis licet altus [...]" ("Another Laelius after many years / Shall by another scion of our house / Be cherished and deserve a special love. / And men may err and blend the twain in one / And speak of Laelius and Scipio / As but one case of friendship and unique / Since time's beginning, though between the pairs / Like-named a lengthy space will intervene"). Also here in his portrait of Scipio, see de Nolhac, p. 85: "Patrie sue natum se dicebat, laudes populi Romani cupide predicare suasque in illius gloriam reflectere quosque sibi suis meritis amicos fecerat in illius amicitiam hortari atque traducere solitus."

³⁹ Toward the end of the *Somnium*, Cicero gives one final reminder of what is most prized by the ruler of the heavens who so treasures the cities and assemblies of humankind: those who dedicate their lives, body and soul, to the defense of the fatherland will earn for themselves an assured place in heaven. See Cicero, *De re publica*, VI, 26: "Hanc tu exerce optimis in rebus! Sunt autem optima curae de salute patriae; quibus agitatus et exercitatus animus velocius in hanc sedem et domum suam pervolabit; idque ocius faciet, si iam tum, cum erit inclusus in corpore, eminebit foras et ea, quae extra erunt, contemplant quam maxime se a corpore abstrahet" ("Use it therefore, in the best pursuits! And *the best tasks are those undertaken in defense of your native land; a spirit occupied and trained in such activities will have a swifter flight to this, its proper home and permanent abode*. And this flight will be still more rapid if, while still confined in the body, it looks abroad, and, by contemplating what lies outside itself, detaches itself as much as may be from its body"). All the souls in this part of heaven lived and died for the commonwealth. On this point, see also *Aeneid* VI, 664, which appears in Macrobius quoted above. Petrarch remains faithful to his Ciceronian original on this point, see *Africa*, I, 590-4 (Bergin, 805-11): "[...] Hoc nosse satis sit, / Romanas has esse animas, quibus una tuende / Cura fuit patrie. Proprio pars magna cruore / Diffuso has petiit sedes, meritoque caduce / Pretulit eternam per acerba piacula vitam" ("[...] Let it / Suffice that you know this: all of these souls / Are Romans whose one thought was the defense / Of their dear country. Many by their blood / Poured freely forth have won to this abode / And *through the bitter sacrifice of death / Have gained the prize of everlasting life*").

***Amicitia* as Political Alliance**

Other forms of friendship, alliance and community will follow in the *Africa*, especially as we descend from the heavens and return to the realm of history. The values and concerns of Livy's narration of events will pick up where Cicero's political-theological allegory leaves off. In the beginning of book III, after sharing Scipio's dream vision, we travel to northern Africa with Laelius, who has been sent to court the "friendship" of Syphax, the king of the Masaesulians. Thus, another model of friendship is introduced in Petrarch's *Africa*, a purely political form of *amicitia*, to be understood as a technical term meaning "alliance" between individual political players, representatives of sovereign states.

The language of Laelius' diplomatic speech gives us some indication as to the mechanics of this sort of *amicitia*. After beginning his speech with a *captatio benevolentiae* designed to flatter mildly King Syphax, Laelius speaks of the illustrious lord who sent him, Scipio, whom he praises for being "so great a friend."⁴⁰ He then attempts to move the barbarian king with courteous pleas to accept the proposal of *amicitia* with Rome.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See *Africa*, III, 270-7 (Bergin, 337-48): "Placido mox Lelius incipit ore: / "*Optime rex, tanto quem Sors dignatur amico, / Quantum non alium rediens Sol litore ab Indo, / Dum petit Hesperium despectans cuncta cubile, / Aut uidet aut uidit, mens aut, nisi ceca, uidebit, / Suscipe; ne uanas abeant mea uerba per auras. / Maximus in magno Scipio notissimus Orbe / Te saluere iubet*" ("Laelius quietly began: / "Great King, whom *Fortune has deemed worthy of / So great a friend, the like of whom the sun / Through his discerning path from Indian shores / To his Hesperian resting place sees not, / Has never seen before, nor – if my mind / Play me not false – shall ever see again, / Attend me and let not my utterance fall / On empty air. Most puissant Scipio, / Renowned in every corner of the earth, / Greets you*").

⁴¹ See *Africa*, III, 277-84 (Bergin, 353-60): "Nunc ille tuam, rex, / Poscit *amicitiam*. Vidisti qualia Penis / Pectora sint, quam fluxa fides. Michi crede, secundos / Bellorum euentus si, quos Deus ille deorum / Auertat, Fortuna daret, tibi pessima regni est / Conditio et multis obnoxia uita periculis. / Et modo terror eos, non spiritus ullus amoris / Continet" ("He now, O King, requests your *friendship*. You / Have seen the Punic nature, marked how frail / Its faith. If Fortune should – believe me – grant / Them victory in war (and may the God / Of gods forbid it) then your kingdom's state / Would be unhappy and your life beset / By many perils. Now they are restrained / Not by the bonds of *friendship* but by fear").

“At nulla Romanis certior *ars* est
 Quam seruare fidem; nil illa est carius: ample
 Diuitie nobis dulces numerantur amici.
Testis adest paruo distans Hispania tractu,
Testis et Ausonia est; at tu nunc, Africa, nostram
 Experiare fidem et Populi promissa togati.
 Ipse tibi nostra nichil oportunius usquam
 Cernis *amicitia*.” (*Africa*, III, 284-96)

“But Romans know no debt that’s more compelling
 Nor *duty* dearer than to keep their word.
Allies (*amici*) we value, counting them our wealth,
 As Italy and near-by Spain attest.
 Now Africa will learn how firm the oath
 Sworn by the men who wear the toga stands.
 Nor is there aught that shall avail you more
 Than our alliance (*amicitia*).” (Bergin, 361-8)

For the Romans, according to Laelius, maintaining their relationships, keeping their word, backing up their promises is an “art” – “ars” in the Latin is loosely translated as “duty” in the English here. While some form of action is obviously necessary in order to back up their word, the initial depiction of this kind of alliance seems to suggest that it amounts to little more than an agreement based purely in pronouncements and promises, a construct of language. Notice, however, the anaphora in the original Latin: “*testis... / testis*.” In this case Laelius draws on legal language for an explicitly extra-legal alliance. It is as simple as taking an oath – an oath that is made more valuable and that inspires more faith according to the quality of the reputation backing it up. This much we come to understand in terms of how these alliances are formed.

After laying out a rough sketch of *how* such an *amicitia* is technically forged (words, oaths, reputations, promises), Laelius then proceeds to delineate *what* it might realistically consist of. He gives further evidence as to the principles that underlie this concept of alliance, which can be summed up as a general policy of “live and let live”:

Procul absumus, unde timeri
 Tedia rara queant. Si poscimus, ampla paratis

Classibus exiguo transmittimus equora uento:
 Nostra, ubi tempus erit, medio radiantia campo
 Improvisa tuis occurrent hostibus arma. (*Africa*, III, 296-300)

As we dwell afar,
 Not neighbors, we'll not chafe each other. Yet
 If summoned we shall cross, however slight
 The favoring winds, with ready fleet to aid
 If need should press you, and your foes will quake,
 Surprised to see our armor in your camp. (Bergin, 368-73)

This so-called *amicitia* is different from the intimate interpersonal relationship of pure trust, exchange, council and confidence described above, let alone the classically-informed trope of friendship as the sharing of one soul in two bodies. In this case, the great distance between the parties involved is perceived as a positive attribute of what their pact promises to provide. Inasmuch as they are not even neighbors, there is far less chance that they will interfere with each other or step on one another's toes. There is very little sharing of souls here. And yet, the promise of mutual assistance always stands in time of need. The language of friendship as political alliance is present in Livy, the original source for this episode and elsewhere. Rather than fashion a distinct word for this kind of alliance based on a mutual respect for the independent sovereignty of external parties, classical Latin usage consistently calls it *amicitia*. To this point, as it is in Livy, so it is in Petrarch.⁴²

From the content of Laelius' diplomatic intervention so far, it would seem that the pageantry of political alliance formation is based on the exchange of verbal agreements, on mere words. However, Scipio also sent Laelius with auxiliary reinforcements. Preconceived notions of this possible foreign ally have led the Romans to believe that mere words are not sufficient. For

⁴² *Amicitia* as political alliance recurs throughout the Roman historian's works. See Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXVIII, 17: "[...] *amicitiam* se Romanorum accipere adnuit [...]" quoted at length below for the first of many examples. Other instances include Livy *Ab urbe condita*, XXIX, 23 and XXX, 13.

the “barbarians” of northern Africa, it is thought “loyalty depends upon success” (“*ex fortuna pendet fides*”).⁴³ Short of offering the kinds of results or “success” that these allies require for the recognition of their pact, Scipio has sent Laelius with a stockpile of gifts, in an act of good faith – tokens of some value that are meant to make the symbolic somehow physical. As we will see in Petrarch’s artful description of the inventory of gifts, however, the physical objects themselves also carry a symbolic valence that is central to the Roman negotiator’s persuasive strategies.

When it comes time to bestow the gifts on their new ally and “friend,” Petrarch expands on his source material. The poet puts a speech into the mouth of the Roman ambassador – not present in Livy’s original – that qualifies the gesture and gives us a glimpse into the semantics of verbal alliance as well as the semiotics of the material objects that represent that alliance.⁴⁴ The

⁴³ See Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXVIII, 17: “itaque praemolendas sibi ratus iam res conciliandosque regum gentiumque animos, Syphacem primum regem statuit temptare. Masaesuliorum is rex erat. Masaesulii, gens adfinis Mauris, in regionem Hispaniae maxime qua sita Noua Carthago est spectant. foedus ea tempestate regi cum Carthaginensibus erat, quod haud grauius ei sanctiusque quam uolgo barbaris, quibus *ex fortuna pendet fides*, ratus fore, oratorem ad eum C. Laelium *cum donis* mittit” (“Accordingly, thinking that he must already make preparations and gain the goodwill of kings and tribes, he decided first to sound King Syphax. He was the king of the Masaesulians. A tribe bordering on the Mauri, the Masaesulians directly face the region of Spain in which lies New Carthage. At that time the king had a treaty with the Carthaginian; and Scipio, thinking it would have for Syphax no more weight and sanctity than is usual for barbarians, with whom *loyalty depends upon success*, sent Gaius Laelius as envoy to him with the *gifts*”). Emphasis added.

⁴⁴ See *Africa*, III, 311-32 (Bergin, 387-412): “Munera quin etiam ne despice fortis amici. / Is tibi namque Apulis rapidum sub finibus ortum / Mittit equum bellis habilem, qui cursibus Austros / Equat et infesto uenientia tela Tonante. / Iungit equo phaleras niueoque monilia collo / Aurea Samnitico quondam prerepta tyranno. / Addit et arma uiro *rigidis fortissima* uenis / Quas aperit uario prefertilis Ilua metallo. / Aspice nigram galeam gladiumque nitentem; / Aspice quam *tutum tegit* ingens lamina pectus, / Vt faciles ocree, uariis ut purpura bullis / Intertexta micat ferrumque obnubit opacum, / Ferreus ut fuluo stimulus splendescat in auro, / Vt procul hasta ferit, *clipeusque ut uulnera curuo* / *Excutit obiectu calibum*. Romana deinceps / In bellum fer signa, precor. *Felicibus ista* / *Sumpseris auspiciis magni Scipionis amicus*. / Hoc petit ille uolens, hoc te tua Roma precatur. / *Iunge fidem fedusque feri*. Sit faustus utrisque / Iste dies gemina semper celebrandus in ora / Europe Libieque bonus.’ Sic ille locutus / Conticuit, uocemque simul uultumque remisit” (“Scorn not the gifts sent by your mighty friend: / From the Apulian plains a charger swift / And skilled in battle, rivalling in its course / The blasts of Auster and

gifts sent to Syphax on behalf of Rome are all of the military sort, including horses, arms and armor, but it is worth noticing the way Laelius describes them to their recipient. The language he deploys emphasizes durability and strength, defense and protection. The horse is presented with a breastplate. The arms and armor for the rider are of the most steadfast and trustworthy materials: durable, solid, sturdy and supple (*rigidis, fortissima, tutum tegit, ingens*) are the adjectives and expressions used to describe them. Then there is the shield with its “protective curve” that “deflects” an attack. The whole barrage of gifts is representative of the safety and security an alliance with Rome would provide.

As it turns out, however, neither the gifts nor the flowery platitudes of Laelius’ eloquent oration, so full of promises, will suffice. Syphax’s response to the proposal of a *foedus* with Rome is rife with the language of alliance and the formalities of pact formation.⁴⁵ Syphax is

the Thunderer’s bolt; / Further, he adds a breastplate for the steed, / And a gold collar for his snowy neck, / Reft from a Samnite tyrant, and thereto / Arms for the rider, *durable* and hewn / From solid ore of sundry metals mined / In fertile Elba. Mark the dusky helm, / The flashing sword; see how the *sturdy* plate / *Protects* the breast, how *supple* are the greaves, / How glows the purple of the belt, concealing / The sword’s dark metal, how the pointed goad / Glitters with tawny gold. The javelin / See here, apt for far-reaching thrust. Observe / How *with protective curve* the studded shield / *Deflects the stroke*. Henceforth, in frays to come, / Put on these Roman tokens. *Arm yourself / In happy auspices as Scipio’s friend*. / This he and friendly Rome would ask of you: / Give us your faith and pledge, so may this day / Forever be propitious for us both / And honored long in song on either shore / Of Africa or Europe.’ Having spoken / He let his voice fall and cast down his gaze”).

⁴⁵ See *Africa*, III, 333-48 (Bergin, 413-32): “Tum rex blandus ait: “Vestrum, Romane, libenter / Propositum *amplector*, nec *amici munera tanti* / Despicio uestramque *fidem*. *Sed iungere fedus* / In partemque noui subito transire pericli / Sponte mea uereor, nisi primum cernere coram / Magnanimum facis ipse ducem. *Michi summa uoluntas* / *Victricem tetigisse manum*, que *federis obses* / *Fida sit et pignus uenture in secula pacis*. / Scimus quanta quidem uirtus, quam clara per Orbem / Fama uiri: nullus Romano illustrior usquam / Viuit in imperio, nullusque potentior alter / Flectere uoce animos et pectora fronte mouere. / Tangimur et meritis et nomine tangimur ipso; / Optamusque ducis congressum: *dextera dextre* / *Hereat atque oculis oculi, permixtaque uerbis* / *Verba sonent faciatque fidem* presentia fame” (“The king gave gracious answer: “I *embrace* / Your offer gladly, Roman, nor would I / *Disdain the gifts of such a friend* nor yet / The *alliance* you propose. *Yet* I do fear / To *make a pact* and choose a side, incurring / New and alarming risks, unless I first / May meet your great-souled leader face-to-face. / My

ready to accept Laelius' proposal, but first he insists on meeting in person with the great Roman leader in order to bind their pact with eye contact and a shaking of the right hand.⁴⁶ The gifts are not enough.⁴⁷ There is the curious need for physical presence for the shared convention of the handshake to be enacted: a politics of trust reinforced by physical proximity and human contact.⁴⁸ After all, the turbulent situation between Rome and each of the individual tribes in

highest wish it is to grasp the hand / Of the great conqueror and in loyal pledge / To seal the bond, a gage of peace for years / To come. His merit well we know, how famed / Throughout the world his honor stands, for none / Among all Romans held such high renown / Nor could by noble discourse so well bend / Reluctant spirits, charming every heart / By his aspect alone. His mighty name / And glory move us and *it is our hope / To meet him, so may hand clasp hand and eye / Meet eye and word respond to word; thus may / His presence verify his wide renown*").

⁴⁶ The right-handed handshake employed to seal an agreement is a custom that is also present in Petrarch's source material. See Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXVIII, 17: "quibus barbarus laetus et quia res tum prosperae ubique Romanis, Poenis in Italia aduersae in Hispania nullae iam erant, *amicitiam* se Romanorum accipere adnuit: *firmandae eius fidem nec dare nec accipere nisi cum ipso coram duce Romano*" ("Delighted with these [the gifts], and since at that time the situation was everywhere favourable to the Romans but for the Carthaginians unfavourable in Italy and now quite hopeless in Spain, the barbarian indicated that he would accept the *friendship* of the Romans; that for its confirmation *he would neither give nor receive a pledge except in the actual presence of the Roman commander*"). Upon sealing their agreement that Scipio will come in person and before beginning the feast, Laelius and Syphax also shake hands: see *Africa*, III, 364-66 (Bergin, 453-5): "Dixit, et exurgens solio dextramque benigne / Apprendens, stratis sublimem ex more locauit / Purpureis" ("So speaking, he uprose and grasped the hand / Of Laelius and sat him in a place, / Outspread with purple, high above the rest").

⁴⁷ *Africa*, III, 357-363 (Bergin, 447-52): "Ille igitur quem degeneris non lenta morantur / Frena metus, quem ferre mali patientior etas / Aspera queque monet, si nostri est cura – per undas / Tuta uia est – sociam, si quid michi credis, ad aulam / Colloquium petat et sermone fruatur amico. / Interea tamen ad nostras accedere mensas / Vmbra monet crescens et pars extrema diei" ("Let him then, if his love for us be true / And you have *faith* in me, seek out the hall / Where dwells a *friend* prepared for words of peace. / The sea will offer him a path secure. / But now the dying day and thickening shade / Bid us to hasten to the waiting feast").

⁴⁸ The fact that Scipio's reputation precedes him, that his fame incites so much curiosity and that his personal charm is the source of his great renown only makes a face-to-face encounter with the great man that much more precious. See *Africa*, III, 349-52 (Bergin, 433-36): "Nam neque usque adeo sunt corda ferocia nobis, / Pectore sub nostro nec mens tam barbara uiuit, / Vt non pulcra oculos moueant, *spectataque Virtus / Illiciat capiatque animos*" ("Not so untutored are our minds, our hearts / Beat not so

northern Africa is far from an ideal seedbed of reliable alliances. Whether spoken agreements or pacts made over a handshake in person, the extra-legal bond of mere *amicitia* is no match for the myriad external disturbances it might encounter from common greed, lust, envy or evil ambition. The hope is that the sheer charisma of Scipio will protect and reinforce the bonds that are respected and deliver punishment for those that are not.

Scipio's Cult of Friendship

In resuming work on the *Vita Scipionis* in Parma in 1341 Petrarch adds a moral portrait of his Roman hero. He praises Scipio's *pietas*, depicts his cult of friendship, his generous daring, his dedication to letters and to the poet Ennius, his modesty, clemency, chastity, eloquence, appearance, and love for leisure and solitude.⁴⁹ Petrarch's Scipio is the living embodiment of all of the ideals of Petrarch's humanistic project.⁵⁰ Much of this idealized portrait gets incorporated into the *Africa* in the form of a speech that Laelius gives in his capacity as ambassador to Syphax.

In his encomium of Scipio's virtues, Laelius praises the great Roman general for privileging true glory over riches and, more importantly, loyal friends over the praise of the mob.⁵¹ In fact, the outstanding virtue he has been known to demonstrate as a model friend even

barbarously within our breasts / That with blind eye we look on beauty, *nor* / Does Virtue, once perceived, leave us unmoved").

⁴⁹ For Petrarch's appreciation of Scipio, see Bernardo, *Petrarch, Scipio and the Africa*, p. 110.

⁵⁰ The parallels between Petrarch and Scipio are many. For Petrarch the poet and the prince (or in this case, general) form a natural pair. In Cicero's *Pro Archia*, Petrarch found an articulation of the trope that plays a dominant role in his *Collatio laureationis* and elsewhere.

⁵¹ See *Africa*, IV, 87-90 (Bergin 120-24): "Spernit opes; populi uentosos spernit honores: / *Gloria uera placet. Dulces conquirunt amicos*: / He sibi diuitie sunt, quas solet ille perennes / Qua peperit seruare fide" ("Riches he scorns and all the empty praise / The fickle mob bestows; *he venerates* / *True glory and he*

extends to his efforts on the battlefield, since apparently Scipio was even famous for having made friends of those he conquered: “who with *friendly grace (placida amicitia)* can win to him / the foeman he has bested in the fray.” This quality of “friendly grace” captures a particularly vivid aspect of the charm and natural charisma that he was said to possess.⁵²

Extending beyond the bounds of interpersonal intimacy and true-hearted affection, *amicitia* additionally reveals itself to be a powerful political tool. It is such a powerful tool that it even earns Scipio a comparison to the immortal gods. His keen dexterity with winning his enemies over with friendship (*placida amicitia*) is likened to the brilliance of the sun, which probably says as much about his character as it does about his friendly disposition.⁵³ He apparently seems even more marvelous in person than his reputation on the battlefield suggests. Petrarch and Livy represent Scipio as possessing a natural charisma that heightens his inborn

seeks for loyal friends: / These are his treasures; these he ever holds / By the same faith that wins them”). Emphasis added.

⁵² See *Africa*, IV, 90-100 (Bergin, 124-37): “Modo fama per omnem / Voluitur Hesperiam, iuuenem uenisse supernis / Dīs similem, cui uis hominum non ulla resistat, / Quique etiam *placida* quoscumque subegerit armis / Vincat *amicitia*.... / Vincitur ut celo species telluris opace, / Florida sic omnes tellus premit Itala terras; / Vtque nitet celi pars purior una sereni, / Italia sic Roma potens prefulget in ipsa; / Solque uelut radiis fulgentia sidera uincit, / Scipio sic omnes superat” (“Now through Spain / run wide reports of this youth newly come / like an immortal from above, ‘gainst whom / no strength of any mortal may avail / and who with *friendly grace (placida amicitia)* can win to him / the foeman he has bested in the fray. / And as the radiance of the skies outshines / Earth’s darkness, even so the flowing soil / of Italy outstrips all other lands, / and as one sector of the heavens glows / more brightly than the rest, so mighty Rome / surpasses Italy itself, and as / the sun dims with its rays the lesser stars / so Scipio excels”).

⁵³ The trappings of his magnificent appearance/presence are also most effective in face-to-face interaction, not unlike the effectiveness of Sophonisba’s beauty in persuading Masinissa in a later episode, the analysis of which demands to be taken up on another occasion. As it turns out, these two episodes present parallel acts of seduction: one political, the other erotic, though of no less political import. In the fragment that remains from this passage in Polybius’s account of the meeting between the three men, this detail of Scipio’s abilities at persuasion is also mentioned, see Polybius, *Histories*, XIV, 4 ff.

talent for winning people over. Coupled with his reputation, the compelling presence of the great Roman general was the most powerful weapon in his arsenal.

Iunctis animis, corporibus separantur

Petrarch further extends the conceptual range of his use of *amicitia* in his prose portrait of Scipio Africanus composed for inclusion in the *De viris illustribus*. In a variant that is only attested to in an alternative manuscript fragment of the *Vita Scipionis*, we find a hybrid of the two distinct types of friendship that have been discussed so far.⁵⁴ The episode is Scipio's first encounter with Rome's ally, Masinissa of Numidia. Up until their first meeting the Roman general's dealings with Masinissa had been postponed because, like Syphax, the Numidian leader had insisted on meeting Scipio in person and sealing their pact with a handshake. Again, the importance of the handshake is striking.⁵⁵ However, what Masinissa in his insistence on a

⁵⁴ See De Nolhac, *Le De viris illustribus de Pétrarque*, p.81: "Les morceaux publiés ici ne comprennent pas toute la partie inédite de la biographie consacrée par Pétrarque au héros de son *Africa*, mais seulement des fragments de genre différent destinés à faire connaître l'intérêt de la rédaction nouvelle. Les uns serviront à comparer Tite-Live et son imitateur, et *montreront de quelle manière celui-ci savait tantôt abréger, tantôt développer et même compléter le texte du modèle; les autres ajouteront quelques pages à l'oeuvre philosophique d'un moraliste du XIVe siècle, disciple attardé de Cicéron et de Sénèque*. Dans le récit de l'entrevue de Masinissa et de Scipion, sujet traité sans doute dans un des épisodes perdus ou inachevés de son poème, *on verra percer les idées de Pétrarque sur l'amitié, grâce à une altération légère et inconsciente du récit antique*. Dans l'introduction à la bataille de Zama, *la profondeur de son sentiment romain se révélera en quelques phrases brèves*, où il a partagé, à travers les siècles, l'émotion de Scipion avant cette journée décisive. On remarquera surtout le portrait intellectuel et moral qu'il s'est plu à tracer, à loisir et avec toutes sortes de détails, du vainqueur d'Hannibal, d'après le témoignage des auteurs anciens; sous une apparence de compilation, ce morceau est un des plus personnels, et par conséquent un des plus intéressants pour nous, de l'oeuvre historique de Pétrarque." Emphasis added.

⁵⁵ For the passage in Livy, the so-called "first interview" between Scipio and Masinissa, that corresponds to the unpublished manuscript fragment analyzed here, see Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXVIII, 35: "Incohata res iam ante de Masinissa aliis atque aliis de causis dilata erat, quod Numida cum ipso utique congregi Scipione uolebat atque eius dextra fidem sancire" ("Dealings which had to do with Masinissa, begun even before this time, had been postponed on one pretext or another because the Numidian desired in any case to meet with Scipio in person and to ratify the agreement by clasping his [right] hand").

face-to-face encounter had underestimated was the forcefulness of the physical seduction that would ensue:

[...] ceperat iam ante Numidam ex fama rerum gestarum admiratio uiri, substitueratque animo speciem quoque corporis amplam ac magnificam; ceterum maior praesentis ueneratio cepit, et praeterquam quod suapte natura multa maiestas inerat, adornabat promissa caesaries habitusque corporis non cultus munditiis sed uiriliter uere ac militaris, et aetas erat in medio uirium robore, quod plenius nitidiusque ex morbo uelut renouatus flos iuuentae faciebat. (Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXVIII, 35)

The Numidian had already been filled with admiration for the man in consequence of his reported achievements, and had conjured up in his mind an ideal figure, tall and stately. But greater still was the reverence that possessed him for the man in his presence; and while Scipio had great natural dignity, long hair added charm, as did a general appearance not due to studied elegance, but truly masculine and soldierly; and his age was exactly at the height of physical strength, amplified and made more dazzling by the youthful bloom which appeared to have renewed after his illness.

The amount of attention to the aesthetics of Scipio's effortless seduction of Masinissa in Livy's description of the Roman general's physical appearance is striking inasmuch as it seems out of place in the context of Livy's historical narration. This level of detail fits right in with the traditional depiction of the many natural gifts the illustrious figure possessed. In light of the physicality of Scipio's charismatic seduction of Masinissa, this instance of *amicitia* as political alliance is implicitly juxtaposed, within the value system of Petrarch's *Africa*, to the similar depiction of the erotic seduction of Masinissa at the mercy of Sophonisba's more treacherous beauty.⁵⁶

In contrast to the disastrous seduction of Masinissa by Sophonisba in book V is the description in the following book of the effects of Scipio's numerous charms on Masinissa, which is found in both Livy and in the *Africa* passages analyzed above as well as in the

⁵⁶ Petrarch's dilations and additions to the description he lifted out of Livy parallel his treatment of the more diabolically seductive beauty of Sophonisba, the daughter of the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal, who also claims Masinissa as one of her victims in a seduction of the erotic sort (*Africa*, V). The fiasco ends in the marriage that only serves to bring great disgrace on Rome's Numidian ally.

corresponding episode in the *Vita Scipionis*.⁵⁷ As a result of Scipio's superlative charm and graceful virtue, the Numidian leader pledges his allegiance to the Roman cause with superlative ardor and hopes that their *amicitia* will prove stable.⁵⁸ Scipio does not have looks that kill. He has looks that inspire trust and faith – a powerful trait for a general to possess.

Though the episode in Livy had been triggered by Masinissa's need to meet with Scipio in person so as to shake his hand, the Roman historian refrains from narrating the details of the handshake itself. Petrarch, in contrast, dramatizes their final oath-taking process. He adds the

⁵⁷ For the version found in the alternative manuscript of Petrarch's *Vita Scipionis*, see de Nolhac: "Et quanquam rex ignoti viri, ex actibus quos partim audiendo partim experiendo didicerat, ipse sibi et vultus et totius corporis augustissimam ac serenissimam animoque simillimam finxisset imaginem, *longe tamen augustiorum atque sereniorem repperit quam mente conceperat*; et, *preter elegantissimam naturalem formam frontique insitam maiestatem plus quam regiam, exterior ipse habitus, non muliebri mollitie infectus*, quo libenter formosi atque enervati iuvenes uti solent, sed viro dignus ac milite, animique habitum pre se ferens, et coma humeris sparsa mulcebat detinebatque oculos, pars etatis virentissima, ut que nondum trigesimum attingisset annum, cuius florem, quod plerisque iuvenibus accidit, velut ex egritudine reformatum et robori multum addidisse diceres et decori."

⁵⁸ For Masinissa's conversion in Livy, see *Ab urbe condita*, XXVIII, 35: "Prope attonitus ipso congressu Numida [...] cupere se illi populoque Romano operam nauare ita ut nemo unus externus magis enixe adiuuerit rem Romanam. id se, etiamsi iam pridem uellet, minus praestare in Hispania terra aliena atque ignota potuisse; in qua autem genitus educatusque in spem paterni regni esset, facile praestaturum" ("Almost dazed by merely meeting him, the Numidian [...] was eager to give such services to Scipio and the Roman people that no individual foreigner would have aided the Roman state with more ardour. That aid, although he had long wished to give it, he had been unable to furnish in Spain, a foreign and unknown land. But in the land in which he had been born and brought up in the hope of inheriting his father's kingdom, he would easily furnish it"). For the version in Petrarch's prose biography, see de Nolhac: "Itaque illum intuens Masinissa, leto stupore perfusus, quoad primum loqui potuit, de remisso nepote gratias egit atque ex illo suum erga se propositum affectumque animi gratis verbis exposuit, dilationem vero difficultatibus excusavit; *ad amorem cultumque viri nulla re alia quam virtute et claritate nominis motum, se sperare amicitiam stabilem fore, que radicibus tam honestis innixa esset*; se quidem ad ipsius et populi Romani obsequia paratum animum habere, quem, etsi prius habuerit, non potuisse prius ostendere; neque ut potuerit multum in se peregrina atque externa in patria auxilii futurum, in Africa autem, ubi, etsi durior fortuna, regia sibi tamen esset origo, plus se momenti aliquid habiturum ad gerendas res; denique totis viribus enisurum ne cuiusquam alienigene erga eum ac Romanos conspectior fides esset, neque vero diffidere, si Scipionis auspiciis in Africam transeatur, cito perituram esse Carthaginem."

final image of their handshake and heightens its significance with an additional layer of transcendent imagery whereby the statesmen experience a joining of their souls though their bodies remain separate:

Hec dicentem prono animo dux Romanus amplectitur, et affatu quidem et indole ac virtute regia in vultu iuvenis eminente delectatus. *Fide mutua datis dextris amicitiam firmant; utinamque pari fide omnes amicitie iungerentur*, ut nec evo omnia consumente consumerentur, neque levibus causis contracte levioribus solverentur et sepe, quo nichil est turpius, in tristes inimicitias verterentur! Finito colloquio, *iunctis animis, corporibus separantur*. (De Nolhac, *Vita Scipionis*)

Saying these things with his soul disposed he embraces the Roman leader, delighted indeed by his speech and his disposition and the regal virtue projecting from his youthful face. They sealed their friendship with mutual trust by giving their right hands; that they would all be joined with equal faith in friendship, that they not be consumed by all-consuming time, and that their agreements not be broken by trifling causes for trivial things and that their pact never turn into bitter enmity, for there is nothing more unseemly! Having finished their discussion, *with their souls joined their bodies remained separate*.⁵⁹

The Numidian embraces the Roman leader. With a right-handed handshake, joining their souls in the bond of friendship, they seal the pact of their purely political *amicitia* that is based in a profoundly personal affection between the two men. Despite the political and military nature of their alliance, the *topos* of a classically informed *amicitia* as the paradoxical two bodies sharing one soul is invoked here in the language of the joining of their souls, *iunctis animis*.⁶⁰ The two men achieve the transcendent joining of souls that does not usually pertain to the purely political form of *amicitia* as alliance but it is on the whole reserved for the intimate forms of affective interpersonal friendship.

⁵⁹ Translation mine.

⁶⁰ The imagery of Petrarch's treatment of the unity between the lovers in the Sophonisba episode borrows heavily from the classical trope of friendship as one soul in bodies twain, and thus provides a negative parallel to the primary positive application of the discourse of *amicitia* to politics.

In coopting the political-philosophical concept of *amicitia*, Petrarch actively engages in the mediation of meaning.⁶¹ As we have seen, one writer can use a single word in a variety of contexts to mean completely different things.⁶² A particularly rich case is that of the accumulation of meaning around the particularly abstract noun *amicitia*. From Petrarch's introduction of the intimacy of interpersonal friendship into the value system of Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* to his imitation of Livy's *amicitia* as political alliance, from the *Africa* to the *Vita Scipionis*, my analysis has surveyed several individual instances in which the discourse of friendship and the maintenance of human community are evoked in Petrarch's treatment of Scipio.

⁶¹ On speech acts and meaning, see Pocock, "Verbalizing a Political Act," pp. 38-9: "There is a double sense, then, in which the words that perform my acts are not my own: in the first place, they are words used by others and only borrowed by me, and in the second place, they have been institutionalized to the point where they cannot finally be reduced to the speech acts of known individuals. My acts, therefore, have been preinstitutionalized; they must be performed by institutionalized means. But language-structures which have been institutionalized are available for use by more than one person, operating with more than one purpose and in more than one situation; they are never free from ambiguity in the sense that they can never be reduced to the performance of any one person's intention. To perform my speech act I must borrow another's, and he was in exactly the same predicament; all verbalized action is mediated."

⁶² Pocock, "Verbalizing a Political Act," p. 38: "Humans communicate by means of language, and that language consists of a number of already formed and institutionalized structures. These embody and perform speech acts, but they perform the intentions of the user only through words formed by sedimentation and institutionalization of the utterances performed by others whose identities and intentions may no longer be precisely known."



Roman coin depicting handshake as gesture of *concordia*

Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161). AR *denarius*. Rome, AD 139.

ANTONINVS AVG PIVS P P, bare head of Antoninus right / TR P COS II, hands clasped
before caduceus and two grain ears.

Chapter Three

The First Political Petrarchist: Cola di Rienzo's Politics of *Antiqua amicitia*

Cola di Rienzo's Petrarchan Politics

When Petrarch and Cola di Rienzo (1313-1354) first met in Avignon in 1343, the two men immediately became friends.¹ They shared an enthusiasm for ancient and early Christian Rome and a desire to restore the great city's former power and glory.² Petrarch and Cola also

¹ Eight of Petrarch's letters to Cola survive, including *Fam.* VII, 7, *Sine nom.* II, III, IV, and *Var.* 38, 40, 42, 48. Other writings that address Cola's controversial rise and fall include: *Eclogue 5*: "The Shepherds' Affection"; *Sine nom.* VIII, IX, *Fam.* VII, 1; VII, 4-5, XI, 16-17; XIII, 6-7; *Sen.* I, 4; *Fam.* XV, 1; XVIII, 1; *De remediis*, I.89; and *Invectiva in Gallum*. For Cola's acknowledgment of their friendship, and recognition of Petrarch's reverence for Rome, see Cola di Rienzo to Francesco Petrarch, July 27, 1347, *Epistolario XV*, p. 37-8 (Cosenza, p. 37-8): "Et quanta sit vestra circa Urbem eiusque statum prosperum affectionis plenitudo ex literis vestris plene colligitur et *ex nota per visum vestre bonitatis prudentia certissimum retinetur et de affectione sinceritatis perfecte*, quam habetis in nobis et Urbe. Nos et Romani singuli vobis afficimur, et ad honores et commoda sincerius obligamur" ("We clearly discern from your letters the fullness of your love for the city and your anxiety for its welfare. The most positive proofs, indeed, of the sincerity and the depth of the affection that you cherish for us and for the city are your human kindness and sagacity, with which I became personally acquainted. We and all the Romans feel warmly attached to you, and the more sincerely do we pledge ourselves to serve your glory and advantage"). For a further discussion of the origin of their friendship in 1343, see Cosenza, *The Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*, pp. 1-8.

² For an impassioned outpouring of Petrarch's dream to reform the state of things in Rome, see *Sine nom.*, VII: "Dum sanctissimum gravissimumque sermonem repeto, quem mecum ante religiosi illius ac veteris templi fores nudius tertius habuisti, concalesco acriter, et ita sum, ut oraculum aditis penetralibus emissum putem et deum michi videar audisse, non hominem. Adeo michi divine presentem statum, imo casum ac ruinam reipublice deplorare adeoque profunde digitos eloquii tui in vulnera nostra demittere visus eras, ut quotiens verborum tuorum sonus ad memoriam meam redit, totiens dolor ad animum, meror ad oculos revertatur; et cor meum, quod, dum loquebaris, ardebat, nunc dum meminit, dum cogitat, dum providet, resolvatur in lacrimas, non quidem femineas, sed viriles, sed masculas et, si detur, *pium aliquid ausuras, proque virili portione usque ad iustitie patrocinium erupturas*." (Cosenza, p. 4: "As I recall that most inspired and earnest conversation we had two days ago as we stood before the portals of that famous and ancient sanctuary, I glow with such zeal that I consider your words those of an oracle issuing from the

longed for a united Italy, and the fact that Rome would assume a role of central importance in such a project was obvious to both of them at the time.³ In the mid-fourteenth century, however, there was a vacuum of power in the great *Urbs* of antiquity. Abandoned by both the emperor and the pope, Rome had fallen into the hands of two powerful baronial clans, the Colonna and the

innermost recesses of that temple. I seem to have been listening to a god, not to a man. You bemoaned the present conditions – no, the very fall and ruin of the republic – in words of such divine inspiration, and you probed our wounds with the shafts of your eloquence to such depths that whenever I recall the sounds and the meaning of your words, tears leap to my eyes, and grief again grips my soul. My heart was all inflamed as you spoke. But now, as I recall the words and ponder them, as I anticipate the future, I melt into tears – not effeminate, but manly and bold – tears that, if the occasion offered, *would dare accomplish some patriotic deed and would gush forth in the defense of justice*, as befits a man”). Emphasis added. Though unspecified, it was once thought to be addressed to Cola. For an analysis of *Sine nom.* VII, see Foresti, “Sognando la riforma del governo di Roma,” pp. 263-67; Wilkins, *Studies in the Life and Works of Petrarch*, pp. 179-81, 186-92; Pastore Stocchi, “Petrarca e i potenti della terra,” pp. 39-42. For the Cola hypothesis, see Piur, *Petrarchs “Buch ohne Namen” und di päpstliche Kurie*, pp. 342-5. For two thematically related letters probably written about the same time, see *Fam.* XI, 16 (November 18, 1351) and *Fam.* XI, 17 (November 24, 1351).

³ Petrarch’s obsession with the notion of a *renovatio* or *traslatio imperii* is a recurring theme in his correspondence with the Imperial Court in Prague. See, for example, *Fam.* X, 1; X, 6; XII, 1; XVIII, 1; XXI, 1; XXIII, 2; XXIII, 9; XXIII, 12; XXIII, 15-16. His fervent support of Cola in general also attests to his particular fervor for Rome’s revival. For a more philosophical exposition of his ideas on a united Italy, see *Sine nom.* IX (Cosenza, p. 81): “Persecutionum duo sunt genera: hoc nolentes patimur, hoc volentes. Plura forsitan alter invenerit; et profecto persecutiones innumere sunt, quas quisquis diu vixit intelligit; omnes tamen ad violentam ac voluntariam referuntur. [...] Volentes vitiorum iugo premimur, et vel degeneri metu vel turpi segnitie vel infami patientia vel vilis lucri spe vilissimorum sepe hominum imperio paremus. [...] Hoc persecutionis fasce serva nostris temporibus suspirat Italia, tum demum finem habitura miserie, cum unum velle ceperit. Difficilis plane conditio, sed nequaquam impossibilis. ‘Unum’ dico, non studiis, sed studiorum termino tedioque servitii indigni” (“There are two kinds of oppression; to one we submit willingly, to the other unwillingly. Someone else may discover more categories; indeed there are innumerable oppressions, as anyone advance in years is well aware. All of them, however, reduce themselves to an oppression that is either forcibly inflicted or willingly endured. [...] With our full consent we submit to the rule of the vilest men, either through degenerate fear, or disgraceful inactivity, or dishonoring passivity, or the hope of vile gain. [...] Contemporary Italy sighs like a slave under the sword of this second form of oppression. She will see the end of her woes only when she begins to wish unity. The conditions are hard, I grant, but they are by no means unattainable. I have said ‘when she wishes unity,’ and by this I mean that she will be united not by the victory of this or that party but by the abolition of party lines [*non studiis, sed studiorum termino*] and through an utter disgust for her unmerited slavery”).

Orsini, who plundered the city for their own profit and left its inhabitants to their own devices. The corruption and negligence of the nobles hastened the decline in population by allowing the city to descend into a constant state of lawlessness.⁴ Rome was in desperate need of some form of local authority to reintroduce basic law and order to the most rudimentary level of civic life.⁵ This was the void that Cola di Rienzo groomed himself to fill, although his ambitions extended beyond the walls of the city.

The idealistic humanist enthusiastically embraced the Roman tribune's initiative. When Cola took office, Petrarch offered to serve as poet to Cola's prince in the capacity of official mouthpiece and chronicler of the movement:

And since you are occupied in performing noble deeds, until you find a genius capable of recounting your deeds in worthy language, I promise you the service of my feeble intellect and of my pen – if God permits me to live. In this way I shall – to borrow Livy's

⁴ For a description of the state of the city prior to Cola's restoration of order, see Cola di Rienzo to the *Comune di Lucca*, July 7, 1347, *Epistolario* V, p. 16: "nec mirandum erat, cum ipsa sacra civitas, que ad consolationem animarum constructa fuit et que fidelium omnium debet esse refugium, facta erat offensionis silva; et spelunca latronum, potius quam civitas, aparebat" (It was not surprising, then, when this very holy city, which was built for the consolation of souls and which should be a refuge for all the faithful, had become a forest of crime; and it seemed to be more a den of thieves, than a city). Translation mine. For an indication of the chaos of the situation in and around Rome at the time from Petrarch's experience, see *Fam.* IV, 8 (Bernardo, p. 196): "At ut recenti experimento cognoscerem quam semper letis iuncta sunt tristia, vix menia Urbis egressi, ego cum his qui me terra et pelago secuti erant, *in latronum armatas manus incidimus*; e quibus ut liberati et Romam redire compulsi fuimus quantusque ibi ob hanc causam populi motus, et ut die postero certiori armatorum fulti presidio discessimus ac ceteros vie casus si explicare tentavero, longa erit historia" ("But so that I might learn from fresh experience how sad things always accompany joyful things, we had scarcely left the walls of the city when I, together with those who had followed me on land and sea, *fell into the hands of an armed band of thieves*. How we were freed from them and were forced to return to Rome, how upset the people were because of this, how we left on the following day supported by an escort of armed men, and the other events on our trip would make too long a story for me to recount here"). Emphasis added.

⁵ For the reconstruction of the socio-political climate of fourteenth-century Rome, see Miglio, *Scritture, scrittori e storia*; Maire-Vigueur, "Il commune romano"; and Modigliani, *L'eredità di Cola di Rienzo*.

words – perform my part in enhancing the memory of the most noble people in the world.
Nor will my Africanus mind yielding to you for a short while.⁶

Petrarch offers his services as scribe to the cause, as the poet to his prince, the Ennius to his Scipio. His offer to set aside his labors on the *Africa* suggests that, for the time being, he sees Cola's new undertaking as being of greater importance.⁷

According to Mario Cosenza, Cola would have seemed to Petrarch like the reincarnation of his beloved Scipio Africanus, the great liberator of Italy from Hannibal's invasion.⁸ In the only letter in the *Familiaries* addressed to Cola, Petrarch even makes reference to Scipio Africanus in the context of the great joy he has felt for the Tribune's accomplishments: "I confess that you have caused me recently to repeat often and with great pleasure the words that Cicero has Africanus speak: 'What is this that fills my ears, so great and so sweet a sound it is?'" (*Fam.* VII, 7; Bernardo, p. 349).⁹ Comparisons to Scipio appear throughout his treatment of Cola, Petrarch's *Scipio redivivus*: "That most illustrious of Rome's generals would have followed the same course, I believe, had he lived in these days. For he was as duly observant of

⁶ *Var.* 38, (Cosenza, p. 41): "Et quoniam tu in agendo occuparis, donec ingenium rebus par inueneris, ego tibi, nisi Deus..., in eam rem ingeniolum hoc et hunc calamum spondeo, *pro virili parte*, ut ait Livius, *principis terrarum populi memoriae succursurus; nec cedere paululum indignabitur Africanus meus.*"

⁷ See also Petrarch's famous *Hortatoria* (*Var.* 48), an open letter addressed to Cola di Rienzo and the Roman People on the occasion of his peaceful elevation to the tribunate. On July 28, 1347, Cola responds to Petrarch – the only surviving letters he wrote to his friend, see *Epistolario*, XV, p.38 (Cosenza, p. 38): "Et utinam persone vestre presentia Rome foret!" ("If only you were present at Rome in person!").

⁸ See also Cosenza, *The Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*, p. 3: "To Petrarch, Cola must have appeared the reincarnation of his hero Scipio Africanus, who first freed Italian soil from the foot of the barbarian, or as the embodiment of Dante's Greyhound, who was to be the savior of that low Italy 'on whose account the maid Camilla died' (*Inf.* I, 107)."

⁹ *Fam.* VII, 7: "Fecisti, fateor, ut sepe per hoc tempus illud apud Ciceronem loquentis Africani dictum multa cum voluptate repeterem: 'Quis est hic qui complet aures meas, tantus et tam dulcis sonus?'"

his sacred duties as his age permitted, an age shrouded in darkness and deprived of the knowledge of heaven” (*Var.* 48).¹⁰

In an open letter addressed to Cola and the Roman people, a sort of panegyric composed for the occasion of Cola’s ascension to power, Petrarch likens the self-styled “liberator of the Roman people” to a new Camillus, a new Romulus, and a third Brutus.¹¹ In his usual pedagogical mode of teaching by *exemplaritas*, Petrarch even holds him up to the example of Augustus Caesar, the revered author of the *pax Romana* – an esteemed period of peace to which he longed to return.¹² The superlative tone of these poetic analogues accurately reflects the fact that Petrarch did indeed have high hopes for the initiative of his quixotic friend. In his only extant epistolary response to Petrarch, Cola expresses his gratitude to the humanist for calling to mind such inspirational models to emulate.¹³

¹⁰ *Var.* 48 (trans. Cosenza, p. 20): “Servasset, ut auguror, hunc morem, si ad hec tempora pervenisset, servavitque quoddam simile, quantum obducta tenebris et etheree lucis egens permisit etas, ille Romanorum ducum longe clarissimus Africanus.”

¹¹ See *Var.* 48 (Cosenza, p. 19): “Salve, noster Camille, noster Brute, noster Romule, seu quolibet alio nomine dici mavis! Salve, Romane libertatis, Romane pacis, Romane tranquillitatis auctor! Tibi debet presens etas quod in libertate morietur, tibi posteritas quod nascetur” (“Hail then our Camillus, our Brutus, our Romulus! Or – if you prefer to be addressed by some other name – hail author of Roman liberty, of Roman peace, of Roman tranquility. The present age owes you the fact that it will die in liberty; posterity will owe you the fact that it is conceived in liberty”).

¹² See Petrarch, *Var.* 48. The same coordinates expounded in the Introduction and Chapter 1 of this study are again present here: the prince or statesman and the poet-teacher are players in the Cola-Petrarch dynamic.

¹³ For Cola’s embrace of Petrarch as teacher, see Cola di Rienzo to Francesco Petrarch, July 27, 1347, *Epistolario* XV, p. 37-8 (Cosenza, p. 37): “[I]n gratissimo exortamine vestro, per exempla laudabilia bonorum veterum, per eccitationes ad virtutum amplexus, nos sumus et fuimus plurimum recreati. (“In your very gratifying letter of exhortation, you have summoned the praiseworthy examples of the heroes of old to spur us on to emulate their virtuous deeds, whereby our spirits are and have been thoroughly revived”).

Born to a Roman innkeeper and a washerwoman, Cola di Rienzo was an autodidact and self-made man in every sense when it came to both his intellectual development and his political career.¹⁴ He was indeed a product of the same early humanistic ferment that Petrarch's career would spearhead, earning him a great many emulators throughout Italy and Europe.¹⁵ Following the example of Petrarch's revival of the coronation ceremony with all of its classical pomp, Cola staged a series of ceremonial spectacles to legitimize the position he fashioned for himself as Roman "tribune" – just one of many titles he recovered from the annals of Roman history.¹⁶ The antiquarian eccentricity of the colorful nomenclature he adopted for himself from his reading of classical Roman historians and the ancient inscriptions found all over the city is symptomatic of the other archaizing terminology that he attempted to reintroduce into current usage by injecting them into the political discourse of the time.¹⁷ From his classically inspired rhetorical practices to

¹⁴ For a biographical sketch, see Collins, *Greater Than Emperor*, pp. 15-26; Di Carpegna Falconieri, *Cola di Rienzo*; and Musto, *Apocalypse in Rome*.

¹⁵ For Petrarch's intention to influence and initiate a movement in his own humanistic image, see *Coronation Oration*. For an expression of Petrarch's retrospective self-satisfaction late in life regarding the legacy in the form of the intellectual cultural movement he was leaving behind, see *Sen.* XVII, 2.

¹⁶ In first two months of his tribunate he officially referred to himself in the *salutatio* of his letters as: "Nicholaus severus et clemens, libertatis, pacis iustitiaeque tribunus et sacre Romane reipublice liberator" (Severe and clement Nicholas, tribune of liberty, peace and justice and liberator of the holy Roman republic). After the christening ceremony he staged on August 1 before an audience of ambassadors from the major city-states of central and northern Italy, he changed his title to: "miles Nicolaus severus et clemens, liberator Urbis, zelator Ytalie, amator orbis et tribunus augustus" (Severe and clement sir Nicholas, liberator of Rome, zealot of Italy, lover of the world and august tribune).

¹⁷ In *Var.* 48, Petrarch gives Cola some stern instructions, including a very specific definition of the role and responsibilities that come along with the title "tribunus" he has adopted, rather than, say, "consul." The intent is to remind the Tribune of the importance of the meaning of words. See *Var.* 48 (Cosenza, p. 17): "Tu vero, vir fortissime, qui tantam labentis molem piis humeris subiisti, nichilo segnus adversus tales cives quam adversus crudelissimos hostes armatus invigila! Iunior Brute, senioris imaginem ante oculos semper habe: ille consul erat, tu Tribunus. Si conferimus dignitates, multa quidem a consulibus adversus plebem Romanam animose dicta, multa etiam atrociter facta sunt, cuius tribunos constantissimos defensores semper accepimus. Quodsiconsul ille studio libertatis filios interemit, quid Tribuno tibi

his bold implementation of other broadly Petrarchan patriotic values, Cola di Rienzo has all the makings of what I would like to call the first political Petrarchist.¹⁸

Moving from the political dimensions of Petrarch's Latin epic to the turbulent world of Italian and specifically Roman politics, this chapter will examine the language of friendship and the practices of community building in the context of the official political discourse of the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁹ Several chronicles from the cities that received Cola's epistolary invitations and subsequently participated in his Festival of Italian Unity prove to be a unique source of information for gauging how the tribune's efforts to unify Italy were received.²⁰ These chronicles

agendum sit in ceteris vides" ("But you, most brave man, you who have buttressed the immense weight of the tottering state with your patriotic shoulders, gird yourself and watch with equal vigilance against such citizens as against the most bitter enemy. You, younger Brutus, always keep the example of the first Brutus before you. He was Consul, you are Tribune. If we compared the two offices we would find that the consuls performed many acts hostile to the welfare of the Roman plebs; indeed – and I will speak out bravely – they often treated it harshly and cruelly. But the tribunes were always and constantly the defenders of the people. If then that consul slew his own sons because of his love of liberty, realize what is expected in all circumstances from you as a tribune").

¹⁸ If not the first, then Cola can certainly be considered one of the first. There was of course the four-year period in which Petrarch attempted to advise and counsel the Azzo da Correggio in his administration of Parma, from 1341 to 1345, that ended turbulently to say the least. The turbulence of Italian political alliances is particularly evident in the negligent end of the da Correggio brothers' short reign in Parma. Without the backing of the power the Visconti dynasty in Milan exercised in the region, Azzo would never have been able to succeed in his coup against the tyranny of the Scaligeri in 1341, an even that Petrarch celebrates in his *estravagante* political canzone "Quel ch'è nostra natura." Azzo's four-year tenure in power in Parma ended badly when he betrayed the support of the Visconti alliance that made it all possible. For an overview of Petrarch's Parma phase and his involvement with Azzo, see Dotti, *Petrarca a Parma*.

¹⁹ For more than fifty of Cola's letters, some familiar but most official-political in nature, see di Rienzo, *Epistolario di Cola di Rienzo*.

²⁰ In his *Cronica* the anonymous Roman author known as the Anonimo Romano, the most important primary source of biographical information on the revolutionary Roman tribune, makes little or no reference to his pan-Italian campaign. The chronicles of other Italian cities that present the most useful information on this subject include the anonymous *Chronicon Estense*, Giovanni de Bassano, *Chronicon Mutinense* (Modena), Guglielmo Cortusio, *Chronica de novitatibus Padue et Lombardie* and the *Storie*

also preserve other sources of information regarding the genres of alliance building, such as peace treaties, defense pacts and trade agreements, whose language, patterns of expression, stylistic strategies and formal conventions illuminate the political landscape of the Italy in which Cola attempted to situate himself.²¹ This chapter will thus address the rhetorical strategies of community building – on a scale beyond that of regional alliances – and the language of group identity formation in the fourteenth-century Italy of Petrarch and Cola, with a particular emphasis on the re-emergence of classical *amicitia* as a political ideal.

Ad antiquam amicitiam renovandam

Within the first few months of his short tenure as Roman tribune (May 19-December 15, 1347), Cola di Rienzo sent variations of the same letter to the major city-states of northern Italy – including Florence, Lucca, Mantua, Modena and Perugia – inviting them to participate in what he variously refers to as a “*consilium*” (council), a “*parlamentum*” (parliament or congress) and a “*synodus*” (synod, based on a parliamentary rather than a religious model) that was to be held in Rome on August 1, 1347.²² The language of his invitation is worth noting. In addition to the legal and religious sounding terminology he deploys in his attempt to convene a council, a parliament and a synod, he requests the presence of representatives of each of the city-states that he variously refers to as “*syndicos*” and “*ambasciatores*.” Cola’s effort to legitimize his initiative is evident in the legalese of the language. The purpose of his epistolary campaign was to restore

Pistoresi. See Barbi, ed., *Storie Pistoresi (Mccc-Mcccxlvi)*; Bini and Grazzini, eds., *Cronica dei fatti d’Arezzo di Ser Bartolomeo di ser Gorello*; Bertoni and Vicini, *Chronicon estense cum additamentis usque ad annum 1478*; and Mazzali, ed., *Cronica*.

²¹ The most significant contemporary peace treaties include a brief document entitled *Memoria pacis facte inter commune Aretij et Ubertinos (luglio 20, 1345)* and *Atto di concordia e lega fra i comuni di Arezzo, Firenze, Siena, Perugia ed altri (aprile 22, 1347)*, which takes us up to just about a month before Cola di Rienzo would take office and bears many more similarities both to Cola’s vision and his linguistic frame of reference. Both of these documents are available in Ghiron, *Annali d’Italia*.

liberty (*libertas*), peace (*pax*) and justice (*iustitia*) to the Roman people and their provinces, as well as to renew the ancient friendship (*amicitia*) that had once united Italy as a whole.²³

The values of *libertas*, *pax*, *iustitia* and *amicitia* all bear strong classical associations. Justice and friendship, in particular, immediately evoke what Aristotle in *The Nicomachean Ethics* considers to be the “relational” elements of political life.²⁴ Cola lays the very foundations for his campaign to unite Italy on a series of combinations of abstract nouns with both legal

²² For one of the many letters that survive from those he sent to dozens of Italian city-states, take, for example, Cola di Rienzo to the *Comune di Lucca*, July 7, 1347, *Epistolario* V, p. 17-18: “Nihilominusque *sub antiquitate dilectionis affectu, libertatis, iustitiae pacisque*, presentibus vos hortamur instanter, quatenus infra octavam festivitatis beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli mittere placeat duos syndicos et ambasciatores idoneos terre vestre ad consilium et parlamentum, que intendimus illa die pro salute et pace Italie solemniter celebrare” (“And nevertheless *under the ancient desire for love, liberty, justice and peace*, through the eighth day of the festivities of Saints Peter and Paul I earnestly exhort you to send two suitable representatives and ambassadors of your land to the council and parliament, because we intend that day to solemnly celebrate the welfare and peace of Italy”). Emphasis added. Translations of Cola’s letters and local chronicles, unless otherwise noted, are mine.

²³ Cola di Rienzo to the *Comune di Firenze*, late June 1347, *Epistolario* VII, p. 19-20: “Ad salutatem, libertatem, pacem et iustitiam sacri Romani populi et Romane provincie, ad reconciliationem totius sacre Ytalie et antique amicitie renovationem inter sacrum Romanum populum, vos et ipsam sacram Ytaliam universam [...]” (“For the *welfare, liberty, peace and justice* of the sacred people of Rome and of the Roman provinces, for the reconciliation of every corner of sacred Italy and for the renewal of ancient friendship among the sacred Roman peoples, you and all of sacred Italy [...]). Emphasis added.

²⁴ For the classical origins of the legal versus extra-legal status of the various terms of Cola’s ethical universe, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII, 1155a25: “Friendship seems too to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than justice; for concord seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all, and expel faction as their worst enemy; and when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality. See also Cicero *De officiis*, I, 53-8. Cola was an astute reader of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. The erudite frame of reference of his Latin *Commentarium* on Dante’s *De monarchia*, a unique document in which Cola further enlarges the classical scope of the Florentine poet’s tract in his citations from other authors such as Sallust, Boethius, Virgil, Seneca and Cicero, especially the *De officiis*. See Cola di Rienzo, “In ‘Monarchium’ Dantis commentarium,” pp. 266-320, 323-65. For the political nature of classical *amicitia*, see Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution*; Brunt, “*Amicitia* in the Late Roman Republic”; Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*; Vernant, “City-State Warfare,” 30.

(*iustitia*) and extra-legal (*amicitia*) implications for the parties involved.²⁵ Like his forerunners, Dante and Petrarch, the Roman tribune was driven by ideals he had inherited from both his classical studies and the theological age in which he lived. Taking *amicitia* as a mantra of sorts for his movement, Cola attempted to unite Italy under the auspices of a renewal of ancient friendship (*antiquae amicitiae renovatio*) between the city-states and independent communes of the peninsula.²⁶ Such a move was bold not least of all for the shaky footing that such a trust-based extra-legal bond as friendship implies, especially considering the nation-wide scale on which it was meant to extend.

²⁵ Referring to this list of concepts in one of his letters of advice to the tribune, Petrarch uses the terminology of the “firmus” (“signature”) as an adjective, meaning “firm,” “sturdy,” “stable” or “solid.” He instructs Cola in the importance of investing special care in his language and the rhetoric he uses and commends him for having laid such “firm” foundations in terms of the abstractions he has already invoked as his core values; see Petrarch, *Var.* 38 (Cosenza, p. 40): “Iecisti fundamenta validissima: veritatem, pacem, iustitiam, libertatem; super illis edifica. Quidquid enim erexeris, *firmum erit*, adversus que quisquis impegerit collidetur. Qui contra veritatem venerit, mendax erit, qui contra pacem, inquietus, qui contra iustitiam, iniquus, qui contra libertatem, arrogans et impudens” (“You have laid the strongest of foundations: truth, peace, justice, and liberty. Build on these. Whatever structure you erect *will remain firm*; and whoever hurls himself against it will be dashed to pieces. He who wars against truth will declare himself a liar; against peace, a restless spirit; against justice, a dishonest man; and if against liberty, an arrogant and shameless wretch”). Emphasis added.

²⁶ See Cola di Rienzo to the *Comune di Firenze*, *Epistle VII*, p. 19: “ad reconciliationem totius sacre Ytalie et antique amicitie renovationem inter sacrum Romanum populum, vos et ipsam sacram Ytaliam universam” (for the reconciliation of all of sacred Italy and the revival of ancient friendship between the sacred Roman people, your city and all of sacred Italy). The Florentine historian Giovanni Villani records that he sent letters to all the major cities of Italy and that he used the argument of their shared descent from ancient Rome to win their support to his cause. See Villani, *Istorie fiorentine*, XII, xc: “E mandò lettere a tutte le caporali d’Italia e una ne mandò al nostro Comune con molto eccellente dittato. E poi ci mandò cinque solenni ambasciatori gloriando sè e poi il nostro Comune, *e come la nostra città era figliuola di Roma e fondata e edificata dal popolo di Roma, e richiesene d’aiuto alla sua oste.*” Emphasis added.

The Language of Coalition Building in 14th Century Italy

Advocacy for Italian unification was one of the salient features of Cola's legendary rise to power, but the idea by no means originated with him. Scholars have long discussed the presence of the concept of Italian political unity in this period, particularly in the work of Italian poets.²⁷ There is very little indication, however, that the idea of a unified Italy had any traction in the actual political discourse of the time.²⁸ By all accounts, the peninsula was too mired in local conflict between the variously warring independent city-states. Nevertheless, despite the widespread unrest, alliances between cities were still forged and communities of interest were formed. A series of treaties and political agreements between the communes of Italy have survived alongside the communal chronicles of the time and prove to be exciting sources of fourteenth-century political and linguistic information.²⁹

²⁷ See D'Ancona, "Il concetto dell'unità politica nei poeti italiani," pp. 3-103.

²⁸ On the novelty of Cola's strategy, see Gregorovius, *Rome and Medieval Culture*, pp. 276-7: "In none of the other revolutions had it occurred to the heads of the city to send letters announcing their accession to government outside the sphere of the city itself. Cola, however, thought of Rome in its relation toward Italy and the world. His envoys carried letters to all communes, princes, and despots of Italy; even to the Emperor Louis and the king of France. [...] These letters were written with intelligence and dignity. From a higher point of view, Cola wrote to the cities of Italy, and exhorted them to join in throwing off the yoke of the tyrants, and to form a national brotherhood, since the deliverance of the eternal city was also that of the 'whole sacred Italy.' He further invited them to send deputies and judges to a national parliament in Rome on August 1. The great and ingenious scheme of making Italy into a confederation, with Rome at its head, was here expressed for the first time, and its novelty and boldness filled the world with admiration. Thus, at the very beginning of his reign, Cola di Rienzo displayed lofty national ideas in sight of his native country."

²⁹ See Muratori, *RIS XV*, 1, "*Cronica dei Fatti d'Arezzo*," p. 207. The language of a brief document entitled *Memoria pacis facte inter commune Aretij et Ubertinos (1345, luglio 20)*, (Record of peace made between the city of Arezzo and Umbertide, July 20, 1345) begins to give us a contextual hint as to the kind of political discourse of community and coalition building that was current in the world in which not only Petrarch but also Cola di Rienzo was working. The initial expression, "*Memoria pacis facte*" (memory of peace having been made), with its use of "*memoria*" hints at its status as a technical term. Then there is the word: "*comuni*," which is a term for "township" or "city" that is already charged with

Similar in terms of its scale, a document aimed at the establishment of a Tuscan Guelf League provides an excellent point of comparison with Cola's attempt to unify Italy, not least for its chronology. The *Atto di concordia e lega fra i comuni di Arezzo, Firenze, Siena, Perugia ed altri* was signed on April 22, 1347, roughly a month before Cola took office in Rome.³⁰ The authors of this treaty use the term "*status*" for the state of affairs they are interested in establishing, namely:

the commonality implicit in terms like "community" and "*res publica*," or "the public matter, thing, affair." It is unclear, however, as to whether the title, *Memoria pacis facte inter commune Aretij et Ubertinos*, is original or a later addition by an editor. Another lexically significant moment occurs toward the end of this short document: "*firmavimus pacem inter ipsas partes perpetuo duraturam*." The unusual use of the verb "*firmavimus*," "*we signed*," implies a coming-together, engenders a relation of being together, pact building. "We" are doing it together, which is not to be overlooked when it comes to discussions of community building and acting in common. And then there is the concept: "*firmare pacem*." What a contemporary Italian would think of is that they simply "sign" peace, as the Italian "*firma*" or signature, signifying literally the signing of their names to the document, leaving their signature. However, in Latin "*firmare*" means "to affirm, assert, declare, promise" and can also mean "to make firm," "to secure," "to make lasting, durable, permanent," even "to bind," which seems particularly pertinent in this case. The contract makes lasting peace between the parties involved.

³⁰ See Muratori, *RIS XV*, 1, *Atto di concordia e lega fra i comuni di Arezzo, Firenze, Siena, Perugia ed altri* (1347, aprile 22), p. 207-12. The final completion of the agreement bears a signature of April 22, 1347, just weeks before Cola would become the tribune of Rome, after which time his famous letters to the princes and communes of Italy were dispatched. This agreement dates to the period between Cola's apocalyptic public arts projects and his taking of power. Much has been written on the carefully executed and very deliberately conceived iconographic program behind the ritualized spectacle Cola di Rienzo made of his rise to power: one of the most memorable moments of which being the apocalyptic fresco he had painted on a façade facing the market near the Capitol in which Rome is depicted as twice widowed and Italy is portrayed as a woman shipwrecked in the throes of a stormy sea. While the original fresco is no longer extant, the *Cronica* attributed to an anonymous Roman author of the time preserves a vivid description of the famous painting Cola commissioned for the wall above the market on the Capitoline. See Anonimo romano, *Cronica*, 116: "Era pento uno grannissimo mare, le onne orribile, forte turvato. In mieso de questo mare stava una nave poco meno che soffocata, senza tomone, senza vela. In questa nave, la quale per pericolare stava, stava una femina vedova vestuta de nero, centa de cengolo de tristezze, sgressa la gonnella da pietto, sciliati li capelli, como volessi piagnere, stava innocchiata, incrociava le mano piecate allo pietto per piettate, in forma de precare che sio pericolo non fussi. Lo soprascritto diceva: 'Questa è Roma.'" See also Sonnay, "La politique artistique de Cola di Rienzo (1313-1354)," pp. 35-43.

ad statum pacificum totius partis guelfe Ytalie [...] et ad honorem et statum pacificum et tranquillum et fortificationem et manutionem comunium Florentie, Perusij, Senarum, et Aretij

for the peaceful state of all Guelf parts of Italy [...] and for the honor and peaceful and tranquil state and fortification and maintenance of the communes of Florence, Perugia, Siena, and Arezzo.

With its strict partisanship in all parts of Italy, this treaty has its sights set on forging a widespread alliance among proponents of the Guelf party throughout the peninsula.³¹

The document then introduces a string of terms that are repeated, but rarely in the same order. This act of rhetorical *copia*, or abundance, is aimed at uniting the communes in question under the aegis of as many different forms of community as possible: “societatem, unionem et ligam [...] per dicta comunia et amicorum dictorum comunium et cuiuslibet” (partnership, union and league [...] for said communes and of the friends of said communes and of whomever you wish).³² The same formula is shuffled and repeated as “*ligam et societatem*.” Then it is repeated again, this time expanding its frame of reference to “*unione et sotietate fraterna et tallia et liga*” (“union and fraternal society and tally and league”).³³ The *Atto di concordia* is extremely rich and varied in its vocabulary of community, including the concept of friendship. Its authors seem

³¹ See Muratori, *RIS XV*, 1, *Atto di concordia*, n. 2: “La lega fu per cinque anni a difesa comune. Le modalità sono specificate nei *Capitoli*, qui pubblicati. Fu deliberato che si mandassero ambasciatori al papa, pregandolo, a non voler permettere che passasse alcun signore tedesco in Italia, poichè seguirebbe con danno di santa Chiesa e di parte guelfa e de’ collegati che se ne mandassero ancora all’altre città, comunità e signori d’Italia, se ben fossero ghibellini, esortarli a entrare nella lega.”

³² Muratori, *RIS XV*, 1, p. 208. The openness of the treaty to accommodate the inclusion of the external entities referred to as “friends of said communes” (“et amicorum dictorum comunium”).

³³ Muratori, *RIS XV*, 1, p. 208. “*Tallia*” is an unusual word, thought to be of military origins, certainly medieval, that means “tally” in the sense of being equal count and therefore equal. “*Liga*,” also appearing in the title, means: tie, tied together, bind, pact, but we also see the English league in there, with its modern immediate connotation of a “League of Nations.” “*Unio*” quite obviously means: a coming together, as in a union or unity. “*Societas*,” with its root in “*socius*,” or partner, is a partnership with extra-legal implications.

to be concerned with diplomatically working out the meaning of a series of terms that all refer to the fashioning of one and the same community of interest among all the Guelfs of Italy, no matter what word is used to frame it. The varied repetition draws attention to their synonymy, yet each new encounter with these familiar words leads one to meditate on how each word maintains its own characteristic semantic nuance: *unio*, *societas*, *liga*. It is an attempt to institute an extremely forward-looking collective of communes who share an interest in one another's wellbeing as well as a common recognition of each other's individual local sovereignty, inasmuch as the group is made up of independent parts that also work together as a whole. As a result, the treaty represents a powerful speech act aimed at forging new forms of association through language.³⁴

There is also a sense that the subscribers of the document are in part interested in ushering in the future. In phrasing like “et alia comunia ad dictam ligam et talliam venientia in futurum,” the treaty contains a vision of the potential community-to-be, welcoming all the communes who might enter into said league at any time in the future.³⁵ Indeed, the intended goals are also defensive:

pro conservatione libertatis et pacifici etiam guelfi status dictorum comunium [...] et ad evitandam et impediendam omnem occupationem, violentam et invasionem

(for the conservation of liberty and also of the peaceful Guelf status of said communes [...] and to avoid and impede all occupation, and violent invasion).

³⁴ One of the goals is stated outright: “facienda pro comuni conservatione et fortificatione status pacifici eorumdem comunium” (the conservation and fortification [or protection] of the peaceful state of the very same communes). Notice again the use of the word “*status*” here, which demands further attention and future study.

³⁵ Muratori, *RIS XV*, 1, p. 209: “And other communes coming into said league and tallia in the future.”

With its sense of the need for a common protectionist agreement – note again the appearance of key expressions like “*pacificus status*” and “*libertas*” – this kind of league promises to articulate itself first in the form of a united Tuscan Guelf front rather than a pan-Italian one.³⁶

Although it is only one example, the *Atto di concordia* provides some background to the textual world into which Cola cast his epistolary campaign to unite Italy. From this brief survey of the language and some of its rhetorical strategies, we can see that many aspects of Cola’s vocabulary and presentational style would have been right at home with the operative model of the time.³⁷ For instance, just as the Guelf League immediately stated the objective of their alliance, so Cola announces the accomplishment of a similar objective in the first letters he sent to neighboring city-states, using much the same language:

et ad reformationem et renovationem iustitie, libertatis et securitatis *statusque pacifici prefate Romane urbis ac totius provincie* oculos nostre mentis direximus et prosequi intendimus viriliter et potenter, secundum ordinem antique iustitie³⁸

(and to the reformation and renewal of justice, liberty and security and *the peaceful state of the aforementioned city of Rome and of all of her provinces* we direct the eyes of our mind and we intend to pursue with virility and powerfully, following the order of ancient justice).

³⁶ In places this document even seems to read like a Tuscan ploy for greater dominance of the Guelf party. See Muratori, *RIS XV*, 1, p. 210: “Item pro pacifico statu et libertate totius provincie Tusce et omnium venientium ad dictam ligam quod transmissa primo dicta ambasiata ad summum Pontificem requirantur per dicta comunia sic insimul colligata et colliganda omnia comunia et domini tam guelfi quam ghibellini in Italia commorantes de quibus videbitur ipsis comunibus Florentie, Perusij et Senarum ad ea que deliberabuntur per dicta tria comunia.” Their vision also never seems to reach beyond the denomination of the commune, whose integrity, independence and unique individual identity that the pact means to protect at all costs.

³⁷ Despite the fact that he does not go into any great detail regarding affairs external to the city itself, even the Anonimo Romano records that Cola started his initial letters with the pronouncement that he had brought about a good, peaceful and just state in Rome,

³⁸ Cola di Rienzo to the *Comune di Viterbo*, May 24, 1347, *Epistolario II*, pp. 7-8.

In letters written within weeks of the Tuscan treaty, Cola's use of such key words as "*status pacificus*" is an indication that such a state was not only much coveted amidst the turbulence of the peninsula, but that this was also one of the primary ways of talking about such questions of state. Cola's desire to renew universal friendship with citizens in all parts of Italy was motivated by a desire to bring a "*status pacificus*" to the city of Rome and her provinces beyond the limitations of city and region and certainly well beyond the divisions of paltry party lines.

The First Political Petrarchist

Nowhere in Cola's extant writings is there any mention of party lines dividing the Italy that he so desperately desires to unite. This is perhaps because he was of one mind with his friend Petrarch, who articulated the following sentiment regarding the obstacles of self-inflicted oppression that prohibited Italy from achieving her freedom:

Hoc persecutionis fasce serva nostris temporibus suspirat Italia, tum demum finem habitura miserie, cum unum velle ceperit. Difficilis plane conditio, sed nequaquam impossibilis. 'Unum' dico, non studiis, sed studiorum termino tedioque servitii indigni. (*Sine nom.* IX)

Contemporary Italy sighs like a slave under the sword of this second form of oppression. She will see the end of her woes only when she begins to wish unity. The conditions are hard, I grant, but they are by no means unattainable. I have said 'when she wishes unity,' and by this I mean that she will be united not by the victory of this or that party but by the abolition of party lines [*non studiis, sed studiorum termino*] and through an utter disgust for her unmerited slavery. (*Sine nom.* IX; Cosenza, p. 81).

For Petrarch, unities like the Guelf League of Tuscany are not part of the solution since they are a source of division and oppression. The unified Italy that Petrarch foresees is one that transcends traditional political identities that are based on fear, passivity or greed for the kind of petty gain that allegiance to factionalism promises.

Considering the legal status of the various terms that have been introduced over the course of this survey of the discourse of community and alliance building in Cola's fourteenth-

century Italy (*liga, unio, communitas, societas, civitas*), the operative terms of the Roman tribune's campaign strikingly draw upon extra-legal distinctions, in particular, the whole semantic field around the concept of *amicitia*.

In his *Epistle XIV* to the *Comune di Firenze*, Cola explicitly phrases his follow-up request for soldiers in extra-legal terms with his rejection of jurisdiction for friendship: “Nam non pro alicuius iurisdictionis pretextu, sed pro reformatione antique amicitie et gaudiorum participio eos duximus amicabiliter expetendos” (“Indeed not under the pretense of any legal authority, but for the reformation of ancient friendship and the sharing of joys did we lead those men [soldiers] that are so amicably sought after”).³⁹ Emphasizing the purely amicable basis of the bond of friendship he proposes to his fellow citizens and Italian neighbors, he insists that it is no legal bond that binds them. No voice of authority commands them to cooperate, just the opportunity to share in the joy of common victory and communal triumph.

The Reception of Cola di Rienzo's Epistolary Politics

Although the Anonimo romano's *Cronica* (1357) does not go into great detail regarding Cola's “foreign policy” initiative to bring together the city-states on the peninsula under the aegis of a united Italy, he gives us a thorough account of the iconography that the tribune employed during his rise to power. The anonymous Roman chronicler's almost exclusive focus on the domestic aspects and Roman events of Cola's rise to power and almost immediate fall from grace is conspicuous.⁴⁰ In *Greater Than Emperor*, Amanda Collins suggests that the author of

³⁹ Cola di Rienzo to the *Comune di Firenze*, July 22, 1347, *Epistolario XIV*, pp. 37. Cola's initial requests also always included a plea for reinforcements in the form of additional troops to defend his cause against the ruling nobles of Rome and neighboring towns who sought to obstruct his populist rise.

⁴⁰ Regarding Cola's diplomatic mission to create a larger community body out of the independent city-states of Italy, the Anonimo comments rather vaguely. See Anonimo, *Cronica*, pp. 117-118: “Allora lo

the Roman *Cronica* was writing at a later date in which the exemplary trajectory of Cola's career could have had an admonishing effect on later developments in the politics of the Eternal City and perhaps even more specifically serve as a warning aimed against the analogous rise of another charismatic leader who was reviving many of Cola's ideals in the late 1350s and early 1360s. The Anonimo is decisively more concerned with recounting the events of Cola's life from a specifically Roman point of view. In order to understand how Cola's epistolary campaign was perceived outside the walls of Rome, we must move beyond the Anonimo's vernacular Roman chronicle and take a closer look at how the Roman tribune's rhetoric of unity was interpreted and received by other communes on the peninsula.

The *Chronicon Estense* (1354) provides one of the most complete contemporary accounts of Cola's time in the spotlight. Even more than the local anonymous Roman chronicler, the *Chronicon Estense* written in Ferrara documents the advent of Cola on the broader Italian stage of politics in grand narrative fashion. The Roman tribune is dramatically depicted as a savior from the moment he makes his first appearance in the Ferrarese chronicler's lucid Latin:

tribuno fece uno sio generale Consigilo, e scrisse lettere luculentissime alle citati e alle communitati de Toscana, Lommardia, Campagna, Romagna, Maretima, allo duce de Venezia, a missore Lucchino tiranno de Milana, alli marchesi de Ferrara, allo santo patre papa Chimento, a Ludovico duca de Bavaria, lo quale era stato elietto imperatore, como ditto de sopra ène, alli regali de Napoli. In queste lettere proponeva lo sio nome per mannifico titolo in questa forma: 'Nicola servero e pietoso, de libertate, de pace e de iustizia tribuno, anche della santa romana repubblica liberatore illustre'. *In queste lettere dichiarao lo stato buono, pacifico, iusto, lo quale comenzato aveva.* Dechiarava como laviaio de Roma, lo quale soleva essere dubioso, era libero. Puoi petiva che lli mannassino sintichi sufficienti, delli quali avea bisuogno a *rascionare cose utile allo buono stato nella sinodo romana.*" Emphasis added. Note that the eccentric spelling "errors" reflect the idiosyncrasies of the medieval Roman vernacular dialect in which this text is written. The Anonimo only gives us an approximation of the first lines of his first round of letters, and he does not even superficially touch the motivations behind the famous letters he sent to the dukes and communes of the peninsula. There is no explanation of the nature of the "*sinodo*" nor of the other goals and abstract language that some of the other chronicles from other city-states like Ferrara and Modena record upon receipt of his letters and news of his initiatives which they each interpret in their own ways in the very act of recording them.

Civitas romana existens in maxima discordia inter cives intrinsecos propter quod multi de alienis provinciis recusabant visitare Romam ne in itinere derobarentur; quare, *prout divine Providentie placuit*, electus fuit in civitate predicta tribunus Niccolaus de Roma, quem Populus romanus confirmavit in gubernatorem dicte civitatis, et expulsi sunt extra civitatem illos qui ex superbia prius regnabant, et omnes alios malefactores dissipavit etc.⁴¹

The city of Rome existing in the greatest discord between its own citizens on account of which many from other provinces were reluctant to visit Rome lest they be robbed on their journey; wherefore, *as though it pleased divine Providence*, the aforementioned tribune Niccolaus of Rome was elected, whom the Roman People confirmed as governor of said city, and he expelled from the city those who reigned before out of pride, and he dispersed all other evildoers etc.

Rome was fundamentally a dangerous morass, we are told. Then as if divinely ordained by Providence herself along comes Cola, who immediately expels from the city those who had ruled out of haughtiness and all other evildoers along with them.

The Ferrarese chronicle also acknowledges Cola's diplomatic correspondence with all of the lords and communes of Italy, without neglecting his unifying intentions.

Niccolaus tribunus civitatis romane destinavit litteras omnibus Comunibus et Dominis Ytalye, ut mittere deberent ibi duos ambaxiatores pro quolibet Domino et Comuni, quia generale parlamentum facere intendebat pro bono et pacifico statu totius humanitatis.⁴²

Niccolaus tribune of the city of Rome sent letters to all of the Communes and Lords of Italy, that they might send to Rome two ambassadors on behalf of each Lord and Commune, because he intended to create a general parliament for the good and peaceful state of all humanity.

The chronicle notes that Cola's intended goal was to establish a "general parliament" in the spirit of maintaining the good and peaceful state of all humanity, or a "*bonus et pacificus status*." The very same vocabulary that appeared in the *Atto di concordia* is deployed in this chronicle that also attributes to Cola the concept of a general, peninsula-wide parliament, in which all of the communes and leaders of what he calls "*Ytalye*" are invited to participate. While the chronicle

⁴¹ *Chronicon Estense*, p. 148. Emphasis added.

⁴² *Chronicon Estense*, p. 149.

passes over in silence Cola's stated attempt to unify Italy, it records his goals with a grandiosity of scope, which is not an inaccurate representation of the way in which he actually presented his campaign to the lords and communes of Italy: "*pro bono et pacifico statu totius humanitatis.*"⁴³

The reception of Cola as revolutionary figure varied in his appearance from one chronicle to the next. In some cases, his newly-minted identity as tribune and liberator of the Roman people was embraced and regurgitated verbatim; in other cases, he was simply recorded for what he was: a humble notary and mere citizen of the city of Rome. Those aspects of his activities that are emphasized by any given chronicle can be extremely telling. The *Chronicon Mutinense* (Modena, 1349) by Giovanni de Bazano puts forth a first impression of Cola as a crusader against the nobles in power:

Dicto millesimo de mense mai die XX dominus Nicolaus filius quondam domini Laurentii notarius et civis romanus et populares Urbis, propter iniqua et pessima quae in ipsa civitate perpetrabuntur per *nobiles et potentes*, impetus et furore expulerunt de dicta civitate *nobiles* de Ursinis et de Colupnis et eciam alios *nobiles et potentes* dictae Urbis.⁴⁴

That same year on May 20 the lord Nicolaus, son of a certain lord Lorenzo, a notary and Roman citizen and pleb of the city, on account of the awful and evil things which had been perpetrated in that same city by the *nobiles and potentates*, with impetus and fury he expelled from said City the *nobiles* of the Orsini and Colonna families and also other *nobiles and potentates* of said City.

⁴³ Just two months later, on the occasion of the spectacular celebration of Cola's coronation on the first of August, the *Chronicon Ferrarese* records his bold quasi-imperial gesture of offering Roman citizenship to all the inhabitants of the peninsula and the unifying agenda. See *Chronicon Estense*, p. 151: "Nos Nicolaus miles tribunus, auctoritate, potestate, iurisdictione nobis concessis a romano Populo, et nuper a domino nostro summo Pontifice, ut patet per publica instrumenta, et bullas eius, et gratia Spiritus Sancti, omni modo iure, forma, quibus melius possumus, decrevimus et declaramus, et pronunciamus cives esse Romanos ac Romane libertatis privilegio de cetero volumus gaudere. Item eadem auctoritate et gratia Dei, profferimus et declaramus electionem romani Imperii, iurisdictionem ac monarchiam ad ipsam aliam Urbem et eius Populo, necnon universam Ytaliam pertinere." For similar coverage of this same event, see the discussion of the *Chronicon Mutinense* below.

⁴⁴ *Chronicon Mutinense* in *RIS*, XII, p. 134. Emphasis added.

Obsessively repeating “*nobiles*” and “*potentes*,” this chronicle highlights the fact that Cola’s was an anti-Seigniorial movement, one poised against the nobles who had committed acts both “*iniqua et pessima*” in the city. Modena potentially either had a vested interest in the righteous mission of Cola’s crusade against the oligarchs or perceived this kind of class upheaval as somehow threatening. Either way, the lexical fixation on the objects of Cola’s attack is telling.

In an entry for the following month, the Modena chronicle documents the receipt of another letter from the Roman tribune, the incipit of which the chronicler quotes in its entirety before proceeding to paraphrase most of the rest. The letter paraphrased in the chronicle is the one in which Cola assumes the title of tribune – emphasizing his coronation and excluding other less significant details.⁴⁵ The entry then jumps right to Cola’s diplomatic proposition:

Tandem in fine exhortabat [...] ut placeret Mutinensibus mittere Romam die festi sancti Petri ad vincula, die primo augusti venturo, duos syndacos et ambaxiatores de Mutina ad consilium et parlamentum quod in illo die in romana synodo facere intendebat, ad salutem totius Italiae celebrandum.⁴⁶

Finally at the end he exhorted [...] that were it pleasing to Modena to send to Rome for the holiday of Saint Peter in chains, the coming first day of August, two representatives and ambassadors from Modena to the council and parliament that on that day he intended to create in the Roman synod, for the celebration of the wellbeing of all of Italy.

What most engaged the imagination of the Modenese chronicler was the call “to celebrate the wellbeing of all of Italy.” Giovanni de Bassano homes in on the Roman tribune’s invitation to the first convocation of the Pan-Italian parliament to be held in the Roman synod, but unlike other chronicles – such as the Anonimo, for example – the Modenese chronicler does not leave out the goal behind the initiative: “*ad salutem totius Italiae celebrandum*.” For certain chroniclers more than others, these broad sentiments resonated enough to merit inclusion in their

⁴⁵ *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 134.

⁴⁶ *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 135. The terms *consilium*, *parlamentum* and *sindacus* also demands to be noted as important elements of the political discourse.

shorthand accounts of contemporary history. Through both these second-hand summations and the primary sources they paraphrase, the effect Cola's idealistic speech acts had on his contemporaries begins to emerge.

After a brief tangent describing the devastation of a plague, which predated by roughly a year the famous "Black Death" of 1348 that would devastate most of Europe, the *Mutinese* chronicler returns to the next development in Cola's rise.⁴⁷ Details regarding the general state not only of the peninsula's turbulent politics but also of the other hardships that the people of the time had to endure help to give a fuller sense of context in which Cola's campaign was launched and received. In the same period of time that a terrible pestilence took the lives of some of the best people in neighboring towns, a series of letters, the chronicler recounts, was delivered to Bologna. Among them was one from Cola that began in his usual grandiose fashion. His salutation immediately captivated readers and created enough of a stir for its opening lines to be recorded in local annals: "Nicolaus condam Laurentii severus et clemens, pacis iusticiaeque tribunus et sacrae Romane Reipublicae liberator [...]" (Nicolaus de Lorenzo, severe and clement, tribune of peace and justice and liberator of the Roman Republic [...]).⁴⁸ After duly noting the overwrought tone of the letter's incipit that presents Cola's name surrounded by half a dozen epithets and qualifiers, the chronicler then explains that part of the motivation for the Tribune having written the letter is to announce that he intends to change his title: "*intendit sibi mutare*

⁴⁷ See *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 135: "Dicto anno fuit magna mortalitas personarum maxime in civitate Bononiae et [mortui sunt] de maioribus et melioribus personis ipsius civitatis ultra decem milia personarum et duravit dicta mortalitas a mense maii usque ad mensem septembris; e similiter fuit dicta mortalitas in civitate Mediolani, Briziae et Florentiae." Summer outbreaks of localized minor plagues were a regular occurrence even prior to more extreme epidemics, like the Black Death of 1348.

⁴⁸ *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 135.

nomen.”⁴⁹ The name-changing ceremony that will take place at the Festival for the Celebration of a United Italy that transpires over the course of the first two weeks of August is then described in detail.

Although the Modenese chronicler belittles to some extent the Festival of a United Italy – by referring to it as a “name-changing ceremony” rather than a celebration “*pro bono et pacifico statu totius humanitatis*,” as it had appeared in the letter – he nevertheless describes the grand pageantry of the actual celebration and the extraordinary turnout it attracted in such detail that one is led to believe that Cola’s festival had its share of supporters. The Festival for the Celebration of a United Italy was a vainglorious blockbuster, according to the flair and flourish with which the Modenese chronicler describes it. The grand finale was even replete with its very own explosive surprise: “*Ibi etiam obtinuit et habuit a populo Urbis quod omnes Italici sint et esse censeantur cives romani [et] gaudeant privilegiis et dignitatibus Romanorum*” (There he also obtained and offered on behalf of the people of the Urbs that all Italians are and will be considered Roman citizens [and] that they will enjoy the privileges and dignities of the Romans).⁵⁰ And so the people of Rome, having just been saved from the clutches of tyranny, banditry and bestiality three months prior, suddenly, under the tutelage of Cola di Rienzo, have the wherewithal to offer Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of Italy along with the privileges they apparently now enjoy. Since not only highly intelligent individuals like Petrarch but also a vast majority of the city-states of the peninsula took Cola and his spectacular campaign seriously, such eager reactions to participate should give us some indication as to the general tenor of the political landscape in which Cola was working. There was obviously a desire for a

⁴⁹ *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 135.

⁵⁰ *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 136.

unity movement of some kind, despite all the forces like the papal court in Avignon and certain factions of ruling nobles who strove to make it impossible.

The Modenese chronicler then transcribes in its entirety Cola's famous letter of August 1 – the one in which Cola makes his bold bid for an imaginary *caput orbis* and an impracticable united Italy:

Nos itaque propter auctoritatem, potestatem et iurisdictionem antiquam et arbitrariam potestatem nobis concessam a Romano populo in publico parlamento et nuper a domino nostro summo Pontefice, ut patet per publicas et apostolicas bullas eius ne videamur de dono et gracia Spiritus Sancti ingrati quo[modo] libet [vel] avari, tam Romano populo quam populis sacrae Italiae supradictis, [et] ne per negligentiam iura et iurisdictiones Romani populi [permittamus amplius deperire, auctoritate et gracia Dei et Spiritus Sancti ac sacri Romani populi] et omni modo, iure et forma quibus melius possumus et debemus, decernimus, declaramus et pronuntiamus ipsam sanctam Romanam Urbem caput Orbis et fundamentum fidei christianae et omnes et singulas civitates Italiae liberas esse et easdem ad cautelam [integrae] libertati [dedimus et] donamus ac omnes et singulos populos tocus [sacrae] Italiae liberos esse censemus.⁵¹

I therefore with the authority, ancient power and jurisdiction and judicial power vested in me by the Roman people in the public parliament and recently also by our lord the high pope, as made apparent through his public and apostolic bulls lest I seem unworthy of the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit in any way, or greedy, as much by the Roman people as by the aforementioned people of sacred Italy, and lest through negligence of the laws and jurisdictions of the Roman people [I should allow it to fall further into ruin, by the authority and grace of God and of the Holy Spirit and of the sacred Roman people] and in any way, lawfully and in any form by which I am better able and should, I discern, declare and pronounce this Holy Roman City the capital of the world and foundation of the Christian faith and each and every city of Italy to be free, and I grant each of the same the caution of complete liberty, and I judge the sovereign people of all of Holy Italy to be free.

The architecture of his imaginary community is vague, but we can begin to make out some of its outlines through each torturous turn of phrase in Cola's medieval legalese.⁵² Cola determines that

⁵¹ *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 137.

⁵² For an additional contrast in diplomatic style between Petrarch and Cola, see the more than fifty surviving letters of Cola di Rienzo that are predominantly official in tone and largely political in nature. On epistolary style in the period, see Richardson, "The *Ars dictaminis*, the Formulary, and Medieval

Rome is both the capital of the world and the foundation of the Christian Church. A strong political Rome will put the city back on the Christian map, and he is going to make Italy's cities free to participate in the new society. Boggled down in legal formulas, he pronounces each and every city of sacred Italy free and manumits all their people as well. Indeed, he invokes not just the "*populis*" above, but also the "*cives*," a word he uses again shortly thereafter in the same document, where there is even talk about "privileges" and universal rights as citizens of Rome.⁵³ Cola's political thinking is rooted in republican rhetoric. The people have a place and a new identity as citizens of a larger collective that is characterized by its status, which is variously described as either "*pacificus*" or as a "*bonus status*," a status over which they are invited to rejoice and enjoy (*gaudere*).

Cola calls upon the involvement of the people, the average citizens of the city-states on the peninsula throughout his writings. They are, after all, a central feature of his populist cause.⁵⁴ In addition to invoking citizens, and not just dealing with diplomacy between statesmen, Cola also invokes the concept of friendship, even the antique friendship (*antiqua amicitia*) that must be renewed.⁵⁵ Cola's eclecticism – which is certainly in part home-grown, the product of his own erudition and learning, but also potentially in part a result of his dealings with Petrarch, from

Epistolary Practice," pp. 52-64; and Seigel, "From the *Dictatores* to the Humanists" in *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism*," pp. 200-25.

⁵³ *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 138: "Et ex nunc omnes praetatos populos et *cives* civitatum Italiae facimus, declaramus [et] pronuntiamus *cives* esse Romanos et Romanae libertatis privilegio de cetero volumus eos gaudere."

⁵⁴ No matter how impractical, Cola makes a broad offer of citizenship to all citizens of Italy, united as citizens of Rome, "quae caput est urbium orbis terre ac totius sacre Ytalie." See *Chronicon Mutinense*, p. 136. Placing this sort of emphasis on the people is traditional republican rhetoric and serves as a reminder that it was a populist movement, at least in the beginning.

⁵⁵ *Epistolario*, p. 28

whom he received frequent letters, many of which we still possess – begins to mark the introduction of something new, something in large part recovered from classical antiquity, despite the medieval legalese that so plagues Cola's style.⁵⁶

Over the course of his short-lived moment at the center stage of Italian political culture, Cola certainly emerged as one of the earliest leaders daring enough to implement many Petrarchan political values, including the promotion of a version of his classicizing ideals of friendship as the foundation for a practical political program. He captivated the hearts and minds of a large portion of the Italian ruling class, who took his initiative seriously, and injected into the discourse at large a patriotic love not only for the glories of ancient Rome but also for Italy as a whole.

⁵⁶ The focus here has been on the linguistic and rhetorical context of community-building discourse in fourteenth-century Italy. An expanded version of this study would include further analysis of Petrarch's letters to Cola as well as his other writings on the subject. A wealth of material remains to be included in an expanded version of the conclusions reached here.



Cola di Rienzo

Painting by Dario Querci depicting Cola di Rienzo addressing a crowd (1871)
Rome, Rome Museum, Rome Photographic Archive

Chapter Four

Ad comunis epystole lectionem: Pan-Italian *Familiaritas* and Petrarch's Community of Friends

The *Iugum* of Friendship

When in May of 1352 Petrarch heard that the seam of friendship between two prominent men from important Italian city-states had come unstitched, he sought to mend it with “the needle of firm devotion and a thin thread of words.”¹ His stitches took the form of a rhetorically charged series of letters (*Familiars* XII, 14-17), in which he encourages the disaffected men to “return to the yoke of their old friendship” (*sub iugum veteris amicitie redire; Fam. XII, 15*). The men involved were Giovanni Barrili of Naples and Niccolò Acciaiuoli of Florence, both of whom had proudly served the Kingdom of Naples since the time of King Robert of Anjou and continued to do so in different capacities. Since they hailed from two different major centers of power on the peninsula and thus represented two different factions within the Neapolitan court, the renewal of their “old” bond of friendship would have had local repercussions as well as more general implications for political relations in Italy as a whole.

Petrarch's injunction to “return to an old friendship” (*vetera amicitia redire; Fam. XII, 15*) is reminiscent of the rhetorical strategy Cola di Rienzo had deployed in his short-lived 1347

¹ Petrarch, *Familiars*, XII, 14 (Bernardo, p. 162): “Non effractum certe sed parumper, ut audio, dissutam amicitiam vestram acu solide devotionis ac *tenui verborum filo* reparare disposui, ambobus pariter scribens magna fide nec minori fiducia, non in eloquii mei viribus sed in Dei auxilio et utriusque vestrum moribus spem habens” (“Upon hearing that the friendship between you two had not really been broken, but somewhat unstitched, I determined to repair it with the needle of firm devotion and with *a thin thread of words*. With great confidence and trust I wrote both of you at the same time, hoping not in the power of my eloquence but in the assistance of God and in your character”). Emphasis added. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Familiars* are from Francesco Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo. The Latin text comes from Francesco Petrarca, *Le familiari (Libri XI-XV)*, eds. Vittorio Rossi, Umberto Bosco and Ugo Dotti.

campaign to unite Italy under the banner of a renewed ancient friendship. The populist Roman tribune's motto for unification among the various sovereign city-states of the peninsula took the form of a purpose clause: *ad antiquam amicitiam renovandam*.² Calling for the renewal of ancient friendship among the city-states of the peninsula, Cola had turned to the long tradition of equating *amicitia* to political alliance that went back at least to the time of the Roman republic if not before. Returning to the values that had characterized the tribune's campaign to unite Italy under a form of alliance he called *antiqua amicitia*, Petrarch reiterates Cola's politics of *amicitia* in the unique epistolary campaign under analysis here (*Fam.* XII 14-17), only this time he recasts it in more intimate terms, a politics of *familiaritas*, to suit the familiar relations between two acquaintances rather than a loose-knit collection of city-states.³

In this regard, Petrarch's use of the image of the *iugum*, or yoke, of their old friendship in this initial injunction (*Fam.* XII, 15) is also significant inasmuch as it signals a distancing from

² For the concept of *amicitia* as political alliance in the context of the late Roman Republic, to which both Cola and Petrarch turned when it came to resuscitating the illustrious values of the past in their own time, see Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, p. 12: "The competition was fierce and incessant. Family influence and wealth did not alone suffice. From ambition or for safety, politicians formed compacts. *Amicitia* was a weapon of politics, not a sentiment based on congeniality. Individuals capture attention and engross history, but the most revolutionary changes in Roman politics were the work of families or of a few men." For a comprehensive overview of the scholarly debate over the meaning and import of *amicitia* in the late Roman republic, see Brunt, "Amicitia in the Late Roman Republic." For additional studies in the political nature of classical *amicitia*, see Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*; Vernant, "City-State Warfare," pp. 29-53.

³ Writing from the source of the Sorgue in 1352, Petrarch would have had the memory of the Roman tribune Cola di Rienzo's short-lived epistolary campaign to unify Italy fresh on his mind. Not only was Petrarch about to definitively abandon his ties to the papal court in Avignon, largely as a result of his risky gamble in backing the loose-canon populist upstart during his initial rise to the tribunate of Rome back in 1347, but Cola had recently been taken prisoner by the imperial court in Prague and was about to be transferred to Avignon to be tried for heresy. He was thus a hot topic again in court politics. See Francesco Petrarca, *The Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*; Collins, *Greater Than Emperor: Cola di Rienzo and the World of Fourteenth-Century Rome*; and Musto, *Apocalypse in Rome: Cola di Rienzo and the Politics of the New Age*.

the idealizing rhetoric typically associated with the notion of friendship that he found in Cicero's *De amicitia*. The yoke implies not only a shared enterprise and a common bond, but also a collective sense of responsibility and a mutual burden.⁴ In *Familiares* XII, 2, the famous *regimen principis* written earlier that year and addressed to one of these very same correspondents, Niccolò Acciaiuoli, Petrarch again deploys the rhetoric of the *iugum*. The image of the yoke comes up in the context of his advice to the prince regarding the sanctity of friendships, in particular, the importance of being loved by one's friends and subjects since the passions of others are impossible to control: "As the ancient proverb states, 'let him unstitch his friendships and not cut them.' Let him hope for the same spirit in others as he displays in himself, and let him not deign to be esteemed by anyone whom he himself does not esteem. That is a common error among the powerful. *Affections are, however, unrestrained; they do not bear any yoke nor recognize any master. Never is love driven except through love, never can it avoid being so driven.*"⁵ In this instance, however, it is a different yoke – one that the human faculty of reason only with great difficulty attempts to impose on the passions, thus implying subjugation. Whereas friendship between the two men in *Familiares* XII, 14-16 is painted in a human light,

⁴ When it is valued for its utility, *amicitia* is a political expedient. In the context of political alliance, *amicitia* is defined less by a unity of feeling or principle than by sharing common interests and by a mutual exchange of services. For an analysis of the vocabulary of community, see Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, especially in the section on "Giving and Taking."

⁵ *Fam.* XII, 2 (Bernardo, 135): "ut est in antiquo proverbio, 'dissuat amicitiam non discindat.' Qualem prestat, talem ab aliis animum speret, nec a quoquam diligi sibi fingat quem ipse non diligit: error iste potentum est; *liberrimi autem sunt affectus, iugum non ferunt, dominum non agnoscunt; nunquam amor nisi amore cogitur, nunquam amore non cogitur.*" Emphasis added. The advice not to burn any bridges when it comes to breaking off a friendship is phrased in the form of an *antiquum proverbium*, the source of which is Cicero, *De amicitia*, XXI, 76: "dissuendae [amicitiae] magis quam discindendae" ("They [friendships] should be unraveled rather than rent apart"). The same proverb appears in *Fam.* IX, 14, 3. See also Wilkins, *Studies in the Life and Work of Petrarch*, pp. 97-9; and Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca*, pp. 244-6.

though it is also portrayed as a matter of duty – a shared sense of obligation to each other, to the court, and even to Italy as an illusive, abstract whole.

The *De amicitia* is not the only place where Cicero discusses the trappings of friendship in political life. In fact, Petrarch would have also found a more nuanced, flexible approach to the multitude of possible friendships and alliances in the same author's *De inventione*:

As a matter of fact there are some who think that friendship is to be sought *solely for advantage*, others *for itself alone*, and others *for itself and for advantage*. Which opinion has the best foundation is a matter to be considered at another time. For the present let it be left thus as far as oratorical practice is concerned, that friendship is to be sought for both reasons. In as much as some friendships are related to religious scruples, and some not, and some are old and some new, some arise from a kindness done to others, and some from our own services to them, some are more advantageous and some less, an examination of their nature will involve a consideration of the value of causes, the suitability of times and occasion, moral obligation, religious duties, and length of time.⁶

Cicero's taxonomy of friendships is as varied and all-inclusive as the non-dogmatic mind of the orator should be. He does not break friendship down into rigid idealized categories but rather allows for the malleability and variety of experience that the vicissitudes of life present to us.

In much the same Ciceronian spirit of distinguishing between these various types of possible friendships, Petrarch's epistolary strategies in negotiating alliances under the aegis of *amicitia* among the leaders of the city-states of his much-beloved Italian peninsula are, in fact, extremely eclectic.⁷ Sensitive to the "times and occasion" at hand, he utilizes a variety of rhetorical strategies. Three of the primary models of political friendship that Petrarch invokes

⁶ Cicero, *De inventione*, II, 167: "Quamquam sunt qui propter utilitatem modo petendam putant amicitiam; sunt qui propter se solum; sunt qui propter se et utilitatem. Quorum qui verissime constituatur, alius locus erit considerandi. Nunc hoc sic ad usum oratorium relinquatur, utramque propter rem amicitiam esse expetendam. Amicitiarum autem ratio, quoniam partim sunt religionibus iunctae, partim non sunt, et quia partim veteres sunt, partim novae, partim ab illorum, partim ab nostro beneficio profectae, partim utiliores, partim minus utiles, ex causarum dignitatibus, ex temporum opportunitatibus, ex officiis, ex religionibus, ex vetustatibus habebitur."

⁷ Tocco, *Niccolò Acciaiuoli: Vita e politica in Italia alla metà del XIV secolo*, pp. 102-3.

correspond to categories that contemporary social scientists have derived from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: the attribute model, appealing to the unique character of the individuals involved; the homophily-heterophily model, emphasizing the "birds of a feather" phenomenon; and, lastly, the propinquity model, deriving a community of interests from spatial proximities.⁸ What follows is a case study of the diplomatic eclecticism with which Petrarch deploys each of these models in his attempt to mediate the peaceful reconstitution of friendship between two wayward old friends whose sphere of influence not only includes Angevin court politics in Naples and Italian relations as a whole in the collective imaginary but also extends into the world of papal Avignon. As analyzed in this chapter, the letters that document Petrarch's reconciliatory efforts include *Familiares* XII, 14-17 and XIII, 9-10.

Florentinum ac parthenopeum decus

Born to a noble Neapolitan family, Giovanni Barrili occupied a position of great favor in the court of King Robert of Anjou, on whose behalf he carried out many important political and diplomatic missions. He was a magistrate and soldier in the service of Naples who also later named Grand Seneschal of Provence. He and Petrarch first met in 1341 when the latter visited Naples for the first time for his "examination" by King Robert prior to his coronation in Rome.⁹

⁸ As an expedient I have borrowed the terminology for these three categories from recent work in the social sciences on friendship in modern legislative life. See Caldeira and Patterson, "Political Friendship in the Legislature," pp. 959-965. Based on classical distinctions of friendship in politics found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Caldeira and Patterson's categories perfectly sum up the strategies Petrarch deploys, here and elsewhere in his work. See, in particular, his similar epistolary campaign to negotiate peace between Venice and Genoa as documented in the letters *Fam.* XI, 8; XIV, 5 and 6. For Aristotle's "birds of feather" category, see *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII, I (1155a25).

⁹ In addition to *Fam.* XII, 16, other letters addressed to Giovanni Barrili include *Fam.* XII, 14; Var. 57; *Epyst.* II, 1; III, 13 and 21. He also appears in the guise of the shepherd Ideo, distinguished for his loyalty and intelligence, in the second eclogue of Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen*, where he is depicted lamenting the loss and singing the praises of King Robert of Anjou.

Barrili was to have been the one to crown Petrarch poet laureate on the Capitoline hill that same year, but he missed the ceremony due to an ambush of ruffians he encountered on his way from Capua that delayed his arrival in Rome.¹⁰ Their relationship was reinforced during Petrarch's second diplomatic trip to Naples in 1343, shortly after the death of his much admired royal patron, King Robert of Anjou.¹¹ Though Barrili remained in good standing with the king's daughter and heir to the throne, Queen Joanna I of Naples (1326-1382), his influence in court began to wane after the death of King Robert in 1343 and the subsequent rise to prominence of Niccolò Acciaiuoli.

Niccolò Acciaiuoli was born in 1310 into the bastard branch of an important mercantile family in Florence.¹² In 1331 he was sent to represent his family's commercial interests in Naples. Ambitious and shameless by reputation, he quickly entered into the good favor of King

¹⁰ The first metric epistle of the second book of his *Epystolae metricae* is addressed to Barrili, where Petrarch laments his friend's absence at the ceremony.

¹¹ On Petrarch's second trip to Naples, see Ugo Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca*, pp. 117-22; Michele Feo, "Inquietudini filologiche del Petrarca: il luogo della discesa agli inferi," pp. 115-83.

¹² In *Fam.* XI, 13, Petrarch emphasizes the fact that he and Niccolò Acciaiuoli share the same fatherland, "*commune patria*" (Bernardo, p. 115: "our common fatherland"). Broadly speaking it could be said that Petrarch always considered himself vaguely Florentine in origin, though he never actually lived there and was born in Arezzo. In the context of the rest of the letter, with its pan-Italian emphasis, it would seem that Petrarch is actually referring to Italy as the *patria* they hold in common, *Fam.* XI, 13 (Bernardo, pp. 115): "I see you battling fortune with such a great and invincible spirit that often *I have been moved to compose a rather grandiose work about you*, worthy of you and me, and not unworthy of *our fatherland*, which gave birth to us under very different stars, you for splendid glorious actions and me for stringing words as best I can. The recent good fortune of the king, supported by your wise counsel, has provided still more fertile matter for my pen. It has restored to me the welcome hope that, while he lives, foreigners will never control Italy." (Emphasis added.) In this letter dated August 29, 1351, Petrarch requests Acciaiuoli's patronage during his rise to power in the Neapolitan court under Louis of Taranto in exchange for Petrarch's services as scribe and even epic poet in his willingness to document Acciaiuoli's glorious deeds in his capacity as Grand Seneschal. They would only meet in person in 1360 (see *Fam.* XXII, 6).

Robert, and after the death of the king in 1343 he dedicated his service to Louis of Taranto.¹³ Acciaiuoli helped orchestrate Louis' marriage to Queen Joanna after the assassination of her first husband, Andrew of Hungary. He then proceeded to align himself with Louis as the new King against the Queen. Elected Grand Seneschal in 1348, Acciaiuoli became one of the most powerful, as well as one of the richest, men in the Kingdom of Naples.¹⁴ In 1350, as Louis rose to power within the court at Naples, Acciaiuoli was his primary political adviser.¹⁵

Despite Acciaiuoli's rise, Barrili continued to serve under Queen Joanna's rule. In the summer of 1348, however, she appointed him to Grand Seneschal of Provence, a position Petrarch had encouraged him to accept.¹⁶ According to some scholars, however, this was perhaps the turning point after which tensions escalated between him and Acciaiuoli, not in small measure due to the fact that Barrili's appointment created much scandal in Provence as only

¹³ Tocco, *Niccolò Acciaiuoli*, pp. 102-3.

¹⁴ The letters Petrarch addressed to Niccolò Acciaiuoli include *Fam.* XI, 13; XII 2, 15 and 16; XXIII 18; *Sen.* III, 3; *Epyst.* III, 14. Two of his letters in response to Petrarch have also come down to us, one of which can be found in an appendix to Enrico Cochin, *Un amico di Francesco Petrarca. Le lettere del Nelli al Petrarca*, p. 112.

¹⁵ Although Petrarch was aware of the fact that Acciaiuoli's methods were often questionable, he was generally enthusiastic about the Grand Seneschal's political and diplomatic prowess. What most impressed Petrarch was Acciaiuoli's ability to liberate Naples from the presence of the Hungarian troops King Louis of Hungary had left behind. See *Fam.* XI, 13 (Bernardo, pp. 115-6): ("et si, quod spero quidem et cupio, ceptis illustribus favor celestis affuerit, ut corpus italicum tabe barbarica purgatum medullitus agnoscam, in quod iam nunc, ut fama est, dulcia nostris amara hostibus preparatoria confecistis, sentio me desiderio meo non posse diutius obstare quominus in illud litus cui non modo in Italia sed in toto etiam orbe terrarum scriptores rerum dant pulcritudinis principatum, inter occupationum mearum retia dilapsus evadam et faciem tuam visurus et Parthenopen revisurus") ("And if, as I hope and indeed pray, divine favor supports your lofty undertakings so that I might see Italy's body cleansed to its marrow of the foreign plague – it is said you are making preparations pleasing to our people though disturbing to the enemy – I will no longer feel able to resist my desire to cast aside the nets of my affairs and to return to those shores which writers in Italy and throughout the world consider the most beautiful, and to see you in person and Naples once again").

¹⁶ See *Epyst.* III, 13.

months before the Queen had promised local residents that the position would only be held by someone from the area. It is unclear if Acciaiuoli had a hand in the worsening of the situation.¹⁷ In any case, Louis – with Acciaiuoli on his side – turned the revolt in Provence into a coup within the court against the Queen. Enter Petrarch, who would attempt to apply a localized remedy, court politics aside, intended to mend the friendship between the two men by means of a unique epistolary campaign.

¹⁷ Tocco, *Niccolò Acciaiuoli*, pp. 102-3.

A Rhetoric of *Familiaritas*¹⁸

Addressed simultaneously to both Niccolò Acciaiuoli of Florence *and* Giovanni Barrili of Naples, *Familiare* XII, 16 is intimate and informal in tone and structure, even though its subject is political in nature. In contrast to the “dictaminal” style that had dominated official correspondence at that time, Petrarch’s letter is distinctly non-formulaic.¹⁹ In contrast to the medieval *ars dictaminis* model, Petrarch was the prime mover behind a revival of the classical model of the “familiar” letter that he had famously unearthed at an earlier stage of his career in the form of a rare manuscript of Cicero’s *Ad Atticum*.²⁰ By evoking the interpersonal dimension of friendship in his “familiar” approach to the political missive, Petrarch introduces a whole new way of talking about forms of political and social communion that would have been foreign to the more pragmatic world of late medieval diplomacy.²¹

¹⁸ On rhetorical *familiaritas*, see Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy*.

¹⁹ For a discussion of the evolution of letter-writing theory and praxis in this period, see Burton, “From *Ars dictaminis* to *Ars conscribendi epistolis*: Renaissance Letter-Writing Manuals in the Context of Humanism”; Abbruzzetti, “La codification de l’art épistolaire au moyen âge. Un exemple italien: Boncompagno da Signa”; and Richardson, “The *Ars dictaminis*, the Formulary, and Medieval Epistolary Practice.” Petrarch’s promotion of this intimate new style was so persuasive that all of his friends and correspondents can be seen to emulate him, including Acciaiuoli, who draws attention to the casual, informal style he deploys in one of his letters to the humanist. See Cochin, *Un amico*, p. 112.

²⁰ For a discussion of this watershed moment, see Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy*, pp. 49 ff.; Witt, “Medieval ‘Ars Dictaminis’ and the Beginnings of Humanism: A New Construction of the Problem”; and Fantazzi, “General Introduction” in J. L. Vives, *De conscribendis epistolis*, pp. 5-7.

²¹ For a particularly articulate expression of just such a reception, see the letter Andrea Dandolo, Doge of Venice, wrote in response to a similar attempt Petrarch made to mend the doge’s fraught friendship with one time friend, the Doge of Genoa, which can be found in Dotti, *Petrarca a Milano*, pp. 155-57 in Latin, and pp. 86-88 in translation. This exchange is discussed in greater detail below. For an additional contrast in diplomatic style, see the more than fifty surviving letters of Cola di Rienzo that are predominantly official in tone and largely political in nature, discussed in Chapter 2 of this study. For Cola’s letters, see Gabrielli, *Epistolario*. For a sense of the rhetorical practices current at the time, see also Giorgi, “Il trattato di pace e di alleanza del 1165-1166 fra Roma e Genova,” pp. 397-466. A series of significant peace treaties from the time also survive, including a brief document entitled *Memoria pacis facte inter*

One of the characteristics of the newly revived style of the familiar letter is an immediacy to which the more formal, official dictaminal model did not aspire – an immediacy that makes present those who are absent. As far back as Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* we find definitions of the art and value of writing based on the desire to communicate to those who are not present.²² In addition to the ability of writing – especially letter writing – to overcome distance in order to communicate important information, there is a specific kind of writing that Cicero calls “*scribere familiariter*” (“friendly correspondence,” or “writing intimately”) that not only allows communication across space but also makes vividly present those who are not:²³

Believe me, too, *when I seem to talk with you*, I have some relief from sorrow, and, *when I read a letter from you*, far greater relief.²⁴

On numerous occasions, Cicero likens the immediacy of written, friendly correspondence to the satisfaction of live conversation.²⁵ The form, the content and, perhaps most of all, the style of the

commune Aretij et Ubertinos (luglio 20, 1345) and Atto di concordia e lega fra i comuni di Arezzo, Firenze, Siena, Perugia ed altri (aprile 22, 1347). Both of these documents are available in Ghiron, *Annali d'Italia, in continuazione al Muratori e al Coppi*. For a reconstruction of the socio-political climate of fourteenth-century Rome, see Miglio, *Scritture, scrittori e storia*; Maire Vigueur, “Il commune romano,” pp. 117-57; and Modigliani, *L'eredità di Cola di Rienzo: Gli statuti del Comune di popolo e la riforma di Paolo II*, pp. 10-178.

²² Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 3.12, p. 255: “[writing] avoids the necessity of silence if one wishes to communicate to others [who are not present].” See also, Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy*, pp. 11-17.

²³ Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 9, 4, I: “Quae enim solute animo *familiariter scribi* solent, ea temporibus his excluduntur, quae autem sunt horum temporum, ea iam contrivimus” (“[F]or the present crisis debars us from the free and easy topics of *friendly correspondence*, and the topics connected with the present crisis we have already exhausted”). See also, Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy*, pp. 11-17.

²⁴ Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 8, 14, I: “[...] et simul, crede mihi, requiesco paulum in his miseriis, *cum quasi tecum loquor, cum vero tuas epistolas lego*, multo etiam magis.” Emphasis added.

²⁵ Other examples in his *Letters to Atticus* abound. See also 9, 10, I: “Sed, cum me aegritudo non solum somno privaret, verum ne vigilare quidem sine summo dolore pateretur, tecum ut quasi loquerer, in quo

familiar letter thus acts as the vehicle for a synesthesia by which the reader is able to experience the living presence of an absent friend through the vividness of his intimately written words.

Perhaps the clearest, most canonical statement of the *absens/praesens* motif in the poetics of the familiar letter is found in Seneca's *Epistle 40*:

I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith. If the pictures of our absent friends are pleasing to us, though they only refresh the memory and lighten our longing by a solace that is unreal and unsubstantial, how much more pleasant is a letter, which brings us real traces, real evidences, of an absent friend! For that which is sweetest when we meet face to face is afforded by the impress of a friend's hand upon his letter – recognition.²⁶

With the potential for even greater intimacy than a visual representation of an absent friend, a letter is capable of transmitting the touch of its writer's friendly hand. And so, the trope of making present those who are absent becomes a commonplace of the theory and praxis surrounding the familiar letter. Elsewhere, in the appropriately titled *Ad familiares*, or *Letters to His Friends*, Cicero praises the virtues of the specific practice of letter writing in the same way.²⁷

uno acquiesco, hoc nescio quid nullo argumento proposito scribere institui” (“But as a sick heart not only robs me of sleep, but will not allow me even to keep awake without the greatest pain, I have begun to write to you something or other without definite subject, that I may have a sort of talk with you, the only thing that gives me relief”); and 12, 53: “Ego, etsi nihil habeo, quod ad te scribam, scribo tamen, quia tecum loqui videor” (“Though I have nothing to say to you, I write all the same, because I feel as though I were talking to you”).

²⁶ Seneca, *Epist.* 40, I: “Numquam epistulam tuam accipio, ut non protinus una simus. Si imagines nobis amicorum absentium iucundae sunt, quae memoriam renovant et desiderium falso atque inani solacio levant, quanto iucundiores sunt litterae, quae vera amici absentis vestigia, veras notas adferunt? Nam quod in conspectu dulcissimum est, id amici manus epistulae impressa praestat, agnoscere.”

²⁷ Cicero, *Ad familiares* 2, 4, I: “Epistularum genera multa esse non ignores, sed unum illud certissimum, cuius causa inventa res ipsa est, ut *certiores faceremus absentes*, si quid esset, quod eos scire aut nostra ipsorum interesset” (“That there are many kinds of letters you are well aware: there is one kind, however, about which there can be no mistake, for indeed letter writing was invented just in order that we might *inform those at distance* [literally, “those absent”] if there were anything which it was important for them or for ourselves that they should know”). Emphasis added.

Distance is no match for the closest of friends who have the familiar letter at their disposal. The casual, familiar style affords the closest approximation to lively conversation between friends.

Writing in the epistolary mode that Cicero had practiced and theorized, Petrarch begins *Familiars* XII, 16 abruptly, *in medias res*, employing a direct, informal address:

Iungam vos, magnanimi viri, florentinum ac parthenopeum decus, iungam vos, si patimini nec contactum amice manus horrescitis.

I wish to bring you together [*iungam vos*, literally “join you”], O most illustrious men and pride of Florence and Naples, I wish to bring you together [*iungam vos*] if you will permit me to do so and will not shudder at the touch of a friendly hand.²⁸

Invoking one of the commonplaces of the familiar letter, the “touch of a friendly hand” here is that of the letter writer who makes himself present through the letter. However, the purpose of the letter – as we will soon see in more detail – is to bring these two men together, physically together. And so, simultaneously addressing both Niccolò Acciaiuoli and Giovanni Barrili, the pride of Florence and Naples, with the second person plural pronoun *vos*, the “touch of a friendly hand” is also that of his dual addressees who are expected to come together over a handshake. By presenting a variation on this commonplace in the rhetoric of the familiar letter with his addition of physical presence to the equation, Petrarch heightens the conventions of the genre while at the same time subverting them.

In just this first sentence of *Familiars* XII, 16 the expression “*iungam vos*” is repeated twice in a rhetorical figure known as *conduplicatio*, which here works to create a tone of incessant care through supplication. By invoking his dual addressees twice – first in the plural referring to both of them together as illustrious men, “*magnanimi viri*,” and then in the singular according to their respective nationalities, *florentinum ac parthenopeum*, Petrarch presents them

²⁸ *Fam.* XII, 16 (Bernardo, p. 166). The use of the word *decus*, root of *decorum*, also demands to be analyzed as an extension of the argument presented here.

both as two and as one; as two in one. By placing his dual vocative phrases between the *conduplicatio* of “I wish to join you,” Petrarch sandwiches the two men together in hopes that the two geographically distinct identities will effectively become one – that magnanimity will be the force that transcends geographical distance and difference. He dramatizes physical propinquity through grammatical propinquity.

The first word of the letter, *ingungam*, gives us a first glimpse of the ways in which further along the author seeks to literalize the metaphor of community as a joining, a coming together, resulting in the convergence of two men into a single body, into a unique identity that would no longer be separate but united. Etymologically derived from the “*iugum*,” or “yoke,” discussed above, the verb *ungere* conjures a variation of the classical philosophical concept of friends sharing “one soul in two bodies.” Such a characteristically Platonic and Aristotelian concept of friendship is also found in Cicero, Horace and Augustine.²⁹ More than another self, the friend represents an extreme of closeness, an extension of one’s own self.³⁰ This is the essence of the

²⁹ For the classical precedents of this conception of friendship, see Plato, *Lysis* (221e): “If, then, you two are friendly to each other, by some tie of nature you belong to each other”; Cicero, *De amicitia*, 23-24; Horace, *Odes*, 1.3, 8; and Augustine, *Confessions*, IV.6. For an overview of the transmission of the concept from classical antiquity to Tudor England, via medieval and Renaissance Europe, see Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain*.

³⁰ Cicero, *De amicitia*, 81: “Quod si hoc apparet in bestiis, volucribus, nantibus, agrestibus, cicuribus, feris, primum ut se ipsae diligant (id enim pariter cum omni animante nascitur), deinde ut requirant atque appetant, ad quas se adplicant, eiusdem generis animantes idque faciunt cum desiderio et cum quadam similitudine amoris humani, quanto id magis in homine fit natura, qui et se ipse diligit et alterum anquirit, cuius animum ita cum suo misceat, ut efficiat *paene unum ex duobus*” (“Now if it is evident in animals, whether of the air, the water, or the land, and whether tame or wild, first, that they love themselves – for this feeling is born alike in every living creature – and, secondly, that they require and eagerly search for other animals of their own kind to which they may attach themselves – and this they do with a longing in some degree resembling human love – then how much more, by the law of his nature, is this the case with man who both loves himself and uses his reason to seek out another whose soul he may so mingle with his own as *almost to make one out of two*”). Emphasis added.

classical concept of idealized friendship: just as we love ourselves, so it is understood that we love our friend.³¹

Themes of love, attraction, convergence of selves and joining of interests are found throughout Petrarch's *Familiares* XII, 16. Love, or *Amor*, is repeated again and again throughout the letter, in which all of the commonplaces from *Omnia vincit Amor* ("Love conquers all"), *Nos cedamus Amori* ("Let us yield to Love"), and *Amor ignobilem animum secernit a nobili* ("Love distinguishes a noble heart from an ignoble one"), are quoted. At first glance Petrarch seems to be working within the confines of an idealized notion of friendship. In the *De amicitia* Cicero points out that the Latin word for "friendship" is etymologically linked to the word for "love." Laelius affirms: "For it is love (*amor*), from which the word 'friendship' (*amicitia*) is derived that leads to the establishing of goodwill" ("Amor enim, ex quo amicitia nominata est, princeps est ad benevolentiam *coniungendam*").³² Yet there is more at work here as Petrarch, an intermediary brokering force, also insists on the necessity of bringing the two men together, face to face, within touching distance, close enough to shake hands, embrace, even join their souls together and form one spirit out of two.

In *Familiares* XII, 16, Petrarch promotes the idea that his two addressees, Niccoló and Giovanni, are part and parcel of the same soul. Arguing that they are two complementary halves

³¹ Cicero, *De amicitia*, 80: "Ipse enim se quisque diligit, non ut aliquam a se ipse mercedem exigat caritatis suae, sed quod per se sibi quisque carus est. Quod nisi idem in amicitiam transferetur, verus amicus numquam reperietur. *Est enim is, qui est tamquam alter idem*" ("For everyone loves himself, not with a view of acquiring some profit for himself from his self-love, but because he is dear to himself on his own account; and unless this same feeling were transferred to friendship, the real friend would never be found; *for he is, as it were, another self*"). Emphasis added.

³² Cicero, *De amicitia*, 26. Emphasis added. In the opening of *Familiares* XII, 16, Petrarch uses a cognate (*iungere*) of the very same verb Laelius uses (*coniungere*). On the equivalence of *amor* and *amicitia*, see also Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, XIV, 13b, I.

of the same soul, Petrarch insists that they belong together, and he encourages them to return to that state:

Redite *in* vos et ad me redite meque ad vos redeuntem admittite, sine quo nusquam bene erit. Redite in gratiam in colloquium in amplexus, dextras animosque *coniungite*, iterum e duobus unum *conflate* animum. Quis *disiunxit* unanimes et, ut proprie dicam, de uno animo duos fecit?

Return to yourselves, return to me and admit me as I return to you; without this no good will ever result. Return to one another's good grace, discourse and embrace; join [*coniungite*] your right hands, unite [*coniungite*] your hearts, and once again form [*conflate*] a single heart [*animum*, literally also spirit, mind, soul] from two. Who separated [*disiunxit*] your united hearts [*unanimes*] and, to speak frankly, made two hearts of one?³³

In a series of impassioned imperatives Petrarch implores them to return not just *to* each other – which would require “*ad*,” the preposition that, by contrast, appears in the second and third imperatives – but rather he commands them to return *into* each other: “Redite *in* vos! Et *ad* me redite!” Returning to the verb *iungere*, “to join,” and its cognates, Petrarch’s subsequent choice of words in this passage all work within the same semantic field of yoking, joining and union. After incessantly repeating the imperative *redite*, “return,” three times, his next imperative, iterated just once, does double work. In the Latin “*coniungite*” is the command he gives them both for joining their right hands and their souls. Bernardo’s translation breaks them up into two separate actions. He translates Petrarch’s single utterance “*coniungite*” with both “join” and “unite” to cover the two direct objects on which the original acts single-handedly. This is significant inasmuch as it suggests that for Petrarch the act of these two men coming together to join hands coincides with the joining of their souls. It is all one: one action and thus one verb.

The poetic concision of Petrarch’s rhetorical dexterity continues in his use of the next verb in the passage: “*conflate*,” literally meaning “to blow together” or “to conflate.” He urges

³³ *Fam.* XII, 16 (Bernardo, p. 166). Emphasis added.

his dual addressees to conflate their two souls into one: “*unum conflate animum.*” The word order here is particularly effective as he intentionally places the verb between the “*unum*” and the “*animum*,” purposively separating the unity that he is persuasively arguing for. In the next clause, however, he exquisitely illustrates what it looks like, linguistically, when you conflate “*unum*” with “*animum.*” The result is “*unanime*,” a cognate of our “unanimous,” translated by Bernardo as “united hearts.” Petrarch then wonders who could ever have disjoined (“*disiunxit*,” another cognate of *iugum*) such a tightly bound compound as two men who are represented with the remarkable “*unanimes*,” which is both plural yet expresses singularity at the same time.³⁴ Throughout this passage Petrarch is virtuosic in his ability to reflect the drama of the subject matter at hand in the minutest detail of his rhetorical command.

In order to speed the process of reconciliation along, Petrarch wants to bring them together physically: “Add to this that your coming together will be all the more pleasing the longer you have been apart; often a face, the eyes, and the sound of a voice can greatly influence the mind.”³⁵ However, it does not seem to follow that this kind of transaction would require an external, third party to do the brokering. With friendship the spatial distance was not considered an obstacle, as the interpersonal closeness of friends is emotional rather than physical.³⁶

³⁴ For Classical attestations of the adjective “*unanimus*,” see Plautus, *Stichus*, 5, 4, 49: “ego tu sum, tu’s ego: unanimi sumus”; Statius, *Thebaid*, 8, 669: “unanimes fratres”; and Livy, 7, 21, 5, where the correct reading actually seems to be “*una animos.*” For a few additional attestations that Petrarch would probably not have been familiar with, see also Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*, “*unanimus*” and the post-classical “*unanimis.*”

³⁵ *Fam.* XII, 16 (Bernardo, p. 166): “Accedet serenarum frontium eo gratior quo diutius intermissa presentia; sepe multum poneris ad inclinandum animum vultus habet, presentes oculi, viva vox.”

³⁶ The Aristotelian notion that friends need to be together, under the same roof, sharing bread and salt, provides the obvious parallel narrative of friendship when physical distance is not an issue. So while Petrarch’s move might subvert the classic notion of letter-writing, he plays right into one of the standard tropes of friendship.

Petrarch's "touch of a friendly hand," in the above quotation, is material as well as spiritual. However, the focus here is on the literal: the need for human contact, a handshake, an embrace.³⁷ This is where the *topos* of "physicality" in Petrarch subverts the tradition of the familiar letter that as a rule – as illustrated above – knows no impediment in physical distance. In fact, epistolary language is meant to make present those who are absent, which is why it is worth emphasizing the apparent need for a physical "meeting." As noted above, this kind of official meeting is antithetical to the treatment of physical distance in more personal cases of *amicitia*, especially in the context of "friendly correspondence."

In the letter that immediately follows (*Fam.* XII, 17) Petrarch lays out the strategy by which he goes about bringing these two historical figures, Niccolò Acciaiuoli and Giovanni Barilli, face to face in such a way that would force them to engage in direct conversation and thus also to confront not so much their differences as the commonalities they share. Petrarch sends a single copy of the same letter to both men:

Hac usus arte, ut *ambos una eademque clauderem epystola*, quo scilicet inter legendum saltem necessario coirent.

I used a method whereby *I sent to both men a single letter* [literally, "I sealed both men *by means of a single letter*"] so that they would at least have to meet in order to read it.³⁸

³⁷ For a history of the handshake and the embrace as gestures of concord and agreement, see the discussion in Chapter 1 of the importance of the physical contact in Livy's depiction of the establishment of *foedus* and *amicitia* between Scipio and his allies, first with Syphax and then with Masinissa. Though the practice is often seen to be a uniquely medieval gesture symbolizing trust, it dates at least back to the late Roman Imperial period when it is said to have been used particularly between friends after a long absence. Coins from the era of the Emperor Nerva bear the image of two hands clasped in a handshake with the words "Concordia exercituum" ("Union, agreement, harmony of armies") emblazoned around them.

³⁸ *Fam.* XII, 17 (Bernardo, p. 172). Emphasis added.

Bernardo's translation of "*ambos una eademque clauseram epystola*" as "I sent to both men a single letter" does not quite capture the subtle nuance of the original construction, though the sense is similar. Rather than use the verb "to send," which is how Bernardo renders it, Petrarch uses "*claudere*," which literally means, "to close," or in the context of a letter, perhaps, "to enclose" or "to seal." What is so fascinating about Petrarch's word choice is that it preserves the sense of intimacy or familiarity implicit in the fact that the contents are meant only for the eyes of the addressees, since we are after all in the terrain of the familiar letter. His use of the technology of epistolary communication is reflected right down to the level of his language. The word order, too, is powerful: "*ambos una [...] epystola*," literally: "both with one [...] letter." The placing "*ambos una*" side-by-side in this way captures the sense of the idealized unity out of multiplicity – from many, one – inherent in friendship discourse with the verb "to close" enclosed in the middle: "I sealed both men together by means of one and the same letter."

The epistle in which he explains his strategy of sending one letter to two addressees is characteristically "familiar" in tone and structure (*Fam.* XII, 17). Rehearsing the trope of the casual epistolary meta-discourse commonly found in the tradition from Cicero to Seneca, he depicts himself shuffling through stacks of letters from friends, only to come upon one from the current addressee, Zanobi da Strada, who is both a trusted friend of Petrarch and a close confidant of Acciaiuoli.³⁹ The purpose of the letter is to request a favor, namely, to personally deliver *Familiares* XII, 16 to its dual addressees once they have been assembled in the same room, and furthermore to do so only when the time is right:

³⁹ Zanobi da Strada was a close friend to all three men and so could be trusted as a neutral party. He was a scribe and scholar who had risen to prominence in the court in Naples right alongside Niccolò Acciaiuoli, thanks in large part to the patronage of his fellow Florentine who had acquired so much power in the court. Petrarch often encouraged him to accept Acciaiuoli's preferential treatment. Tocco, *Niccolò Acciaiuoli*, pp. 102-3.

Epystolam ipsam ad te misi ut per manus illuc tuas properet et securior coram illis tuo etiam favore fulta compareat. Permitto autem tibi, quod *in superscriptione eius* omnibus interdixi, ut illam aperias et siquid detrahendum vel addendum duxeris, facias, qui naturam illius atque animum et quibus facile tangi solet, quique viri ‘molles aditus et tempora nosti.’

I have sent the letter to you so that it may hasten to them in your hands, and reach them more securely with the support of your favor as well. I am also allowing you to do what I had forbidden *on its cover [in superscriptione eius]* to anyone else, namely, you may open it. If you feel anything should be deleted or added, you may do so, since you are acquainted with his character and mind, with what most easily moves him, and since ‘you know the appropriate times and approaches.’⁴⁰

He tells Zanobi that as intermediary he may do what has been forbidden to others, namely, to break the seal and open it. Petrarch’s use of the word “*superscriptio*,” referring to the writing on its exterior, offers a glimpse into the technology of the letter. He employs an ingenious epistolary strategy that takes into account the actual material object of the letter that is meant to create an occasion in which the two men will be forced to meet. The literary reference – in quotation marks at the end of the block quotation immediately above – enjoining Zanobi to act on the “appropriate times and approaches” not only echoes verses Virgil puts in the mouth of Dido addressing her sister Anna in Book IV of the *Aeneid* (IV, 423) but also recalls the Ciceronian injunction discussed earlier from *De inventione*. According to the dictates of rhetorical *decorum*, persuasion occurs when the rhetorician is able to adapt his *logos*, or message, to suit the audience. Putting into practice the rhetorical importance of *decorum*, Petrarch’s diplomatic and political insights, particularly evident in this letter (*Fam.* XII, 17), are psychological in nature. He displays a keen ability to understand the need to appeal to the

⁴⁰ *Fam.* XII, 17 (Bernardo, p. 171). Emphasis added.

personal temperament, the disposition of the individual, in order to achieve the desired result of persuasion, which is a lesson he would have learned from his classical rhetorical training.⁴¹

The “Birds of a Feather” Model

In addition to using his rhetorical training, Petrarch also makes good use of the classical philosophical discourse of friendship found in such sources as books 8 and 9 of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, which tells us that friendship is cemented by a similarity of character (*ethos*) or, often in Latin, customs (*mores*). In Cicero, *amicitia* often purports to describe sincere affection based on a community of tastes, feelings and principles, and it takes the form, where opportunity permits, of continuous and intimate association (*vetustas, familiaritas, consuetudo*).⁴² In his friendship with Scipio, Laelius claims to have “found agreement on politics, advice in private affairs and repose full of delight.” They shared the same house, the same life, the same campaigns, the same travels; they were occupied in leisure in the same philosophical inquiries. They enjoyed “that in which lies the whole strength of friendship, the complete agreement of wills, pursuits and opinions.”⁴³ Petrarch echoes these classical sentiments with his own formulation: “The root of friendship is likeness of character.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ See Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*. Petrarch would have been not only familiar with Cicero’s rhetorical writings, as well as with the Pseudo-Ciceronian *Ad Herennium*, but he also cherished whatever fragments of Quintilian he could get his hands on, among others.

⁴² For an example of broken habit (*consuetudo*) interrupting the flow of a friendship, see Cicero *Ad familiares* XV, 14, 2, which Petrarch would not have known first-hand.

⁴³ Cicero, *De amicitia*, 15, 27, 74, 79, 103-04.

⁴⁴ *Fam.*, XII, 16, 19 (Bernardo, p. 168-9): “Virtus etiam in hoste delectat atque allicit et sibi placet ubicunque conspecta, seque ipsam non amare non potest; *amicitiarum radix est similitudo morum*; ceterum inter malos instabile fundamentum nacta, familiaritas evi brevis est; ingens autem bonis et eterna cognatio est” (“Virtue is appealing and charming even in an enemy, pleasing wherever it may appear, incapable of not loving itself. The root of friendship is likeness of character. Intimacy among evil men is

The powerful ties, interests and pursuits (*studia*) Giovanni and Niccolò share are many. After age and birthplace, Petrarch adds to his list of the things they have in common: “your military experience, your virtue, your glory, your nobility, identical studies, the recollection of personal merits, and shared interests [*comunis utilitas*], which is the most efficacious bond of friendship [...] finally your common hardships, your common glory, your common danger, or the reciprocal assistance, timely comforts and helpful advice.”⁴⁵ In this passage in which he argues for the renewal of their political friendship, Petrarch augments the traditional image of the convergence of souls with several more practical, utilitarian concerns: *comunis utilitas* (common interest), *labor* (labor or toil), and *periculum* (danger). Those commonalities of interest and experience serve as the basis of their shared Italian pride.

In addition to recognizing the hardships and harsh realities they had faced over the years together, Petrarch also reminds them of the sweeter side of the memories that they share:

Recall to mind and set *before your eyes* whatever moments of sweetness, trust, or pleasure you shared throughout your lives: the pleasant journeys, the delightful vacations, the enjoyable conversations, the tranquility, the military service and campaigns, the days spent in the dust and the nights under the divine heavens when you enjoyed sleeping on

of brief duration, being built on weak foundations; among good men, in contrast, it forms an enduring and eternal alliance”). Emphasis added. See Cicero, *De amicitia* 8, 28: “Nihil est enim virtute amabilius, nihil quod magis adliciat ad diligendum: quippe cum, propter virtutem et probitatem, etiam eos, quos numquam vidimus, quodam modo diligamus.” See also Seneca, *Epistles*, Ep. 66, 2, where he concurs that virtue has no need for ornament inasmuch as it is “its own greatest ornament to itself” (“*ipsa magnum sui decus est*”). Again, “*decus*” demands further elaboration in terms of its associations with “*decorum*,” and that which belongs to someone, that which pertains, but for now will have to remain fodder for further study.

⁴⁵ *Fam.* XII, 16 (Bernardo, p. 168): ““*Multa sunt quidem que vos in amicitiam trahant, pauca, imo vero nulla, que retrahant; colligant vos, prevalidi nexus, etas natio militia virtus Gloria nobilitas, studiorum identitas recordatio meritorum et, efficacissimum copulandis amicitis vinculum, comunis utilitas [...] siquis denique comunis labor, siqua comunis gloria, siquod comune periculum, siquid ultro citroque opportune opis, siquid tempestivi solatii, siquid consilii salutaris.*” Emphasis added.

the bare ground or on the sod, when you as soldiers would set your shields upside down to serve as a tent.⁴⁶

In this passage, Petrarch asks them to think back to all those things that make life worth living, all that which is “*dulce*” and “*iocundum*,” all that makes them human. Drawing on the strategy of rhetorical vividness (*evidentia*), he asks them to remember their past lives together and to place it before their very eyes (*ante oculos*). After all, it has not been all bad. The rhetoric of the letter attempts to push them to recognize – as vividly as possible – their common condition in happiness and in triumph, in danger and in toil as a reminder of what friendship is made of as well as to convince them that it is opportune for them to unite:

Two things create enduring friendships and add luster to noble spirits: the *recollection of past kindnesses* and the *disregard of past offenses*. Both of these I now request of you. If you do grant this, I shall achieve my greatest wish, and will have written with good fortune or, as they say, with the right foot.⁴⁷

Following the recognition of their common *humanitas*, Petrarch encourages them to call to mind all the good deeds they have done for one another and to ignore any past offenses. As a consummate mediator of peace, Petrarch urges both gratitude and forgiveness.

⁴⁶ *Fam.* XII, 16, 13 (Bernardo, p. 168): “Revocate ad memoriam, ponite ante oculos quicquid inter vos per omnem vitam dulce, quicquid fidum aut iocundum fuit; sicubi grata peregrinatio, sicubi placens rusticatio, sicubi iocosa confabulatio, sicubi pax, sicubi militia; siqua expeditio bellica, siquis dies in pulvere, siqua nox acta sub divo, siquando somnus humi captus et cespes in delitiis habitus, siquando militariter inversus clypeus pro tentorio fuit.”

⁴⁷ *Fam.* XII, 16 (Bernardo, p. 168): “Duo hec sunt que et perpetuas faciunt amicitias et magnum claris animis lumen adiciunt: *beneficiorum memoria* et *oblivio offensarum*; utrunque nunc a vobis exigo, quod si prestiteritis, voti optimi compos evadam et dextro pede, ut aiunt, ad scribendum venero.” Emphasis added. He seems to end this passage again with yet another proverb. The role of proverbs in his rhetorical strategies also demands to be further analyzed.

The *Propinquititas* Model

The powerful ties that bind these two men, he insists, are not only generational but also geographical:

In fact many are the reasons leading you back to your former friendship and few, indeed hardly any, preventing you from doing so. You are bound by powerful ties, such as your age, your birthplace (*natio*) [...].⁴⁸

Considering that Niccolò Acciaiuoli is a descendant of an illustrious Florentine mercantile family and Giovanni Barilli is Neapolitan in origin, this is a striking, not to mention quite an unusual observation for Petrarch to make. Though they were not born in the same city or region even, he encourages them to recognize that they nevertheless share the same *natio*, or birthplace, by which he must mean Italy. Bestowed upon them by the very fact that they inhabit the same place – inasmuch as place influences character – kinship is forged through culture: that of Italians, as Petrarch would have it.⁴⁹ His use of the word *natio* in referring to their shared birthplace, precisely because he refers to it as one that they share, seems to carry a much broader meaning than usual in this period. Approximating something closer to the use of “nation” today, though not in the sense of a “nation-state,” he uses “*natio*” as a stand-in for “*patria*,” which he also discusses with some frequency. Petrarch wants to instill in these two men that their similarities, cultural and linguistic, stem from the fact that their traditions and interests derive from their belonging to a community larger than that of their local and regional one. Petrarch wants them to recognize their common Italian identity, and in some way even their shared Roman cultural

⁴⁸ *Fam.* XII, 16 (Bernardo, p. 167): “Multa sunt quidem que vos in amicitiam trahant, pauca, imo vero nulla, que retrahant; colligant vos, prevalidi nexus, etas, *natio* [...]” Emphasis added.

⁴⁹ For the relationship between place and *ethos*, or character, see Chamberlain, “From ‘Haunts’ to ‘Character’: The Meaning of Ethos and Its Relation to Ethics,” pp. 97-108; Dainotto, *Place in Literature*, pp. 1-15; and Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy*, pp. 18-22.

heritage. Thus, the basis for Petrarch's claim that they belong to one another is their proximity as neighbors, cohabitants of the same geographical place, heirs to the peninsula's ancient culture.⁵⁰

The same argument for *propinquititas* as the binding glue of a lasting friendship is also found in Cicero's *De amicitia*. Fellow countrymen, neighbors and relatives take priority when it comes to friendship. As if the embrace, or *amplexus*, in which Petrarch encourages his two interlocutors to intertwine themselves and their souls were not already sensual enough, even metaphorically, Petrarch wants to emphasize that there is even a physical element of touch to the intimacy implied by this kind of geographical proximity – or *propinquititas*, to revert to Ciceronian terminology. Along with the intimacy it entails, physical proximity naturally encourages a similarity in interests. Being adjacent, touching, bordering, they are thus bound, moored, tied inextricably to one another.

⁵⁰ See Cicero, *De amicitia*, 19-20: “Sic enim mihi perspicere videor, ita natos esse nos, ut inter omnes esset societas quaedam, maior autem, ut quisque proxime accederet. *Itaque cives potiores quam peregrini, propinqui quam alieni*. Cum his enim amicitiam natura ipsa peperit; sed ea non satis habet firmitatis. Namque hoc praestat amicitia propinquitati, quod ex propinquitate benevolentia tolli potest, ex amicitiae nomen tollitur, *propinquitatis manet*. Quanta autem vis amicitiae sit, ex hoc intellegi maxime potest, quod ex infinita societate generis humani, *quam conciliavit ipsa natura*, ita contracta res est et adducta in angustum, ut omnis caritas aut inter duo aut inter paucos *iungeretur*” (“For it seems clear to me that we were so created that between us all there exists a certain tie which strengthens with our proximity to each other. Therefore, *fellow countrymen are preferred to foreigners and relatives to strangers*, for with them Nature herself engenders friendship, but it is one lacking in constancy. For friendship excels relations in this, that goodwill may be eliminated from relationship while from friendship it cannot; since, if you remove goodwill from friendship the very name friendship is gone; if you remove it from relationship, the name of relationship still remains. Moreover, how great the power of friendship is may most clearly be recognized from the fact that, in comparison with the infinite ties uniting the human race and *fashioned by Nature herself*, this thing called friendship has been so narrowed that the bonds of affection always *unite* two persons only, or, at most, a few”). Emphasis added.

Amicitiae memoria

After invoking the Aristotelian bond of geographical *propinquitias*, which is also Ciceronian, Petrarch eventually returns to the common trope of renewing ancient friendship: “You need not lay aside enmity, but simply renew the memory of an old friendship.”⁵¹ His emphasis here is not on laying aside hostilities, which he presents as trivial in the grand scheme of things, but rather on the more important act of renewing what he has only vaguely referred to as the “memory of ancient friendship.” This renewal goes beyond the mere patching up of two longstanding friends. It incorporates the many examples of political friendship that have come down to them from ancient times. “Rush to embrace one another, I beg you, and weep for lost time,” Petrarch implores, “and do not allow yours not to be equal to the most famous friendships.”⁵² Throughout the letter Petrarch invokes the names of illustrious pairs of friends whose heroic reconciliations adorn the annals of classical history. But the friendships showcased are not just ancient; they are friendships of political consequence between men in positions of political power:

No more serious than yours was the reason for reconciliation that *joined* [*reconiunxit*] Emilius Lepidus and Flaccus Fulvius for five years or for one year, for six or for eighteen months, in the office of censor; no more serious than yours was that of Livius Salinator and Claudius Nero during the year of their consulship, which consigned a dreadful affront to a merciful oblivion. Yours is not an association resulting from some office or other but a lifelong one that cannot be laid aside before the end. No more efficacious is your continuing relationship than the meal of the elder Africanus and Tiberius Gracchus,

⁵¹ *Fam.* XII, 16 (Bernardo, p. 170): “Vobis nulle inimicitie deponende, sed *prisce duntaxat amicitie memoria renovanda est.*” As I have begun to illustrate above, the renewal of ancient friendship was also a characteristic of Cola di Rienzo’s campaign to unify Italy.

⁵² *Fam.* XII, 16, 26 (Bernardo, p. 170): “Ruite precor in amplexus et perditum tempus flete parque unum illustribus amicitiiis nolite subducere.”

which hosted them as enemies but succeeded in *uniting* [*coniunctos reddidit*] them, not so much in their former friendship, but in an even stronger alliance.⁵³

All three of the examples Petrarch cites are drawn from the chapters in which Valerius Maximus and Aulus Gellius describe noble reconciliations between illustrious leaders who become closer friends and even relatives as a result of their return to goodwill.⁵⁴ The language of reconciliation, including all the same word choices in the semantic field of joining and reuniting, applies throughout as well (see phrases in italics). Gellius narrates that Scipio Africanus reconciles with Tiberius Gracchus during the banquet offered by the Senate to Jove on the Campidoglio, and, symbolic of their newly forged familial bond, Scipio promises the hand of his daughter in marriage to his former nemesis. To the friendship of Claudius Nero and Livius Salinator, Petrarch dedicates an entire chapter of his *De viris illustribus* entitled *De Claudio Nerone et Livio Salinatore*, enemies who come together despite differences so profound that they were described as opposites.⁵⁵

In the same breath with these illustrious pairs of virtuous friends – examples from the history of Roman politics that demand to be emulated – Petrarch adds the names of his dual addressees:

[P]ermittite posteritati ne preclarissima nomina sileantur *Nicolaus Iohannes*.

⁵³ *Fam.* XII, 16, 7-8 (Bernardo, p. 167): “Haud equidem maior reconciliationis causa fuit sive quinquennalis sive annua sive semestris sive annua et semestris censura que Emiliam Lepidum et Flaccum Fulvium *reconiunxit*, nec maior Livii Salinatore et Claudii Neronis annuus consultans, qui oblivione lenissima atrocem obliteravit iniuriam, quam vestra est: non huius aut illius officii sed totius vite non ante finem deponenda societas. Nec potentior Africani superioris et Tiberii Gracchi mensa, que quos hostes acceperat non tantum *amicitia veteri* sed *nova etiam affinitate coniunctos reddidit*, quam vester assiduus convictus.” Emphasis added.

⁵⁴ See Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, IV, 2; and Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, XII, 8.

⁵⁵ *De viris illustribus*, 213: “Hos duos, animi non diversos tantummodo sed adversos invicemque hostes et gravibus inimicitiiis dissidentes, unum historie in locum ipsa series rerum cogit.”

Let not posterity be ignorant of the illustrious names of *Niccolò and Giovanni*.⁵⁶

Unlike the English translation, the Latin allows for the names of his dual addressees to appear side-by-side as subjects without a conjunction, virtually as one name. This is just how connected he envisions these two men: two names that go hand-in-hand and that is the way he hopes they will be remembered. Petrarch holds the promise of glory and renown before these men by adding their names to the long list of friends from ancient Roman history that will be passed down to their shared Italian posterity:

Should my wishes prevail, I shall be proud of having offered a great and significant service to the republic (*reipublice*) and shall be eternally indebted to this pen of mine.⁵⁷

In his explanatory letter to Zanobi (*Fam.* XII, 17), Petrarch conjures a fictive “*res publica*” – recalling the Roman ideals he so cherished – as the beneficiary of his epistolary campaign. The importance of the public good runs throughout Petrarch’s work both in Latin and the vernacular, in prose as in poetry alike. The roots of such an attitude can be traced back to the vision of the afterlife found in Cicero’s celebrated *Somnium Scipionis*, in which those who defend the republic and privilege public good over personal gain enjoy everlasting life in a special place reserved exclusively for them in the heavens.⁵⁸

While Italy would not unite for another 500 years, Petrarch puts to good use the heroic Rome of collective political memory. In addition to the renewal of an ancient tradition of friends and friendships, in the series of letters from *Familiaries* XII, 14-17, Petrarch clearly campaigns

⁵⁶ *Fam.* XII, 16, 26 (Bernardo, p. 170).

⁵⁷ *Fam.* XII, 17 (Bernardo, p. 172): “Quod si votive successerit, gratum quiddam ac magnificentum reipublice prestitisse gloriabor, et multum semper huic calamo debebo.”

⁵⁸ See Cicero, *De re publica*, VI, 13. Petrarch’s debt to Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis* is also addressed to some depth in Chapter 1 of the present study.

for the renewal of friendship and even genuine love between Acciaiuoli and Barrili. His persuasive strategies include subverting the genre of the familiar letter, exploiting the concept of the cultural legacy they hold in common (the “birds of a feather” model), and emphasizing their shared *natio* (the *propinquitatis* model), not to mention priming them for inclusion in the long line of great political friends from antiquity. From the reconciliation of individuals, whether friends or lovers, neighbors or heads of state, to the unification of Italy, one of the fundamental forces unifying the work of Petrarch as humanist is the underlying desire for unity, for togetherness, for the conjoining of interests and of resources. It is a *reductio ad unum* that not only characterizes the classical tropes of friendship but is also a signature principle of Petrarchan humanism. While he had higher aspirations than the purely utilitarian, Petrarch recognizes the importance of friendship as a political tool, even on the localized level of relations between two individuals, on which the wellbeing of Italy as a whole – should it manage to become a whole – depended.



Niccolò Acciaiuoli

Andrea del Castagno c. 1450. From the Cycle of Famous Men and Women. Detached fresco.
(250 x 154 cm., Uffizi, Florence, Italy)

Chapter Five

Mediator pacis:

The Petrarchan Humanist from Psychological Self-Control to Political Self-Rule

Petrarchan Politics and the Rhetoric of *Humanitas*

On October 2, 1373, an ailing and frail Francesco Petrarca delivered before the ruling nobles of Venice a brief introductory oration on behalf of his last princely patron and lord of Padua, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara.¹ Although he was in attendance as a representative of the defeated Padua for the purpose of paying reverence and begging forgiveness (*ad faciendam reverentiam et petendum veniam*, as stipulated by the treaty imposed by Venice), Petrarch nevertheless seized the opportunity to preach a message common to nearly every one of the political interventions he made over the course of his long career, whether literary, epistolary or oratorical in form.² “As Terence the comic playwright says: lovers’ quarrels are the reintegration of love,” begins the convalescent Petrarch, according to one contemporary chronicler and our

¹ Lazzarini, “La seconda ambasceria di Francesco Petrarca a Venezia,” p. 181: “L’orazione fu pronunziato il 2 ottobre, di domenica, nell’ora di terza, dopo la messa solenne in S. Marco: lo stesso giorno gl’inviati padovani, tolta licenza dal doge e dalla Signoria, montarono in barca e, fermatisi la sera ad Oriago, arrivarono il mattino seguente a Padova.” The following summer, during the night between July 18 and 19, 1374, just days before his seventieth birthday, Petrarch succumbed to one of the attacks he had endured on previous occasions. This time the outcome was decisive. See Wilkins, *Petrarch’s Later Years*, pp. 258 ff.; Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca*, p. 439. The date of his death is based on a letter written by Giovanni Dondi, dated July 19, 1374.

² For the term of the peace agreement, see the Chinazzo chronicle in *RIS* XV. For the most detailed account of the embassy, including Petrarch’s involvement, see Redusio, *Chronicon Trevisinum*, in *RIS* XIX.

only source for the content of his speech that day.³ Taking his tagline from the Roman comic playwright, Petrarch preaches reconciliation.⁴

The 1373 Venetian embassy would be his last diplomatic outing, but the sixty-nine year-old humanist was no stranger to the Great Council Chamber of Venice.⁵ In that very same place on November 8, 1353, twenty years earlier almost to the day, acting as ambassador to Giovanni Visconti, he had delivered a similar plea for reconciliation between the perennially warring commercial interests of the two great maritime republics of Genoa and Venice and peace not only for the parties involved but also for Italy as a whole.⁶ In his Venetian oration of 1353 he exhorts his fellow countrymen from Venice and Genoa in similar terms.⁷

³ “Como dise Terencio Comedo: *amantium ire red(r)integracio amoris est.*” The anonymous Papafava chronicler is the only contemporary to record the content of Petrarch’s final oration. Even he is assumed to be a second-hand source, though he who would have received information regarding the event from a series of first hand sources. It comes down to us in a sort of vernacular paraphrase. The original Latin text is the stuff of legend. For the Papafava transcription of the oration, see Lazzarini “La seconda ambasceria.” See also Wilkins, *Petrarch’s Later Years*, p. 251-2. (In an appendix I have translated the brief Papafava paraphrase in its entirety. It appears here in English for the first time.)

⁴ On Petrarch’s participation in the 1373 Venetian embassy, see Zardo, *Petrarca e i Carraresi*, pp. 164 ff.; and Barozzi, *Petrarca a Venezia*, pp. 288 ff..

⁵ On both the 1353 and the 1373 embassy, see Fulin “Petarca dinanzi alla signoria di Venezia. Dubbi e ricerche,” although his study is self-consciously incomplete. He laments his lack of access to the Cronaca Papafava. For a complete treatment of the 1373 embassy, see Lazzarini, “La seconda ambasceria.” Lazzarini, who seems to be one of the first to have had access to the Cronaca Papafava, also includes a reproduction of Petrarch’s 1373 oration in the medieval Paduan dialect.

⁶ On the 1353 embassy, see Hortis, “Petarca e le guerre tra Genova e Venezia”; and Godi, “Il Petarca «inutilis orator» a Venezia: L’arringa per la pace tra Genovesi e Veneziani,” p. 404.

⁷ For the complete string of arguments Petrarch deploys, see Hortis, “Arrenge inedite,” pp. 329-34. One passage in which he links his rhetoric to his desired result by means of a fanciful metaphor is the following (Hortis, pp. 329-30; translation mine): “I relinquish my peace to you, I say, I give my peace to you. I have faith that his mercy will open your minds and that from the modest seed of my words he will bring forth an abundant harvest of desired peace” (“[...] pacem meam relinquo vobis inquit pacem meam do vobis, de illius inquam misericordia confido quod animos vestros aperiet et de tenui semente verborum meorum uberem messem proferet optate pacis”).

First of all, in fact, a certain Ciceronian saying comes to mind: Of the utmost necessity in all forms of instruction and persuasion, he says, is a spirit that is not fighting back, for indeed if Cicero himself cannot, much less will I be able to persuade the unwilling. Therefore, lend me – I beseech you, most illustrious men – your non-resistant minds, dispel from thence your hate, cease in your anger, abolish the memory of offenses, extinguish the desire for revenge.⁸

Drawing on his training in the rhetorical tradition, Petrarch invokes on this occasion the authority of Cicero instead of the comic playwright Terence, the Roman orator's spiritual and intellectual grandfather in terms of the lineage of what has come to be known as the Scipionic Circle.⁹ The Ciceronian passage to which Petrarch refers is found in the *Tusculan Disputations* (2.15): "I'll surely try, but it is a great subject and I will have need of a spirit that is not fighting back."¹⁰ If he is to be effective in his speech, the persuasive speaker must demand the complete and willing

⁸ For the Latin text of the 1353 Venetian oration (translation mine), see Hortis, "Arrenge inedite," pp. 330: "In primis quidem illud mihi Ciceronianum occurrit: In omni doctrina inque omni persuasione optimum opus est inquit animo non repugnante, quid enim nedum ego sed cicero ipse si aforet persuadere posset invitis, prestate ergo mihi oro vos viri clarissimi non repugnantes animos, pellatur inde odium cesset ira aboleatur memoria offensarum, extingatur libido vindictae." For an Italian translation of the oration, see Dotti, *Petrarca a Milano*, pp. 114-18. On the legitimacy of his 1353 Venetian oration, see Wilkins, *Petrarch's Eight Years in Milan*, pp. 53-60.

⁹ The substitution of the great Roman orator humanist with the great comic playwright could seem like an intentional descent from the high oratorical to the low comedic, a kind of surrender, an acceptance of folly. It has something of the sardonic to it but, of course, Cicero quotes frequently from Terence as well. Rather than evoking the grand rhetorical authority of Cicero he invokes the authority of a rather scandalous comic playwright from a generation or two prior to the much revered Roman orator. Bearing in mind the great esteem in which Petrarch held Terence, perhaps there is another sense behind this move. Going from Cicero (106-43 BCE) to Terence (195/185-159 BCE) is actually a move that traces a reverse trajectory back to the Scipionic Circle of friends whose interest in Greek philosophy provided the soil in which Roman humanism took root. The result was a unique blend of Greek sensitivities to learning and Roman pragmatism that scholars have come to call *humanitas romana*. For the scholarly debate on the Scipionic Circle, see Brown, *A Study of the Scipionic Circle*; Nybakken, "Humanitas romana"; and for a skeptical take on the actual existence of a "circle," see also Zetzel, "Cicero and the Scipionic Circle."

¹⁰ For the Ciceronian passage to which Petrarch refers, though he does not quote it exactly, see Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, 2.15: "[...] experiar quidem; sed magna res est, animoque, mihi opus est, non repugnante." For discussion of this and other similar passages in Cicero's philosophical dialogues, see Gorman, *The Socratic Method in the Dialogues of Cicero*.

attention of his listeners. In his plea for reconciliation, Petrarch appeals to their humanity. He entreats them to open their minds and to search their souls for tolerance and forgiveness. The attitude he demands of them as ideal negotiators in the political process is akin to that of the Stoic sage who is unburdened by mental turmoil and the distractions of the passions – a model that lies at the heart of the project of Petrarchan humanism.

And so in the fall of 1353, just as in 1373, with his death less than a year away, Petrarch is still doing exactly what he had done throughout his career as public intellectual, namely, deploying his learning and eloquence in service of the resolution of conflict and the reintegration of alliance. Right up to the end, just as he had cast his role as public intellectual and laurel-crowned poet in the oration he gave on the occasion of his coronation in 1341 on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, he is still engaging the interest of the ruling classes in order to compel them to open their minds, to reconcile their differences and to unite their forces.¹¹ He is still leading by the light of his example and still proffering his words of encouragement to his contemporaries so that they might follow his illustrious, albeit idealistic guidance.¹²

The Petrarchan humanist, then, can be understood as a sort of consummate *mediator pacis*, that is to say, as a mediator of both inner-personal and interpersonal peace. The present

¹¹ For the theme of “goaded the industriousness of others” or “calcar alienae industriae,” see Wilkins, *Collatio laureationis*, p. 34; and *Sen.* XVII, 2.

¹² For an expression of his belief in the ability of the properly trained humanist to be able offer to help to his fellow citizens through the proper use of rhetoric, see *Fam.* I, 9, 4 (Bernardo, p. 48): “Moreover, undeniably the most unusual often emerges when the movements of the mind are composed. But when these are in agitation little of any significance can be produced. The study of eloquence requires much time. If we did not need it, and if through its own power our mind could silently display its good traits without the support of words (*verborum suffragiis*), great toil would yet be necessary for the sake of those with whom we live (*ad ceterorum saltem utilitatem*). For without doubt, our conversations would be of great assistance to their minds (*quorum animos nostris collocutionibus plurimum adiuvari posse non ambigitur*).”

dissertation has surveyed the poetics of Petrarch's politics. Any political style typically will operate as a mixture of rhetorical strategies, institutional customs – akin to something like the conventions of a genre – and philosophical arguments as they have developed in specific historical periods and cultural locales. By examining the characteristic humanistic intelligence produced from the dialectics of private study and public intervention, I hope to have challenged the traditional conception of Petrarch as mere opportunistic recluse, hypocritical moralist and intermittent and inconsistent political participant.¹³ In this conclusion I will continue to argue, as I have in the previous chapters, that Petrarch's political involvement is actually a natural expression and a logical extension of the principles of his humanist project.

Calcar alienae industriae

“Often examples inspire more effectively than words.”
– Francesco Petrarca, *Seniles* XVII, 2¹⁴

It is hard to imagine what it took to convince the convalescent old man in this condition to attend such a humiliating ceremony on behalf of a dishonest tyrant who had the nerve to send his fourteen-year-old son in his stead.¹⁵ Is he playing in his use of the line from Terence that likens the border war between Venice and Padua, with all of its senseless waste, to a lovers' tryst? Was he reluctant to participate? Or was this exactly where he wanted to be? One is hard pressed to imagine what drove the lover of solitude to even take part in the pomp and

¹³ Most recently this position has been put forth by Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity*, pp. 261-70 and pp. 302-3; however it has been around since Petrarch's earliest detractors, even those who lived during his lifetime.

¹⁴ *Sen.* XVII, 2, 14; Bernardo, pp. 648-9: “Saepe validius excitant exempla quam verba.”

¹⁵ Lazzarini, “La seconda ambasceria,” p. 183: “ben che per la soa vechieça et per una infirmità la quale ello havea habuda et de la qual ello no era ancora guarido, la vose ie tremò un pocho, como da quilli che iera fo rasonado.”

circumstance of the embassy. So what was the personal motivation behind his participation in the 1373 Venetian embassy? What was the nature of his personal mission for being there?

In *Sen. XVII, 2*, written just seven months prior to his second diplomatic jaunt to Venice and addressed to Boccaccio, we find something of an answer. Commonly considered Petrarch's "spiritual will and testament," *Sen. XVII, 2* is a response to a letter from Boccaccio, who, among other things, must have advised the aging humanist to retire his pen and rest. In his letter, Boccaccio seems to have lavished praise on the aging Petrarch for his achievements in the areas of reviving the *studia humanitatis*:

Of course, I am not refusing the praise you bestow upon me for having inspired the minds of many throughout Italy – and perhaps beyond Italy – to these studies of ours, neglected for many centuries. For I am the oldest of almost all of those who now pursue these studies among us. But I do not admit what you infer from this, that yielding to younger minds I should interrupt the momentum of the labors I have undertaken, and allow others to write something if they wish, lest I appear to have wanted to write everything alone. (*Sen. XVII, 2*; Bernardo, p. 648)

Thanks to Petrarch – Boccaccio acknowledges – the study of the liberal arts thrives again. In like measure, in response to Boccaccio's suggestion that Petrarch cease his intellectual activities, he retorts that he would continue writing until the end.¹⁶ Since the beginning, or at least since the coronation oration in which he expresses the same sentiment, Petrarch's life mission had been to raise the bar as much as he possibly can in order to leave a worthy model to those who would follow in his footsteps:

O quantum nostre invicem differunt sententiae, cum voluntas amborum una sit! Tibi ego omnia seu longe plurima, michi vero nil penitus videor scripsisse. Sed ut multa scripserim et ut multa scribam, quonam melius modo possim sequentium animos ad perseverantiam exhortari? Saepe validius excitant exempla quam verba.

¹⁶ See *Sen. XVII, 2* (Bernardo, p. 653): "Whatever you make of me – for there is nothing that the pen of a learned and eloquent man cannot do – I must nevertheless try, if I am more, and if I were great, which I am not anyhow, to be greater and the greatest insofar as I can."

O how greatly our opinions differ, though both our wills are the same! to you I seem to have written everything, or far more than anyone else; but to me I seem to have written nothing at all. But suppose I have written much and am writing much, how much better could I exhort the minds of those who follow me to persevere? Often examples inspire more effectively than words.¹⁷

His retort to Boccaccio at the end of his life echoes the message he had found as a young man in 1333 in the monastery in Liege in the pages of Cicero's otherwise long-forgotten *Pro Archia*, a mantra he would repeat almost ten years later in the *Collatio laureationis*, where he presents in his definition of the humanist soul the desire to goad the industriousness of others, "*calcar alienae industriae*." In all likelihood, he made the sacrifice to attend the 1373 embassy in Venice in order to continue to live up to his humanistic, civilizing mission of prodding the thoughts and deeds of others with the goad of his words and offering himself as a guide through his example.¹⁸ This is just how seriously Petrarch took the vocation of eloquence.

Coluccio Salutati understood the nature of Petrarch's civilizing mission. A friend and a follower of Petrarch's humanistic faith, Salutati sums up the nature of the vocation of eloquence in a letter of consolation written to his friend Roberto Guidi on August 16, 1374, about a month after the death of the great humanist:

[...] eidem insuper eloquentiam indultam, quam cum nulli animalium suscepit homo communem, ut haberet quis, quo proximi sui sopitam, seu depravatis moribus, seu crassioris corporis onere rationem mutuae caritatis ignibus excitaret; et quantum in uno vel natura deficeret, vel consuetudo turpis corrupisset, eloquentia proximi edificaret et redderet.

[...] he [the creator] bestowed upon him eloquence (which man has in common with no other living creature), so that if his neighbor's reason has been put to sleep by corrupt behavior or the gross body's burden, he will have means to rouse him with the fires of

¹⁷ *Sen. XVII*, 2, 14 (Bernardo, pp. 648-9).

¹⁸ See Wilkins, "Petrarch's Coronation Oration," p. 306: "I am venturing to offer myself as guide for this toilsome and dangerous path; and I trust that there may be many followers."

mutual affection. A neighbor's eloquence can build where nature has failed and restore what bad habits have usurped.¹⁹

Petrarch used his eloquence to ignite the fire of mutual affection in the hearts of his neighbors, but especially in those of the prominent leaders and intellectual figures of his time. Drawing on the power of discourse and his god-given gift of eloquence, he sought to “build where nature has failed and restore what bad habits have usurped.”²⁰ For *Salutati*, the common gift – the “*communus*” of community, or literally the gift (*munus*) we have in common (*com-*, as in *cum*) – is not to be understood so much as a shared burden or debt, which are other meanings of the *munus* of community, but rather as the god-given gift of eloquence we share with others.²¹ The implication of his appraisal of Petrarch is that what makes us human is not merely the phenomenon of our reason, but our ability to use effective language to persuade and elevate our neighbors.

In the *Coronation Oration*, Petrarch propagates the notion that poets themselves are a sort of divine gift, *deorum munus*, or gift of the gods, to all of humanity. He initially attributes the source of the sentiment to Cicero's *Pro Archia*:

Take not my word for this, but Cicero's, who in his oration for Aulus Licinius Archias has this to say of poets: “We have it upon the authority of the most learned men that whereas attainment in other activities depends upon talent, learning, and skill, the poet attains through his very nature, is moved by the energy that is within his mind, and is as it were inspired by a divine inbreathing so that Ennius fairly calls poets sacred in their own

¹⁹ Translation from Thompson and Nagel, *The Three Crowns of Florence: Humanist Assessments of Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio*. For the Latin, see *Salutati, Epistolae*, II, p. 54: “[...] eidem insuper eloquentiam indultam, quam cum nulli animalium susceperit homo communem, ut haberet quis, quo proximi sui sopitam, seu depravatis moribus, seu crassioris corporis onere rationem mutuae caritatis ignibus excitaret; et quantum in uno vel natura deficeret, vel consuetudo turpis corrupisset, eloquentia proximi edificaret et redderet.”

²⁰ *Salutati, Epistolae*, translation from Thompson, *The Three Crowns of Florence*, p. 54.

²¹ See Esposito, *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community*, pp. 8-11.

right, since they appear to be commended to us by the possession of a divine gift.”
(Petrarch, *Coronation Oration*, pp. 301-2)²²

He also attributes the sentiment to Marcus Varro when it resurfaces as one of the central themes of his coronation oration.²³ What makes humankind not just *homo* but *homo sapiens* is a very particular faculty of reason, namely speech: the power of language, the ability to improve those who live around us with the productive force of our words. Community can thus be seen to be a product of communication.

As both rhetorician and poet, Petrarch is keenly aware of the role of language and of the proper use of words in establishing a society.²⁴ As J. G. A. Pocock observes: “There is polity where people succeed in communication.”²⁵ In light of Petrarch’s particular sensitivities to the

²² For the Latin, see Petrarch, “Collatio laureationis” in Hortis, *Arrenge inedite di Petrarca*, pp. 312-3: “Non mihi sed Ciceroni credite qui in oratione pro Aulo Licinio Archia de poetis loquens verbis talibus utitur. Ab eruditissimis viris atque doctissimis sic accepimus, ceterarum rerum studia et ingenio et doctrina et arte constare, poetam natura ipsa valere et mentis viribus excitari et quasi divino quodam spiritu afflari ut non inmerito noster ille Hennius suo quodam iure sanctos appellat poetas quod deorum munere nobis commendati esse videantur, hec Cicero.”

²³ See Cicero, *Pro Archia*, VIII, 18-19: “Qua re suo iure noster ille Ennius sanctos appellat poetas, quod quasi deorum aliquo dono atque munere commendati nobis esse videantur. Sit igitur, iudices, sanctum apud vos, *humanissimos homines*, hoc poetae nomen, quod nulla umquam barbaria violavit. Saxa et solitudines voci reponent, bestiae saepe immanes cantu flectuntur atque consistunt: nos, instituti rebus optimis, non poetarum voce moveamur?” (“Rightly then, did our great Ennius call poets ‘holy,’ for they seem *recommended to us* by the *benign bestowal of God*. Holy then, *gentlemen*, in your *enlightened eyes* let the name of poet be, inviolate hitherto by the most benighted of race! The very rocks of the wilderness give back a sympathetic echo to the voice; savage beasts have sometimes been charmed into stillness by song; and we, who are nurtured upon all that is highest, be deaf to the appeal of poetry?”). Emphasis added. Cicero lavishes praise on the arts of poetry and eloquence in this passage. He also makes use of the adjective “*humanissimos*” in a most powerful way. I wonder if it ever appears in Petrarch.

²⁴ Also see, Frye, *The Educated Imagination*, p. 133: “Its theme is the founding of a city and a new civilization, and naturally the author, being a poet, is keenly aware of the importance of the use of words in establishing a society.”

²⁵ See Pocock, “Verbalizing a Political Act: Towards a Politics of Speech,” p. 38. For a further discussion of the role of language in the creation of community, see also Berger and Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

nuances of language, it is precisely in the subtle effects created by the poetics of his politics that we strike upon the core of many of his concepts and ideas.

The Mediator of Political and Psychological Peace

Petrarch's political style is predicated on a set of ideas regarding human nature and good government. In his essay "La politicità del Petrarca," Michele Feo lays out the consistency of Petrarch's notion of the universal character of human nature when confronted with death and vice that links humanity in all times and places whether pagan or Christian.²⁶ Drawing on three examples from disparate genres of his work, Feo illustrates how Petrarch's idea of the common humanity that we all share transcends time and place, party and faith. Whether pagan or Christian, ancient or modern, "barbarian" or Italian, humankind is prone to all the same modes of behavior when it comes to the definitive nature of our mortality, the same issues of greed when it comes to our reactions to gold and the accumulation of wealth, and the same palate of capabilities pertains when it comes to the human condition regardless of social class.

Feo argues that for Petrarch man is always similar to himself, which is to say, human nature remains in the broadest sense forever a constant: death, greed and our ability (or inability) to love are afflictions common to all humankind, regardless of the contingencies of history. Since for Petrarch man is also always dissimilar to himself, I argue that human identity is always split, that human nature is driven by a dialectical process of drives and passions that are constantly in conflict with one another.

Since Petrarch vividly depicts the tensions at work in the hidden recesses of the individual in several key passages, I want to take Feo's position one step further. According to my reading his idea of human nature is also imbued with an understanding of the host of

²⁶ See Feo, "La politicità del Petrarca."

dialectical processes constantly at work in mediating psychological peace on the level of the individual. Petrarch portrays the concept of his idealized figure of the stoic sage as one of those rare beings who constantly seeks to transcend this internal divide in his search for unity within himself. He is the *mediator pacis* of the humanist soul; a mediator of oppositions, not only of forces in the world external to him, but first and foremost the mediator of conflicting passions and desires acting from within him.²⁷

Petrarch holds the ideal of self-government as the fundamental attainment of those who seek or hold power:

Nevertheless I shall speak more clearly. ‘Who is more outstanding than Themistocles in Greece?’ said Tullius; and I faithfully repeat: ‘Who in Italy and indeed who throughout Europe is more outstanding than Robert?’ When thinking about him I find I admire his character more than his crown and his mind more than his kingdom. Him do I indeed call king who rules and controls not only his subjects but himself, who takes command of the passions which rebel against the mind and would crush him if he yielded. Just as there is no clearer victory than to overcome oneself, so is there no loftier king than the one who can rule himself. (see *Fam.* IV, 2; Bernardo, p. 182).²⁸

Expounding a lesson that is Stoic in origin, he insists that civic leaders as well as citizens who are active politically should be motivated and guided by civic virtues of self-control and cautions against the perils of myopic individual interest. His conception of political life celebrates first and foremost self-government as the highest moral calling.

²⁷ For an analysis of the famous *reductio ad unum*, the humanist’s ability to reduce the multiplicity of conflicting desires to an interior unity, see Antognini, *Il progetto autobiografico delle Familiare di Petrarca*, pp. 122-6.

²⁸ *Fam.* IV, 2: “Cernis, ut arbitror, quid intendam; dicam tamen expressius. ‘Quis in Grecia clarior Themistocle?’ ait Tullius; ego fidentissime: ‘Quis in Italia, imo vero quis in Europa clarior Roberto?’ in quo sepe cogitans soleo non tam dyadema quam mores, neque tam regnum quam animum admirari. Illum ego vere regem dixerim, qui non subditos modo, sed se ipsum regit ac frenat; qui exercet in passiones suas imperium, que sunt animo rebelles, illum, si cesserit, oppresse. Ut nulla est quidem clarior victoria quam se ipsum vincere, sic nullum regnum altius quam se ipsum regere.”

The root of this ideal leader finds an even more vivid illustration in the image of the stoic sage we find in *Familiars* I, 9, a letter that Ugo Dotti has called a “manifesto for Petrarchan humanism.”²⁹ In terms of the chronology of Petrarch’s epistolary epic, the twelve letters that constitute the first book of the collection – with the exception of the first one that acts as a prologue to the work as a whole – cover the period of his earliest youth from 1326-1337.³⁰ *Fam.* I, 9 is the third in a series of six letters addressed to Tommaso Caloiro, a vernacular poet and university companion from his years in Bologna.³¹ The letter addresses the union between the two ostensibly conflicting pursuits of eloquence and philosophy, which of course has long been at the center of the debate over our scholarly understanding of “humanism,” in terms of both its continuity and novelty with regard to the rhetorical fashions and civic traditions of the Middle Ages.³² To prove his point that the study of eloquence (*sermo*) is indissolubly tied to the spirit (*animus*) or substance of our speech, Petrarch gives us the key image of what constitutes the unique skill set of the Stoic sage:

[...] nisi primum desideria invicem nostra conveniant, quod preter sapientem scito nemini posse contingere, illud necesse est ut, dissidentibus curis, et mores et *verba* dissideant. At

²⁹ See Dotti, *Petrarca Civile: Alle origini dell'intellettuale moderno*. If the coronation address Petrarch gave in Rome in 1341 is most commonly considered the first manifesto for European humanism, then *Familiars* I, 9 is the most explicit elaboration of its core values and principles.

³⁰ For an in-depth analysis of book one, see Antognini, *Il progetto autobiografico*, pp. 119-26.

³¹ *Fam.* I, 2 and 7-12 all are addressed to Tommaso Caloiro, also referred to as Tommaso da Messina. This accounts for seven of the twelve letters that constitute book one.

³² The literature on this issue is vast. A few salient voices in the debate include Weiss, *The Dawn of Italian Humanism*; Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla*, pp. 3-30; and Witt, “Medieval Italian Culture and the Origins of Humanism as a Stylistic Ideal,” pp. 29-70. Victoria Kahn in an appendix to her volume *Machiavellian Rhetoric* also gives a particularly concise rundown of the evolution of rhetorical practices from the late Middle Ages through the moment of civic humanism to the skepticism of the high Machiavellian Renaissance.

bene disposita *mens* instar immote serenitatis placida semper ac tranquilla est: scit quid velit, et quod semel voluit, velle non desinit.

[...] unless our desires first order themselves (and you must know that no one can achieve this except a wise man) it is inevitable that such disorder will be reflected in our conduct and in our *words*. The well-ordered *mind* is the image of an undisturbed serenity and is always quiet and peaceful. It knows what it wants, and does not cease wanting what it desires.³³

The sense is that the mediation between *mens* and *verba* – here translated as “mind” and “words” respectively – is thus one of the tasks of the learned individual, the “sapiens,” who is conceived of as a sort of stoic sage.³⁴ For Petrarch, the learned individual is the one who is best equipped to perform this kind of mediation between mind and language. Here the act of knowing is all tied up with wanting and then tenaciously persisting in wanting what one desires. The Petrarchan humanist prioritizes such qualities as conviction, focus and the relentless pursuit of one’s plans, goals, ambitions. Out of undisturbed serenity, peace and quiet come a strong sense of purpose, diligent oneness of mind. This is what the well-ordered mind is capable of.

Taking a closer look at the slightly idiosyncratic and very vivid way Petrarch expresses this idea in the original Latin reveals more nuance than Aldo S. Bernardo’s free but faithful English translation quoted above is able to capture regarding the mechanisms at work in the discerning “sapiens” in this process of humanistic mediation. The phrase that Bernardo renders in English as “unless our desires first order themselves” appears in Petrarch’s original as “nisi primum desideria invicem nostra convenient.” In the original Latin the verb *convenient*, derived from *con* + *venio*, which literally means come together, grants agency and independence to each

³³ *Fam.* I, 9, 3 (Bernardo p. 47). In a footnote, Antognini cites a parallel passage in the *De ordine* (II 18.48), where Augustine writes: “quid est autem dissentire, nisi non unum sentire?” (and what is dissension, if not feeling not one?). See Antognini, *Il progetto autobiografico*, p. 126, n. 34.

³⁴ See also, Antognini, *Il progetto autobiografico*, p. 124.

of our opposing desires. The subject of the verb is not the sage but the desires themselves that have a will of their own, which is significant.

Two recent Italian translations of the same passage not only provide some insightful counterpoint to our understanding of the passage but also afford a glimpse into the mechanics of how meaning is transmitted. The translation Roberta Antognini presents in her monograph renders the first clause as: “se prima non avrai acquistato fermezza di volontà.” She glosses over the concept-heavy verb choice by devising her own circumlocution. She manages to approximate the same idea, but here the concept is dressed in the action of acquisition, in the sense of achieving or attaining. The Italian verb “acquistare” is etymologically derived from the Latin *ad* + *quaerere*, namely to seek and to obtain. Here the object of obsession is a firmness of the will, a conviction in one’s desire, *fermezza* – namely, a strength and a certainty – *di volontà*, of the mind or will, in terms of wanting and desire. Antognini personalizes the action of the verb, centering agency on an impersonal second-person subject. Whereas “desideria” in the Latin become “volontà,” or something like the “will,” in Antognini, Ugo Dotti translates the same word as “passioni,” or quite literally the English equivalent of the “passions,” in its broadest possible meaning. It is only in the English translation that the “desideria” remain faithful to their cognate in Bernardo’s choice of “desires”: “unless our desires first order themselves.” His desires are seen to have the need to “order themselves,” which could suggest either tidiness or the falling into order of a troop of soldiers. The image of passions ordering themselves in Bernardo’s translation recalls an image in the opening of Petrarch’s 1373 Venetian oration of the disordered passions that can arise between father and son especially because they have so much in common, especially because they are so similar.

A closer look at the mechanics of Petrarch's original Latin phrasing of the concept reveals its articulation to be particularly rich with philosophical detail: "nisi primum desideria invicem nostra convenient."³⁵ It could be rendered quite literally as the following: "unless first our desires (*desideria*) mutually (*invicem*, one after the other) come together (*convenient*, unite)." Our desires must come together in a stoic state of rest. This is the first step in the mechanics of self-government, the first step in the pursuit of the kind of eloquence that unites our thought with the words we use to express it. This is a task that takes a wise man to master.³⁶

Though he develops his humanistic enterprise throughout his work, Petrarch is particularly

³⁵ Of additional significance is Antognini's rendering of "desideria invicem convenient" as "fermezza di volontà." She adds an explicit mention of the will, which is certainly implicit in the stoic idea of what the Latin actually says though Petrarch only mentions the desires coming together. Ugo Dotti, in his recent re-issue of Rossi's classic work with a facing page Italian translation, gives it to us similarly as: "se prima non si sarà raggiunto l'accordo tra le diverse passioni." In this configuration the concept centers on an agreement, an accord, or the sense of being in harmony, that must be achieved among the varied, contrasting passions, the various, differing desires that stir naturally within us inasmuch as we are but beasts unless we adorn ourselves with the self-control of humanity. The concept of musical harmony, *accordo*, is present in Dotti's rendition, though it is also a word that doubles over additionally with applicability to the field of political negotiations for peace accords and agreements between differing factions, passions, opinions, beliefs, desires. Additionally desire itself, though always present, is dressed in different attire in each version.

³⁶ The clause that immediately follows in the passage also demands to be briefly analyzed. Petrarch's original statement, "quod preter sapientem scito nemini posse contingere," is rendered variously as: "e solo il saggio può raggiungere questo equilibrio," in Antognini; as: "e solo il saggio può conquistare questo equilibrio" in Dotti; and as: "and you must know that no one can achieve this except a wise man" in Bernardo. Note that both Antognini and Dotti introduce the concept of equilibrium, which is not explicitly present in the original at all, though equilibrium may be one effective way of describing the phenomenon of desires coming together in the controlled atmosphere of the mind of the sage. However, equilibrium as a concept is not there. The verb he gives us instead is *contingo*, which places Petrarch's concept in an entirely different semantic field. Equilibrium and balance may be what is implied by the underlying Stoic precepts, but the implications of the specific word choice here – *contingo* – are also worth taking a closer look at. Only the sage will know how to "touch on all sides," *con + tingo*, to bring together, gather, collect, embrace, grasp, as though with palm of the mind – thus to understand, to bring into being, to cause to happen, to make contingent – all of those conflicting desires and know how to orchestrate them in such a way that they will calmly come together on their own.

explicit in *Familiares* I, 9 with regard to the qualities that characterize the life of the mind of the *sapiens*.³⁷ A closer look at the specific language Petrarch deploys in the articulation of these ideas reveals his concept-rich choice of words, especially verbs, the grammatical decisions he made, and the constructions he uses to convey meaning.

Imbedded within the Petrarchan self is the desire of the “*sapiens*” of *Fam.* I. 9 to bring together, to bridge the gap, to harness contradiction, to placate conflict, to live with paradox.³⁸ The impossibilities, the paradoxes, the contradictions are built into the model Petrarch promotes. Petrarchan humanism is driven by a mediating impulse, in this case and in most cases of his political involvement. It is driven by the desire to mediate contrary positions and to usher them toward peace. This is the very nature of the dialectical tensions within humanism.³⁹ The Petrarchan humanist is a *mediator pacis*, a mediator of both political and psychological peace.

The same spirit of social and political reconciliation lies behind the kind of bond he sought to establish between form and content, *res* and *verba*, eloquence and philosophy, *sermo* and *anima*, as well as conflicting internal dilemmas such as the desire to engage in both productive civic activity and profound solitary contemplation. Like the “*sapiens*” in *Fam.* I, 9,

³⁷ In fact, the word choice of *sapiens* is not accidental either. On the conscious decisions made by the knowing individual, or *sapiens*, see Nybakken, “*Humanitas romana*.” The notion of the wise man, or *sapiens*, was also privileged by the group of authors and intellectuals of the Scipionic Circle.

³⁸ The same sentiment can be found in the *Secretum*, also known fittingly enough by its full title: *De secretu conflictu curarum mearum*. At *Prose* p. 120 (Draper, 98; see also Trinkaus, *The Poet as Philosopher*, p. 67), Augustinus offers several remedies for Franciscus’s melancholic reaction to fortune. Initially, he tells Franciscus that he should not make an exception of himself. But hearing of the common complaints of others only sends him in to the familiar tirade about the difficulties of city life, which as we know is one of his favorite subjects. If he did not have to put up with city life so often, as much of his biography suggests he must have had to endure, he probably would not have to complain about it as much as he does.

³⁹ Tinkler, *Renaissance Humanism and the genera eloquentiae*, p. 292.

Petrarch intends to bring together, to convene, to make amends between conflicting elements, whether they be internal desires or external enemies.

Inasmuch as the present dissertation is a study of the discourse of coming together, of community building, of being-in-common, I hope to have begun to delineate Petrarch's ideology of community formation, his rhetoric of *humanitas* and his politics of friendship.

Affective Petrarchan Diplomacy

While the original Latin texts of three diplomatic addresses Petrarch gave over the previous two decades survive, the 1373 Venetian speech exists only in a contemporary transcription that is most likely in large part paraphrased in medieval Paduan dialect.⁴⁰ Even if the only account of his speech is a vernacular transcription by a contemporary chronicler who was not present when it was delivered but instead records in great detail its arguments second-hand, it nevertheless reflects Petrarch's rhetorical and political style. From the tagline taken from Terence that characteristically conflates the erotic with the political to the idealistic plea for an enduring peace, so many of the humanist's core concerns and key themes are present that if it is apocryphal then Petrarch's style had so penetrated the culture at least of Paduan court life that the Papafava chronicler was able to thoroughly embody it in his vernacular paraphrase of it.⁴¹

⁴⁰ The original Latin text of his 1353 oration comes down to us, *Arenga facta Veneciis*, as do the complete Latin texts of three other harangues he gave during his eight-year tenure of service to the Visconti family of Milan (1353-1361). These include: *Arenga facta in civitate Novarie* (1356), *Collatio brevis coram Iohanne Francorum rege*, (1361) and a fourth, however, only preserved in a sixteenth-century vernacular translation, *Arringa facta Mediolani* (1354).

⁴¹ For its richness as well as its brevity, the brief speech demands to be quoted in full. It appears here in an appendix in English for the first time.

As mentioned above, Petrarch opens by invoking the authority of one of his favorite Roman writers.⁴² The first characteristically Petrarchan move is his signature imbrication of the erotic register with political discourse. Building on the commonplace association of love as war, he turns the border wars between Venice and Padua into a conflict between lovers. Though they have had a falling out, the reconciliation of lovers generally implies that they will grow even closer together in the aftermath.⁴³ The stylistic oxymora of his poetry, the living death which is love, the contrary winds of passion, the icy fire, ardent cold, the secret conflict of his cares, all attest to his poetics of opposition – his radical understanding of human existence as a tangle of conflict, war and struggle.⁴⁴

Rather than live by the law of the heath, where men treat the flesh of their brothers as so much meat, Petrarch conjures a society in which men recognize first and foremost that the mortality of their flesh is just one of many things they have in common. In fact, the familial father-son relationship mentioned in the first half of his speech is so dependent on common blood that they are actually to be understood as sharing one flesh:

And thus as a result of the disordered passions that intervene between father and son, who due to shared blood are of one flesh, often a dissension of spirits will occur: similarly as a result of the various appetites between strangers, who for services exchanged reciprocally in the past had been of one mind will often rancor, conflict and war with their tempers soaring.⁴⁵

⁴² One of Petrarch's earliest works, now lost, was a play called *Philologia*, which was by all accounts Terentian in inspiration. See Mariotti, "La *Philologia* del Petrarca," pp. 115-30.

⁴³ The mediation of differences is one of the core principles not only of the Stoic ideals Petrarch espouses in his philosophical works and letters, but it is a driving force behind his political practice. He seeks reconciliation and demands understanding of the political figures with whom he conducts his epistolary and ambassadorial commerce. And he does so by appealing to their humanity.

⁴⁴ For a discussion of Petrarch's fundamental poetics of opposition, see Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch*, p. 34-35; and Forster, *The Icy Fire*, pp. 4-40.

⁴⁵ Lazzarini, "La seconda ambasceria di Francesco Petrarca a Venezia," p. 181-2: "Et così per le desordenade passion che advien fra 'l pare e 'l fiolo, i quali per dependencia de sangue è una carne,

In just the first few lines of the oration as it comes down to us, Petrarch variously casts the estranged parties as lovers on the rocks and as members of the same family, a discordant father and son, both of whom are meant to be of one mind with each other.⁴⁶ Drawing on a stoic understanding of the irrational source of dissension between family members, Petrarch emphasizes the unpredictable tumultuousness of human nature (“per dependencia de sangue è una carne”).⁴⁷

Petrarch then gives advice on how to arrive at a reunion, a reconciliation, a return to good graces between the parties, a move reminiscent of his previous campaigns for Italian peace:

But either it happens then that between these people, so haughty, divided and moved to anger, and between whom there have been wars and scandals, they reconcile their spirits, this is where the authority of Terence cited above comes in: namely, that the anger and offenses of those who love each other have reintegration of greater love, because love newly integrated joins those between whom the grip of contention was firmer the greater their dissension.⁴⁸

Likening the two mortal enemies to lovers after a tiff, Petrarch optimistically conjures a scenario in which the estranged parties will make amends and find they have only grown closer as a result of their little disagreement. In one of his signature moves, he conflates the erotic with the

spesso nasce dissension d’animi: per simele per ie varii appetiti intro le stranij persone, le quali per servisij per lo passado facti l’un al’altro era facti de un voler, spesso se ingera ranchori rixe et guerre con accesi animi.”

⁴⁶ See Kohl, *Padua Under the Carrara, 1318-1405*, pp. 126-9.

⁴⁷ Petrarch’s stoicism is derived from a largely Ciceronian origin, though early Christian authors like Boethius would also certainly have informed some of his thinking in this regard. Petrarch’s philosophical formation in this regard demands to be further explored on another occasion.

⁴⁸ Lazzarini, “La seconda ambasceria di Francesco Petrarca a Venezia,” p. 182: “Ma o lo avegna poi che intra queste persone, così alterade, divise e comosse ad ira, e fra le quale è sta le guerre et i scandali, se faça reconciliacion d’animi, l’autorità de Tarencio allegata de sovra ha allora luogo: ço è che le ire et i corruci de quilli i quali se ama enno reintegracion da maore amore, per chè l’amor novamente reintegrando liga quilli fra i quali è sta le contencion con tanto più fermo groppo quanto è sta maore le sole dissensione.”

political in a bid to ensure that the peace they convened to consummate would result in a stronger and more enduring bond, in the manner of lovers who grow stronger and come closer together after they fight. He touches on many characteristic Petrarchan themes from the reconciliation of estranged Italian leaders – initially articulated in the erotic register only to be recast in familial terms – to the conflation of the lover’s discourse with the political.

Petrarch injects a dose of intimacy and familiarity into the political discourse of the moment. The humility of his style is daring. In a time of brute strength and political conflict, Petrarch brought the subject of love back into politics. He also enlarged the scope of what it meant to talk about friendship in politics and even spent countless hours offering his thoughts, keeping up with his correspondence, intervening in his own idiosyncratic, yet thoroughly studied way. He is able to use the contemplative pose of the hermit-sage as a platform from which to project the voice of the poet-humanist into the contemporary political, cultural and even literary debate of the time. And it is by interjecting his learned lessons and pulling out the authorities of antiquity that he accomplishes his civilizing task.

By unabashedly representing the human, the soft-spoken, the vulnerable, he carves out a space for a whole host of related states of being to soften the general cultural discourse. Petrarchan humanism aims to inject the values of *humanitas* into the ruling classes. A glance at the list of his correspondents shows that he is not interested in the middle-class or the mercantile life that continued to thrive in actual cities, streets and squares of his beloved Italy. His cultural project aims straight for the top.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ For Petrarch, part of his role as humanist advisor was to instruct these lords to embrace their humanity. A component of his humanistic project includes the sentimental education of his interlocutors. In the aftermath of one of the battles that ensued during Cola di Rienzo’s tempestuous reign in which several members of the Colonna family lost their lives, Petrarch addresses a belated letter of condolence to Cardinal Giovanni Colonna. In it he encourages Giovanni to public displays of emotion as an outlet for

The imbrication of the erotic with the political is symptomatic of the approach found throughout his work, particularly in the lyrics. In his vernacular poetry, in both the political and the amorous pieces, he borrows artfully from both registers, mixing them at will.⁵⁰ In the “interior experience” that Petrarch models in both the letters and the poetry, we glimpse the mechanisms of a pedagogical project aimed at the sentimental education of his powerful correspondents and non-politically engaged readers alike.

mourning. Petrarch, *Fam.* VII, 13: “Just continue what you have begun and behave inwardly with the good faith that you have revealed externally, unless a disturbed mind hide beneath a calm exterior. This was most dangerous to many, for while they disguised their upsets and behaved in public as though they were happy, they were dejected in their private rooms and wasted away in concealed grief. Such artifice is appropriate for an insane mind and labors only for one’s own destruction. It is much safer to confess one’s grief and to weep openly.”

⁵⁰ For examples from Petrarch’s lyrical work, see, in particular, the political canzoni: *Rvf.* 28 “O aspectata in ciel”; *Rvf.* 53, “Sprito gentil,” and *Rvf.* 128, “Italia mia,” just to name a few. The contamination of the erotic and the political thematic spheres suggests an understanding of human nature found in later political theorists like Rousseau, whereby the passions come before reason in terms of the human individual becoming an active, decision-making agent in the world.



Petrarch with Francesco il Vecchio

Giusto de' Menabuoi (Florence? - Padua 1391)

Fresco depicting Petrarch between Francesco il Vecchio and his wife Fina Buzzaccarini

Detail of the series "Christ's Miracles"
Padua, Dome Baptistery

Epilogue

“For our life will be judged by our words; when the proof of our actions is gone,
only the evidence of our speech will remain.”

– Francesco Petrarca, *The Life of Solitude*¹

From *Parlar indarno* to *Inutilis orator*

The Italian peninsula of Petrarch’s lifetime was a turbulent and politically fraught place, divided between many fragmentary centers of power and prone to the constant fluctuation of conflicting interests and shifting loyalties. The Padua-Venice conflict of 1372-73 is just one case among many that affords a glimpse of this political patchwork. A complex set of familial, regional Italian and broader European forces must first be sketched in order to better understand the conflict between Padua and Venice that climaxed in 1373.² Up until the middle of the fourteenth century, Padua had maintained healthy relations with the neighboring republic of

¹ English translation of Petrarch’s *De vita solitaria* by Jacob Zeitlin. For the complete passage in the Zeitlin, see Petrarca, *The Life of Solitude*, p. 100 “For our life will be judged by our *conversation*; when the proof of our actions is gone, only the evidence of our speech will remain.” In the epigraph I made a slight adjustment to the standard English translation, which renders “*sermo*” with its most literal English equivalent: “conversation.” But it also means “discourse” or “speech.” Petrarch seems to be referring not to the words he spoke but the immortal ones he wrote. For the Latin, see *De vita solitaria*, p. 8-9: “Qualis enim sermo fuerit, talis vita censebitur quando, rerum sublatis iudiciis, sola verborum supererunt argumenta.” The modern Italian translation by Marco Noce is wordy but closer to the original: “La nostra vita sarà valutata così come l’avranno tramandata le parole, quando, non potendosi più dare un giudizio sui fatti, rimarranno soltanto le prove addotte dalle parole.” The obvious contradiction with the sentiment expressed in the previous epigraph in this chapter is intended as a sign of Petrarch’s open acceptance of paradox.

² The chronicles of the time describe the purpose of the diplomatic mission to Venice: *ad faciendum reverentiam et petendum veniam* (Lazzarini, “La seconda ambasceria,” p. 175; “in order to pay reverence and beg pardon from the ducal Lord for all of their injuries and offenses”).

Venice.³ Under the rule of Giacomo II da Carrara, which came to a sudden end when he was tragically assassinated by his brother's illegitimate son in 1350, Padua had remained a steadfast friend and ally of its neighbor. It was not until after the dust settled in the wake of the sedition that Giacomo's son, Francesco I da Carrara, sowed the first seeds of discord. In 1356, when he chose to back the King of Hungary's army, he sent the first message that Padua preferred the protection of a distant, powerful king to the pretensions of a jealous, neighboring ally.⁴ He sought to further his own agenda by constructing a series of fortifications against Venice along the border of their respective territories, the same border he also began to contest.⁵ War ensued as the dispute spread from the age-old issue of who would control the coastal regions to the definition of other less established borders between the two powers.

The political backdrop against which the Padua-Venice conflict unfolded is characteristic of the fragmentation of power and the tenuousness of alliance that plagued the Italian peninsula over the course of Petrarch's career and beyond. The field is one in which there is no clear sense of good and evil, where conflict is the operative term on the European, regional, local and even familial level. This conflict was not an isolated event. The well-being of civil society at large in all neighboring city-states and polities was also at stake. Indeed, there was little novelty in the

³ For a summary of the events leading up to the Venetian mission of 1373, see Lazzarini, "La seconda ambasceria," pp. 173 ff.; Kohl, *Padua Under the Carrara, 1318-1405*, pp. 96-131; and Lazzarini, "Storie vecchie e nuove intorno a Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara."

⁴ Lazzarini, "La seconda ambasceria," p. 173.

⁵ See Lazzarini, "La seconda ambasceria," p. 173; and Petrarch, *Sen. XIV*, 1 (Bernardo, p. 524): "And at the same time, while desiring peace for the commonwealth more than anyone else, you alone built many strong fortresses at suitable points along your country's borders, something that had never occurred either to the people when the state had a republican government, or to anyone of your dynasty when they held the reins of office for so long." Petrarch's tone is arguably facetious, or even slightly sarcastic here, since these are, after all, the very towers that got Padua into trouble with Venice in the first place. Petrarch's way of whitewashing his interlocutor's questionable record is one of his key pedagogical strategies, on which I intend to further elaborate in future work on the topic of Petrarchan pedagogies.

chicanery underlying the actions of at least one if not both parties involved in this 1373 embassy in Venice, machinations that pervaded the moment of the embassy as well as the course of the events that would transpire over the next couple of years between the two rival powers. Though the conflict would not officially come to an end until a few years after Petrarch's final diplomatic intervention, Francesco il Vecchio's risky ambitions would lead to the demise of his own power and ultimately even the end of the Carrarese dynasty.

In the grand scope of the unfolding of these events, there was nothing particularly momentous or exemplary about the embassy of 1373 in and of itself. Negotiations of peace, drafting of treaties, the creation of leagues and other pageantries of statesmanship took place with some regularity between the various leaders and their autonomous city-states in fourteenth-century Italy. As I have discussed over the course of this study, Petrarch took part in several other events of this kind.⁶ Deals were made, rhetoric deployed, oaths taken and promises broken.

⁶ For Petrarch's own calculus of diplomatic involvement, see *Sen.* XVII, 2 (Bernardo, p. 650): "What I lost at the princes' bidding you will now hear. For I too, like Seneca, keep account of expenses. Once I was sent to Venice to negotiate the reestablishment of peace between that city and Genoa, and I used up a whole month of the winter; later, in behalf of peace in Liguria, three summer months far away from civilization with the Roman prince [Charles IV], who was reviving, or to put it more correctly, abandoning the hopes of the – alas – collapsed empire; finally, three more winter months to congratulate King John of France, who had then been freed from an English prison. For even if on these three journeys I assiduously applied my mind to my usual concerns, still, because there was no means to write or to fix my thoughts in my memory, I call them lost days, although on my last one, while returning to Italy, I dictated an enormous letter to the elderly scholar Pierre de Poitiers [Bersuire], on the vicissitudes of fortune; it arrived too late and found him deceased. There, then, are the seven months I lost in the service of princes, an enormous loss, I do not deny, in so short a life; but would that the loss which the vanity and empty activities of my adolescence caused me were not more enormous!" Add to this the week or so he dedicated to the 1373 Venetian embassy analyzed in this chapter that followed shortly after the composition of this letter to Boccaccio (*Sen.* XVII, 2), which was written on April 28 earlier that same year. In addition to his diplomatic oratory he also intervened in the political and intellectual life of his times through the many hundred letters he addressed to many of the prime movers in matters of state, from the local Italian lords to the emperor in Prague and the constellation of important men of letters in their respective courts.

Few chronicles make more than cursory mention of the 1373 peace settlement and Paduan embassy.⁷ Fewer still go into enough detail to mention the presence of such illustrious participants as Petrarch.⁸ There is nothing unusual either about his absence in the official records. Though he had taken part in several other embassies of this sort, his name rarely appears in the corresponding entries in local chronicles.⁹ The few that do choose to include some of these additional details offer slightly more vivid glimpses into the proceedings of such affairs of state and afford precious insights into the customs of the political landscape and the mechanisms of power that were current at the time. After all, since Petrarch's coronation on the Capitoline in Rome in 1341, the Italian political stage would have grown accustomed to the articulate voice of conscience of the distinguished poet laureate, who styled himself to be a legend in his own time. While the chronicle tradition may be largely negligent in his regard, many others who came into contact with him took note and responded.

The occasion for Petrarch's oration amounted to little more than a ritualized spectacle of public humiliation designed to check the hubris of his Paduan patron, Francesco da Carrara, the

⁷ For brief mention of Petrarch's embassy to Venice with Francesco Novello da Carrara, son of the lord of Padua, Francesco il Vecchio, see *Cronaca Carrarese*, September 24 to October 2, 1373, p. 125-8. A list of stipulations on their pact is also there. A pact of peace is made between the Republic of Venice and the Carrara family of Padova that amounts to a Veneto league of alliance, a bartered *pax Venetiana*.

⁸ From the tone of the beginning of the letter he sent to Francesco il Vecchio in the immediate aftermath of the embassy, *Seniles XIV*, 1, Petrarch does not seem to have participated willingly, especially considering his age and health at the time.

⁹ For example in this chronicle, there is no mention of Petrarch's presence: "Chapitoli di la pacie. Primo, che la Signoria volle ch'el signore de Pado[a] debia andare a Venesia, e dinanzo dal doxe e del suo generale consiglio zurare per suo sagramento, che la guerra che l'à fatto con la signoria di Venesia lui à fatto contra ogni debita raxone. L'anda' de misser Francesco a Venesia. Marti, XXVII de settembre, usi di la città di Padoa il nobelle chavalier misser Francesco Novello da Carara, figliuolo del prefatto signore in persona de Padoa, mandato per comandamento de suo padre a Venexia a laldare retificare in persona di suo padre i sovra scritti patti."

instigator of an aggressive border war, and force him psychologically into symbolic submission to the superior forces of the “Adriatic Queen.”¹⁰ In compliance with the rather extreme terms for peace established by the Venetians, a diplomatic envoy was sent from Padua for the purpose of begging forgiveness and pledging obedience to their renewed ally who now had the upper hand.¹¹ The defeated lord of Padua chose not to attend. Instead, he sent Francesco Novello da Carrara, his fourteen year-old son and heir apparent, to accept the terms of the Venetian peace agreement.¹²

Petrarch featured prominently among the small army of illustrious figures who made up the Paduan embassy. In fact, the revered presence of a man whose reputation preceded him

¹⁰ Lazzarini, “La seconda ambasceria,” p. 181: “Nè l’orazione era fatta per persuadere alla pace, già da alcuni giorni conchiusa, ma era piuttosto un abile accenno alle ragioni della discordia, alla durata e sincerità della conciliazione; la presentazione del giovine signore prima di compiere l’atto di render riverenza e domandar perdono.”

¹¹ See Lazzarini, “La seconda ambasceria,” p.180-2: “L’autore della *Cronaca Papafava*, raccogliendo i ragionamenti di chi era stato presente al fatto, racconta che al Petrarca tremò la voce per vecchiezza e per una infermità della quale non era ben guarito: noi aggiungiamo che l’obbligo di far scuse non doveva dar forza e scioltezza alla parola del vecchio e debole poeta, che sentiva di partecipare all’umiliazione di un vinto, in quello stesso palazzo ducale dove vent’anni prima era stato ascoltato oratore del potente arcivescovo di Milano.”

¹² Redusio, *Chronicon Tarvisinum*, RIS XIX, p. 751, B (translation mine): “Then Boniface Lupus arrived for the purpose of establishing peace; while he was there they negotiated the terms of the peace. Carrara played his hand astutely and he sent his associate, the singular and illustrious poet Francesco Petrarca with his son Francesco Novello to Venice to appear at the feet of the Ducal Lord, in order to supplicate for peace at any cost, which in no way would be offered, if fortune were not standing over his obedience” (“Cum quo Bonifacius Lupus in stabilienda pace coniectus est; qui ibidem dum pacem tractarent, astutè se gessit Carriger, & assumto filio Francisco Novello, illum associatum Francisco Petrarcha Poëta unico atque illustri, Venetias misit ad pedes Ducalis Domini, pacem omnimodam supplicaturum, quam nullo modo praestitisset, si sibi fortuna obsequens extitisset”). This last conditional clause dramatizes the Venetian attempt to keep their Paduan neighbors in line. The rather severe list of provisions includes the ritualized spectacle of public humiliation in which Petrarch participated. Diplomatic mechanisms of this sort afford a fascinating glance at the kinds of *ad hoc* systems of checks and balances that various players in the Italian political arena enacted in order to quell certain rogue elements active at the time.

seems to have caused such a stir that a couple of contemporary chronicles, though not all of them since such details are generally lost on this genre of local historiography, actually mention him by name and two in particular elaborate on the content of his intervention.

According to the second generation chronicler Andrea Redusio, author of a Trevisan chronicle composed roughly half a century later (his *Chronicon Tarvisinum* dates to the years between 1420-1428), that October morning in 1373 after mass in the Great Council Chamber in Venice, Petrarch gave a performance in which he put all of his prowess as orator on display, despite his illness. Though he does not go into much detail regarding the specifics of Petrarch's speech, Redusio notes the stately effect of the elderly humanist on the audience of young Venetian nobles, most of whom were only in their early twenties:

Tantum in se continuit venustatem, quod visu & auditu adstantium ab extra omnes praesentes rancores sustulit & amovit, intrinseca tamen utrimque manente perfidia.

So much elegance did he embody, that from the eyes & ears of those in attendance he lifted up and swept away all present resentment, however an intrinsic treachery continued to be harbored in both men.¹³

Redusio immediately undermines the success of Petrarch's oratorical efforts even as he marvels at the efficacy and sheer beauty of the performance.¹⁴ In the very same sentence describing the

¹³ See Redusio, *Chronicon Tarvisinum*, RIS XIX, p. 751, D-E. Translation mine. Petrarch is seen to be the embodiment of such *venustas*, namely, beauty, elegance, composure, that he nearly shines forth onto the senses of the crowd. The sight of him and his demeanor alleviates all present rancor and compels them to set aside their issues (“omnes praesentes rancores sustulit et amovit”) despite the fact that an intrinsic treachery (faithlessness, perfidy, dishonesty) remained in both men, which seems like a pretty fair and honest assessment of the ways things were in the aftermath. The juxtaposition of the entrenched faithlessness – “intrinsic manente perfidia” – to the superficial relief he brought with his words and presence, by means of which he was able to lift resentments out of sight and out of mind (“visu & auditu ab extra”) casts a skeptical light on the efficacy of the great humanist's diplomatic efforts.

¹⁴ For a sense of the power Redusio's account exerted on the reception of Petrarch's involvement in the 1373 Venetian Embassy, see the following biographies that repeat Redusio's dramatization, at times adding their own narrative details in order to make the scene even more vivid: Campbell, *The Life and Times of Petrarch*, II, pp. 302-3 and Holloway-Cathrop, *Life of Petrarch*, pp. 291-4. For a more balanced

effect his words had on the audience, he is perceived to have barely scratched the surface of the hearts of the two men in the room who mattered most, namely the Venetian Doge and Francesco Novello: “benché il parlar sia indarno” (*Rvf.* 28, 1; “although speech is useless”).¹⁵ Thus, striking out yet again at the end of a long career of almost complete ineffectiveness, Petrarch obstinately runs right up against the harsh reality of barbaric Italian politics, barbaric inasmuch as it is impervious to the discourse of reason, to the impact of eloquence. In this regard, political Petrarch is essentially a failure in terms of his influence on the harsh actuality of the day-to-day politics. Nevertheless, the movement that he spearheaded would have profound repercussions in the state of letters and civilization at large. His injection of civility and *humanitas* into the political discourse of the time was the best he could hope for in terms of contemporary results. He did what he could in order to improve the princes, lords, tyrants and statesmen with whom he came into contact. For the rest, he led life famously aimed at posterity.

His ongoing efforts notwithstanding, Petrarch was not naively optimistic about the results. Petrarch’s realization that speech could be in vain came early in his career. In fact, the sentiment “parlar indarno” features in the opening of one of his most famous early political canzoni, *Italia mia*. Since he was obviously aware of the impotence of speech so early on, there is no reason to take Petrarch as merely idealistic. The tranquility of the bucolic life he idealized had been disrupted too many times for him to still be so naive. He reaffirmed, yet again, this time

approach that takes into account more of a variety of historical sources, see Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca*, pp. 436 ff; Wilkins, *Petrarch’s Later Years*, pp. 250-57.

¹⁵ Lazzarini, *La seconda ambasceria*, p. 181: “Tutti, eccetto il Fulin e il Koerting, parlarono della maestà del veneto senato, mentre l’adunanza ebbe luogo nella sala del Maggior Consiglio, e il discorso fu recitato nel conspetto della Signoria e alla presenza della folla dei nobili di consiglio, tra i quali molti erano giovani intorno ai vent’anni.”

before the ruling nobles of Venice, the fact that his *parlar* truly is *indarno*.¹⁶ Yet, after having played the *inutilis orator* time and again throughout his career, here at the end of his life, despite age and illness, we find him persistent in his mission, still carrying on. This is Petrarch the courtier, the orator, the diplomat that the tradition has only with great difficulty reconciled with the meditative poet and solitary thinker.

While Petrarch may not have ever plied the trade of politics at any one time in his life, his exposure was extensive and his involvement multi-faceted. Most of all he was unequivocally emotionally invested. His primary concerns are exemplified in his articulate and primarily epistolary reflections on the developments of the state of affairs in Italy that he witnessed and even experienced first-hand. These include the desire to see all of Italy united under the enlightened rule of a powerful leader, perhaps best exemplified by King Robert of Anjou of Naples whose loss he sorely felt early in his career; the need for a strong unified defense against the threat of foreign meddling in Italian affairs; and the will to do so while also distancing the peninsula from the pernicious influence of the papal court. These core political and ideological concerns – including the cultural and scholarly values he also renewed – will resurface in the Florentine civic humanists, Machiavelli and even Foscolo. This is the political Petrarch whose legacy would persist for centuries to come throughout Italy, Europe and beyond.

¹⁶ On Petrarch's attempts at forging peace through his oratory, see Godi, *Il Petrarca «inutilis orator» a Venezia*, p. 404.

Appendix 1

Petrarch's 1373 Venetian Oration

Cronica volgare carrarese

Como dise Terencio Comedo: Amantium ire red(r)integratio amoris est. Illustri et magnifici Signori; per la gran varietà de i humori che naturalmente è producti in lo corpo [de l'] homo, ello advien spesse fiade ch'el dicto corpo se altera per alguna sovrabondantia di dicti humori. Et così per le desordenade passion che advien fra 'l pare e 'l fiolo, i quali per dependencia de sangue è una carne, spesso nasse dissension d'animi: per simile per ie varii appetiti intro le stranii persone, le quale per servisii per lo passato facti l'un al'altro era facti de un voler spesso se ingenera ranchori rixe et guerre con animi accesi. Ma o lo avegna poi che intra queste persone, così alterade, divise e comosse ad ira, e fra le quale è sta le guerre et i scandali, se faça reconciliacion d'animi, l'autorità de Tarencio allegata de sovra ha allora luogo: ço è che le ire et i corruci de quilli i quali se ama enno reintegracion da maore amore, per chè l'amor novamente reintegrando liga quilli fra i quali è sta le contencion con tanto più fermo groppo quanto è sta maore le sole dissension. Et così, io no dubito, fra la ducale Signoria de questa benedecta città de Venesia e 'l magnifico Signor messier Francesco da Carrara, reconciliadi insembre, con animi sinceri dover perpetualmente durare el fructo de la pase ala qual, per la gracia de messier Domenedio, elli enno vignudi. Per le qual cose così proposte el magnifico cavaliere messier Francesco novello da Carrara, voiando esequire et complire la volontà del magnifico so pare messier Francesco da Carrara, el qual per altre occupacion che ha habudo no è possudo vignir qui, è vignudo ala presencia de la vostra ducale Signoria a rendere debita reverencia et domandarie perdonança de tucte l'inçurie et offese che a la dicta Signoria per elli fosse in algun modo sta fa te.

As Terence the comic playwright said: the quarrels of lovers are the renewal of love. Illustrious and magnificent Lords; due to the great variety of humors that are naturally produced in the human body, it often happens that said body alters itself as a result of any over abundance of these humors. And thus as a result of the disordered passions that intervene between father and son, who due to shared blood are of one flesh, often a dissension of spirits will occur: similarly as a result of the various appetites between strangers, who for services exchanged reciprocally in the past had been of one mind will often raise rancor, conflict and war with their tempers soaring [*accessi animi*]. But either it happens then that between these people, so haughty, divided and moved to anger, and between whom there have been wars and scandals, they reconcile their spirits, this is where authority of Terence cited above comes in: namely, that the anger and offenses of those who love each other experience reintegration of greater love, because love newly integrated joins those between whom the grip of contention was firmer the greater their dissension. And thus, I do not doubt, between the ducal Signoria of this blessed city of Venice and the great Signor messier Francesco da Carrara, having been reconciled it seems, that with sincerity in their hearts the fruit of the peace they have made should last, by the grace of God, they remain humble. Regarding those things proposed, the magnificent cavaliere Francesco Novello da Carrara, wanting to execute and carry out the wishes of his magnificent father messier Francesco da Carrara, who could not be here due to other obligations, is humble in the presence of your ducal Signoria to pay due reverence and beg your pardon for all injuries and offenses that have been committed against your Signoria.³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ Translation mine. For the original text, see Lazzarini, “Seconda ambasceria,” pp. 182-3.

Appendix 2

Petrarch's *Familiars*: Analytical Chart Highlighting Political Themes¹

This reference chart of the twenty-four books of the *Familiars* is divided into eight columns with the following legend:

- **Gray Shading**: highlights letters that present political topics.
- **“No.”**: number of the letter in collection.
- **“Type”**: each letter has been categorized broadly according the following typologies:
 - **“F”**: purely familiar or friendly in content
 - **“P”**: political in content
 - **“E”**: epistolary, contains meta-discourse theorizing the genre of the letter.
- **“Title”**: given by Petrarch as it appears in Bernardo’s English translation.
- **“No./Total”**: the progressive number over the total of letters to each addressee.
- **“Political Topics”**: brief summary of political themes present.
- **“Place” and “Month”**: both as they appear at the end of each letter. If in parentheses, it means that such information does not always appear in all versions of the text and/or can be elicited from the text.
- **“Year”**: with the exception of eight out of ten of the letters to ancient authors in book XXIV, Petrarch never indicates the year of his letters. Such information can be elicited from the contents and/or from other versions of the letters and scholarly dating. The date in brackets reflects the date of actual composition, as opposed to the date suggested by the ordering of the autobiographical fiction of the collection. Some letters have even been deemed *fittizie*, that is to say that they were explicitly composed for inclusion to flesh out the arc of the epistolary epic.

¹ Elaborated from section 5.2 of Roberta Antognini’s monographic study of Petrarch’s *Familiars*, *Il progetto autobiografico delle ‘Familiars’ di Petrarca*. Milano: Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto, 2008.

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|------------------------|------|--|-------------|---|-------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 1 | F | To his Socrates , preface to his first collection of letters | 1/22 | | (Padua) | (January 13) | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 2 | P | To Tommaso de Messina , on untimely appetite for glory | 1/9 | King Robert d'Anjou as Augustus – Cicero on Julius Caesar – tyranny – poetry & glory – the plague of courtiers – Scipio Africanus – Cicero & the poet Archias | Bologna | April 18 | 1326 [1350] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 3 | F | To the venerable elder Raimondo Subirani , Attorney at Law, on the fleetingness of life | 1/1 | | Avignon | May 1 | 1330 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 4 | F/P | To Giovanni Colonna , Cardinal of the Roman Church, description of a journey | 1/16 | Assessment of the kingdom of King Charles | Acquisgrana | (June 21) | 1333 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 5 | F/P | To Giovanni Colonna , Cardinal of the Roman Church, description of a journey | 2/16 | Political culture of Cologne | Lyon | August 9 | 1333 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 6 | F/P | To Giacomo Colonna , Bishop of Lombez, a friendly complaint that he had left for Rome without waiting for him | 1/3 | Political friendship | Lyon | August 9 | 1333 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 7 | F | To Tommaso de Messina , against aged dialecticians | 2/9 | | Avignon | March 12 | 1334-1335 < 1337 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 8 | F | To Tommaso de Messina , on inventiveness and talent | 3/9 | | | April 11 | 1334-1335 < 1337 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 9 | F/P | To Tommaso de Messina , on the study of eloquence | 4/9 | The political value of eloquence | | May 1 | 1334-1335 < 1337 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 10 | F | To Tommaso de Messina , a description of an avaricious old man | 5/9 | | (Avignon) | | 1333-1337 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 11 | F | To Tommaso de Messina , a description of a famished parasite | 6/9 | | (Avignon) | | 1333-1337 [1350/51] |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|----------------------|------|---|-------------|--|-------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , I, 12 | F | To Tommaso de Messina , the rest of the dispute with the garrulous aged dialectician | 7/9 | | Valchiusa | December 11 | 1337 [1350/51] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 1 | F/P | To Philip, Bishop of Cavailon , that he must bear the death of his dear ones with composure | 1/12 | Exile – metaphor of the one true homeland | Valchiusa | February 25 | 1338 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 2 | F/P | A letter of consolation on the misfortune of a dead and unburied friend and some thoughts concerning the rites of burial [To unknown correspondent] | 1/21 | Patriotism – metaphor of the one true homeland – conjugal love | | | [1354-1360] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 3 | F/P | To Severo Apenninicola , a consolatory letter on his exile | 1/2 | Exile – metaphor of the one true homeland | | | [1354-1360] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 4 | F/P | To Severo Apenninicola , a consolatory letter on his exile | 2/2 | Exile – metaphor of the one true homeland – liberal arts and civic matters | | | [1354-1360] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 5 | F/P | To Giovanni Colonna , that minds suffer greatly from their association with the body | 1/8 | Exile – mind-exiled-from-body theme | (Avignon) | | 1336 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 6 | F/E | To Giovanni Colonna , that absence is not harmful to friendship | 2/8 | Epistolary theme of absence/presence | (Avignon) | | 1336 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 7 | F/P | To Giovanni Colonna , that anxious expectations must be eliminated to live a tranquil life | 3/8 | Longing for Italy, inner Italy, Rome | (Avignon) | | 1336 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 8 | F | To Giovanni Colonna , that all things that happen naturally should be borne courageously and that useless complaints should be avoided | 4/8 | | (Avignon) | | 1336 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 9 | F | A reply to a certain humorous letter of Giacomo Colonna , Bishop of Lombex | 2/3 | | Avignon | December 21 | 1336 [1351-1353] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 10 | F/P | To Agapito Colonna | 1/2 | The predominance of vice and the collapse of society | Valchiusa | May 1 | 1338-1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 11 | F | To Agapito Colonna , an invitation to a poetic dinner | 2/2 | | Valchiusa | January 13 | 1338-1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 12 | F/P | To Cardinal Giovanni Colonna , a description of another journey | 3/16 | The ideal of Italy | (Capranica) | (> January 26) | 1337 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|----------------------|------|--|-------------|---|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 13 | F/P | To Cardinal Giovanni Colonna , on his lengthy stay at Capranica and on the arrival of Giacomo and his brother Stefano | 4/16 | The turbulent state of Rome | (Capranica) | (Early February) | 1337 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 14 | F/P | To Cardinal Giovanni Colonna , from the city of Rome | 5/16 | The greatness of Rome in ruins | Rome | March 15 | 1337 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , II, 15 | F/P | To Cardinal Giovanni Colonna , on the highly justifiable praises of his sisters, Giovanna and Agnes | 6/16 | Roman matronly virtue | (Rome) | March 23 | 1337 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 1 | F/P | To Tommaso da Messina , the opinions of various people concerning the very famous but doubtful Island of Thule | 8/9 | Political insights into Great Britain | (Britannia) | | 1333 [1352] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 2 | F | To Tommaso da Messina , against the expectations and useless labors of a short life | 9/9 | | Avignon | August 18 | 1333 [1352] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 3 | P | To Stefano Colonna the younger, that to have won is pointless for one who does not know how to use his victory | 1/2 | Art of war – illustrious examples from antiquity | | (June) | 1333 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 4 | F/P | To Stefano Colonna the younger, that there is nothing new under the sun | 2/2 | The soldiers' share of the glory – political poetry | | (June) | 1333 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 5 | F/P | To an unknown correspondent , that the solitary life can not be fully commended except by an expert | 2/21 | The political value of eloquence – learning from experience | Valchiusa | May 4 | 1342/1343 <1346 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 6 | F/P | To a friend eager for a questionable undertaking, that not all profit is useful | 3/21 | Learning from experience – the good life – the lessons of philosophy | | | [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 7 | P | To Paganino da Milano , that the appetite for power must be controlled, and on the optimum condition of the state | 1/3 | Lessons of Roman history – Scipio the Younger – the lessons of philosophy | | | 1347-1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 8 | F | To a friend , an exhortation against putting faith in the answers of soothsayers or any kind of diviner | 4/21 | | | | |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 9 | F | To Matteo da Padova , against drunkenness | 1/1 | | | | |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-----------------------|------|---|-------------|---|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 10 | F | To a Transalpine friend , a man of great repute, that cowardice does not delay death and that he should do nothing base in order to attempt to live longer | 5/21 | | | | 1339 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 11 | F/P | To Guido Gonzaga , lord of Mantua, that loved equates unequals | 1/1 | The power of love – political friendship – Caesar’s friends | Avignon | January 13 | 1339 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 12 | P | To Marco Genovese , that even those who server the state can live piously and honestly and can also aspire to the silence of a loftier life above the din of the active life | 1/3 | Political friendship – the virtues of the contemplative stoic sage – political and penitential virtue – salvation through the active life | Valchiusa | January 1 | 1340 [1353] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 13 | F | To Friar Giovanni Colonna , that the gout is common among the wealthy | 5/8 | | Valchiusa | June 22 | > 1337 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 14 | F/P | To an unknown correspondent , an explanation for the turning down of a loan sought in the correspondence of a certain important friend | 6/21 | Political economy | | December 31 | < 1338 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 15 | F/P | To a quarrelsome friend , that just as the friendship of good people is to be sought, so is the enmity of evil people to be shunned | 7/21 | Political friendship | | | |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 16 | F | To Paganino da Milano , that patience is the only remedy in adversity | 2/3 | | | | <1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 17 | F | To Paganino da Milano , that time to think is before acting | 3/3 | | | | <1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 18 | F | To Giovanni dell' Incisa , to whom he has entrusted the search for books | 1/4 | | | | >1345 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 19 | F | To his Lelius , concerning the stubbornness of human expectation | 1/15 | | (Valchiusa) | (winter) | 1346 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 20 | F | To his Lelius , a complaint about his silence and what a relief it might be to be freed from less expectation | 2/15 | | (Valchiusa) | | 1346 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 21 | F | To his Lelius | 3/15 | | Valchiusa | April 26 | 1346 or 1347 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-----------------------|------|--|-------------|---|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , III, 22 | F/P | To his Lelius , on the notable efforts of eloquence and of music and the fact that the most savage beasts are soothed by flattery and sweetness | 4/15 | The political value of eloquence | Valchiusa | April 29 | 1346 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 1 | F/P | To Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro of the Augustinian Order and Professor of Sacred Scripture, concerning some personal problems | 1/2 | Ascent of Mount Ventoux – prelude to coronation | Malaucene | April 26 | 1336 [1353] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 2 | P | To Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro , congratulations on his trip to Robert, the greatest king and philosopher, and the salutary effect that the conversation of famous men has on one's peace of mind | 2/2 | Ascent to the height of power – the political value of eloquence – prison of the body – <i>Somnium Scipionis</i> – the philosopher king: Robert d'Anjou | Valchiusa | January 4 | 1339-1340 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 3 | P | To the famous king, Robert of Sicily | 1/2 | The political value of eloquence – the philosopher king – <i>Somnium Scipionis</i> – poet & prince – glory | Valchiusa | December 26 | 1338-1339 [1352-1353] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 4 | P | To Giovanni Colonna , Cardinal of the Roman Church, where best to receive the laurel crown | 7/16 | Coronation: Paris vs. Rome – alliance between Scipio and Syphax - <i>patria</i> | Valchiusa | September 1 | 1340 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 5 | P | To Giovanni Colonna , Cardinal of the Roman Church, accepting the proposed advice | 8/16 | Coronation: Paris vs. Rome | Valchiusa | September 10 | 1340 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 6 | P | To Giacomo Colonna , Bishop of Lombez, on the same matter | 3/3 | Coronation | Avignon | February 15 | 1341 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 7 | P | To Robert, King of Sicily , on his laurel crown and against those who praise the ancients while always despising things of the present | 2/2 | Coronation ceremony – past vs. present – philosopher king | Pisa | April 30 | 1341 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 8 | P | To Barbato da Sulmona , royal secretary, on the same laurel crown | 1/9 | The turbulence of Rome | Pisa | April 30 | 1341 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 9 | P | To Cardinal Giovanni Colonna , on the liberation of the city of Parma | 9/16 | The turbulence of Italian politics | (Parma) | May 23 | 1341 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------|------|---|-------------|---|------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 10 | F | To Pellegrino da Messina , on the sad case of the untimely death of a friend | 1/1 | | (Parma) | | 1341 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 11 | F | To Giacomo da Messina , on the death of the same friend | 1/1 | | (Parma) | | 1341 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 12 | F/P | To Cardinal Giovanni Colonna , a consolatory letter on the death of his illustrious brother Giacomo | 10/16 | The nobility of citizenship – salvation through the active life – <i>Somnium Scipionis</i> / “ <i>aspectata in ciel</i> ” – metaphor of the one true homeland | (Parma) | January 5 | 1342 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 13 | F/P | To Lelius , not a consolation but a lament over the same death | 5/15 | Coronation | (Parma) | (late winter) | 1342 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 14 | F/P | To Sennuccio di Firenze , concerning the condition of his domestic help | 1/1 | Domestic politics (see <i>Fam.</i> , V, 14) | (Provence) | | 1345-1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 15 | F/P | A controversy with a certain famous man against vaunters of knowledge which is not theirs and against excerpters of literary ornaments [To Giovanni D’Andrea] | 1/5 | Poets & princes – Ennius & Scipio – Statius & Domitian – knowledge as merchandise | (Avignon) | August 17 | 1342 or 1345-1346 [c. 1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 16 | F | To a certain famous man, additional thoughts on vaunters and concerning the University of Bologna [To Giovanni D’Andrea] | 2/5 | | | August 31 | 1342 or 1345-1346 [c. 1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 17 | F | That one’s life style must be controlled by one’s capabilities and that nothing encourages an enthusiasm for lavish entertainment like bad examples [To an unknown correspondent] | 8/21 | | | | 1342-1343 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 18 | F | To rebuke a friend | 8/21 | | | | 1342-1343 [1350-1351] |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 19 | F | To a friend | 9/21 | | | | 1342-1343 [1350-1351] |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|------------------------|------|---|-------------|---|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 1 | P | To Barbato da Sulmona , on the death of King Robert of Sicily | 2/8 | Concern over court in Naples | (Valchiusa) | May 29 | 1342 or February 1, 1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 2 | P | To Giovanni Colonna , an expression of gratitude for the great honors rendered him | 11/16 | Political friendship – patron’s letters for favor in Rome | Rome | October 7 | 1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 3 | P | To Giovanni Colonna , on his journey and the horrors of the ruling council of Naples | 12/16 | Concern over court in Naples | Naples | November 29 | 1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 4 | P | To Giovanni Colonna , a description of Baia and of the female warrior from Pozzuoli | 13/16 | Negotiations in Naples | Baia | November 23 | 1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 5 | F | To Giovanni Colonna , a description of a storm without equal | 14/16 | | Naples | November 26 | 1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 6 | P | To Giovanni Colonna , a complaint about the nocturnal prowlers of Naples and about the disgustingly bloody gladiatorial games that are permitted there | 15/16 | Dissolute young nobles – social unrest in Naples | Naples | December 1 | 1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 7 | F/P | To Giovanni Andrea , professor of Canon law at Bologna, how much faith one should have in dreams | 3/5 | Dreams, prophecy, politics – <i>Somnium Scipionis</i> | (Parma) | December 27 | 1344 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 8 | F/P | To Giovanni Andrea , on the condition of a lustful young man | 4/5 | Morality of the passions | (Parma) | May 13 | 1344 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 9 | F/P | To Giovanni Andrea , on the condition of a dissolute old man | 5/5 | The passions in old age | (Parma) | | 1344 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 10 | P | To Barbato da Sulmona | 3/8 | Flight from Parma under siege – genesis of “Italia mia” (<i>Rvf</i> 128) | Bologna | February 25 | 1345 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 11 | F | To Andrea da Mantova , that the words of detractors should be despised, but their writings should be refuted with writings | 1/2 | | | | 1344 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 12 | F | To Andrea da Mantova , on the same matter | 2/2 | | | | 1344 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 13 | F | To his Socrates , on the desirability of not delaying salutary advice | 2/22 | | | | 1342-1343 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|------------------------|------|--|-------------|--|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 14 | F/P | To his Socrates , on the annoying relations with servants | 3/22 | Civil war = domestic war (see <i>Fam.</i> , IV, 14) | (Valchiusa) | | 1342-1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 15 | P | To his Socrates , an exhortation | 4/22 | Petition for grassroots political action | | | 1342-1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 16 | F | To Guido Sette , Archdeacon of Genoa, an excuse for not writing | 1/12 | | | | 1342-1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 17 | F | To Guido Sette , that the works of ugly people can be beautiful | 2/12 | | | | 1342-1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 18 | F | To Guido Sette , on his present condition | 3/12 | | | March - August | 1342-1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , V, 19 | F/P | To Clement VI , the Roman Pontiff, that he must flee the mob of doctors | 1/1 | Rhetoric vs. the medical profession – Cicero meets Hippocrates | (Avignon) | March 12 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 1 | P | To Cardinal Annibaldo , Tusculan Bishop, against the greed of the Popes | 1/1 | Greed of popes | (Provence) | | 1343 <1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 2 | F/P | To Giovanni Colonna of the Order of Preachers, that one must love not sects but the truth, and concerning the remarkable places in the city of Rome | 6/8 | Literary, political, historical walking tour of Rome | <i>Ex itinere</i> | November 30 | 1341 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 3 | F/P | To Giovanni Colonna , consolation against certain difficulties of life | 7/8 | Humanism's biblical / classical universal concerns | Valchiusa | May 30 | 1342 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 4 | F/P | To Giovanni Colonna , what example are worth is shown by examples | 8/8 | <i>Exemplaritas</i> as pedagogical model | Avignon | September 25 | 1342 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 5 | P | To Barbato da Sulmona , on the sad and undeserved death of King Andrea | 4/9 | Concern over court in Naples | Valchiusa | August 1 | 1346 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 6 | F/P | To an unknown correspondent , vices that cannot be overcome ought to be forsaken | 10/21 | Rhetoric / eloquence – language and lies | Avignon | April 29 | 1346-1347 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 7 | F/P | To an unknown correspondent , on the difference between eloquence and loquaciousness | 11/21 | Rhetoric and the art of speaking | | | 1346-1347 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 8 | F/P | To a friend in need | 12/21 | Lessons from political <i>exempla</i> | | | 1346-1347 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|--------------------------|------|--|-------------|---|-------------------|--------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , VI, 9 | F/P | To Philip, Bishop of Cavaillon | 2/12 | City vs. country – posturing vs. sincerity – closed vs. open | | January 2 | 1347 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 1 | P | To Barbato da Sulmona , a lamentation over the desolation of his native land at the hands of the barbarians | 5/9 | Turbulence of Italian politics – Cola di Rienzo – exile | Avignon | September 11 | 1347 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 2 | F/P | To a friend , on the need for not despising true humility | 13/21 | Lessons in power from biblical and Roman <i>exempla</i> – Scipio Africanus | | | |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 3 | F | To his Socrates , a nocturnal vision, and that a calm poverty ought to be preferred to an agitated wealth | 5/22 | | | January 14 | 1343 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 4 | F | To Giovanni Tricestrino , bishop and professor of theology | 1/1 | | (Valchiusa) | (November) | 1347 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 5 | P/E | To his Lelius , on personal matters and on the disturbing rumors connected with the doings of the Tribune of Rome | 6/15 | Familiar letter theorized – Cola di Rienzo – turbulence in Italian politics | <i>Ex itinere</i> | November 22 | 1347 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 6 | F | To his Socrates , on his private affairs and his desire for moderation | 6/22 | | <i>Ex itinere</i> | November 25 | 1347 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 7 | P | To Nicholas , Tribune of the city of Rome, indignation mixed with entreaties regarding the Tribune's changed reputation | 1/1 | Cola di Rienzo | Genoa | November 29 | 1347 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 8 | F/P | To Giovanni Aretino | 1/5 | Turbulence of Italian politics | (Valchiusa) | (December 1) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 9 | F/P | That opened enmity is to be preferred to concealed hatred [To an unknown correspondent] | 14/21 | Stoic political advice | | | |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 10 | F/P | To Giovanni dell'Incisa , an apology and some thoughts on perishable hope | 2/4 | Disillusionment with the Curia | Verona | April 7 | 1348 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 11 | F/P | To Giovanni dell'Incisa , on the reputation of an expected friend | 3/4 | The power of love – political friendship | Parma | April 10 | 1348 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 12 | F/P | To Giovanni dell'Incisa , a complaint over the death of an expected friend | 4/4 | The power of love – political friendship | (Parma) | (May 11) | 1348 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-----------------------|-------|--|-------------|--|----------|-------------|-----------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 13 | F/P/E | To Cardinal Giovanni Colonna , condolences on the death of his brother and grandsons | 16/16 | Style as expression of the mind – self presentation | (Parma) | (spring) | 1348 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 14 | F | To Bruno di Firenze , that judgment of love is blind | 1/1 | | (Verona) | (April 8) | 1348 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 15 | P | To Luchino Visconti , Lord of Milan, concerning learned princes | 1/1 | Wiseman as advisor – gardening / harvesting metaphor – benefit of <i>otium</i> for statesmen – friendly letters to princes | (Parma) | March 13 | 1348 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 16 | F/P | To Jacopo Fiorentino , that honest censure is to be preferred to false praise | 1/3 | Importance of rebuke between friends | Padua | March 25 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 17 | F/P | To Giberto , grammarian of Parma, on the academic education of boys | 1/1 | Pedagogical project | Padua | March 26 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VII, 18 | F | To Lancillotto di Piacenza , man of arms, on his multiple cares in writing letters to friends, and that love is not assuaged through poetry | 1/1 | | (Parma) | | 1348 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 1 | F/P | To Stefano Colonna the elder, a tearful consolation on the extremely harsh blows of fortune | 1/1 | Model mindset of leader | | September 8 | 1348-1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 2 | F | To Olimpio | 1/5 | | (Parma) | May 5 | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 3 | F/P | To Olimpio , an exhortation to live together and to deliberate on the most appropriate place | 2/5 | Political friendship | (Parma) | May 18 | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 4 | F | To Olimpio , an exhortation for moderate goals, and for not deferring plans for a better life | 3/5 | Quote from Aristotle's <i>Rhetoric</i> (Bernardo, p. 405) | (Parma) | (May 19) | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 5 | F/P | To Olimpio , on the same matter | 4/5 | Political friendship | (Parma) | May 19 | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 6 | F | To Friar Bartholomew of the order of Saint Augustine, Bishop of Urbino | 1/1 | | | | 1348-1349 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|------------------------|-------|--|-------------|---|-------------------|----------------|-----------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 7 | F/P | To his Socrates , a tearful plaint concerning that unequalled plague which fell in their time | 7/22 | Strategy for representation of strong emotion | (Parma) | (June 20) | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 8 | F/P | To his Socrates , on the same matter | 8/22 | Political friendship | (Parma) | (June 20) | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 9 | F/P | To his Socrates , on the violent death of a fiend | 9/22 | The social impact of death – a note on harm caused in Florence | (Parma) | June 22 | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , VIII, 10 | P | To the Florentines , an expression of indignation and complaint concerning the inhuman crimes perpetrated on their borders, and an exhortation to cultivate justice and guard their roads | 1/2 | The turbulence of Italian politics – strategies for justice | Parma | June 2 | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 1 | F | To Manfredo Pio , Lord of Carpi, cured of a serious illness, an appeal | 1/1 | | (Parma) | July 30 | 1348 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 2 | F/P | To his Socrates , a remembrance of friends past and present | 10/22 | European relations | Verona | March 12 | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 3 | F | To his friends , that it is often more troublesome to spend one's old age where one's youth was spent | 15/21 | | Avignon | September 25 | 1346 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 4 | F/P | To a friend , a warning against dangerous loves | 16/21 | Politics of the passions – Roman <i>exempla</i> | (Parma or Mantua) | (early summer) | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 5 | F/P/E | To Ugolino, Bishop of Parma , a self-defense against the slander directed against him, on the nature of harmful acts, and against suspicion | 1/1 | Familiar letter theorized – Roman Curia – Scipio Africanus – political friendship | (Avignon) | December 28 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 6 | F/P | To Luca, clergyman of Piacenza | 1/5 | Intrigues of the Curia | (Avignon) | (December 28) | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 7 | F/P | To Luca, clergyman of Piacenza , concerning suspicion | 2/5 | Political friendship | Avignon | January 13 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 8 | F/P/E | To Giovanni da Bunio , attorney, a friendly letter | 1/1 | Familiar letter theorized – political friendship | Parma | June 17 | 1348-1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 9 | F/P | To his Socrates , that everything must be shared with a friend, especially friendship | 11/22 | Books as friends – political friendship – <i>omnia sunt communia</i> | Mantua | June 28 | 1350 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|----------------------|------|---|-------------|---|-----------|--------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 10 | F/P | To his Lelius , in praise of a friend | 7/15 | Politics and friendship | Luzzara | June 28 | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 11 | F/P | To Niccolò da Lucca , that virtue and the reputation of virtue are the best promoters of friendship | 1/1 | Political friendship – Scipio Africanus – Roman <i>exempla</i> | (Padua) | (January 8) | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 12 | F/P | To an unknown correspondent , on the great variety of customs and opinions | 17/21 | European relations – cultural diversity | (Padua) | (January) | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 13 | F/P | To Philippe de Vitry , musician, rebuking the ineptness of those persons so restricted to one corner of the world as to consider even a glorious absence undesirable | 1/2 | Political friendship – provincialism vs. citizen of the world – reading vs. experience – reason vs. knowledge – political friendship – Roman <i>exempla</i> | Padua | February 15 | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 14 | F/P | To Luca da Piacenza , clergyman, in praise of love for the solitary life | 3/5 | Contemplative vs. active life | (Avignon) | (spring) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 15 | F/P | To Guglielmo da Verona , orator, in gratitude | 1/4 | Political friendship | (Milan) | (July 26) | 1354 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , IX, 16 | F | To Guglielmo da Verona , on false hope | 2/4 | | (Milan) | (summer) | 1354 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , X, 1 | P | To Charles IV , Emperor of the Romans, an appeal to cross into Italy | 1/13 | Turbulence of Italian politics | Padua | February 24 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , X, 2 | F/E | To his Socrates , friendly concern about his condition | 12/22 | Familiar letter theorized – self-serving writing | Carpi | September 25 | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , X, 3 | F/P | To Gherardo, Carthusian monk , on his blessed state and the wretchedness of the times, with an appeal to persevere in his purpose | 1/6 | Contemplative vs. active life – theme of servants – biblical and Roman <i>exempla</i> – Scipio Africanus | Carpi | September 25 | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , X, 4 | F/P | To Gherardo, Carthusian monk , concerning the style of the Church Fathers and the relationship between theology and poetry, with a brief exposition of the first eclogue of the “Bucolicum Carmen” being sent to him | 2/6 | Petrarch reads Petrarch – origin of <i>Bucolicum carmen</i> – explanation of <i>Buc. I</i> – cultivation of uncultivated rulers – Scipio Africanus | Padua | December 2 | 1349 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , X, 5 | F/P | To Gherardo, Carthusian monk , felicitations on his progress, and concerning the great variety and differenced in mankind’s inclinations and activities | 3/6 | Philosophy and medicine – healer of minds / healer of bodies – contemplative vs. active life – road to eternal life | | June 11 | 1352 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------|------|--|-------------|---|-------------|---------------------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , X, 6 | F/P | To Jan [ze Středa] , Bishop-elect of Naumburg, Chancellor of the Imperial Court, a friendly reply | 1/8 | Political friendship | | February 15 – December | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 1 | F/P | To Giovanni Boccaccio , concerning his pilgrimage to the city of Rome in the year of the Jubilee | 1/10 | The state of affairs in Rome | Rome | November 2 | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 2 | F/P | To Giovanni Boccaccio , a lament over his own condition and over the wretched and undeserved death of Jacopo da Carrara the Younger | 2/10 | Consolation over political assassination | Padua | January 7 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 3 | F/P | To Giovanni Aretino , Chancellor of the Lords of Mantua, concerning the same matter but on a broader scale | 2/5 | Outrage over political assassination – turbulence of Italian politics – political friendships | Lonigo | May 12 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 4 | F | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavaillon , a friendly letter | 3/12 | | | (spring) | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 5 | P | To the Florentines , an expression of gratitude for the restitution, or better, the gift of his estate | 2/2 | Examples of repatriation of exiles | (Padua) | April 6 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 6 | F/P | To Giovanni Boccaccio , concerning the writer's intention to cross the Alps | 3/10 | Transalpine politics – political upheaval in Parma – turbulence of politics in Italy and Avignon | Verona | June 1 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 7 | F/P | To his Socrates , concerning the earthquake in Rome and his subsequent foreboding | 13/22 | Foreshadowing of social and political turmoil | Piacenza | June 11 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 8 | P | To Andrea Dandolo , Doge of Venice, and appeal for peace with Genoa | 1/3 | Old age pleas for youth to listen to reason – respect for Italy, the Latin name, Roman republican tradition – classical <i>exempla</i> – Scipio – Italy as victim (of itself) | (Padua) | (March 18) | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 9 | F | To Giovanni Aretino , in transit | 3/5 | | Monginevro | June 20 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 10 | F | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavaillon | 4/12 | | (Valchiusa) | June 27 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 11 | F/P | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavaillon | 5/12 | Strategies of political friendship in the Papal court | Valchiusa | June 29 | 1351 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------|-------|---|-------------|--|-----------|-------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 12 | F/P | To Olimpio , on the mutability of intentions | 5/5 | Condition of exile – transalpine politics – diversity of human judgment | Valchiusa | July 19 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 13 | P | To Niccolò Acciaiuoli , Grand Seneschal of the Kingdom of Sicily | 1/5 | Turbulence of Italian politics – cleansing Italy of foreigners | Avignon | August 29 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 14 | F/P | To Philippe de Vitry , Bishop-elect of Meaux, his uncertainty as to whether to congratulate or pity him | 2/2 | Church politics | Avignon | October 23 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 15 | F/P | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavaillon , on the pursuit of tranquility and the avoidance of toil | 6/12 | Friendship and farming – contemplative vs. active life | Avignon | October 25 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 16 | P | To the four cardinals chosen to reform the government of the Roman Republic | 1/2 | Defense of Roman liberty – Church politics – Roman <i>exempla</i> | | November 18 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XI, 17 | F/P | To the four cardinals chosen to reform the government of the Roman Republic | 2/2 | Political virtues – citizenship and public offices | | November 24 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 1 | P | To Charles IV , a second appeal to cross into Italy | 2/13 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> – turbulence of Italian politics | (Avignon) | (February) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 2 | P | To Niccolò Acciaiuoli , Grand Seneschal of the Kingdom of Sicily, on the education of a prince | 2/5 | <i>Speculum principis</i> – political friendship – self-discovery | Avignon | February 20 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 3 | F/P | To Zanobi , Florentine grammarian, a suggestion that he abandon the teaching of grammar and aspire to greater heights | 1/9 | Philosophy for the improvement of society – “reveal yourself to posterity and enkindle them” | Avignon | April 1 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 4 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] , Prior of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Florence, concerning the dissimilar responsibilities of the soldier and the commander | 1/29 | Politics of power – knowing one’s place | Avignon | January 13 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 5 | F/P/E | To Francesco [Nelli] , Prior of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Florence, a friendly letter | 2/29 | Words and style – changeable identity – self-presentation | (Avignon) | January 18 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 6 | F/P/E | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavaillon , a friendly letter | 7/12 | Kingly politics – concern over the court in Naples | Avignon | February 1 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 7 | F/P | To Barbato da Sulmona , a complaint that he had not seen him in Rome during the year of the Jubilee | 6/9 | Turbulence of Italian politics | Avignon | February 20 | 1352 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-----------------------|-------|--|--------------------|--|-------------|---------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 8 | F | To Jacopo Fiorentino , on Cicero and his works | 2/3 | Textual friendship | (Avignon) | April 1 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 9 | F/P/E | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, a friendly letter | 3/29 | Political friendship – patriotism – underworld visit | (Avignon) | April 1 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 10 | F | To Giovanni Boccaccio , that there is nothing to write | 4/10 | | (Avignon) | April 1 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 11 | P | To Brother Bartolomeo , Bishop of Chieti | 1/1 | Turbulence of Italian politics | (Avignon) | May 21 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 12 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles | 4/29 | Powerful friends | Valchiusa | May 24 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 13 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles | 5/29 | Political friendship – privileges and advantages | Valchiusa | May 24 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 14 | F/P | To Giovanni Barrili , Neapolitan soldier, an appeal to further the cause of peace | 1/2 | Neapolitan politics – power of reason over the passions – reconciliation of a friendship | Valchiusa | May 24 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 15 | F/P | To Niccolò Acciaiuoli , Grand Seneschal of the Kingdom of Sicily, to further the cause of peace | 3/5 | Neapolitan politics – action guided by reason – reconciliation – yoke of old friendship | Valchiusa | May 24 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 16 | F/P | To both Niccolò and Giovanni , an appeal for harmony and for the return to their former friendship | N.A. 4/5; G.B. 2/2 | Neapolitan politics – reconciliation – alliance – friendship – love | Valchiusa | May 24 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XII, 17 | F/P/E | To Zanobi , Florentine grammarian, a request for his assistance in the matter discussed in the preceding letter | 2/9 | Neapolitan politics – Roman exempla – reconciliation of a friendship – epistolary theory | Valchiusa | May 24 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 1 | F/P | To Gui [de Boulogne] , cardinal, Bishop of Porto, condolences on the death of his mother | 1/3 | Celestial rewards for public service | Avignon | May 14 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 2 | F | To Rinaldo da Verona , poet, a recommendation for the young man sent to him for educating | 1/1 | | Valchiusa | June 9 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 3 | F | To Guglielmo da Verona , orator, on the same subject | 3/4 | | (Valchiusa) | June 9 | 1352 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|------------------------|-------|--|-------------|---|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 4 | F/P/E | To Francesco Napoli , Apostolic Prothonotary, how restless and agitated are the lives of men of affairs, and yet great victory is unattainable without great toil | 1/1 | Perils of the active life – psychological insights – Scipio Africanus | Valchiusa | June 10 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 5 | E | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, concerning his misfortunes in the Roman Curia, and concerning the three styles | 6/29 | Writing style – ethos/character and style/speech – reading and writing | (Valchiusa) | August 9 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 6 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, concerning the matter in which poetry is profaned by the multitude and by the ignorant | 7/29 | Cola di Rienzo – epistolary friendship – patriotism and poetry – Italian liberty | Valchiusa | August 10 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 7 | F/P/E | To Pierre , Abbot of St-Bénigne, concerning the same matter and the incurable mania for writing | 1/3 | Contemplative vs. active life – public life and fame – unexpected results of laurels | (Valchiusa) | (November 8-15) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 8 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, concerning his rustic and solitary way of life | 8/29 | Contemplative vs. active life | (Valchiusa) | (June – August) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 9 | F/P/E | To Zanobi , Florentine grammarian, felicitations to him and to other friends who had followed his advice | 3/9 | Political friendships – defense of friends and patience of readers – poetics of intimacy – eloquence and composition – scattered and unpolished writing style | Valchiusa | August 10 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 10 | F/P | To Zanobi , Florentine grammarian, an apology for an earlier letter | 4/9 | Neapolitan politics – on friendship: classical exempla | Valchiusa | August 25 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 11 | F | To Matteo Longo of Bergamo, Archdeacon of the Church of Liège, concerning the nature and faithfulness of dogs | 1/1 | | Valchiusa | August 25 | 1351 or 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIII, 12 | F/P | To the Abbot of Corvara in Bologna, that his thirst for new works must be tempered by patient anticipation | 1/1 | Scipio Africanus | Valchiusa | September 1 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIV, 1 | F/P | To Cardinal Talleyrand , Bishop of Albano, concerning the difficulties and perils of the higher life | 1/2 | Contemplative vs. active life – Roman exempla – domestic conflict | Valchiusa | September 22 | 1352 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|----------------------|-------|--|-------------|---|-----------|--------------------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIV, 2 | F/P | To his Socrates , that he deliver the preceding letter to the person to whom it is written | 14/22 | Church politics | Valchiusa | September 22 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIV, 3 | F/P | To Luca da Piacenza , clergyman, condolences for the untimely death of a young man in the prime of life | 4/5 | <i>De amicitia</i> – “fleshy prison” – exile – celestial rewards | Valchiusa | September 25 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIV, 4 | F/P | To Luca da Piacenza , a reply to various accusations of envious rivals | 5/5 | Babylon/Avignon – contemplative vs. active life | Avignon | October 19 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIV, 5 | P | To the Doge and Council of Genoa , an appeal for peace with the Venetians and for civil harmony | 1/2 | Venice/Genoa conflict – <i>concordiam civilem</i> – civil war – patriotism – Rome as model to follow or avoid | Avignon | November 1 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIV, 6 | P | To the Doge and Council of Genoa , an appeal to do battle against external enemies | 1/2 | Patriotism – holy war | | (March) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIV, 7 | F/P/E | To Gui [de Boulogne] , cardinal, Bishop of Porto | 2/3 | Political friendship | Valchiusa | November 8 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIV, 8 | F/P | To Ponzio Sansone , Canon of Cavaillon | 1/2 | Personal and political allegiance | Valchiusa | November 13 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 1 | F/P | To his Lelius , an appeal to pursue with resolve the projected reform of the Republic | 8/15 | Political reform – Cola di Rienzo – another Roman reformer | (Avignon) | (October 1 – November 8) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 2 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, concerning the obstacles encountered at the start of his journey | 9/29 | Treachery of travel due to political turmoil | Valchiusa | November 18 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 3 | F/P | To Zanobi , Florentine grammarian, concerning the obstacles encountered at the start of his journey | 5/9 | Contemplative vs. active life – religious <i>otium</i> | Valchiusa | February 22 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 4 | F/P | To Andrea Dandolo , Doge of Venice, a justification for his frequent moves | 2/3 | Active life | Valchiusa | February 26 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 5 | F | To Pierre , Abbot of St- Bénigne, his disappointment over the Emperor's delayed journey, and other matters | 2/3 | | Valchiusa | April 3 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 6 | F/P | To Pierre , Abbot of St- Bénigne, against unjust critics | 3/3 | Contemplative vs. active life | Valchiusa | April 17 | 1352 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------|------|--|-------------|---|--------------|-----------------------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 7 | F/P | To Stefano Colonna , Provost of St-Omer, concerning the unsettled condition of nearly the entire world | 1/2 | Italy as victim – Venice/Genoa conflict – turbulence of Italian politics | (Valchiusa) | (< April 24) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 8 | F/P | To his Lelius , a discussion on the selection of a suitable place to live | 9/15 | Turbulence of Italian politics – Italian patriotism – where to take his talents | Valchiusa | April 24 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 9 | F/P | To his Lelius , a discussion on certain accusations that many people seem to have directed against the glory of Rome | 10/15 | Roman politics – biblical and classical exempla | (Valchiusa?) | (April) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 10 | F | To Ponzio Sansone | 2/2 | | (Valchiusa?) | (end of April) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 11 | F/P | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavailon , that envy ought to be shunned by retreating from it | 8/12 | Contemplative vs. active life – perils of fame and public attention | (Valchiusa) | (November 8-15) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 12 | F | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavailon | 9/12 | | Valchiusa | December 14 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 13 | F | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavailon | 10/12 | | Valchiusa | December 15 | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XV, 14 | F/P | To the clergy of the Paduan Church , on the death and virtues of Bishop Ildebrandino | 1/1 | <i>Somnium Scipionis</i> – celestial rewards – “spirto gentil” – <i>De amicitia</i> | (Valchiusa) | (end November – December 6) | 1352 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 1 | F/P | To the Cardinal Talleyrand , Bishop of Albano, and Gui [de Boulogne] , Bishop of Porto, request for a leave, with an admittedly weak but feasible justification for it | 3/3 | Scipio Africanus | Avignon | January 5 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 2 | F | To his brother Gherardo , Carthusian monk, an appeal | 4/6 | Religious themes | | January – February | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 3 | F | To his Socrates , against advocates of worldly pleasures | 15/22 | Religious themes | Valchiusa | March 28 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 4 | F | To a friend wavering in his Catholic faith | 18/21 | Religious themes | | March 29 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 5 | F | To an unknown correspondent , that one is always going toward death even while seemingly returning from it | 19/21 | | | (c. March 31) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 6 | F/P | To Niccolò, Bishop of Viterbo , some words of comfort in his illness | 1/1 | Contemplative vs. active life | (Valchiusa) | (February 15) | 1353 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|--------------------------|-------|---|-------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 7 | F | To his Socrates , concern about the disappearance of a friend | 16/22 | | Valchiusa | April 1 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 8 | F/P | To his Lelius , concerning the noble manners of Roman ladies | 11/15 | State of the republic – exile – patria – gender politics | Valchiusa | April 24 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 9 | F/P | To Zanobi da Firenze , a request in behalf of the Carthusian monestary of Montrieux | 6/9 | Tyrant vs. just king – contemplative vs. active life | (Valchiusa – Avignon) | (April) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 10 | F/P | To Zanobi da Firenze | 7/9 | Turbulence of Italian politics | Avignon | April 28 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 11 | F/P/E | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, on the preciousness of time | 10/29 | Contemplative vs. active life – Italian politics – familiar letter theorized | Milan | August 23 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 12 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, a friendly letter | 11/29 | Contemplative vs. active life | Milan | August 27 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 13 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, that a man can do nothing without being criticized | 12/29 | Perils of public life | (Milan) | (September?) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVI, 14 | F/P/E | To Francesco [Nelli] , of the Church of the Holy Apostles, that men have greater concern for style than for life | 13/29 | Eloquence, rhetoric, style – living through text | Milan | September 16 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 1 | F/P | To Gherardo , Carthusian monk, what is the true philosophy, what is the true law, who is the best teacher of both | 5/6 | Philosophy as guide – biblical and classical exempla | Monza | November 7 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 2 | F | To an unknown correspondent , a rebuke to an undisciplined youth | 1/2 | | | (September – October) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 3 | F/P | To Guido Sette , Archdeacon of Genoa, concerning the many difficulties in human affairs, and the unfortunate fate of the Genoese | 4/12 | <i>Somnium Scipionis</i> – Venice/Genoa conflict – all empires fall – <i>scriver indarno</i> | | (September) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 4 | F/P | To Guido Sette , Archdeacon of Genoa, concerning the many difficulties in human affairs, and the unfortunate fate of the Genoese | 5/12 | Anti-tyranny – Venice/Genoa conflict – monarchy | (Milan) | (first half of October) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 5 | F/P | To Guido Sette , Archdeacon of Genoa, in praise of the rural life | 6/12 | Contemplative vs. active life | San Colombano | October 21 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 6 | F/P | To Bernardo Anguissola , Governor of Como | 1/2 | Turbulence of Italian politics | (Milan?) | (year-end) | 1353 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|------------------------|------|---|-------------|--|---------|---------------|--------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 7 | F/P | To Bernardo Anguissola , Governor of Como, a recommendation for a friend crossing the Alps | 2/2 | European relations – political friendship | | (June – July) | 1354 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 8 | F | To Brother Matteo of Como , that the desire for knowledge grows more honorably by learning than does the desire for possessions by amassing them | 1/1 | | | (year-end) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 9 | F | To Marco da Genova , that those who love intensely make poor judgments | 2/3 | | | (year-end) | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVII, 10 | F | To Giovanni Aretino , why we do one thing while wanting another | 4/5 | | Milan | January 1 | 1354 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 1 | P | A response to the letter of Charles IV offering excuses for his delay, and the weakness of his excuses | 3/13 | Turbulence of Italian politics – <i>translatio imperii</i> | (Milan) | November 23 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 2 | F | To Nicholas Sygeros , Greek praetor, an expression of gratitude for his sending a book by Homer | 1/1 | Books | Milan | January 10 | 1354 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 3 | F | To Giovanni Boccaccio , an expression of gratitude for sending Augustine's book on the Psalms of David | 5/10 | Books | Milan | (April 11) | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 4 | F | To Giovanni Boccaccio , another expression of gratitude for sending books by Varro and Cicero | 6/10 | Books | (Milan) | (year-end) | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 5 | F | To Gherardo , Carthusian monk, that often books of learned men are more incorrect than those of others | 6/6 | Books – power of knowledge | Milan | April 25 | 1354 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 6 | F | To Forese , parish priest, how great the diversity of nature may be in one and the same species | 1/1 | | Milan | March 15 | 1354 or 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 7 | E | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, that unpolished works are often more pleasing to the intellect | 14/29 | Make your letters seem spontaneous | Milan | April 1 | 1355 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------|------|--|-------------|---|---------|---------------|-----------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 8 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, that sincerity suffices for corresponding with friends, and that no special style is necessary | 15/29 | Know yourself – foundations of friendship and community – identity – use of emotion reading and writing | (Milan) | > April 1 | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 9 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, that being unknown to the multitude is a sign of virtue | 16/29 | Public vs. private life | (Milan) | > April 1 | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 10 | F | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Varro's rules for dining | 17/29 | | (Milan) | > April 1 | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 11 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles | 18/29 | Perils of democracy – liberty | Milan | November 14 | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 12 | F | To Jacopo Firentino , that it is much more harmful to be deprived of the books of learned men than the words of the pagan gods | 3/3 | Books – reading and writing | (Milan) | (November 14) | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 13 | F | To Croto , grammarian from Bergamo, a comparison of the labors of Hercules with the study of Tullius | 1/2 | Textual friendship | (Milan) | (August 21) | 1354-1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 14 | F | To Croto , grammarian from Bergamo, concerning Cicero's book known as the "Tusulane Questiones" and concerning that writer's fame | 2/2 | | Milan | December 1 | 1354-1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 15 | F | To Giovanni Boccaccio , that no arrow of fortune can reach the stronghold of reason | 7/10 | | Milan | December 20 | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 16 | P | To Andrea Dandolo , Doge of the Venetians, an attempt to dissuade him from war deliberations | 3/3 | "Italia mia" – Venice/Genoa conflict – <i>parlar indarno</i> (see XI, 8) – civil war | Milan | May 28 | 1354 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 1 | P | To Charles IV , felicitations on his arrival, though late | 4/13 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | (Milan) | (mid-October) | 1354 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 2 | F/P | To Zanobi da Firenze , a description of a frigid winter | 8/9 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | (Milan) | December 27 | 1354 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-----------------------|------|---|-------------|---|---------|-------------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 3 | F/P | To his Lelius , that one must not seek false glory, just as one must not scorn true glory | 12/15 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> – golden fleece of Italian peace – love and friendship | (Milan) | (February 25) | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 4 | F/P | To Charles IV , a recommendation for his Lelius | 5/13 | Political friendship | Milan | February 25 | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 5 | F | To Moggo da Parma , grammarian an invitation to share in his studies | 1/1 | | Milan | May 1 | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 6 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, a recommendation for a friend going to Rome | 19/29 | Contemplative vs. active life | (Milan) | (December 25) | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 7 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, an expression of gratitude | 20/29 | Political friendship | (Milan) | (end of February) | 1356 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 8 | F/P | To Guido Sette , Archdaecon of Genoa, who is flattered to be mentioned in his letters | 7/12 | Political friendship – poets and princes | | | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 9 | F/P | To Guido Sette , Archdaecon of Genoa, traveling in France, news from Italy, especially on the death of the Venetian doge who was executed by his own republic | 8/12 | Patriotism – Marino Faliero affair – Venice/Genoa conflict – turbulence of Italian politics | Milan | April 24 | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 10 | F/P | To Guido Sette , appointed Archbishop of Genoa, his uncertainty as to whether to rejoice with him or to offer condolences | 9/12 | Servitude of leaders | (Milan) | (July) | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 11 | F/P | To Benintendi , Chancellor of the Venetians, that he who is affected by others' praises must find refuge in the stronghold of reason and in his own conscience | 1/1 | One true homeland – political friendships – personal fortitude | Milan | May 26 | 1356 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 12 | P | To Charles IV , Roman Emperor, upon his departure from Italy, a rebuke | 6/13 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | (Milan) | (June) | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 13 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, concerning his embassy to Caesar | 21/29 | Liberty – service to public good – desire for bold political action | Milan | May 19 | 1356 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 14 | F | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, concerning his return from Germany | 22/29 | | Milan | September 20 | 1356 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 15 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles | 23/29 | Italy vs. Germany – praise of Italy | Milan | May 31 | 1357 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|--------------------------|------|--|-------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 16 | F/P | To Guido [Sette] , Archbishop of Genoa, a detailed account of his state of affairs | 10/12 | Public vs. private life – epistolary/textual friendship – fifth year in Milan | (Garegnano) | (May 28) | 1357 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 17 | F | To Guido [Sette] , Archbishop of Genoa, a detailed account of his state of affairs | 11/12 | Value of eloquence, knowledge, study | (Garegnano) | (summer) | 1357 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 18 | P | To Brother Jacopo of the Augustinian Order, Tyrant of Pavia, a harsh and lengthy rebuke | 1/1 | <i>Amicis caritas</i> – tyranny vs. republican liberty – patriotism – Roman exempla – love | Milan | March 25 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 1 | F/P | To Neri Morandi of Forlì , a curse against the present age and a prediction of things to come, and the great power of gold | 1/4 | Turbulence of Italian politics – gold purchases political friends | (Milan) | (June) | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 2 | F/P | To Neri Morandi of Forlì , that the Roman empire is everywhere more prosperous than in the north | 2/4 | Political lessons from Roman history | | | 1355 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 3 | P | To the Genoese Galeotto Spinola , an appeal to seize control of the republic | 1/1 | Turbulence of Italian politics – Genoa affairs – desire for bold political action | Milan | December 18 | 1357 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 4 | F/P | To Marco da Genova , an appeal to persevere in his studies, and a comparison of ancient orators and lawyers with advocates of our own age | 3/3 | Active life – civil law – justice | Milan | May 28 | 1355 or 1357-1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 5 | F/P | To Barbato da Sulmona , that he be more cautious | 7/9 | Turbulence of Italian politics – love makes two into one – Acciaiuoli friendship | (Milan) | August 27 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 6 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, a complaint on the interception of his letters | 24/29 | Turbulence of Italian politics | (Milan) | (March) | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 7 | F | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles | 25/29 | Epistolary friendship | Milan | April 11 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 8 | F | To Agapito Colona the younger , an excuse with an expression of admiration | 1/1 | | Milan | April 13 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 9 | F/P | A response to a letter from three friends | 20/21 | One letter to three addressees – Babylon/Avignon | (Milan) | January 12 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 10 | F | To Giovanni Aretino , felicitations on his condition, and news about his own | 5/5 | | Milan | January 27 | 1358 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------|------|--|-------------|--|---------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 11 | F | To Stefano Colonna , Provost of St-Omer, a friendly letter | 2/2 | | Milan | May 1 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 12 | F | To his Lelius , an exhortation to remain calm | 13/15 | | Milan | May 1 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 13 | F/P | To his Lelius , a plaintive exhortation for reconciliation with a friend | 14/15 | Intimacy – reconciliation of political friendship – two-in-one | Milan | July 30 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 14 | F/P | To his Lelius , joyful felicitations for having listened to his advice and appeals | 15/15 | Political friendship – turbulence of Italian politics – decline cardinalship – Church politics | Milan | February 9 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XX, 15 | F/P | To his Socrates , on the same matter | 17/22 | Yoke of writing – reconciliation of friendship | Milan | February 10 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 1 | F/P | To Ernest , Archbishop of Prague, why the truth has so many enemies | 1/2 | Politics of truth | Milan | April 29 | 1357 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 2 | F/P | To Jan [ze Středa] , Bishop of Olmutz, Imperial Chancellor, a lengthy expression of gratitude | 2/8 | Election to Counts Palatine – patronage of emperor | Milan | April 29 | 1357 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 3 | F | To Cecco da Forli , an excuse for his failure to render the requested assistance, and an offer to consolation together with confidential advice | 1/1 | | (Milan) | October 26 | 1357 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 4 | F | To Bartholommeo da Genova , what the difference is between the customs and pursuits of the young and the elderly | 1/1 | | | | (1357-1359) |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 5 | F/P | To Jan [ze Středa] , Bishop of Olmutz, a recommendation for a common friend | 3/8 | Political friendship | Milan | March 25 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 6 | F/P | To Ernest , Archbishop of Prague, a recommendation for a common friend | 2/2 | Political friendship | Milan | March 25 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 7 | F/P | To the Emperor Charles , a recommendation for the same person so deserving of him and the empire | 7/13 | Political friendship – <i>translatio imperii</i> | Milan | March 25 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 8 | F/P | To Empress Anna , felicitations on the birth of a child, though a girl, and the occasion it affords to express many thoughts in praise of women | 1/1 | Gender politics – <i>speculum principis</i> | Milan | May 23 | 1358 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 9 | F/P | To his Socrates , words of consolation and advice | 18/22 | Exile and patriotism | Milan | June 23 | 1359 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|--------------------------|------|---|-------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 10 | F | To Neri Morando of Forlì , felicitations at regaining his health, advice to flee a dangerous undertaking, and news about a serious mishap that had befallen him | 3/4 | Classical vs. biblical wisdom – textual friendship – tragic book incident – Cicero falls on leg | (Pagazzano sull'Adda) | October 15 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 11 | F/P | To Neri Morando of Forlì , concerning a very loyal and admirable friend of his | 4/4 | Diplomatic travel | (Pagazzano sull'Adda) | October 15 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 12 | F | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, on lengthening time's brevity and halting life's flight | 26/29 | | Milan | November 13 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 13 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, a sequel to the preceding letter and more on the way of life | 27/29 | Military and political insights from solitary study | (S. Sempliciano) | December 7 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 14 | F/P | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, concerning his move from Ambrose's house to that of Semplicianus, and some observations on the life of Semplicianus | 28/29 | Private vs. public life | (S. Sempliciano) | (November 13 or immediately after) | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 15 | F/P | To Giovanni Boccaccio , a defense against an accusation by envious people | 8/10 | Substance and style – Petrarch vs. Dante (unnamed) – exile status – reading and imitation | (Milan) | (summer) | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 1 | F/P | To Pandolfo Malatesta the Younger , Lord of Rimini, whether he should take a wife and who she should be | 1/1 | Public vs. private duties – a classic <i>topos</i> of sophistic rhetoric | Venice | September 11 | 1362 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 2 | F/E | To Giovanni Boccaccio , that often in writing it is easier for him to err in what he knows well; and concerning the law of imitation | 9/10 | Literary learning and style | (Pagazzano sull'Adda) | (first 10 days of October) | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 3 | F | To Barbato da Sulmona , forwarding his "Epistole metrice" dedicated to him | 8/9 | | | (spring-summer) | 1364 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 4 | F/P | To Barbato da Sulmona , that the inconvenience of absence can be mitigated by using an imagined presence as a remedy | 9/9 | Italian unity vs. separation – geographic identity | Venice | April 20 | (1363-1364) |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 5 | F/P | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavillon , an exhortation to pursue a quiet life and to avoid hardships | 11/12 | Contemplative vs. active life | Milan | September 9 | 1360 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|------------------------------|------|--|-------------|--|-------------------|------------------|-----------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 6 | F/P | To Zanobi da Firenze , concerning the arrival of the Grand Seneschal of the Kingdom of Sicily | 9/9 | Niccolò Acciaiuoli | Milan | August 17 | 1360 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 7 | F | To an unknown correspondent , a sharp rebuke to a stubborn youth, denying him permission to return | 2/2 | | Milan | August 30 | 1359 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 8 | F/P | To his Socrates , on the difference between one guest and another | 19/22 | Hospitality | (Milan) | (end of January) | (1360) |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 9 | F | To his Socrates , that he prefers to do good to evil men than evil to good men | 20/22 | | | | |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 10 | F/E | To Francesco [Nelli] of the Church of the Holy Apostles, concerning the blending of sacred and secular studies | 29/29 | Style and literary genius – textual friendships and family | Milan | September 18 | (1360) |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 11 | F | To Guglielmo da Verona , a recommendation for a friend who had late but passionately turned to intellectual pursuits | 4/4 | Books | (Padua) | (April 17) | 1360 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 12 | F/P | To Albertino da Cannobio , physician, that truthfulness is a sign of a good mind; concerning the disdain for property, the worthlessness of servants, and the inevitability of death, against which there is no remedy but serenity | 1/1 | Household politics – servants | Milan | October 26 | 1360 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 13 | F/P | To Pierre de Poitiers , Prior of St-Éloi in Paris | 1/2 | Fortune and politics – turbulence of Italian and French politics | Padua | September 6 | 1361 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXII, 14 | F/P | To Pierre de Poitiers , Prior of St-Éloi in Paris, concerning the inconstancy of fortune, which derives from changes in social and especially military customs | 2/2 | European military innovation – fortune and politics – “Italia mia” – Scipio Africanus – how to train a soldier – trust of allies | <i>Ex itinere</i> | February 27 | 1361 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 1 | F/P | To an unknown correspondent , indignation and complaint against whoever ought to be crushing that are called societies of thieves, now roving throughout Italy | 21/21 | Turbulence of Italian politics | | September 1 | 1361-1362 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------------|------|--|-------------|--|---------|-------------|-----------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 2 | F/P | To our present Caesar , first a personal expression of sincere gratitude for his friendship, then a bitter rebuke in behalf of the abandoned republic and empire, and finally a vehement exhortation | 8/13 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> – patriotism – political friendship | Milan | March 21 | 1361 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 3 | F/P | To our present Caesar , a rather urgent recommendation for a friend | 9/13 | Political friendship | (Milan) | (spring) | 1361-1363 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 4 | F/P | To Bonincontro , felicitations on his escape, albeit late, from the storms of the Curia into the haven of private life | 1/2 | Contemplative vs. active life – Church politics | Milan | January 27 | 1362 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 5 | F/P | To Bonincontro , that one must confront old age and death not only with courage but with joy | 2/2 | Duties to friends, country – celestial rewards for civic virtue – <i>Somium Scipionis</i> – “ <i>Aspectata in ciel</i> ” | Milan | February 23 | 1362 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 6 | F/P | To Jan [ze Středa] , Bishop of Olmutz, Chancellor of the Imperial Court, the more someone loves us, the less must we pay attention to his praises | 4/8 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | Milan | March 21 | 1361 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 7 | F/P | To Jan [ze Středa] , Bishop of Olmutz, Chancellor of the Imperial Court, a recommendation for a friend | 5/8 | Political friendship | | | 1361 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 8 | P | To the Emperor Charles , an expression of gratitude for the gold bowl that he had sent, and an expression of some hope that he will answer his invitation to visit him | 10/13 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | Padua | July 18 | 1361 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 9 | P | To the Emperor Charles , who summons once again with greater insistence, and the increasing possibility of his own complying | 11/13 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> – <i>parlar indarno</i> | Milan | March 21 | 1362 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 10 | F/P | To Jan [ze Středa] , Bishop of Olmutz, Chancellor, concerning the same subject, and that a mind aware of its own insignificance must not allow itself to be diverted from its humility by the praises of others | 6/8 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | Milan | March 21 | 1362 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------------|------|---|-------------|---|----------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 11 | F/P | To Giovanni da Bergamo , attorney, who is journeying across the sea to receive military honors at the sepulcher of Christ, an attempt to dissuade him from such a project | 1/1 | Preference of patriotism over holy war – humility over vain rewards | | | |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 12 | F/P | To Guido [Sette] , Archbishop of Genoa, that endurance of pain is preferable to pain in itself; and that furthermore many things useless to those who obtain them are of benefit to others | 12/12 | Politics and warfare for public good – literary and philosophical work for public good – on Aristotles' Ethics – on Cicero's <i>De officiis</i> | Milan | December 1 | 1360 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 13 | F/P | To his Socrates , that we must bear with equanimity the fact that others reap the fruits of our labor, since it is a common occurrence | 21/22 | Communities of benefit | (Milan) | | End 1359- beginning 1360 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 14 | F/P | To Jan [ze Středa] of Olmutz, Chancellor to Caesar, a friendly letter | 7/8 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | (Venice) | (March 11) | 1363 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 15 | P | To Caesar himself, an exhortation and a supplication to return to Italy | 12/13 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | Venice | March 11 | 1363 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 16 | F/P | To Jan [ze Středa] , Chancellor, personally, that you must not forgo what you are capable of doing, even though you cannot do what you would like | 8/8 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | Venice | August 27 | 1363 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 17 | F/P | To Ugo , Count of San Severino, concerning the courtly dogs at the royal palace in Naples | 1/1 | Philosopher king mourned – concern over court in Naples | | | |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 18 | F/P | To Niccolò Acciaiulo , Grand Seneschal of the Kingdom of Sicily, concerning his magnificent feat | 5/5 | Political friendship – pedagogical flattery – <i>parlar indarno</i> | Padua | June 8 | 1362 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 19 | F | To Giovanni Boccaccio , concerning a young man who has been assisting him with transcriptions; and that nothing is so correct as not to lack something | 10/10 | Style – identity – uniqueness – <i>proprium & aliena</i> | Pavia | October 28 | 1366 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 20 | F/P | To Francesco Bruni , Florentine rhetorician, an agreement to enter into a new friendship | 1/1 | Political friendship | Padua | September 8 | 1361 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|-------------------------------|------|--|-------------|---|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIII, 21 | P | To Caesar , a final exhortation | 13/13 | <i>Translatio imperii</i> | Padua | December 11 | 1364 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 1 | F | To Philippe, Bishop of Cavaillon , concerning the incredible flight of time | 12/12 | Textual friendship – self-discovery | | | 1360 or shortly before |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 2 | F/P | To Pulice da Vicenza , poet, concerning the content of and the occasion for the following letters addressed to Cicero, Seneca, and others | 1/1 | Friendship – <i>familiaritas</i> – inconstancy – political values | <i>Ex itinere</i> | May 13 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 3 | F/P | To Marcus Tullius Cicero | 1/2 | Textual friendship – political inconsistency – love for the republic – friendly rebuke | Verona | June 16 | 1345 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 4 | F/P | To Marcus Tullius Cicero | 2/2 | Textual friendship – eloquence – admiration – loss of grandeur – presence state of Roman affairs – apology for rebuke | Avignon | December 19 | 1345 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 5 | F/P | To Anneus Seneca | 1/1 | Textual friendship – political rebuke – parallels with Petrarch’s choice of patrons | Parma | August 1 | 1348 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 6 | F/P | To Marcus Varro | 1/1 | Textual friendship – contemplative vs. active life – service to princes – loss of antiquity | Rome | November 1 | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 7 | F/P | To Quintilian | 1/1 | Textual friendship - pedagogy of princes – loss/distance of antiquity | Florence | December 7 | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 8 | F | To Titus Livy , historian | 1/1 | Textual friendship – loss | Padua | February 22 | 1351 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 9 | F/P | To Asinius Pollio , orator | 1/1 | Textual friendship – loss/distance of antiquity – political intrigues – friendly rebuke | Milan | August 1 | 1353 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 10 | F/P | To Horatius Flaccus , lyric poet | 1/1 | Textual friendship – poets and princes – patronage | | | 1350 |

| NO. | TYPE | TITLE | NO. / TOTAL | POLITICAL TOPICS | PLACE | MONTH | YEAR |
|------------------------------|------|---|-------------|--|----------|-----------------|------|
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 11 | F/P | To Publius Virgilius Maro , epic poet and price of Latin bards | 1/1 | Textual friendship – poets and princes – Christian supremacy – present Roman affairs | (Mantua) | (May 19) | 1350 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 12 | F | To an unknown correspondent, a reply to a lengthy and highly informative letter addressed to him in the name of the poet Homer from the realm of the dead | 1/1 | Textual friendship – culture and geography | Milan | October 9 | 1360 |
| <i>Fam.</i> , XXIV, 13 | F | To his Socrates , conclusion of this work | 22/22 | Friendship ends only in death | | (June or later) | 1361 |

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