



Copyright © 2009 by University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556  
www.undpress.nd.edu  
All Rights Reserved

Manufactured in the United States of America

The poem "Birthday Card," from book four of "The Gardens of Flora Baum,"  
is printed with the generous permission of its author, Julia Budenz.  
Copyright © 2004 by Julia Budenz.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Petrarch and Dante : anti-Dantism, metaphysics, tradition / edited by  
Zygmunt Baranski and Theodore Cachey.

p. cm. — (The William and Katherine Devers series in Dante studies)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-268-02211-2 (pbk. : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-268-02211-9 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Petrarca, Francesco, 1304-1374—Criticism and interpretation. 2. Petrarca,  
Francesco, 1304-1374—Philosophy. 3. Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321—Criticism  
and interpretation. 4. Italian literature—To 1400—History and criticism.  
5. Ideology and literature—Italy—History—To 1500. 6. Polemics in literature.  
I. Baranski, Zygmunt G. II. Cachey, T. J. (Theodore J.)

PQ4540.P38 2009

851'.1—dc22

2009004362

∞ *This book is printed on acid-free paper.*

PART I

# Anti-Dantism

Copyrighted Material

Petrarch and Dante  
Anti-Dantism, Metaphysics, Tradition  
Edited by Zygmunt G. Baranski and  
Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.

## CHAPTER I

# Between Petrarch and Dante

## *Prolegomenon to a Critical Discourse*

THEODORE J. CACHEY, JR.

MY CHOICE OF TITLE, MIRRORING THE TITLES OF CANONICAL essays by Natalino Sapegno (1963) and Giuseppe Billanovich (1965), is intended in a heuristic and not a hubristic sense.<sup>1</sup> Rather than reflect an exaggerated self-confidence on my part, it represents in the first place an invitation to anyone interested in what came “between Petrarch and Dante” to turn (or return) to these classic accounts of Italian literary origins. To this essential list I propose to add a more recent essay by Enrico Fenzi, “Tra Dante e Petrarca: Il fantasma di Ulisse” (2004),<sup>2</sup> which takes the Ulysses theme as developed by Petrarch to represent a paradigmatic *trait d’union* “between” Dante and Petrarch, and thus a privileged vantage point from which to compare and contrast the two *auctores*.

The particular tradition of Italian literary history encapsulated by “Tra Dante e Petrarca,” which Zygmunt Barański characterizes in this volume as the view that Italian literature is “delicately, though reassuringly, caught between the contrasting possibilities offered by its two great exemplary ‘founding fathers,’” will, however, serve here as the basis for observations against the grain of this harmonious critical picture. Informed by the work of the Petrarchan centenary seminars held at the University of Notre Dame in 2004, my essay serves as a prologue-epilogue to our collective reexamination of the question of who and what in fact came between “Petrarch and

## 4 Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.

Dante,” in ideological, historiographical, and rhetorical terms.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the goal of the seminars was to move beyond the simple juxtaposition of “Dante and Petrarch” or “Petrarch and Dante,” as the case may be. As several participants observed, this juxtaposition has sometimes been reduced to more or less neutral (and thus critically inert) descriptions of the pervasive inter-discursive presence of “Dante in Petrarca.”<sup>4</sup>

In respectful counterpoint to the perspective provided by an illustrious critical tradition, and bolstered by the contributions of colleagues participating in the Notre Dame seminars (mine was last in the series), I begin by suggesting that Petrarch’s deep ideological dissent from Dante can be plausibly linked to the earliest expressions of Trecento anti-*dantismo*<sup>5</sup> discussed by Sapegno, whose critical perspective, however, like most of the Italian critical tradition, elided any connection between these currents and Petrarch. I believe one of the important conclusions to emerge from this volume is that for all Petrarch’s claims of respect and admiration for Dante, he ought to be considered within the tradition of Trecento anti-*dantismo*, in particular, for his consistently polemical attitude toward the claims of the *theologus-poeta*, for which there is persuasive evidence throughout his career.

Secondly, I will highlight the way in which the currents of influence that flowed between Petrarch and Boccaccio, which are described by Bilanovich primarily in terms of Petrarch’s authority vis-à-vis Boccaccio “il più grande discepolo” (the greatest disciple) and the beginnings of Humanism, flowed no less significantly, for the history of vernacular lyric literary history, in the opposite direction from Boccaccio to Petrarch. Boccaccio’s provocative championing of Dante represented, in fact, a strong stimulus for Petrarch’s renewed engagement with vernacular literature during the Italian phase of his career after 1353. Petrarch’s uncompromising, albeit largely dissembled, post-Provence dedication to the vernacular reflects a significant course correction, when considered against the background of his life and works up until and around 1350. The shift becomes especially evident after 1359, the date of the fateful *Familiare* 21.15, “To Giovanni Boccaccio, a defense against an accusation by envious people,” in which Petrarch famously claimed never to have possessed a *Commedia* before Boccaccio had sent him one copied in his own hand, and to have avoided reading Dante so as not to be unduly influenced by him.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, once the deep ideological divide that separated Petrarch from Dante is clarified, it becomes apparent that it was none other than Gio-

vanni Boccaccio, the so-called third crown of Florentine eloquence, who came “between” Petrarch and Dante, and who spurred Petrarch to vie ever more strenuously with Dante in the vernacular during the latter part of his career. Petrarch, in fact, almost as a sign of recognition of his debt to Boccaccio on this front, recorded the triumvirate formula for the first time in *Seniles* 5.2, his letter “To the same person [Boccaccio], concerning the obsessive appetite for first place.”<sup>7</sup> An appreciation of Boccaccio’s influence on Petrarch in the vernacular literary realm is thus enhanced by directly correlating Petrarch’s discussions of Dante in these well-known letters from the *Familiars* and the *Seniles* with the history of the making of the *Canzoniere* and the composition of the *Triumphs*. A topographical reconnaissance of occurrences of the Ulysses theme in Petrarch’s oeuvre in connection with that history (work pioneered by Fenzi, among others) reveals, for example, that Petrarch’s rivalry with Dante in the late 1350s found expression in a famous passage in the first letter on the poet that Petrarch addressed to Boccaccio in 1359, *Familiars* 21.15. As we will see, the subtheme of Ulysses’ refusal to return home to Ithaca is evoked both there and in another much less famous, but nonetheless telling, utilization of the same theme in a nearly contemporary passage from the *Itinerarium ad sepulchrum domini Iesu Christi*. The relation between Petrarch and Dante is brought into clearest focus, however, in the most emblematic and moving of Petrarch’s rewritings of Dante’s figure of Ulysses, in poem number 189, “Passa la nave mia colma d’oblio” (My ship laden with forgetfulness).<sup>8</sup> This originally entered the order of the book as the concluding poem to the first part of the Chigi form of the *Canzoniere* that was undertaken in 1359 under the stimulus of Boccaccio’s conversations with Petrarch about Dante.

### “CONTRA DANTEM”

In the only explicit mention of Dante *auctor* in all of his works, Petrarch contradicted his predecessor’s authority, as if the point of the exercise of reading Pomponius Mela’s *Chorografia* were to find an opportunity to challenge his predecessor. Alongside a passage in which the Roman geographer locates Typhoeus’ burial place in Cilicia rather than in Sicily, as Dante was to do in *Paradiso* 8.67–70, Petrarch wrote “Nota contra Dantem.”<sup>9</sup> Petrarch’s preoccupation with Dante’s opinion regarding the point is unusual by any

6 *Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.*

measure, since when it came to locating Typhoeus, there were numerous and greater authorities than Dante to contend with, including Ovid, who had placed him beneath Aetna. Petrarch, on the other hand, consistent with Horace, Seneca, Lucan, and Claudian, buries Typhoeus under Ischia in the *Itinerarium*, the *Sine nomine*, and the *Triumphus pudicitie* cited here.<sup>10</sup>

Non freme così 'l mar, quando s'adira,  
 non Inarime, allor che Tipheo piagne,  
 né Mongibel, s'Enchelado sospira.

(ll. 112–14)

---

Greater his rage than that of the angry sea, / Or that of  
 Ischia [Inarime] when Typhoeus weeps, / Or Aetna's when  
 Enceladus laments.

The geographical dimension of Petrarch's dissent from Dante emerges as an interesting subtheme of this volume. For example, Albert Ascoli shows how Petrarch utilizes in the self-commentary on his eclogue *Parthenias* (*Fam.* 10.4) a modern and more reliable knowledge of biblical geography, based on newly discovered sources such as Pomponius Mela, to indirectly undermine Dante's *auctoritas*, and specifically his predecessor's account of the rivers of the earthly Paradise at the summit of Mt. Purgatory. For our immediate purposes, however, Petrarch's out-of-the-way geographical annotation regarding Typhoeus' burial site serves simply to illustrate both the "marginality" and the overdetermined character of the emergence of an anti-Dantean attitude in Petrarch's works. The manifestation of this attitude has largely escaped scholarly scrutiny, thanks to a critical tradition concerning the relationship between Dante and Petrarch that, since Boccaccio, has tended to minimize any suggestion of rivalry or incompatibility between the founding fathers of Italian literature. Yet a heightened awareness of the underlying agon that characterized Petrarch's attitude toward Dante can be expected to turn up other intermittent expressions of his indirect ongoing polemic with Dante's authority.

That the equilibrium of Sapegno's title "Tra Dante e il Petrarca," the first in our series of similarly titled essays, is belied by the essay's heavy weighting in favor of Dante is perhaps to be expected, although there is

little doubt the imbalance would have irritated Petrarch no end. Indeed, with due respect to father Francesco, father Dante represents the proverbial eight-hundred-pound gorilla in the room of any literary history of Trecento Italy. In this context Sapegno recalled the fact that the domineering presence of Dante in Trecento Italy stimulated strong resistance on ideological grounds, as well as admiration and assent. The two major examples of the anti-Dantean reaction discussed by Sapegno are the allegorical-didactic poem *Acerba*, by the polemically anti-Dantean Cecco d'Ascoli; and what might be considered the culmination of religious suspicion and rejection of Dante during the Trecento, the *De Reprobatione monarchie* of Friar Guido Vernani of Rimini.

Sapegno would never have dreamed of considering Petrarch in relation to either of these two exponents of Trecento anti-*dantismo*. Nevertheless, particularly in the light of evidence presented here by Barański in support of his thesis that Petrarch pursued consistently over many years “the task of dismantling his predecessor’s *auctoritas*,” it is perhaps worth considering the question of Petrarch’s relation to currents of Trecento anti-*dantismo* during the earliest stage of his literary career. We have already had occasion to mention Albert Ascoli’s discussion of Petrarch’s first eclogue, *Parthenias*. Ascoli uncovers there an implicit critique of Dante’s claims to “the status of *theologus-poeta*, or perhaps better, *scriba Dei*” and a response to the exchange of eclogues that took place between the early humanist Giovanni del Virgilio in Bologna and Dante in Ravenna in the early 1320s, at the same time that Petrarch was studying law in Bologna. Thus one cannot help but wonder whether Petrarch’s anti-Dantean attitude went as far back as his days as a law student. Indeed, as Sara Sturm-Maddox recalls in her contribution to this volume, Petrarch, in contrast to Dante, traced his own literary identity as *poeta* and *historicus* back to the early humanists of Padua, especially Albertino Mussato, who had preceded him in obtaining the honor of the laurel crown.<sup>11</sup>

Bologna in the early 1320s was also host to the most prominent and, in the end, tragically vulnerable exponent of early anti-*dantismo*, Cecco d'Ascoli. He was suspended from his professorship of medicine in Bologna by the Inquisitor Lamberto da Cingoli in 1324, and eventually condemned by the Florentine Inquisition and burned at the stake, together with his works, in Florence on September 16, 1327.<sup>12</sup> Cecco’s anti-*dantismo* is patent, and several passages from the *Acerba*, in which he expresses skepticism about the

poet who “finge, immaginando cose vane” (fakes, imagining vain things), are well known.<sup>13</sup> One in particular deserves further consideration for its generally neglected genealogical relation to what is arguably the most prominent polemical expression of anti-*dantismo* to be found in Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*.

While it might seem incongruous on the face of it to associate Petrarch with the Trecento’s most rabid exponent of anti-*dantismo*, it is worth recalling, besides the possibility of their biographical intersection at Bologna in the early 1320s, that Cecco d’Ascoli and Petrarch shared a connection to the Colonna family, whose patronage Petrarch first attracted during the early 1320s when both poets were in and out of Bologna. Indeed, in a chapter of *Per moderne carte*, and since then, in his authoritative edition of the *Canzoniere*, Marco Santagata has uncovered extensive traces of Cecco d’Ascoli’s poetry in Petrarch’s lyric, beginning with the earliest poems dedicated to the Colonna.<sup>14</sup> While Santagata does not make any connection between Petrarch and Cecco’s anti-*dantismo*, he highlights Petrarch’s utilization of the Dantean turn of phrase “sotto benda” (which derives from Dante’s canzone “Doglia mi reca,” l. 57) in the envoi of canzone 28 in the *Canzoniere* (l. 113), where it is taken to mean simply “among women.” According to Santagata, Petrarch’s use of the expression is directly mediated by Cecco d’Ascoli, who had already adopted it in this sense in a misogynistic passage from chapter 9 of book IV of the *Acerba*:<sup>15</sup>

In donna non fu mai virtù perfetta,  
 Salvo in Colei che, innanzi il cominciare,  
 Creata fu ed in eterno eletta.  
 Rare fiata, come disse Dante,  
 S’intende sottil cosa sotto benna:  
 Dunque, con lor perché tanto millante?  
 Non da virtù viene il parlare inetto.  
 Maria si va cercando per Ravenna  
 Chi in donna crede sia intelletto.  
 (ll. 4393–4402)

---

There was never perfect virtue in a woman, / except in she who  
 before the beginning / was created and chosen in eternity. /

Rarely, as Dante said, / beneath a headband is a subtle thought  
 understood. / Therefore why do you so exalt them? / Inept  
 speech does not come from virtue. / He seeks Mary in Ravenna /  
 He who believes that woman has intellect.

Santagata does not consider the implications of the connection between this *ad personam* (“Maria si va cercando per Ravenna”) instance of anti-*dantismo* and one of Petrarch’s most directly subversive expressions of skepticism about Dante’s claims for Beatrice, found in the *Canzoniere*’s concluding canzone 366, “Vergine bella,” where Dante’s Beatrice is implicitly contrasted with the Virgin Mary (“vera Beatrice”):

Vergine gloriosa,  
 donna del Re che nostri lacci à sciolti  
 et fatto ’l mondo libero et felice,  
 ne le cui sante piaghe  
 prego ch’appaghe il cor, vera beatrice.  
 (ll. 48–52)

---

O glorious Virgin, Lady of that King who has loosed our bonds  
 and made the world free and happy, in whose wounds I pray you  
 to quiet my heart. O true bringer of happiness.

Nonetheless, the link suggests that the underlying *vis polemica* that informed the contrast Petrarch drew at the culminating moment of the *Canzoniere* between the Virgin Mary and any earthly woman traced its genealogical origins directly back to the *Acerba*.<sup>16</sup> This connection between Petrarch’s anti-*dantismo* and Cecco’s might seem tenuous if it were not for the relative prominence of the passage in question in the collection, and its place within a broader albeit subtle program pursued throughout Petrarch’s lyrics aimed at subverting Dante’s extraordinary and unprecedented claims for Beatrice. In the context of his examination of the liturgical underpinnings of Petrarch’s writings (especially as mediated by Dante) in this volume, Ronald Martinez has further focused for us the anti-Dantean precision of Petrarch’s “vera beatrice.” He observes that the expression “is itself a compound of Dante’s phrasing, which introduces Beatrice, in Lucia’s words,

as 'Beatrice, lode di dio vera' (*Inf.* 2.103) and refers to Christ, in the words of the Croatian pilgrim near the end of the poem, as 'Signor mio Jesu cristo, Dio verace, / or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra' (*Par.* 31.107–8).” But already in canzone 287, Petrarch had reductively relegated Dante and his “love story” to the third heaven, demoting the “*theologus-poeta*” to the same status as Sennuccio, Guittone, Cino, and “Franceschin nostro”; and in the poetic catalogue of the *Triumphus cupidinis* (especially 4.28–38), as Barański observes, “[b]y fixing Beatrice as simply a love poet’s lady, the equal of Cino’s Selvaggia, Petrarch, as he had done in sonnet 287, denied her role as a heavenly guide and hence once again challenged the *Commedia*’s metaphysical claims.”<sup>17</sup> In the light of the skepticism about Beatrice found elsewhere in Petrarch’s lyric, there is no reason to doubt that he would have disagreed with Cecco d’Ascoli’s attitude toward her as expressed in the *Acerba*. Yet Petrarch’s connections to Trecento anti-*dantismo*, beginning with Cecco d’Ascoli, have generally been overlooked, due no doubt to the fact that Petrarch tended to reserve for special occasions the expression of his anti-Dantean animus. In fact, given Dante’s status in Trecento culture, Petrarch could only subtly and indirectly take on his predecessor, and seek to undermine him, at the margins, so to speak, of his own works. Moreover, the different bases of Petrarch’s own *auctoritas*, rooted as they were in his Latin humanism, led him to express his dissent in an indirect and condescending manner, so as to avoid granting any more credit to Dante than was strictly necessary (even when directly provoked by Boccaccio, he notoriously avoids naming his predecessor in *Familiars* 21.15 and *Seniles* 5.2). This approach is also reflected in Petrarch’s idiosyncratic reaction to Dante’s *Monarchia*, the second focal point for Trecento anti-*dantismo* recalled by Sapegno in his essay.

In the light of Petrarch’s usual strategy of subverting his predecessor without naming him, one should not be surprised if Petrarch never explicitly cited any of his predecessor’s Latin works, that is to say, works in the literary realm where Petrarch’s preeminence among contemporaries was undisputed.<sup>18</sup> There is ample evidence, on the other hand, of the *Monarchia*’s circulation, and therefore of Petrarch’s opportunity to encounter the work, even after the second decade of the Trecento and Guido Vernani’s confutation. It is, for example, well known that Petrarch’s political idol until around midcentury, Cola di Rienzo, wrote a commentary on the *Monarchia* between 1347 and 1352.<sup>19</sup>

The documentary history of the reception of Dante’s political and rhetorical treatises in Latin (including important recent investigations by Cor-

rado Bologna concerning one of the three principal codexes in which the *De vulgari eloquentia* survives, the Berlinese [Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Lat. fol. 437], containing the *Monarchia*, together with Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro's *Commento* on Valerio Massimo)<sup>20</sup> strongly suggests that Petrarch would have known both *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Monarchia*. Indeed, the historian Robert Lerner had already turned up some years ago a passage that is as close to an explicit citation of the *Monarchia* in Petrarch as one can expect to find, at the beginning of the *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, Petrarch's polemical treatise written in 1367 in response to a group of anonymous contemporary Averroists who had accused him of being an ignorant man.<sup>21</sup>

At the outset of that work the "ignorant man" polemically distinguishes between his own view of human happiness and Aristotle's treatment of the topic, which Dante had strongly endorsed at the beginning of the *Monarchia* when he had opined that it would be superfluous to write about human happiness after Aristotle:

Nam quem fructum ille qui theorema quoddam Euclidis iterum demonstraret? Qui ab Aristotile felicitatem ostensam reostendere conaretur? Qui senectutem a Cicerone defensam resumeret defensandam? Nullum quippe, sed fastidium potius illa superfluitas tediosa prestaret.

---

For what fruit would a man bear who proved once again a theorem of Euclid's? or who sought to show once again the nature of happiness, which has already been shown by Aristotle? Or who took up the defense of old age, which has already been defended by Cicero? None at all; indeed the tiresome pointlessness of the exercise would arouse distaste.

Thus, Petrarch is offered the opportunity in the *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* to deliver a pointed jab at Dante. He is, in fact, astonished that anyone would think such a thing, much less put it down in writing:

Et licet multa Ethicorum in principio et in fine de felicitate tractaverit, audebo dicere — clament ut libuerit censores mei — veram illum felicitatem sic penitus ignorasse, ut in eius cognitione, non dico subtilior, sed felicior fuerit vel quelibet anus pia, vel piscator pastorge fidelis, vel agricola. Quo magis miror quosdam nostrorum tractatum illum

12 *Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.*

aristotelicum sic miratos quasi nefas censuerint, idque scriptis quoque testati sint, de felicitate aliquid post illum loqui, cum michi tamen—audacter forsan hoc dixerim, sed, ni fallor, vere— ut solem noctua, sic ille felicitatem, hoc est lucem eius ac radios, sed non ipsam vidisse videatur. (63–64)

---

Of happiness he [Aristotle] has indeed said a good deal in the beginning and at the end of his *Ethics*. However, I will dare to say—and my censors may shout as loud as they please—he knew absolutely nothing of true happiness that any pious old woman, any faithful fisherman, shepherd or peasant is—I will not say more subtle but happier in recognizing it. I am therefore all the more astonished that some of our authors have so much admired that Aristotelian treatise as to consider it almost a crime to speak of happiness after him and that they have borne witness of this even in writing. It may perhaps be daring to say so, but it is true, unless I am mistaken: It seems to me that he saw of happiness as much as the night owl does of the sun, namely its light and rays and not the sun itself.

The indirect allusion to the *Monarchia* has the effect of consigning Dante and his political vision as expressed in that treatise to the same category of scholastic Aristotelianism that Petrarch rejected outright in the *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* and throughout his oeuvre. Nevertheless, even taking this intent into account, the polemical poke at Dante is clearly overdetermined. Singling Dante out in this way reflected Petrarch's private concern with undermining Dante's authority in the literary culture. Although the critique of scholasticism pursued in *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* did not require evoking, even indirectly, the vernacular poet, Petrarch does not miss the opportunity to take a swipe even in the context of a Latin polemic from late in his career, when the controversies surrounding Dante's *Monarchia* were no longer at the forefront of current debate. It is worth recalling in this context that Petrarch wrote *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* at the same time that he was assertively engaged in consolidating his own position as a vernacular poet vis-à-vis Dante. He had been working on the *Triumphs* with renewed conviction and in direct competition with Dante's epic throughout the 1360s; and between the end of 1366

and the beginning of 1367, the year he authored the *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, he first undertook the organization of the “author’s book” of the *Canzoniere*, Vatican Latin manuscript 3195.<sup>22</sup>

The idiosyncratic form that Petrarch’s anti-*dantismo* takes vis-à-vis the *Monarchia*, characterized by a kind of surface vulnerability, even peevishness, combined with profound ideological dissent, afforded Lerner in his excellent essay the opportunity to contrast Dante’s and Petrarch’s divergent brands of humanism. In fact, for Lerner, “Petrarch’s attack on Dante’s view of Aristotle’s *Ethics* and human happiness is at the heart of Petrarch’s reaction against Dante.”<sup>23</sup> The epistemological optimism of Dante’s Aristotelian-Aquinian worldview appeared to Lerner, paradoxically, to be more “humanistic,” or modern, at least in the contemporary and colloquial sense of that term, than Petrarch’s Augustinian pessimism.<sup>24</sup> This particular point of contact between Dante and Petrarch regarding human happiness is symptomatic of the ideological roots of Petrarch’s estrangement from Dante as a poetic authority, a topic variously treated by Giuseppe Mazzotta, Teodolinda Barolini, and Christian Moevs in this volume.

Mazzotta, while recognizing Petrarch’s occasional “spasms of crude jealousy,” is perhaps the most sanguine of our contributors about the possibility of reconciling Petrarch to Dante. Viewing Petrarch’s dialogue with Dante as one between the ancients and the moderns that “is destined never to end,” Mazzotta argues that, despite their differences, “Petrarch’s modern vision of horizontal self-transcendence flows from a source that is common to both Dante and himself: the Franciscan tradition.” Barolini, for her part, provides a meticulous reading of the profound metaphysical valences of Petrarch’s poetic vocabulary, especially in relation to the metaphysical theme par excellence of “[s]ingular versus plural, whole versus fragment, the one versus the many.” She succeeds in uncovering metaphysical resonances of the *Canzoniere* that inevitably point, however, to the ideological abyss that separated Petrarch from Dante, when one considers the “modern” Petrarch’s failure to achieve the kind of metaphysical integration that the *Commedia* described. Moevs contrasts Petrarch’s ontologically deracinated subjectivity with Dante’s concept of self in terms of an epochal crisis in the metaphysical underpinnings of Christian culture. Thus, for Moevs, Petrarch’s culminating vision in the *Triumphus eternitatis*, contrasted with Dante’s in *Paradiso* 33, appears a “reduction of the mystical or transcendent or metaphysical to the prosaic [that is] almost Ariostesque in irony.”

Moreover, Moevs views Petrarch's rewriting of Dante's Ulysses in *Fam.* 21.15, to which I will return, as Petrarch's way of "stripping Dante of the powerful mythology he created around his own literary project: [Petrarch] is saying that Dante, in reality, did not and could not do more than what Petrarch or any writer can do, which is to establish and stabilize one's presence in the world, the consequence of which is literary glory."

Although the deracinated metaphysical portrait of the Petrarchan self that Moevs provides contributes to our understanding of the desire for literary glory inspiring Petrarch's rivalry with Dante, it perhaps underestimates the extent to which that literary activity represented for him a spiritual practice in its own right. There is little doubt that the vulnerability of the Petrarchan ego, its extreme "suscettibilità," to use an Italian term, made for a life that was full of polemics, all of them at one level or another motivated by Petrarch's need to defend and bolster a precarious sense of identity. In this sense Petrarch's struggles with Dante were central to the construction of a literary sense of self. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that writing for Petrarch itself represented a vehicle for pursuing his own alternative "horizontal" path of spiritual self-transcendence. Thus Petrarch's vernacular lyric poetry articulated, in contrapuntal opposition to the prophetic-poetic claims of Dante's *Commedia*, Petrarch's own experience of transcendent being through the encounter with Laura along a discontinuous and fragmentary itinerary of spiritual development.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, while there is no essential contradiction between the rejection of Laura-Medusa at the end of the *Canzoniere* and the apotheosis of Laura in the final vision of the nearly contemporary *Triumphus eternitatis*, both works, each in its own pointed way, express an unwavering dissent from the claims for Beatrice upon which Dante founded his *Commedia*. Far from an irreconcilable divergence, Petrarch expresses in the *Canzoniere* and the *Trionfi* two perfectly compatible alternative attitudes of the deracinated Petrarchan self vis-à-vis the experience of transcendent being that Laura represented in his life. On the one hand, Laura in the *Canzoniere* is taken to be the Medusa of worldly form to be transcended, while on the other hand, in the *Triumphus eternitatis* she continues to represent the very possibility and promise of that transcendence.<sup>26</sup> In this respect, the culminating vision of the *Triumphus eternitatis*, compared with Dante's in *Paradiso* 33 (with which it shares the identical number of verses), appears to be not so much an expression of Ariostesque irony as a parody in the original sense of that term, that is, a counter-song (the apparent Greek roots of the word are

*par-*, which can mean beside, counter, or against, and *-ody*, or song, as in an ode), an imitation that was set in opposition to the original and that expressed Petrarch's own alternative, more humanly vulnerable truth claim.<sup>27</sup>

The specifically ideological basis of Petrarch's rejection of Dante's poetics should not be underestimated. That is to say, the supposed personal issues with Dante, the jealousy of his predecessor that was attributed to him by his contemporaries and against which he archly defended himself in the first of his letters on Dante to Boccaccio, should not obscure for us the fact that his ideological dissent from Dante was substantive. What was at stake was not so much, or in any case not only, poetic glory but rather two divergent views of the relation between the human and the divine, and consequently between literature and divine knowledge. While Petrarch had far less confidence in man's capacity to bridge these gaps in this life than did Dante, his perspective, as is amply demonstrated by Martinez's essay in this volume, was no less profoundly Christian than his predecessor's. Thus it was fundamentally for ideological reasons that Petrarch could never be persuaded by the prophetic truth claims of the *Commedia*, and why he felt authorized, even compelled, to read and rewrite his predecessor against the grain — as we will see, perhaps most emblematically, in the case of Dante's self-authorizing utilization of Ulysses in the *Commedia*.

Given Petrarch's disbelieving attitude toward Dante's poetic claims, it is not surprising that one of his favorite parodic devices in the project of dismantling Dante's authority is reductionism or what Barański terms in his essay "deminutio." The recognition of this kind of pointed "intertextual"<sup>28</sup> intervention through which Petrarch strategically sought to undermine Dante's theological and prophetic claims has been made difficult by the neutral inter-discursiveness that characterizes most of Petrarch's borrowings from Dante, which were due to the rapid and irresistible success of Dante's poetic language as a model for Trecento Italy. Moreover, this rhetorical phenomenon often passes unobserved, due to the anodyne manner in which the relationship between Petrarch and Dante has been received by much of the critical tradition.

To cite one example, when Guglielmo Gorni discovered some years ago that Petrarch had taken the rhyme scheme and even several of the rhyme words of Dante's great canzone of exile, "Tre donne," and used them in his ballad "Di tempo in tempo mi si fa men dura" (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 149),<sup>29</sup> the critic did not consider the possibility that the borrowing could represent anything but an unambiguous homage to the master. For

Gorni, the use of Dante's strophic structure and rhyme words served Petrarch's primary purpose of elevating the status of the ballad and rendering it worthy of entering the austere classicizing precincts of the *Canzoniere*.

Yet this approach ignores the very real possibility that Petrarch sought to undermine Dante's authority by "reducing" to the context of an amorous ballad<sup>30</sup> the structure and rhyme words of the first stanza of "Tre donne," arguably Dante's greatest canzone, the one in which he assumes the self-authorizing status as exile and that led in so many senses directly to the *Commedia*.<sup>31</sup> If one were to accept the notion that Petrarch had knowledge of the *De vulgari eloquentia* (as does Corrado Bologna),<sup>32</sup> the polemical edge of Petrarch's utilization of the scheme from "Tre donne" would emerge even more sharply, for there the *cantio* is defined by Dante as the most privileged and tragic of poetic genres in explicit contrast to the lowly ballad.<sup>33</sup> The subtle nature of Petrarch's reductionism vis-à-vis Dante has conspired with the tendency of Italian literary historiography to mask the underlying *vis polemica* informing Petrarch's attitude toward Dante, and has led scholars as sophisticated as Gorni, Feo,<sup>34</sup> or Fenzi to occasionally overlook its presence. As we will see, the desire to reconcile Petrarch to Dante leads Fenzi to conceive of a Petrarch who is sympathetic to his predecessor, despite persuasive evidence marshaled by Fenzi himself that Petrarch's reuse of Dante's Ulysses reflects a debunking of his predecessor's poetic claims in the *Commedia*. But the evident need of the Italian scholarly tradition to overlook Petrarch's anti-*dantismo* ultimately traces its prestigious origins to the success of Boccaccio's ambitious philological, historiographical, and patriotic program of canonization on behalf of "Florentine" vernacular literature, which required in the first place that Petrarch be reconciled to Dante. The fact that Petrarch's anti-*dantismo* was forced to come to terms with the most enthusiastic of pro-Dantists largely explains its curiously surreptitious and complex character. Petrarch was forced to go underground with his dissent from Dante, and to leave it for posterity to uncover.

#### BETWEEN PETRARCH AND DANTE: BOCCACCIO

Billanovich's fundamental essay "Tra Dante e Petrarca" describes an *ab origine* opposition between the Tuscan vernacular tradition epitomized by Dante and the earliest phase of Humanism pioneered by Lovato Lovati

and Albertino Mussato in Padua, precisely the line that Petrarch was to inherit and carry forward, initially from Provence. (This was the divide that Giovanni del Virgilio had sought to bridge during the 1320s: were Dante to “cease scattering heedlessly his pearls to swine” in the vernacular and instead sing of modern deeds in Latin, not only would del Virgilio personally bestow the laurel crown in Bologna, but Dante would also enjoy the company there of the recently crowned “Phrygian Muso” Albertino Mussato.)<sup>35</sup> Billanovich traces the rapid spread of Petrarch’s reputation throughout Italy following the watershed of his coronation as poet laureate in 1341, and the development of Humanism. He describes Boccaccio’s contributions to Humanism and to Petrarch’s fame in Italy and Florence, beginning with the *De vita et moribus domini Francisci Petracchi de Florentia* (1341). Powerful cultural synergies between Boccaccio and Petrarch were greatly fostered by their personal relationship, which grew more intense after they met for the first time in Florence in 1350. Like that between the later Goethe and Schiller, theirs was to become one of the most significant friendships in literary history.

According to a historiographic commonplace that emerged from this standard account, Boccaccio turned away from the vernacular to embrace Latin Humanism after meeting Petrarch in 1350 in Florence. In fact, most of Boccaccio’s works composed after that date were written in Latin, including books that were fundamental for early Humanism, such as the *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355–63), *De montibus, silvis, fontibus et de nominibus maris liber* (1355–64), *De mulieribus claris* (1361–62), *Genealogia deorum* (1350–74), and the *Buccolicum carmen* (1369–70). According to Dionisotti, the *volgarizzamento* of the second and third decades of Petrarch’s *Livy* that Boccaccio would have completed before their meeting remained without attribution, so as not to offend the fastidious humanistic linguistic sensibilities of Boccaccio’s new friend, for whom the very notion of the *volgarizzamento* as a cultural operation was tantamount to casting “heedlessly pearls to swine.”<sup>36</sup> Yet, despite his conversion to Petrarch’s cultural program and his own impressive contributions to early humanist literature, Petrarch’s “first disciple,” as Billanovich styled him, never betrayed his faith in Dante, and was not bashful about enthusiastically recommending the father of Tuscan vernacular literature to Petrarch. One can imagine how thrilled Petrarch must have been to encounter Boccaccio’s unabated enthusiasm for Dante when they first met in Florence in 1350.

In fact, while joining with Petrarch to promote the cause of Humanism, Boccaccio pursued with no less conviction his own promotion of Dante and his legacy. He wrote in his own hand three extant copies of the *Commedia* between the early 1350s and the early 1370s; and in the last years of his life he undertook a public reading and commentary on Dante's poem in the church of Santo Stefano di Badia. The notes of these lectures have survived as *Le esposizioni sopra la Commedia di Dante* (1373–75), which represent the final testament of a lifelong, unrelenting commitment to Dante and his *Commedia*.

Boccaccio's importance for the tradition of Dante's works is well known. He copied numerous Dantean texts in his manuscript miscellanies or *Zibaldoni*, which preserve three Latin letters (III, X, XII) for which no other copies survive, as well as the most philologically important testimony of the poetic exchange with Giovanni del Virgilio. The *Commedia* that Boccaccio had sent to Petrarch between the summer of 1351 and May 1353, Vatican Latin manuscript 3199, was utilized by Pietro Bembo in his edition of Dante's *Terze rime* published by Aldus Manutius in 1502, and became the vulgata of the poem until the mid-nineteenth century and the edition of Karl Witte (1862). Boccaccio's own "editions" of Dante's poem included other texts and paratexts, among them the *Vita nova*, an anthology of fifteen *canzoni*, brief summaries to accompany the cantos of the *Commedia*, and his own biography of Dante, the *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, which was written to accompany the ensemble. Simon Gilson has recently noted Boccaccio's concern with how Dante and Petrarch might be reconciled and how this aim permeates Boccaccio's *Trattatello*: "[Boccaccio] constantly attempts to juxtapose Dante and Petrarch and to make them complement one another, as he does earlier in the life of Petrarch and later on the pages of his Chigiano manuscript."<sup>37</sup>

Boccaccio's editorial approach to Dante's vernacular writings, meanwhile, reflected a philological attitude toward vernacular literature that was unprecedented and that Petrarch would have recognized and found congenial. It was an approach that applied an incipient humanist textual sensibility to the vernacular sphere, one that represented the beginnings of a response to Petrarch's worries about the uncontrolled nature of the transmission of vernacular texts. These worries emerge as a central preoccupation in both of Petrarch's letters to Boccaccio about Dante. In his contribution to this volume, Justin Steinberg shifts the discussion of *Familiars* 21.15

and *Seniles* 5.2 from a focus on Petrarch's presumed anxieties of influence vis-à-vis Dante to Petrarch's explicitly stated anxieties about textual control over his own vernacular legacy. He shows how Petrarch's preoccupation with the unstable nature of vernacular transmission conditioned the treatment of his own "uncollected" poems, the *disperse*, and influenced not only Petrarch's distinctive development of the theme of "the other woman" that he had inherited from Dante, but also the final ordering of the *Canzoniere* (in particular, the late substitution of *Rvf* 121, the madrigal "Or vedi, Amor, che giovenetta donna," for the ballata "Donna mi vene spesso ne la mente" [E18]).

For our immediate purposes, it is important to recognize that Boccaccio's canonization efforts on behalf of Dante and vernacular literature represented the beginnings of Italian vernacular philology and historiography and, therefore, an institutional response to Petrarch's reservations, anxieties, and fears about the place of vernacular poetry in the culture, including by extension his own "nugellae." It was largely by virtue of his philological and critical efforts that Boccaccio succeeded in reconciling Petrarch to the cause of the vernacular and even to Dante, if only to the extent that Petrarch was thereby stimulated to vie even more strenuously with "ille nostri eloquii dux vulgaris" (the master of our vernacular literature [*Sen.* 5.2.31]).

The most important of Boccaccio's editorial contributions from the perspective of Petrarch and his vernacular legacy was the Chigiano manuscript (Chigi L. VI.176) mentioned by Gilson, which contains the only surviving testimony of the second published form of the *Canzoniere*, also known as the "Chigi" form (1358–63). The fact that Boccaccio brought together in that codex Dante's *Commedia* and Petrarch's *Canzoniere* would have no doubt made a strong impression on Petrarch, as it has on the subsequent tradition and recent criticism. Corrado Bologna, for example, in his history of the classical canon of Italian literature, characterized the Chigi manuscript as "an epoch-defining event, inconceivable to Petrarch's way of looking at things, virtually a necessity in the new horizon opened by Boccaccio, that is, in his integration of Dante and Petrarch." At one level, given his attitude toward Dante, the combination must certainly have been beyond the ken of Petrarch ("impensabile"), as Bologna suggests.<sup>38</sup> Yet at still another level Petrarch must have recognized the implications of Boccaccio's editorial activities for his own vernacular legacy. Together with the

conversations with Boccaccio about Dante, they represented a stimulus to continue on his own counter-Dantean vernacular course with renewed determination and conviction. Thus the importance of Boccaccio's Dantean "philology" for subsequent vernacular literary history cannot be underestimated, beginning with its influence on Petrarch. It was no less significant or momentous than Petrarch's on Boccaccio for the history of Humanism. There is, indeed, a kind of balance of reciprocal literary influence to be observed in Boccaccio's turn to Latin, on the one hand, and Petrarch's renewed and intensified engagement with the vernacular in response to Boccaccio's Dante, on the other, as reflected in the compositional histories of the *Canzoniere* and the *Triumphs*.

In fact, the two major letters that Petrarch addressed to Boccaccio concerning Dante coincide with the compositional histories of the *Canzoniere* and the *Triumphs* in such a way as to suggest that their placement in the epistolary collection was meant to underscore for posterity the significance, for Petrarch's vernacular legacy, of the conversation between the two friends about Dante. The first of these, *Familiars* 21.15, was written during the summer of 1359, in the same year in which Petrarch embarked on the Chigi form of the *Canzoniere* (1359–63). He had just published in the previous year the pre-Chigi or Correggio form of the book (1356–58), which is named for its dedicatee Azzo da Correggio, and is generally taken to have been the first published form of the *Canzoniere*. In addition, surviving manuscript annotations point to intensive work on the *Triumphs* toward the end of the 1350s, for which there is also evidence, as we will see, in letters from the *Familiars* written during the same period. Petrarch also composed and published in 1358, among the many projects that engaged him at that time, a pilgrim's guide to the Holy Land, the *Itinerarium ad sepulchrum domini Iesu Christi*, to which I will have occasion to return since, as mentioned earlier, it contains one of the most pointed rewritings of Dante's Ulysses in all of Petrarch's works.

*Seniles* 5.2, probably written in 1364, was postdated by its ordering in the collection to 1366. This was the very year in which Petrarch started work on the "author's book," Vat. Lat. 3195, that was eventually to contain the definitive form of the *Canzoniere*: the redating of the letter was very likely intended to establish an implicit link to that key moment in the history of the *Canzoniere*.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, it was between 1366 and 1367 that the "forma di Giovanni" of the *Canzoniere* was completed, the next form of the book

after Chigi, which is named for the copyist Giovanni Malpaghini, who copied it but abruptly left Petrarch's service in 1367. Petrarch records the episode in nearby letters from book 5 to Donato Albanzani (*Sen.* 5.5 and 5.6), almost as if he intended to indirectly allude to the completion of the "Giovanni form" and his own continuation of the project in these pages of the *Seniles*. That Petrarch was indirectly referencing current developments in his own vernacular project in book 5 of the *Seniles*, especially 5.2 addressed to Boccaccio, is fairly evident. In her contribution to this volume, for example, Sara Sturm-Maddox takes Petrarch's intriguing reference in *Seniles* 5.2 to an ambitious unfinished work in the vernacular to be an allusion to the project of the *Triumph*, which continued to be a major focus for Petrarch during the 1360s and to the end of his life.<sup>40</sup>

Be that as it may, after Giovanni Malpaghini left Petrarch's service in the spring of 1367, the poet himself continued the work of selecting, revising, ordering, and copying the poems for all the subsequent "forms" of the *Canzoniere*, including the "pre-Malatesta" (1367–72), the "Malatesta" (1371 or 1372 to 4 January 1373), the "Queriniana" (1373), and the final "Vatican redaction" (1373 to 18 July 1374). Far from having given up on the vernacular, as he claims to have done in *Seniles* 5.2, Petrarch was working on both the *Canzoniere* and the *Triumph* when he wrote that letter, and would continue to do so until his death. During the last year of his life, while still working on the *Triumphus eternitatis*, and perhaps even during his last days, he continued to seek the perfect ordering of the poems, and in the right upper-hand corner of Vat. Lat. 3195 he renumbered the last thirty-one compositions of the *Canzoniere*.<sup>41</sup> The epistolary exchanges with Boccaccio on Dante thus correspond to the two most important moments in the history of the *Canzoniere*, that is, when Petrarch decided to reopen the project in 1359 following its first publication the year before (which also corresponded to a time of intense dedication to the *Triumph*), and when he first initiated the assembly of the "author's book" of the *Canzoniere* in 1366. The influence of Boccaccio's promotion of Dante and the nascent vernacular literary tradition on his friend's vernacular development is implicitly commemorated by the chronologically congruent placement of these letters in the epistolary.<sup>42</sup>

But to appreciate fully the force of that influence, a brief review of their interactions during the 1350s (discussed more completely by Sturm-Maddox in this volume), is necessary, before examining in somewhat greater detail

these two crucial junctures in the progress of Petrarch's vernacular project. Having learned at their first meeting in Florence in 1350 that Petrarch did not possess a copy of the *Commedia*, Boccaccio sent him (between the summer of 1351 and May 1353) what would become known as Vat. Lat. 3199, together with a poem in praise of Dante, "Ytalie iam certus honos," in which Boccaccio heralded Dante as *theologus-poeta*, and worthy of the laurel crown. Boccaccio's provocative promotion of Dante arrived at a time when Petrarch found himself at an important turning point. Their first encounters during the early 1350s (the first meeting in Florence was followed by a visit of Boccaccio's to Petrarch in Padua in the spring of 1352) coincided with preparations and negotiations that would soon lead to Petrarch's definitive move to Italy. The consolidation of the *Canzoniere* into a book, which is conventionally dated from the time of the composition of the proemial poem (1350), also took place at this time. The plan for the *Familiars* dates from the same period, as did the composition of the dedicatory letter of that collection, which is also dated 1350. The first draft of the *Posteritati* is thought to have been written around the same time, probably under the influence of Boccaccio's own precocious biography of Petrarch, the *De vita et moribus domini Francisci Petracchi de Florentia*.<sup>43</sup>

When Boccaccio and Petrarch first met in Florence in 1350, Petrarch was engaged in fashioning for the benefit of contemporaries and posterity an exemplary autobiography figuring his claimed "conversion at forty," somewhat awkward or incongruous remnants of which still survive in his writings. According to these extant traces of the biographical plot that Petrarch was developing around 1350,<sup>44</sup> Petrarch initially planned to present himself to his contemporaries and to posterity as having moved beyond the love story with Laura already in the 1340s, a breakthrough that is foreshadowed in *Familiars* 4.1 (fictionally dated 26 April 1336 but composed between 1350 and 1353) and at the end of book 3 of Franciscus' dialogue with Augustinus in the *Secretum*, which was also fictionally dated (between 1342 and 1343), but actually composed between 1350 and 1353.<sup>45</sup> This same fictional autobiographical scheme informed the penitential structure of the Correggio form of the *Canzoniere*, which took a palindomic rejection of his love for Laura as its point of departure: "et del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto / e 'l pentérsi" (and of my raving, shame is the fruit, and repentance [*Rvf* 1, 12–13]).<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, Petrarch reported in the *Posteritati* that he had rejected the fairer sex around his fortieth year (1344): "Mox vero ad quadragessimum

etatis annum appropinquans, dum adhuc et caloris satis esset et virium, non solum factum illud obscenum, sed eius memoriam omnem sic abieci, quasi nunquam feminam aspexissem” (As I was approaching my fortieth year, while I still had plenty of ardor and strength, I so completely threw off not only the obscene act, but the very recollection of it, that it seemed I had never looked at a woman [*Sen.* 18.1]). Moreover, in the *Posteritati* he still appeared to stake his literary reputation squarely on the *Africa*. In fact, the coronation, discussed by Sturm-Maddox in this volume, still seemed central to Petrarch’s self-portrait in the “Letter to Posterity,” at a time when he found himself at a crossroads between Provence and Italy, and on the verge of committing himself to Italy and the second part of his literary career. Yet there is no doubt that Petrarch’s renewed encounter with Dante, forced by Boccaccio’s enthusiasm, occurred at a propitious moment, and that a change in direction can be traced to the time when Petrarch was first confronted by Boccaccio’s Dante. In 1352, the year after his second meeting with Boccaccio in Padua, and the year before his definitive move to Italy, Petrarch probably began in Vaucluse, under the influence of Boccaccio’s Dantean *Amorosa visione*, the composition of the *Triumph*.<sup>47</sup> And as Sturm-Maddox opportunely recalls, it was in the *Amorosa visione* that Boccaccio envisions Dante receiving the laurel crown (*A.V.* 5.70–78), a passage that must have warmed Petrarch’s heart.

Petrarch had already claimed by that time, in the “Letter to Posterity,” to have abandoned poetry in favor of sacred letters. He did, in effect, abandon the *Africa* and had, for the most part, completed the last of his major poetic works in Latin, the *Bucolicum carmen*, by the end of the 1350s. Nevertheless, in blatant contradiction to the claim that he had abandoned poetry in the *Posteritati*, a renewed commitment to vernacular poetry from the end of the 1350s on clearly emerges, as indicated by even a cursory review of the synthetic chronology of Petrarch’s life and works that accompanies Santagata’s edition of the *Canzoniere*. It was, in fact, this renewed commitment to vernacular poetry that largely characterized the Italian phase of Petrarch’s career and would shape his legacy and reputation for subsequent literary history.

Petrarch must have rapidly come to appreciate during the 1350s the opportunity that the vernacular represented for him in Italy. At the same time, he must also have recognized the formidable opposition that his own anti-*dantismo* would have had to overcome, beginning with his new friend Giovanni Boccaccio, the greatest of Dante’s contemporary admirers. In

any event, Petrarch appears to have discarded the “conversion at forty” program by the time of their third meeting in Milan in the spring of 1359 and his first letter to Boccaccio on Dante, *Familiare* 21.15, composed the following summer. The first traces of Petrarch’s work on the “Chigi” form of the *Canzoniere* date from the fall of that same year. Significantly, this new form of the book abruptly reopened the project of the *Canzoniere* by disrupting the ethical structure that had informed the Correggio redaction, which had been based upon the autobiographical fiction of Petrarch’s *mutatio vitae*. The new form, instead, effectively reopened the question of whether the poet’s love for Laura was a positive or a negative spiritual force in his life.

The open-ended and ideologically unresolved extension of both parts of the Chigi form left the book, as recorded by Boccaccio in the manuscript he copied in the early 1360s (presumably during his visit with Petrarch in Venice during the spring of 1363), in a precarious state, especially pronounced at the end of the first part, which concluded with the pessimism of Petrarch’s most famous shipwreck, “Passa la nave mia colma d’oblio,” a composition that would eventually take position 189 in the final order.<sup>48</sup> As noted earlier, this Chigian moment of “horizontal self-transcendence” in the history of the *Canzoniere* corresponds to the same time period in which Petrarch was working on the *Triumph* with a renewed sense of purpose. The earliest surviving manuscript datings begin in 1356, and Petrarch’s enthusiasm in connection with his work on the *Triumph* is expressed, for example, in *Familiare* 19.16, where Marco Ariani has detected a clear allusion to the project.<sup>49</sup> Both these new beginnings, so to speak, take place in suggestive temporal proximity to the 1359 letter to Boccaccio on Dante, *Familiare* 21.15, when there is plenty of evidence to suggest that Dante was very much on Petrarch’s mind. In another famous letter to Boccaccio on imitation, for example, which was written in the same year, namely, *Familiare* 22.2, Ariani has identified a clear allusion to the *Triumph*, which the critic takes to be among the “inaccessa” of which Petrarch speaks:

Nolo ducem qui me vinciat sed precedat; sint cum duce oculi, sit iudicium, sit libertas; non prohibear ubi velim pedem ponere et preterire aliqua et inaccessa tentare; et brevior sive ita fert animus, planior callem sequi et properare et subsistere et divertere liceat et reverti.

I do not want a guide who leads me, not one who binds me to him, one who leaves me to use my own sight, judgment and freedom; I do not want him to forbid me to step where I wish to go beyond him in some things, to attempt the inaccessible, to follow a shorter or, if I wish, an easier path, and to hasten or stop or even to part ways and return.

It does not require a great deal of imagination to imagine who the guide is that Petrarch does not need.

An even clearer signal that Petrarch at the end of the 1350s was particularly engaged in taking his own path in counterpoint to Dante's is found in two parallel, nearly contemporary evocations of the Ulysses theme from that period. The most famous of these is in an autobiographical passage from the first letter on Dante to Boccaccio, *Familiars* 21.15, which has quite rightly been interpreted by Gilson, and now in this volume by Moevs and Barański, as containing a veiled critique of Dante:

Cum avo patreque meo vixit, avo minor, patre autem natu maior, cum quo simul uno die atque uno civili turbine patriis finibus pulsus fuit. Quo tempore inter participes erumnarum magne sepe contrahuntur amicitie, idque vel maxime inter illos accidit, ut quibus esset preter similem fortunam, studiorum et ingenii multa similitudo, nisi quod exilio, cui pater in alias curas versus et familie sollicitus cessit, ille obstitit, et tum vehementius cepto incubuit, omnium negligens soliusque fame cupidus. In quo illum satis mirari et laudare vix valeam, quem non civium iniuria, non exilium, non paupertas, non simultatum aculei, non amor coniugis, non natorum pietas ab arrepto semel calle distraheret, cum multi quam magni tam delicati ingenii sint, ut ab intentione animi leve illos murmur avertat.

---

He lived with my grandfather and father, being younger than the first, but older than the second with whom on the same day and as a result of the same civil disturbance he was driven from his native land into exile. At such times, fast friendships often develop among victims of similar tribulations, and this was especially true of them since, in addition to a similar fate, they shared common interests and studies. But my father compelled by other matters and by concern for his family,

resigned himself to exile, while his friend resisted and began devoting himself all the more vigorously to his literary pursuits, neglecting all else and desirous only of glory. In this I can scarcely admire and praise him too highly when nothing— not the injustice suffered at the hands of his fellow citizens, not exile, poverty, or the stings of envy, not his wife’s love or his devotion to his children— diverted him from his course once he had embarked upon it, when many other great talents, being weak of purpose, would be distracted by the least disturbance.

Petrarch here praises Dante for his single-minded pursuit of glory and implicitly compares him to Ulysses, utilizing terms that echo the very words that Dante had used to condemn Ulysses in the *Inferno*:

“né dolcezza di figlio, né la pieta  
del vecchio padre, né ’l debito amore  
lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta,  
vincer potero dentro a me l’ardore  
ch’i’ ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto  
e de li vizi umani e del valore;”  
(*Inf.* 26.94–99)

---

“not tenderness for a son, nor filial duty / toward my aged  
father, nor the love I owed / Penelope that would have made  
her glad, could overcome the fervor that was mine / to gain  
experience of the world / and learn about man’s vices, and  
his worth.”<sup>50</sup>

Not exile, Petrarch writes, nor stings of envy, nor his wife’s love, nor his devotion to his sons could keep Dante from the pursuit of glory. As Gilson has noted, a “pointed differentiation is implied in Petrarch’s emphasis upon how Dante pushed aside all matters including family, in the ardent pursuit of fame.”<sup>51</sup> The passage evidently traces part of its inspiration to Boccaccio’s *Trattatello*, and in particular to a passage in which Boccaccio had emphasized Dante’s focus on sacred studies, which Petrarch pointedly alters to a relentless pursuit of fame, while adding the underhanded allusion to Dante’s Ulysses.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, as Baranski makes clear in his essay in this volume, Petrarch consistently differentiates his own virtue and virtuous moti-

vations from Dante's more questionable poetics fueled by a pursuit of fame. Petrarch even implies in *Familiars* 21.15, according to Barański, that desire for glory motivated Dante to write for a more numerous and less demanding public in the vernacular in the first place: "Dante's pursuit of glory, of wanting to receive the recognition of others (and what others), points to a profound lack of virtue."<sup>53</sup>

The revision of Dante's Ulysses and the sly use of Dante's own invention *contra Dantem* in his letter on Dante addressed to Boccaccio is therefore diametrically opposed to Petrarch's use of the same figure of Ulysses just a year earlier, in a key passage of the *Itinerarium ad sepulchrum domini Iesu Christi* (17.1). There it is the pursuit of virtue, not of glory, fame, or honor, that is described as characteristic of the Ulyssean journey (and by extension, of Petrarch's own journey). The contrast with the motivation that Petrarch will attribute to Dante one year later is evident. When Petrarch addresses to his pilgrim-friend Giovanni Mandelli the exhortation to continue his journey despite nostalgia for home, he may as well have been speaking of his own artistic pilgrimage at the end of the 1350s, urging himself to push beyond his less virtuous predecessor:

Quid vero nunc cogitas? An nondum te desiderium nostri cepit, ut domum, ut patriam, ut amicos invisere animus sit? Credo id quidem, imo ne aliter fieri posse certus sum. Sed nullus est acrior stimulus quam virtutis. Ille nunc per omnes difficultates generosum animum impellit, nec consistere patitur, nec retro respicere cogitque non voluptatum modo, sed honestorum pignorum atque affectuum oblivisci, nichil aliud virtutis spetiem optare, nichil velle, nichil denique cogitare. Hic stimulus qui Ulixem Laertis et Penelopes et Thelemaci fecit immemorem, te nunc nobis vereor abstrahet quam vellemus.

---

But what are you thinking now? Hasn't the desire to see us again taken you yet; hasn't the desire to return to your home, your fatherland, and friends entered your soul yet? I believe so and am sure it could not be any other way. But there is no greater stimulus than virtue. Virtue inspires the generous soul to overcome every difficulty; it does not suffer one to remain in one place, nor that one should look back; it forces one to forget not only pleasures but also more just duties and affections; it does not allow one to choose anything but the ideal of virtue and it does

not allow one to desire or think of anything else. This is the stimulus that made Ulysses forget Laertes, Penelope, and Telemachus, and now keeps you far from us, I am afraid, longer than we should like.

The unambiguous endorsement of the pursuit of virtue as the appropriate and praiseworthy stimulus that made Ulysses stay away from home is in striking contrast with the ambiguity of Petrarch's attributing to Dante one year later the relentless pursuit of glory as the stimulus that made him forget his wife and children. Before turning, however, in the last section of this essay to the wider meta-literary significance of Petrarch's appropriation and rewritings of Dante's Ulysses in his works, we must first consider the state of the *Canzoniere* at the time of the second letter on Dante, *Seniles* 5.2, for the light it can shed on the evolution of Petrarch's attitude toward Dante and toward vernacular literature, and by extension toward his own vernacular poetry.

In the "Giovanni form" of the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch continued to undermine Dante's *auctoritas* by denying him even the title of "poeta," while at the same time clearly signaling his renewed commitment to his own vernacular legacy. Below I provide a map of a segment of Vatican Latin manuscript 3195 showing the complex textual history of reorderings and insertions that Petrarch accomplished in the transition from the Chigi (Ch; 1359–63) to the Giovanni (Gv; 1366–67) to the first phase of the pre-Malatesta (PmI; October 1367–May 1368) forms of the author's book in the first part:

35v	36r	36v	37r	37v	38r	38v	39r	39v
166 (Gv)	170 (Ch)	174 (Gv)	178 (Ch)	182 (Gv)	186 (Gv)	190 (Gv)	194 (PmI)	198 (PmI)
167 (Gv)	171 (Ch)	175 (Gv)	[ ]*	183 (Gv)	187 (Gv)	191 (PmI)	195 (PmI)	
168 (Gv)	172 (Ch)	176 (Ch)	180 (Gv)	184 (Ch)	188 (Gv)	192 (PmI)	196 (PmI)	
169 (Ch)	173 (Ch)	177 (Ch)	181 (Gv)	185 (Ch)	189 (Ch)	193 (PmI)	197 (PmI)	

Completing the Giovanni form required first of all that Petrarch revise the pessimistic ending of the Chigi form, which had concluded with the shipwreck of number 189, “Passa la nave mia,” whose original position is indicated in the map by the gap between numbers 178 and 180 that Petrarch had instructed Giovanni Malpaghini to leave blank. It is clear from the map that Petrarch’s plan for the Giovanni form was informed, even graphically, by the desire to reestablish equilibrium and achieve balance at the end of the first part of the Giovanni form, values that had been compromised by the ideologically and formally unresolved state of the Chigi *Canzoniere*. The lacuna in the order of the Giovanni form of the book left behind by the shipwreck poem (which had been moved forward to the penultimate position of the Giovanni form) remained unfilled until the first phase of the pre-Malatesta form (Pm1), when Petrarch himself copied number 179, “Geri, quando talor s’adira,” into the order of Vat. Lat. 3195.

This particular textual segment of the transition between forms is arguably the most significant in the history of the making of the *Canzoniere*. Petrarch manages in the passage between the Giovanni form and the first phase of the pre-Malatesta form to overcome the shipwreck that had threatened the project at the end of the Chigi form, which had left unresolved the contrast between a positive and negative view of the poet’s love for Laura. I have argued elsewhere that Petrarch definitively resolved the unstable ideological structure of the book only during the first phase of the pre-Malatesta form, by inserting number 179, which identified Laura with Medusa: “Andrei non altramente / a veder lei, che ’l volto di Medusa, / che faceva marmo diventar la gente” (I would not go to see her otherwise than to see the face of Medusa, which made people become marble [179, 9–11]).<sup>54</sup> Petrarch copied another Medusan poem into the order at the same time, number 197, “L’aura celeste che ’n quell verde lauro”: “pò quello in me, che nel gran vecchio mauro / Medusa quando in selce trasformollo” (has the power over me that Medusa had over the old Moorish giant, when she turned him to flint [197, 5–6]). Petrarch thereby established both a structural-ideological link back to an earlier Medusa poem (number 51, “Poco era ad appressarsi agli occhi miei”) and, more importantly, a bridge forward to the last poem in the collection, the canzone to the Virgin composed at the same time, in which Laura is explicitly identified with Medusa in opposition to the Mother of God: “Medusa et l’error mio m’àn fatto un sasso / d’umor vano stillante” (Medusa and my error have made me a stone dripping vain moisture [366, 111–12]).

30 *Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.*

In the context of the present discussion of Petrarch's evolving attitude toward the vernacular, however, I would like to draw attention to the placement of three key metapoetical poems on either side of the blank space left by moving the shipwreck poem in the transition from the Chigi to the Giovanni forms. These metapoetic poems were additions to the Giovanni form that Petrarch precisely positioned in two chiastically structured triptychs, located in the first three positions on pages 35v and 38r, respectively. The triptychs frame, the seam around the shipwreck that Petrarch was concerned with closing between the Chigi and Giovanni forms:

35v	36r	36v	37r	37v	38r	38v
166	170	174	178	182	186	190 (last poem of Giovanni form)
167	171	175	[ ]*	183	187	
168	172	176	180	184	188	
169	173	177	181	185	189	

The triptychs are mirror images of one another. The first metapoetic poem, "S'i' fussi stato fermo a la spelunca" (166), is followed by two love poems, while on the other side of the blank space left by "Passa la nave mia," two metapoetic poems, "Se Virgilio et Homero avessin visto" (186) and "Giunto Alexandro a la famosa tomba" (187), are followed by a love poem:

166	186
167	187
168	188

Besides the graphic and thematic symmetries that are present, Petrarch established by their placement a thematic progression between the poems on either side of the frame that expressed his new attitude toward his vernacular project, consistent with his ongoing work on the *Canzoniere* and the *Triumphs*. In other words, the transition from 166 to 186/187 in the order of

the book parallels the unmistakable, albeit dissembled, deeper significance of his contemporary letter addressed to Boccaccio concerning Dante. The first poem, probably a composition from his days in Provence, is recovered by Petrarch and added to the order of the book for the first time here.<sup>55</sup> It combines a dismissal of Dante, to whom Petrarch denies even the title of “poeta” in the first quatrain,<sup>56</sup> with dejection about the prospects of his own Latin poetry, in particular, the *Africa*, while characteristically maintaining the possibility that Jove might yet rain his grace upon him:

S’i’ fussi stato fermo a la spelunca  
 là dove Apollo diventò profeta,  
 Fiorenza avria forse oggi il suo poeta,  
 non pur Verona et Mantoa et Arunca;

ma perché ’l mio terren più non s’ingiunca  
 de l’umor di quel sasso, altro pianeta  
 conven ch’i’ segua, et del mio campo mieta  
 lappole et stecchi co la falce adunca.

L’oliva è secca, et è rivolta altrove  
 l’acqua che di Parnaso si deriva,  
 per cui in alcun tempo ella fioriva.

Così sventura over colpa mi priva  
 d’ogni buon fructo, se l’eterno Giove  
 de la sua gratia sopra me non piove.

---

If I had stayed in the cave where Apollo became a prophet, Florence would perhaps have her poet today, not only Verona and Mantua and Arunca; but, since my ground produces no more reeds from the water of that rock, I must follow another planet and with my hooked sickle reap thistles and thorns in my field. The olive tree is dry, and the waters have turned elsewhere that flow down from Parnassus and at one time made it flourish. Thus misfortune or my fault deprives me of all good fruit, if eternal Jove does not rain His grace down upon me.

The anti-*dantismo* of this sonnet has been recognized by the commentary tradition since Tassoni (“Mostra di non tener conto alcuno di Dante” [He shows that he has no regard for Dante])<sup>57</sup> and has been reaffirmed by the recent *lectura* of Guglielmo Gorni and Paola Allegretti.<sup>58</sup> What has been overlooked, however, is that the extremely unusual rhyme scheme that departs from “spelunca” is also, ultimately, anti-Dantean in inspiration. The feature completely overlooked, as far as I have been able to determine, is the way in which Petrarch’s rare rhymes from “spelunca” ostentatiously echo Dante’s hapax use of “spelunca” in rhyme in a passage of the fourth circle of Malebolge (*Inf.* 20.46–51), where the false prophets and soothsayers are punished. Petrarch pointedly recalls in his use of “spelunca” as a rhyme word the infernal example of a Tuscan augur:

“Arona è quel ch’al ventre li s’atterga,  
che ne’ monti di Luni, dove ronca  
lo Carrarese che di sotto alberga,  
ebbe tra ’ bianchi marmi la spelunca  
per sua dimora; onde a guardar le stelle  
e ’l mar non li era la veduta tronca.”  
(*Inf.* 20.46–51)

---

“He who puts his back to that one’s belly is Aruns. / In the hills of Luni—where the Carraresi, / who shelter in the valley, work the earth— / he lived inside a cave in that white marble, from which he could observe the sea and stars / in a wide and boundless prospect.”

Not only was Dante not a poet in Petrarch’s view; he was also a false prophet. Petrarch dismissed Dante not just on stylistic and linguistic grounds and because he wrote in the vernacular rather than Latin, but for ethical and ideological reasons as well.

Poems 186 and 187, on the other hand, rather emphatically express Petrarch’s reconciliation with and renewed faith in his own vernacular project:

Se Virgilio et Homero avessin visto  
quel sole il qual vegg’io con gli occhi miei,

tutte lor forze in dar fama a costei  
 avrian posto, et l'un stil coll'altro misto:

di che sarebbe Enea turbato et tristo,  
 Achille, Ulixè et gli altri semidei,  
 et quel che resse anni cinquantasei  
 sí bene il mondo, et quel ch'ancise Egisto.

Quel fior anticho di vertuti et d'arme  
 come sembiante stella ebbe con questo  
 novo fior d'onestate et di bellezze!

Ennio di quel cantò ruvido carne,  
 di quest'altro io: et oh pur non molesto  
 gli sia il mio ingegno, e 'l mio lodar non sprezzè!  
 (186)

---

If Virgil and Homer had seen that sun which I see with my eyes, they would have exerted all their powers to give her fame and would have mixed together the two styles: for which Aeneas would be angry; and Achilles, Ulysses, and the other demigods, and he who ruled the world so well for fifty-six years, and he whom Aegisthus killed, would all be sad. That ancient flower of virtue and arms, what a similar star he had with his new flower of chastity and beauty! Ennius sang of him an inelegant song, I of her; and ah! May my wit not displease her, may she not despise my praises!

Giunto Alexandro a la famosa tomba  
 del fero Achille, sospirando disse:  
 O fortunato, che sí chiara tromba  
 trovasti, et chi di te sí alto scrisse!

Ma questa pura et candida colomba  
 a cui non so s'al mondo mai par visse,  
 nel mio stil frale assai poco rimbomba:  
 cosí son le sue sorti a ciascun fisse.

34 *Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.*

Ché d'Omero dignissima et d'Orpheo,  
 o del pastor ch'anchor Mantova honora,  
 ch'andassen sempre lei sola cantando,

stella difforme et fato sol qui reo  
 commise a tal che 'l suo bel nome adora,  
 ma forse scema sue lode parlando.

(187)

---

When Alexander came to the famous tomb of fierce Achilles, he sighing said: "O fortunate one, who found so clear a trumpet, one who wrote such high things of you!" But this pure and white dove, whose equal I think never lived in the world, she resounds very little in my frail style. Thus each one's destiny is fixed; for she is worthy of Homer and Orpheus and of the shepherd whom Mantua still honors, worthy to have them always singing only of her, but a deformed star and her fate, cruel only in this, have entrusted her to one who adores her lovely name but perhaps mars her praise when he speaks.

In the transition between the ideologically unresolved and aesthetically still tentative Chigi form and the resolution and recomposed equilibrium of the Giovanni form, Petrarch manages to reiterate his disregard for Dante, suggest that his own ambitions in Latin poetry are a thing of the past, and reaffirm the validity of his own vernacular poetic enterprise. While rhetorically expressing doubts about his own talent, as was typical for Petrarch, the worthiness of Laura as an object of poetic celebration is most emphatically asserted in poems 186 and 187; Petrarch justifies his own vernacular project by an appeal to no less than the authority of Virgil, Homer, and Orpheus. In an important *lectura* of poems 186 and 187, Vincenzo Fera proposed that their addition to the *Canzoniere* during the Giovanni phase of elaboration had to do with the fact that Homer, who is mentioned in both poems for the first and only time in the collection, had entered Petrarch's library in translation around that time.<sup>59</sup> Yet the architectural precision of the arrangement of the metapoetic poems in this passage of the book suggests that a deeper, less external intention was at work. Just as Petrarch strategically ordered the letters in his epistolary to commemorate the his-

tory of his spiritual and intellectual development, so the selection and ordering of the poems in the *Canzoniere* responds to and records the evolution in his thinking about his vernacular legacy as a poet. A moment of reconciliation and recommitment to his vernacular legacy, albeit *contra Dantem*, is expressed and punctually recorded, on the one hand, by the discussion of Dante with Boccaccio in *Seniles* 5.2, and on the other, by the selection and placement of the metapoetic poems that entered the Giovanni form at the end of the first part of the *Canzoniere*.

### BETWEEN PETRARCH AND DANTE: ULYSSES

Beyond the richness and precision of its philological reconnaissance of the presence of Ulysses in Petrarch's oeuvre, Enrico Fenzi's 2004 contribution to the "Between Dante and Petrarch" tradition of commentary is fundamental for its discovery that Petrarch's Ulysses ultimately derives his ideological force from Dante's rewriting of the myth. For Fenzi, "Petrarch's Ulysses is essentially Dante's Ulysses, or at least as seen through Dante." He finds that Petrarch, "while basing his evaluation of the figure of Ulysses on classical texts, demonstrates to the end his substantial faithfulness to Dante's vision."<sup>60</sup> In addition, Fenzi's essay provides a vital insight into the motivations that informed Petrarch's appropriation of Dante's Ulysses, and in particular of the Ulyssean journey as a signature theme: Petrarch recognized the sign of his own modernity in Dante's bold rewriting of the myth, which he redirected on an outward-bound trajectory. Petrarch embraces Dante's invention of a Ulysses who never returns home to Laertes, Penelope, and Telemachus: "Ulysses is not that of the tradition, but precisely, that of Dante, he who *does not return*."<sup>61</sup>

But true to the Boccaccian legacy of concern with how to reconcile the two great founders of the traditions of Italian Humanism and vernacular literature, Fenzi, faced with Petrarch's ambiguous praise of a Ulyssean Dante in the first letter to Boccaccio, quite explicitly elides the anti-*dantismo* and resistance that is present in Petrarch's appropriation of Dante's Ulysses: "I don't know how useful it would be, but one might discourse at length on Petrarch's intelligent perfidy in striking his great rival with his own weapons, turning back on its creator the sublime ambiguity of his most controversial creation. Nevertheless, it is best to stick to the serious substance and not the polemics of the discourse. . . ." Rather than explore the nature

or the motivation of that perfidious gesture, Fenzi prefers to see Petrarch's attitude as one of admiration for his predecessor as a man. While admitting that Petrarch, in fact, did not endorse the fiction of Dante's own fictional poetic journey, Fenzi concludes that "the operation of Petrarch transforms but essentially remains faithful to the old efficacious topos that states: 'Aristotle was a man and he could err.'"<sup>62</sup>

But such an attempt to reconcile Dante and Petrarch requires that one overlook the way in which Petrarch's ostentatious appropriation of Dante's account of Ulysses's journey (which, one should recall, ends in shipwreck) represented an implicit critique of Dante's utilization of Ulysses in the *Commedia* as a vehicle for authorizing his own poetic journey. As Emilio Pasquini has noted, Petrarch was the first to grasp the manipulative self-authorizing strategy that informed Dante's shipwreck of Ulysses in *Inferno* 26,<sup>63</sup> that is to say, the way in which Dante makes Ulysses and his shipwreck the negative double of himself and his own successful journey. Modern Dante criticism has explored at length this device and found it to be central to the ideological structure of the poem. Yet, while it may be true, as Teodolinda Barolini has argued, that "Ulysses is the lightning rod Dante places in his poem to attract and defuse his own consciousness of the presumption involved in anointing oneself God's scribe,"<sup>64</sup> Petrarch's perfidious praise of Dante for his "non-Ulysean" pursuit of fame makes clear that for Petrarch, the shipwreck of Ulysses was not sufficient to atone for Dante's presumption. Just as Petrarch implicitly rejected and subverted Dante's self-authorizing vernacular literary history by revising and reordering it in both the *Canzoniere* and the *Triumphs*, so too, he rejected and effectively revised for his own purposes Dante's self-authorization by means of the invention of Ulysses and his shipwreck.

Petrarch's acceptance of the inevitability of shipwreck thus represented, implicitly, a trenchant critique of the elaborate self-authorizing fiction of Dante's *Commedia*, which had based its claim for Dante's successful journey into the afterlife on the shipwreck of Ulysses. In contrast to Dante, Petrarch staked the truth claim for his literature on a stoic acknowledgment of his own human vulnerability and of the inescapability of shipwreck. That Petrarch utilizes every literary means at his disposal to defer inevitable *ruina* thus expresses yet another form of Petrarchan literary resistance to Dante's shipwreck of Ulysses and the literary-ideological system that it supported. For while the wandering journey and shipwreck of Ulysses were for Dante the negative other to the triumph of his own own salvific poetic pilgrim-

age, Petrarch's stoic deferral of shipwreck allowed him to hold out hope for rescue from his moral abyss. According to an anti-heroic narrative that was implicit and recurring in Petrarch's representations of his moral life, and according to an alternative Christian humanistic poetics conceived in polemical contrast to Dante's, Petrarch repeatedly appeals for deliverance from the depths of his existential predicament, tossed upon the waves, crying out to the Virgin to save him.

Petrarch's appropriation of Dante's Ulysses thus goes to the heart of Petrarch's resistance to Dante and to his theological-poetic system. He rewrites Dante's Ulysses against the grain of Dante's self-authorizing literary construction. It is for this reason that he never uses the figure of the triumphant ocean voyage as a figure for his writing in any of his literary works, as Dante had famously done. Instead, the *Familiars*, for example, begins under the sign of shipwreck, and the burning of Petrarch's letters and poems is likened to the strategy of shipwrecked navigators who lighten their ships in order to survive shipwreck: "mille, vel eo amplius, seu omnis generis sparsa poemata seu familiares epystolas . . . Vulcano corrigendas tradidi. Non sine suspirio quidem — quid enim mollitiem fateri pudeat? —; sed occupato animo quamvis acri remedio succurrendum erat, et tanquam in alto pregravata navis, relevanda preciosarum etiam iactu rerum" (I committed to Vulcan's hands for his correction at least a thousand and more of all kinds and variety of poems and letters . . . I am not ashamed to admit that I did this with a certain tenderness and with many sighs; just as an over-weighted boat in deep waters can be lifted above the billows by discharging overboard even its most precious cargo so it was necessary to render assistance, no matter how drastic, to my preoccupied mind [*Fam.* 1.1.8]).

Petrarch's appropriation of shipwreck as a signature theme is thus "contra Dantem," in the sense that he presents himself in his literature as stoically and serenely contemplating shipwreck, as in the proverbial Lucretian "shipwreck with spectator," even to the point of dispassionately contemplating the inevitability of his own demise. Nothing could be further from Dante's version of Ulysses' shipwreck, hypocritically willed by "altrui" (another), than the ethical authority of Petrarch's Christian stoicism as expressed by Augustinus in the *Secretum*.<sup>65</sup> But no less important, from a literary point of view, to Petrarch's response to Dante's shipwreck of Ulysses is the fact that he rewrites the shipwreck theme in such a way as to avoid as long as possible going under the waves.<sup>66</sup> The focus of the revisions of the Giovanni form cited earlier, for example, can be interpreted in terms of

Petrarch's attempt to contain and overcome the shipwreck threatened by the Chigi form, focused by the shipwreck of poem 189, which found its antidote initially in the Giovanni form in poem 190, and ultimately in the final ordering by the Po river poem 180. Both compositions serve to ward off and defer the shipwreck threatened by "Passa la nave mia."<sup>67</sup> But even in "Passa la nave mia," the most successful and enduring of his treatments of the theme, we find that Petrarch rewrites Ulysses' shipwreck in such a way as to defer ultimate *ruina*, thus holding out hope for ultimate salvation.

Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio  
per aspro mare, a mezza notte il verno,  
entra Scilla et Caribdi, et al governo  
siede 'l signore, anzi 'l nimico mio;

A ciascun remo un penser pronto et rio  
che la tempesta e 'l fin par ch'abbi a scherno;  
la vela rompe un vento umido eterno  
di sospir', di speranze et di desio.

Pioggia di lagrimar, nebbia di sdegni  
bagna et rallenta le già stanche sarte,  
che son d'error con ignorantia attorto.

Celansi i duo mei dolci usati segni;  
morta fra l'onde è la ragion et l'arte  
tal ch'incomincio a desperar del porto.

---

My ship laden with forgetfulness passes through a harsh sea,  
at midnight, in winter, between Scylla and Charybdis, and at  
the tiller sits my lord, rather my enemy; each oar is manned by  
a ready, cruel thought that seems to scorn the tempest and the  
end; a wet changeless wind of sighs, hopes, and desires breaks  
the sail; a rain of weeping, a mist of disdain wet and loosen the  
already weary ropes, made of error twisted up with ignorance.  
My two usual sweet stars are hidden; dead among the waves  
are reason and skill; so that I begin to despair of the port.

By means of a rhetorical strategy of deferral, which expresses Petrarch's own counter-Dantean conception of the earth-bound place and the humanly delimited function of literature, the presence of the subject called Petrarch endures even to this day, when after seven hundred years he is still "just beginning" to despair of reaching port.

## NOTES

1. Natalino Sapegno, "Tra Dante e il Petrarca," in *Storia letteraria del Trecento*, La letteratura italiana; Storia e testi (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1963), 169–96; Giuseppe Billanovich, "Tra Dante e Petrarca," *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 8 (1965): 1–44.

2. Enrico Fenzi, "Tra Dante e Petrarca: Il fantasma di Ulisse," in *Saggi petrarcheschi* (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2003), 492–517.

3. This chapter is based on the last of the lectures in the series, and thus had the benefit of being able to draw on the insights and conclusions of the other contributors. The editors initially thought it would be appropriate to place it last in the order. On reflection, we concluded that it would be more appropriately placed at the beginning, since the essay foreshadows and utilizes different aspects of the other contributions to the seminar while developing its own argument. It should be clear, however, that the chapter is not intended as an introduction to the volume in the conventional sense.

4. For example, Marco Santagata, "Presenze di Dante 'comico' nel *Canzoniere* del Petrarca," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 146 (1969): 163–211, reprinted in Santagata, *Per moderne carte* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), 25–78; Marco Santagata, "Dante in Petrarca," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 157 (1980): 445–52, reprinted in Santagata, *Per moderne carte*, 79–91; Paolo Trovato, *Dante in Petrarca* (Florence: Olschki, 1979); Giorgio Orelli, "Dante in Petrarca," in *Il suono dei sospiri: Sul Petrarca volgare* (Turin: Einaudi, 1990), 124–62; Claudio Giunta, "Memoria di Dante nei *Trionfi*," *Rivista di letteratura italiana* 11 (1993): 411–52; and Peter Kuon, *L'aura dantesca: Metamorfosi intertestuali nei "Rerum vulgarium fragmenta" di Francesco Petrarca* (Florence: Cesati, 2004). For further bibliography on Petrarch's relationship to Dante, see Barański, "Petrarch, Dante, Cavalcanti" in this volume, n. 1.

5. See Guido di Pino, "L'antidantismo dal Trecento al Quattrocento," *Lettere classensi* 5 (1976): 125–48.

6. *Familiares* 21.15, as one might expect, receives focused attention by several contributors to this volume, especially Barański, Mazzotta, Moevs, Steinberg, and Sturm-Maddox. Petrarch's belittling of his vernacular lyrics as "nugae" or "nugellae" (trifles) has become a critical commonplace. See Francesco Petrarca,

40 Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.

*Canzoniere*, ed. Gianfranco Contini, annotated by Daniele Ponchiroli (Turin: Einaudi, 1968), xv–xvi. Giuseppe Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato. I. Lo scrittoio del Petrarca* (Rome: Edizioni di “Storia e letteratura,” 1947), points out that when Petrarch received from Boccaccio the gift of the *Commedia* (Vat. lat. 3199) and Boccaccio’s *Amorosa visione*, he uncharacteristically failed to note with an annotation on their cover pages the entry of these texts into his library, nor did he compose letters of thanks that were included in his epistolary, as he did for writings of the Church Fathers and the classics.

7. *Seniles* 5.2 also receives focused attention by several contributors to this volume, especially Barański, Steinberg, and Sturm-Maddox. “Audio senem illum Ravennatem, rerum talium non ineptum iudicem, quotiens de his sermo est semper tibi locum tertium assignare solitum. Si is sordet sique a primo obstare tibi videor, qui non obsto, ecce volens cedo, locus tibi linquitur secundus” (I understand that the old gentleman from Ravenna, a competent judge of such matters, always likes to assign you third place whenever the subject comes up. If this is too lowly, if I appear to block your way to first place, which I do not do, look, I gladly yield and leave second place to you), in Francesco Petrarca, *Senile V 2*, ed. Monica Berté (Florence: Le Lettere, 1998), 32–33.

8. Citations of Francesco Petrarca are from the following texts and translations: *Rerum familiarium libri*, ed. Vittorio Rossi and Umberto Bosco, 4 vols. (Florence: Sansoni, 1933–42); *Letters on Familiar Matters*, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo, 3 vols. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975; Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982–85); *Petrarch’s Guide to the Holy Land: Itinerary to the Sepulcher of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, ed. and trans. Theodore J. Cachey, Jr. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002); *Canzoniere*, ed. Marco Santagata (Milan: Mondadori, 1996); *Petrarch’s Lyric Poems: The “Rime sparse” and Other Lyrics*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Durling (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976); *Trionfi, Rime stravaganti, Codice degli abbozzi*, ed. Vinicio Pacca and Laura Paolino (Milan: Mondadori, 1996); *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, trans. Ernest Hatch Wilkins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia; Della mia ignoranza e di quella di molti altri*, ed. Enrico Fenzi (Milan: Mursia, 1999), translation by Hans Hachod cited from Ernst Cassirer, *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 47–133; Francesco Petrarca, *Secretum*, ed. Enrico Fenzi (Milan: Mursia, 1992); *The Secret by Francesco Petrarca with Related Documents*, ed. Carol E. Quillen (Boston: Bedford St. Martin’s, 2003); *Senile V 2*, ed. Berté; *Letters of Old Age*, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo, Saul Levin, and Reta A. Bernardo, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

9. First noted by Giuseppe Billanovich, “L’altro stil nuovo: Da Dante teologo a Petrarca filologo,” *Studi petrarcheschi* n.s. 11 (1994): 1–98 (at 92–93); “Tra Dante e Petrarca,” *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 8 (1965): 39–40; Michele Feo, “Petrarca, Francesco,” *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, 6 vols., ed. Umberto Bosco, 4:450–58

(at 450). See Ascoli, "Blinding the Cyclops" in this volume, n. 67, for further bibliography and discussion.

10. Petrarch, in placing Typhoeus beneath Ischia in the *Trionfi* and the *Sine nomine* (consistent with Horace, *Carm.* III 4, 53–58; Seneca, *Herc. Oet.* 1155–59; Lucan V 99–101; Claudian, *De raptu* III 183–87), meant dissenting from the "authority" of Dante (*Par.* 8.67–70; cf. *Inf.* 30.124), who followed Ovid (*Met.* V 346–58) in his placement of Typhoeus beneath Aetna. While the question of Petrarch's philological-geographical investment as "long-distance specialist" in locating the burial sites of Enceladus and Typhoeus merits further study, for our immediate purposes, it serves to raise the issue of Petrarch's evolving attitude toward Dante.

11. Ronald Witt has built a case for Petrarch's direct or indirect acquaintance with del Virgilio during his student years in Bologna. See Ronald Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 236–38: "Petrarch would almost certainly have known of the exchange of bucolic poetry between Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio, which must have been circulating in Bologna in 1320 and 1321"; and see Michele Feo, "Petarca prima della laurea: Una corrispondenza poetica ritrovata," *Quaderni petrarcheschi* 4 (1987): 50.

12. See Egidio Guidubaldi, "Stabili, Francesco," *Enciclopedia dantesca*, 3:404–5, and, more recently, Justin Steinberg, *Accounting for Dante: Urban Readers and Writers in Late Medieval Italy* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 58–60. Steinberg suggestively discusses intersections between Cecco's condemnation by the Inquisition and the pro-Dante vernacular literary allegiances of the poet-judges involved, including Girardo da Castelfiorentino, a friend and associate of Cino's, Frate Accursio Bonfantini, reported to be the first public lecturer on Dante, and Francesco da Barberino. Steinberg, following Guidubaldi, recalls that several eighteenth-century scholars, including Crescimbeni, Quadrio, and Mazzuchelli, went so far as to attribute Cecco's condemnation and punishment to his anti-*dantismo*.

13. Usually exemplified by the following notorious tercets: "Qui non si canta al modo delle rane, / Qui non si canta al modo del poeta / Che finge, immaginando, cose vane; / Ma qui risplende e luce ogni natura / Che a chi intende fa la mente lieta. / Qui non si gira per la selva oscura. || Qui non veggio né Paolo né Francesca, / Delli Manfredi non veggio Alberico / Che amari frutti colse di dolce esca. / Del Mastin vecchio e nuovo da Verrucchio / Che fece di Montagna, qui non dico, / Né dei Franceschi lo sanguigno mucchio. || Non veggio il Conte che per ira ed asto / Tien forte l'arcivescovo Ruggero / Prendendo del suo ceffo il fiero pasto. Non veggio qui squadrare a Dio le fiche. / Lascio le ciance e torno su nel vero. / Le favole mi fur sempre nemiche" (4669–86). Cited from Cecco d'Ascoli [Francesco Stabili], *L'Acerba [Acerba etas]*, ed. Marco Albertazzi (Lavis, Trento: La Finestra Editrice, 2002).

14. The Colonna family is celebrated throughout the *Acerba* as exemplary of true nobility and magnanimity. See Santagata, *Per moderne carte*, 223–45. Traces

of Cecco d'Ascoli turn up in poems of the *Canzoniere* dedicated to the Colonna family (*Rvf* 10, 1–4; 7), which are among the earliest dated poems in the book. A good part of Petrarch's astrological lexicon (although Petrarch was an anti-determinist) derives from Cecco as well. Bestiary and lapidary motifs bearing the signature of Cecco d'Ascoli make their appearance in the *Canzoniere*, including such key elements as the phoenix or the "calamita." Furthermore, Santagata notes that Petrarch shared with Cecco an admiration for Cino's "La dolce vista," at a time before it was canonized by Boccaccio's rewriting of the poem in the *Filostrato* (V 62–65), which is to say, before 1340; for which see also Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato*, 66–67, n. 1.

15. See Santagata, *Per moderne carte*, 242–43.

16. The suggestion was first made by Cecco's early-twentieth-century editor A. Crespi, *L'acerba*, ed. Achille Crespi (Ascoli Piceno: G. Cesari, 1927), as reported by Guidubaldi, "Stabili, Francesco."

17. See Barański, "Petrarch, Dante, Cavalcanti" in this volume, n. 21, for critics who have recently discussed "the ways in which Petrarch used Dante in order to define himself and establish his own cultural superiority."

18. It is reasonable, I think, to suppose that Petrarch knew both the *Monarchia* and the *De vulgari eloquentia*, although he never explicitly cites them, and notwithstanding Barański's caveats about Petrarch's knowledge of Dante's Latin works expressed in these pages. See Barański, "Petrarch, Dante, Cavalcanti," n. 6. See n. 20 below for details of recent research by Corrado Bologna. Earlier, Billanovich expressed the view in *Petrarca letterato* that it was impossible to think that he did not know it (p. 239) and noted, "Argomenti per infirmare la donazione di Costantino molto simili a quelli di *Monarchia* III x e II xii sono esposti nella *Sine nomine* XVII, scritta negli ultimi mesi del 1357" (p. 240).

19. See Pier Giorgio Ricci, "Monarchia," *Enciclopedia dantesca*, 3:993–1004 (at 1002).

20. See Corrado Bologna, "Un'ipotesi sulla ricezione del *De vulgari eloquentia*: Il codice Berlinese," in *La cultura volgare padovana nell'età di Petrarca*, ed. Furio Brugnolo and Zeno Lorenzo Verlatto (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2006), 205–56. For Bologna, "it is not illogical to at least hypothesize that the entire collection was organized by Dionigi himself." He persuasively situates the Berlinese at the court of King Robert of Naples around 1340, within the context of the nascent humanistic cultural milieu that featured prominently not only Petrarch's intimate friend and confessor Dionigi, but also Boccaccio, around the time of Petrarch's coronation. The reception of the *Monarchia* and the *De vulgari eloquentia* expressed a compelling cultural political program linking political power to rhetoric in this environment. In fact, both treatises appear within the codex under the common rubric of a "retrica Dantis." According to Bologna's reconstruction, Petrarch would have come into contact with the *Monarchia* and the *De vulgari eloquentia* through this joint publication of Dante's political and rhetorical treatises, together with

Dionigi's lengthy commentary on Valerio Massimo's *Dicta e facta* (a commentary whose ideology and inspiration is related to those of Petrarch's own *Rerum memorandarum libri*). See also Corrado Bologna, "Occhi, solo occhi (*Rvf* 70–75)," in *Lectura Petrarca Turicensis. Il Canzoniere. Lettura micro e macrotestuale*, ed. M. Picone (Ravenna: Longo, 2007), 183–205.

21. Robert E. Lerner, "Petrarch's Coolness toward Dante: A Conflict of 'Humanisms,'" in *Intellectuals and Writers in Fourteenth-Century Europe: The J. A. W. Bennett Memorial Lectures, Perugia, 1984*, ed. Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986), 204–25.

22. In fact, he wrote the *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* while sailing on the Po river, and the same theme of writing while traveling by river occurs in *Rvf* 180, which enters the order of the book during this same period, as an antidote to the shipwreck of *Rvf* 189, regarding which see the following discussion in this essay.

23. Lerner, "Petrarch's Coolness," 207.

24. Lerner, "Petrarch's Coolness": "Petrarch's dismissal of Aristotle on happiness was related to his Augustinian view that classical philosophy per se had nothing of independent value to offer the Christian. For Petrarch 'to be a true philosopher is nothing but to be a true Christian' (*Fam.* 17.1). Hence whereas Dante gave Aristotle the last word on happiness, placed Siger of Brabant in Paradise and even quoted Averroës with approval in the *Monarchy* (I,3) Petrarch opposed all the 'crazy and clamorous' scholastics who found intrinsic merits in philosophical works" (222).

25. See Maria Cecilia Bertolani, *Il corpo glorioso: Studi sui Trionfi del Petrarca* (Rome: Carocci, 2001): "il finale dei *Trionfi* va letto alla luce di un intenso clima religioso e filosofico che poi era profondamente mutato nell'arco dei pochi anni tra Dante e Petrarca: gli anni che videro la crisi dell'ottimismo gnoseologico facente capo a san Tommaso. Anche Petrarca condivide la sfiducia nelle possibilità delle facoltà intellettuali di giungere al soprannaturale, e rinnova, contro il tentativo scolastico di conciliare la teologia con la filosofia, le riserve di Agostino, Giovanni di Salisbury, san Bernardo e di tutta la cultura monastica" (137). See also Bertolani's *Petrarca e la visione dell'eterno* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), especially chapter 4, "Nelle profondità della parola: Dal *Canzoniere* al *Trionfo dell'Eternità*," 187–227.

26. Bertolani, *Petrarca e la visione dell'eterno*: "Tuttavia il tema del corpo risorto e quindi della comunità ritrovata occupa in Dante uno spazio secondario rispetto a quello della visione di Dio: il motivo è assente dall'ultimo canto del Paradiso che è invece una celebrazione proprio della *visio Dei intuitive et facialis*. . . . Diversa l'operazione di Petrarca che, attraverso il motivo della resurrezione assunto nel mito laurano, può dunque concertare la sua differenza con il Dante paradisiaco senza per questo doversi confrontare con la potenza visionaria della *Commedia*" (209).

27. Bertolani, *Il corpo glorioso*: "non si deve per questo ritenere, come afferma Ariani seguendo Goffis, Bosco e in ultimo Santagata, che i *Trionfi* si chiudano 'in una dimensione profana': il percorso di Petrarca si ferma ai *visibilia* poiché gli *invisibilia*, giusto il precetto della teologia negativa, non sono conoscibili

44 *Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.*

direttamente, ma è possibile averne una impressione ‘vaga’ (un aggettivo, questo, costante nei *Trionfi*, riferito in genere a ‘mente’ e ad ‘alma’) solo ricorrendo, appunto, ai *visibilia* che, in tal modo, divengono come la scala di Giacobbe che congiunge la terra al cielo” (138).

28. See Cesare Segre, “Interstuale-Interdiscorsivo: Appunti per una fenomenologia delle fonti,” in *La parola ritrovata: Fonti e analisi letteraria*, ed. C. Di Girolamo and I. Paccagnella (Palermo: Sellerio, 1982), 15–28.

29. Guglielmo Gorni, “Le ballate di Dante e di Petrarca,” in *Metrica e analisi letteraria* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), 219–42.

30. Other examples of this kind of reductionism are discussed by Michelangelo Picone, “Riscritture dantesche nel *Canzoniere* di Petrarca,” *Rivista europea di letteratura italiana* 2 (1993): 115–25.

31. See Ronald L. Martinez, “‘Nasce il Nilo’: Wisdom, Justice, and Dante’s Canzone ‘Tre donne intorno al cor mi son,’” in *Dante Now: Current Trends in Dante Studies*, ed. Theodore J. Cachey, Jr. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 115–53.

32. See Bologna, “Occhi, solo occhi (*Rvf* 70–75),” especially 188–91.

33. “Preterea: illa videntur nobiliora esse que conditori suo magis honoris afferunt: sed cantiones magis deferunt suis conditoribus quam ballate; igitur nobiliores sunt, et per consequens modus earum nobilissimus aliorum” (Moreover, those things are seen as more noble than bring greater honour to those who create them; but *canzoni* bring more honour to their creators than *ballate*; therefore they are more noble, and, in consequence, theirs is the noblest form of all) (Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. and trans. Steven Botterill [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], II.3 [55]).

34. See Barański, “Dante, Petrarca, Cavalcanti,” n. 78, which critiques Michele Feo’s viewpoint as expressed in “Petrarca, Francesco,” *Enciclopedia dantesca*, 4:450–58, that Petrarca’s *Sen.* 4.5 addressed to Federico Aretino on how to read the *Aeneid* represents “uno degli sforzi più umanisticamente impegnati a conciliare classico (Virgilio) e moderno (Dante), o meglio a capire, ad assorbire, a sistemare il moderno entro una visione classica” (453).

35. See Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, vol. 3, tomo 2, ed. Enzo Cecchini (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1989). English translation by Wilmon Brewer, in Dante Alighieri, *Dante’s Eclogues (the Poetical Correspondence between Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio)* (Boston, Cornhill, 1927).

36. Carlo Dionisotti, “Tradizione classica e volgarizzamenti,” in *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1971), 142–43. The attribution of the *volgarizzamenti* of Livy is, in any event, complex. Billanovich attributed them to Boccaccio and noted their influence on Boccaccio’s developing prose style in the vernacular, in *Petrarca letterato*, 86–87 and n. 2. See more recently Maria Teresa Casella, *Tra Boccaccio e Petrarca. I volgarizzamenti di Tito Livio e di Valerio Massimo*, *Studi sul Petrarca* 14 (Padova: Antenore, 1982), reviewed by Giuseppe Velli, *MLN* 100, no. 1 (1985): 175–77.

37. Simon Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25, quotation at 27.

38. “. . . un evento epocale, impensabile nell’ottica di Petrarca, quasi necessario nell’orizzonte nuovo del Boccaccio: in questo cioè proprio nell’integrazione di Dante e Petrarca.” Corrado Bologna, *Tradizione e fortuna dei classici italiani* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1993), 204. See the facsimile edition of the Chigi codex: *Il codice Chigiano L.V. 176 / autografo di Giovanni Boccaccio*, ed. Domenico De Robertis (Rome: Archivi Edizioni; Florence: Fratelli Alinari, 1975).

39. See Vittore Branca, *Studi in onore di Matteo Marengoni* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1957), 30–42, on *Sen.* 5.2, who spoke of “questa lettera scritta, sembra, nell’agosto del ’64, ma che il Petrarca, rielaborando il suo epistolario, assegnò all’estate del ’66 probabilmente per motivi ideali. Era proprio il periodo in cui pensava più assiduamente ai ‘rerum vulgarium fragmenta’ e andava maturando in lui il disegno di rivederli e di ordinarli sistematicamente e in maniera in certo senso definitiva, meglio di quanto non avesse fatto sino allora. V’erano stati, sì, già dei tentativi in questo senso e delle divisioni e dei raggruppamenti provvisori; ma è solo nel 1366 che il Petrarca, dopo lunghi dubbi e meditazioni, delinea con risolutezza i criteri e il disegno del suo canzoniere, di cui comincia nel dicembre l’organica sistemazione e trascrizione in quello che oggi è il Codice Vaticano 3195” (38). For the dating of the letter, see most recently Berté, who confirms the 1364 date in “Introduzione,” *Senile V* 2, 14 and n. 3.

40. *Sen.* 5.2: “Certe michi interdum, unde coniecturam hanc elicio, de vulgaribus meis, paucis licet, idem agere propositum fuit, fecissemque fortassis, ni vulgata undique iam pridem mei ius arbitrii evasissent, cum eidem michi tamen aliquando contraria mens fuisset, totum huic vulgari studio tempus dare, quod uterque stilus altior latinus eo usque priscis ingeniis cultus esset ut pene iam nichil nostra ope vel cuiuslibet addi posset, at hic, modo inventus, adhuc recens, vastatoribus crebris ac raro squalidus colono, magni se vel ornamenti capacem ostenderet vel augmenti. Quid vis? Hac spe tractus simulque stimulis actus adolescentie magnum eo in genere opus inceperam iactisque iam quasi edificii fundamentis calcem ac lapides et ligna congesseram” (Certainly I have sometimes had the idea of doing the same with my vernacular writings, few though they were — that is why I guess this about you; and perhaps I would have done so had they not long ago escaped from my control by being so far-flung, although at times I had also had the self-contradictory idea to devote all my time to vernacular pursuits since the loftier Latin style — both prose and poetry — had been so highly polished by ancient talents that now my resources, or anyone else’s, can add very little. On the other hand, this vernacular writing, just invented, still new, showed itself capable of great improvement and development after having been ravaged by many and cultivated by very few husbandmen. Well then, this hope so attracted me and at the time the spur of youth so urged me onward that I undertook a great work in that style; and having laid, as it were, the foundations of that edifice, I gathered the cement and stone and wood [52]). See also, for the interpretation of this passage, Renato Serra, “*Dei Trionfi* di F. Petrarca”

46 Theodore J. Cachey, Jr.

[1904], vol. 2 of *Scritti di Renato Serra*, ed. G. De Robertis and A. Grilli (Florence: Le Monnier, 1938), 43; Umberto Bosco, *Francesco Petrarca*, 3rd ed. rev. (Bari: Laterza, 1973), 216; Carlo Paolazzi, "Petrarca, Boccaccio e il *Trattatello in laude di Dante*," *Studi danteschi* 55 (1983): 199.

41. Marco Santagata, *I frammenti dell'anima: Storia e racconto nel Canzoniere di Petrarca* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), 341.

42. In fact, many years ago, scholars such as Giuseppe Billanovich, Francesco Mazzoni, and Vittore Branca, each in his own way, noted connections between Petrarch's vernacular literary investments and the correspondence with Boccaccio regarding Dante: Giuseppe Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato*, 167–77; Francesco Mazzoni, "Giovanni Boccaccio fra Dante e Petrarca," *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia Petrarca di Lettere, Arti e Scienze di Arezzo* 42 (1976–78): 15–42; Vittore Branca, *Studi in onore di Matteo Marengoni*. Billanovich's discussion is the classic treatment. Mazzoni's portrays a dynamic of reciprocal influences between the two friends, for example, focused on Boccaccio's sensitivity to Petrarch's concern about the unstable nature of vernacular transmission as made explicit in both his letters to Boccaccio about Dante, and suggesting that this was a principal inspiration for Boccaccio's editorial work on Dante. But Mazzoni viewed the directionality of influence, as has most of the tradition, as primarily from Petrarch to Boccaccio. He did not elaborate on the impact of Boccaccio's editorial activism and promotion of Dante on Petrarch's own vernacular development. Vittore Branca's review of the "nearly forty-year dialogue" between Boccaccio and Petrarch also emphasized the second of Petrarch's two letters to Boccaccio regarding Dante, *Seniles* 5.2, for the light it shed on the making of the *Canzoniere*. He first noted the coincidence of the fictional dating of the letter with the date when Petrarch first undertook, with the assistance of his copyist Giovanni Malpighini, the organic systemization and transcription of the poet's "author's book," Vat. Lat. 3195.

43. Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato*, 136–41, n. 1.

44. As reconstructed by Santagata in *I frammenti*, "La finzione autobiografica," 76–83.

45. For an introduction to the dating controversy surrounding the *Secretum*, see Francisco Rico, *Vida u obra de Petrarca, I: Lectura del 'Secretum'* (Padova: Antenore, 1974); and Hans Baron, *Petrarch's "Secretum": Its Making and Its Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1985).

46. Marco Santagata, *I frammenti*, "Come tanti altri progetti, anche quello di impostare il proprio ritratto ideale sulla conversione a quarant'anni non rimase a lungo sul tavolo di Petrarca. Allo scadere degli anni '50 appare già tramontato. La seconda redazione del *Canzoniere* seguirà un diverso percorso, nel quale i punti di riferimento cronologici legati a quell'evento fittizio perdono ogni rilevanza" (101).

47. Boccaccio had sent Petrarch a copy of his *Caccia di Diana* and of the *Amorosa visione* at the same time that he sent the *Commedia* and "Ytalie iam cer-

tus honus” during that summer of 1351. Based on this fact, Billanovich made the proposal, accepted by Santagata’s chronology of Petrarch’s life, that the poet first began work on the *Triumphs* at that time. Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato*, 168–72, goes as far as to suggest that Boccaccio is the mysterious unidentified “Tuscan guide.” See also Giuseppe Billanovich, “Dalla *Commedia* e dall’ *Amorosa Visione ai Trionfi*,” *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 123 (1945–46): 51–52.

48. Santagata, *I frammenti*, “La sua doppia anima [of the Chigi form], il fatto cioè che in esso convivessero a fatica e non senza attriti, due possibili esiti tra loro divergenti, rischiava in effetti di inceppare la crescita ulteriore del libro. E’ forse perché quella condizione era oggettivamente paralizzante che la nuova forma evita di scegliere fra l’una o l’altra strada, eludendo il problema di fondo, cioè il dilemma se l’amore per Laura fosse una esperienza moralmente condannabile o un mezzo di perfezionamento spirituale” (259).

49. Francesco Petrarca, *Triumphs*, ed. Marco Ariani (Milan: Mursia, 1988), 6.

50. Dante in the original is cited from the Giorgio Petrocchi edition: Dante Alighieri: *La Commedia secondo l’antica vulgata*, ed. G. Petrocchi (Florence: Le Lettere, 1994 [1966]); the translation is by Robert and Jean Hollander, *Dante Alighieri Inferno* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

51. Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, 33.

52. Enrico Fenzi, “Tra Dante e Petrarca,” 510 n. 18: “Petrarca ne abbozza un ritratto [of Dante] che chiaramente deriva da quello del *Trattatello* boccacesco: ‘Non poterono gli amorosi disiri né le dolenti lagrime, né la sollecitudine casalinga, né la lusinghevole gloria dei pubblici uffici, né il miserabile esilio, né la intollerabile povertà giammai con le lor forze rimuovere il nostro Dante dal principale intento, cioè da’ sacri studi” (first redaction [82]).

53. Barański observes in this volume that “Petrarch expresses a similar opinion, albeit implicitly, regarding Dante’s pursuit of literary fame as proof of his lack of virtue both in the *Triumphs* and in *Seniles* 5.2.”

54. See Theodore J. Cachey, Jr., “Per una mappa del *Canzoniere*: *Rvf* 171–179,” in *Il Canzoniere. Lettura micro e macrotestuale*, ed. M. Picone (Ravenna: Longo, 2006), 395–414; and “From Shipwreck to Port: *Rvf* 189 and the Making of *Canzoniere*,” *MLN* 120, no. 1 (2005): 30–49.

55. Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. Rosanna Bettarini (Turin: G. Einaudi, 2005), 783.

56. Stefano Asperti notes that Petrarch denies to Dante the title of “poet” (which he reserves for himself and classical poets) twice in the *Canzoniere*, *Tr. cup.* IV, 25, and *Rvf* 166, 3, in “Dante, i trovatori, la poesia,” *Le culture di Dante: Studi in onore di Robert Hollander. Atti del quarto seminario dantesco internazionale, University of Notre Dame (Ind.), USA, 25–27 settembre 2003*, ed. M. Picone, T. Cachey, and M. Mesirca (Florence: Cesati, 2004), 67–68.

57. *Considerazioni sopra le rime del Petrarca*, ed. Alessandro Tassoni (Modena, Cassiani, 1609).

58. Paola Allegretti and Guglielmo Gorni, "Mondo dell'oltretomba e *spelunca* in Petrarca (RVF 161–70)," in *Il Canzoniere. Lettura micro e macrotestuale*, ed. M. Picone (Ravenna: Longo, 2006), 383–93: "è inane il tentativo di attenuare la polemica implicita in questo verso" (390).

59. Vincenzo Fera, "I sonetti CLXXXVI e CLXXXVII," *Lectura Petrarce* 7 (1987): 219–43.

60. Enrico Fenzi, "Tra Dante e Petrarca": "l'Ulisse di Petrarca sarebbe essenzialmente l'Ulisse di Dante, o almeno, visto attraverso Dante"; and: "Petrarca invece, sia pur basando la valutazione del personaggio di Ulisse sui testi classici, manifesta sino alla fine la sua sostanziale fedeltà alla visione dantesca"; and "pur avendo tutti i mezzi per correggerla, di fatto accetta la versione di Dante, e a scampo di equivoci ripetutamente la considera come una sorta di archetipo della 'scelta virtuosa' libera da condizionamenti e debolezze" (509).

61. Enrico Fenzi, "Tra Dante e Petrarca": "Ulisse non è quello della tradizione, ma, appunto, quello di Dante. Cioè, essenzialmente, quello che *non ritorna*. Il punto, a mio parere, è decisivo. C'è infatti qualcosa che qui Petrarca riconosce per sempre a Dante (oserei dire, quasi a farne un Omero cristiano): gli riconosce d'aver spezzato la struttura del ritorno che caratterizzava l'esperienza ulissiaca, e dunque di aver spezzato la nozione circolare e pagana del tempo dominata dalla sua sua 'cattiva infinitezza', e di averla raddrizzata e infine ordinata all'unicità e irripetibilità del tempo cristiano" (512).

62. Enrico Fenzi, "Tra Dante e Petrarca": "Non so quanto utilmente, ma certo si potrebbe discorrere a lungo dell'intelligente perfidia petrarchesca che colpisce il grande rivale con le sue stesse armi, ribaltando sul creatore la sublime ambiguità della sua più controversa creatura. Tuttavia, è meglio restare alla sostanza seria, non polemica, del discorso, e osservare che l'operazione di Petrarca trasforma ma però essenzialmente ancora s'affida al vecchio e però efficace topos che recita: 'Aristotele fu un uomo e poté errare'" (515).

63. Emilio Pasquini, "Discussione della relazione di Boitani," in *Dante: Mito e poesia. Atti del secondo Seminario dantesco internazionale*, ed. Michelangelo Picone and Tatiana Crivelli (Florence: Cesati, 1997), 232–33.

64. Teodolina Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 52.

65. "Id autem, ut dixi, facillime consequeris si tue primum mentis compescueris tumultus; pectus enim serenum et tranquillum frustra vel peregrine circumcumeunt nubes vel circumtonat externus fragor. Itaque velut insistens sicco litori tutus, aliorum naufragium spectabis et miserabiles fluitantium voces tacitus excipies; quantum ve tibi turbidum spectaculum securitas compassionis attulerit, tantum gaudii afferet proprie sortis, alienis periculus collata, securitas" (But, as I said, you would accomplish this most easily if you would first restrain the commotion in your mind. For clouds and clamor surround a serene breast in vain. And so just like one sitting safe and dry on shore, you will watch the shipwrecks of others, and

you will hear in silence the miserable voices of those floundering at sea. And even as you have felt compassion at this chaotic spectacle, so you will feel joy at the security of your fate compared to the dangers of others) (*Secretum* II, 126). For the Lucretian shipwreck with spectator topos, see Hans Blumenberg, *Naufragio con spettatore: Paradigma di una metafora dell'esistenza* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985). Lucretius is an indirect source for Petrarch in the *Secretum*: while the text of Lucretius' *De rerum natura* was only discovered by Poggio Bracciolini in 1417, the image circulated widely among religious authors of the Middle Ages.

66. See Theodore J. Cachey, Jr., "Peregrinus (quasi) ubique': Petrarca e la storia del viaggio," *Intersezioni* 17, no. 3 (December 1997): 369–84: "E' pertanto attraverso l'interiorizzazione della *navigatio vitae* e dei temi del naufragio che Petrarca riesce a sopravvivere al naufragare della storia. La costante rivisitazione del tema crea la distanza necessaria a stabilire una misura di controllo e di restare sulla spiaggia ad osservare a distanza il proprio naufragio. Come nel caso delle metafore del viaggio di terra, potremo dire che Petrarca, attraverso la continua applicazione delle metafore navigative, sia riuscito a svuotare il viaggio di mare della sua mobilità minacciosa. E questo avviene poiché Petrarca assume tipicamente il ruolo del naufrago e il ruolo dello spettatore. . . . Il brivido, il delirio prodotto da 'Passa la nave mia' è analogo alla gioia della propria incolumità di cui parla Agostino nel *Secretum*, un'estraneità raggiunta attraverso mezzi estetici" (384).

67. See Cachey, "From Shipwreck to Port": "*Rvf* 190 recounts not only a vision of Laura as an emblem of chastity. . . . The poet's fall into the water in the last verse, 'Quand'io caddi ne l'acqua et ella sparve,' whatever one's interpretation of the allegory, represents a recognizably Petrarchan form of shipwreck. It echoes the one recorded in the tercets of *Rvf* 67, and here, as there, appears to signal a moral and spiritual reawakening which in *Rvf* 190 coincides with Laura's 'disappearance,' in marked contrast with the contiguous shipwreck of 189. . . . Sonnet 180 addressed to the Po is no less antidotal with respect to the shipwreck of 189:

Po, ben puo' tu portartene la scorza  
 di me con tue possenti et rapide onde,  
 ma lo spirto ch'iv'entro si nasconde  
 non cura né di tua né d'altrui forza;

The hemistich 'né di tua né d'altrui forza' at the end of the opening quatrain represents a fairly explicit allusion to the famous 'altrui' responsible for Ulysses' demise in canto 26 of the *Inferno*" (39).