Medieval and Renaissance Studies

Publication of this book has been made possible by a grant from the Hull Memorial Publication Fund of Cornell University
Theodor Mommsen's undergraduate seminar, Cornell University, November 10, 1954
THEODOR E. MOMMSEN published most of his work in the form of articles. He often said himself that he was an article man rather than a book man. Inevitably his writings are scattered, some of them in relatively inaccessible journals; and both the coherence and the variety of his scholarship have been correspondingly masked. So when several of his graduate students suggested after his death that his papers be collected in a single volume, the Cornell University Department of History welcomed the proposal as appropriate and useful. This book is the result. Its purpose is to serve the memory of an admirable scholar and to make the bulk of his work more conveniently available to a larger number of readers in this country and abroad.

Articles which appeared first in English are reprinted without change. Those which appeared in German or Italian have been translated. The essay on Augustine and Orosius is printed here for the first time. I have included, I believe, all of Mommsen's important articles. I have omitted notes and documents, reviews, articles on subjects too narrow, in my judgment, to warrant a second printing, and articles the inclusion of which would have confused the structure of the book. A comparison of the table of contents with the bibliography will indicate the papers I have chosen to omit and where they remain available.

Permission was kindly granted by the following editors and publishers to reprint the articles included in this book: the President of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica, the Accademia Lucchese di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, the Chicago Uni-
versity Press, the editors of the American Journal of Archaeology, Pantheon Books, the Libreria Editrice Minerva of Bologna, the Mediaeval Academy of America and the editors of Speculum, the editors of The Art Bulletin, the editors of the Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, the Cornell University Press, the Fordham University Press and the editors of Traditio, the editors of the Journal of the History of Ideas, and the Princeton University Press.

Mr. Craig Fisher, Stechert-Hafner, Inc., of New York, Mr. Richard Rouse, the College Art Association of America, Professor Kurt Weitzman, and Father Edwin Quain, S.J., generously gave up their offprints of Mommsen articles or copies of the journals in which they appeared. Professor Friedrich Baethgen very kindly secured for me a microfilm of the article "Karl der Grosse—Kaiser der Franzosen?"

Finally, I gratefully acknowledge my debt to friends, colleagues, and students who have helped and advised me: Felix Gilbert, Ernst Kantorowicz, Ludwig Edelstein, Roger Hahn, Karl Morrison, Walter Simon, Harry Caplan, Hajo Holborn, and Joseph Mazzeo. They have saved me time and mistakes.

Ithaca, New York
May 18, 1959

Eugene F. Rice, Jr.
Introduction

WHEN Theodor Ernst Mommsen came to Cornell University in 1934 as professor of medieval history, he was a mature teacher and scholar, a man in the prime of life. He had left Germany, his native land, in 1935 as an act of protest against the totalitarian government and anti-Semitic policy of Hitler, and on coming to the United States he had at once taken up again his academic career. Johns Hopkins University, Yale University, Groton School, and Princeton University gave him his first experience of the American academic scene; he adapted himself to it quickly and completely. Like every good teacher he had a strong desire to express himself; like every good scholar he was a versatile linguist. To the Greek and Latin, the French and Italian he had learned in school and university he soon added English, and, though his voice never lost the smooth vowels and throaty consonants of German speech, he spoke the new language fluently. By the time he left Princeton for Cornell his colleagues acclaimed him as an excellent teacher and scholar and gave him high place in the academic life of the United States. He had completed a new chapter in his career.

The first chapter, the German one, began with his birth in Berlin in 1905. He was member of a family famous in the scholarly world both for the achievements of his grandfather, Theodor Mommsen, the renowned historian of classical civilization, and of the sociologists, Max and Alfred Weber, who were his uncles. The young Theodor found himself committed to the life of a scholar almost before he left his mother's knee, and as he grew up he enjoyed the company of many scholars and professional men,
some conservative, some liberal in their outlook upon the academic and political life of Germany. From them he derived intellectual tastes and standards which were to endure. He found among them men whom he regarded throughout his life with reverence and affection. Here his informal education began. Yet the actions of German scholars and professional men put before him his first dilemma. For while he admired much, he found much to condemn, particularly the tendency of the group as a whole to lack a sense of public duty and the readiness of many individuals to co-operate with the Hitler dictatorship.

His own formal studies took him to Heidelberg and Vienna during the years 1923 to 1925. In 1929 the University of Berlin gave him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He had already joined the staff of the great historical enterprise called Monumenta Germaniae Historica and continued as one of its resident associates until 1935, carrying on his scholarly pursuits at many research centers in Germany and Italy.

His departure for the United States in 1936 was the most striking event in his life. Not only did he leave the land of his birth, he left his family, his mother, sisters, and brothers, and he turned his back on a way of living which, despite its shortcomings, held many happy memories for him. He came to the United States because he hoped to find generosity and toleration in the relations of man and man and because he sought opportunity to associate freely with persons of all classes and creeds. He was not disappointed. And he himself, the newcomer, actively and joyfully took up the life of an American. He made friends in all branches of society. As if to wipe out the shame of Hitler, he reaffirmed his association with Jewish scholars, both native Americans whom he now met for the first time and those whom he had known in Europe and who in some instances had counseled him on his decision to live in the United States. During the Second World War he took part in the program of the United States Army for training American soldiers who were assigned to American universities, and he also helped to present his own interpretation of history to Germans who were held as prisoners of war in the United States. In the years immediately following the war he was a member of the faculty of
INTRODUCTION

Princeton University, where the companionship of his colleagues and of members of the Institute for Advanced Study deepened his interest in scholarly work.

When he joined the history department of Cornell University, his colleagues welcomed him as a scholar and teacher and soon learned that he had other gifts, academic and personal, to give to the life of the community. He had many friends and acquaintances among scholars throughout the world, and he made available to his colleagues and graduate students the advantage of these associations. No one knew better than he where to turn for information about candidates for a university post or for judgment on an out-of-the-way piece of scholarship. He corresponded extensively and traveled often to keep fresh his knowledge and to renew his associations, for he enjoyed to the full the sense of intimacy with others which came from a leisurely meal, an informal conversation, or a long letter.

Such was the range of his interests and his capacity for friendship that he soon associated himself with the departments of classics and literature at Cornell and thus substantially strengthened the ties of the history department with all other scholars in the humanities. The great Petrarch collection in the Cornell University Library had attracted him before he became a member of the university faculty.

In the early pre-Cornell days his friendship with the local scholars who used the Petrarch collection and with others whose interest in medieval studies and the classics touched his own had given him a place, a visitor’s place, in the Cornell community such as he enjoyed in a dozen American universities. Once he joined the Cornell faculty, he rapidly enlarged his circle of friends and acquaintances, young and old. He took a leading part in building up medieval and renaissance studies and promoted every cause which seemed likely to raise the quality of scholarship in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School. On one occasion, when offered an attractive post at another university, he agreed to stay at Cornell on condition that the university endow a fellowship in medieval studies, the George Lincoln Burr Fellowship.
were not his only sphere of activity. His love of music was another; a third was his love of the graphic arts, which caused him to assemble a small collection of modern paintings. He was a great concertgoer and led his friends on journeys, sometimes hazardous and snow-swept, to Rochester and Syracuse. He collected gramophone records and invited his friends—particularly graduate students—to musical evenings at his apartment. There, as the middle-aged bachelor who shared his pleasures with the young and told them stories of the Germany of his youth, he was, perhaps, at his happiest.

He was a noteworthy teacher throughout his career in the United States; indeed, at Princeton University the students nominated him as one of their best teachers. At Cornell he devoted himself to relatively small classes and to seminars. He also served as representative of the history department in its dealings with the Graduate School. His own graduate students were his special care; their training had first call upon his time. Although his interest in medieval history was wide, he kept to a narrow line in planning the work of his seminars, for his purpose was to give his students the tools of historical research rather than a detailed knowledge of history. His model was the training he himself had received in Germany, where the seminar was a co-operative workshop, the professor leading and directing but not dominating his students. He believed medieval history to be an ideal subject for the teaching of young historians because the relative scarcity of the records available for study made every fragment precious.

From term to term he chose a few documents—an early history, a biography, some letters—and led his students through a microscopic examination of them. They searched step by step, discussing here perhaps the phrases by which a pope described his authority or a king alluded to his powers, perhaps there a seemingly innocent word which suggested a new turn of thought in the relations of church and state. Together Mommsen and his students put before one another at these seminars the fruits of the studies each had made in preparation for the discussion, and in this exchange of knowledge and opinions they worked until, to use his phrase, they had "squeezed the sources dry."
INTRODUCTION

While the labor continued there was no time for rest. So intense was the concentration that all felt the effects, not least Mommsen. He had prepared as assiduously as his students; he had guided and stimulated the conversation from idea to idea and called into play the whole range of his knowledge. The end of the week's seminar—the weekly crucifixion, as one of his students called it—left all exhausted. Mommsen repaired the ravages of the afternoon by leading the group, or most of it, away to dinner at the Faculty Club, where the rule was that no one should talk history. One of his musical evenings often continued the work of recreation.

His writings covered a wide range of subjects and displayed meticulous scholarship, as the following pages show. Regarded as a whole they resemble a thriving, wide-spreading tree whose roots were in the early middle ages and thus drew nourishment from the historical writings of his grandfather. His Petrarch studies, which he continued to the end, were the center of his scholarly interests; they were the trunk of the tree. The branches reached out in many directions to touch the history of Germany, Italy, France, and Britain; one of them, represented by his work with the Monumenta Germaniae Historica, followed the line of his apprentice days as a historian. He did not see his work in this way; to him it lacked unity, authority, and volume. But he was judging by the standards his grandfather had set; he had in mind the array of massive works usually associated with the name of Mommsen.

To criticize himself on this score was not reasonable. The younger Mommsen reached manhood in Germany during the desperate years following the First World War; he uprooted himself to come to the United States when his career as a historian was just beginning. Then, within four years, came the Second World War, and the whole academic system was out of joint again. What were his thoughts during these dark days? He had shown his own aversion to the Germany of the thirties, to the Germany of Hitler; yet in the eyes of the world Germany was Hitler. Even so he must have shuddered at the defeat of Germany, at her devastation and her dismemberment. When he visited Germany in 1948, he saw the home of his mother and
the home of his father in ruins, only a few bricks standing; the Germany of his happier memories had vanished. The cataclysm was all the more difficult for him to bear because as a result of his visit he judged that Germany had learned nothing from her experience and because some within his own German circle had supported Hitler. In the light of these disasters what is remarkable is not the paucity of Mommsen’s scholarly writings during the early and middle 1940’s but the fact that he wrote anything at all.

In the late 1940’s and the early 1950’s he renewed his vigor as a scholar. As a teacher he had his success at Princeton University. During these years and when he came to Cornell he seemed to be beginning the most stable and promising period of his career. He was hard at work. One saw him in the early morning, a stocky figure striding across the campus. At lunch time he was never without two or three companions. Sometimes he dined alone in his apartment; often he spent his evenings with friends and students. They sought him eagerly for he was a gentle, genial man, lively in conversation and fond of describing the world he had known. His wit was a scholar’s wit, precise in its focus on individual objects, yet ranging wide in the discussion of books and music, men and places, and always kindly in describing those with whom he had worked, particularly the young.

The zest with which he maintained a conversation and the energy of his physical movements made him appear to be a man of robust health, but this was not so. He moved energetically because his body was by nature sluggish and poorly co-ordinated. He conversed in a lively manner to drive away melancholy. The image of his grandfather cast a shadow on his own work, and the dark picture of a Germany that had destroyed itself was always with him. From these burdens death delivered him on July 18, 1958, and in so doing took away from family, friends, colleagues, and students an accomplished scholar and a generous companion.

Frederick George Marcham
Contents

Preface v

Introduction, by Frederick George Marcham vii

Part I. Studies in the Diplomatic and Military History of Italy and the Empire, 1316–1687

1. The Habsburg-Angevin Marriage Alliance of 1316 3
2. Castruccio Castracani and the Empire 19
4. The Venetians in Athens and the Destruction of the Parthenon in 1687 50

Part II. Petrarchan Studies

5. An Introduction to Petrarch's Sonnets and Songs 73
6. An Early Representation of Petrarch as Poet Laureate 101
7. Petrarch's Conception of the "Dark Ages" 106
8. Petrarch and the Decoration of the Sala Virorum Illustrium in Padua 130
9. Petrarch and the Story of the Choice of Hercules 175
10. The Last Will: A Personal Document of Petrarch's Old Age 197
11. Rudolph Agricola's Life of Petrarch 236

Part III. Studies in Early Christian Historiography

12. St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of The City of God 265
13. Aporius and Orosius on the Significance of the Epiphany 299
14. Orosius and Augustine 325

Bibliography of the Writings of Theodor E. Mommsen 349
PART I

Studies in the Diplomatic and Military History of Italy and the Empire, 1316-1687
The Habsburg-Angevin

Marriage Alliance of 1316*

ON the 19th and 20th October, 1314, the dual election of
Frederick the Fair and Louis of Bavaria as king of Rome had
taken place in Frankfurt. In consequence of the resulting in-
ternal conflict in Germany, concern with conditions in Italy
was relegated to the background; but it did not disappear al-
together. In fact, significantly enough, the two pretenders to
the throne adopted different policies in this respect. Louis
remained loyal to the traditional practices of imperial law by
appointing John of Beaumont, the brother of Count William
of Holland, Vicar General of the empire in Italy on January 4,
1315,1 and by announcing this action in Italy by means of a
circular.2 To be sure, no further significance attached to this
appointment; we do not even know whether John took office in
Italy in person. Subsequently, until the battle of Mühlendorf in
1322 and apart from the politically insignificant granting of
some privileges, Louis refrained from any further active in-
tervention in Italy.3

* Reprinted from Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche
1 Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Constitutiones, ed. J. Schwalm, V,
175, nr. 195.
2 Const., V, 179, nr. 196 See also ibid., 391, nr. 347.
3 See Const., V, 207, nr. 339; 282, nr. 333; 427, nr. 537; 438, nr. 538; 516,
nr. 653
By contrast, Frederick did not immediately appoint a Vicar General or imperial vicars for separate districts. He attempted instead to prepare for his Italian policy by diplomacy. He was in a favorable position by virtue of the fact that as the husband of Elizabeth, the daughter of James II of Aragon, he was the son-in-law of a monarch with exceptionally good diplomatic connections in all capitals, particularly in Avignon and Naples, the two centers of power most important for Italy; moreover, as a result of his campaigns for the conquest of Sardinia James was himself actively interested in Italian affairs. Indeed, on July 10, 1314, even before his election, Frederick had asked his father-in-law quod, si fortuna nobis arriserit in hac parte (i.e. in Germany), in partibus Italic nostram promoveatis negotia. In his reply of October 17, 1314, James promised to further Frederick’s policy ubicumque poterimus. Frederick continued on several occasions to request James’ support in Avignon and in Italy; significantly, however, whereas James not only gave undertakings but actually took steps with respect to Avignon, he made no response whatever to Frederick’s Italian plans.

Early in 1315, Frederick also entered into negotiations with

4 The first imperial vicar appointed by Frederick, without a precise demarcation of his jurisdiction, was Castruccio Antelminelli, on August 5, 1315 (Const., V, 270, nrs. 314 and 315). Cf. my article on Castruccio in the Atti della R. Accademia Lucchese, N.S. III (1934), 35 ff. [See below, pp. 19–32.]


7 Const., V, 78, nr. 82.

8 Frederick’s letter to James of Sept. 25, 1314, i.e. also before the election (Const., V, 77, nr. 81); James’ reply is lost. Further letters from Frederick to James on Jan. 13, 1315 (Const., V, 187, nr. 210), and on May 23, 1315 (Const., V, 241, nr. 281, incorrectly dated 13 May). See also the letter of Duke Rudolf of Saxony dated Jan. 1, 1315 (Finke, III, 275, nr. 123; Gross, Regesta Habsburgica, III, 249, nr. 56a), and the king of Aragon’s answer of March 8, 1315 (Const., V, 197, nr. 225). On Frederick’s plan for an early Italian expedition in the summer of 1315 see also the letter of one of the queen’s ladies-in-waiting of June 6, 1315 (Const., V, 254, nr. 291, and Finke, I, 362, note 6).

9 See Const., V, 196, nr. 223; 198 ff., nrs. 226–228; 219 ff., nrs. 256–260; 238 ff., nrs. 276–280; 267 ff., nrs. 311–313; 283, nr. 335; 284, nr. 338; 285, nr. 339; 316, nr. 376; etc.
Sicily. His letter to King Frederick III, brother of James II, has been lost; but from the Sicilian’s reply (May/June 1315) we can deduce that it contained a notification of his election, a report on conditions in Germany, and a request for support. The king of Sicily promised his aid and reminded the Habsburg Frederick of the undeviating loyalty to emperor and empire that he had demonstrated in the time of Henry VII.

The arrival of this letter caused the king of Sicily’s German friends to suggest that the formal exchange of assurances of friendship could be converted into a closer alliance by a marriage between Catherine, Frederick the Fair’s sister, and Peter, the heir to the Sicilian throne. Frederick responded by a letter (September 22, 1315) to his father-in-law leaving to him the decision and possible further steps in this matter, which shows how dependent Frederick was on James in his Italian policy.

10 On April 30, 1315, James sent Frederick’s no longer extant letter to his brother in Sicily (Const., V. 226, nr. 264), and on June 18 the latter sent James a copy of his reply to Frederick (see Finke, I. 353, note). Schwalm (Const., V. 227, nr. 266) is therefore right in assigning the letter to the period between these two dates, as contrasted with Finke, I. 352, nr. 239: “1315 vor April 15.” Gross’ appendix to nr. 181, which follows Finke, should accordingly also be corrected.

11 The date is derived from the fact that there is no mention of the marriage project in Frederick of Sicily’s letter of May/June 1315 referred to above, but that on the other hand Frederick the Fair on Sept. 22 informed his father-in-law of this plan, originated, as he said, ad suggestionem sinceram quorumdam ipsius Friderici [of Sicily] amicorum (Finke, III, 293, nr. 192). This disposes of Davidsohn’s conjecture (Mitteilungen des österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung, XXXVII, 2001) that consultations had already taken place between Frederick and his wife and sister, with a view to a Sicilian marriage for the latter, on the occasion of the wedding of Duke Henry of Carinthia (the beginning of February, see Gross, nr. 86). The assumption of E. Haieckern, Der Kampf um Sizilien in den Jahren 1302-1337 (1921), p. 187, note 10, that Frederick was given the idea of the marriage project by the king of Sicily’s letter of congratulation should be corrected to the extent that the initiative came from German friends of the latter from the period of his coalition with Henry VII.

12 Finke, III, 298, nr. 192; Gross, nr. 326a; cf. also the letter of Queen Elizabeth to her father of October 1, 1315 (Finke, III, 296, nr. 194; Gross, nr. 332a).

13 It is likewise characteristic that Frederick sent his reply to the Sicilian court via Barcelona (see Const., V. 284, nr. 358); since he had left the final decision to his father-in-law, the letter must have been couched in very general terms.
Although Frederick had not concealed his eagerness to conclude such an alliance, James categorically advised against it on the ground that Peter of Sicily was bound by his earlier betrothal to Beatrix, the daughter of Henry VII, *iuxta sacrorum canonum instituta.*

Nevertheless, the real reason for James' negative attitude is probably to be found in his disinclination to see his son-in-law involved in the conflict between the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily that resulted from the Sicilian Vespers. James, as the brother of the king of Sicily and the brother-in-law of the king of Naples, had consistently tried to mediate in this dispute, although in general he had tended to be on the side of his Angevin brother-in-law; and this policy of mediation was bound to be made more difficult if James' German son-in-law, the possible future emperor, committed himself to one of the two parties by a marriage alliance. Moreover, James' mediation appeared particularly necessary just at this time, for March 1, 1316, was the expiration date of the truce that on December 16, 1314, had put a temporary end to the war between the two countries which had broken out in connection with Henry VII's Italian expedition.

An Aragonese diplomatic report of February 25, 1316, provides useful information concerning the prevailing mood in Naples and in Messina. Both courts were at a complete loss as to the attitude of the future incumbents both of the vacant papal throne and of the imperial throne, disputed by two aspirants; both courts feared that the other might gain a decided advantage when these situations clarified, and they ob-

---


16 The ambassador speaks of the favorable conditions for making peace that prevailed at the moment: in the first place because both parties had suffered considerable losses, in the second place "quia propter eventus incertos pape et imperatoris et aliqua alia negocium contingencia non potest sciri certitudinaliter, cuius conditio melior sit futura. Et talis papa posset creari, vel taliter imperator se posset habere, quo unus super alium videretur habere magnum avantagium, propter quod posset ad pacem difficilius inclinari" (Finke, II, 715, nr. 448. See also Caggese, II, 3 ff.).
served the activities of the other with appropriate care and anxiety, since every move in this involved game, with its international complications, might bring about tactical changes of great importance. There can therefore be little doubt that Robert of Naples was cognizant of the attempts to steer Frederick the Fair in the direction of a Sicilian alliance as well as of James of Aragon’s negative attitude toward this project.

At exactly this same time, at the beginning of 1316, a mission from Frederick arrived in Naples, probably charged, like the similar mission to Sicily a year earlier, only with establishing diplomatic connections and not with making any concrete proposals, from which Frederick was prohibited so long as the Sicilian marriage negotiations were pending. It is highly probable that Robert seized the opportunity of this mission to take the initiative himself by proposing, in his turn, a marriage alliance between his house and the Habsburgs, that is to say, between Catherine and the heir to the Angevin throne, Duke Charles of Calabria. The German envoy to Naples returned home on February 3, 1316, in the company of a Neapolitan ambassador who, on this hypothesis, must have been the bearer of the marriage project. If this was the case, the Neapolitan offer

17 We have only one piece of evidence concerning the German embassy and the reply it received, an entry in the Angevin exitus regestrum, according to which on February 3, 1316 "Iohanni de Ypra clerico et familiaris regis et Iohanni de Lusimburgo nuncio domini regis Romanorum . . . misis per dominum regem [i.e. Robert] ad certas partes," a payment to cover their expenses was made (Gross, nr. 387, regarded this entry as probably the first trace of the marriage negotiations). Frederick himself attested to the fact that the initiative in the negotiations came from Naples when on June 30, 1316, he informed his Italian adherents of the treaty and described the agreements as per magnificum principem Robertum Jerusalem et Sicilie regem nuper a matestate nostra petita (Const., V, 304, nr 364). See also the corroborating passage in Queen Elizabeth’s letter to her father of July 24, 1316 (Finke, III, 307, nr. 143). But even if this evidence is discarded as possibly tainted with subjectivity, it was objectively impossible for the German embassy which returned from Naples on February 3 to have been originally sent off with cognizance of James’ letter dated January 8 from Barcelona. The distances (Barcelona—south Germany, south Germany—Naples) were too great and the time (a bare four weeks, from which must be subtracted the intervals necessary for consultations at the courts of Frederick and Robert) too short. But so long as the Sicilian project was pending Frederick could not conceivably launch discussions with another
would have been made about four weeks after James' rejection of the Sicilian offer, and would have arrived in Germany at a correspondingly later date.

Unfortunately we have no information as to how Frederick received these two missives, but we do know that he rapidly accomplished the change of front which they both suggested. No further mention was made of the Sicilian project. On the contrary a Habsburg-Angevin marriage agreement was concluded on June 29, 1316, only four months after the arrival of Robert's offer. In the meantime the Neapolitan ambassador had received further instructions from his court.

The actual treaty instruments probably prepared by both parties are not extant. Our knowledge of the matter is based on the following documents:

1) on Frederick's part: a circular to his Italian adherents, dated June 30, 1316, and letters to James II from Frederick, dated July 18, and from Queen Elizabeth, dated July 24;

2) on Robert's part: a notification to the Jusititarius of Montorio Superiore, dated August 1, obviously a specimen of a circular to a number of Neapolitan officials and towns;

— Haberkern, op. cit., p. 187, note 10, assumes without substantiation that the initiative for this marriage project also emanated from Frederick the Fair; Caggese, II, 10, declares that nothing is known on this question.

Nothing is known about the place where the treaty was signed. We know only that on June 26, three days after the date of the treaty, the king was two days' journey distant from Schaffhausen (see Gross, nr. 489 and 479a; on the document allegedly issued by King Frederick in Vienna on June 26, 1316, see the remarks of Gross, nr. 462).

According to the Angevin exitus regestrum in Naples, the courieri Ancehinnus and Franciscus de Fladria, accessiris extra regnum were paid over five ounces of gold on May 4, 1316 (Naples, State Archives, Reg. Ang. 209, fol. 333). On August 1 the same two persons, redituri in Alamannia, received another payment (ibid., fol. 333; see Gross, nr. 484). The word redire indicates that the couriers had just been in Germany; it was probably they who brought the news of the signing of the treaty to Naples on July 31 (this date is derived from Robert's circular printed below).

Const., V, 304, nr. 364 (copies for Treviso and Casteleccio). See also Const., V, 303, nr. 363, and 305, nr. 365.

Finke, III, 306, nr. 142; Gross, nr. 477a.

Finke, III, 307, nr. 143; Gross, nr. 479a.

Hitherto unprinted, summary in Caggese, I, 654, note 3, printed below [pp. 17-18] from the original mandate in the State Archives in
letter to the Aragonese ambassador Petrus Ferrandi de Ixar, dated August 2, and letters from the king and queen of the same date to James.

From these conflicting sources we must try to deduce the probable contents of the agreements.

Frederick's accounts confine themselves largely to the fact of the marriage alliance. The king hoped that this agreement would lead to a pacification and settlement of the hostilities by which Italy was torn. At the same time, Frederick wished it "to attract [the Anjous] to the empire," imperio atrahere, allicere et nuptiarum placere probabili blandimento, terminology which, in view of the family pride of the house of Anjou, connected as it was with the French royal family, was not very diplomatic or wise when employed in an open circular. Queen Elizabeth made use of these same terms in her letter to her father on July 24, in which (like her husband in his letter to James a few days earlier) she also expressed the hope that the marriage would contribute to a settlement of the Neapolitan-Sicilian conflict too and would be welcome to James for this reason alone. The king of Aragon, who this time had not been asked for his agreement in advance, declared in his reply of September 19, 1316, that he shared these hopes, but otherwise expressed no opinion as to the concrete implications of the alliance.

Frederick's letters are silent concerning the detailed provi-

---

Naples: Pergamene della R. Zecca, vol. 22, nr. 477. We cannot venture to explain the provenance of this document. That it is a specimen of a circular, accidentally preserved is clear in the first place from the fact that at the end of the document itself the king lists a number of places which he wishes to inform directly. But, in the second place, the condition of the document indicates that it took the form of a circular: the addressee was named originally only as iustitianus, with a space left for a later indication of the district; the two dots before iustitiano took the place of the name of the individual in each particular case (see below, [p. 17], note a). I am much obliged for the friendly suggestions of Count Riccardo Filangieri de Candia, director of the State Archives in Naples, and of Professor Stahmer.

24 Finke, III, 310, nr. 145: Gross, nr. 480a. In both Finke's and Gross' descriptive notices "imperial vicar in the Guelf districts of Italy" should be substituted for "imperial vicar in all of Italy."

25 Finke, III, 310, nr. 145, note.

26 Const., V, 316, nr. 376. (Finke's note, III. 307: "Kein zeichen einer Antwort" should accordingly be corrected. See also Const., V, 318, nr. 377.)
sions of the agreements,\textsuperscript{27} for which we are therefore dependent on Robert's accounts. According to the latter the provisions were of two kinds. In the first place the two kings undertook not to attack each other, but to come to each other's aid with both advice and action. To be sure, Robert's words, taken literally, indicate a unilateral undertaking on Frederick's part;\textsuperscript{28} and it is true that Robert would have been more interested in such a guarantee than Frederick, bearing in mind the possibility of a Roman expedition on Frederick's part and remembering the policy that Henry VII had adopted toward him for imperial considerations only a few years before. Nevertheless, in view of the prevalent practice known from numerous instances, it is to be assumed that Robert and Frederick in fact concluded a bilateral "non-aggression treaty," as we should say nowadays.\textsuperscript{29}

But if in this respect King Robert had the greater interest and enjoyed the greater advantage, this was even more true of the second point, which provided nothing less than that King Frederick should appoint Robert's son, Duke Charles of Calabria, as imperial vicar for all Guelf areas in Italy. Robert's accounts of the meaning and implications of this appointment differ. According to his letter to the Aragonese ambassador the vicariate was to include all areas which had belonged to the Guelf party in the time of Henry VII, belonged to them now, or might belong to them in the future.\textsuperscript{30} On the other hand, in his letter to the Iustitarius, those districts only are defined as Guelf which had been ruled by Guelfs in the time of Henry VII.\textsuperscript{31} In view of the importance of the appointment it would

\textsuperscript{27} Communication of further details was probably left to the embassy which Frederick sent to Italy at the same time as the circular of June 30 (\textit{Const.}, V, 303, nr. 363).

\textsuperscript{28} See below, [p. 17].

\textsuperscript{29} Robert himself, in his communication to the Aragonese ambassador, also speaks of \textit{condicionibus et convencionibus, quibus ipse electus et nos invicem striccius obligamur} (Finke, III, 310, nr. 145).

\textsuperscript{30} "Constituitque idem electus . . . ducem . . . eius vicarium in tota Ytalia in terris, que erant de parte Guelfa tempore domini Henrici quondam Romanorum regis, sunt ad presens vel erunt in futurum" (Finke, III, 310, nr. 145).

\textsuperscript{31} "... dans et concedens (i.e. Frederick) eidem primogenito nostro per
be of great interest to know its precise terms, but owing to the
loss of the agreements themselves this is very difficult. The
problem is whether the imperial vicariate pertained to the area
of Guelf power at the time of the Luxembourg emperors, or
extended also to all areas since conquered by the Guelfs and
even to those which might be conquered by them in the future.
The probabilities are in favor of the former and against the
latter supposition. In the first place a reference to the future,
such as would be indicated by the latter supposition, would
have introduced into a treaty too great a factor of uncertainty,
which would have contained considerable potentialities of con-
flict and could scarcely have contributed to the goal of a settle-
ment of Italian animosities. We should also consider the ad-
dressees of the various accounts. The more comprehensive
version was addressed to the envoy of a foreign power; it was
expressly designed for use in pending negotiations 32 with Sicily,
Robert's most active opponent; 33 Robert was therefore likely
to be tempted to exaggerate the concessions received from the
German king beyond the actual provisions of the agreement in
order to use them as a means of exercising pressure. In the ac-
count addressed to the officials and towns of Robert's own king-
don this factor was absent, and an unvarnished report of the
facts was adequate.

According to these considerations the contents of the Habs-
burg-Angevin treaty of June 23, 1316, may be reconstructed as
follows:

1) Catherine of Austria is betrothed by proxy to the heir to

---

totam Italiam in omnibus terris imperii vicariam Guelfis videlicet, que per
Guelfos olim gubernate fuerunt tempore quondam domini Henrici de
Lissemburg, regis Alamannic nominati” (see below, [p. 17]).

32 “Predictis (i.e. convencionibus) autem in tractato nobiscum negocio,
pro quo itus, utamini, sicut prudencia vestra cognoverit promocioni ipsius
negocii expedire” (Finke, III, 310, nr. 145).

33 It is clear from the identity of the addressee, Petrus Ferdinandi de
Izar, who in 1316 attempted to mediate between Robert and Frederick on
behalf of James of Aragon, that these items of information were to be used
in the course of the Neapolitan negotiations with Sicily (cf. Finke, II, 671,
nr. 425; 718, nr. 245, especially the note about Petrus’ mission on p. 725:
933, note; III, 279. For the general context of these negotiations see Haber-
kern, p. 75).
the Neapolitan throne, Duke Charles of Calabria, with the usual agreements concerning the dowry and its settlement as well as concerning the embassy to be sent from the Neapolitan court to collect Catherine on Italian soil.

2) Kings Frederick and Robert undertake not to attack each other.

3) King Frederick appoints Duke Charles of Calabria to be imperial vicar for all areas in Italy which were Guelf in the time of Emperor Henry VII.

According to Frederick the Fair’s intentions the agreement was designed *imperio atrahere*, “to attract the king of Naples to the empire.” For an understanding of this expression, as well as for a correct evaluation of the treaty as a whole, a brief examination of the situation in Italy, as well as of the recent Roman expedition of Henry VII, is necessary.

The Italian peninsula had for a long time been torn by the most violent animosities, partly between the communes and signories, partly within the several territories between the ruling families, social classes, or variously composed factions; the party names Guelf and Ghibelline actually served to designate the most widely divergent kinds of hostile relationships. Henry VII, however, had crossed the Alps with the intention of putting an end to these quarrels and of reconciling the several authorities by subordinating them to a new legal order, or rather to a revival of the old imperial legal order. But the result of his campaign was precisely the reverse of this original purpose. Even previously it had often been the case that, in view of the complicated involvements of the Italian state system, local conflicts had been fought out in larger arenas, but after the emperor’s death Italy was manifestly divided into two camps: the *pars imperialis*, which had rallied under the imperial banner, and the opposing party which styled itself the *devoti*

---

34 This is evident from one of Robert’s papers dated Dec. 31, 1316 (Gross, nnr. 545 and 629).
35 In Robert’s circular to his adherents it is said that Catherine “assignetur instanter gentibus nostris et ipsius primogeniti nostri in civitate Trivissii, deinde in regnum cum comitiva honorabili traducenda” (see below, [p. 18]). On the composition of this *comitiva* see Gross, nr. 484.
36 It should be noted here that *pars imperialis* was the customary name
sanctae matris ecclesiae and which regarded the king of Naples as its patron. The party names Guelf and Ghibelline, therefore, acquired once more a significance similar to that which they had had in the days of the Hohenstaufen but which they had lost during the long period when the imperial power had left Italy virtually to its own devices and when any reference to the empire, positive or negative, had therefore become largely meaningless. Henry VII had attempted to superimpose the empire over these two “parties” and to absorb them in a higher unity. It is therefore no accident that the official sources (unusually plentiful for his reign) contain only one reference to the names Guelf and Ghibelline, and even this one with the meaning just suggested; in the summer of 1311 the king directed his ambassador to Pope Clement V to inform the latter of the state of affairs in Lombardy and Tuscany et qualiter se habet (i.e. Henry) absque omni partialitate ad Guelfos et Guibel-
linos." These designations occur nowhere else in the extant letters or privileges issued by the emperor, whereas they appear frequently in all the contemporary Italian, Spanish, and papal documents. The force of events and of circumstances gradually drove Henry increasingly in the direction of becoming the leader of the pars imperialis, i.e. of the Ghibellines; but he consistently refused to acknowledge this development formally by ignoring the party names.

After this backward glance at the period of Henry VII we can see clearly the radical change of policy that Frederick the Fair undertook by concluding the agreement of the summer of 1316. He abandoned all pretense of ignoring the existence of two rival parties, accepting it instead as an accomplished fact

for the Ghibelline party. For example, Frederick the Fair’s appointment of Castruccio (April 4, 1320) as Vicar General of a number of specified places cum aliis terris partis imperialis Pistoii subjectis (Const., V, 458, nr. 570) is to be translated as “together with other districts subject to the imperial (Ghibelline) party of Pistoia,” that is to say, those districts belonging to the Pistoian exiles, constituted as an independent community. Gross’ descriptive notice for nr. 928 should be corrected accordingly.

37 Const., IV, 604, 21.

38 Cf., for example, the Index of Const., vol. IV under “Gibellini” (p. 1477) and “Guelhi” (p. 1517) and Finke, Acta Aragonensia, vols. I–III.
and attempting merely to attract them to the empire (*imperio atrahere*) in one fashion or another and thus to make them, after all, a part of the empire. One of these parties, the Guelfs, with the Angevin royal house at its head, was in principle opposed and hostile to any claim to imperial suzerainty. Frederick sought to render this situation of fact as harmless as he could by legalizing it when he conferred the title of imperial vicar in the Guelf territories on Duke Charles. In so doing, to be sure, he acknowledged the existence of two spheres of interest in Italy, the control of which the empire was thenceforth to share with the Angevins.

The direct results of the agreement corresponded to Frederick's expectations (as expressed in his reports) in at least one area in which the conflict had raged with particular bitterness, Tuscany. The war-weariness prevalent there probably contributed to the conclusion of a truce (August 1316) between the Guelf and Ghibelline communes, as demanded by the heads of the two parties who were now in alliance; and this was followed in the next year by a definitive peace. The wedding journey of Catherine, the daughter and the sister of German kings, through Italy, and her ceremonial welcome in such centers of Guelf sentiment as Bologna and particularly Florence might therefore have appeared as the symbol of the new harmony.

At this same time, just before his son's wedding, Robert made an effort to buy a crown that had at one time belonged to Henry VII and had been left behind by him in Rome. In the document dealing with this matter Robert referred to Henry as the "self-styled king of the Romans," (*se Romanorum regem dicentis*) that is to say, here as elsewhere, he disputed the legitimacy of the Luxembourg emperor's title. This phrase must be considered in conjunction with that of the circular of August 1 in which he informed his subjects of the conclusion of the marriage alliance and in which he referred to Frederick as duke

---

30 The best treatment of these events is Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz*, III, 604 ff.
31 The available information on this wedding journey has been collected by Gross, nrs. 484, 499, 508–510, 519, 520a, 546; cf. Davidsohn, *op. cit.*, III, 607, and Caggese, I, 654 ff.
31 See Robert's mandate of Sept. 20, 1316 (*Const.*, IV, 1307, note 1).
of Austria and king of Germany, but not as king of Rome. 42 Although Robert permitted his son to receive one of the highest imperial posts from the actual possessor of imperial power and thus formally to become a member of the official hierarchy of the empire, and although he used Frederick’s correct title in diplomatic notes, he declined, in the last resort, to attribute its proper significance to the emperor’s position. It appeared expedient to him, at a time when the international situation was obscure, to enter into an alliance with the emperor, especially since it did not affect the actual power position of the Guelfs, whereas it did imply some weakening of imperial authority. So far as Robert was concerned, the Habsburg marriage alliance represented above all a tactical move against Sicily and the danger of a Sicilian alignment with the empire. In fact, he continued his policy of attempting to enlist German forces for his own purposes when, after the expiration of the truce, the war with Sicily was resumed in the spring of 1317. 43 Robert must have been very reluctant to fulfil the quid pro quo demanded by Frederick, the use of his good offices with the Curia in order to obtain papal recognition of Frederick’s kingdom; 44 not many years, after all, had passed since Robert himself had asked Pope Clement V to deny imperial claims to dominion in

42 See below, [p. 17].
43 See the report of Christian Spinula to James II, dated March 26, 1317, to the effect that it had been rumored for some time “quod dominus rex Robertus intentit de Theotonici se munire et quod miserit ad ducem Austericher pro mille Theotonici habendis” (Finke, II, 574, nr. 374; Gross, nr. 581).
44 We learn from a letter of Frederick the Fair to James II, dated April 14, 1317, that an embassy from Frederick to Robert had just returned from Naples; in his reply to Frederick’s request for his good offices with the Curia, Robert “qui status et negocii nostri [i.e. Frederick’s] apud summum pontificem . . . intendit et vult, ut fermitter asseruit et promisit, vigili et fervens esse promotor,” had promised to exert himself “sicut facere dispositui” (Finke, III, 330, nr. 156). Cf. James’ reply, dated June 6, 1317, saying that Robert “non potuit propter brevitas termint ad hoc dare operam, sicut facere dispositui, efficacem, set quod brie et congruo tempore in ipso negocio operacione sollicita laborabit” (Const., V, 347, nr. 411). In the early summer of the same year another ambassador, Ersus, was apparently sent by Frederick to Naples. This is confirmed by a Neapolitan Exchequer note according to which Ersus had left for Rome on August 14, 1317 (Gross, nr. 626).
Italy by delaying his recognition of the German election after Henry VII's death and making it conditional, among other things, on a renunciation of Italy.\textsuperscript{45}

Robert, therefore, who, so far as we know, never allowed his son to use the title of imperial vicar, was not likely to be much concerned when on March 31, 1317, the new pope, John XXII, forbade persons of all ranks, even royal, to accept or to use the title of vicar;\textsuperscript{46} in so doing, in fact, John made himself the spokesman of Guelf principles and of Robert's personal views. Shortly thereafter, on July 16, 1317, Robert received from the pope the office of imperial vicar for the duration of the vacancy of the imperial throne which, in the papal view, existed in Germany.\textsuperscript{47}

This event marked the failure of Frederick's first attempt at an Italian policy in alliance with the Guelfs.\textsuperscript{48} Henry VII had striven to pacify Italy by imposing the higher idea of the empire and by deliberately ignoring the existing party alignments; Louis of Bavaria later embarked on his Italian expedition of 1327 at the behest of the Ghibellines; Frederick the Fair tried to find a middle way. While leaving the forces hostile to the empire intact he tried to associate them formally with the empire by means of an imperial title; but in so doing he disregarded the self-contradiction that such a policy implied for the Guelfs. The failure of all three of these entirely different policies demonstrates the impossibility of a recovery of Italy for the empire after the estrangement at the end of the Hohenstaufen era.

\textsuperscript{45} Const., IV, 1369, nr. 1253. \hfill \textsuperscript{46} Const., V, 340, nr. 401.
\textsuperscript{47} Const., V, 967, nr. 443.
\textsuperscript{48} We cannot here go any further into Frederick the Fair's subsequent Italian policy, which generally was concerned only with northern Italy, though in 1320 he concluded another alliance with the kingdom of Naples (Gross, nrs. 963 and 964). It may be noted, however, that in pursuit of this policy Frederick at times played the part of a leader and defender of Guelf interests and therefore departed even more markedly from the traditional imperial policy than he had done in 1316.
Appendix

King Robert the Wise informs the Iustitiarius of the Principato ulteriore of the marriage of his son, Duke Charles of Calabria and Catherine, the sister of King Frederick the Fair.

Naples August 1, 1316.

Robertus Dei gracia rex Ierosolem et Sicilie, ducatus Apulie et principatus Capue, Provincie et Forcalquerii ac Pedimontis comes . . . iusticiario Principatus a ultra Serras Montorii a fideli suo graciis suam et bonam voluntatem Ad fidelix nostrorum noticiam libenter gaudiosa perferimus, qui eos frequentem de multis inculcati oneribus inviti quodammodo fatigamus, set primum prompta voluntas delectabiliter efficit, secundum urgens articulus patule necessitatis indicit. Sane noverit b vestra sincera devocio nunciorum nostrorum, quos pridem ad ducem b Austrie, Alamanie regem illustrem, misimus, heri die ultima preteriti mensis Iulii certas nos litteras recepisse, quod ipsi ex precedente tractatu iam habito die vicesima tercia Junii proximo nunc transacti in spectabilem iuvenem Catherinam sororem regis eiusdem sicut in sponsam Caroli primogeniti nostri ducis Calabrie ipsius nomine et eadem domicella in eos tanquam in ipsum primogenitum nostrum suum sponsum legitemum per verba de presenti legitime consenserunt dictaque sponsa sacerdotali benefictione premissa fuit in ecclesia publice desponsata dictusque rex in maioris amoris vinculum confederavit se nobis per amabilem unionem promittens nos ipsumque primogenitum et terras nostras nullo unquam tempore offendere vel molestare aut permettere pro suo posse offendi vel ab aliis molestari, quin pocius nobis patenter assistere auxilio, consilio et favore, dans et concedens eidem primogenito nostro per totam Yraliam in omnibus terris imperii vicariam Guelfis videlicet, que per Guelfos olim gubernate fuerunt

a From Principatus to Montorii was added by another hand. Because the space left was so small, the writing is very cramped.
b From noverit to ducem is written over an erasure.

tempore quondam domini Henrici de Lisimburg, regis Alamanie nominati, subiuncta ordinacione concordi inter cosdem regem et nuncios nostros, ut domicella prefata assignetur instanter gentibus nostris et ipsius primogeniti nostri in civitate Trivisii, deinde in regnum cum comitiva honorabili traducenda. Per que faciente pacis auctore speramus et credimus, quod dicte unionis et confederacionis nexus amabilis nobis nostrisque fidelibus pausam placidam quietis et pacis affert et multa prepedia implicite contencionis elidet. Volumus et fidelitati tue districte iubemus, quatinus statim recepit prezentibus in singulis terris et locis decrete tibi provincie, in quibus expedire videris, ad exultacionem nostrorum fidelium nova huiusmodi divulgare studeas vel facias divulgari, exceptis civitatibus infra scriptis, quibus ea notificamus per alias nostras litteras speciales, quarum nomina sunt hec: videlicet Avellinum, Arianum, Aquaputida, Guardia Lombardorum, Frequentum, Apicium et Mons Fusculus.

Dat. Neapoli per Bartholomeum de Capua militem logothetam et prothonotarium regni Sicilie, anno domini M. CCCXVI, die primo Augusti, XIII indictionis, regnorum nostrorum anno VIII.

The ending of the brief, from Avellinus on, was added later, apparently in several stages. The rather shakily written words per Bartholomeum de Capua militem might be in the hand of the Chancellor.

2 Treviso.
3 Avellino south of Benevento.
4 Ariano di Puglia west of Benevento.
5 The present Mirabella Eclano southeast of Benevento. See Stamer, op. cit., 104, note 5.
6 Guardia Lombardi southwest of Melfi.
7 Frigento southeast of Benevento.
8 Apice east of Benevento.
9 Montefusco southeast of Benevento.
Castruccio Castracani and the Empire*

CASTRUCCIO Castracani degli Antelminelli, by birth a noble of Lucca, bore the following titles at his death: Dei gratia dux Lucanorum, Lateranensis comes, sacri Romani imperii vexillifer et Pisarum vicarius generalis.¹ These dignities, which placed him in one of the highest ranks of the imperial hierarchy, he owed to imperial authority. He himself explicitly acknowledged this when he wrote to the Pisans on January 17, 1322, the day on which Louis of Bavaria's coronation raised him to the height of his power, that the life and safety of him and his followers depended solely on the imperialis celsitudo.²

Castruccio himself was thus convinced that he owed his position to the empire. Was this in fact true? The present study seeks to answer this question, not by a chronological account of Castruccio's life, but rather by examining, with this particular question in mind, the successive stages of his rise to power.³


¹ Castruccio used the title in a codicil to his will dated December 20, 1327.


³ Two modern biographies of Castruccio are F. Winkler, Castruccio Castracani, Herzog von Lucca (Berlin, 1897), and C. Magnani, Castruccio
Castruccio, later to become leader of the Ghibellines, was descended from a family originally Guelf. In the factional strife which divided Lucca, as it did Pistoia, Florence, and other Guelf cities, strife caused by personal rivalries between the leading houses, the Antelminelli took the side of the Bianchi. They were defeated; in 1301 the family was banished and, like the Bianchi of other Tuscan cities, oppressed by the Neri. Thus Castruccio grew up as an exile, living for thirteen years in an anti-Guelf environment. The Italian expedition of Henry VII was the crucial turning point of his life. Until then Castruccio had been a condottiere, serving France, Verona, and Venice far from his native city. Now he joined the imperial army, first in Lombardy under its captain general Werner von Homburg, then under the emperor himself, whom he followed to Pisa in 1312. In a letter to the Florentines sixteen years later he called himself a planita of Henry VII. He expressed the same feeling of devoted gratitude by naming his sons Arrigo, Giovanni, and Valerano, the names of the emperor, his son, and his brother. But since Castruccio had attained no real prominence during the lifetime of Henry VII, it is impossible to determine if, and in what way, the emperor personally favored him. He was, in any case, to honor Henry VII as the man who had given a powerful impetus to his destiny and to that of the Ghibelline party.

The power of the Ghibellines continued to grow after the premature death of Henry VII, above all because they had found in Uguccione della Faggiuola, lord of Pisa, a valiant chief. Castruccio remained in the background. Only the peace concluded by Uguccione with Lucca on April 25, 1341, made it possible for him and the other Luccan exiles to return to their native city. His rise to power begins here; for a few months later when war broke out anew between Lucca and Pisa, he was able to give Uguccione effective support in the conquest of Lucca.

(Milan, 1926). R. Davidsohn, Geschichte der Stadt Florenz is indispensable for placing Castruccio in the historical context of his time. See also the bibliography which E. Lazzareschi has added to his article on Castruccio in the Enciclopedia Italiana, IX, 384.

4 Const., VI, 382, nr. 464.

5 His name does not occur in the well-preserved diplomas of Henry VII. See Const., IV.
But when Uguccione did not reward his services with a share in the government of the city, he sought to establish himself outside of Lucca. He persuaded bishop Bernardino Malespina to make him viscount of the bishopric of Luni-Saranza (July 4, 1314). Within the district were the communes of Saranza and Castro, subject only to the bishop for the spiritualities, but as camera imperii independent for the temporalities. But even if Castruccio was incontestably to exercise effective power over these imperial enclaves, that power could be legitimized only by imperial law.

He found a solution by having the communes elect him imperial vicar of the Lunigiana at the first news of the election of a new German king (December 5, 1314). From the wording of the act which records Castruccio’s election, it might appear that he did not know that two kings had been elected at Frankfurt. This is possible, though hardly probable. The elections of Louis of Bavaria and Frederick the Fair had taken place on two consecutive days (October 19 and 20); and in the uproar which followed, the two names could not have been kept silent. Spreading contrary rumors was perhaps a premeditated means of hiding the fact of a double election and, therefore, of avoiding the need to opt for one of the two rivals.

But soon decision became inevitable, for already at the beginning of 1315 King Louis made clear his Italian pretentions by naming a Vicar General. No sooner had Uguccione received this news than he openly allied himself with the Bavarian and in return received a diploma of investiture (March 26, 1315).

What was Castruccio’s attitude at this moment?

Had he really wished to further the interests of the empire against its enemies, he should have followed the example of Uguccione and recognized Louis of Bavaria in order to avoid a schism in the imperial party which could only benefit the Guelfs. His very different conduct is to be explained by his rivalry with Uguccione. Castruccio was seeking to found an independent power, and he was right in fearing that Uguccione would exercise his influence over Louis, if he had not already done so, to secure legal recognition of the same power for himself. So Castruccio sent an ambassador to Frederick the Fair and
got a privilege (dated August 5, 1315) making him his councilor and familiar and, more important, naming him Vicar General of all the imperial fortresses, castles, cities, and villages then in his possession. This appointment as an imperial vicar was of great value to Castruccio because it gave him juridical sanction for his present possessions and his future conquests.

While these negotiations with Frederick were in progress in Germany, Castruccio maintained an apparent friendship for Uguccione, supporting him in his struggle against Florence and fighting on August 29 in the battle of Montecatini, Uguccione's splendid victory over the Guelfs, won under the banner of the Wittelsbachs. Only somewhat later, after Castruccio's ambassador returned with the privilege from the Habsburg king, did Uguccione become aware of his duplicity and open conflict break out between them. Castruccio had executed for high treason many citizens of Massa, a city subject to him. Uguccione called these death sentences assassinations, an implicit assertion that Castruccio's title of imperial vicar was invalid, for it alone granted the right to impose the death penalty. The Guelfs must have rejoiced to see Ghibellines, who boasted of representing the empire and its law, fighting for these titles, which thus appeared even more empty.

The Pisan revolt of April 11, 1316, rather than respect for Castruccio's distant royal lord saved him from the death penalty passed against him by Uguccione. The political situation in Tuscany changed significantly, and not through the intervention of the empire or its rival representatives. At one blow Uguccione, until then lord of Pisa and Lucca and the recognized head of the Tuscan Ghibellines, lost his power over the two cities, after Florence the most important in Tuscany. With his fall the conflict between Guelf and Ghibelline lost its sharpness, the more so because at the same moment King Robert of Naples and Frederick the Fair, the heads of the two factions, made an alliance which was supposed to extend to their adherents. Frederick addressed a request for such a truce to his Italian supporters on June 30, 1316. It is preserved in two copies, one of them addressed to Castruccio. On March 12, 1317, peace was concluded between Pisa and Lucca, on the
one hand, and Florence and the other Guelf communes of Tuscany, on the other.

This period of peace, though brief, was precious to Castruccio, enabling him to build up and fortify the powerful position he had acquired in Lucca after the fall of Uguccione. It did not take him long to attain this objective, for already in 1318 he felt himself strong enough to take the offensive and get himself elected captain general of a group of irreconcilable Pistoian exiles who had not wished to recognize the peace. Given the relations between Florence and Pistoia, war between Castruccio and the Guelf communes was bound to follow. For the next ten years Pistoia became the center of the struggle in Tuscany.

Before openly declaring war, however, Castruccio sent an embassy to King Frederick in Germany. But this time he did not content himself, as he had at the beginning of his career in 1315, with a general and appropriately vague formulation of rights. The privilege he now asked for, and got (April 4, 1320), sanctioned his effective position by naming him imperial Vicar General of Lucca and the district for a six-mile radius around the city. More than this it took into consideration his wider ambitions. Since the imperial vicariate granted him extended over all territories subject to the pars imperialis of Pistoia, he was in fact made head of the Tuscan Ghibellines and Bianchi. This implied a particular threat to Florence, for he got from the German king authority over territories long controlled by Florence de facto and since the peace of 1317 held legally. No sooner had he obtained this privilege than Castruccio got himself declared captain general and lord of Lucca for life (April 26, 1320). The former exile had now completely legitimized his external and internal position as lord of Lucca and could very willingly give the German ambassador in exchange the oath of fealty and obedience Frederick of Hapsburg required (May 1, 1320).

Precisely at this moment a war broke out between Guelfs and Ghibellines, which soon spread as far as Liguria. In opposition to King Robert of Naples, who had seized the lordship of Genoa, Castruccio was elected Vicar General of the Genoese exiles (July 19, 1320). On May 27, 1321, he had him-
self acclaimed lord of Pontremoli, having already held the title of dominus generalis of the pars imperialis of the city.

In the meantime the struggle for the German throne had been decided by Louis of Bavaria’s victory at Mühldorf on September 28, 1322. Castruccio did not hesitate to abandon Frederick’s cause and give his support to the victor; and when a royal plenipotentiary arrived in Tuscany in the spring of 1323, he took the same oath of loyalty as the lords of Pisa and Arezzo. He proved his loyalty in the summer of the same year by contributing effectively toward the liberation of Milan during the struggle for the city between the Ghibelline army led by Louis of Bavaria’s Italian lieutenant, the count of Neiffen, and a Guelf and papal army. And in the autumn he refused to allow the pope’s sentences against Louis to be published in his territories.

But while he showed himself so loyal a defender of imperial interests and while he probably conducted negotiations in Germany to confirm his power as an imperial vicar, Castruccio also took steps in a quite different direction. The war between Pisa and the kingdom of Aragon over Sicily was entering its final stage. The relations between Castruccio and the Ghibelline city had long been strained, and an alliance between Aragon and Castruccio was to be foreseen. This was in fact brought about at the end of 1323 by one of the most interesting political figures of the period, Cardinal Napoleone Orsini, who had relations with both Castruccio and King James of Aragon. At the beginning of 1324 Castruccio sent an embassy to Barcelona and initiated negotiations designed, according to the cardinal’s proposals, to bring him into the service of the Aragonese king for the duration of the Pisan war and perhaps longer. Incalculable consequences would have flowed from the realization of such a project. A new political force—one openly hostile to the papacy—would have modified profoundly the character of the conflict between Guelfs and Ghibellines. The alliance did not come off. But it was not due to any lack of desire or deter-

6 See the reports of the Aragonese ambassadors in H. Finke, Acta Aragonensia (Berlin and Leipzig, 1908), II, 606, nr. 389; 608, nr. 391; 621, nr. 395.
mination on Castruccio’s part that the head of the Tuscan Ghibellines did not desert the imperial cause and enter the service of a new overlord. The project failed because it seemed too daring to the king of Aragon, who was anxious to limit, if possible, his war with Pisa to the conquest of Sardinia.

Once the Aragonese project had fallen through, Castruccio pressed his negotiations with the German king. These were concluded on May 29, 1324. He was confirmed in his post of imperial vicar of Lucca. His appointment as imperial vicar of Pontremoli made legitimate the lordship he had exercised over that city since 1321. He was also made imperial vicar of the city, county, and district of Pistoia, where before he had been vicar only of the pars imperialis, that is, of the Pistoian exiles. This was tantamount to an open declaration of war against the still independent commune and its Florentine protectors. Finally, to support Castruccio further, King Louis revoked, in the case of Lucca, the sentences of punishment which Henry VII had decreed against all the Guelf cities of Tuscany.

But if the head of the Ghibellines had received imperial sanction for his struggle in Tuscany, his Guelf opponents replied in kind: the first papal ban was launched against Castruccio on April 30, 1324. Henceforth the adversaries called each other rebelles sacri Romani imperii and rebelles sanctae matris ecclesiae.

War now began. On March 5, 1325, Castruccio conquered Pistoia and on September 23 of the same year gained a splendid victory over the Florentines near Altopascio. Castruccio’s victory caused a sensation, for it seemed to give the Ghibellines a decisive advantage in Tuscany. Florence felt defenseless before the threat of an immediate danger. She looked for help toward the most important Guelf power in Italy, and on December 23, 1325, elected Duke Charles of Calabria, the son of King Robert of Naples, lord of the city. Castruccio then disclosed his ultimate aim. On March 9, 1326, he accepted the captainship of the pars imperialis, that is of the Ghibelline party, of the city, county, and district of Florence.

These events explain Castruccio’s attitude toward Louis of Bavaria’s Italian expedition. His campaign in Tuscany had
entered a decisive phase, aimed no longer at the single bastion of Pistoia but at the center of Guelphism itself, Florence. He needed a counterweight to the support Florence had found in the king of Naples. So toward the end of 1326 Castruccio and the Ghibellines of northern Italy dispatched an embassy to the German king, urging him to hasten his long-projected expedition to Italy. Louis decided to yield to the pressure of his Italian partisans and on January 4, 1327, wrote to Castruccio in this sense. Although Castruccio could not, like the Lombard Signori, participate in person in the conference which Louis called at Trent, he sent a plenipotentiary; and he remained in constant contact with the king until he could greet him personally in September at Pontremoli, the entrance to his dominions.

Louis found a very complicated situation in Tuscany, a complication for which Castruccio was largely responsible. His policy of annexation threatened not only Florence, which was Guelf, but also Pisa, which was Ghibelline. And so this most faithful city of the empire, once the principal support of Henry VII, although it offered Louis money and devotion, refused to allow him within its walls, obviously for fear that beside the king would ride the powerful Castruccio, a presence potentially fatal to its liberty. When Louis rejected so conditional a subservience, war began. The Pisans found support in the Florentines, traditionally their bitterest enemies. After a month's siege Pisa submitted to the king and on October 11, 1327, admitted him, but not Castruccio. But three days later, thanks to a popular insurrection, engineered perhaps by Castruccio himself, he too entered the city.

With the elimination of Pisa as an independent political force Castruccio took a long step forward on the road to predominance in Tuscany. He was disappointed in his ambition of being named lord of Pisa; but on conducting the king to Lucca, he was splendidly rewarded by being created hereditary duke of Lucca, Pistoia, and Volterra and gonfaloniere of the empire (November 11, 1327).

It is doubtful that this title made him a prince of the empire. But the real significance of Castruccio's new rank cannot, in any case, be understood in purely formal terms. There was, to
be sure, no lay prince according to imperial law in Italy at this period, nor was it possible to adapt such an institution to the very different conditions of Italy. In fact, however, we have seen that Castruccio exercised rights of extreme importance: mixtum et merum imperium, the regalia, and feudal investiture. His exercise of these rights was now confirmed by a new title. The title dux itself was not of primary importance; the important fact was rather that the title made hereditary the rights it reconfirmed. An imperial vicar could be dismissed; Castruccio's new title raised him to the position of hereditary lord of a large territory including three cities. He therefore possessed, in fact, a princely authority which placed him above the other Italian dynasts.

It is perhaps no accident that the wording of the royal privilege was vague. The explicit recognition of Castruccio as a prince of the empire would have been an innovation in Italy; it would have created a precedent and aroused the jealousy of the other Ghibelline leaders. Instead it recognized Castruccio's authority as equal to that of the German princes; it granted him the ducal title, which after the royal dignity was the highest rank in the feudal hierarchy, while at the same time avoiding, formally, the title princeps. But Castruccio's contemporaries, careless of the niceties of imperial law, considered him and called him prince.⁷

A point of special interest in the constitutio of November 17 is the appointment of Castruccio as Vexillifer imperii. Such a title had never existed in imperial law. It must be seen as an imitation of the title Vexillifer ecclesia, conferred by the popes since the end of the thirteenth century.⁸ The king also granted Castruccio a new coat of arms, allowing him to quarter the Wittelsbach arms with his own. Here too he was perhaps following papal practice. Although we have no authentic document confirming this, Villani's testimony cannot be questioned.⁹

⁷ For example, even after Castruccio's death a document from the court of the general vicariate of the Lunigiana dated January 21, 1329 refers to Castruccio as illustris princeps (Const., VI, 452, nr. 544).
⁸ See C. Erdmann in Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken, XXIX, 229.
Both the grant of the coat of arms and the appointment as Gonfalonier of the empire are important for the history of German political institutions because such acts are here verified for the first time. In both cases the king imitated the pope in his effort to distinguish his most important partisans and so prepared the way for the acceptance in imperial law of uses and titles of papal origin.

Castruccio conducted the king from Lucca to Pistoia and showed him the sites of his battles against the Florentines. But for the time being he was unwillingly obliged to halt his campaign against Florence and, rendering an unwelcome service demanded by his royal privileges, accompany the king from Pisa to Rome early in December. The importance of Castruccio's political role is clear from Villani's detailed narrative of this memorable expedition. And even if it be admitted that Villani, with his contempt for Louis of Bavaria, profoundly admires Castruccio and overemphasizes his role, despite the hatred of the Guelf for the dangerous Ghibelline enemy of his city, even coloring certain things in his favor, it remains no less true that the facts of the Roman expedition confirm his narrative. The emperor heaped the most important posts and honors in his gift on the head of the duke of Lucca. According to custom the count of the Lateran figured in the coronation ceremonies at St. Peter's. This was a papal functionary; and the man then holding the office, Benedetto Gaetani, had left the city. In order to respect the ancient usages, Louis abolished the papal office, created an analogous imperial office, and conferred it on Castruccio and his heirs forever.\(^ {10} \) From this usurpation, dictated by a momentary need, derives the later imperial office of count Palatine.\(^ {11} \) After the coronation Louis knighted Castruccio and the same evening announced the engagement of his son Arrigo and the daughter of the chief of the Roman Ghibellines, Sciarra Colonna. Next day he was named Roman senator.

\(^ {10} \) The document containing this appointment dates only from March 14, 1328 [\textit{Const.}, VI, 316, nr. 415].

\(^ {11} \) See Ficker, \textit{Forschungen zur Reichs- und Rechtsgeschichte Italiens}, II, 112.
The singular importance the emperor attributed to Castruccio could not have been more strikingly shown than by these extraordinary favors showered on him.

Still Castruccio did not let himself be blinded by the splendor of the position he had attained in Rome, conscious that Tuscany was the basis of his power. Thus he did not hesitate to hasten home at the first news of Florence's reconquest of Pistoia. The emperor did not object; he could not keep Castruccio at his side by force, and he feared that other Guelf victories in Tuscany would imperil his return to Germany. Castruccio's haste probably saved King Robert and the kingdom of Naples from an attack by Louis, who now, without Castruccio's troops and the promised help of the Sicilians, felt himself too weak to undertake it.

The emperor spent several months in Rome in virtually complete military inactivity while his discussions with the papacy became increasingly sharp under the influence of his Franciscan advisors and Marsilius of Padua. In the meantime Castruccio vigorously pursued his energetic policy. He seized Pisa and on April 29, 1328, without the slightest consideration for the emperor and his imperial vicar, got himself acclaimed lord of the city for two years by a citizen body intimidated by his mercenaries. The emperor had no choice but to sanction this act of violence and on May 30, through a plenipotentiary, he made Castruccio imperial vicar of Pisa. And so Castruccio added a new imperial title to the many he held already.

His immediate aim was the reconquest of Pistoia. He arrived there on August 4, the very day the emperor was forced to leave Rome. The Florentines and the duke of Lucca were bound to assume that he was moving against Florence, which, according to Castruccio's past promises to him, could be conquered in two months. The alarmed Florentines asked King Robert for help. But then Louis suddenly changed his mind and turned south to join the Sicilian fleet, which had at last arrived for action against the kingdom of Naples.

The emperor's decision was a hard blow for Castruccio, who
had hoped he could count on his help in the conquest of Flo-
ence. He was of course aware by now of the emperor's relative
weakness. He had profited from it only a few months earlier to
usurp the lordship of Pisa. But even then, when the emperor's
authority and power had seemed reasonably solid, Castruccio
had acted only in his own interest and without any respect for
imperial law, hoping at the same time to use Louis to further
his Florentine plans. No wonder that he was less respectful
than ever of imperial interests, now that his expectation was
frustrated and Louis had deserted him. There is, therefore, no
reason to doubt Villani's statement that Castruccio had decided
to abandon the imperial cause and begin secret negotiations
with Florence. These negotiations had barely begun when they
were cut off by Castruccio's death.

When he heard that his most powerful Tuscan ally had died,
the emperor went to Pisa. Here he learned of Castruccio's
projected desertion. At last he must have realized clearly how
weak the foundations were on which his rule in Italy rested,
when the man whom he had raised above all others, whom he
had sought to bind to the empire with its highest titles, honors,
and privileges, so easily forgot his obligation of fealty to the
emperor to whom he owed those privileges. Louis in his turn
considered himself released from his promises and refused to
recognize the right of Castruccio's sons to the ducal title and
to the dominions which only a year before he had conferred on
their father as an hereditary right.

To study a life like Castruccio's is to gain a clearer under-
standing of the political condition of Italy in the early four-
teenth century. The fall of the Hohenstaufen had removed the
peninsula's supreme source of law. A legal order binding on all
men no longer existed. Italy, it can be said, was atomized. Only
very slowly was a new unity being formed. Individuals, families,
classes, communes, each took sides in accordance with its own
interests. Yet ultimately every political authority had to be
legitimized in law, however fictitious in origin. The Guelfs
turned to the papacy; more specifically, the Guelf communes
appealed to customary law, even though their customary law
was in reality nothing more than a tissue of violations of the traditional imperial legal order.

The Guelfs, then, could consider themselves "conservatives." The case was very different for rulers like Castruccio, who had arisen out of nothing. Their rights rested on the de facto power they had themselves acquired rather than on a traditional dominion. In most cases they had used republican forms to rise to power in their own communes. But once on top they inevitably tried to secure their authority with other than democratic guarantees, in principle always revocable.

It is this search for legitimacy which explains why the majority of the Signori—the Visconti and the Scaligeri, for example, to mention only the most important—were Ghibellines, that is, based their authority on imperial law. Castruccio, to be sure, was anti-Guelf for family reasons. But this was not his only motive for being a Ghibelline; his very status as a Signore forced him to ally himself with the pars imperialis. And so we see him after each forward step in his career turn immediately to the German king in order to obtain legal sanction for what he had already acquired in fact. By studying the royal grants of 1315, 1320, 1324, and 1327 we can follow his rapid rise to power, but in estimating their real significance we must recognize that in none of them was Castruccio given anything he did not already possess.

The Ghibellines called themselves the pars imperialis. But Castruccio's career clearly reveals that they represented the empire in no significant sense at all: for example, his dubious game in 1315 at the time of the double imperial election; his desire in 1323–1324 to ally himself with the Kingdom of Aragon; his secret negotiations with Florence at the end of his life. It was in fact precisely this last unforeseen change of sides by the head of the Ghibellines which was to convince the emperor of the impossibility of finding support in the "imperial party." Louis of Bavaria made the attempt and failed. In reality, of course, the Ghibellines wanted a fictitious empire, not a real authority. The emperors were to supply them with that theoretical legality which every ruler needs; but they had no in-
had hoped he could count on his help in the conquest of Florence. He was of course aware by now of the emperor's relative weakness. He had profited from it only a few months earlier to usurp the lordship of Pisa. But even then, when the emperor's authority and power had seemed reasonably solid, Castruccio had acted only in his own interest and without any respect for imperial law, hoping at the same time to use Louis to further his Florentine plans. No wonder that he was less respectful than ever of imperial interests, now that his expectation was frustrated and Louis had deserted him. There is, therefore, no reason to doubt Villani's statement that Castruccio had decided to abandon the imperial cause and begin secret negotiations with Florence. These negotiations had barely begun when they were cut off by Castruccio's death.

When he heard that his most powerful Tuscan ally had died, the emperor went to Pisa. Here he learned of Castruccio's projected desertion. At last he must have realized clearly how weak the foundations were on which his rule in Italy rested, when the man whom he had raised above all others, whom he had sought to bind to the empire with its highest titles, honors, and privileges, so easily forgot his obligation of fealty to the emperor to whom he owed those privileges. Louis in his turn considered himself released from his promises and refused to recognize the right of Castruccio's sons to the ducal title and to the dominions which only a year before he had conferred on their father as an hereditary right.

To study a life like Castruccio's is to gain a clearer understanding of the political condition of Italy in the early fourteenth century. The fall of the Hohenstaufen had removed the peninsula's supreme source of law. A legal order binding on all men no longer existed. Italy, it can be said, was atomized. Only very slowly was a new unity being formed. Individuals, families, classes, communes, each took sides in accordance with its own interests. Yet ultimately every political authority had to be legitimized in law, however fictitious in origin. The Guelfs turned to the papacy; more specifically, the Guelf communes appealed to customary law, even though their customary law
was in reality nothing more than a tissue of violations of the traditional imperial legal order.

The Guelfs, then, could consider themselves "conservatives." The case was very different for rulers like Castruccio, who had arisen out of nothing. Their rights rested on the de facto power they had themselves acquired rather than on a traditional dominion. In most cases they had used republican forms to rise to power in their own communes. But once on top they inevitably tried to secure their authority with other than democratic guarantees, in principle always revocable.

It is this search for legitimacy which explains why the majority of the Signori—the Visconti and the Scaligeri, for example, to mention only the most important—were Ghibellines, that is, based their authority on imperial law. Castruccio, to be sure, was anti-Guelf for family reasons. But this was not his only motive for being a Ghibelline; his very status as a Signore forced him to ally himself with the pars imperialis. And so we see him after each forward step in his career turn immediately to the German king in order to obtain legal sanction for what he had already acquired in fact. By studying the royal grants of 1315, 1320, 1324, and 1327 we can follow his rapid rise to power, but in estimating their real significance we must recognize that in none of them was Castruccio given anything he did not already possess.

The Ghibellines called themselves the pars imperialis. But Castruccio's career clearly reveals that they represented the empire in no significant sense at all: for example, his dubious game in 1315 at the time of the double imperial election; his desire in 1323–1324 to ally himself with the kingdom of Aragon; his secret negotiations with Florence at the end of his life. It was in fact precisely this last unforeseen change of sides by the head of the Ghibellines which was to convince the emperor of the impossibility of finding support in the "imperial party." Louis of Bavaria made the attempt and failed. In reality, of course, the Ghibellines wanted a fictitious empire, not a real authority. The emperors were to supply them with that theoretical legality which every ruler needs; but they had no in-
tention of becoming his subordinates in any political hierarchy of significance. Dante reproached contemporary Ghibellines for having degraded the imperial idea to the level of a party label, crying out:

Faccian li Ghibellin, faccian lor arte
sott’altro segno; chè mal segue quello
sempre chi la giustizia e lui diparte.\textsuperscript{12}

His reproach remains valid for Castruccio and all the Ghibelline Signori of his time. The Guelfs called them tyrants, by this name emphasizing not only their despotism but also the illegitimacy of their rule.

That their rule was illegitimate is objectively true; for all these lordships were based on violence, not on the fictitious rights their rulers subsequently acquired. And yet it would be a mistake to question Castruccio’s own subjective conviction of loyalty, his conviction that “he had acted justly for the empire and his commune.”\textsuperscript{13} Castruccio lived at a turning point of history, and he considered his own actions solely in terms of traditional imperial norms, however far they deviated from such norms. He bore the title of Gonfalonier of the empire, a title rightly his in the circumstances of the time. In reality, however, he was a new type of prince and condottiere, already corresponding in part to the type later exalted by Machiavelli.

\textsuperscript{12} Paradiso, VI, 103–105.
\textsuperscript{13} Giovanni Villani, Cronica, X, 86: Biblioteca classica Italiana (Trieste, 1857), s. XIV, nr. 21, I, 328.
The Accession of the Helvetian Federation to the Holy League: An Unpublished Bull of Pope Julius II of March 17, 1512

THE Scheide collection of the Library of Princeton University contains, among many other documents from the eleventh century to the eighteenth, one piece which deserves special attention. It throws new light on one of the most interesting phases of the history of international relations during the Italian Renaissance—the war of the Holy League of 1511–1512 against King Louis XII of France and the methods used by Pope Julius II to bring about the entrance of the Swiss federation into this war. The document in question is a bull issued by the pope at St. Peter's in Rome on March 17, 1512, in which Julius excommunicates the French supporters of the rebels against the papal see and at the same time threatens the Swiss with excommunication in case they should conclude any kind of agreement with King Louis. For the right understanding of this hitherto unpublished papal bull it is necessary to sketch briefly the events leading up to its issuance.¹


¹ As to the general background see esp. M. Brosch, Papst Julius II (Gotha, 1878); Ch. Kohler, Les Suisses dans les guerres d'Italie de 1506 à 1512 (Geneva and Paris, 1897); L. Pastor, The History of the Popes, Vol. VI (St. Louis, Mo., 1912); E. Gagliardi, Geschichte der Schweiz, Vol. I (Zurich, 1890); W. Oechsl, History of Switzerland, 1499–1914 (Cambridge, 1923); H. Nabholz, Geschichte der Schweiz, Vol. I (Zurich, 1934); F. Ercole, Da
On October 4, 1511, Pope Julius II, King Ferdinand of Aragon, and the Venetian Republic concluded "a league which the pope himself wanted and ordered to be called most holy because it was established and made entirely for the benefit of the church." The stated purpose of this alliance was "the conservation of the holy church and the dignity of the holy papal see and the recovery of Bologna and the other territories of the holy Roman church which are now occupied by its enemies." Actually, however, Julius II aimed at a much greater objective than the mere re-establishment of his authority over the papal states. His ultimate goal was the complete liberation of Italy from the French "barbarians." He was only too well aware of the fact that the "rebels" against the holy see, the Bentivoglio family of Bologna and Duke Alfonso of Ferrara, were continuously supported by the French king, who through his possession of the Duchy of Milan and through his alliance with the Florentine Republic had acquired a very strong position in Italy. Since the pope alone was too weak to break the predominant power of Louis XII, he resorted to an alliance with Spain and Venice and endeavored also to bring Henry VIII of England and Emperor Maximilian of Germany into this coalition. England did, in fact, join the Holy League shortly after its conclusion, on October 17, 1511, whereas Maximilian continued to adhere to a pro-French policy, motivated by the conflict of interests which for many years had existed between himself and Venice.

But if it is correct to say that the famous Holy League of 1511 was really a grand alliance of the great European powers against France and that its actual goal was the reduction of

Carlo VIII a Carlo V (Florence, 1932); and M. Darcy, Louis XII (Paris, 1935).

2 See the letter of Bernardo da Bibbiena to Cardinal Giovanni Medici, Rome, Oct. 4, 1511: "Conclusa, stabilita, ferma e sancita si è stasera la lega, la quale Nostro Signore, per essere fondata e fatta tutta a beneficio della Chiesa, vuole e comanda che si chiami Santissima" (published in A. Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane [Paris, 1861], II, 548).

3 See the pope's letter to Medici, Oct. 5, 1511, ibid., p. 551. For the full text of the treaty of the Holy League see T. Rymer, Foederæ, VI, Part I (The Hague, 1741), 23–24.
French power in general and the expulsion of the French armies from Italy in particular, we have to keep in mind that this objective was not explicitly and formally stated in the text of the agreement between the allied states. Consequently, there developed a rather curious situation in the autumn of 1511. Although the armies of the Holy League had started some rather halfhearted campaigns in northern Italy against the lords of Bologna and Ferrara and their French associates who were commanded by the French governor of Milan, this actual outbreak of hostilities was not accompanied by a formal rupture of the diplomatic relations among the various powers. On the contrary, at the papal and French courts, as well as in Venice and elsewhere, a great many open and secret negotiations took place in which attempts were made either to find a basis for the conclusion of a general peace or to reach some separate agreements between individual members of the two hostile camps.

During the first months of 1512 things came more and more to a head. In contrast to the very slow start of hostilities in the preceding autumn, the fighting became increasingly serious in January and February of that year. The initial successes were with the French, and by the middle of March it seemed to be evident that their commander in Lombardy, Gaston de Foix, was intent on starting a large offensive in order to destroy the armies of the Holy League. At the same time, there was a great deal of activity on the diplomatic front. In February and in the first part of March, Louis XII tried once more to make peace with the pope. The negotiations were carried on at the French court in Blois, where the Aragonese tried to serve as mediators, and simultaneously at the papal court in Rome.

---

4 Cf. Brosch, pp. 237-240; and Pastor, VI, 395.
5 See esp. the collection of diplomatic dispatches, sent by various diplomats of the great powers between October and December 1511, in Lettres du Roy Louis XII, avec plusieurs autres lettres, memoires et instructions ecrites depuis 1504 jusques et compris 1514 (Brussels, 1712) (hereafter cited as Lettres du Roy Louis XII), III, 80-105.
7 Lettres du Roy Louis XII, III, 175 and 193-196; and Sanuto, XIV, 49.
on the initiative of some pro-French cardinals. A peaceful settlement could not be reached. Finally, a last attempt, it seems, was made in Rome on March 17, when the Roman nobleman, Domenico Massimo, saw Julius II in two successive audiences and urged him, in the name of the Roman people, to come to an understanding with Louis. The pope’s answer was so evasive and guarded that it became clear that the conflicting interests and aims of the papal see and France were irreconcilable.

While Julius and Louis were engaged in these peace negotiations, each tried simultaneously to lure his opponent’s allies over to his own side. The pope endeavored to bring Maximilian into the fold of the League by reconciling him with the Venetians, and Louis secretly made very favorable overtures to Venice in order to neutralize it. By the end of March it was manifest that Louis was unable to draw Venice away from the League, whereas Julius was on the point of success in his mediation between the Venetians and the emperor. Thus in the spring of 1512 France found itself in a most dangerous situation; it was threatened by an imminent offensive of the pope, Venice, Spain, and England; and against this formidable coalition it could not even rely on further support from its only strong ally, the Habsburg emperor.

In the Europe of that era there was, however, besides the six countries just mentioned a seventh state, the Helvetian federation, which, from the military point of view, at least, had to be counted among the great powers. The more the general tension over the Italian issues increased, the more important became the question whether and on whose side the Swiss would

---


9 See the dispatch of the Venetian ambassador in Rome, Mar. 17, 1512, quoted by Brosch, pp. 242–243 and 357, n. 8.

10 See Pastor, VI, 383–384 and 412–413; and H. Kretschmayer, Geschichte von Vendig (Gotha, 1920), II, 459.


12 As to contemporary documents illustrating this situation see, e.g., Lettres du Roy Louis XII, III, 119, 149–150, and 208; Desjardins, II, 573; Sanuto, XIV, 48 and 76; and see also Kohler, pp. 297–298.
participate in the coming hostilities. Ever since the French invasion of Italy in 1494, Swiss mercenaries had fought in the service of the French kings. But when in 1510 Louis XII failed to renew his old alliance with the federation, Julius II used this opportunity to secure for himself the support of the best soldiers of that time. In March 1510 he concluded an agreement which obliged the Swiss, in exchange for the papal promise of annual subsidies, to come to the defense of the holy see during the next five years, whenever the pope might request their help; the Swiss also engaged not to make an alliance with a third power without the pope's knowledge and consent. As this treaty of 1510 was to last for five years, it would appear at first glance that at the time of the outbreak of the war of the Holy League the Swiss were still under obligation to fight on the papal side. But in spite of the fact that in December 1511 they had undertaken an expedition against the French in Lombardy, the Swiss no longer considered themselves legally bound to the papal cause, for, according to their claims, Julius had not completely fulfilled the financial stipulations of the treaty of 1510.

As things stood early in 1512, it was natural that both the Holy League and France should strive to win the military support of the Helvetian federation, and it was just as natural that the Swiss should try to use this favorable situation to their best advantage. They were willing to listen to propositions made by representatives of both camps, but at the same time they made it very clear that their services could be obtained only for a heavy price. At the French court it was realized that "the whole victory of the king [Louis] against his enemies was based" on the support of the Swiss. But after many conferences the French envoys to the Helvetian diet were finally, on March 24, 1512, ordered by the French court to make a formal proposal of an alliance with the Swiss league. This proposition was made in the following terms: "We demand of you that you come to our aid in this war, and in order that we may have a true and good friendship with you, you shall do the following: You shall swear to us that you shall fight against all enemies of the king our sovereign lord, from which time forth you shall have the title of 'ally' and the right to consult with us on all matters of importance." The Swiss, however, insisted on a higher price, and the negotiations were suspended until further notice.

---

13 See Kohler, pp. 151-153; and Gagliardi, I, 250.
14 On this campaign see Kohler, pp. 219-280. Gagliardi, I, 252-253; and Nabholz, p. 303.
15 See Kohler, pp. 192, 203-205, and 288-292.
16 On these negotiations of the Swiss with France and with the Holy League see esp. Kohler, pp. 286-305.
17 Letter of Jean le Veuve to Margaret of Austria, Blois, Jan. 29, 1511: "... sur laquelle resolution est fondée toute la victoire du Roy contre ses ennemys" (Lettres du Roy Louis XII, III, 135).
presented with "so great and unreasonable" financial demands that they had to ask for an adjournment of the talks in order to get new instructions from Louis. While carrying on these negotiations with the French, the Helvetic diet decided to send a large diplomatic mission to Venice to meet there a fellow-countryman, the cardinal and papal legate, Mathaeus Schiner, and to discuss with him and the Venetians the possibilities of renewing or implementing the former alliance with Pope Julius. Immediately after the arrival of Cardinal Schiner in Venice on March 26 the parleys between him and the Helvetic envoys started.

The great question, then, in March 1512 was whether the Swiss would ultimately ally themselves with France or with the Holy League. As a matter of fact, Andreas of Burgos, one of the shrewdest observers of the rapidly shifting diplomatic scene of those days, who at that time was accredited to the French court, declared specifically that the future course of events depended largely on this Swiss decision. In a dispatch which he wrote from Blois to Margaret of Austria on March 15 he gave a detailed account of the intricate diplomatic game of the preceding weeks and reported the news from Italy concerning the probability of an imminent offensive of the French troops against the armies of the Holy League. Then Andreas continued: "L'on attend de jours en jours nouvelles de ce que

---

18 According to a dispatch of Andreas of Burgos of March 22, the Swiss "demandent choses si grandes et desraisonnables que jamais le Roy ne le fera si ce n'est par autre extreme necessité" (Lettres du Roy Louis XII, III, 206).


22 On these negotiations see esp. Sanuto, XIV, 57–79 and passim (Mar. 26–Apr. 2); and Kohler, pp. 313–319.

23 Lettres du Roy Louis XII, III, 197.
s'ensuyvra en Suysses, de quo y depend en grand partie ce qu'advien dra d'estre.'"

The picture painted by Andreas of Burgos of the European situation in mid-March 1512 provides us with an excellent key to the understanding of the content and the purpose of Pope Julius' bull of March 17, 1512, for there are two distinct issues with which Julius shows himself primarily concerned in this document—the war against the French army in Italy and the problem of the Swiss attitude toward the Holy League and France.

In regard to the first point, the pope complains bitterly about the continuous support given by Louis XII and his troops to the members of the Este and Bentivoglio families. According to Julius, this aid has frustrated so far all attempts made by himself and his ally, King Ferdinand of Aragon, to crush "the tyranny" of those lords of Ferrara and Bologna and to re-establish papal authority over the territories of the Roman church now "usurped" by them. To remedy the situation, the pope commands "the captains of King Louis and those fighting under them in the cities of Ferrara and Bologna and other lands belonging to the Roman church" to evacuate these territories within six days from the promulgation of this bull. In case the French should disobey this order of the pope, they will automatically fall under papal excommunication and other most severe punishments of the church.

In applying these ecclesiastical weapons against the French troops, the pope acted in accordance with an obligation which he had assumed at the time of the conclusion of the Holy League. One of the articles of this alliance stipulated that the pope was bound "to fulminate censures and ecclesiastical penalties against anyone of whatever authority or rank, ecclesiastical, secular or even royal, who opposed the League... both inside and outside Italy." 24 When the pope finally, after five

---

24 "Item, quod Sanctissimus Dominus noster teneatur et debeat contra quoscumque, quavis auctoritate vel dignitate ecclesiastica vel mundana etiam regia fulgentes et praeditos, hujusmodi ligae et foederi se opponentes, eis auxilium consilium et favorem praestantes tam in Italia quam extra,
months of more or less open and direct hostilities between the armies of the Holy League and Louis XII, made good this threat of excommunication, he was certainly not under the illusion that the French generals would be so deeply impressed by his spiritual authority that they would automatically comply with his order. It is more plausible to assume that through the promulgation of this bull Julius wanted to put an end to the state of undeclared warfare and to brand publicly the French troops in Italy as enemies of the papal see.

If this interpretation of the bull as a kind of official declaration of war against the French in Italy is correct, the date of its issuance, March 17, is very interesting, for as we have seen before, it was on the very same day that Domenico Massimo made a last attempt to bring about a Franco-papal understanding. From our new document we are able to conclude not merely that on that day the pope gave an evasive answer to Massimo's entreaties but that he also decided to break openly with the French. In regard to this rupture it is, however, also worth noticing that Julius excommunicated only the French commanders and their troops in Italy and not the king himself. Throughout the bull, Julius speaks most respectfully of “our dearest son in Christ, the most Christian King of the French,” in striking contrast to his denunciation of Alfonso of Ferrara and the members of the Bentivoglio families as “sons of iniquity.” A past master of the diplomatic game of the Italian Renaissance and a great expert in the most subtle rules of this game, Julius knew how to hold the door still ajar for the possibility of a reconciliation with the French king.

What were, however, the specific reasons which, at that particular moment, motivated the pope to “formalize” his war against the French armies by excommunicating them? This question brings us to the second aspect of the document, its connection with the problem of the Swiss attitude and with the diplomatic negotiations then going on in Venice.

Whether or not the pope had any information concerning the secret overtures made by the French to the Venetians at that
time is impossible to decide. We know only that on March 19 and later some French proposals for the conclusion of a separate peace were submitted to the Venetian doge and council \(^{23}\) and that on March 23 the same council was informed through a dispatch of the Venetian ambassador in Rome that the pope "has composed a bull in which he excommunicates all those who stay in the pay of France or give aid to it." \(^{26}\) On the next day, the 24th, the papal nuncio in Venice presented certain proposals concerning the conclusion of an agreement between Venice and Emperor Maximilian and at the same time told the Venetian council of Julius' resolution of "chasing the French." \(^{27}\) If the pope actually happened to know of the secret Franco-Venetian negotiations, the promulgation of his bull at that very moment could very well serve to keep the Venetians in the camp of the Holy League. But even if we discard the possibility of this specific objective, there is no doubt that through the excommunication of the French troops the pope intended to notify the Venetians that henceforth he wanted to wage the Italian war in a much more open and resolute fashion than had been the case hitherto. Thus, Cardinal Schiner, in his own words, "speaking as a good Italian, though born a barbarian" (i.e., a Swiss), certainly acted in accordance with Julius' ideas and instructions when, on March 28, he declared before the Venetian council that he would do everything in his power "to chase the barbarians out of Italy and to bring the Swiss into the [Holy] League." \(^{28}\)

This last reference and other similar passages in Schiner's speech before the Venetian council on March 28 have to be connected with those parts of Julius' bull of March 17 which deal with the Swiss problem. In speaking of the hostile acts commit-

\(^{25}\) Compare Sanuto, XIV, 38-39, 47, 51, 61-62 and 78; see also Kohler, pp. 312-313.

\(^{26}\) "(Sua Santità) . . . ha fatto una bulla che scomunica tutti chi è a soldo di Franza e chi li dà aiuto, etiam sguirari si con lui saranno, et asolve tutti quelli che li va contra in servizio di la Chiexia e di colpa e di pena, benedicendoli etc" (Sanuto, XIV, 49; cf. also Kohler, p. 318).

\(^{27}\) "E . . . di la bona mente dil Papa in concluendo questo accordo e cazar francesi" (Sanuto, XIV, 52).

\(^{28}\) "[Schiner] parlando per tanto come bon italiano, licet sia nasuto barbaro, vol far ogni suo poter che se caza barbari de Italia, et far li elvetii sia con la liga" (ibid., p. 58).
ted by the French against himself, the pope says that he has been informed from several sources that Louis XII is trying to incite the Swiss to fight on the French side against Julius and his ally, King Ferdinand of Aragon. This complaint shows clearly that the pope had full knowledge of the French-Swiss negotiations which were taking place at that time before the Helvetian diet. In his bull the pope recalls the fact of the alliance which (since March 1510) had existed between himself and the Helvetian federation, and he reminds the Swiss of their promises and legal obligations which, in his opinion, are still valid. He forbids them, therefore, under the threat of excommunication to conclude an alliance with Louis or to give military assistance to him or any other enemy of the pope and his allies. He even requests the Swiss not to carry on negotiations or to have any direct or indirect dealings with the troops of the French king.

There is no doubt that these sections dealing with the Swiss problem were inserted into the bull of March 17 for a very definite and practical purpose. They were to be used by Cardinal Schiner in his negotiations with the envoys of the Helvetian federation in Venice. We know that rumors had been spread in Switzerland to the effect that the pope was on the point of reconciling himself with the French king. From the papal point of view these rumors were very dangerous because they could easily give a pretext to the Swiss for the conclusion of an agreement of their own with the French. To deny the authenticity of these reports and to prove at the same time the pope's definite rupture with the French in Italy, Cardinal Schiner had only to produce the bull of March 17 and to point out to the Swiss envoys the fact of the papal excommunication of the French generals and troops. But even more, the threat of excommunication against the Swiss themselves enabled the papal negotiator to put strong pressure upon the envoys of the Helvetian federation, for if elsewhere the weapons of ecclesiastical penalties, because of their all too frequent use, had become rather blunt and ineffective, they could still be expected to make a deep impression upon the devout mountaineers.

To be sure, the most crucial point in the negotiations between

Scheriner and the Swiss envoys in Venice was the satisfaction of the financial demands of the federation, just as was the case in the simultaneous bargaining between the French envoys and the Helvetic diet in Zurich. Cardinal Scheriner put this point very neatly before the council of Venice in his speech of March 28 when he said: "We know the malady of those Swiss. Through the medicine of money they will recover quickly." But the cardinal was too good a diplomat not to use other, more intangible and immaterial inducements as well.

First, Scheriner held out promises of some special and symbolic honors, like the gift of a sword. But eventually, after a whole week of negotiations, he told the Swiss delegation directly about the papal bull of March 17. According to the official report of the envoys, he informed them on April 2 that the "pope has heard about the presence of French ambassadors in Switzerland and about their proposal of a Franco-Swiss alliance. If such an agreement should be concluded, the pope is resolved to anathematize the Swiss in the same way as he has already anathematized the French." This final threat seems to have turned the scale of the negotiations, for on the same day, April 2, a basic agreement for an alliance was reached between Cardinal Scheriner and the Swiss envoys. Five days later the Helvetian delegation was ready to leave Venice to submit the treaty to the Helvetian diet for ratification.

After that events moved rapidly. While the Swiss envoys were still on their way home, on April 11, the French army under Gaston de Foix triumphed over the army of the Holy League in the great battle of Ravenna. For a moment Julius II believed his cause lost. But soon he recovered his courage and decided to

30 "... cognoscemola malatia diessielvetii, quali con danarì si risanano presto" (Sanuto, XIV, 58).
31 See the dispatch of the Swiss envoys to the diet in Zurich: "Uff frytag vor dem pahttag [i.e., Apr. 2] hat unser gnaediger herr [i.e., Scheriner] uns anzeigt, das iim brief und Bullen kommen syen von baebstlicher H[eilig]keit, wie das baeheul. Ht. vernommen habe, das die franzoesische Botschaft in unserm land lige und da ein Vereynung mit uns machen welle; wo das bescheche, ist Sin Heiligkeit der Meynung, uns in bann zu thun mit allem fuch wie dann die Franzosen darin sind" (Amtliche Sammlung der älteren Eidgenössischen Abschiede, III, Part 2 [Lucerne, 1869], 606; cf. V. Anshelm, Berner Chronik, III [Bern, 1888], 306).
fight on. Even more important for further developments was that on April 19 the Helvetian diet, still ignorant of the outcome of the battle of Ravenna, resolved to ratify the alliance with the pope and to start war against France early in May. In a campaign of only a few weeks the Swiss, without much support from the other armies of the Holy League, conquered most of Lombardy and forced the French troops to withdraw completely from Italy.

All these dramatic changes took place within three months after March 17, when the pope had issued his declaration of war against the French armies in Italy. On June 22 Julius received the news of the final collapse of the French power in Italy. He exclaimed exuberantly: "We have won. We have won. . . . May God give joy . . . to all the faithful souls whom he has at last deigned to deliver from the yoke of the barbarians." But Julius II remembered also very well that above everything else it had been the power of the Swiss soldiers which allowed him to see the realization of his most cherished desire, the liberation of Italy from the French. Thus, on July 6, 1512, the same Swiss, who only a few months earlier had been threatened by the papal anathema, were granted by the pope the perpetual title of "Protectors of the Liberty of the Church."

TEXT OF THE BULL

Julius episcopus servus servorum Dei. Ad futuram rei memoriam. Ad compescendos conatus nepharios perversorum, qui Dei timore postposito contra Romanam ecclesiam sponsam nostram, quam pro corum honore et dignitate liberalem et gratiosam

32 Compare Kohler, pp. 320–324; and Buechi, "Korrespondenzen," loc. cit., pp. 139, No. 174, 140, No. 175.
33 See Kohler, pp. 338–399.
34 Account of the papal master of ceremonies, Paris de Grassis, as quoted by Pastor, VI, 416.
35 The document which is preserved in the Scheide collection of the Library of Princeton University is not an original but a copy. This copy originated, however, in the papal chancery itself, for we find on the reverse side the following notes: "De curia[?] duplicata"; and beneath that line, in larger letters: "A[?] de Comitibus." Also on the reverse side we read: "Ita apud me Bal. Tuerdum." The name of Balthasar Tuerdus appears likewise
invenereunt, arma sumere non vererunt, tanto magis nos decet oportune remedio providere, quanto peramplius eorum de-testanda iniquitas tendit in divine maiestatis offensam et ex illorum malefactis, qui ab aliis facile in exemplum trahuuntur [sic], possent ecclesie prefate maiora scandala provenire. Sane quod non sine magni animi displacentia referre cogimur, quod, cum anno proxime elapso potentissimum fortissimumque exercitum contra iniquitatis filium Alfonsum Esten(sem) civitatem nostram Ferrarie ad Romanam ecclesiam legitime devolutam occupatam indebite detinentem paravissemus, charissimus in Christo filius noster Ludovicus Francorum rex christianissimus non solum eisdem Alfonsi protectionem recepit eique gentium armorum copiis auxilium prestitit, quominus civitatem ipsam recuperare valuerimus, verum etiam effecit, quod iniquitatis filii Bentivoli eisdem regis exercitu suffultci civitatem nostram Bononien(sem), que et eius cives ab eorum tirannide opera nostra magni nostro in commodo liberata fuerat, occuparent et occupatam detinarent. Nuper ex pluribus locis ad nostrum pervenit auditum, quod idem rex Helvetiorum et Sue tertium [sic] gentes manupromptas et in arte militari expertas, que nobis pro Romane ecclesie et nostrorum iurium conservatisen fedus et ligam inierunt et nunquam contra nos et eandem ecclesiam, cuius semper devotissimi filii fuerunt, arma sumere promiserunt et ad id se astringerunt, contra nos et dictam ecclesiam provocare et in partis [sic] suas adducere et ad sua stipendia conducere satagit, ut valido et potenti exercitui, quem charissimus in Christo filius noster Ferdinandus Aragonum rex illustris et catholicus ex partibus Hispaniarum pro nostra et iurium dicte ecclesie defensione ac civitatum huiusmodi recuperatione misit, ac nostro aperte resistere seu illum profugire ac terras et

at the end of the bull itself; he was, as we know from other bulls of Julius II, a member of the papal chancery. From this provenance we may conclude that the Princeton document is a “transumptum auctenticum,” i.e., one of the official copies which, according to the text of our bull itself, were to be used to propagate and publicize its content as widely as possible. The first line of the text, containing Julius’ title and the invocation, is written in elongated capitals. Apart from a few small holes which have been caused by the folding of the parchment document, it is in an excellent state of preservation.
loca dicte ecclesie armata manu invadere possit, et ad hec se totis viribus preparat contra nos, qui summo desiderio cupimus non solum dictarum civitatum recuperationem ac pacem et tranquilitatem in ecclesia Dei conservare, sed etiam impedit sanctos cogitatus nostros de obviando infidelibus et quod per nos apparatus erat contra Christiani nominis hostes prosequi, ac verentes, ne ex hiis maiores tumultus, ut verisimiliter creditur, excitentur, quibus impediti premissa exequiri ut optamus non possumus.

Conversi ad remedia, que pronunc offeruntur et in bulla que legitur “In cena Domini” continentur, videlicet quod omnes conspirantes aut coniurantes contra personam statum vel auctoritatem Romani pontificis, etiam regali dignitate fulgentes aut eis consilium auxilium vel favorem quomodolibet prestantes aut civitates terras et alia loca ecclesie Romane invadentes et illis adherentes excommunicantur et anathematizantur, prefati Ludovici regis capitaneos ac sub eis militantes in Ferrarien(s) et Bononien(s) civitatibus et aliis terris ad dictam Romanam ecclesiam pertinentibus existentes et alios tunc expressos, quos etiam per alios nostra litteras excommunicationis sententias ac alias penas in litteris nostris privationis dicti Alfonsi Esten(s) olim ducis Ferraric contentas incurrisse declaravimus in virtute sancte obedientie et sub penis infrascriptis et etiam in dicta bulla “Cene Domini” contentis, quas contrafacientes incurriere voluimus ipso facto, auctoritate apostolica tenore presentium requirimus et monemus eisque districte precipiendo mandamus, quatinus omni excusatione cessante appositionibusque exceptionibus et replicationibus quibuscunque infra sex dierum spatium, postquam presentes littere fuerunt publicate, quorum duo pro primo, duo [sic] pro secundo et reliquis duobus dies pro tertia et ultimo ac peremptorio termino ac monitone canonica eis omnibus et eorum singulis assignamus, a Ferrarien(s) et Bononien(s) ac aliis civitatibus et terris ac locis dicte ecclesie recedant et a prestacione auxili consilii vel favoris Alfonso et Bentivolis prefatis penitus desistant, alioquin lapsis sex diebus huiu- (sm)odi 30 in dicti Ludovici regis capitaneos et sub eis militantes

30 There is a hole in the parchment; the above conjecture seems to be most probable.
et quemlibet eorum maioris excommunicationis sententiam pro-
mulgamus in his scriptis et illos illam incurrere volumus eo
ipso, a qua preter in mortis articulo constituti ab alio quam a
Romano pontifice, et(siam pretex)tu 36 cuiuscunque facultatis
cuiuscunque pro tempore desuper concesse, nequeant absolutionis
beneficium obtinere. Et si moniti et excommunicati predicti
dictam excommunicationis sententiam per alios tres dies dictos
sex dies immediate sequentes animo, quod absit, sustinue(rint
ob)durato, 36 sententiam ipsam aggravamus. Si vero moniti et
excommuni(cati) 36 predicti per alios tres dies dictos ultimos tres
dies immediate sequentes ad cor revertit et nostris motioni et
mandato predictis obtemperare distulerint et in sua voluerint
cordis duritia et perversa obstinatione permanere, eos et quem-
libet eorum reaggravationis et anathematizationis ac maledic-
tionis et damnationis iunctione percutimus ac omnium ecclesi-
asticarum censurarum laqueis ligatos et irretitos ac reos criminis
lese maiestatis et ab omnibus dicte Romane ecclesia devotis cum
eorum bonis perpetuo diffidatos ac honoribus et dignitatis
privatos auctoritate et potestatis plenitudine esse decernimus et
civitates terras opida et loca, ad que aliquem eorumsem excom-
unicatorum declinare contigerit, quamdiu ibidem perman-
serit et triduo post recessum eiusdem, ecclesiastico subjicimus
interdicto.

Ac universis et singulis Christi fidelibus, presentim Helvetiiis
et Suetensibus prefatis sub eisdem penis, ne contra sedus nobis-
cum initum contra nos aut alios colligatos nostros arma sumere
aut ad stipendia alicuius, qui contra nos et civitates et loca ad
dictam Romanam ecclesiam et colligatos nostros legitime spec-
tantia venirent, militare presumant, ac eis et quibusvis aliiis sub
eisdem penis iniungimus, ut excommunicatibus anathematizatos et
maledictos prefatos evitent et quantum in eis est evitari faciant
ac cum eis commercium aliquamve conversationem non habeant
nec eis prestent aliquod consilium auxilium vel favorem. Inhib-
emus quoque omnibus et singulis temporalia dominia obtinen-
tibus, etiam regali ducali principatus marchionatus comitatus
vel alia dignitate fulgentibus, universitatibus presentim corun-

36 There is a hole in the parchment; the above conjecture seems to be
most probable.
dem Suetensium et Helveticorum ac communitatibus quan-
cunque potentiam et dominium obtinentibus, ne cum regis
Gallorum gentibus huiusmodi directe vel indirecte maxime ad
impediendum recuperationem civitatum terrarum et locorum
ad dictam Romanam ecclesiam et colligatos nostros pertinen-
tium vel ad defensionem seu auxilium eorum dem se nobis vel pro
eadem ecclesia agentibus aut ad motionem belli opponant in
prejudicium Romane ecclesie tendentis ligam aut confere-
ationem [sic] seu colligationem suscipiant vel intelligentiam in-
eant, quas, quatinus ille ad prejudicium dicte Romane ecclesie
tendant, etiam si penarum adictione iuramentoque sint vallate,
non tenere et nemini, quominus eisdem monitis et excommuni-
catis lavendo sub colore eorum censuras predictas incurrant,
excussionem prestare posse declaramus, observent quoquo
modo.

Et ut moniti ac alii, quos presentes littere contingunt qui-
busve aliquid mandatur vel prohibetur per easdem, nequeant de
premissis ignorantiam allegare et pretextu ignorantie, si non
paruerint, velamen excussionis assumant, et ut ad ipsorum
notitiam ducantur, cum hee nostrre littere eis tute publicari
non possint, eas in valvis Basilice Principis Apostolorum de Urbe
et apostolice Cancellarie affigi iubemus. Ac omnibus et singulis
ordinariis locorum et civitatem tam in Italia quam extra eam
consistentium ecclesiarum quarumlibet cathedralium et non
cathedralium monasteriorum prioratum et domorum ac loco-
rum religiosorum ordinum quorumcunque etiam mendicantium
exemptorum et non exemptorum episcopis capitulis canonici
cabbatibus prioribus conventibus guardianis fratribus et personis
aliis ecclesiasticis quibuscunque et ipsorum cuilibet, ita quod
alter alterum in hiis exequendis non expectet, sub similibus
excommunicationem censuris et penis etiam privationis bene-
cficiorurn ac dignitatum et privilegiorum eis et eorum ecclesiis et
monasteriis a sede predicta vel alias quomodolibet conecessorum
dicta auctoritate mandamus, quatius ipsi et quilibet eorum,
cum desuper fuerint requisiti, has nostras litteras seu illarum
transumptum auctenticum manu publici notarii subscriptum et
sigillo alienius prelati munitum in ipsarum ecclesiarum valvis
affigant et alias etiam in eorum sermonibus ad populum publi-
The Venetians in Athens and the Destruction of the Parthenon in 1687*

ON September 12, 1683, the Turkish army, which had laid siege to Vienna, was defeated by imperial and Polish troops under the command of Duke Charles of Lorraine and King John Sobiesky of Poland. This event marks a turning point in the relations between Orient and Occident. For after a period of more than three centuries of Turkish aggression and conquest it was now the turn of the western peoples to assume that offensive, which in the course of the next two centuries led to the almost complete exclusion of the Turks from southeastern Europe. The signal for this counter attack was given by an alliance concluded under the papal auspices by the Habsburg emperor, Poland, the Venetian Republic, and other powers. The Venetians had good reasons for their adhesion to the anti-Turkish coalition. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they had seen their position in the eastern Mediterranean more and more threatened by the Turkish advance. They were, therefore, only too eager to go to war against the Ottoman Empire by attacking it simultaneously on the Dalmatian coast and in Greece. In three campaigns, from 1685 to 1687, the Venetian commander-in-chief, Francesco Morosini, succeeded in conquering the

whole Peloponnesus, which was to remain under Venetian rule until 1714.

However great this success was—and it was to be the last glorious chapter in Venetian history—Morosini’s Creek campaign has always been remembered with rather bitter feelings for one particular episode: his landing in the Piraeus and the conquest of Athens in September 1687. From the standpoint of the political historian this event is quite insignificant, since the Venetians had to abandon Athens after an occupation of hardly more than half a year. But futile as the expedition was, it will always be recalled because of the irreparable damage which was inflicted on the Parthenon by a Venetian bomb during the siege of the Acropolis on September 26, 1687.

What were the detailed circumstances under which the Parthenon was destroyed? This question has been raised frequently during the last hundred years, but so far no uniformity of opinion has been reached. In his recent book on The Venetians in Athens, 1687–1688, Mr. James Morton Paton has presented new sources of information on the topic. In addition, there exist some other sources which have not been used in the earlier monographs on the destruction of the Parthenon. This new material makes it appear appropriate to approach the much discussed problem once more, with the hope of finding a solution. In undertaking this task, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Paton’s research, which has greatly facilitated my task.

In 1835 Leopold Ranke published an article entitled: “Die Venezianer in Morea.” ¹ Ranke concerned himself primarily with the Venetians’ administration of the Peloponnesus during their brief rule over the peninsula from 1687 to 1714, but in a short retrospective chapter on the war of 1685–87 he spoke also of the conquest of Athens. In Ranke’s opinion this conquest must be considered “a calamity rather than a stroke of fortune.” For on this occasion “the most beautiful ruins of the world, the remains of perhaps the most perfect building that ever existed, were destroyed by an unfortunate accident.” Ranke used as his source of information an account given by a con-

¹ Historisch-politische Zeitschrift ii, Berlin, 1835.
temporary Venetian officer, Muazzo by name, which he reprinted in a footnote.\(^2\)

Whereas Ranke had expressed the view that the destruction of the Parthenon was due to "an unfortunate accident," the historian of Venice, S. Romanin, avoided committing himself to so definite an opinion. In his *Storia documentata di Venezia* he simply said that on the occasion of the shelling of the Acropolis a bomb fell in the Parthenon, which the Turks had transformed into a powder-magazine. He concluded his account with the statement that the Venetian commander-in-chief, Morosini, "gentilmente allevato al bello, al sentimento artistico in Venezia," could not help exclaiming: "O Atene, o delle arti cultrice, quale sei ora ridotta."\(^3\) By telling this anecdote, which he found in an eighteenth-century biography of Morosini,\(^4\) Romanin evidently implied that the Venetians themselves felt a profound regret for their work of destruction.

Ranke and Romanin had based their accounts on rather inadequate sources. Neither they nor anyone before them had made an attempt to collect all the sources relating to the siege and conquest of Athens and the Acropolis in 1687. The gathering of all the material available was the task which the Comte de Laborde set himself in his work: *Athènes aux XV\(e\), XVI\(e\) et XVII\(e\) siècles*, where he dealt in great detail with the events leading to the catastrophe of the Acropolis.\(^5\) De Laborde's interest in the subject was not entirely that of an antiquarian, as is shown by the dedication of the second volume of his book: "Aux vandales, mutilateurs, spoliateurs, restaurateurs de tous les pays, hommage d'une profonde indignation." But despite his moral indignation over "cette détestable bombe"\(^6\) and the incidents which led to the final disaster, de Laborde strove hard to be fair to the people responsible for it; especially to the com-

\(^2\) *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift* ii, 1835, p. 425.


\(^4\) A. Arrighi, *De vita et rebus gestis F. Mauroceni*, Padova, 1749.


\(^6\) De Laborde, *Athènes* ii, p. 149.
manding general, Count Koenigsmarck, upon whom he did not want to cast "un trop amer reproche." The conclusion of the French scholar, however, was that the destruction of the Parthenon was not due to "an unfortunate accident," but that it was done intentionally. De Laborde's principal source of information was an account given in a diary of a German officer in the Venetian expeditionary army, Sobiewolsky by name. According to this report, the Venetians were informed by a deserter that the besieged Turks used the Parthenon as a powder-magazine; consequently, the Venetians made the temple the target of their bombs and after a number of misses they eventually succeeding in hitting and blowing it up. At the end of his narrative de Laborde spoke of the admiration of the Venetian officers for the greatness of the ruined monument. But at that point, again, de Laborde expressed his moral condemnation by the remark that the feeling of remorse made Morosini decline "the responsibility for the misdeed."

De Laborde's thesis met with quite different responses. In 1871, Adolf Michaelis published his book, Der Parthenon, where he gave a detailed account of the siege and conquest of Athens in 1687. Michaelis, to be sure, did not take the standpoint of a moral judge, as de Laborde had done, but his presentation of the events followed that of the French scholar with only slight divergencies. In Michaelis' opinion, too, "the fateful shot" was the result of the deserter's report concerning the powder-magazine in the temple, which gave "a definite target for the Venetians."

Ranke certainly did not wish to make this his own opinion. When, a few years after the publication of Michaelis' book, he reprinted his essay on the Venetians in Morea, he did not change a single word in his text, in which he had attributed the destruction of the Parthenon to "an unfortunate accident."

7 L.c. ii, p. 139. 8 See de Laborde, L.c. ii, p. 151, n. 1.
9 L.c. ii, p. 175.
10 A. Michaelis, Der Parthenon, Leipzig, 1871, pp. 61-65.
11 See Michaelis, L.c., p. 61, n 251. In appendix III of his book (pp. 345-347), Michaelis printed extracts from the most important sources concerning the siege of the Acropolis.
12 L.c., p. 62.
merely added a passage to his original footnote in which he rejected de Laborde's thesis. He contrasted briefly his own authority (the account of the Venetian officer Muazzo), with that of de Laborde (the diary of the German officer Sobiewolsky), and came to the conclusion that, compared with Muazzo's narrative, that of Sobiewolsky was "ein kameradschaftliches Histörchen." He decided, therefore, that the story could be disregarded and that "Muazzo's account is here undoubtedly to be preferred." It is curious to note a certain sensitiveness on the part of Ranke against the imputation that, if Sobiewolsky were to be believed, an unnamed German artilleryman was responsible: "this honor," Ranke exclaimed ironically, "we Germans can refute with good conscience."

De Laborde had not raised this national issue; in his opinion "Christian Europe" as a whole, and not individual nations and their members, were responsible for the disaster of 1687. But just as Ranke had sensed a certain attack against German honor in de Laborde's thesis, so had an Italian scholar seen in it a "slander" on the Venetian name. In 1881, A. Dall'Acqua Giusti published an essay: "I Veneziani in Atene nel 1687," the purpose of which was to reply to de Laborde's book and its thesis, and to save Venice, "salvatrice della civiltà dell'Europa," from "la nuova invettiva," which charged her with the wilful destruction of Ictinus' masterpiece. After a brief account of the beginnings of the siege and the bombardment of the Acropolis, Dall'Acqua Giusti came to the crucial question, how to account for the fateful bomb which blew up the Parthenon. "Was it by deliberate aim or by accident? By accident." His authorities were primarily the accounts of three officers of the Venetian expeditionary force, among them Muazzo. In Dall'Acqua Giusti's opinion, Sobiewolsky's testimony could be entirely discarded, since it was not only completely isolated, but taken by itself was hardly believable. For, according to Dall'Acqua Giusti, ballistics were not yet very far advanced, and therefore it was impossible to assume that a shot fired from a

14 See de Laborde, Athènes ii, pp. 149 ff.
15 Archivio Veneto xxii, 1881, pp. 251-270.
16 L.c., p. 251.
17 L.c., p. 259.
18 L.c., pp. 259 ff.
great distance and to a much higher point could have been aimed so precisely as to hit the only vulnerable point in the middle of the temple. "So marvellous an artilleryman seems to me to be fabulous," Dall'Acqua Giusti concluded. Thus he decided that de Laborde, to be sure, did excellent work in collecting all the sources available for the solution of the problem, but that he did not make the right use of them, since, because of his alleged prejudice against the Venetians, he relied exclusively on one source, the diary of Sobiecwolsky, and neglected the other and more trustworthy testimony.

Since the publication of Dall'Acqua Giusti's article, the problem of the causes responsible for the destruction of the Parthenon has never again been studied by itself. Those scholars who had to deal with the event in a larger connection, as, for instance, in histories of Venice or Athens, did not turn to the primary sources, but contented themselves with accepting the results of one of the earlier monographs. Thus we find one group of authors who, in accordance with Ranke and Dall'Acqua Giusti, attributes the destruction of the Parthenon to "an unfortunate accident." In this group we find F. Gregorovius, W. G. Hazlitt, and H. Kretschmayr. A number of other scholars accepted de Laborde's and Michaelis' thesis and believed that the destruction had been intentional. This opinion we find in W. Miller, M. L. D'Ooge, and G. Fougères. Finally, a third group of students avoids the whole issue and states simply the fact that the Parthenon was ruined during the siege of 1687. Among these are G. Finlay and H. C. Brown.

19 L.c., p. 266.
20 L.c., pp. 267 ff.
21 Die Geschichte der Stadt Athen im Mittelalter ii, Stuttgart, 1889, p. 420.
22 The Venetian Republic; its Rise, its Growth, and its Fall (1410-1797) ii, London, 1900, p. 279.
27 A History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time v, Oxford, 1877, p. 185.
del barbaro luogo, s’ebbe il contento di vederne fra le altre cader una, la sera del 26, con fortunato colpo, mentre acceso un deposito di buona quantità di polvere, non potè più estinguersi la fiamma, che andò serpendo, e per due interi giorni dirottando l’abitato coll’apportar loro notabili danni e crucciose mestizie.” 31 But despite this calamity, Morosini reported, the besieged Turks held out bravely and surrendered the fortress only after their hope for relief from outside had proved to be vain.

In this report several points seem noteworthy. In the first place, Morosini did not claim any merit for himself, but attributed the direction of the attack and its success to the commander of the landing forces, Count Koenigsmarck. Should this fact lead us to assume that by disclaiming any personal responsibility, Morosini intended to put any possible blame for the work of destruction on another man? I do not think so. Morosini expressed very clearly his “satisfaction” over the “lucky shot” which played such an important part in the siege. Was this “fortunato colpo,” then, according to Morosini, a merely fortunate accident? Certainly not. For it resulted from a systematic bombardment which had lasted for several days and the purpose of which could have been nothing else but such a direct hit. Finally, we should note that in this report Morosini simply spoke of the explosion of a powder-magazine and did not say anything about the destruction of the Parthenon.

About a week after this first account of the conquest of Athens, Morosini sent a second report to Venice. 32 He informed the Venetian Senate that he had appointed Count Pompei governor of the ruined fortress, “da cui s’applica di fronte a farlo scombrar dalle rovine, e renderlo purificato dal fetore de’ putrefatti cadaveri, sendone più di trecento periti di sesso diverso dalla sola prodigiosa bomba che causò la desolazione del maestoso tempio dedicato a Minerva, e che in empia moschea s’era convertito.” 33

31 L.c., p. 158, n. 1.
33 L.c., p. 162, n. 1.
From this second letter we learn further details concerning the effects of this "prodigious bomb": it had caused the ruin of the Parthenon and had brought death to more than three hundred people of both sexes.

Count Koenigsmarck, the second in command of the Venetian army, did not report to Venice on the siege-works under him, but we possess the testimony of a person who was in the general's entourage and who gives us precise information on his feelings at that critical moment. This evidence is contained in a long letter which, on the 18th of October, 1687, Anna Akerhjelm, lady-companion and friend of Countess Koenigsmarck, wrote from Athens to her brother in Sweden. The relevant passage reads as follows: "The fortress (i.e., the Acropolis) lies on a mountain which was, as some say, most difficult to seize, since no mines could be used. How reluctantly His Excellency (i.e., Count Koenigsmarck) saw himself compelled to destroy this beautiful temple which has stood some three thousand years (sic) and is called the temple of Minerva. But it could not be helped. The bombs did their work, and this temple can never again be re-erected in this world."

From the sources just quoted, we get a clear picture of both the actions and the feelings of the two highest commanders of the Venetian army. It was their task to complete the conquest of Athens with the seizure of the fortress, the Acropolis. Since the Turks refused to surrender, and since other means—such as sapping—were not applicable, they saw themselves forced to resort to a systematic bombardment of the citadel. The bomb-

---

34 In this country there is unfortunately no copy of A. Schwencke's work, *Geschichte der hannoverschen Truppen in Griechenland, 1685–1689*, Hannover, 1854, "in welchem aus den Briefschaften Koenigsmarcks die wichtigsten Mittheilungen über die Belagerung vorkommen," Ranke, *Sammliche Werke* xxxxxii, 297, n. 1; on Schwencke, see also de Laborde, *Athénes* ii, p. 139, n. 2. On Otto Wilhelm Graf von Koenigsmarck, see Krause's article in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* xvi, Leipzig, 1882, pp. 532 ff.

35 The Swedish text and a French translation are found in de Laborde, *Athénes* ii, pp. 276 ff.

36 "Fästningen ligger på ett berg, som säges vara det stemmaste att bemäktiga sig ty ingen mine kunde göras: huru nödtig Hans Excellents willa förberda det sköna tempel som uti 900 år har stått och kallas Minerva Tempel, men det hjelpte inte, bomberna gjorde sin werkan och kan det tempel aldrig i denna werlden mer upprättas"; *l.c.*, p. 276.
ing had the desired effect: for one shot blew up a powder-magazine, which was in the Parthenon, and caused such damage that after two more days the besieged Turks capitulated. From the military point of view there was every reason for the satisfaction which Morosini expressed in his dispatches, although both he and Count Koenigsmarck felt great personal regret that this victory had to be bought at the price of the ruin of the Parthenon, the beauty of which both admired.

We must now turn to the second group of documents relating to the siege of Athens, the reports of Venetian officers. Here we have first the *Relazione dell'operato dell'armi venete dopo la sua partenza da Corinto e della presa d'Atene*, which was written by an unknown officer who took part in the siege.\(^37\) In his account of the bombardment this writer discriminated sharply between the efficiency of the cannon and the mortars. The cannon-fire was well directed and soon silenced the batteries of the enemy. As to the mortars, however, the author of the report asserted: "Le bombe per il contrario non fecero alcuna danno alla fortezza, non so se per la troppo distanza de' mortari, ovvero per altra causa, non avendo il Moltoni (i.e., Mutoni, Count of San Felice), nemmeno quest'anno avuta fortuna di levare della mente di molti il concetto della sua poca abilità e la credenza che' abbia più parole che fatti." According to the *Relazione*, Count Koenigsmarck summoned Mutoni and reprimanded him severely for the inefficiency of his work. When, despite this rebuke, Mutoni's efforts continued to be of no avail, Koenigsmarck was on the point of removing him from the post in which only Morosini's intervention had kept him. "Ma nel punto ch'era (i.e., Koenigsmarck) per farne la consegna, una bomba gettata a capriccio e senza regola andò a cadere sul tempio di Pallade dentro alla fortezza e diede il fuoco a molta polvere che per giornaliero deposito tenevano in quel loco."\(^38\) A little farther on in the same *Relazione* we read: "In fortezza si vede il tempio dedicato a Pallade Proteettrice, ma quello che restò illeso dall'ira e furore di Serse è rimasto rovinato dalle bombe gettatevi in questo assedio, non essendo restato in piedi che una

piccola parte della facciata.” As to this last point, we may remark that the *Relazione* somewhat overstated the work of destruction by saying that only “a small part of the façade” remained. We may point out furthermore, that the author was inconsistent. At first he spoke of the explosion of only one bomb in the Parthenon; later, however, he used the plural, speaking of “the bombs thrown into it.” But most noteworthy is the statement of the *Relazione* that the fateful bomb was thrown “capriciously and irregularly.”

This assertion we find repeated in two more accounts. In a letter of June 8, 1688, written by a Venetian officer who had arrived in Athens about three months after the conquest, we read: “La conquista però della piazza si deve ad una bomba caduta a caso nel tempio di Minerva, ove i Turchi come asilo aveano riposte tutte le loro ricchezze ed il bassà tutta la munizione da guerra, la quale accesa, fè precipitosamente cadere quel l’altissima mole, la quale, benché caduta, non ha potuto non farmi restare estatico in contemplarla.”

Although this officer knew things only from hearsay, we possess testimony from a third Venetian officer, Francesco Muazzo, who had been an eye-witness of the conquest. In his *Storia della guerra tra li Veneti e Turchi dal 1684 a 1696*, Muazzo gave a detailed account of the siege of the Acropolis. Like the anonymous author of the *Relazione*, Muazzo asserted that the bombardment of the citadel was so badly managed that Count Koenigsmarck was forced to “corregger pubblicamente il Moltoni, direttore delle batterie, il quale per allora deposta le presunzione, lasciò la cura al governator Leandro assai provetto, benché suppeditato dal fasto ambizioso dell’altro. Adoprate le macchine da mani più destre, fecer immediate l’effetto dentro la rocca, ed il 27 settembre casualmente penetrò una per l’unico foro della superficie del tempio di Minerva, decantato per architettura e scultura impareggiabile, sostenuto negli archi massicci da raddoppiati corsi di smisurate colonne, alla divota sussistenza di cui (fatto meschita) la guarnigione tenea ricovrate le sostanze, le famiglie e le munizioni da guerra. Al cader della bomba s’accese la polvere. . . .” 40 This disaster greatly dis-
couraged the besieged Turks and eventually induced them to capitulate when their hope for outside relief proved vain.

It is on the basis of the three accounts quoted that the destruction of the Parthenon has been attributed by modern scholars to "an unfortunate accident." Before accepting or rejecting this thesis we must scrutinize these three sources more closely. In the case of the second we do not get very far, since the writer of the letter of 1688 simply stated that "one bomb fell by chance in the temple of Minerva." But in the Relazione and in Muazzo's account we obtain detailed information on the events preceding the fateful shot. According to both sources, the Venetians began a systematic bombardment of the besieged Acropolis. While the cannon did efficient work, the mortars did not achieve any success. Both Muazzo and the author of the Relazione ascribed this failure to the incompetency of Antonio Mutoni, Count of San Felice, who was in charge of the Venetian "bombisti." From sources collected by de Laborde and Paton we learn that Mutoni, because of his reputation as an expert in ballistics, had been put in charge of the Venetian mortars in 1685, but that his new theories and inventions did not work well during the campaigns of 1685 and 1686. In this respect, therefore, the charges made by Muazzo and by the Relazione against Mutoni are borne out by independent witnesses, who establish the fact that within the Venetian army there were officers who considered Mutoni unfit for his job; he was able to keep it only through the protection of the commander-in-chief Morosini.

On the other hand, we have to note an interesting divergence concerning an important point in the accounts of Muazzo and the Relazione. According to the Relazione, Mutoni was about to be replaced, when "a bomb, thrown capriciously and irregularly" fell into the powder-magazine in the Parthenon. According to this account, then, Mutoni was still in command when the decisive shot was fired; but, according to Muazzo, this was not the case. For he asserted that, after his rebuke by Count

41 See de Laborde, Athènes ii, p. 141, n. 5; especially the following passage from a letter of a German officer: "Le comte Felice est un sot, il nous fait plus de mal avec ses bombes qu'à l ennemi." Compare Paton, l.c., p. 74, n. 17.

42 See Paton, l.c., p. 72, n. 17.
Koenigsmarck, Mutoni yielded the direction of the actual bombardment to his subordinate Leandro. Muazzo then stated that "under a more adroit direction, the machines (i.e., the mortars) achieved immediate effect within the fortress and on the 27th (sic) of September a bomb accidentally penetrated the only opening in the roof of the temple of Minerva." This last sentence of Muazzo is puzzling and at first glance seems to be rather illogical. For if the fire of the mortars under the direction of Leandro was now actually better aimed, how could the final success then be "accidental"? The only possible explanation appears to be that, in Muazzo's opinion, it was by chance that the bomb fell into "the only opening" of an otherwise hardly penetrable surface.\(^43\)

When we accept this explanation, we cannot agree with Ranke and Dall'Acqua Giusti, who base their thesis of the "accidental" destruction of the Parthenon on the assertion that there exists concordant testimony of three Venetian officers on this point. For one of these officers, the writer of the letter of 1688, was not an eyewitness of the event, and his account is not very detailed; the two other accounts disagree as to whether or not Mutoni was still in charge of the bombing when the fateful shot was fired. According to the Relazione, moreover, it was by accident that the Parthenon was hit at all, whereas, according to Muazzo, it was by accident only that one particular and especially vulnerable spot in the building was hit. In addition we have to keep in mind that from the same sources we learn that within the Venetian army there existed two schools of opinion about the commander of the "bombisti," Mutoni, one group led by Count Koenigsmarck, the other by Morosini. We must take into consideration the possibility that the author of the Relazione and Muazzo were somewhat prejudiced and inclined to discredit the work, not only of Mutoni, but also of the mortars, by ascribing the final success of the bombs to a mere accident.

In addition to the accounts of the three Venetian officers, we

\(^{43}\) For Mutazzo's "unico foro della superficie del tempio," see a design of the Acropolis, drawn up in 1670 by an unknown artist, and reproduced by H. Omont, Athènes au XVII siècle, Paris, 1898, pl. XXIX.
possess narratives of the conquest of Athens written by two German officers in the expeditionary army. The first is found in a diary of a Hanoverian officer who fought in the Venetian service during the Greek campaign of 1686/87. The anonymous diarist gave a detailed report of the landing of the Venetians in the Piraeus on the 21st of September, the beginning of the siege, and an attempt to mine the citadel. On the afternoon of the second day of the siege "schosse man zur probe die erste bombe hinein, welche sehr woll fiel; auch wurden 4 stücke aufgebracht." The bombardment both with cannon and with mortars was continued throughout the next day: "auch wurden unterschiedliche Bomben hinein geworfen, welche guten Effect hatten, in dem unterschiedliche auf ihre Bolwerke gefallen und groszen Schaden gethan." Under the date of the 26th of September, the diarist said: "Frühe morgendz wurd wieder angefangen mit Canonen und Bomben zu werfen, doch wurden viel derselben fehl geworfen; gegen abend fiel eine in den schönen Tempel der göttin Minerva, welche den ihre Pulver und munition, so sie daselbst gehabt, ergriffen, so dasz alles angegangen, dergestalt, dasz durch einen gewaltigen schlag das schöne gebäude gantz ruiniret worden. . . ." The fire continued to rage for two days and destroyed the whole temple, "so dasz nichtz als die beiden mauer sehe blieben, welches den wohl zu bedauern war, in dem es noch von den eltesten und raresten gebäuden der welt gewesen. . . ." On the 28th of September the Turkish garrison, five hundred men apart from women and children, surrendered the fortress.

From this account we get a description of the bombardment of the Acropolis which is quite different from that given by the three Venetian officers. According to the Hanoverian diarist, "the unfortuniate bomb," which in one stroke blew up the Parthenon, was only the last and most successful in a series of hits within the Acropolis which had started two days earlier when the first bomb was fired with good effect into the fortress.

45 L.c., p. 369.
46 L.c., pp. 369 ff.
47 L.c., p. 370.
48 L.c., p. 370.
The diarist's statement that quite a few of the bombs went astray strengthens his claim to reliability, since even in the course of a systematic bombardment it was inevitable that a number of shots should miss their mark.

The second account of a German officer is found in the *Marschrute des Hessischen Regimentes so nach Morea geschickt worden*; the author is Major Sobiewolsky, who served as lieutenant of the Venetian auxiliary troops in the campaign of 1687. Sobiewolsky reported that on the 22nd day of September his regiment began to build trenches and to bring batteries into position. At the same time his men began to sap mines in the hard rock of the Acropolis, an effort which, in Sobiewolsky's opinion, probably would have proved vain. At that moment, he continued, "there came a deserter from the castle with the news that the commander of the fortress had all the stores of powder and other precious things brought to the temple which is called the temple of Minerva, and that also the people of rank were there because they believed that the Christians would not do any harm to the temple. Upon this report, several mortars were directed against the temple, but none of the bombs was able to do damage, particularly because the upper roof of the temple was somewhat sloping and covered with marble, and thus well protected. A lieutenant from Lüneburg, however, offered to throw bombs into the temple, and this was done. For one of the bombs fell through (the roof of) the temple and right into the Turkish store of powder, whereupon the middle of the temple blew up and everything inside was covered with stone, to the great consternation of the Turks." 40

40 "In deme aber dieses geschah (i.e., the mining), kame ein überläuffer aus dem Castell, welcher diese nachricht mitbrachte, das der Commandant der vestung allen vorraht von Pulver nebst anderen besten sachen in den Tempell, der Minervae Tempell genannt, hätte einbringen lassen, auch das die vornehmste Personen sich darin befinden, in dem sie glaubeten, die christen würden dem Tempell keinen schaden zufügen. Hierauf sind unterschiedliche Mörssell auff den Tempell gerichtet, keine bombe hat aber schaden können, sonderlich weilen das oberdach am Tempell etwas abhängig mit Marmor bedecket, und woll verwahret war. Ein lüneburgischer lieutenant aber, derselbe erboste (sic) sich, in den Tempell Bomben einzuwerfen, welches auch geschehen, in dem eine davon durch den Tempell gefallen, und eben in der Türckern vorraht von Pulver; da dan die
This "description" of Major Sobiewolsky is the crucial account which de Laborde and Michaelis made the basis of their narratives of the destruction of the Parthenon, and which Ranke and Dall'Acqua Giusti rejected peremptorily. In weighing the value of this statement we may note first that Sobiewolsky did not claim any merit for himself or for any other specific person, not even for a member of his own regiment. He was not like Benvenuto Cellini who, at the occasion of the siege of Rome in 1527, ascribed to himself the glory of the death of the Constable of Bourbon. The complete lack of personal pretension on the part of Sobiewolsky makes it difficult to discard entirely his report, since there seems to be no reason for him to invent a story which he reported as a simple matter of fact and without any judgment of value.

But apart from this inner plausibility, there exist other and independent authorities which to a certain extent confirm the correctness of Sobiewolsky's account. According to him, it was an officer from Luneburg who fired the decisive shot. Now we possess the text of the convention between the Duke Ernest of Brunswick and Lüneburg and the Venetian Republic concerning the sending of three regiments of eight hundred men each by the Duke to Venice in 1684. The 10th paragraph of this contract reads as follows: "L'artiglieria necessaria per queste Truppe con li bombardieri è la munition di guerra sarà fornita in ogni luogo dalla Repubblica à sue spese ed ella farà risarcir le armi rotte è perdute in fattion alli soldati." 50 This stipulation proves that the regiment, to which the officer from Lüneburg belonged, had mortars as part of its equipment.

Furthermore there exist several plans of the bombardment of the Acropolis which were drawn up by Verneda, an engineer in the Venetian expeditionary army, who took part in the siege of Athens. 51 In addition to bombs which are falling both inside

50 Printed in de Laborde, Athènes ii, p. 75, n. 1.
and outside the Acropolis, we see the effect of the one fatal bomb which has just blown the Parthenon into the air. Since Verneda indicated the trajectories of the missiles, we can trace the bomb back to the point from which it was fired. The position of this particular battery was, according to one of Verneda's plans, very close to the "Quartieri del Reg(imen)to del Principe di Branswich," that is, of that regiment to which Sobiewolsky's officer from Lüneburg belonged.

Finally, Sobiewolsky's story seems to be somewhat confirmed by the account which was given by the contemporary Venetian chronicler Cristoforo Ivanovich in his *Istoria della Lega Ortodossa contro il Turco*. For after having recounted the start of the bombardment of the fortress, Ivanovich continued: "Averitto Sua Eccellenza (i.e., Morosini) trovarsi nel Tempio di Minerva le monizioni de'Turchi insieme con le loro principali donne e figli, stimandosi ivi sicuri per la grossezza delle mura e volti del detto tempio, ordinò al Conte Mutoni che dirizzasse il tiro delle sue bombe a quella parte. Nacque sino dal principio qualche disordine nel getto delle medesime, che cadeano fuori, e fu per l'inegualità del peso che si trovò in 130 libre di svario dall'una all'altra; ma praticatosi il giusto peso non andò più fuori alcuna, si che una di quelle colpendo nel fianco del tempio fini di romperlo." In the next sentence Ivanovich described the "terrible effect" of this shot. The following paragraph of the *Istoria* told how on the 28th of September the Venetians defeated Turkish troops who attempted to relieve the fortress; and how on the same day the *Proveditor di Campo*, Dolfin, by "accelerating the work of the cannon and mortars," strove "di necessitar i Turchi alla resa." Ivanovich continued: "Averito il Mutoni da un Greco che in una casa erano ritirate alcune donne dell'Aga diresse i tiri alla medesima e una bomba fece si fiera stragge di quelle che atterrìa tutta la Fortezza, des-perata anco del soccorso fuggato, convenne esporre bandiera bianca per rendersi, e fu lo stesso giorno a ore 22."
Ivanovich's narrative seems to agree with Sobiewolsky's assertion that the Venetians were apprised of the existence of the powder-magazine in the Parthenon, and that, therefore, they made this building the target of their bombs. Since it is not possible to assume that Ivanovich had seen and read the account of the German officer, he must have obtained his information from other sources, probably from accounts given by Venetian soldiers after their return home. Thus, Sobiewolsky's story seems to be borne out and confirmed by an independent source. Unfortunately, Ivanovich's account of the episode as a whole is of dubious value. It is excusable that he attributed to Morosini a much greater personal share in the victory than any of the other sources, including Morosini's own reports; this may be explained, in the words of Mr. Paton, by Ivanovich's "wish to magnify the importance of the Captain General." But our belief in Ivanovich's reliability is really shaken when we read in his account, first that the explosion of the powder-magazine in the Parthenon came about because Morosini had been informed of its location and had directed the fire of the Venetian mortars there; and next when we read in the following paragraph—in almost identical words—about the deliberate slaughter of a number of Turkish women, likewise, because of special information—an incident not reported by any other source. This duplication of destructive bombs in Ivanovich's narrative actually is due, as Mr. Paton points out, "to a failure to recognize that two accounts of the disaster caused by the 'prodigiosa bomba' really referred to the same event."

Although this confusion makes it impossible to accept at face value Ivanovich's narrative of the details of the siege of the Acropolis, we may safely draw one conclusion: there were rumors in Venice which attributed the destruction of the Parthenon to a deliberate bombardment. The existence of these

56 See Paton, *I. c.,* pp. 69 ff.  
58 Paton, *I. c.,* p. 70, n. 11.  
59 There was, however, at least one man in the Venetian army who even claimed personal credit for the final success of the bombardment. On November 8, 1687, Matteo del Teglia, Florentine *Maestro di Posta,* wrote a letter from Venice to Florence in which we find the following sentence: 'La sorte di questo attaco toccò al Signore Rinaldo Buchetti, o di vero La
rumors would speak in favor of Sobiewolsky's assertion. But despite the conformity of two different and independent sources on this point, I hesitate to say more than that there is a certain probability for the truthfulness of these reports, but no really conclusive proof.

But even if we discard completely these particular details, we are certain of the following facts as substantiated by concurring testimonies of the various eyewitnesses:

(1) In 1687 the Acropolis served as a fortress to which the Turks retreated after they had been forced to abandon the city of Athens to the Venetian expeditionary army.

(2) The commanding generals of the Venetian army, Francesco Morosini and Count Koenigsmarck, desiring to spare the fortress the horrors of a siege, summoned the Turkish garrison to surrender before they opened the battle; the Turks, however, refused to capitulate.

(3) By military necessity, therefore, though with personal reluctance, the Venetian generals ordered a systematic bombardment of the Acropolis, which began on the 24th of September. An earlier attempt to mine the citadel had failed, because of the hardness of the rock on which it was built.

(4) After the bombardment had started, the mortars, in contrast to the efficiency of the cannon, did not obtain immediate effect. Eventually, however, on the third day of the siege, that is, on the 26th of September, one of the bombs penetrated the roof of the Parthenon and blew up a large store of powder in the temple; the explosion resulted in the death of many people and in a fire which, two days later, forced the Turkish garrison to surrender.

(5) Although the Venetians regretted the ruin of the Parthenon, they were highly pleased by this quick success of their arms;
they felt no need for apology when they announced the news of the conquest of Athens in the *Ragguagli giornaliero* of November 22 and December 6, 1687 (extracts in de Laborde, *Athènes* ii, p. 146, n. 1, and 176, n. 2). —In the fall of 1687, after the conquest of the Peloponnese had been completed, an official account of the expedition was printed in Venice under the title: *Ragguaglio giornaliero delle trionfanti ed invincibili armate Venete marittime e terrestri con suoi acquisiti distintamente descritti fatti contro la Potenza Ottomana . . . , seguiti l'anno 1687.* (In Venice, 1687, per G. Albrizio in Campo dalla guerra a S. Zulian.) While this report was in the process of publication, the news of the conquest of Athens arrived in Venice, and the editor decided immediately to insert at last a short account of this event in his book; see the edition of the text by H. Omont, "Une relation Vénitienne du siège d'Athènes," in *Revue des études Grecques* viii, 1895, p. 258. Immediately after its publication in Venice, the *Ragguaglio giornaliero* was translated into English under the title: *A Journal of the Venetian Campaign, A.D. 1687. Under the conduct of the capt. general Morosini, provost gen. Cornaro, general Coningsmarsh, general Venieri, etc.* (Translated from the Italian original, sent from Venice, and printed by the order of the most Serene Republic. Licensed, decemb. 16, 1687. R. L. Estrange, London; printed by H. C. and sold by R. Taylor, near Stationers Hall, 1688); the description of the siege of the Acropolis has been inserted on pp. 88 ff.—The Venetian government of that time was greatly interested in publicizing the successes of the Venetian armies and lent active support to a number of publications, both in the form of books and pamphlets, which served this purpose; some of these publications were even illustrated with drawings of battle scenes and sieges; on this practice, see de Laborde, l c. ii, 98-109; H. Omont, *Athènes au XVIIe siècle*, pp. 10 ff. (descriptions of pls. XXXII-XXXVII).

61 The rocky plateau of the Acropolis is very small, its largest extension from east to west being less than 350 yards, that from north to south less than 150 yards. Within this narrow space, the Parthenon occupies a comparatively large room, since its platform, the stylobate, is 70 yards long and 33 yards broad.
Antonio Mutoni, Count of San Felice, failed at first in his task and was accused of incompetency by his adversaries in the Venetian army. This fact has been told by Muazzo and by the anonymous author of the Relazione, who have served as the main authorities for the "accidental" character of the explosion. But, in my opinion, the very fact that Mutoni was accused of incompetency, proves that it was considered perfectly feasible to effect direct hits on the Acropolis, and that such hits were demanded. That the Parthenon was finally hit, was not an accidental event, but an almost inevitable and, from the military point of view, desirable result of the systematic bombardment of the Acropolis. If there was "luck," then it was that kind of luck with which every artillery officer will reckon, the luck he is hoping for and is to a certain degree able to bring about. In this sense, then, but only in this sense, we may take the words in Morosini's official reports, which attributed his victory to the "fortunato colpo" of "una prodigiosa bomba."
PART II

Petrarchan Studies
An Introduction to
Petrarch's Sonnets and Songs

PETRARCH presents in his life and work a most interesting example of a complete mutation in literary fame. For there exists in critical annals a very marked and curious contrast between his reputation among his contemporaries and in subsequent periods.

In the popular imagination of today his name is indissolubly linked with that of Laura,

"La bella giovenetta ch'ora è donna."

(Rime No. 127)

This tradition reaches back many centuries; in fact it had originated shortly after his death. To the majority of the generations of his admirers, Petrarch has been primarily the lover of Laura and the author of the Rime, the sonnets and songs which he began in his youth and in which he never tired of singing of his


1 I should like to thank my friend George W. Freytag, Jr., for his many valuable suggestions and for his constructive criticism.

love. Among Italians and non-Italians the image and fame of that Petrarch are just as much alive today as they were vivid towards the end of the fourteenth century when Geoffrey Chaucer glorified him in the *Canterbury Tales*:

"Fraunceys Petrak, the lauriat poete,
Highte this clerk, whose rethorike sweete
Enlumyned at Ytaille of poetrice."

Through the mastery of language in his Italian poetry Petrarch not only made an everlasting contribution to world literature, but also rendered a very specific service to the development and moulding of the language of his own country. Since the Renaissance literary historians have referred to him as "the father of the Italian language," a title which he shares with the two other great Florentines of the fourteenth century, Dante and Boccaccio.

By later generations Petrarch was considered an initiator in still another respect. Through the influence of the *Rime* he became the originator of a whole school of poetry, that of the "Petrarchists," which appeared soon after his death both inside and outside Italy. He had brought his favourite form of expression, the sonnet, to such a classical perfection that for centuries to come he remained the admired and widely imitated model of many poets who endeavoured to write in the same pattern. For the Elizabethan period witness the statement made in 1593 by Gabriel Harvey in his *Pierces Supererogation*: "All the noblest Italian, French, and Spanish poets have in their several veins Petrarchized; and it is no dishonour for the daintiest or divinest muse to be his scholar, whom the amiablest invention and beautifullest elocution acknowledge their master." Among these Petrarchists of the Renaissance we find Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey in England, the group of the *Pléiade* with their leader Ronsard in France.

In marked contrast to the judgment of posterity, Petrarch's own generation, however, found his principal merit in his Latin writings, not in his Italian poetry.

This contemporary estimate is most clearly shown by the fact
that it was the authorship of the Latin epic *Africa* and not that of the *Rime* which brought Petrarch, in 1341, at the age of thirty-seven, the famous crown of the poet laurcateship on the Roman Capitol. According to the tradition of the fourteenth century, in antiquity this ceremony had symbolized the greatest tribute which could be given to a living poet. To Petrarch’s contemporaries no one was deemed more worthy of this ancient honour than he who seemed to re-emboby the classical ideal. Through the conscious imitation of the *Aeneid* and the *Eclogues* in his own *Africa* and *Carmen Bucolicum* he appeared to have become a second Vergil. Moreover his numerous treatises dealing with problems of moral philosophy and especially the content and style of his hundreds of widely circulated letters placed him in juxtaposition with Cicero. And as King Robert the Wise of Naples asked Petrarch for the dedication of the *Africa* to himself, so the German Emperor Charles IV requested later on the same honour for Petrarch’s main historical work, the collection of Roman biographies entitled *De viris illustribus*, in which Petrarch recounted the lives and deeds of the great political and military leaders of ancient Rome in order to inspire his readers to similar accomplishments.

Throughout all these various Latin writings Petrarch pursued the same purpose: he wished to teach his Italian contemporaries not to regard the great Roman statesmen and writers as figures of a dead past, but to look upon them as living models for the present and as harbingers of the future. The Italians alone, not “barbarians” like the French or Germans, Petrarch asserted, had a legitimate claim to the Latin inheritance. In the acceptance of this Roman legacy Petrarch saw an instrument of spiritual unity for his fellow countrymen. With this motive he devoted many of his Latin poems, treatises, and letters to the task of awakening the consciousness of this legacy in the hearts and minds of the Italians of his day.

In this sense, then, Petrarch again stands at the beginning of a very important evolution in Italian culture, the great movement known as “the Revival of Antiquity” or “Humanism.” He was destined to direct and stimulate these new ideas in many significant ways, as for instance through his zealous effort to write
in a "pure," i.e., classical, Latin style, through his tireless and often extremely successful search for ancient manuscripts, and through his gift for textual emendation. In contrast to many of the later humanists, this "father of Humanism" did not, however, study Latin primarily from an antiquarian point of view, since for him this language was the medium through which the greatest aesthetic, intellectual, and political tradition ever created had found its timeless expression. It was as the voice of this tradition that Petrarch was most admired and revered in his lifetime. This reputation of Petrarch within his own generation has been well characterized in Jakob Burckhardt's Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: "Petrarch, who lives in the memory of most people of today chiefly as a great Italian poet, owed his fame among his contemporaries far more to the fact that he was a kind of living representative of Antiquity."

In view of the fact that there exists such a divergence of opinion in the evaluation of the main aspects of Petrarch's lifework and such variety in the judgments rendered by his own generation and by posterity, it seems worth asking what conceptions Petrarch had concerning himself and his work. It is quite easy to find an answer to this question. For Petrarch was fully conscious of the fact that his life and work represented a unique and interesting phenomenon. Thus he says in the first sonnet of his Rime:

". . . I have seen enough that in this land To the whole people like a tale I seem."

When Petrarch wrote these lines in the proem to the collection of his Rime, he had reached the summit of his fame. He could rightly assume that to Italian and non-Italian eye-witnesses his accomplishments and his rise to glory would appear "like a tale." Naturally he wished this "tale" to be perpetuated accurately beyond the memory of his contemporaries, and consequently around the year 1351 he wrote a letter which he addressed explicitly "To Posterity." Later he included this epistle, in a revised form, in the first collection of his letters called the
Familiares, and thus made sure that the letter would actually come down to future generations.

The stated purpose of this letter is to tell posterity "what sort of man I was and what was the fate of my works." There is no better account of the main events during the first part of Petrarch's life than that given by himself in this "Letter to Posterity."

He introduces himself with a description of his outward appearance: "In my early days my bodily frame was of no great strength, but of great activity. I cannot boast of extreme comeliness, but only such as in my greener years would be pleasing. My complexion was lively, between fair and dark, my eyes sparkling, my sight very keen for a long time until it failed me unexpectedly after my sixtieth year, so that to my disgust I had to have recourse to glasses."

After this portrait of himself he begins the tale of his life: "I was but a mortal man in like yourself, with an origin neither very high nor very low. . . . I was of honourable parents, both natives of Florence but living in exile on a scanty fortune which was, to tell the truth, verging upon poverty. During this exile I was born at Arezzo, in the year of Christ 1304 of this present age, at dawn on Monday the 20th of July. . . . The first year of my life, or rather part of it, I spent at Arezzo where I first saw the light; the six following years, after my mother had been recalled from exile, at Incisa, an estate of my father's about fourteen miles from Florence. My eighth year I passed at Pisa, my ninth and following years in Transalpine Gaul on the left bank of the Rhone. The name of the city is Avignon, where the Roman Pontiff holds, and has long held, the Church of Christ in a shameful exile. . . . There then, on the banks of that most windy of rivers, I passed my boyhood under my parents' care, and, later, all my early manhood under my own vain fancies—not, however, without long intervals of absence. For during this time I spent four whole years at Carpentras, a small town not far east of Avignon; and in these two places I learnt a smattering of Grammar, Dialectic and Rhetoric suited to my age—as much, I mean, as is generally learnt in schools—and how little that is, dear reader.
you know well enough. Then I went to Montpellier to study Law, where I spent four more years; and then three years at Bologna where I heard the whole Corpus of Civil Law, and was thought by many to be a youth of great promise if I would only persevere in what I had taken up. However, I abandoned that study altogether as soon as my parents abandoned the care of me; not because I did not respect the authority of Law, which is doubtless great and full of that Roman Antiquity in which I delight, but because it is degraded by the villainy of those who practise it. And so I revolted at learning thoroughly that what I would not turn to dishonourable, and could scarcely turn to honourable, uses; for such rectitude, if I had tried it, would have been laid to ignorance. Accordingly, in my twenty-second year (1326) I returned to Avignon—my exile home, where I had lived from the close of my childhood, for habit is second nature.”

Petrarch continues to relate that there in Avignon he gained the friendship and patronage of many distinguished men. Among these patrons he mentions particularly some members of the great Roman family of Colonna who resided at that time at the papal court. He does not tell that after his renunciation of law he took minor orders which entitled him to receive ecclesiastical prebends without becoming a priest. He had now become “a worthy clerk,” as Chaucer calls him in the prologue to The Clerk’s Tale.

During that period, Petrarch’s account goes on, “a youthful longing impelled me to travel through France and Germany; and though other causes were feigned to recommend my going to my superiors, yet the real reason was an eager enthusiasm to see the world. On that journey I first saw Paris; and I took delight in finding out the truth or falsehood of what I had heard about that city. Having returned thence, I went to Rome, which from my infancy I had ardently desired to see. And there I so venerated Stefano Colonna, the noble-minded father of that family, who was like one of the ancient heroes, and I was so kindly received by him in return, that you could scarcely have detected a difference between me and one of his own sons.”

On his return from Rome, in 1337, Petrarch decided to estab-
lish himself in Vaucluse. According to the "Letter to Posterity" these were his reasons: "I could not overcome my natural ingrained repugnance to Avignon, that most wearisome of cities. Therefore I looked about for some bypath of retreat as a harbour of refuge. And I found a narrow valley, delightful and secluded, called Vaucluse (fifteen miles from Avignon), where the Sorgues, King of all fountains, takes its rise. Charmed with the sweetness of the spot, I betook myself thither with my books. It would be a long story if I were to go on to relate what I did there during many, many years. Suffice it to say that nearly every one of my works was either accomplished or begun or conceived there; and these works have been so numerous that they exercise and weary me to this day."

Now Petrarch's tale comes to the supreme moment of his life, his coronation as poet laureate: "While I was spinning out my leisure in Vaucluse, on one and the same day, strange to relate, letters reached me both from the Senate of the city of Rome and from the Chancellor of the University of Paris, bringing me rival invitations to accept the laurel crown of poetry—the former at Rome, the latter at Paris. In my youthful pride at such an honour, thinking I must be worthy of it as such eminent men so thought me, but weighing their verdict instead of my own merit, I yet hesitated for a while which invitation to accept. And on this point I asked by letter for the advice of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna. He was so near that although I had written late in the day, I received his answer the next morning before nine o'clock. In accordance with his advice I decided for the dignity of the city of Rome as superior to all others, and my two replies to him applauding that advice are still extant. I set out accordingly, and though, like all young men, I was a very partial judge of my own works, I still blushed to accept the verdict upon myself even of those who had invited me. Yet no doubt they would not have done so if they had not judged me worthy of the honour so offered. I determined, therefore, first to visit Naples, and appear before that distinguished king and philosopher, Robert—as illustrious in literature as in station, the only king of our time who was a friend of learning and of virtue alike—to see what judgment
"youthful audacity" in accepting the honour of the coronation. But there is no doubt that at the time of the event itself he drew a deep inspiration for his work from his public and official acclaim as "a great poet and historian." He himself tells in the "Letter to Posterity" why it was that after his departure from Rome he resolved to finish his Latin epic Africa which he always considered his greatest title to fame: "I was mindful of the honour I had just received and anxious that it should not seem to be conferred on one who was unworthy of it. And so one day when, during a visit to the mountains, I had chanced upon the wood called Selvapiana across the river Enza on the confines of Reggio, I was fired by the beauty of the place and turned my pen to my interrupted poem, the Africa. Finding my enthusiasm, which had seemed quite dead, rekindled, I wrote a little that very day and some on each successive day until I returned to Parma. There . . . in a short time I brought the work to a conclusion, toiling at it with a zeal that amazes me today." And in the last book of the Africa he did not hesitate to insert, in the form of a prophecy, an account of his coronation, "such as Rome has not seen for a thousand years."

While it is thus certain that Petrarch's greatest Latin poem owed its completion to the stimulus of the laurel crown, we might digress here for a moment from the account of the "Letter to Posterity," to point out that it seems at least probable that Petrarch's greatest Italian poem, the canzone "Italia mia," was conceived under the same inspiration.2 This fervent appeal for Italian unity is addressed to the Italian princes.

"In whose hands Fortune has put the rein
Of the beautiful places. . . ."

(Rime No. 128)

It is significant that Petrarch, a poet, not a man of politics, makes himself the mouthpiece of all his fellow countrymen when he reminds the rulers of Italy of their common inheri-

2 [See Theodor E. Mommsen, "The Date of Petrarch's Canzone Italia Mia," Speculum XIV (1959), 28-37. Mommsen argues that "Italia mia" was certainly composed "before the year 1345" and probably composed in the years 1341-1342, in the months following Petrarch's coronation as poet laureate on April 8, 1341.]
tance of "the gentle Latin blood" and implores them not to call in "barbaric" mercenaries from abroad and not "to ruin the loveliest country of the earth." He places his hopes for the unification and pacification of contemporary Italy in the revival of the ancient *virtus Romana*:

"Virtue will fight and soon the debt be paid: 
For the old gallantry 
In the Italian hearts is not yet dead."

It is interesting to recall that Machiavelli concludes his *Prince* with "an exhortation to liberate Italy from the barbarians," and that he ends this final chapter with the quotation of those very verses of Petrarch.

There seems to be hardly any other moment in Petrarch's life in which he could feel better entitled to utter such an exhortation than that period following his coronation when he had been acknowledged symbolically not only as the greatest living poet of Italy, but also as the resuscitator of the spirit of ancient grandeur. It is by this spirit that "Italia mia" is inspired. In this canzone Petrarch created a poem which, because of its leitmotiv of national unity, might rightly be called the first Italian anthem. But beyond that he distinguished these verses by an intensity of feeling so powerful that all his readers, regardless of their national origin, then found it and have since found it a timeless expression of their sentiments towards their native country:

"Is not this the dear soil for which I pined? 
Is not this my own nest 
Where I was nourished and was given life? 
Is not this the dear land in which we trust, 
Mother loving and kind 
Who shelters parents, brother, sister, wife?"

It is most significant that for the first time in the history of the western world patriotic feeling had found articulate expression in poetry and had come to consciousness in a man who had grown up and lived in exile and who, therefore, could more clearly perceive the idea of supreme unity which was hidden to the resident citizens through their very entanglement in local rivalry and disunity.
PETRARCH'S SONNETS AND SONGS

The "tale" of Petrarch's life had reached its climax on the Capitoline in the spring of 1341 and during the period of the greatest productivity of his poetical genius. From the artistic point of view it appears logical, then, that in his "Letter to Posterity" Petrarch deals only very briefly with the events during the ten years following his coronation and that he breaks off his account rather abruptly with the year 1351, never to take it up again. For everything he had to narrate concerning the second half of his life would have seemed anticlimactic in comparison with the story of his dramatic rise during the first half. Even more, the account would have necessarily become a record of Petrarch's increasing pessimism and feeling of personal frustration and disillusionment. The hopes which he continued to have for the pacification and unification of Italy were destined to remain unfulfilled, whether he was to place them on the Italian princes or on the Roman Tribune of the People, Cola di Rienzo, or on the German Emperor Charles IV. The fervent exhortations which he addressed to successive popes, admonishing them to return from Avignon to Rome, met with little or no response. To his passionate feelings against Avignon as the seat of the Frenchified papal court he gave frequent expression in both his Latin and Italian writings, as for instance in the Rime (No. 138), where he denounces the hated city as:

"Fountain of sorrow, dwelling of revolts,
The school of errors, place of heresy,
Once Rome, now Babylon wicked and false,
For which the world suffers in infamy."

The nearness of hateful Avignon poisoned even Petrarch's love for Vaucluse, where since 1337 he had so often sought refuge from the turmoil of the world and found inward peace and stimulation for his work. Thus in 1353 Petrarch decided to bring to an end his sojourn of more than forty years in southern France and to go back to Italy.

It was an outwardly restless life Petrarch spent during his remaining years in northern Italy. He did not choose to take up permanent residence in any one place, not even in his native Florence, where he had been offered, at the instigation of his
friend and admirer Boccaccio, a professorship at the university. The Italian princes, among them the powerful Visconti family in Milan, as well as the patrician rulers of Venice, considered it a great honour when the poet accepted their hospitality. Petrarch’s democratic and republican friends deplored the close relationship into which the herald of the grandeur of the Roman Republic seemed to have entered with the “tyrants” of his age. Petrarch defied these complaints, for he never considered himself the servant of any prince or the tool of any interest contrary to his own convictions. Free from all obligations of office, in complete independence, he lived solely for his literary work and for the cause of the revival of the eternal standards and universal values of classical antiquity.

If we can trust an old report, death overcame Petrarch in the midst of his studies late at night on July 18, 1374, while he was working in the library of his country house in Arquà near Padua.

An examination of Petrarch’s literary opera shows that in the most complete edition, that of the year 1554, the various Latin works and letters occupy almost twenty times as much space as the Italian poetry, the Rime and the Trionfi. Thus Petrarch’s Latin writings do not merely outweigh those in the vernacular in actual volume, but they seem also to have had definite preponderance in the mind and judgment of the author himself. For in the “Letter to Posterity” he speaks in some detail about most of the Latin works which he had written or begun by that time, but he does not mention specifically the collection of his Italian Rime. That this omission was not simply accidental becomes evident from the following passage in the same epistle: “My mind was rather well balanced than acute; and while adapted to all good and wholesome studies, its special bent was towards moral philosophy and poetry. But the latter I neglected, as time went on, because of the delight I took in sacred literature. In this I found a hidden sweetness, though at one time I had despised it, so that I came to use poetry only as an accomplishment. I devoted myself singly, amid a crowd of subjects, to a knowledge of Antiquity; for this age of ours
I have always found distasteful, so that, had it not been for the love of those dear to me, I should have preferred to have been born in any other."

This passage leaves no doubt as to which part of his work Petrarch himself considered most important. From his own point of view the judgment of his contemporaries certainly was right and that of later generations wrong. He himself desired to be renowned, above all else, for his "single devotion to the knowledge of Antiquity," and not for his Italian poetry.

The fact that Petrarch gave his personal preference to his humanistic endeavours and accomplishments ought not, however, to compel us to believe that he actually meant to disavow his Italian writings altogether. It is true that in a letter written two years before his death, he called his poems in the vernacular "little trifles" and "juvenile fooleries" and expressed the wish that "they might be unknown to the whole world and even to myself if that could be." But notwithstanding this wish for their obliteration, Petrarch, from the record of his work, actually took the greatest personal care in preserving and editing these very same poems. When in mid life he decided to collect his "scattered rhymes" (Rime No. 1) in one volume, he never ceased working over them throughout the rest of his days, striving to bring them to what he considered the point of perfection.

The clearest evidence of the painstaking effort Petrarch made in this task of polishing his verse is manifestly shown by the great number of corrections and marginal notes in his working copy of the Rime which is preserved today in the Vatican Library. A few examples may suffice to illustrate this point. On the margin of the sonnet "Non fùr ma' Glove" (Rime No. 155) Petrarch remarks: "Note that I had once in mind to change the order of the four stanzas so that the first quatrain and the first terzina would have become second and vice versa. But I gave the idea up because of the sound of the beginning and the end. For (in the case of a change) the fuller sound would have been in the middle and the hollower sound at the beginning and at the end; this, however, is against the laws of rhetoric."

Another marginal note (to Rime No. 199) gives an interesting
glimpse into Petrarch's working habits: "In 1368," he jots down, "on Friday, August the 19th, sleepless for a long time during the first watch of the night, I at last got up and came by chance upon this very old poem, composed twenty-five years ago." That Petrarch gave a great deal of thought to determining which of his earlier poems were worthy of inclusion in his final collection is well demonstrated by the following note at the end of the sonnet "Voglia mi sprona" (Rime No. 211): "Amazing. This poem was once crossed out by me and condemned. Now, by chance reading it again after a lapse of many years, I have acquitted it and copied it and put it in the right place. Shortly afterwards, however, on the 27th, in the evening, I made some changes in the final lines, and now I shall have finished with it."

Within the limited compass of this essay it is impossible to go into the intricate problems involving the chronology, the variant forms and arrangements of Petrarch's collection of sonnets and songs. It will be sufficient to state that despite his solemn declarations to the contrary Petrarch never, even during his old age, lost his interest in his "juvenile fooleries" but continued editing and re-editing them to the last. He worked on them until his sense of artistry was truly satisfied. There is tangible evidence of his own critical approval in the frequent recurrence of the word placet on the margins of his working copy. And if there is a legitimate suspicion that Petrarch was not quite candid in the denial of his personal interest in his Italian poems, the same doubt can assail our acceptance of the sincerity of his wish that "they might be unknown to the whole world." For he knew very well from the study of his beloved antiquity that glory depends solely on true distinction in whatever field of activity an individual might choose. In his own incessant striving after perfection he must, therefore, have been greatly inspired and impelled by the desire for approval of these poems by readers in his own era as well as in coming centuries.

In the final collection of his verse Petrarch included three hundred and sixty-six poems. Of this number, three hundred and seventeen were written as sonnets, twenty-nine as canzoni, nine as sestine, seven as ballate, and four as madrigals. The collection has no definite title but is known in Italian simply
by the generic names of *Canzoniere* or *Rime*, or somewhat more specifically, *Rime Sparse*. For in contrast to Dante, who assembled his poems to Beatrice in a book named by himself *La Vita Nuova*, Petrarch never chose a precise name for his collected poems but was content to call them rather vaguely *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, "Fragments," or better "Pieces of matters written in the vernacular." This absence of a concrete title does not seem to be wholly fortuitous. For again in contrast to Dante's *Vita Nuova*, Petrarch's *Rime* do not form an organic unit but are in truth "scattered rhymes," as Petrarch calls them himself in the proem to the collection. The content of most of the longer poems is political, religious, or moral in nature whereas the theme of the overwhelming majority of the sonnets is Petrarch's love for Laura. The author did not arrange his poems according to their poetical form nor apparently did he attempt to divide the long series of the love sonnets to Laura into definite "sequences," although there are to be found certain groups of poems which are more closely interrelated than others.

Some of Petrarch's most beautiful verse is contained in his *canzoni*, as for instance in "Spirto gentil," "Italia mia," or "Vergine bella." But it was especially in the sonnet that his genius found the most adequate mode of expression. Petrarch did not invent the form of the sonnet. It had appeared long before his time and flourished greatly in the school of poets writing in the "dolce stil novo," which reached its climax with Dante. He surpassed, however, all his predecessors in the fashion in which he perfected the traditional form and filled it with a content at once richer and more variegated than ever before. The brevity of the fourteen lines actually permits no more than the expression of one idea or one mood or one emotion. These perceptions and feelings, however, are not allowed to remain vague and fleeting but are submitted to the discipline of rigid form. As no other poet before and only few after him, Petrarch, in many of his sonnets, succeeded in striking this delicate balance of form and content and in establishing a true harmony of feeling and thinking. As the unsurpassed master of the love sonnet of his day Petrarch became, as has been shown before,
the model of innumerable sonneteers, in Italy as well as abroad, who were fully conscious of their discipleship and even proud of their denomination as "Petrarchists."

In creating the glory of the Italian sonnet Petrarch can lay claim to still another distinction, the tone colour which is one of the most outstanding characteristics of his Italian poetry. In this connection it is worth noting that the Italian terms sonetto and canzone are derived from the words for "sound" and "song." This derivation tells us very clearly that poems written in these particular two forms were meant to be intoned and that consequently their authors needed musical as well as literary talent. Petrarch in full measure possessed the gifts of the musician. His contemporary biographer, the Florentine Filippo Villani, states: "He played the lyre admirably. His voice was sonorous and overflowing with charm and sweetness." Among the few personal possessions which Petrarch deemed worthy of specific mention in his last will there appears "my good lyre."

In the working copy of his Rime we find the following note to one of his sonnets: "I must make these two verses over again, singing them (cantando), and I must transpose them. — 3 o'clock in the morning, October the 19th." No better testimony than this intimate self-reminder can be found to illustrate both the importance which Petrarch attributed to the musical qualities of his verse and the method which he used to test these qualities. Whoever reads his sonnets and songs aloud in their rich Italian will immediately be impressed by their melodiousness and will readily agree with Filippo Villani who says: "His rhythms flow so sweetly that not even the gravest people can withstand their declamation and sound." Some of Petrarch's most beautiful verse, the poems in honour of the Virgin, were set to music by the greatest composer of the Italian Renaissance, Palestrina, in his Madrigali Spirituali.

The theme of the overwhelming majority of Petrarch's Rime is his love for Laura. This fact has led many editors since the sixteenth century to divide the collection up into two parts,
the first containing the poems written "In vita di Madonna Laura," the second one consisting of those "In morte di Madonna Laura," beginning with the moving lamentation of the sonnet "Oimè il bel viso" (Rime No. 267). Although this division cannot be directly traced back to Petrarch himself there is no doubt that the main theme of the sonnets is Petrarch's love for Laura "in life and in death."

Who was Laura? With this question we come to that problem which more than almost any other has attracted the attention of scholars working on Petrarch and has, to an even greater degree, challenged and fascinated the popular imagination.

The crux of the problem is that Petrarch himself, both in his Rime and in his Latin writings, chose to give only very few details of a concrete nature concerning Laura and her personal circumstances. This discretion on the part of Petrarch in regard to the central figure in his life becomes particularly manifest in his "Letter to Posterity." For although in this epistle he speaks of a good many of his close friends in some detail, he condenses all he has to say about the person presumably nearest to his heart in one sentence: "In my youth I suffered from an attachment of the keenest kind, but constant to one, and honourable; and I should have suffered longer, had not death—bitter indeed, but useful—extinguished the flame as it was beginning to subside." The marked restraint and the curious detachment make it very evident that in this autobiographical record written for the perusal of later generations Petrarch was resolved to gloss over the crucial importance of Laura in his life, just as he attempted, in the same document, to belittle the significance and the value of those Rime whose principal theme was his love for Laura.

When not thinking of himself in the light of posterity but writing solely for his own record, Petrarch had a good deal more to say about Laura. It was his habit to make notes on the most intimate details of his personal life in the most cherished book of his library, on the fly-leaf of his manuscript of Vergil's works. There appears the following entry: "Laura, illustrious by her own virtues and long celebrated in my poems, first appeared to my eyes in the earliest period of my manhood, on
the sixth day of April, anno Domini 1327, in the Church of St. Claire, at the morning hour. And in the same city at the same hour of the same day in the same month of April, but in the year 1348, that light was withdrawn from our day, while I was by chance at Verona, ignorant—alas!—of my fate. The unhappy tidings reached me at Parma in a letter from my friend Louis on the morning of May the 19th in the same year. Her chaste and lovely body was laid in the Church of the Franciscans on the very day of her death at evening. Her soul, however, I am persuaded—as Seneca says of Africanus—has returned to heaven whence it came. I have felt a kind of bitter sweetness in writing this, as a memorial of a painful matter—especially in this place which often comes under my eyes—so that I may reflect that no pleasures remain for me in this life, and that I may be warned by constantly looking at these words and by the thought of the rapid flight of years that it is high time to flee from the world. This, by God’s preventing grace, will be easy to me when I keenly and manfully consider the empty, superfluous hopes of the past, and the unforeseen issue.”

Neither in this most intimate record nor anywhere else does Petrarch say who Laura actually was. In truth, he kept this secret so well that apparently even among his closest friends the suspicion arose that “Laura” was merely a fictitious name for an imaginary love and that the word stood not so much for the name of a real person as for Petrarch’s dearest goal in life, the “laurel,” symbol of the poet’s fame. Indeed Petrarch himself liked to play upon the similarity between the name of Laura and the Latin and Italian words for laurel. Against the charge of feigned love Petrarch defended himself in a letter written in 1336 to his intimate friend Giacomo Colonna, Bishop of Lombez, as follows: “You actually say that I have invented the name of ‘Laura’ in order to have some one to talk about, and in order to set people talking about me, but that, in reality, I have no ‘Laura’ in mind, except that poetical laurel to which I have aspired, as my long and unwearied toil bears witness; and as to this breathing ‘laurel,’ with whose beauty I seem to be charmed, all that is ‘made up’—the songs feigned, the stories pretended. On this point would that your jests were
true! Would that it were a pretense, and not a madness! But, credit me, it takes much trouble to keep up a pretense for long; while to spend useless toil in order to appear mad would be the height of madness. Besides, though by acting we can feign sickness when we are well, we cannot feign actual pallor. You know well both my pallor and my weariness; and so I fear you are making sport of my disease by that Socratic diversion called 'irony,' in which even Socrates must yield the palm to you."

This letter is a convincing proof of the genuineness of Petrarch's love, but it is again noteworthy that even in this self-defense he did not deign to reveal the identity of the actual Laura. As the result of Petrarch's silence concerning the real circumstances of Laura's life there arose soon and grew and flourished throughout the centuries almost to the present a Laura-legend which was an interesting composite of romantic and fanciful imagination, pseudo-scholarly research, and half-truth. It would lead into too many bypaths to follow the story of this legend. May it suffice to say that according to modern scholarship it seems likely that the "historical" Laura was the daughter of a Provençal nobleman, Audibert de Noves, that she was married to Hugues de Sade, and that Petrarch probably met her for the first time about two years after her marriage.

That the object of Petrarch's love was a married woman and the mother of several children was a hypothesis that ran contrary to the popular and sentimental romanticization of the two lovers and their relationship, and for that reason this thesis was long and bitterly contested. But actually the "real" Laura does not matter at all. For whatever the facts of her life might have been, they do not provide us with any "background" for a better understanding of the collection of the Rime in the form in which Petrarch wanted them to endure. If he had not burnt many of his earlier poems, as he did according to his own statement, the picture would perhaps be quite different. But his final collection does not present a narrative pattern or sequence, and all attempts have completely failed to crystallize an account of a romance out of the Rime.

Everything the more curious need know for the understanding of the nature of Petrarch's relationship with Laura, he him-
self has told in the self-analysis of his book called the Secretum, which he composed in the form of a dialogue between himself and St. Augustine as his father confessor. He started writing this work in 1342 while Laura was still alive and finished it a few years after her death. Therein he states: "Whatever little I am, I have become through her. For if I possess any name and fame at all, I should never have obtained them unless she had cared with her most noble affection for the sparse seeds of virtues planted in my bosom by Nature." Laura's mind, Petrarch says, "does not know earthly cares but burns with heavenly desires. Her appearance truly radiates beams of divine beauty. Her morals are an example of perfect uprightness. Neither her voice nor the force of her eyes nor her gait are those of an ordinary human being." Petrarch asserts emphatically that he had "always loved her soul more than her body," though he has to admit that, under the compulsion of love and youth, "occasionally I wished something dishonourable."

But the purity of the relationship was saved by Laura, for "not moved by any entreaties nor conquered by any flatteries, she protected her womanly honour and remained impregnable and firm in spite of her youth and mine and in spite of many and various other things which ought to have bowed the spirit of even the most adamant. This strength of character of the woman recalled seemly conduct to the mind of the man. The model of her excellence stood before me so that in my own strife for chastity I lacked neither her example nor her reproach. And when finally she saw me break the bridle and fall (this is obviously a reference to a love affair with another woman), she left me rather than follow my course."

Eventually Petrarch succeeded in conquering himself, for in the dialogue he assures St. Augustine: "Now I know what I want and wish, and my unstable mind has become firm. She, on her part, has always been steadfast and has always stayed one and the same. The better I understand her womanly constancy, the more I admire it. If once I was grieved by her unyielding resolution, I am now full of joy over it and thankful." It was for spiritual reasons that Petrarch felt a sense of profound
gratitude towards Laura, as he makes clear both in the *Secretum* and in the moving lines of thanksgiving in one of his later sonnets:

"I thank her soul and her holy device
That with her face and her sweet anger's bolts
Bid me in burning think of my salvation."

(Rime No. 289)

The autobiographical account in the *Secretum* provides the most valuable clue to the right understanding of Petrarch's conception of Laura's image and his relationship with her, as they are reflected in the *Rime*. For a clear comprehension of the passages quoted it should be remembered that they do not represent simply a personal record but are set forth in the solemn form of an imaginary dialogue with Petrarch's spiritual guide and conscience, St. Augustine. In this dialogue, which has an almost confessional character, Petrarch naturally felt bound to reveal himself fully and frankly, even if this meant his candid admission of aberrations from the right path of acting and feeling. It is purely incidental that he has satisfied our curiosity about certain external details of his relationship with Laura.

On the other hand, it is most significant that he depicted this relationship as one in which were linked together two beings who belonged to two entirely different spheres and therefore acted in an entirely different fashion. Whereas he himself was an ordinary human being with all of man's passions and desires, Laura was above earthly cares and burnt solely with heavenly desires. Whereas his own personality and sentiments underwent many radical changes, she remained always one and the same. The climax of this love was reached when Petrarch, inspired by the example of Laura's perfection, masters himself and his desires and begins, under her guidance, to strive for the salvation of his soul.

What Petrarch has recounted in the prose of his *Secretum* as his personal confession to St. Augustine, he has expressed in the lyrics of his *Rime* to all
"... who hear in scattered rhymes the sound
Of that wailing with which I fed my heart."

(Rime No. 1)

For in the Rime he gives us the rapture of love in which there is only one subject, the man, who alone speaks and feels, acts and changes, while the woman is but the mute and passive object of this love, an ideal and therefore immutable being.

This ideal object of his love was, however, not imaginary or fictitious. As if to refute any doubt as to the existence of a "real" Laura, Petrarch makes repeatedly very specific chronological statements in the Rime themselves concerning the dates of his first meeting with Laura and of her death. Petrarch obviously had very good reasons for such an inclusion of dates into his verse, for his musical ear must have protested against these attempts at fitting bare figures into a rigid metre.

In other ways, too, Petrarch tries to assure his readers of Laura's reality. He describes her appearance, her golden hair and her fair eyes, or he pictures her in the beauty of nature, "walking on the green grass, pressing the flowers like a living girl." But all these descriptions are rather limited in range, for her beauty and charm are beyond the power of the poet's pen, as he himself confesses:

"... I still seem to pass
   Over your beauty in my rhyme ...
   But the burden I find crushes my frame
   The work cannot be polished by my file.
   And my talent which knows its strength and style
   In this attempt becomes frozen and lame."

(Rime No. 20)

Petrarch is aware that he will be criticized for his endeavour to enshrine her above others in his song and that the temper of his praise will be considered false, but he cannot accept such criticism. For he knows that no matter what he says he will never be able to express his thoughts in verse as well as he feels them enclosed in his breast (Rime No. 95).

Eventually Laura assumes an ideal nature such as is disclosed
in one of the sonnets in words which are almost identical with the quoted passage from the *Secretum*:

"In what part of the sky, in what idea
Was the example from which Nature wrought
That charming lovely face wherein she sought
To show her power in the upper sphere?"

*(Rime No. 159)*

This conception of Laura as the sublime ideal, expressed in terms strongly reminiscent of Platonic thought, shows most clearly the transformation which the picture of the "real" Laura had undergone in the poet's mind: she has become the image of the concept of the beautiful, and we might add from the reading of other poems in the *Rime*, the embodiment, too, of good and the right. The ultimate transfiguration of Laura is attained in one of the later sonnets where his

". . . inner eye
Sees her soar up and with the angels fly
At the feet of our own eternal Lord."

*(Rime No. 345)*

While Laura is thus elevated into "the upper sphere," Petrarch himself remains earthbound. The object of his love is an ideal, but his feelings for his beloved are human. From the time when, at the age of twenty-three, he met Laura first in the church in Avignon, to her death twenty-one years later, and from that time to his own death, this was the focusing passion of his life:

"I have never been weary of this love,
My lady, nor shall be while last my years."

*(Rime No. 82)*

Petrarch runs the whole gamut of emotions and passions of a lover, from the highest elation to the deepest despair. In this full scale only one note is missing which in ordinary love would naturally mark the supreme moment: the exaltation of physical consummation. That the love for Laura, by its very nature, was denied fulfillment in the common sense, has to be under-
stood as the mode to which the whole tone of Petrarch's sonnets and songs is pitched. For above all the *Rime* sing of the sad and woeful beauty of love, of the longing for the unattainable, of the rebellion against denial, of the inward laceration of the lover and of his melancholic resignation. In the *Rime* all these moods of a lover have found their timeless representation. And the very fact that the figure of Laura is so idealized has made it possible for many readers of these sonnets and songs to see in the image of Laura the picture of their own beloved and to hear in the verse of the poet the expression of their own thoughts and the echoes of their own love.

While in the exalted conception of his beloved Petrarch was still bound by the tradition of the love poetry of the Provençal troubadours and the Italian poets of the "dolce stil novo," in the representation of himself and of his own humanity he was guided by a very different source of inspiration, the model of Latin poetry of classical times. There is hardly one poem in the *Rime* which does not show more or less definite traces of this influence as to form and content, figures of speech and comparisons, symbols and allegories. Petrarch went wholeheartedly (and with full consciousness of his debt) to school to the great Roman poets. And what he learned there he absorbed so completely that even in imitating he succeeded for the most part in creating something new. The splendour and richness of the *Rime* were to a large extent based on his lifelong devotion to the scholarly study of antiquity. Thus the accomplishments of Petrarch the sonneteer presuppose the research of Petrarch the humanist.

Petrarch once strikingly compares himself to the statue of Janus: like the double-faced Roman god he feels himself to be looking both backward and forward. This, his own comparison, characterizes well Petrarch's personal outlook on life. For often and with profound yearning he looked back to the glory of ancient Rome and drew from its grandeur the deepest inspiration for his work. He regarded the whole epoch of a thousand years, extending from the fall of the Roman Empire to his own days, as a period of "darkness." But throughout his life he hoped that the "revival" of the past would put an end to the
process of decline and would usher in a new and better era. This ardent hope for the future Petrarch has voiced in the canzone "Italia mia" and in many other pieces, but nowhere more impressively than in that work which he himself considered as his greatest, the Africa. At the very end of this epic he addresses his own poem as follows: "My fate is to live amid varied and confusing storms. But for you perhaps, if, as I hope and wish, you will live long after me, there will follow a better age. This sleep of forgetfulness will not last forever. When the darkness has been dispersed, our descendants can come again in the former pure radiance."

Posterity may accept Petrarch's own judgment and may agree that the figure of Janus truly symbolizes his position in history. His outlook on the world indeed included views of two different ages. Yet to posterity his choice of the image of Janus might seem a simplification. He had, it would seem, more than the two aspects of the Roman god. Witness one of the most famous incidents in his life, the ascent of Mont Ventoux near Vaucluse, which he undertook in 1336, at the age of thirty-two. In a letter written under the immediate impression of this experience Petrarch relates how he decided to climb this mountain, "induced by the sole desire of seeing the remarkable height of the place." As a student of classical authors he knows of similar undertakings in antiquity and thus, in imitation of an ancient model, he does what no man during the Middle Ages had done, he scales a mountain with the sole motive of satisfying his curiosity. He describes in great detail the difficulties which he and his brother, his only companion, found on their way. Despite the warnings which the pair received from an old shepherd, they continue their strenuous ascent and finally reach the summit. What Petrarch sees and feels on that momentous occasion, he endeavours to express in the following sentences: "First of all, braced by the nip of the keen air and the extent of the view, I stood as dazed. I looked back; the clouds were beneath my feet. And now the stories of Athos and Olympus seem less incredible to me, as I behold on a mountain of lesser fame what I had heard and read of them. I turn my eye's glance in the direction of Italy, whither my heart most inclines. . . . I con-
fess I sighed for the skies of Italy, which I looked upon with my mind rather than with my eyes, and an irrepressible longing seized me to behold my friend and my country."

But while he was thus gazing at the beauty of the panorama of the Alps, "a new thought" suddenly possessed him which drew him from the sight of the external world towards a consideration of himself and his past life. He thinks of Laura, saying: "What I used to love, I love no longer—nay, I lie, I do love, but with more restraint, more moderately, more regretfully." He continues: "While I marveled at these things in turn, now recognizing some earthly object, now lifting my soul upwards as my body had been, I thought of looking at the book of Augustine's *Confessions* . . . which I always have with me. I opened the little volume, of handy size but of infinite charm, in order to read whatever met my eye. . . . I call God to witness, and my listener too, that these were the words on which my eyes fell: 'Men go abroad to admire the heights of mountains, and the mighty billows, and the long-winding courses of rivers, the compass of the ocean, and the courses of the stars—and themselves they neglect.' I confess I was amazed; and begging my brother, who was eager to hear more, not to trouble me, I closed the book, indignant with myself that at that very moment I was admiring earthly things—I, who ought to have learnt long ago from even heathen philosophers that there is nothing admirable but the soul—in itself so great that nothing can be great beside it. Then, indeed, content with what I had seen from the mountain, I turned my eyes inward upon myself, and from that moment none heard me say a word till we reached the bottom."

By this narrative of the ascent of Mont Ventoux Petrarch revealed himself in the whole complexity of his personality and in the diversity of his thoughts, feelings, and interests. He was the man of a new age who set out to discover the beauty of the world and relive an experience forgotten for long centuries. He was the humanist who wanted not merely to devote himself to an antiquarian study of the arts and letters, the history and philosophy of Roman days, but who desired to revive the past in the present and for the future by re-enacting what the
ancients had done. He was the Italian patriot whose inner eye beheld the unity and splendour of his native country. He was the lover of Laura who was still torn in his human feelings but was beginning to conquer himself. Yet at the end he found himself bound by the traditions of medieval Christianity in which he had been brought up and which he always revered in the person and work of his great guide, St. Augustine. Thus at the culminating point of his new experience Petrarch closed his eyes to the external world and turned to the spiritual problems of his soul.

All these manifold facets of Petrarch, which the account of his impressions on the peak of Mont Ventoux illumines in a most dramatic fashion, have found their expression in the Rime. The essential nature remains, but the colours are much more variegated and the pattern as a whole is infinitely richer. Only the most striking parallel may be pointed out. As the story of the mountain climbing ends with spiritual reflections stimulated by the reading of St. Augustine's Confessions, so the collection of love poetry concludes with a devout prayer to the Virgin Mary:

"Recommend me to your Son, to the real
Man and the real God,
That Heaven's nod be my ghost's peaceful seal."

Petrarch lived in an era which in the history of western civilization marks the beginning of the turn from the medieval to the modern age. Petrarch's personal views and his literary work reflect fully the transitional character of his period. For if there are characteristic medieval features to be found in Petrarch, there are also just as many traits which point to a venture into a world of new ideas. Thus the English biographer of Petrarch, Edward H. R. Tatham, rightly names him "the first modern man of letters." It is Petrarch's interest in man and in the problems of human nature that makes him "modern" and differentiates him from medieval writers. All of Petrarch's works, whether they were written in verse or in prose, in Italian or in Latin, have as their main theme the spiritual and intellectual, the emotional and artistic aspects of man's life.
But Petrarch was not only concerned with "man" in general, but was also deeply engrossed in the phenomenon of man as an individual being, as he saw him in the history of the past or as a living actor on the contemporary stage. And above all Petrarch was interested in himself and in the phenomenon of his own individuality.

"In the Middle Ages," writes Jakob Burckhardt, "both sides of human consciousness—that which was turned within as that which was turned without—lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. This veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession through which the world and history were seen clad in a strange hue." Petrarch was among the first to tear this veil away by striving for a full understanding of his own individuality through continuous self-analysis and self-portrayal, as illustrated by the "Letter to Posterity" or the Secretum or, above all, the Rime. In this sense Petrarch may be called the founder of modern humanism.
An Early Representation of Petrarch as Poet Laureate

THERE is an early fifteenth-century illustrated manuscript in the Rossi Collection of the Vatican Library which has a certain interest for Petrarch iconography.

The body of the manuscript contains the texts of the twenty-three lives which make up Petrarch’s most important historical work, the De viris illustribus. At the end of the last biography, that of Caesar (f. 178r), there is a note about Petrarch’s death similar to those found in manuscripts of the same work copied in Padua after the poet’s death. The following pages contain Petrarch’s Latin translation of Boccaccio’s story about Griselda; and on the last page are two epigrams on Scipio Africanus the Elder and Scipio Africanus the Younger written by Francesco

* Reprinted from Studi Petrarcheschi, II (1949), 101-105. Translated by Eugene F. Rice, Jr.

1 Cod Rossianus 526, formerly IX, 216. The manuscript has been described by H. Tietze, Die illuminierten Handschriften der Rossiana in Wien-Lainz (Leipzig, 1911), p. 105, nr. 194. In 1924 the Rossi Collection was transferred by its owners, the Jesuits, from Lainz to Rome and permanently located in the Vatican Library.

da Fiano at the beginning of the fifteenth century as captions or "tituli" for a series of twenty heroes decorating the Sala dei Giganti of the Palazzo Trinci in Foligno.  

A short note by the copyist at the end of the text of the De viris illustribus tells us that this part of the codex Rossianus was commissioned in 1418 "from Naples." Unfortunately the name of the first owner and the coat of arms at the bottom center of the first page have been defaced. Very probably the codex was later acquired by Cardinal Domenico Capranica (1400-1458), who left it in his will, together probably with another Petrarch manuscript, to the library of the Collegio Capranica.  

The manuscript contains many illuminated initial letters. According to Tietze their style would indicate Venetian and, more specifically perhaps, Paduan origin. Three initial letters differ from the others because they contain human figures. Thus the miniature of the letter R, which begins the biography of Romulus (f. 21r), shows the bust of an armed warrior; the letter G, the first letter of the biography of Julius Caesar (f. 93r), represents an armed knight mounted on a white horse. Although both these figures look completely medieval, there can be absolutely no doubt that the intention was to portray the first king of Rome and the founder of the Roman Empire.  

3 The "Epigrama Scipionis Africani superioris" begins with the words Columnen infirmum. It has been published by L. Bertalot, "Humanistisches in der Anthologia Latina," Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, LXVI (1911), 72 f. The "Scipionis Emiliani posterioris Africani epigrama" begins with the words Altera lux patrie nilet. It has not yet been published. Cf. Bertalot, op. cit., pp. 64 and 75; M. Salmi, Bolletti d'Arte, XIII (1919), 165, n. 1, 176, and 180; and A. Messini, Rivista d'Arte, ser. II, XIV (1942), 85 ff.  

4 Cod. Rossianus 526, f. 178r: "... de Napoli fecit scribi hunc librum M°CCCXC-XVIII."  

5 Cod. Rossianus 715 (formerly X, 95), which contains the Familiar, is stamped with the arms of Cardinal Domenico Capranica. Cod. Rossianus 526 is listed in the 1657 catalogue of the library of the Collegio Capranica under the following title: "Francisci Petrarcae illustrium virorum gesta manuscript. in fol. pergamo" (Tietze, op. cit., p. XII).  

6 See Tietze, op. cit., p. 195, nr. 194. G. Martellotti, who is working on the critical edition of the De viris illustribus, has kindly informed me that the codex Rossianus apparently derives directly from codex Ottobonianus 1893, which was in the possession of Salutati. In that case Florentine origin might seem more probable.
Petrarchus

Petrarchus vero, qui studuit etiam in arte scribendi, erat clarissimus. Hanc habuit aeneam dicta, quae nobis posteris in memoriam ament. Quum enim oculis suo populo spectaret, Graeco et Latina lingua scripsit. Quae opus est, quod nos adhuc in studiosis collectum est. 

1. Rome, Vatican Library, Cod Rossianus 520, fol. 1r. Petrarch as poet laureate
The third of these miniatures is much larger than the other two. It illustrates the first page of the codex where Petrarch's preface begins with the words: "Illustrae quosdam viros." The letter I forms a gilded shaft, decorated with violet-colored leaves, which frames against a blue ground the figure of a bearded man, wrapped in a purple robe and wearing purple shoes. His brow is crowned with laurel. The important position assigned this picture and the laurel crown are sure evidence that the aim here was to represent Petrarch himself.

The question now arises to what extent this miniature is a real portrait of the poet. Any reference to Petrarch's actual appearance must be ruled out at once. This can be proved by confronting the miniature from the codex Rossianus with the most authentic Petrarch portraits, such as the miniatures in several of the earliest manuscripts of his works (for example, cod. Paris. Lat. 6069 F and cod. Vatic. Lat. 3198) or the portrait of Petrarch by Nardo di Cione in the fresco in the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Maria Novella in Florence. These portraits of the poet, as indeed those whose real resemblance is less certain, all have one element in common: Petrarch is

7 [See Fig. 1.] Cf. the reproduction in Tietze, op. cit., p. 106.
8 Tietze, who discovered this figure and reproduced it for the first time, did not identify it with Petrarch, describing it simply as "ein bärtiger Mann." This omission probably explains why the miniature has not hitherto been considered in relation to Petrarch iconography.
9 Cf. P. de Nolhac, Pétrarque et l'Humanisme, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1907), II, 250 ff. The most recent reproductions of this portrait are in N. Festas's edition of the Africa (1946) and in U. Bosco, Petrarca (1946), plate I. Cf. also the tiny picture in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, reproduced by A. Ratti (Pope Pius XI), Un antico ritratto di Francesco Petrarca all'Ambrosiana (Milan, 1907), p. 11.
10 Reproduced by V. Rossi in the second volume of his edition of the Familiari.
11 Reproduced in the fourth volume of the Familiari edited by Rossi and Bosco. On the specific worth of this portrait cf. H. Keller, "Die Entstehung des Bildnisses am Ende des Hochmittelalters." Römische Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte, III (1939), 335-338 and fig. 301.
12 For example, cod. Paris. Lat. 6069 T (in Rossi's ed., Familiari, III): Bibliot. Marciana, Cl. VI n. 86 (in de Nolhac, op. cit., II); Bibliot. Trivulziana (Milan), cod. 905 (reproduced in Petrarca e la Lombardia, Milan, 1904; cf. ibid., pp. 322 ff., and also Prince d’Eslung and E. Müntz, Pétrarque, ses études d'art, son influence sur les artistes, ses portraits et ceux de Laura, l'Illustration de ses écrits, Paris, 1904, p. 85); Darmstadt, cod. 101 (d’Eslung-Müntz, op. cit., p. 65); and, finally, the late-fourteenth-
picted without a beard. Leaving aside other incongruities of the miniature from the codex Rossianus, the emphatic representation of a luxuriant beard is enough to prove conclusively that this picture does not portray the real appearance of the poet, but rather gives an idealized personification of the type executed later by painters like Castagno and Justus of Ghent.\(^13\)

But although this miniature sheds no new light on how Petrarch really looked, it does have one element of importance for the study of Petrarch iconography: there can be no doubt that the painter wished to represent Petrarch as poet laureate. The laurel crown and purple robe are unequivocal. The miniaturist, or the unknown Neapolitan who commissioned the manuscript, by choosing the royal purple wished to celebrate Petrarch’s coronation as poet laureate on the Capitol in 1341. On that occasion Petrarch in fact did wear a robe given him by King Robert of Naples, as he himself records with pride and gratitude in one of his Latin poems: “On that festive day I was clothed in royal robes.”\(^14\)

In 1418, moreover, the tradition was no doubt still alive in Padua that Petrarch had been buried in the purple gown of a

---

\(^{13}\) The portraits followed by Justus and Castagno have been reproduced by Bosco, *op. cit.*, plates II and VI.


“Tum regia festo
Vestis honesta die me circumfusa tegebat,
Et dominum referens, et tanti testis amoris,
Quam, lateri exemptam proprio, regum ille supremus
Rex dederat gestare suo.”

"master of poetics and of history." 15 Perhaps the miniaturist, or the person who commissioned the work, knew, as Petrarch himself certainly knew, the ancient tradition which ruled the ceremonies and coronations on the Capitol. According to Suetonius, the emperor Domitian presided at such ceremonies "in half-boots, clad in a purple toga in the Greek fashion, and wearing upon his head a golden crown." 16

Painters, and the innumerable engravers who imitated them, would later picture Petrarch robed in purple and crowned with laurel, as in Raphael's "Parnassus" or the portraits at the Musée Calvet in Avignon and the Uffizi in Florence. 17 One of the best-known, and hitherto one of the earliest-known, examples of this type illustrates a manuscript of the Rime and Trionfi in the Laurentian Library. 18 The 1418 miniature from the codex Rossianus, however, antedates this by more than fifty years, for the Laurentian manuscript was written in 1463. 19 But more interesting than the question of the priority of the Rossi miniature is the remarkable fact that a portrait of Petrarch as poet laureate has been used to illustrate the manuscript of one of his historical works. This is clear indication that the men of the early Quattrocento still remembered, according to the words of the "Privilegium laureae" of 1341, that the laurel crown bestowed on Petrarch consecrated in him "the great poet and the great historian."

16 Domitian, IV, 4.
17 Reproduced by d'Essling-Muntz, op. cit., pp. 67, 69, and 79. For other portraits and engravings see the list in M. Fowler, op. cit., pp 499-503.
18 Cod. Plut. XLI n. 1, f. 8v, reproduced by d'Essling-Muntz, op. cit., p. 71.
Petrarch’s Conception of
the “Dark Ages”*  

IN The American Cyclopaedia of 1883 we read: “The Dark Ages is a term applied in its widest sense to that period of intellectual depression in the history of Europe from the establishment of the barbarian supremacy in the fifth century to the revival of learning about the beginning of the fifteenth, thus nearly corresponding in extent with the Middle Ages.”¹ This statement from a popular work is merely a reflection of opinions held at that time by quite a few students of the Middle Ages, a fact proved, for instance, by the very title of Samuel R. Maitland’s book, The Dark Ages. In this work, which appeared for the first time in 1889, the author published a number of essays illustrating “the state of religion and literature in the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries,” thus characterizing as “dark” centuries like the eleventh and the twelfth which, from the present point of view, represent the climax of the mediaeval period. In the scholarly world this usage of the term “Dark Ages” was either to be abandoned completely or at least to be restricted increasingly in its application. When in 1904 William Paton Ker published his work The Dark Ages in the collection Periods of European Literature, he stated: “The Dark Ages and the Middle Ages . . . used to be the same; two

names for the same period. But they have come to be distinguished, and the Dark Ages are now no more than the first part of the Middle Age, while the term mediaeval is often restricted to the later centuries, about 1100 to 1500."\(^2\) This restricted conception of the term found expression in a newer encyclopaedia, *The Americana*, in the 1909 edition of which the phrase "the Dark Ages" is defined as "a period supposed to extend from the fall of the Roman Empire, 475 A.D., to the revival of literature on the discovery of the Pandects at Amalfi in 1137."\(^3\) In a similar manner the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911) states that the period from the fifth to the tenth centuries is called "the dark Age," and affirms that "the dark Age was a reality."\(^4\) It is important to note, however, that in the latest (the fourteenth) edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* the term "Dark Ages" is no longer used. On the contrary, it is explicitly stated that "the contrast, once so fashionable, between the ages of darkness and the ages of light has no more truth in it than have the idealistic fancies which underlie attempts at mediaeval revivalism."\(^5\)

Therefore, if we use the popular encyclopaedia as a means of ascertaining the nature of opinions commonly held, and the changes in such common opinions, it would seem that the notion of the mediaeval period as the "Dark Ages" is now destined to pass away for good. This idea, however, had a long and interesting history of its own, a history which has been described in a detailed monograph by Lucie Varga.\(^6\) Miss Varga has shown very clearly that the expression "Dark Ages" was never primarily a scientific term, but rather a battle-cry, "a denunciation of the mediaeval conception of the world, of the mediaeval attitude toward life, and of the culture of the Middle Ages."\(^7\)

\(^2\) *Op. cit.*, p. 1; cf. *ibid.*, p. 1 ff., where Ker quotes a number of passages from English writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, illustrating their conceptions of the "dark ages." Other quotations are found in *A New Dictionary on Historical Principles*, III (Oxford, 1897), 34.

\(^3\) *The Americana*, VI (New York, 1909/10), under "Dark Ages." This definition is repeated verbatim in the later editions of the same work.


\(^5\) *Op. cit.*, XV, 449

\(^6\) L. Varga, *Das Schlagwort vom "finsteren Mittelalter"* (Vienna-Leipzig, 1933).

gan attained its greatest currency in the age of the Enlighten-
ment, and the very name of that period was a manifest declara-
tion of war against the era of "darkness" and its scale of values. 8

But the conception originated even earlier with the Italian
humanists of the Renaissance. 9 In a recent essay on "La Cos-
cienza della Rinascita negli Umanisti," 10 Franco Simone em-
phasizes the fact that "the idea of renovation brought with it,
in a supplementary way, the idea of a period of absolute ig-
norance of the classical culture," and that "the humanists, in
order to express this double conception of theirs, used another
metaphor which was no less common than that of 'rebirth';
this other formula was that of light and darkness." 11 The meta-
phor as such was, of course, not at all new, for throughout the
Middle Ages it had been used to contrast the light, which
Christ had brought into this world, with the darkness in which
the heathen had languished before His time. 12 It was in this
sense that Petrarch used the old metaphor when he pitied Cic-
ero who had had to die shortly before "the end of the darkness
and the night of error" and before "the dawn of the true
light." 13

But the same Petrarch asserted that "amidst the errors there
shone forth men of genius, and no less keen were their eyes,
although they were surrounded by darkness and dense gloom;
therefore they ought not so much to be hated for their erring
but pitied for their ill fate." 14 These words are a good illus-
tration of the attitude which Petrarch held throughout his life to-

8 Ibid., pp. 113 ff.
9 Ibid., pp. 96 ff.
10 Published in La Rinascita, II (1939), 838–871; III (1940), 163–186.
11 F. Simone, op. cit., III, 169 f.
13 Petrarcha, De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia, ed. M. Capelli (Paris,
1906), p. 45: "... pauci enim ante Christi orum obierat oculosque claus-
erat, heul quibusc proximo noctis erratice ac tenebrarum finis et ueritatis
initium, uercque lucis aurora et iustitie sol instabat." Compare Petrarch's
remarks on Aristotle, ibid., pp. 40 f.
14 "Nullo enim modo diuinaram illis uerum ueritas apparec illis poterat,
quibusc nondum uerus sol iustitiae illuxerat. Elueebant tamen inter errores
ingenia, neque iideo minus uiuaces erant oculi quamuis tenebris et densa
caligine circumsepti, ut eis non erranti odium, sed indignae sortis miserratio
debetur"; Apologia contra cuisdam anonyh Galli calumnias (in Opera
omnia, Basel, 1554, p. 1195); quoted by Simone, op. cit., III, 182.
ward the classical poets and thinkers and of the way in which he justified the object of his life's work. But these sentences have an importance beyond this personal aspect. They mark, as Simone says, "the moment at which the metaphor of light and darkness lost its original religious value and came to have a literary connotation."¹³ This concept was soon to be developed fully by Men like Boccaccio, Filippo Villani, Ghiberti and others contrasted the "rebirth" of the arts and letters which, they held, had been effected by Dante, Giotto, and Petrarch, with the preceding period of cultural darkness.¹⁴ With this change of emphasis from things religious to things secular, the significance of the old metaphor became reversed: Antiquity, so long considered as the "Dark Age," now became the time of "light" which had to be "restored": the era following Antiquity, on the other hand, was submerged in obscurity.

The use of the expression "the Dark Ages" was not, however, confined to the circles of artists and writers of the Renaissance. The term was also used, and in an even more comprehensive sense, by the humanist historians who, from a general point of view, attempted to assign to their own time its place in the course of history. This problem of periodization of history, as it appeared to the Renaissance scholars themselves, has recently been studied by Wallace K. Ferguson in an article on "Humanist Views of the Renaissance."¹⁷ Ferguson concludes that "the Humanists . . . are in fairly general agreement that there was a decline of ancient civilization with the decline of Rome and that this decline led to a period of barbaric darkness."¹⁸

In this connection it is obviously important to find out which humanist first used the expression "the Dark Ages" as a term of periodization, since the figure of speech in itself implies a sharp chronological demarcation. Scholars have pointed to Petrarch as the man whose writings seemed to suggest such a conception.¹⁹

¹³ Simone, op. cit., III, 182 f.
¹⁷ Published in The American Historical Review, XLV (1939), pp. 1–28.
¹⁸ Ferguson, op. cit., p. 28.
¹⁹ Cf. e.g., W. Rehm, Der Untergang Roms im abendländischen Denken (Leipzig, 1930), p. 45; Simone, op. cit., II, 842 f.; Ferguson, op. cit., p. 7.
But there is no definite agreement on this particular point. But I think, however, that sufficient material can be adduced to decide the disputed question. This problem must be approached with an investigation of the development of the conception which Petrarch held with regard to his main historical work, the *De viris illustribus*. This investigation will lead directly to a discussion of Petrarch's historical conceptions in general and the part which the term "Dark Ages" played in them.

In a letter written from Parma in 1349, Petrarch recalls the years full of personal happiness and literary productivity which he once spent in the seclusion of his beloved Vaucluse. In it he enumerates the various poems and works which he began there; then he continues: "No place gave more leisure or offered stronger stimulation. That solitude encouraged me to bring together the illustrious men of all countries and of all times." This composition which Petrarch conceived in the solitude of Vaucluse was to become his work *De viris illustribus*.

It is possible to fix the approximate date of the conception of this plan. The earliest possible date is 1387, when Petrarch took up residence in Vaucluse. We learn moreover from another remark of Petrarch that the design of *De viris illustribus* formed itself in his mind before that of the *Africa*. The date of this

---

20 Cf. Varga, *op. cit.*, pp. 41 f.: "Petrarca und... Coluccio Salutati... bezeichnen im allgemeinen noch nicht das von ihnen abgelehnte Jahrtausend mit der Metapher der Finsternis; wohl aber sprechen sie, trotz aller Verehrung für die Antike, vom 'finstenen Heidentum'... Bei Petrarca und Salutati ist somit die Verteilung von Licht und Schatten auf die Geschichte fast ausschliesslich vom christlichen Standpunkt aus bestimmt."


latter work is Good Friday 1338. Thus we may conclude that the first plan of *De viris illustribus* dates from 1337/38.

According to his plan to write on "illustrious men of all countries and of all times," Petrarch went to work immediately and started writing "biographies" of Jewish and oriental, Greek and Roman figures, belonging to the realm of both myth and reality. This first version began with the life of Adam and ended with that of Caesar.

A few years later, however, the original program was to undergo a decisive change. In Petrarch's *Secretum*, which was begun about 1342/43, Saint Augustine addresses the poet in the following words: "You have been dreaming of becoming renowned to posterity and for this reason . . . you have ventured upon writing the history from King Romulus to Emperor Titus, an immense undertaking that requires much time and work." This sentence shows that in 1342/43 Petrarch no longer intended, as he had done five years earlier, to write on the illustrious men of all ages. By this time he had restricted his theme to the history of a very definite period, stretching from Romulus, the first king, down through the centuries of the Roman Republic to the first hundred years of the Empire.

---

25 It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that this first text of *De viris illustribus* was discovered by P. de Nolhac, who published extracts from it, *op. cit.*, p. 110 ff.; cf. P. de Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l’Humanisme*, II (2nd ed.), Paris, 1907, 1 ff.
27 *Opera omnia* (Basel, 1554), p. 411. "... famam inter posteros concepti, ideoque manum ad maiora iam portigens, librum historiarum a rege Romulo in Titum Caesarum, opus immensum temporisque et laboris capaxisimum aggressus est."
28 R. Tatham, *Francesco Petrarca, the First Modern Man of Letters; His Life and Letters*, II (London, 1926), p. 66, believes that Petrarch started out with writing "a series of lives of Roman warriors and statesmen from Romulus to Titus," and that "afterwards—at what date is not clear—he extended his design so as to include famous men of all ages and countries." Tatham argues as follows (II, 66, n. 3): "(Petrarch) alludes to the longer design in *Fam.*, VIII, 3, which was written in 1349; and since the *Secret* was written in 1342-1343, the change must have been between these dates." This argument is wrong: Tatham did not notice that in *Fam.*, VIII, 3, Petrarch does not speak of books he was working on in 1349, but of plans which he had conceived in a happy past when he was living in Vaucluse.
How are we to account for this alteration of the original design? Must we believe that Petrarch abandoned the initial project because he had come to realize that the task was "too vast and beyond his power"? Surely no mere external difficulties could offer an impulse strong enough to make Petrarch discontinue his original plan and even discard all the lives of biblical and Greek personages which he had already written. It seems more logical to assume that it was a new concept of history which necessitated these alterations. A search for possible causes of this decisive change, which took place in Petrarch's mind between the years 1337 and 1342/43, reveals that one of the most important events in the poet's life fell in this period: his coronation as poet laureate on the Capitol on April 8, 1341. The question, then, arises whether Petrarch's new concept of history as Roman history is to be connected with his Roman coronation?

To answer this question we have to consider Petrarch's relation around Rome. Ever since his childhood his thoughts had centered around "the city to which there is none like, nor ever will be." But when in 1337 he came to Rome for the first time and actually saw the remains of her ancient grandeur, he was so overwhelmed by the impressions he received that he was unable to express his feelings in words. The fact that Petrarch saw


30 On this point compare Tatham, op. cit., I, 328-348: in his text Tatham gives large extracts from a number of Petrarch's letters dealing with Rome, viz. Fam., II, 9, 12, 13, 14; VI, 2; VII, 1.


32 Thus Petrarch wrote in a letter of 1337, dated "Rome, idibus Martii, in Capitolio," to his great patron, the Cardinal Giovanni Colonna: "Ab urbe Roma quid exspectet, qui tam multa de montibus acceperit? Putabas me grande aliquid scripturum, cum Romam pervenissem. Ingens michi forsan in posterum scribendi materia oblata est; in presens nichil est quod
the mendicant friar Giovanni Colonna. Petrarch had first met Giovanni in Avignon and had carried on a correspondence with him, after this scion of the great Colonna family had gone to Rome to conclude his life as a monk. When Petrarch came to Rome in 1341, Giovanni often accompanied him on his promenades around the city. These common wanderings of theirs Petrarch recalls in that letter to Giovanni which begins: "Deambulabamus Rome soli." After a digression on the relative values of the various ancient schools of philosophy Petrarch continues: "We were wandering together in that mighty city, which, though from its extent it seems empty, has an immense population; we were wandering not merely in it but all around it; and at every step we encountered food for musing and for conversation." There follows a long list of the localities which the two friends visited on their walks through Rome. It is to be noted that for the most part Petrarch recalls spots which were connected with the great figures and events of the history of pagan Rome, especially of the time of the Roman Republic, whereas only a very small part of the enumeration is devoted to scenes of Christian Rome: the proportion shows where Petrarch's main interest lay. This is the more noteworthy, since in the beginning of the same letter Petrarch affirms: "We are to read philosophy, poetry, or history in such fashion that the echo of Christ's gospel, by which alone we are wise and happy, may ever be sounding in our hearts,—that gospel, without which the more we have learnt, the more ignorant and

37 Fam., VI, 2 (ed. Rossi, II, 55–60); partly translated by Tatham, op. cit., I, 343–346. The date of the letter was controversial and it was doubtful whether it referred to Petrarch's first or second visit to Rome. However, L. Foresti, Aneddoti della vita del Petrarca (Brescia, 1928), pp. 81–84, has proved beyond any doubt that "la lettera fu inverosimile in cammino per la campagna di Parma il 30 Novembre 1341" (op. cit., p. 82); F. E. H. Wilkins, A Tentative Chronology of Petrarch's Prose Letters (Chicago, 1929), p. 6 (under November 30).

38 "Vagabamur pariter in illa urbe tam magna, que cum propter spatium vacua videatur, populum habet immensum; nec in urbe tantum sed circa urbem vagabamur, aderatque per singulos passus quod lingua atque animum excitaret" (ed. Rossi, II, 56; transl. by Tatham, op. cit., I, 344).

39 In Rossi's edition of the letter in Le Familiari, the ratio is about ten to one: lines 47 to 105 are devoted to the description of pagan Rome, lines 106 to 111 to that of Christian Rome.
wretched shall we be; to which, as the highest citadel of truth, all things must be referred; on which alone, as the firm foundation of sound learning, all human toil is built." 40 Here a strong inconsistency appears: on the one hand Petrarch denies the intrinsic value of secular knowledge and declares that everything must be referred to eternal religious truth; on the other he puts an almost exclusive emphasis on the history of pagan Rome and neglects the Christian aspects of the eternal city. 41

After enumerating the historical spots, Petrarch complains bitterly that the contemporary Romans know nothing about Rome and things Roman. In his opinion this ignorance is disastrous. For he asks: "Who can doubt that Rome would rise up again if she but began to know herself?" 42 After this emotional outburst, Petrarch continues the reminiscences of his wanderings with Giovanni Colonna: "After the fatigue of walking over the immense circuit of the city, we used often to stop at the Baths of Diocletian; sometimes we even climbed upon the vaulted roof of that once magnificent building, for nowhere is there a healthier air, a wider prospect, or more silence and desirable solitude. There we did not talk of business nor of private or public affairs on which we had shed tears enough. As we walked over the walls of the shattered city or sat there, the fragments of the ruins were under our very eyes. Our conversation often turned on history, which we appeared to have divided up between us in such a fashion that in modern history

40 "Sic philosophica, sic poetica, sic historias legamus, ut semper ad aurem cordis Evangelium Cristi sonet: quo uno satis docti ac felices; sine quo quanto plura didicerimus, tanto induceres atque miserores futuri sumus; ad quod velut ad summam verum referenda sunt omnia; cui, tanquam uni literarum verarum immobili fundamento, toto superediscat humanus labor." (ed. Rossi, II, 56); transl. by Taitham, op. cit., I, 344.

41 In this connection it is interesting to contrast this letter of 1541 with a passage in a letter which Petrarch wrote to Barbaro da Sulmona in 1538 (Fam., XII, 7; ed. Rossi, III, 28). "Id quidem quod non in ultimis adversitaturn numquam, ut me Roma non inveneris, divinitus factum reor, ne si congregi licuisset, non templo Dei devotione catholicis uel Urbis ambitium, histrastemus curiositate poetica, non anime curam agentes sed negotium literarum, quod licet si locundissimum pabulum intellectus, nisi tamen ad unum verum hanc redigatur, infinitum quiddam et inane est."

42 Fam., VI, 2 (ed. Rossi, II, 58): "Quis enim dubitare potest quin illico surrecctura sit, si repetit se Roma cognoscere?"
you, in ancient history I, seemed to be more expert; and ancient were called those events which took place before the name of Christ was celebrated in Rome and adored by the Roman emperors, modern, however, the events from that time to the present.”

What strikes the modern reader of this letter is the fact that the poet looked at Rome and the Roman scene primarily from a historical and not from an aesthetic point of view. And even this historical point of view is quite unique. This becomes evident in the climax of the letter where Petrarch recalls the conversations which he had with his old friend on the roof of the Baths of Diocletian, the ruins of the city spread beneath them. The reader of these sentences is immediately reminded of the words with which in his Memoirs Gibbon records the conception of his great history: “It was on the fifteenth of October (1764), in the gloom of evening, as I sat musing on the Capitol, while the barefooted fryars were chanting their litanies in the temple of Jupiter, that I conceived the first thought of my history. My original plan was confined to the decay of the City; my reading and reflection pointed to that aim; but several years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I grappled with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.”

To Gibbon, true son of the age of Ruinen-Romantik, those Roman ruins bore witness to “the greatest, perhaps, and most aw-

43 “Solebamus ergo, post fatigationem quam nobis immensa urbs ambita peplerat, sepius ad Termas Diocletianas subsistere, nonnunquam vero supra testudinem illius magnificentissime olim domus ascendere, quod et acri salutaris et prospectus liber et silentium ac votiva solitudo nusquam magis. Ibi de negotiis nihil omnino, nihil de re familiari nichilique de publica, quam semel flevisse satis est. Et euntibus per menia fracter urbis et illic sedentibus, ruinarum fragmenta sub oculis erant. Quid ergo? Multus de historiis sermo erat, quas ita partiti videbamur, ut in novis tu, in antiquis ego videret expetior, et dicantur antiquae quecunque ante celebratum Rome et veneratum romanis principibus Cristi nomen, nove autem ex illo usque ad hanc etatem.” (ed. Rossi, II, 58); compare Tatham’s translation, op. cit., I, 345.—The rest of the letter deals with the problem of the beginnings of the liberal and mechanical arts.

44 Quoted by D. M. Low, E. Gibbon (London, 1937), p. 184; cf. the similar words at the very end of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

45 Cf. W. Rehm, Der Untergang Roms im abendländischen Denken (Leipzig, 1930), pp. 120 ff.
ful scene in the history of mankind”; and thus was he inspired to inquire and to describe the decadence of Rome. Petrarch’s reaction as shown by his letter was entirely different. To him those ruins evidently bore witness to the time when Rome and the Romans had been great: “Of minute things,” he exclaims, “there are no great ruins; . . . he never will fall from a height who already lies in the abyss”; thus Petrarch shows his main interest, the rise and greatness of the Respublica Romana. In Gibbon’s opinion Rome had fallen once and for all; in Petrarch’s opinion there was a hope of resurrection, “if Rome but began to know herself.”

This interpretation of the letter of 1341 reveals that by this time a new concept of history existed in Petrarch’s mind. It would be highly gratifying to our sense of the logical if we were able to prove conclusively that this gravitation toward ancient Rome originated in and resulted directly from Petrarch’s coronation which made him a civis Romanus both legally and ideally. The material at our disposal, however, is too scanty to show this with absolute certainty. But one conclusion we may safely draw from Petrarch’s letter to Giovanni Colonna in 1341: here for the first time he ventured to state explicitly that his primary interest was in the history of pagan rather than of Christian Rome, thus drawing a sharp boundary-line between “ancient” and “modern” history. As in this letter he spoke almost exclusively of the remains of the classical time in Rome, also shortly afterwards he stated in his Secretum that he

48 E. Gibbon. The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, last page.
47 “Minutarum rerum ruina magna esse non potest; procul absunt ab hoc metu; nunquam cadet ex alto, qui in imo facit; Roma igitur ex alto cecidit, non cadet Aunio”; Apologia contra cunusdam anonymi Galli calumnias (in Opera omnia, Basel, 1554, p. 1180).
49 There exists the possibility that Petrarch had conceived of this idea before he went to Rome, and that his laurel crown merely fortified his belief in the focal importance of Roman history.
had confined his work *De viris illustribus* to the time “from Romulus to Titus.”

The same demarcation of two clearly separated epochs of history is found in a letter of 1359, which Petrarch addresses to another member of the Colonna family, Agapito Colonna. Petrarch's main purpose in writing this letter is to defend himself against Agapito's reproach of ingratitude and haughtiness and against the accusation that he intended to use Agapito as an example of vanity. Petrarch repudiates these charges and assures Agapito that he never had introduced his name in any of his works, “not because I lacked affection but because I lacked occasion.” Petrarch continues: “And yet had I touched upon illustrious men of our time, I will not say that I should have introduced your name (lest in my present anger I should seem to flatter you, a thing which is not my habit even when well disposed), but most assuredly I should not have passed over in silence either your uncle or your father. I did not wish for the sake of so few famous names, however, to guide my pen so far and through such darkness. Therefore sparing myself the excess both of subject-matter and of effort, I have determined to fix a limit to my history long before this century.”

In accordance with the passages quoted above from the letter of 1341 and from the *Secretum*, Petrarch states in this letter of 1359 that he had resolved to set a precise date limit to his historical studies. At the same time, however, he qualifies his judgement of the period following the period to which he was devoting his attention: this epoch was to him an era of “*tenebrae,*” of “darkness.”

What did Petrarch mean to say by using this word “*tenebrae*”? In his opinion was this period dark simply because the lack of sources prevented the historian from shedding light on

---

51 “Caeerum nusquam ibi, nusquam alibi hactenus tuum nomen inserui, destituente quidem materia, non affectu” (ed. Fracassetti, III, 30).
52 “Quamquam si illustres aevi nostri viros attigissetem, non dicam te, ne tibi, quod placatus non soleo, iratus adulari vidcar, at certe nec patrum nec patrem tuum silentio oppressurus fuerim. Nolui autem pro tam paucis nominibus claris, tam procul tantasque per tenebras stilum ferre: ideoque vel materiae vel labori parces, longe ante hoc saeculum historiæ limitem statui ac defixi.” (ed. Fracassetti, III, 30 f.).
it? Or was it dark because "the lamps had gone out all over Europe" for a time of more than a thousand years? With this alternative we come to the crucial point in the interpretation of Petrarch's conception of history. For the acceptance of the second assumption would mean that by the use of the word "darkness" Petrarch passed a very definite judgement of value upon the long era in question.

To solve this problem we turn to statements made by Petrarch elsewhere in his writings. In a famous passage in the second book of the Africa he makes the father of the elder Scipio Africanus predict the future of Rome to his son. Lucius Scipio breaks off his prophecy with the reigns of the Emperors Vespasian and Titus. "I cannot bear," he exclaims, "to proceed; for strangers of Spanish and African extraction will steal the sceptre and the glory of the Empire founded by us with great effort. Who can endure the thought of the seizure of supreme control by these dregs of the people, these contemptible remnants, passed over by our sword"? 53

Similar ideas Petrarch expresses in a letter which he directed to the German King Charles IV in 1351. 54 The second half of this letter is a speech which Roma herself addresses to Charles. She describes in detail the rise of the Roman Republic up to the Augustan era: hundreds of years of effort and struggle, she says, resulted in the foundation of the Empire and in the establishment of eternal peace. At this point Roma suddenly breaks off her narration. She declares emphatically that she does not wish to begin "the lamentable story" of the decline: "where things have retrograded," Charles will see for himself. 55

In the history of the later Roman emperors of "foreign" ex-

53 Ulterius transire piget; nam sceptr a decusque
Imperii tanto nobis fundata labore
Externi rapient Hispane stirpis et Afr.
Quis ferat has hominum sordes nostrisque pudendas
Relliquias gladi fastigia prendere rerum: Africa, II. 274-278 (ed.
N. Festa, p. 40); cf. Africa II, 255 f.
54 Fam., X. 1 (ed. Rossi, II, 277-284); cf. P. Piór's edition of this letter
in K. Burdach, Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation, VII (Berlin, 1953), 1-11.
55 "... voti composit, omnia sub pedibus meis vidi. Inde sensim nescio
quonammodo, nisi quia mortalium opera decet esse mortalia, in labores
meos irrepsit aliena seguitices, ac ne lacrimabilem ordiar historiam, quorum
res redierint, vides" (ed. Rossi, II, 182).
traction Petrarch is no more interested than he is in the history of all those rulers of non-Roman nations, "whose names," as he says in the preface to the second version of De viris illustribus, "were always obscure and are now entirely obliterated because of the long lapse of time." In this connection it is noteworthy that in an early letter (written in 1333) Petrarch calls Charlemagne simply "King Charles whom, by the cognomen of 'the Great,' barbarous peoples dare to raise to the level of Pompey and Alexander." If in this letter and elsewhere Petrarch denies to Charles both his official and his popular titles, he denies more than the personal greatness of a single individual: he expresses his disregard of the whole institution—the first and greatest representative of which Charlemagne had been—the mediaeval Empire, the self-proclaimed heir and successor of the Imperium Romanum. That Petrarch does not contest the imperial idea, according to which the Empire had been transferred from the Romans to the Byzantines, the Franks and eventually the Germans, is shown by the prediction which in the Africa he puts in the mouth of Lucius Scipio. But in contradiction to the political theorists and historians of the Middle Ages, Petrarch looks with scorn at this continuity. For in his

50 "Quis enim, queso, Parthorum aut Macedonum, quis Gothorum et Unnorum et Vuandalorum atque aliarum gentium reges ab ultimis repetitos in ordinem digerat, quorum et obscura semper et iam senio deleta sunt nominia?" (ed. P. de Nolhac, in Notices et extraits de la Bibliothèque Nationale, XXXIV, 1 [Paris, 1890], 112).


opinion the Roman Empire "had been impaired, debilitated, and almost consumed at the hands of the barbarians." 60

From these passages it is clear that Petrarch discarded the whole history of the Roman Empire during late Antiquity and the Middle Ages because within that age, everywhere in the western world, had come into power "barbarous" nations which brought even Rome and the Romans under their domination. Because Petrarch could think of this whole development only with a feeling of scornful grief, he consciously and consistently consigned it to oblivion in all his writings. In his letters time and again he conjures up the great shades of Antiquity, but scarcely ever does he refer to a mediaeval name. In his Rerum memorandarum libri quatuor, more than half of the examples are drawn from Roman history, about two-fifths from ancient Greek history, and only the rest from "more recent" times, which in this case meant almost exclusively from the fourteenth century; the Middle Ages proper are passed over in complete silence. 61 Exactly the same is true of his Trionfi, where nearly all of the handful of mediaeval figures mentioned belong to the realm of legend or poetry or to the period close to Petrarch's own time. 62 To realize the peculiarity of Petrarch's standpoint, we have only to think of the entirely different picture of the past in the Divine Comedy, where Dante usually

60 In the Apologia contra cuiusdam anonymi Galli calumnias Petrarch says of the Empire: "quod licet inter manus barbaricas imminutum atque debilitatum et pene consumptum sit, Romanas inter manus tale sufit, ut omnia mundi illi admota puériles ludiuisse videantur et inania nomina" (in Opera omnia, Basel, 1554, p. 1187).

61 Compare Rerum memorandarum libri IV (in Opera omnia, Basel, 1554, pp. 442–550). The work contains 20 chapters, each of which is arranged in the three sections of the history of the Romans, the "externi," and the "recentiores." There are about 350 entries in the work, of these, 30 entries are grouped under the heading of "recentiores," more than 130 under that of "externi"; the remaining more than 180 stories are from Roman history.—On the general character of this work cf. L. Tonelli, Petrarca (Milan, 1930), pp. 261 ff.

couples ancient and mediaeval figures in his representation of the various vices and virtues of man. 63

Petrarch’s conception of history, I think, cannot be better expressed than by the words which he wrote in the Apologia contra cuiusdam anonymi Galli calumnias: “What else, then, is all history, if not the praise of Rome?” 64 This peculiar notion of history, very impressive in its Latin succinctness, was formulated by Petrarch only at the end of his life. But evidently he conceived of it much earlier, in the beginning of the 1340’s, when he started work on the second version of De viris illustribus. When in his historical work Petrarch emphasized everything that was Roman and excluded everything that was outside Rome, he was entirely in accord with all his other writings; both in his letters and in his poetical works he confined himself to the same topic as in De viris illustribus.

This consistent restriction to subjects taken from Roman history makes it clear that Petrarch did not narrow down the scope of his historical studies for mere external reasons, but that he rather limited himself on principle. This limitation was based on a very definite judgement of value: the praise of Rome corresponded to the condemnation of the “barbarous” countries and peoples outside Rome. This point of view Petrarch expressed when in 1341 he drew a line of demarcation between “ancient” and “modern” history, and when later on he called the period stretching from the fall of the Roman Empire down to his own age a time of “darkness.” In Petrarch’s opinion that era was “dark” because it was worthless, not because it was little known. The sooner the period dropped from man’s memory, the better. Therefore Petrarch, personally at least, was resolved to bury it in oblivion.

This notion, however, has an importance beyond its relation

63 Cf. J. Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, b. iii, ch. 4: “In the Divine Comedy (Dante) treats the ancient and the Christian worlds, not indeed as of equal authority, but as parallel to one another. Just as, at an earlier period of the Middle Ages types and antitypes were sought in the history of the Old and New Testaments, so does Dante constantly bring together a Christian and a pagan illustration of the same fact.”

64 “Quid est enim alium omnis historia quam Romana laus?” (in Opera omnia, Basel, 1554, p. 1187); cf. H. W. Eppelsheimer, Petrarca (Bonn, 1926), p. 77.
to the life and works of Petrarch. It offers not only a key to the understanding of Petrarch's personal standards of value, but it deserves attention as well in connection with the problem with which our discussion started, the problem of the humanist periodization of history.

As we have seen, Petrarch divided the course of history into two sharply separated periods and set as a dividing point between them either the time when Christianity became the state religion in the Roman Empire or the time when the Roman Empire began to "decline" under the rule of "barbarian," that is, non-Roman emperors. Mediaeval historiography was based on essentially different principles. Whereas after the modification of his original plan Petrarch concerned himself exclusively with the first period and concentrated upon the secular history of Rome "from Romulus to Titus," the mediaeval historians almost without exception wrote universal history, that is, in the words of Benedetto Croce, "a history of the universal, of the universal by excellence, which is history in labor with God and toward God." Even the most meager monastic chroniclers and annalists dealt usually with their particular monasteries within the framework of a history of the world from its creation to the present. In doing so they followed very definite schemes according to which universal history was divided up into the succession either of the four world-monarchies or of the six ages. These two patterns were first drawn up by Jerome in his Commentaries on Daniel's famous prophecy on the statue composed of different metals and on the four


66 B. Croce, op. cit., p. 206.

beasts (*Daniel*, 2, 31 ff. and 7, 1 ff.); and by Augustine in the *City of God* (xxii). Both schemes had in common the conception of the world and its various countries and peoples as a unity, which implied the notion both of universality and of continuity in history. This idea originated in Hellenistic times, and later on was taken over by the greatest of the early Christian historians, Eusebius of Caesarea. Because of the authority of Jerome and Augustine the patterns of the four world-monarchies and the six ages became the models of almost all the mediaeval universal histories, those of Isidore of Seville, Bede, Otto of Freising, Vincent of Beauvais, to mention only the greatest names. As late as in the seventeenth century we find histories of the world organized in accordance with the interpretation of Daniel's prophecy. In these two schemes the beginnings of the last period coincided, since in the one it began with the foundation of the Roman Empire by Caesar or Augustus, in the other with the birth of Christ. "And thus," as Comparetti says, "history was divided into two distinct periods—a long period of error and darkness, and then a period of purification and truth, while midway between the two stood the Cross of Calvary." 

Against this background we may now place Petrarch's division of history: he certainly drew an entirely different line of demarcation. Since he concerned himself exclusively with one particular state, Rome, he was not interested in the four world-monarchies. He started out from the very beginnings of Rome and showed her growth under the leadership of the great men of the republican period, whereas the mediaeval historians paid very little attention to the epoch preceding the foundation of the Empire. "The lamentable story of how things retrograded," Petrarch did not want to recount (*Fam.*, x, 1), and therefore he...

---


stopped precisely at the point where in his opinion the "decline" of the Empire began. The mediaeval historians, on the other hand, continued the history of the Empire straight through to their own time: in their opinion the Imperium Romanum still existed although the rule over it had been "transferred" from the Romans to other peoples.

By setting up the "decline of the Empire" as a dividing point and by passing over the traditional marks either of the foundation of the Empire or of the birth of Christ, Petrarch introduced a new chronological demarcation in history. This scheme has been distinguished from the older mediaeval or "Hellenistic" ones by the name "humanistic," 72 for it formed the underlying principle of most of the historical works written by Italian humanists. 73 Its most manifest expression is found in the title of Flavio Biondo's work Decades historiarum ab inclinatione imperii, a history of the period stretching from 410 to 1440. The origin of this new chronological demarcation, therefore, has usually been dated hitherto from the middle of the fifteenth century. 74 But, since Petrarch consciously confined his historical studies to the period "usque ad declinationem imperii," if we may say so, we are justified in stating that thereby he implicitly anticipated ideas of the fifteenth-century Italian humanists.

This statement with regard to Petrarch's demarcation of "Antiquity" raises another question. The humanists were to replace the older patterns with a division of history into three periods which, under the names of "ancient," "mediaeval," and "modern" times, live to the present day. 75 Is it possible to con-

75 On the question of division of history compare K. Heussi, Altertum, Mittelalter und Neuzeit; ein Beitrag zum Problem der historischen Periodi-
nect Petrarch also with the origin of this division? I think that the question can be answered in the affirmative. To be sure, this threefold division we shall nowhere find expressed directly by Petrarch. As we have seen, he speaks only of "ancient" and "modern" history. The use of the word "modern" in this connection cannot be interpreted otherwise than that Petrarch thought of his own time as still a part of the period which had begun with the "decline" of the Empire. His was an age of decadence: this idea Petrarch has expressed time and again in his letters. The feeling of profound pessimism finds perhaps its most impressive wording in an early letter where Petrarch says: "As conditions are, I foresee worse things from day to day; but, although I can fear worse things, I can scarcely imagine them." But like so many men of all ages, Petrarch was a pessimist because he was an idealist at heart. In measuring the actual conditions of his time with the standards of his lofty ideals he could not escape despair, a despair, however, which did not always mean hopelessness. His "Golden Age," it is true, lay in the past but, on occasion at least, he was able to visualize the possibility of its return in the future. Thus, in a letter to Pope Urban V, he expresses his belief that Christ desires the re-establishment of the papal court in Rome "pro aurei saeculi principio." In similar, though less religious language Petrarch phrases his passionate appeals to the Roman Tribune of the People, Cola di Rienzo, and to the German Emperor Charles IV, urging them to take over the legacy of Antiquity and to follow the models of the great men of ancient Rome: by so doing they were to revive the grandeur of times past. It was this same con-

sierung (Tübingen, 1921); H. Spangenberg, "Die Perioden der Weltgeschichte," Historische Zeitschrift, cxxvii (1923), 1-49.

76 Fam., vi, 2 (ed. Rossi, ii, 58).


78 Senil., vii (in Opera omnia, Basel, 1554, p. 903): "Incipit, credo, Christus Deus noster suorum fidelium misereri, uult ut arbitror, finem malis imponere, quae multa per hos annos uidimus, uult pro aurei saeculi principio Ecclesiæ suam, quam uagari propter culpas hominum diu sinit, ad antiquas et proprias sedes suas et priscae fidei statum reuocare."
fiction which impelled Petrarch to pursue historical studies. Since he believed that "Rome would rise up again if she but began to know herself," he strove throughout his life and his work to make his contemporaries conscious of the great traditions of the eternal city. In spite of his often expressed pessimism Petrarch evidently was convinced that there existed the chance of a spiritual rebirth which would put an end to the process of decline, and bring about the beginning of a "new time." This ardent hope of his for the future Petrarch voices nowhere more impressively than in the work which he himself considered as his greatest: at the very end of the Africa he addresses his own poem as follows: "My fate is to live amid varied and confusing storms. But for you perhaps, if as I hope and wish you will live long after me, there will follow a better age. This sleep of forgetfulness will not last for ever. When the darkness has been dispersed, our descendants can come again in the former pure radiance." These verses of the Africa show clearly Petrarch’s views on the periodization of history. He holds that there was an era of "pure radiance" in the past, Antiquity, and that there is an era of "darkness" succeeding this former period and lasting to the poet’s own days. Thus, in Petrarch’s opinion, there exists, for the time being, only a twofold division of history. But, since he hopes for the coming of "a better time," the conception of a third era is expressed, or at least implied, in his thoughts. This is illustrated most distinctly in one of his Epistles, in which he complains against Fate for having decreed his birth in such sad times, and in which he wishes that he had been born either earlier or much later; for he says, "there was a more fortunate age and probably there will be one again; in the middle, in our

79 I shall give this question detailed treatment in a monograph on Petrarch's Historical and Political Ideas [This monograph was never written] 80 Africa, X, 451-457 (ed. Festa, p. 278); . . . Michi degere vitam.  
Impositum varia rcrum turbante procella.  
At tibi fortassis, si—quod mens sperat et optat—  
Es post me victura diu, meliora supersunt  
Secula: non omnes veniet Letheus in annos  
Iste sopor! Poterunt discussis fortes tenebris  
Ad purum priscumque inbar remeare nepotes.
time, you see the confluence of wretches and ignominy." In these lines Petrarch plainly distinguishes between three eras: the fortunate ages of the past and, possibly, of the future; between them there is a "middle" time which has not yet come to an end. For the humanists of the fifteenth century periodization of history was to be much simpler. In their opinion the "new" era had actually come to light, because of the work of the great artists and poets of the fourteenth century, among them Petrarch himself. Thus, in their minds, there was no doubt about the reality of three periods: a "middle" period separated the Golden Age of Antiquity from a "modern" time of "renascence." It would be asking too much to expect Petrarch to proclaim himself explicitly the inaugurator of a new era, although occasionally he comes close to making such a claim. But implicitly he certainly paved the way to the idea which was to be set forth by the humanists of following generations. In this sense, then, our modern threefold division of history can be traced back to Petrarch.

The strength of Petrarch's hope for a revival of the Golden Age varied throughout his life, in accordance with general circumstances and his personal moods. But he never vacillated in his firm conviction that the era following the decline of the

---

81 Epist. metr., iii, 33 (ed. D. Rossetti, F. Petrarchae poëmata minora, ii [Milan, 1891], 262) begins as follows:

Vivo, sed indignans, quae nos in tristia fatum
Saecula dilatos peioribus intulit annis.
Aut prius, aut multo decuit post tempore nasci;
Nam fuit, et fortassis erit, felicior acuvm.
In medium sordes, in nostrum turpia tempus
Confluxisse vides; gravium sentina malorum
Nos habet; ingenium, virtus et gloria mundo
Cesserunt; regnumque tenent fortuna, voluptas;
Dedecus ingenti visui nisi surgimus actum est.

82 The first written proofs of the expression "Middle Ages" used in the technical sense, date from the middle of the fifteenth century; cf. P. Lehmann, "Mittelalter und Küchenlatein," Historische Zeitschrift, cxxvii (1928), 200–206.

Roman Empire was a period of "darkness." The fact that we are able to associate this conception with Petrarch, means more than merely the fixation of a date. For the whole idea of the Italian "rinascita," is inseparably connected with the notion of the preceding era as an age of obscurity. The people living in that "renascence" thought of it as a time of revolution. They wanted to break away from the mediaeval past and all its traditions and they were convinced that they had effected such a break. They believed that in their time, to use the words of Petrarch, "the darkness had been dispersed," and that they had "come again in the former pure radiance." Their model was Antiquity, "and the Middle Ages did seem to be a ditch or a declivity." 84

From our modern point of view we may find it impossible to draw such a sharp line of demarcation between the Renaissance and the preceding period. We have, however, to keep in mind one very essential fact which has been expressed by Joachimsen as follows: "If there is one thing that unites the men of the Renaissance, it is the notion of belonging to a new time." 85 It is precisely this notion of a "new time" which distinguishes the Italian Renaissance from all the so called earlier "Renaissances" in the Carolingian and Ottonian times or in the twelfth century. These times may have experienced a certain revival of classical studies, but the people living in them did not conceive of or wish for a complete break with the traditions of the times immediately preceding 86 This idea was peculiar to the Italian Renaissance and it found its expression in the condemnation of the mediaeval epoch as an era of "darkness." Petrarch stands at the very fountainhead of Renaissance thought. It is logical that the "Father of Humanism" is also the father of the concept or attitude which regards the Middle Ages as the "Dark Ages."

Petrarch and the Decoration of the Sala Virorum Illustrium in Padua*

PETRARCH and the Arts is a topic which has often claimed the attention of scholars interested in the history of ideas current during the early Italian Renaissance. For throughout his life Petrarch took a great personal interest in the art of his own time, as well as in that of the classical era; he owned works of Giotto and Simone Martini and he concerned himself on many occasions with the archaeological and other remains of Roman antiquity. That the greatest poet then living in Italy distinguished himself also as a connoisseur and collector must have helped the "new" art considerably and increased the critical regard for it of the people of his generation. It is noteworthy that Petrarch remained faithful to his original love although, after the middle of the fourteenth century, there developed among his younger contemporaries "a certain kind of adverse criticism.


1 The nature of the problems treated in this article forced the author to move into areas of research which are somewhat outside his own field. He therefore feels most grateful for the helpful advice and the valuable suggestions which he received from his friends B. Degenhart, E. Mandowsky, E. Panofsky, and W. L. Woodfill, as well as from the members of the University Seminar on the Renaissance at Columbia University, to whom the paper was presented in Spring 1950. Acknowledgment for the use of photographs is made to Danesin, Padua, for Figs. 2, 3, and 4.
of the work of Giotto and his followers." ² Of Petrarch’s “fervent, yet systematic and scientific labors devoted to antiquity,” it has justly been said that they “mark a phase of the greatest moment in this development.” ³

But perhaps even more important than this personal interest in contemporary art and in ancient archaeology is the fact that through his literary work Petrarch gave many ideas to the artists of later generations. In the standard work on this topic, Prince d’Essling and Eugène Müntz came to the conclusion that “a historian who neglects [this influence] passes over one of the most operative factors of the Renaissance.” ⁴ Above all it was, of course, the Trionfi which inspired artistic imagination, and so we find throughout the Renaissance a large number of representations of Petrarch’s triumphs, some of the whole series and some of only a single triumph. ⁵ But other works of Petrarch were also to exert a definite influence upon artistic creation, as Prince d’Essling and E. Müntz have shown. ⁶

The case of Petrarch’s main historical work, De viris illustribus, a collection of biographies of great Roman statesmen and generals, is of particular interest. In most of the other instances Petrarch’s influence was posthumous. But here we know that his book was adapted by painters during his lifetime and under his very eyes. Moreover, we even know the motive which inspired his patron, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara, to commission the frescoes representing Petrarch’s historical work in the palace at Padua. This information we obtain from Petrarch’s faithful disciple, Lombardo della Seta, whom he appointed his

² M. Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death, Princeton, 1951, p. 6; see ibid., pp. 70-71; for Petrarch’s remarks concerning Giotto, see R. Salvini, Giotto, bibliografia, Rome, 1938, p. 5 notes 9-11.
⁵ See W. Weisbach, Trionfi, Berlin, 1919, passim.
⁶ D’Essling and Müntz, op. cit., ch. iii (pp. 83-100)
literary executor. In 1379, five years after Petrarch's death, Lombardo completed his continuation of the work *De viris illustribus*, which Petrarch had left unfinished. In his dedicatory preface Lombardo addresses Francesco il Vecchio as follows: "As an ardent lover of the virtues, you have extended hospitality to these *viri illustres*, not only in your heart and mind, but also very magnificently in the most beautiful part of your palace. According to the custom of the ancients you have honored them with gold and purple, and with images and inscriptions you have set them up for admiration. . . . To the inward conception of your keen mind you have given outward expression in the form of most excellent pictures, so that you may always keep in sight these men whom you are eager to love because of the greatness of their deeds." 8

If the decoration of the Sala Virorum Illustrium in Padua had been preserved in the original form inspired by Petrarch and commissioned by Francesco da Carrara, we would have a singular opportunity to study and understand how the essence of an important literary work was expressed in painting. The almost complete destruction of the frescoes seems, at first glance, to have deprived us of that opportunity. However, sufficient evidence remains so that we can attempt to reconstruct, to a certain extent at least, the original decoration.9

The first problem which arises is the question as to when the

---


frescoes of the hall were painted. The dates which have been assigned so far vary from the late 1340's to a date before 1370. It is, however, possible to fix the date somewhat more precisely by taking into consideration the fact that Francesco da Carrara commissioned the frescoes only after Petrarch had dedicated his work De viris illustribus to him. The final preface, containing this dedication, is undated. But a study of the relationship which existed between Petrarch and Francesco il Vecchio permits us to establish quite definitely the date post quern of the dedication of the book, and, consequently, also that of the beginning of the decoration.

Francesco was the son of Giacomo da Carrara with whom Petrarch, in his younger years, had been on very close terms. The news of Giacomo's assassination by members of his own family, in 1350, came as a terrible shock to Petrarch, and for more than seven years he avoided Padua. It was only in 1358 that he revisited the city, of which Francesco il Vecchio had by then assumed the government. From that year on, Petrarch again frequented Padua for longer or shorter periods and ultimately, from 1367 to his death in 1374, he resided there and in nearby Arquà more often than anywhere else. During his stays in Padua, Petrarch of course got to know the lord of the city but, to judge from a letter written in 1361, his relationship with Francesco remained at first quite formal. Evidently, it was only after Petrarch had become a more or less permanent


14 See Fam. (ed. V. Rossi) xxiii, 20, §§ 5–6.
resident of the principality of the Carrara that a true friendship developed between the two men, as a large number of letters indicates, which Petrarch either addressed directly to Francesco or in which he spoke of him. These letters were all written between the years 1367 and 1374.\textsuperscript{15} We learn from them that the prince endeavored in every possible way to show the respect and the admiration which he felt for the poet. Thus, for instance, he appeared in person to greet Petrarch on his return from a journey, had his own physician attend him, and called on him to deliver personally unhappy news of one of Petrarch's closest friends, news which later fortunately proved to be false.\textsuperscript{16} Theirs was not a relationship between lord and subject but between man and man, and consequently their conversations were characterized by complete frankness and cordiality.\textsuperscript{17} Petrarch, on his side, had high regard for Francesco's statesmanship and took a great interest in the political affairs of Padua.\textsuperscript{18} He even went so far, not long before his death, as to write for the prince a treatise in which he undertook to outline and discuss in quite meticulous fashion the administrative problems and tasks of the government of the city.\textsuperscript{10} Petrarch's gratitude toward Francesco found its ultimate expression in one of the stipulations of his last will in which he left to him his picture of the Virgin by Giotto.\textsuperscript{20} This gift was a token of his appreciation of the fact that his closing years in Padua and Arquà had been so pleasant because "the lord of these places, a very wise man, loves and honors me, not as a master but as a son does, both on account of his own affection for me and in memory of his magnanimous father who loved me like a brother." \textsuperscript{21}

The intimate friendship between the two men bore rich fruit

\textsuperscript{15} Sen. x, 2; xi, 2, 3, and 17; xiii, 8; xiv, 1 and 2; xv, 5; Epistola Posteritati, ed. E. Carrara, Annali d. Istituto Superiore d. Magist. di Torino, iii, 1929, p. 308, § 40.—As to the dates of these letters, compare the extremely helpful chronological list and the bibliographical references given by E. H. Wilkins, The Prose Letters of Petrarch: A Manual, New York, 1951.

\textsuperscript{16} Sen. xi, 2; xiii, 8; xi, 3.

\textsuperscript{17} Cf. Sen. xiii, 9; xiv, 1 and 2.

\textsuperscript{18} Sen. x, 2; xiv, 2.

\textsuperscript{19} Sen. xiv, 1 (ed. V. Ussani, Padua, 1922).

\textsuperscript{20} G. Fracassetti, F. Petrarcae epistolae de rebus familiaribus, Florence, 1869, iii, p. 541; the document dates of 1370, not of 1361, as R. Salvini, Giotto, p. 5, n. 11, assumes.

\textsuperscript{21} Sen. xv, 5.
because it resulted, on the part of Petrarch, in the resumption of his work *De viris illustribus* and, on the part of Francesco da Carrara, in the commissioning of the painting of the *Sala Vironum Illustrium*.

Petrarch's interest in history dated back to his early youth, and, after his first visit to Rome in 1336, he resolved to write a great historical work in the form of a collection of biographies of "the illustrious men of all countries and ages." 22 Soon after starting this ambitious undertaking Petrarch apparently realized that the only history which truly interested him was that of Rome, and thus he decided to limit himself to writing the biographies of all the famous statesmen of Rome "from the time of Romulus to that of Titus." 24 In consequence, during the late 1330's and early 1340's, he wrote a number of lives of great figures in Roman history. After this brief period of intensive historical work, other interests monopolized his attention so that he never completed even this more restricted project. But although Petrarch actually did very little work on *De viris illustribus*, he kept it in his mind and mentioned it rather frequently in other works and in his letters and conversations.25 In spite of this continuous interest it seems likely,

23 Fam. viii, 3, § 12.
25 See, e.g., *Rerum Memoranda Libri*, 1, 2 (ed. G. Billanovich, Florence, 1943, p. 273); *De vita solitaria*, 1, 10 (in Petrarch's *Opera*, ed. Basel, 1581,
however, that Petrarch would never have attempted any final “editing” of that work, had it not been for Francesco da Carrara. For we learn from Petrarch himself that it was Francesco who requested him “to collect his scattered biographies in one book.”26 After Petrarch’s death, Lombardo della Seta likewise stated that the collection of biographies of a number of illustrious men was “ordered” by Francesco il Vecchio.27 It is evident that we owe the final redaction of Petrarch’s main historical work in the form in which it has come down to posterity to the initiative of Francesco da Carrara.

When one considers Francesco’s decisive role, it seems only just that Petrarch should have inscribed the work to him. But from Petrarch’s point of view this final dedication actually signified a much higher and more unusual honor than appears at first glance. For when he started the work in 1337 and 1338, far from dedicating it to a prince, he declared explicitly that “the princes of our days furnish material merely for satire, not for history.”28 Fifteen years later, in 1354, when the German king and later emperor Charles IV asked that the book De viris illustribus be inscribed to himself, Petrarch replied frankly and to Charles’ face: “Know, Caesar, that you will be worthy, at long last, of this gift and of the dignity of the title of this

---

p. 240; Invectiva contra medicum quendam, 1. ii (ibid., p. 1095); Fam. viii, 7, § 5; ix, 15, § 1; xix, 3, §§ 12–13; xx, 8, § 11.

26 See Petrarch’s final preface to De viris illustribus (ed. Razzolini, Bologna, 1874, 1, p. 2), in the following, quoted from Cod. Paris. Lat. 6069 F, fol. 1r: “Illustres quosdam uiros, quos excellenti gloria floruisse doctissimo rum hominum ingenia memoriae tradiderunt, in diversis voluminis tract quam sparsos ac disseminatos rogatu tuo, plaustrifer insignis, qui modestissimo nutu inclite urbis Patauine sceptra unice geris, locum in unum colligere et quasi quodammodo stipare arbitratum sum.” G. Martellotti (Ori entamenti Culturali, ii, 1946, p. 207) was the first to point out the importance of the fact that it is only in this preface that the qualifying term “quidam viri illustres” is used; before that Petrarch always spoke of the illustrious men; cf. Martellotti, ibid., p. 210.

27 See Lombardo’s preface to his continuation of the Compendium (in Petrarch’s Opera, ed. 1581, p. 502), in the following, quoted from Cod. Paris. Lat. 6069 G, fol. 9v: “Tussisti enim multa et maxima quorundam uiorum facta prius quodam epithomate neque prolixo neque artato, sed mediocri stylo declarari.”

28 See Petrarch’s first preface to De viris illustribus, ed. de Nolhac, op. cit., p. 111, ii. 22–24.
book, not simply because of a resplendent name or a meaningless diadem, but only when, because of your deeds and the virtue of your mind, you have finally joined the company of illustrious men and when you have lived so that posterity will read of you what you read about the ancients." 29 The bitter disappointment which Petrarch was soon to feel about Charles' Italian policy ended any thought he may have had of ever inscribing the book to him. Nor did Petrarch deem any of the other powerful men with whom he was connected throughout his life worthy of the honor. It was saved for the last of his princely patrons, Francesco il Vecchio, whom, in a letter of 1373, he indeed calls "vir illustris." 30

In view of the fact that Petrarch attributed such great significance to the dedication of this particular work, it seems safe to assume that he inscribed it to Francesco da Carrara only after he had established a really close relationship with him. As we have seen from Petrarch's correspondence, this was not before the year 1367, which therefore appears to be the earliest possible date of the final preface to De viris illustribus. Since the resumption of Petrarch's historical work was directly connected with the prince's desire for its pictorial representation in his palace, 31 it follows that the same year 1367 has to be regarded also as the terminus post quem for the beginning of the decoration of the hall. Because the painters had to know which men and how many of them were to be depicted in the hall, Petrarch must have made, at the same time, his final selection of the Roman heroes. We can therefore assume that not only the twenty-four biographies of De viris illustribus which were written by Petrarch himself, but also the twelve others which, after Petrarch's death, were added by Lombardo della Setta, formed part of the plan agreed upon with Francesco il Vecchio in or shortly after the year 1367. 32

29 Fam. xix, 3, § 13: "Quod autem ad te, Cesar, ita demum hoc te munere et eius libri titulo dignum sito, si non fulgere nominis tantum aut inani dyademate, sed rebus gestis et vertute animi illustribus tete viris ascriptis et sic vixeris, ut, cum veteres legemis, tu legaris a posteris"

30 See the last sentence of Sen. xiv, 1 (ed. V. Ussani, p. 47).

31 See Lombardo's statement, quoted supra, note 8.

By 1370 the decoration of the hall was so far advanced that the project was known even outside Padua. For we learn from a notice in Piero Buoninsegni’s *Florentine History* concerning the death of the Florentine condottiere Manno Donati and his burial in Padua that “the lord [i.e., Francesco il Vecchio] had Manno’s portrait painted in a hall among the other men famous for their feats of arms.” 33 A letter from Lombardo asks Petrarch “to insert Manno in the work *De viris illustribus* . . . and thus to make him deservedly eternal among the mortals.” 34 Petrarch could not assent to this request because long ago he had decided to exclude men of his own era from the work, but it is likely that he composed at least an inscription for Manno’s tomb. 35 Francesco da Carrara, on the other hand, evidently deemed his Florentine contemporary worthy of the same honor which he was rendering to the great war lords of ancient Rome and had Manno portrayed in one of the halls of his palace, though not in the Sala Virorum Illustrium itself, which remained reserved for the heroes of antiquity. 36

As to when the decoration of the hall was completed, long discussion is unnecessary: the *terminus ante quem* is January 25, 1379, the day on which Lombardo della Seta, according to his own statement, finished his continuation of *De viris illustribus*. 37 Shortly before he set down that date, at the beginning of his last biography, that of Trajan, Lombardo addresses himself

---

33 P. Buoninsegni, *Historia Fiorentina*, Florence, 1580, p. 548 (ad. a. 1370): “. . . hauuta la vittoria ne venne a Padoua e dopo pochi gironi passò di questa vita e fu seppellito in Padoua con grandissimi honori, e fecelo il signore dipignere in una sala fra gli altri luomini famosi in fatti d’arme.” Buoninsegni’s account was repeated by Sozomeno da Pistoia in his *Chronicon Universale* (ed. Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Milan, 1790, xvi, p. 1090); see also Scipione Ammirato, *Istorie Fiorentine*, Florence, 1848, iii, p. 213.—The date of Manno Donati’s death is controversial; A. Zardo, *Il Petrarca e i Carraresi*, pp. 119–124, believes that Manno did not die until 1374, but his arguments are not convincing.

34 The letter was edited by de Nolhac, *op. cit.*, p. 109, n. 3: “Hunc [i.e., Manno] scilicet te intra opus Illustrium inserere rogo. . . . Arripe, quaeso, illum tuum disertissimum calamum, quo soles strenuos illustrare viros, et hunc merito fac inter mortales eternum.”

35 See de Nolhac, *op. cit.*, p. 64, n. 9.


to Francesco il Vecchio as follows: “I know that you, gracious lord of Padua, are eagerly waiting for the conclusion of this work so that you can learn briefly and in the right order about the deeds of your famous heroes. For this reason, just as you have placed Trajan among the others in the extreme corner of your beautiful hall, so I, in this work, set out to treat him as the last one.”

The frescoes in the Sala Virorum Illustrium of the Carrara palace in Padua which illustrated the lives of the great Romans in Petrarch’s De viris illustribus must, therefore, have been painted between the years 1367 and 1379.

In regard to the dates of the portraits of Petrarch and Lombardo della Seta which were painted on one of the small sides of the same hall, we are somewhat less certain. If the portrait of Petrarch which is still to be seen in the hall, although greatly retouched (Fig. 4), was actually the work of Guariento, as some scholars believe, it must have been painted before 1370, the year of Guariento’s death. This attribution can be supported by the fact that Guariento worked in Padua from early in 1368 until he died, that is, during the years when the decoration of the hall had already been started. Furthermore, such a likeness from life would not have been unusual, because other portraits, executed while Petrarch was alive, were in various Italian palaces. However, in view of the complete silence of all our sources, including the naturally well-informed eye-witness Lombardo della Seta, it seems more likely that the portrait was made only after Petrarch’s death in 1374 or even after Lombardo had

---


written, in 1379 and 1380, the two prefaces to his continuations of Petrarch’s historical works. Consequently, the portrait has been attributed to a number of other masters active in Padua during the last decades of the fourteenth century, including Altichiero of Verona, Jacopo Avanzo of Padua and Giusto de’ Menabuoi.41 It has even been held to have been painted in the early fifteenth century because “the forms of the furniture, which are still Gothic, and the acquaintance with, though still awkward employment of, linear perspective, point to the time of Pisanello.” 42 Most scholars have rejected this later dating,43 and their arguments seem to be supported by a fresco in the church of the Abbey of Viboldone near Milan representing the Doctors of the Church and showing in one part a monk studying in his cell (Fig. 5). The whole setting of this monastic study is very much like that of the portrait of Petrarch in the Sala Virorum Illustrium, in respect both to the particular kind of perspective used and to the Gothic milieu. The fresco in Viboldone was painted between 1363 and 1365 and has been assigned either to a painter who was strongly influenced by the Tuscan school of Giotto’s followers 44 or, more specifically, to Giusto de’ Menabuoi.45 The question of whether or not the two frescoes were painted by the same master can be answered only on the basis of additional comparative material. But the noticeable similarity of the perspective certainly allows the assumption that the Paduan portrait of Petrarch was painted about the same time as the picture in Viboldone, that is, in the last third of the fourteenth century. In view of the political developments which took place in Padua

42 Schlosser, op. cit., p. 189; see d’Essling and Müntz, op. cit., p. 64.
45 Bettini, op. cit., pp. 45-50: see ibid., pl. 21, the reproduction of the whole fresco in question.
at that time, it appears possible to determine the date *ante quem* even more closely. For in 1388 Francesco il Vecchio was vanquished by a coalition of Milan and Venice and condemned to end his life as a prisoner of Gian Galeazzo Visconti. His son Francesco Novello reconquered Padua in 1390 but his position remained precarious, politically as well as financially, until the final collapse of the power of the Carrara family in 1405. These external difficulties, and the fact that Francesco Novello showed himself quite uninterested in Petrarch's literary legacy, seem to justify the conclusion that the portrait of Petrarch was painted when the older Francesco was still in power, that is, before the year 1388.  

The portrait of Lombardo della Seta, the counterpart of the Petrarch portrait in the hall, was so completely painted over in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that its original style and appearance cannot be determined. It has been rightly assumed, however, that it was painted during the reign of Francesco il Vecchio, probably in recognition of Lombardo's completion of Petrarch's *De viris illustribus*, that is, between the years 1380 and 1388. In the case of this portrait, it is absolutely certain that it was not done under the rule of Francesco Novello. For, during the Milanese occupation of Padua, Lombardo entered the service of the victors and on Francesco Novello's return to power, in 1390, had to flee to Venice where he died a few weeks later. In accordance with his last wishes, he was to be buried near Petrarch in Arquà. But Francesco Novello, it seemed so deeply his collaboration with the Viscontis that he ordered the body to be sent back to Venice.

---


47 The popularity of the Paduan fresco portrait is shown by the fact that in the early fifteenth century it was copied by the illuminator of a manuscript of Petrarch's *Rime* (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Cod. Palat. 184 fol. Ov; see Fig. 7); a copy of this illumination is to be found in another manuscript of the *Rime*, which was written in the later fifteenth century (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Cod. Stranz. 173 fol. Or).


49 The documentary evidence of this interesting incident was recently discovered by G. Billanovich, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 334 f.
Use in this article of the designation "Sala Virorum Illustrium" is appropriate, for it is found in two Paduan documents of the years 1382 and 1390.\textsuperscript{50} The very name of the hall as it appears in these official records demonstrates most clearly the close connection which in the eyes of contemporaries existed between the decoration and Petrarch's homonymous work.

The earliest descriptive information about the hall as a whole is obtained through the treatise \textit{De laudibus Patavii}, which was composed by Michele Savonarola in 1446 or 1447.\textsuperscript{51} In his description of the "Capitanei curia," that is, the former palace of the Carrara family, which by that time had become the residence of the Venetian governor of Padua, Michele Savonarola says: "There are two very large rooms which are elaborately decorated with pictures. The first of these rooms is called the 'Sala Thebarum,' the other one, which is larger and more glorious than the first, is named the 'Sala Imperatorum.' In this room are depicted the Roman generals \textit{[Romani imperatores]}, in wonderful figures and with their triumphs, painted in gold and with the best colors. The representation of these men was the work of the famous painters Ottaviano and Altichiero. This is indeed an imperial palace and worthy of an emperor." \textsuperscript{53}
The details of this statement will be discussed later. At this point, only one particular item requires immediate clarification. In speaking of the figures of the Romani imperatores in the Sala Virorum Illustrium, Savonarola certainly did not mean to imply that the hall contained pictures of “emperors” exclusively. He rather made use purposely of the double meaning of the word, because this allowed him to say that “the hall of the Roman generals” was truly “imperial” or majestic. This interpretation of the phrase in question is confirmed by the observation that a hall in the Palazzo Trinci in Foligno, which contains a similar series of frescoes depicting a number of great men of the Roman Republic and Empire, was in the fifteenth century likewise called “la sala de l'imperatori.”

The next information about the hall is found in the Notizia d'opere del disegno by the so-called Anonimo Morelliano, that is, by Marcanton Michiel, who wrote about a hundred years later than Michele Savonarola. Michiel says: “In the Sala dei Giganti, according to Campagnola, Jacopo Avanzo painted on the left side the captivity of Jugurtha and the triumph of Marius; on the right side, Guariento of Padua painted the twelve Caesars and their deeds. According to Andrea Riccio, the painters working there were Altichiero and Ottaviano of Brescia. There are portrayed Petrarch and Lombardo who, I believe, supplied the subject-matter of these pictures.”

nominatur prima maior atque gloriosior, in qua Romani imperatores mitis cum figuris cumque triumphis, auro optimoque cum colore depicti sunt. Quos gloriose manus illustrium pictorum Octaviani et Alucheni configurarunt. Hec vero domus imperatoria est et imperatore digna: cui camere, amena viridaria, ecclesia, officialium loca et advenarum hospitium quam magnifica minime desunt.”

54 As to the name “la sala de l'imperadori,” as used in Gattarri’s Cronaca Carrarese, see supra, note 50.
56 Anonimo Morelliano (Marcanton Michiel), Notizia d’opere del disegno, ed T. Frimmel, Vienna, 1888, p. 35: “Nella sala di Giganti, secondo el Campagnola, Jacomo Dauanzo dipinse a man mano la captitua di Giugurta, et triompho di Maria Guariento Padoano li XII Cesari a man dextra e li lor fatti Segondo Andrea Ruzzo ui dipinsero Alticherio et Octauiano Bressano. Iui sono ritratti el Petrarcha et Lombardo, i quali credo dessero l'argomento di quella pittura.”
Use in this article of the designation “Sala Virorum Illustrium” is appropriate, for it is found in two Paduan documents of the years 1382 and 1390. The very name of the hall as it appears in these official records demonstrates most clearly the close connection which in the eyes of contemporaries existed between the decoration and Petrarch’s homonymous work.

The earliest descriptive information about the hall as a whole is obtained through the treatise De laudibus Patavii, which was composed by Michele Savonarola in 1446 or 1447. In his description of the “Capitanei curia,” that is, the former palace of the Carrara family, which by that time had become the residence of the Venetian governor of Padua, Michele Savonarola says: “There are two very large rooms which are elaborately decorated with pictures. The first of these rooms is called the ‘Sala Thebarum,’ the other one, which is larger and more glorious than the first, is named the ‘Sala Imperatorum.’ In this room are depicted the Roman generals [Romani imperatores], in wonderful figures and with their triumphs, painted in gold and with the best colors. The representation of these men was the work of the famous painters Ottaviano and Altichiero. This is indeed an imperial palace and worthy of an emperor.”

50 See A. Gloria, Documenti inediti intorno al Petrarca, Padua, 1878, p. 36 (ad a. 1382): “in sala virorum illustrium”; ibid. (ad a. 1390): “super podiolas iuxta salam novam illustrium virorum.” Gloria’s documentary material gives a very illuminating insight into the variety and the wealth of decorations in the many rooms of the Carrara palace of the fourteenth century.—In Galeazzo and Bartolomeo Gattari’s Cronaca Carrarese, which was composed at the end of the fourteenth century, the hall is called “[la] grande sala de l’imperadori” (ed. A. Medin and G. Tolomei, in Muratori, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, Città di Castello, 1914, xvii, part 1, p. 408, ad a. 1390).

51 Ed. A. Segarizzi, in Muratori, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, Città di Castello, 1902, xxiv, part 15: as to the date of the treatise, see ibid., p. viii; on the reliability of Savonarola’s statements concerning the various works of art in Padua, see Segarizzi’s remarks, ibid., p. 44, n. 2.

52 On this hall, see Schlosser, op. cit., p. 184.

53 Ed. Segarizzi, op. cit., p. 49: “Cumque honoratas scalas ascendis, podiola lodiam parte in superiori circuientia, columna marmoreis ac magnificis fenestris, que ad utranque curiam aspectum habent, etiam ornata invenis. Stantque due amplissime et picturis ornatissime sale ad latera horum situate, quorum prima Thebarum nuncupatur, altera Imperatorum
value. Nor does it seem possible to decide with any real certainty whether Campagnola and Riccio supplement or contradict one another in their statements quoted by Marcanton Michiel concerning the participation of Avanzo, Altichiero, and Ottaviano Prandino in the work.\(^2\) It seems significant that Michiel himself did not choose to make any decision between these conflicting authorities.

Another puzzling question is raised by the statement attributed to Campagnola that the hall contained the portraits of "the twelve Caesars." For the book *De viris illustribus* included the biographies of only four of the Roman emperors, and certainly neither Petrarch nor Francesco da Carrara ever intended to glorify in their Hall of Fame the memory of all of the first twelve Roman emperors portrayed in Suetonius' work. Thus it seems more likely to assume that Campagnola, like Michele Savonarola before him and Vasari after him, knew that the room was called "the Hall of the Romani Imperatores," but did not realize that in this case the word *imperatores* had the meaning of "general"; consequently, he saw in the name of the hall a reference to the popular title of Suetonius' book on "the twelve Caesars." The assumption of such a linguistic misunderstanding would appear to offer a very simple explanation, were it not for the fact that Campagnola was a native of Padua and ought therefore to have known that there were no portraits of "the twelve Caesars" in the palace. Two alternatives remain: either Marcanton Michiel did not quote verbatim from Campagnola's letter and is therefore himself responsible for the misinterpretation of the word *imperatores*; \(^3\) or Campagnola


\(^3\) In accordance with Campagnola's, or Marcanton Michiel's, mistatement, modern scholars, including Venturi, *op. cit.*, v, p. 929, L. Chiovenda, in *Archivum Romanicum*, xvi, 1933, p. 10, and H. Keller, *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, xi, 1939, p. 355, have spoken of the portraits of "the twelve Caesars" in the Carrara palace; P. Schubring, in *Thieme-Becker, op. cit.*, i, p. 351, speaks of the "Kaiseraal"; Van Marle,
In the evaluation of this statement, it is important to notice that Marcanton Michiel merely expresses an opinion of his own in the last sentence quoted, concerning the portraits of Petrarch and Lombardo and their presumable participation in the choice of the pictorial topics. In regard to the other frescoes, however, Michiel declares explicitly that his account is based on the information of two earlier Paduan authorities, Gerolamo Campagnola (who flourished in the second part of the fifteenth century), and Andrea Riccio (who lived from 1470 to 1532). Of these two, Riccio's information confirms, or simply repeats, Michele Savonarola's statement that the Sala Virorum Illustrium was decorated by Altichiero of Verona (died ca. 1385), and by Ottaviano Prandino of Brescia (flourished 1370–1420). Gerolamo Campagnola on the other hand, attributes the frescoes to two entirely different painters, Guariento (died 1370) and Jacopo Avanzo of Padua (flourished in the second part of the fourteenth century).

As we have seen before, Guariento was active in Padua between 1368 and 1370, so that his participation in the decoration of the Sala Virorum Illustrium, which is also asserted by Vasari, could well be fitted into the chronology of the work. The fact that he died so shortly after the start of the enterprise could be taken as an explanation of why it had to be completed by other artists. But in view of the scarcity of the documentary material at our disposal, the thesis of Guariento's share in the decoration of the hall cannot claim more than a hypothetical

61 Vasari, *Vite*, ed. Milanesi, III, pp. 656 f.: "Guarierto pittor padovano... dipinse... la sala dell'Imperadori romani, dove nel tempo di carnovale vanno gli scolari a danzare." Vasari, in this connection, does not mention any of the other painters named in Michiel's statement.
C. Fabriuvs, et S. Adonovm, papera, lega,

2 Sala dei Giganti; Eulogia of L. Quintius Cincinnatus and C. Fabricius Luscinus
did not know the actual subjects of the portraits because the decoration of the Sala Virorum Illustrium had been destroyed before his time.

It was indeed during that very same period, around the turn of the fifteenth century, that the interior of the former Carrara palace suffered damage to such an extent that practically all the earlier decorations disappeared. Unfortunately, no written sources exist which give an account of that destruction, its causes and its exact date. But the restoration of the hall which was undertaken by the University of Padua in the year 1928 led to discoveries which permitted the following conclusion: “It seems that between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century a fire destroyed the ceiling of the hall and also did irremediable damage to the pictorial decorations on the walls. Abundant traces of fire were noticed on the remains of the walls of the Trecento.” 64 Of all the original frescoes of the late fourteenth century, apparently only one, the portrait of Petrarch, survived that fire and even that picture had evidently been somewhat damaged, for it was partly repainted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The present decoration of the hall was initiated in 1539 or 1540 65 when, according to an inscription above the main door, it was resolved “to restore, in its full splendor, the hall which was near to collapse because of old age.” 66 Two prominent citizens of Padua were in charge of the selection of the subject-matter and decided which heroes were to be portrayed and what scenes of their lives were to be depicted by the two painters chosen for the work, Domenico Campagnola and Stefano dall’Arzere. Giovanni Cavazza composed the eulogia which one of the best calligraphers of the time, Francesco de Puciviglians.

---

64 Translated from a pamphlet entitled Appunti sulla storia della Sala dei Giganti, which was published (ca. 1930) by the R. Università degli Studi in Padova; Professor Carlo Anti of the University of Padua was kind enough to refer me to this pamphlet and to give me a copy of it.

65 On the history of the rebuilding of the Sala dei Giganti, see A. Moschetti, in Padova a F. Petrarca, Padua, 1904, pp. 9 f.; the Appunti quoted in note 64; and O. Ronchi, Guida di Padova, 1932.

66 Quoted by Moschetti, op. cit., p. 9: “. . . aulam vetustate pene colapsam in hunc egregium nitorem restituit.”
8. State Library of Darmstadt, Cod. 101, fol. 2v. King Amulus, Rhea Silvia; soldier carrying Romulus and Remus

9. Cod 101, fol. 3r. The she-wolf and the twins; Ara Larentia and the twins

10. Cod 101, fol. 3v. Romulus (with a crown) and a group of farmers

11. Cod. 101, fol. 4r. Romulus attacking Alba, the killing of Amulus
6. State Library of Darmstadt, Cod. 101, fol. 1v: Petrarch

7. Florence, Bibl. Nazionale, Cod. Palat. 184 (E. 5.7), fol. 0v: Petrarch
8. State Library of Darmstadt, Cod 101, fol 2v. King Amulius; Rhea Silvia; soldier carrying Romulus and Remus

9. Cod 101, fol 3r. The she-wolf and the twins, Ara Larentia and the twins

10. Cod 101, fol 3v. Romulus (with a crown) and a group of farmers

11. Cod 101, fol 4r. Romulus attacking Alba, the killing of Amulius
12. Cod. 101, fol. 4v: The building of the walls of Rome; the quarrel between Romulus and Remus

13. Cod. 101, fol. 6v: The Horatii and Curiatii between the armies of Rome and Alba

14. Cod. 101, fol. 7r: The fight between the Horatii and Curiatii (traces of buildings similar to those in Fig. 12 are visible in the background)

15. Cod. 101, fol. 7v: Ancus Martius and some nobles; the worshiping of a god (Jupiter Feretrix)
16 Cod 101, fol 8r: Lucretia and nobles, expulsion of Tarquin by Brutus

17 Cod 101, fol 8v: Cœles beneath the Tiber bridge, the recalling of Cincinnatus

18. Cod. 101, fol. 9r: The triumph of Camillus

19 Cod 101, fol. 11r: Camillus expelling the Gauls from Rome
20. Cod. 101, fol. 14r: T. Manlius Torquatus threatening the tribune Pomponius

21. Cod. 101, fol. 15r: Valerius Corvinus receiving the banners and shields of conquered Samnites

22. Cod. 101, fol. 18r: Fabricius and Pyrrhus' slave; extradition of the slave to Pyrrhus

23. Cod. 101, fol. 19r: The siege of a city by Alexander's army
24. Cod. 101, fol. 19v. The battle between the armies of Alexander and Darius

25. Cod. 101, fol. 20r. The finding of Darius' body

26. Cod. 101, fol. 21r. Alexander and a prisoner

27. Cod. 101, fol. 22r. Alexander worshiping a goddess
28. Cod. 101, fol. 24v: The oath of Hannibal; Hamilcar

29. Cod. 101, fol. 51v: The triumph of Claudius Nero and Livius Salinator

30. Cod. 101, fol. 53v: The triumph of P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus

31. Cod. 101, fol. 54r: Scipio Africanus, King Massinissa, Hannibal
32. State Library of Darmstadt, Cod. 101, fol. 2r: The Triumph of Time

33. Harvard, Houghton Library, Ms. The City of God (ca 1380), fol 66v: Cain and Abel; Romulus and Remus
34. Cod. 101, fol. 5r, initial:
Numa Pompilius

35. Cod. 101, fol. 7v, initial:
Ancus Martius

36. Cod. 101, fol. 8r, initial:
Tarquinius Superbus and
Junius Brutus

37. Cod. 101, fol. 9r, initial:
Camillus

38. Cod. 101, fol. 8v, initial:
Horatius Cocles

39. Cod. 101, fol. 8v, initial:
Cincinnatus
inscribed underneath the paintings. Because of the over life-size of the figures, the hall was immediately called the "Sala dei Giganti" and has kept the name to the present day. After many vicissitudes the room was once more completely restored in 1928 and serves now as the assembly hall of the University of Padua.

The brief survey of the history of the hall has shown that the Sala dei Giganti of today represents almost entirely work of the Cinquecento and not of the late Trecento. Nevertheless, the question arises whether it is not possible to draw at least indirect inferences from the present room as to the aspect of the original Sala Viorum Illustrium.

For this purpose it seems best to list the heroes of Petrarch's book De viris illustribus who had been portrayed in the old hall, and to compare this series with that of the men who in the sixteenth century were represented in the Sala dei Giganti. If we assume that the images of the original viri illustres, like those of the latter giganti, were arranged on the two long walls only and not on the short ones, we obtain the following arrangement of the portraits in the old Sala Viorum Illustrium: 68

M. Claudius Marcellus
C. Claudius Nero
M. Livius Salinator
P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus
M. Porcius Cato (Censor)
P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica
T. Quinctius Flaminius
L. Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus
L. Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus
Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus
P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus
Romulus
Numa Pompilius
Tullus Hostilius
Ancus Martius
L. Junius Brutus
Horatius Cocles
L. Quintilius Cincinnatus
M. Furius Camillus
M. Valerius Corvinus
T. Manlius Torquatus
P. Decius Mus
L. Papirius Cursor
M. Curius Dentatus
C. Fabricius Luscinus
Alexander
Pyrrhus
Hannibal
Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator

67 For the first time, we find this name in Marcanton Michiel's Notizia (see supra, note 56), which was written between 1515 and 1541.
68 In the following arrangement, it has been assumed that the series of the portraits of the Trecento, like that of the sixteenth century, started in the northwest corner, i.e., on the right side, of the hall.
Before giving the scheme of the portraits in the Sala dei Giganti, it is necessary to describe briefly the present aspect of the hall as a whole. The main door is in the center of the north wall, and another door is on the opposite wall near the southeast corner. On each of the two short sides of the room are three large windows which leave space for four portraits on the west wall and for only two on the east wall. The decorations on the two long sides are divided by pilasters into fifteen panels on each side. The upper part of each of the panels contains from one to three standing figures, the giganti. Underneath these figures each panel contains frescoes of historical scenes and, beneath these, inscriptions of the eulogia of varying length. The number of scenes and inscriptions (or tituli) in each panel always agrees with the number of figures portrayed above in the same panel.

The arrangement of the portraits in the Sala dei Giganti presents the following scheme:

**West Wall**

Petrarch (window) Asinius Stella (window) C. Valerius Flaccus (window) Lombardo della Seta

**South Wall**

Charlemagne

M. Tullius Cicero

M. Attilius Regulus

M. Junius Brutus

Theodosius

**North Wall**

Romulus

A. Cornelius Cossus

M. Claudius Marcellus

Numa Pompilius

---

69 See Fig. 1; the picture has been taken from the east wall; in the upper left-hand corner is the portrait of Petrarch (see Fig. 4). [Fig. 1 of this article has been omitted for technical reasons.]

70 See Fig. 3, which shows, in one panel, the figures of Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus and Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator, flanked by single figures of Julius Caesar and Augustus; underneath are scenes from the lives of these men.

71 See Fig. 2, which shows the eulogia or tituli of L. Quinctius Cincinnatus and C. Fabricius Luscinus.—According to G. A. Moschini, Guida di Padova, Venice, 1817, p. 197, these inscriptions were published by J. Zabarella, Aula heroïum, Padua, 1671.

72 See Fig. 3.

73 The grouping of names in the scheme, whether one, two, or three, indicates that there are one, two, or three portraits in a panel.
When we compare the two lists, we find that only twenty-seven of the thirty-six viri illustres of Petrarch's and Lombardo's book are represented in the series of forty-four portraits in the Sali dei Giganti. In regard to the omissions, the exclusion of the three non-Roman heroes (Alexander the Great, Pyrrhus, and Hannibal) might be explained by the assumption that the sixteenth century planners wanted to give their hall an entirely Roman character. It seems impossible, however, to find any good reasons why the other six men (Horatius Cocles, P. Decius Mus, M. Livius Salinator, L. Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica, and Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus) were omitted. On the other hand, among the men who were added in the sixteenth century we find quite a number whom Petrarch himself, for various reasons, definitely did not consider viri illustres in the true sense and whom he therefore purposely excluded—for instance, men like the two kings Tarquinius Priscus and Servius Tullius, Sulla, M. Porcius Cato Uticensis, and...
the younger Brutus.\textsuperscript{74} According to his definition of the term, which comprised only great men of action—that is, generals and statesmen\textsuperscript{75}—Petrarch did not regard Cicero as a \textit{vir illustris}, although he admired him tremendously, of course, as the outstanding Roman writer and thinker. Furthermore, whereas Petrarch and Lombardo ended their series, as we have seen, with the emperor Trajan, the planners of the sixteenth century added five more emperors, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Constantine, Theodosius, and Charlemagne. The inclusion of the last of these rulers would have caused particular displeasure to Petrarch if he had seen it, because throughout his writings he denied consistently the cognomen of “the Great” to the founder of the mediaeval Roman empire.\textsuperscript{76} In conclusion, then, we can state that the Sala dei Giganti of the sixteenth century was very definitely not a Sala Virorum Illustrium according to Petrarch’s conception of the term.

In looking over the series of portraits in the Sala dei Giganti, we see that each of the Roman monarchs, whether king or emperor, occupies a panel by himself, while the figures belonging to the republican era of Rome are always represented in groups of two or even three men within one panel. Again one wonders whether Petrarch would have approved of an arrangement in which the representatives of the monarchical form of government were given such strikingly prominent positions. The whole tenor of his writings makes it more likely that he would have preferred a uniform and equal treatment in the pictorial representation of his great Romans.

In the Sala dei Giganti the six kings and the ten emperors (including Julius Caesar) are portrayed in chronological order,

\textsuperscript{74} Petrarch’s inclusions and omissions of biographies in his book \textit{De viris illustribus} express a very definite judgment of value on his part, as I shall attempt to show in my forthcoming study of Petrarch’s historical works.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Invectiva contra medicum quendam}, 1. 11 (in Petrarch’s \textit{Opera}, ed. Basel, 1581, p. 1095): “Nihil ibi de medicis nec de poetis quidem aut philosophis agitur, sed de his tantum, qui bellicos virtutibus aut magno rei publicae studio flouerunt et praeclaram rerum gestarum gloriam consueci sunt.”

\textsuperscript{76} See, e.g., \textit{Fam.} 1, 4, §7: “Carolum regem, quem Magni cognomine equare Pompeio et Alexandro audent.”
beginning with Romulus in the northeast corner and going clockwise around the room. The sequence of the other figures is not at all chronological and appears on the whole quite arbitrary. In this respect, too, it is most likely that the arrangement differs from that in the original Sala Virorum Illustrium, which seems to have followed the chronological order. Witness the remark which Lombardo makes concerning the identical location of Trajan’s image in the Sala Virorum Illustrium and his literary portrait in the book of the same name, which is, of course, chronologically arranged.\(^77\)

Comparison, then, of the number, the subject-matter, and the arrangement of the portraits in the hall shows that on all three counts the Sala dei Giganti differs greatly from the original decoration of the Sala Virorum Illustrium, an observation borne out by the discoveries made on the occasion of the recent restoration of the hall. Then it was found that the fifteenth century fire was so devastating that it left hardly any traces of the former decoration, with the exception of the portrait of Petrarch. Thus the work of the sixteenth century was one of complete refinishing rather than of restoration.

But after all these negative remarks have been made, it has to be stated that in one respect at least we can obtain very important information from the present Sala dei Giganti about the former Sala Virorum Illustrium. For, irrespective of all the changes in detail, the general scheme and aspect of the decoration of the original hall can be assumed to have been identical with that of the room of today. The most characteristic feature of the sixteenth century decoration is the division into panels and the tripartite division of each panel into figures of the heroes, scenes from their lives, and inscriptions or \textit{tituli}. That the same scheme was already employed by the artists of the late Trecento is clearly shown by the statements concerning the old hall which were quoted earlier. In the dedication of his continuation of \textit{De viris illustribus}, Lombardo della Seta praises Francesco il Vecchio because he honored those men in his palace “with images and inscriptions.”\(^78\) Michele Savonarola states explicitly that in the Sala Imperatorum “the Roman generals

\(^77\) See supra, note 38.  
\(^78\) See supra, note 8.
are depicted in wonderful figures and with their triumphs, that is, with glorious scenes from their lives.  

The existence of historical scenes in the frescoes is also confirmed by Gerolamo Campagnola, who is obviously describing one of them when he says that “Avanzo painted on the left side of the room the captivity of Jugurtha and the triumph of Marius.”

In regard to the inscriptions or tituli mentioned by Lombardo, the question arises as to whether they were composed by Petrarch himself. We learn from Lombardo that Francesco da Carrara asked Petrarch “to compress in an abridged form” his larger work De viris illustribus. Petrarch started to comply with this wish of his princely friend, but at the time of his death he had composed only fourteen biographies in this series, so that this Compendium, like the more extensive Epitome, had to be completed by Lombardo della Seta. In his dedication of the Compendium to Francesco da Carrara, Lombardo describes the character of this collection of abridged biographies, De viris illustribus, very strikingly by saying: “I shall draw and not paint the image of the subject so that the quality of the linear contours can be seen without an adumbration of the inward character.”

It has been claimed that with this statement Lombardo seems to establish an analogy between the literary portraits in the Compendium and the pictorial images in the Sala Virorum Illustrium, which were probably simple grisailles. And on the basis of this parallel it has been furthermore asserted by some scholars that Petrarch and Lombardo wrote these abbreviated biographies in the same style. However, this seems unlikely, as the Compendium contains the earliest extant biographies of the Roman emperors and the Salae Virorum Illustrium are more likely to have been the work of a single artist, possibly the painter of the Sala Regia in the Vatican.

---

70 See supra, note 53.
80 See supra, note 56.
83 Cod. Paris. Lat. 6069 G, fol. 9v: “Itaque rei designabo ymaginem, non pingam, ut liniamentorum qualitas sine indolis specie considerari possit.”
84 See Schlosser, op. cit., pp. 185 and 189, n. 4.
biographies specifically to serve as tituli underneath the portraits and scenes in the Carrara hall.\textsuperscript{65}

Although this hypothesis is rather tempting, it must be rejected for two reasons. In the first place, neither Petrarch nor Lombardo ever made any direct statement to that effect. Their silence is more significant in this case than it would be ordinarily, because it must be remembered that Lombardo pointed out in most explicit terms the close connection which in other respects existed between Petrarch's historical portraits and their pictorial representation by Francesco da Carrara.\textsuperscript{66} Apart from this argumentum e silentio, the very length of the biographies contained in the Compendium seems to bar the thesis, or at least makes it rather improbable that these accounts were meant to be used as tituli. When we look over the edition of 1581 of the Compendium, we find that only five of these biographies are fairly short (from twelve to eighteen lines); two thirds of them vary in length from about thirty to more than forty lines, and one, that of Julius Caesar, is fifty lines long. In view of the size of the panels of the hall into which the inscriptions had to be inserted, it can be assumed that the number of words in each line there must have roughly corresponded to the number of words in each line of the printed edition, that is, from ten to twelve words. Such tituli of thirty to forty lines, however, would certainly have made very clumsy reading and would have looked unsightly. It is more likely, therefore, that Petrarch and Lombardo composed the Compendium so that Francesco il Vecchio and others could use it as a convenient little manual for the Sala Virorum Illustrium. The actual inscriptions beneath the scenes were probably rather brief, perhaps similar to those which are still to be found in the Libreria of the Cathedral of Siena under Pinturicchio's frescoes representing the main events of the life of Pope Pius II.\textsuperscript{67}

If it is impossible, then, to reconstruct the original tituli in the hall, we are more fortunate in regard to the historical scenes

\textsuperscript{65} That is the assumption of Schlosser, op. cit., p. 185, and of d'Essling and Münz, op. cit., p. 46.
\textsuperscript{66} See supra, notes 8 and 38.
\textsuperscript{67} See the reproductions in P. Miciocchi, The Piccolomini Library in the Cathedral of Siena, Siena, 1934.
from the lives of the great Romans, with which the room was once decorated. For we can gain a certain impression of the outward appearance and the subject-matter of the lost frescoes from a number of illuminations in a manuscript of Donato degli Albazani's translation of Petrarch's De viris illustribus. The manuscript was written around the year 1400 in northern Italy, probably in Padua, for the Paduan family Papafava, and is now preserved in the State Library of Darmstadt. It is a codex on vellum of forty-five leaves and measures about 9 x 14 inches.  

Each page is divided into two columns and at the bottom of every page space has been left by the copyist for the illuminations. However, there are only twenty-four illuminations altogether, which measure on the average about 2 1/2 x 7 inches; and, whereas most of the biographies begin with ordinary decorated letters, seven of them contain an image of their hero in their initials. The reverse side of the fly-leaf of the manuscript shows a large portrait of Petrarch in his study (Fig. 6), and the upper part of the first page of the text has a representation of the Triumph of Fame (Fig. 32).

Julius von Schlosser, who first discovered and described the Darmstadt Codex, noticed immediately that the portrait of Petrarch on the fly-leaf is undoubtedly a copy, and a very accurate copy, of the Trecento portrait of the poet still preserved, though in badly retouched form, in the present Sala dei Giganti in Padua. He observed moreover that the manuscript was written for a Paduan family closely related with the Carrara dynasty, and concluded that it was most likely that the other illuminations also were derived from the paintings in the original Sala Virorum Illustrium. In short, Schlosser decided that the illuminations in the Darmstadt manuscript "give us an approximate idea as to what the [lost] frescoes ... looked like." 

88 See the description of the manuscript by Schlosser, op. cit., pp. 185 ff.
89 See Figs. 8–31, 34–39; ten of the illuminations were reproduced by Schlosser. ... [Cod. 101, fol. 6v, initial: The Horatii is omitted here.]
90 Compare Figs. 4 and 6.
91 According to P. P. Vergerio's Vitae principum Carrariensium (ed. Muratori, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, Milan, 1730, xvi, p. 117), the Papafava family was a younger branch of the Carrara family.
92 Compare Schlosser, op. cit., p. 190; see also d'Essling and Müntz, op. cit., pp. 47 f.; W. Weisbach, Trionfi, Berlin, 1919, pp. 20 f.
Furthermore, Schlosser pointed out that among the original frescoes in the hall there was probably also one showing the **Triumph of Fame**. For the representation of this subject which is found in the Darmstadt manuscript (Fig. 32) resembles strongly the headpieces in two other manuscripts of *De viris illustribus*, both of which were written in Padua about the same time, one in 1379, the other at the end of the century. The similarity of these three illuminations and their common Paduan origin make it probable that they were all derived from a fresco in the Carrara palace. Considering the general arrangement of the Sala Virorum Illustrium, it seems likely that this representation of the **Triumph of Fame** was placed on the east wall, opposite the other short side of the room, which still contains the portraits of Petrarch and Lombardo. On the two long walls in between were the pictures of the men whom the goddess and the poet-historian deemed worthy of eternal fame.

One additional observation in this connection: Schlosser and other scholars have pointed out that the three Paduan illuminations and later representations of the **Triumph of Fame** follow the concept of the Triumph of Fame which Boccaccio presents in his poem *Amorosa Visione*, and that the artists had to depend on Boccaccio because Petrarch, in his *Trionfi*, fails to give a precise description of the setting of that particular triumph. It must be added that in one respect at least the three Paduan illuminations, and presumably therefore also their lost model in

---

83 Schlosser, *op. cit.*, pp. 190 ff.
84 The most recent reproductions of these two illuminations were given by D. Shorr, "Some Notes on the Iconography of Petrarch’s **Triumph of Fame**," *Art Bulletin*, xx, 1938, p. 101, figs. 1 and 2. However, Mrs. Schorr states wrongly that they appear as headpieces of manuscripts of the Italian translation of *De viris illustribus*: they are actually found in Cod. Paris. Lat. (and not Ital.) 6669 F and I. On these manuscripts and the illuminations, see also de Nolhac, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 ff., 93 ff.; E. Muntz, *Histoire de l’Art pendant la Renaissance*, Paris, 1889, I, 228; P. de Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l’Humanisme*, Paris, 1907, II, pp. 250 ff.—The two illuminations have been attributed by P. Toesca, (Monumenti e Studi per la Storia della Miniatura Italiana, Milan, 1930, p. 36) to the school of Altichiero; by Longhi (in Critica d’Arie, v, 1940, p. 180, n. 4) to Giusto, S. Bettini, *Giusto de’ Menabuoi*, Padua, 1944, p. 142, does not declare himself on the question of their authors.
the Sala Virorum Illustrium, differ from all other Triumphs of Fame. Whereas in the later pictures Fame is always shown surrounded by both men and women, only men appear in the headpieces of the three Paduan manuscripts (See Fig. 32). And with good reason, for it is obvious that neither in these manuscripts nor in the Hall of the Illustrious Men was there properly a place for women. It was only when the artists began to represent the Triumph of Fame in general, not just as an illustration of Petrarch's historical work, that they began also to show women in their pictures, in accordance with Petrarch's own Trionfi and with Boccaccio's Amorosa Visione. The first example of this later kind seems to be offered by the picture of the Triumph of Fame on a Florentine cassone of ca. 1400; although it is "closely connected with the Darmstadt illustration," it shows, in contrast to it, Fame attended by women as well as by men.

When we now turn to an analysis of the historical scenes as they were depicted in the Sala Virorum Illustrium and are preserved to a certain extent in the "copies" of the Darmstadt manuscript, we must remember that they were meant to illustrate the main scenes of Petrarch's De viris illustribus. A comparison of the pictorial representations with the historical text shows indeed that the artist, or the artists, almost always depicted incidents to which Petrarch himself had assigned a central, or at least a very prominent, position within the framework of his biographies.

Thus, for instance, more than half of the biography of King Tullus Hostilius is devoted to the account of the combat between the three Horatii and the three Curiatii, illustrated twice in the Darmstadt manuscript (Figs. 13 and 14). In Figure 15 we see King Ancus Martius worshiping the statue of a god who

96 Shorr, op. cit., p. 104; see the reproduction of the cassone, ibid., p. 102, fig. 4.
97 It should be noted, however, that the illuminator apparently added some scenes on his own initiative. For, considering the size of the panels in the hall, it is hard to see how, e.g., the two sets of five scenes, each illustrating the lives of Romulus (Figs. 8–12) and of Alexander (Figs. 23–27), could have been fitted into the scheme of the decoration.
from Petrarch's text can be identified as Jupiter Feretrius; in other passages of the same biography Petrarch emphasized strongly the attention which Ancus Martius gave to things religious. Another illumination (Fig. 17) shows Horatius Cocles swimming under the Tiber bridge, in accordance with Petrarch's statement at the very beginning of the biography: "About this man nothing comes to mind but that famous and hardly believable battle and defense of the Pons Sublicius." The illumination in the biography of Cincinnatus (Fig. 17) illustrates accurately the literary account of how he was found by the emissaries of the Senate while "he was alone on his land, busy with farm work." The miniaturist likewise depicted very well the climax in the life of Marcus Valerius Corvinus (Fig. 21) when, after the battle of Suessula, he was presented by his soldiers "with forty thousand shields and one hundred and seventy ensigns of the enemy." Finally, the picture of young Hannibal taking the oath to fight the Romans (Fig. 28) represents an excellent choice, because the incident foreshadowed his whole career, as Petrarch himself declares at the beginning of his biography of Hannibal.

In a number of instances, the pictures contain details which to a surprising degree correspond to the particular items indicated in the text. In his biography of Brutus, for example, Petrarch tells how Lucretia related her sad story to her friends and then committed suicide. After that Petrarch continues: "Whereas the others burst out in tears and lamentations... Brutus showed himself the leader of the public revenge." The illuminator succeeded very well in bringing out the contrast between mere compassion on the part of the people watching Lucretia's suicide and the dramatic action taken by Brutus (Fig.

99 Ed. Razzolini, p. 59: "... auctumque Feretrii Jovis templum": compare ibid., p. 48; see also the account of the king's life in the Compendium (in Petrarch's Opera, ed. Basel. 1581, p. 496).
100 Ed. Razzolini, p. 51; Compendium, p. 497.
101 Ed. Razzolini, p. 58; compare ibid., p. 56, and Compendium, p. 497.
103 Ed. Razzolini, p. 422: "... a patre... aris applicitus et sacramentum obstrictus esse iam tunc animo inimicum Romanorum et futurum rebus ubi primum faculas affueisset."
104 Ed. Razzolini, pp. 50 f; Compendium, p. 496.
16). In the same picture Brutus' breastplate bears the inscription Libertas, a reflection of the statement made by Petrarch in the first sentence of his biography that Brutus was "the founder of Liberty." In his various representations of the triumphs of Roman war lords, the illuminator depicts in only one case, that of Camillus, a chariot drawn by four, instead of two, horses (Fig. 18). This is in exact agreement with Petrarch who asserts (apparently without the support of any ancient source) that on the occasion of his first triumph Camillus entered Rome seated "in a golden chariot drawn by four white horses." 105 In his life of T. Manlius Torquatus, Petrarch relates how Manlius went to the house of the tribune Pomponius in order to prevent him from prosecuting his father; he continues: "After the bystanders had been removed, Manlius was admitted alone, whereupon he suddenly brandished his sword over the head of the tribune." 106 The illumination (Fig. 20), showing Manlius threatening the tribune with his sword while three soldiers stand guard outside the house, illustrates the scene very accurately. In his account of the triumph of the older Scipio Africanus, Petrarch says that "according to Polybius King Syphax was among the prisoners of war made to march in front of the triumphal chariot." 107 The illumination depicting this scene (Fig. 30) does indeed show the African king, distinguished by the crown on his head.

It can be argued that the close similarity between the pictorial representations and the literary accounts simply resulted from a thorough study of Petrarch’s historical text by the illuminator and that, therefore, it is not necessary to assume that Petrarch himself supervised the illustration of his work. In the case of at least one of the illuminations, however, the first explanation does not seem to suffice. In the biography of Romulus we find a picture which represents the building of Rome by Romulus and Remus and the quarrel between the two brothers who are

105 Ed. Razzolini, p. 64: "[Camillus] urbem est ingressus ... currum aereum equis quatuor niveo candore trahentibus"; see the similar statement in the Compendium, p. 497.
106 Ed. Razzolini, p. 102; see Compendium, p. 499.
107 Ed. Razzolini, p. 610: "Inter captivos vero hostium ante currum actos suisse Syphacem regem Polybius scribit"; Petrarch's reference to Polybius is based on Livius, 45.
shown facing one another across the walls under construction (Fig. 12). It seems curious that the illuminator did not choose to depict the actual killing of Remus by Romulus, although this dramatic climax of the quarrel has always been one of the best known facts of Roman history and although, from the point of view of a painter, it would also seem to offer an interesting and thankful subject. Note, for example, the illuminations in two French manuscripts of St. Augustine's *City of God* also made in the late fourteenth century, which illustrate the parallel between the killing of Abel by Cain and that of Remus by Romulus (Fig. 33). A look at the two versions of Petrarch's work *De viris illustribus* appears to provide the explanation for the singular representation of the famous incident by the Paduan artists. For in the longer text of the biography of Romulus, Petrarch states that "Remus was killed" but does not mention the tradition that Romulus had any responsibility for the murder. In the condensed version of the *Compendium* he goes even further and omits the whole incident. From his reading of *The City of God* Petrarch knew, of course, the famous parallel which St. Augustine had drawn between the two fratricides standing at the beginnings of "the earthly city" and of "the second Babylon." The fact that he had this knowledge makes it the more noteworthy that, on this particular point, he deviated so markedly both from his ancient Roman sources and from the authority of St. Augustine. Since Petrarch took such great care to de-emphasize this famous event and the significance commonly attributed to it and for that reason in his *Compendium* even

---

106 Both illuminations were reproduced by Comte A. de Laborde, *Les manuscrits à peintures de la Cité de Dieu de Saint Augustin*, Paris, 1909, III, pl. vii; the manuscript, which formerly belonged to the collection of H. Yates Thompson, is now in the collection of Mr. Philip Hofer at the Houghton Library of Harvard University (see Fig. 33); compare A. de Laborde's description of the manuscript, op. cit., I, pp. 241–244.

107 Ed. Razzolini, p. 16: "Ceterum seu hinc orto certamine seu contempto fratris edicio Remus nova moenia transcendentem interficitur; sive imperii cupiditas sive ille iustitiae rigor suit, variat enim in multis vetustissimae rei fides."

110 See *Compendium*, p. 493.

111 See Augustine, *De civitate Dri*, xv, 5.

112 A fuller discussion of this problem will be found in my forthcoming study of Petrarch's historical works.
went so far as to ignore it completely, the assumption seems warranted that, at the same time, he suggested to the artists of the Paduan hall that they omit the fratricide and depict simply the quarrel between the brothers. This instance, then, would seem to support the statement made by Marcanton Michiel that "Petrarch supplied the subject-matter of these pictures." 113

Very little need be said about the small illuminations (Figs. 34–39) which are contained in the initial letters of seven of the biographies. Some of their features reveal the same close dependency on the text of Petrarch's work which can be observed in the pictures of the historical scenes. For instance, King Numa Pompilius "the law-giver," as he is called in his biography, 114 is shown holding a book in his hand (Fig. 34); Ancus Martius, "who built a wall around the Gianicolo," 115 is represented carrying the model of a walled city (Fig. 35); and Cincinnatus the farmer appears in a typical peasant dress (Fig. 39). At first glance one might be inclined to believe that these illuminations were meant to reproduce, on a minute scale, the series of large portraits which, as we have seen, must have been painted above the historical scenes in the hall. But this assumption cannot be maintained in view of the fact that some of those initial letters do not contain individual "portraits" but rather depict historical scenes (see Figs. 36–38).

A particularly interesting feature of the illuminations in the Darmstadt manuscript, and presumably therefore also of the lost frescoes in the Carrara palace, is the architectural background which appears in some of the historical scenes. In his discussion of Paduan painting during the late fourteenth century, R. Van Marle has pointed out that one of its characteristics is the attention given by the leading masters of that school to the representation of architecture. 116 But whereas most of the buildings shown in the other Paduan paintings of that pe-

---

113 See supra, note 56.
114 Ed. Razzolini, p. 34: "... primus apud Romanos legifer"; see ibid., p. 38, on the later finding of the fourteen Latin and Greek books of the king, "... de iure pontifici, ... de sapientia conscripti."
115 Ed. Razzolini, p. 50: "murusque Ianiculio circumductus."
116 Van Marle, op. cit., vii, p. 40 (with specific reference to Guariento, Semitecolo, Altichiero, and Avanzo); see ibid., iv, p. 175.
period seem to be either local or imaginary edifices, the decorators of the Sala Virorum Illustrium apparently attempted to place their scenes from Roman history against the background of the city of Rome and of some of its main buildings as they actually existed around the year 1400.

Thus we find the following Roman buildings depicted in the illuminations of the Darmstadt manuscript. Fig. 11: the Janus Quadrifons (or Arco di Giano) which is identified by the three arched gates visible. Fig. 12: the Castel Sant'Angelo, the Colosseum, the Vatican Obelisk, and again the Janus Quadrifons. Fig. 16: the Vatican Obelisk, the Pantheon, and once more the Janus Quadrifons. Fig. 19: the Pantheon, the Vatican Obelisk, and one of the Columns, either that of Trajan or of Marcus Aurelius. Fig. 23: the Church of S. Nicola in Carcer.

117 L. Schlosser, in his discussion of the Darmstadt manuscript, did not comment on the Roman background of the scenes; but on the basis of Schlosser's reproductions, E. Muntz, in Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France, 1899, pp. 350, identified some of the buildings: see also d'Essling and Muntz, op. cit., p. 48. It is interesting to compare the group of ancient monuments depicted by the Paduan artists of the late Trecento with the representation of the city of Rome on the golden bull of Louis IV (the Bavarian), which was made at the time of the imperial coronation at Rome in 1328; see the reproductions by O. Posse, Die Siegel der deutschen Kaiser und Könige, Dresden, 1909, 1, pl. 59, nr. 8, and by W. Erben, Rombilder auf kaiserlichen und königlichen Siegeln des Mittelalters, Graz, 1931, pl. 11 (with bibliography). According to W. Erben, op. cit., pp. 61-68, the following ancient monuments can be identified on that imperial seal: the Colosseum, the Pantheon, the Castel Sant'Angelo, the Vatican Obelisk, the Arch of Titus, the Pyramid of Cestius, the Column of Marcus Aurelius, the Mausoleum of Augustus.

118 On this particular identification, see T. E. Mommsen, "Un problema riguardante la topografia medioevale di Roma: S. Nicola in Carcer nell'anno 1400," Atti d. Pontif. Accad. Romana d. Archeologia, Rendiconti, xxiv, 1949, pp. 309-315. [Mommsen remarks that S. Nicola in Carcer was probably reproduced because it is an example of a Christian church built around an antique temple. The article concludes as follows: "Sembrerà un caso fuori del comune quello di trovare una miniatura primitiva che rappresenti una fra le chiese secondarie e minori di Roma, perché queste si trovavano troppo adombrate da numerosi edifici d'interesse superiore, o religioso o artistico o storico. Quando il disegnatore padovano del 1400 si decise ad illustrare proprio questa chiesa, a preferenza di tante altre, avrà dovuto fare tale scelta perché essa interessava per i suoi elementi antichi. Anche nelle altre sue miniature egli ha mostrato la stessa tendenza; perché si ricorderà che la maggior parte degli edifici da lui indicati erano di origine classica. In tale senso, dunque, il modesto schizzo di San Nicola
churches which appear in Figs. 11, 12, 16, 18, and 19 are drawn in such a highly stylized fashion that identification with particular buildings seems to be impossible.\textsuperscript{110} Likewise, the Gothic palace which is shown in Figs. 12, 16, 19, and 23 cannot be identified; for a survey of the pictorial representations and the literary descriptions of Rome during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries definitely excludes the identification of this building with the Senatorial Palace; \textsuperscript{120} nor does the same material seem to show any other building of an aspect similar to that indicated in these figures.\textsuperscript{121}

It will be noted that all the buildings which can be identified are either of classical origin or at least contain ancient elements, like the Church of S. Nicola in Carcere which incorporates the remnants of two pagan temples.\textsuperscript{122} As a matter of fact, the list of the edifices shown in the Darmstadt manuscript includes some of the most representative monuments of ancient Rome still extant at the end of the Middle Ages and, above all, of course, the Pantheon, the Colosseum, and the Castel Sant’ Angelo. That the Vatican Obelisk was depicted in no less than three of the illuminations is explained not merely by the fact that it was the only one of the Roman obelisks which remained standing throughout the Middle Ages, but even more by the popular legend connected with it.\textsuperscript{123} According to the Mirabilia urbis Romae, the

\textit{in Carcere costituisce una notevole espressione del rinasciente spirito umanistico di quell’età.”}

\textsuperscript{110} It has to be noted that Fig. 16 shows two quite similar churches, both of which have their campanile on the left side, whereas in Figs. 12, 18, and 19 the campanile appears on the right side.

\textsuperscript{120} E. Müntz, in \textit{Bulet. d. l. Soc. Nat. des Antiquaires de France}, 1899, p. 351, says of the palace shown in Fig. 16: “un chateau crénelé, probablement le Capitole.” Against this identification see, however, the representation of the Senatorial palace on the golden bull of Louis IV of 1328, mentioned above, note 117. On the aspect of the Palazzo Senatorio during the later Middle Ages, see also E. Lavagnino, “Il Campidoglio al tempo del Petrarca,” \textit{Capitolium}, xvi, 1941, pp. 103–114.

\textsuperscript{121} Compare the bibliography given by C. Scaccia Scarafoni, \textit{Le Piante di Roma possedute dalla Biblioteca dell’Istituto e dalle altre Biblioteche Governative della Città}, Rome, 1939.

\textsuperscript{122} The drawing (Fig. 23) shows clearly six Ionic columns along one side of the church.

\textsuperscript{123} On the cycle of legends concerning the Vatican Obelisk, see R. Lanciani, \textit{The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome}, Boston and New York, 1897, pp. 549 f.
Agulia, as it was called in the Middle Ages, was a memorial to Julius Caesar: "There his ashes nobly rest in his sarcophagus, to the intent that as in his lifetime the whole world lay subdued before him, even so in his death the same may still lie beneath him forever." 124 Petrarch was familiar with that tradition, for in one of his letters he speaks of "that stone, amazing in size, sitting upon bronze lions and sacred to the divine emperors, upon the top of which, according to the legend, the bones of Julius Caesar are resting." 125

Whereas the inclusion of the Vatican Obelisk probably resulted from the legendary association of the monument with the memory of Caesar, the illustrator of Petrarch's De viris illustribus very definitely deviated from the same mediaeval tradition in his representation of the Colosseum. The Mirabilia urbis Romae had asserted that the Colosseum was "all covered with an heaven of gilded brass." 126 and this statement was often repeated—for instance, by Petrarch's Florentine contemporary Fazio degli Uberti in his cosmographical poem II Dittamondo. 127 Accordingly, on two maps of Rome which were drawn in the third decade of the fourteenth century, 128 and in an illuminated manuscript of II Dittamondo of the mid-fifteenth century, 129 the Colosseum is shown covered by a dome. The Paduan illuminator of 1400, on the contrary, depicts the Colosseum in its real appearance to the best of his ability (see Fig. 12). 130

125 Fam. VI, 2, § 11: "Hoc est saxum mire magnitudinis ensique leonis ibus innixum, davis imperatoribus sacrum, cuius in vertice Iulii Cesaris ossa quiescere fama est." See M. Mercati, Gli Obelischi di Roma, 1589, pp. 239–244, who, in his discussion of the Vatican Obelisk, refers explicitly to this statement by Petrarch.
126 Nichols, op. cit., p. 63; Jordan, op. cit., ii. 628.
127 Ed. Jordan, op. cit., ii. 391: "... come un castel ch'è quasi tondo, coperto fu di rame. ..."
129 See de Rossi, op. cit., p. 88.
130 In this respect, the Paduan illuminator somewhat resembles his contemporary, the Milanese Leonardo da Vesozzo who, in the early fifteenth
Throughout his life Petrarch was greatly interested in the monuments of the cities which he visited and especially, of course, those of Rome, as various passages in his letters and other literary works show. In his epic *Africa* (viii, 862–951), he describes in great detail the sights of Rome as they presented themselves to the Carthaginian ambassadors who, at the end of the second Punic War, were taken on a tour around the city. Of this description it has been rightly said that "it testifies to a direct knowledge of the monuments, nay, even to an affectionate familiarity with them." In view of Petrarch's interest and knowledge, one is led to believe that the choice of an actually Roman background, and perhaps even the selection of the particular monuments shown in the Sala Virorum Illustrium, were due to the advice of Petrarch, who in this respect, too, would have "supplied the subject-matter of these paintings." Further support for such an assumption can be found in the fact that, during his last years in Arquà and Padua, Petrarch used to employ in his household, in addition to his copyists, some illuminators as well, as we learn from a letter written in 1371. We may conclude that he was quite accustomed to giving precise instructions to century, drew a panoramic view of Rome in which he attempted "di raffigurare Roma nella sua attualità intera"; see F. Gregorovius, "Una pianta di Roma delineata da Leonardo da Besozzo milanesi," *Atti d. R. Accad. d. Lincei*, 1882/83, ser. iii, Memorie d. Class. d. Scienze Morali, xi, p. 210.—See also the representation of the Colosseum on the golden bull of Emperor Louis IV of 1328 (reproduced by Posse, *op. cit.*, i, pl. 50, nr. 8, and by Erben, *op. cit.*, pl. iii), and the images of the Colosseum which appear on the seals of the earlier German rulers Frederick I, Henry VI, and Henry VII (see Erben, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff., 53 f., 71 ff., also pl. ii).

131 See, e.g., *Fam.* vi, 2, §§ 5–15, where Petrarch mentions, among others, four of the buildings illustrated in the Darmstadt codex, i.e., the Vatican Obelisk, the Castel Sant' Angelo, the Pantheon, and the Columns; see furthermore: *Africa* (ed. N. Festa, Florence, 1926), Book viii, vv. 862–951; *Ep. Metr.* ii, 5 (ed. D. Rosetti, F. Petrarchae poëmata minora, Milan, 1834, iii, pp. 4–30); *De remediius utriusque fortunae*, Book i, dial. 118 (in Petrarch's *Opera*, ed. 1581, pp. 99 f.).


133 Var. 15 (ed. G. Fracassetti, *F. Petrarca Epistolae de rebus familiaribus*, iii, pp. 332 f.): "Soleo habere scriptores quinque vel sex; habeo tres ad præsens, et ne plures habeam, causa est, quia non inveniuntur scripores; sed pictores utinam non inepti."
illustrators of his own works, as well as of books of other authors collected by him. Petrarch was also gifted with the eyes of a painter and proved himself able, in another passage in Africa (iii, 249-262), to offer a remarkably graphic picture of the appearances and characteristic attributes of the ancient gods. 

Prince d’Essling and Eugène Müntz have pointed out that “one of the most striking features of the illuminations” of the Darmstadt manuscript is the fact that “the costumes, as well as the architecture, are decidedly those of the fourteenth century, not those of ancient Rome.” This observation is correct, and one could go even further and point to the naive anachronism to be found in the consistent representation of Christian churches in scenes of pagan history. In this respect, the Paduan illustrators of Petrarch’s De viris illustribus were still encumbered by the artistic tradition of their era. For, although “during the fourteenth century the representation of antiquity became one of the favorite themes of Western book-illustrators,” these men, like most of the painters of that day, tended to depict ancient buildings in the style of their own period. Thus we see the graphic artists of the Trecento still unable to present antiquity in its own aspects and terms, whereas Petrarch succeeded in doing it remarkably well in his poetical and historical works.

But if it is true that the accomplishments of the decorators of the Sala Virorum Illustrium fell short of the later achievements of men like Mantegna, they must at least be credited with a definite endeavor to create a specifically Roman background, by showing some of the most characteristic antique buildings of

---


135 D’Essling and Müntz, op. cit., pp. 47 f.; the same opinion was expressed by Schlosser, op. cit., p. 190, and by Weisbach, Triumph, p. 10.


137 See C. Hulsken, La Roma antica di Ciriaco d’Ancona, Rome, 1907, pp. 37 f.
the city. Another instance of this endeavor is to be found in the two pictures of ancient temples (Figs. 15 and 27): the nude statues of the deities being worshiped, which we see placed on the altars in these temples, are employed, without any apparent disapproval by the artist, as a typical feature of a "classical" environment, and not as a frightening example of pagan idolatry, as was the case in so many mediaeval representations of hagiological or other sacred subjects. And although the Roman statesmen and warriors in the Darmstadt manuscript, their battles and triumphs, do not look exactly antique to the modern critic, they certainly appear to be less feudal or chivalrous than the armor-clad knights shown in practically all of the contemporary manuscripts which include illuminations of Roman history. We have to remember that what Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl have stated of the mediaeval mind in general was still true of the artist around the year 1400: "Being incapable of realizing, as the modern mind automatically does, the unity of classical form and classical subject-matter, [the mediaeval mind] actually avoided bringing the two together—for we must remember that any combination of what were regarded as two separate things would have been meaningless to both the average artist and the average beholder." 

138 When Schlosser, op. cit., p. 190 (and, following him, d'Essling and Müntz, op. cit., p. 86), said that "das archäologische Beiwerk gipfelt etwa in dem S.P.Q.R." (on the shields, breast plates, and banners of the soldiers, and on the gates of Rome; see Figs. 13, 14, 16, 17, 19 and 21), it must be noted that this example was badly chosen; for the knowledge and use of that abbreviation was not at all "archaeological" but has rather to be traced back to a medieval tradition, as we learn, e.g., from Giovanni Villani's Chronicle; see L. Magnani, La Cronaca figurata di G. Villani, Vatican City, 1936, p. 23, and ibid., pls. vii, x, and xi.

139 See, e.g., the illuminations in a manuscript of Livy's first ten decades, which was written in Venice in 1373 (cf. G. Fogolari, "La prima deca di Livio illustrata nel trecento a Venezia," L'Arte, x, 1907, pp. 330–345), or the "antique" scenes in a late fourteenth century manuscript of Villani's Chronicle (see Magnani, op. cit.). Compare also P. d'Ancona, La Miniature italienne du Xe au XVIe siècle, Paris, 1925 (see esp. pp. 20–48 on the various schools of the fourteenth century); E. Panofsky and F. Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art," Metropolitan Museum Studies, iv, 1932/33, pp. 262 f.; Antal, op. cit., p. 273, n. 33.

Petrarch's whole creative work was marked by a conscious effort to unite classical content and its form and expression. The poet was more advanced in this regard than the contemporary artists. But a reflection, at least, of this new approach can be found in the illustrations to Petrarch's historical work, imperfect as these attempts are.

One more question remains. During the Middle Ages it had become common practice for princes and nobles all over Europe, and even for rich burghers, to have the walls of their residences decorated with frescoes depicting people and events belonging to the realms of both history and legend. Among the great variety of topics chosen, we find representations of the popular romances, like those of Alexander the Great, of Troy and of Thebes, of the cycles of King Artus and the Holy Grail, or of the famous series of the Neuf Preux, which included three examples each of Hebrew, pagan, and Christian heroes (Joshua, David, Judas the Maccabaean; Hector, Alexander the Great, Caesar; Artus, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon); sometimes these men were accompanied by the Neuf Preuses. How does the Paduan series of the viri illustres fit into that tradition? The large mass of material bearing on this question makes it advisable to confine ourselves to a survey of the most important schemes of decoration executed in Italy during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

The first example to be mentioned seems to be by the hand of Giotto. In about 1322 he executed for King Robert of Naples a number of paintings which included the decoration of "la sala dei uomini famosi" in Castelnuovo, a work which unfortunately was destroyed in the fifteenth century. These frescoes portrayed nine heroes who, however, were not identical with the traditional Nine Worthies, there being among them no Christians, only two Hebrews (Solomon and Samson), and seven

pagans (Alexander, Hector, Aeneas, Achilles, Paris, Hercules, and Caesar); their wives were probably also represented.  

A few years later, in about 1340, Azzo Visconti commissioned in his newly built palace in Milan “a large hall . . . in which Vainglory was depicted and also illustrious pagan princes of the world, such as Aeneas, Attila, Hector, Hercules, and several others; but among them is only one Christian, Charlemagne, and then Azzo Visconti.”  

About the time of the frescoing of the hall of Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara, Altichiero painted, according to Vasari, in neighboring Verona, “the great hall of their palace [i.e., of the della Scala]. . . ., depicting therein the war of Jerusalem, according as it is described by [Flavius] Josephus. In this work, Aldigieri showed great spirit and judgment, distributing one scene over the walls of that hall on every side, with a single ornament encircling it right round; on the upper part of which ornament, as it were to set it off, he placed a row of medallions, in which it is believed that there are the portraits from life of many distinguished men of those times, particularly of many of those Signori della Scala. . . . And among many portraits of men of distinction and learning, there is seen that of Messer Francesco Petrarca.” According to the same passage in Vasari’s Lives, “Jacopo Avanzo shared the work of this hall with Aldigieri, and below the aforesaid pictures he painted two most beautiful Triumphs, likewise in fresco, with so much art and so good a manner, that Gerolamo Campagnola declares that Mantegna used to praise them as pictures of the rarest merit.”  

If we can trust another notice in Vasari’s Lives, at about the same time (ca. 1370) Giotto painted a “Hall of Famous Men” in the palace of the Orsini family in Rome.

145 Vasari, Vita de Vittore Scarpaccia, ed. Milanesi, iii, p. 693; English translation by G. du C. de Vere, iv, pp. 54 f.  
146 Schlosser, op. cit., pp. 180 f., assumes that these decorations were executed for Canzignorio della Scala, who died in 1375.  
147 Vasari, Vita di Tommaso detto Giottino, ed. Milanesi, i, p. 626;
Around the turn of the century several cycles of "famous men" seem to have been executed in Florence. We hear that portraits of four Florentine poets of the Trecento (Dante, Petrarch, Zeno, da Strada, and Boccaccio) were commissioned by the guild of the judges and notaries, and that another series was in the "aula minor palatii Florentini," in which the Florentine poets, including Claudianus, were represented among ancient heroes such as Ninnus, Alexander, Brutus, Camillus, Scipio, and Cicero; Coluccio Salutati was supposed to have written the tituli for these portraits. According to Vasari, Cosimo Medici's father Giovanni commissioned Lorenzo di Bicci "to paint in the hall of the old house of the Medici... all those famous men that are still seen there to-day, very well preserved." Of all these Florentine frescoes, unfortunately nothing seems to remain.

Between 1407 and 1414, Taddeo di Bartolo decorated the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. Only the vestibule of this chapel concerns us. Here Taddeo painted, besides a panoramic view of contemporary Rome and the images of Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, and Pallas, nine famous figures of antiquity (Aristotle, Caesar, Pompey, Cicero, Cato, Curius Dentatus, Scipio Nasica, Camillus, and Scipio Africanus), whose characters and deeds are described underneath in Latin verses. We also see, besides the images of Brutus and Laelius, the symbolizations of the virtues of Justice, Magnanimity, Prudence, Fortitude, and Religion, and representations of St. Christopher, Judas the Maccabaeus, and the blessed Ambrogio of Siena. At first glance this combination of pagan and Christian elements seems to be strange and incongruous, but its meaning is made clear by an inscription of fifteen lines in the vernacular, which begins with the words: "You who are the regents, look upon these [images]..."

---


if you want to govern for thousands and thousands of years.” 151 On their daily walks to the chapel, the ruling authorities of Siena were to be reminded of their moral obligations by the images of the virtues and of some of the great pagan and Christian figures of the past.

About the same time, between the years 1413 and 1424, the Trinci family of Foligno in Umbria built in their palace “la sala de l’imperatori,” in which twenty great Roman statesmen and generals, from Romulus to Trajan, were commemorated both with paintings and with Latin epigrams composed by Francesco da Fiano.152

And, finally, we obtain an example of the representation of the Neuf Preux and Neuf Preuses, dating from the third decade of the fifteenth century and located in one of the halls of the Castle of Manta near Saluzzo.153 It appears to be the only representation of this typically mediaeval and chivalrous subject to have been preserved on Italian soil and, appropriately, it was painted by a French painter and is found in Piedmont where the influence of French culture was always strong. For throughout the later Middle Ages this particular topic of the Neuf Preux was even more popular in France than anywhere else.154

Painting of the series of “famous men” continued, of course, throughout the fifteenth century all over Italy,155 and the great-

151 See the first two and the last four lines of the poem, which was published by L. Schorn in the footnotes to his German translation of Vasari’s Vite (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1832, 1, p. 405, n. 1); Van Marle, op. cit., n., pp. 547 and 567.  
155 See, e.g., the “Baedeker-Liste” compiled by L. Bertalot, Rheinisches Museum, LXVI, 1911, p. 78, n. 2, which lists for the later fifteenth century
est and best known collection of this kind was ultimately brought together by Paolo Giovio, who called the museum which contained his collection of portraits the "Templum Virtutis." 158

From this survey we learn that there are certain similarities between the Paduan Sala Virorum Illustrium and other "Halls of Famous Men" belonging to the same period. For instance, just as tituli were inscribed underneath the images in Padua, so were tituli also under the lost frescoes in Florence, in the vestibule of the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, in the Castle at Manta, and in the Palazzo Trinci in Foligno. 157 And if the Paduan hall included a picture of the Triumph of Fame, as it almost certainly did, it was in that respect like the halls which were decorated by the two great princely families of northern Italy, the Visconti in Milan and the della Scala in Verona.

But more noteworthy than these resemblances is the fact that the exclusively Roman subject-matter of the Paduan hall seems to have been unique, 158 and it deserves special attention, there-

158 See Giovio's description of his collection in Elogia doctorum virorum, Basel, 1571, pp. 5-14; especially p. 12: "Publicatis ac in Musaeo tanquam augusto Virtutis templo dedicatis clarorum virorum tabulis, illae ipsae veluti spirantes imagines aequissimo iure deposcunt, ut Musaeum quoque, sua sacrata sedes, eodem conditoris stylo describatur."

157 The poems celebrating the Neuf peaux in Naples did not form a part of the decoration but were composed shortly afterwards; see G. de Blasis, Napoli Nobilissima, ix, 1900, pp. 65 f.; Schubring, Repertorium für Kunswissenschaft, xxiii. 1900, p. 424.

159 If we can trust a somewhat inconclusive Sienese tradition of the early fifteenth century, there existed in the fourteenth century another decoration depicting stories from Roman history. For the Cronaca Senese attribuita ad Agnolo di Tura del Grasso detta la Cronaca Maggiore (ed. A. Lisini, in Muratori, Rerum Italianarum Scriptores, Bologna, 1931-35, xv, part vi, p. 518) contains the following statement (under the year 1337): "Sanseu avendo fatto el palazzo co' la prigione nuova, e sopra la sala del consegglio fecero le camere de' Signori e d'altri famegli nella sala del
fore, in the history of Italian art of the early Renaissance. This uniqueness resulted from an idea which was conceived, it seems to me, by none but Petrarch himself. As has been mentioned before, he intended originally to write about “the illustrious men of all countries and ages.” Such a plan was entirely in accordance with the customary mediaeval conception of universal history. In his *Trionfi*, especially in the Triumph of Fame, Petrarch remained faithful to the mediaeval tradition, listing among his famous men and women great figures of the Old Testament, of Greco-Roman antiquity, and of the mediaeval romances and legends. But as far as his historical work was concerned, Petrarch decided very early to confine himself exclusively to one people and one period, the era of Roman greatness from Romulus to Titus or Trajan. This new conception of history was formulated most succinctly by him when he asked in one of his latest writings: “What else, then, is all history, if not the praise of Rome?”

And even within this limited compass Petrarch did not propose to write about all the men who had been outstanding.

---

Palazzo del mezo, e fecelle dipingare di fuore a storie romane di mano di maestro Ambruogio Lorenzetti da Siena.” E. von Meyenburg, *Ambrogio Lorenzetti*, Heidelberg, dissertation, 1903, p. 16, quotes the above passage and refers in this connection also to the following passage in Vasari’s *Vita di Ambruogio Lorenzetti* (ed. Milanesi, i, p. 523): “... e nel medesimo palazzo [i.e., the Palazzo Pubblico di Siena] fece otto storie di verdeterza, molto pulitamente”; according to Milanesi, *ibid.*, p. 523, n. 4, those Roman scenes “furono dipinte nel 1345, ma da gran tempo sono perdute.”—If the attribution to Ambrogio Lorenzetti can be accepted as reliable and correct, that lost representation of an exclusively Roman subject-matter could be interpreted as another instance of Ambrogio’s “interesse per il passato, nella duplice qualità di artista e di archeologo,” which was noted by G. Rowley, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti il pensatore,” *La Balzana*, xx, 1927, p. 214; on Ambrogio’s interest in classical antiquity, see also von Meyenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 13; G. Sinibaldi, *I Lorenzetti*, Siena, 1933, pp. 82 ff.; Meiss, *op. cit.*, p. 157. However, it ought to be noted in this connection that Lorenzo Ghiberti in his *Commentarii* does not mention those alleged “storie romane,” despite his recognition of Ambrogio’s special interest in the antique. Since the representation of an entirely classical subject appears to be foreign to the whole spirit of the early Trecento, the assumption of such a work by Ambrogio Lorenzetti seems rather doubtful, a doubt which my friend George Rowley shares with me.

150 *Apologia contra cuiusdam anonymi Galli calumnias* (in Petrarch’s *Opera*, ed. 1581, p. 1076): “Quid est enim alius omnis historia quam Romana laus?”
ing in Roman history, but only about those whose personalities and characters, as he saw them, were shaped and dominated by their innate \textit{virtus} in such a manner that they were able to perform deeds worthy of being remembered and imitated by posterity.

The galaxy of the great men of Rome that we find in the final version of his work \textit{De viris illustribus} derived from and expressed a very definite judgment of value on the part of Petrarch. It is evident that the images of the same men in the Sala Virorum Illustrium and the representations of their main deeds, which were given underneath the portraits in the pictorial scenes and the inscribed \textit{tituli}, were meant to imply the same normative character.

If we now look over the schemes of the other “Halls of Famous Men” decorated during Petrarch’s lifetime, we see immediately that none of them was in accordance with this fundamental conception of Petrarch. There was nothing Roman and not even the slightest homogeneity in the hall at Verona in which illustrations of Flavius Josephus’ \textit{Jewish War} were combined with portraits of political and literary figures of the fourteenth century. Men like Attila or Charlemagne, who were portrayed among others in the Castle at Milan, certainly did not qualify, in Petrarch’s opinion, as \textit{viri illustres}, but they were men whose power was the gift of \textit{fortuna} and not of \textit{virtus}.\footnote{On this distinction between men who are merely “hominis fortunati” and those who are truly “viri illustres,” compare Petrarch’s final preface to \textit{De viris illustribus} (ed. de Nolhac, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 112, ll. 69–72).}

In regard to the pictures of the strange “Nine Worthies” and their wives in Castelnuovo at Naples, it has been considered curious that in his \textit{Iter Syriacum} Petrarch does not refer to this work of Giotto although he commends Giotto’s activity in Naples.\footnote{\textit{Iter Syriacum}, ed. G. Lumbroso, \textit{Atti d. R. Accad. d. Lincei}, 1888, ser. iv, Rendiconti, iv, 398, ll. 232–234; see G. de Blasis, \textit{Napoli Nobilissima}, ix, 1900, p. 65.} If any conclusion at all can be drawn from this omission, it may be that Petrarch considered that selection of heroes to be completely arbitrary and therefore hardly worth noticing; in other instances as well, in order to show his rejection of matters alien to him, Petrarch simply passed them over in silence.
Of the later "Halls of Famous Men," only that in the Palazzo Trinci at Foligno seems to come close to Petrarch's ideas. For it contains only Roman statesmen and generals from the time of Romulus to Trajan, and we even find that sixteen of the twenty men portrayed in Foligno belong also to Petrarch's series of *viri illustres*. But among the four others are three whom Petrarch explicitly considered disqualified, Cato Uticensis on account of his suicide, Tiberius and Caligula because of their vices.

Thus it seems that the Sala Virorum Illustrium in Padua stands by itself in the series of decorated halls of the early Italian Renaissance. From this point of view it appears logical that the room also reveals, together with the *Triumph of Fame* and the representations of the images and the deeds of the great men of Rome, the portrait of the man who inspired this remarkably unified work of program-painting.

Throughout all his writings Petrarch endeavored to recall to the memory of his Italian contemporaries the great personifications of the antique *virtus Romana*. In the preface to his work *De viris illustribus* he declares: "Indeed, if I am not mistaken, it is the fruitful task of the historian to make known that which the reader should imitate or which he should avoid, so that of these two a number of illustrious examples are available." 162

In the Sala Virorum Illustrium of Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara in Padua, Petrarch's conception of the exemplary value of the history of Rome personified by her great men found its visual expression. And the words written by Lombardo della Seta to the prince who commissioned this unique decoration might also have been addressed as an admonition and a challenge to every beholder of these pictures: "Keep always in sight these men whom you ought to be eager to love because of the greatness of their deeds."

162 Ed. de Nolhac, *op. cit.*, p. 113: "Hic enim, nisi fallor, fructuosus historici finis est illa prosequi, que vel sectanda legentibus vel fugienda sunt, ut in utramque partem copia suppetat illustrium exemplorum."
Petrarch and the Story of
the Choice of Hercules

IN his book Hercules am Scheidewege, Erwin Panofsky has shown how the ancient tale of the choice of Hercules became during the Renaissance a favourite theme of humanist writers and playwrights, and of artists, especially in Italy and Germany. The great popularity of the theme in antiquity as well as in the Renaissance and afterwards is striking in contrast to its complete absence from the work of mediaeval writers and artists. According to Panofsky, “the topic was revived in literature only around the year 1400,” making its first appearance in Coluccio Salutati’s treatise De laboribus Herculis. Panofsky supported this point by remarking that “neither do Petrarch and Boccaccio mention the decision of Hercules nor do the mediaeval mythographers, Berchorius, Villena and the Livre du fort Hercules.”


2 Panofsky, op. cit., p. 155. Salutati’s treatise has just been edited by B. L. Ullman, De laboribus Herculis, 2 vols., Zürich, 1951; on this treatise, see the remarks made by E. Garin in the preface to his edition of Salutati’s De nobilitate legum et medicinae, Florence, 1947, pp. xxviii–x, and by Ullman, op. cit., pp. vii–xiv.

3 Panofsky, op. cit., p. 155, n. 2.
This statement requires a modification as far as Petrarch is concerned, for he actually did know the story.

Petrarch, to be sure, does not mention the choice of Hercules where one would expect to find it, in the "Life of Hercules," which formed a part of the first version of his biographical collection De viris illustribus and which was probably written in the year 1337 or shortly afterwards. It is true that he never finished that biography, but if he had intended to tell of the decision made by the young Hercules, he would have done so at the beginning. The name of Hercules appears a number of times in Petrarch's Rerum Memorandarum Libri, and in his correspondence, but always without any reference to the choice. However, in his De vita solitaria, which he began in 1346, Petrarch referred in two different places (1, 4, 2; 2, 9, 4) very explicitly to the choice of Hercules.

Before starting the discussion of these passages it is necessary to ask why the ancient tale was so completely neglected throughout the Middle Ages. At first this phenomenon seems rather strange, because mediaeval scholars certainly must have come upon the story in Cicero's De officiis (1, 32, 118; 3, 5, 25), and, one might think, must have found its moral lesson highly commendable. Actually, however, as Panofsky proved very convincingly, the story implied a moral conception which from the Christian point of view was much too pagan and secular and therefore had to be passed over in silence. In the first place, the two ways of life were represented in the tale by the personifications of what was considered praiseworthy and bad (virtus and voluptas) in a strictly earthly sense and not at all in accord-


7 Panofsky, op. cit., p. 156.
ance with the Christian interpretation of the eternal meaning of
good and evil. And secondly, no Christian was given the right,
which in the story was claimed for Hercules, to make an entirely
free and wholly individual choice concerning the basic direction
of his life; it was granted only to Christ that “he may know to
refuse the evil and choose the good” (Isaiah vii. 15).

Panofsky discussed this tacit rejection of the tale of the choice
of Hercules in connexion with his observation that throughout
the Middle Ages artists created many pictorial and sculptural
images of the various virtutes and vitia, either in whole cycles or
individually, but no representations of virtus or vitium in gen-
eral. The ancients had held, of course, the concept of a supreme
Virtue, the dea virtus, which could be depicted in an anthro-
updated morphic figure, but such deification of virtus was not acceptable
to any Christian theologian. Thus it was denounced in the most
explicit terms by St. Augustine who wrote in The City of God:
“[The pagans] made also virtus a goddess; if she really were a
goddess, she would indeed have to be preferred to many others:
but since actually she is not a goddess but a gift of God, she is to
be obtained by Him by whom alone she can be given.”
The virtus Dei as the power of God in the fullest sense was personi-
fied by Christ alone, as St. Paul taught. It was therefore in
complete accordance with the Christian refutation of the pagan
concept of the dea virtus, Panofsky said, that “medieval think-
ing could no longer seek for the supreme Virtue in the anthro-
pomorphic but only in the metaphysical sphere.” On the
other hand, since the individual virtutes were to be achieved
by man in this world, they could be represented by earthly per-
sonifications, such as the life-like figures of women.
The Augustinian distinction between the supranatural character of the supreme virtus Dei on one side, and the variety of the cardinal, theological and other virtutes entering into the realm of human life on the other side, apparently dominated artistic tradition to the very end of the Middle Ages. Whosoever wanted to deviate from that tradition and create an image of the supreme Virtue could do so only in full awareness of the novelty of his attempt. This becomes evident to the reader of the remarks which the Tuscan writer and designer Francesco da Barberino (1264–1348) made in the Latin commentaries to his work Documenti d’Amore (published in 1314). In connexion with his discussion of “the three kinds of virtus (i.e., naturalis, spiritualis, and animalis),” Francesco da Barberino said that he intended “to represent the virtus moralis in genere.” As he knew, “some people declared that although it is possible to represent in images the virtutes in specie, it is impossible to depict the virtus in genere.” But in spite of those objections Francesco decided “to proceed ad istam generalitatem figurandam,” and actually drew a sketch of the virtus in genere or virtus generalis. He did so “not without some great hesitation,” as he admitted himself, because he was conscious of “the novelty of the image” to be introduced by him.  


13 The work was edited by F. Egidi, 4 vols., Rome, 1905–27; as to the date of its composition, see ibid., IV, pp. xxxii–xli; on Francesco da Barberino’s life and works, compare Egidi’s article in Enciclopedia Italiana, VI, 1930, p. 141 (with bibliography). I owe the reference to the subsequently discussed passage in the Documenti d’Amore to Professor Panofsky who discovered it only after he had published his Hercules am Scheidewege.

14 Ed. Egidi, op. cit., I, 66: “Sed primo quidem nobis videndum est et sciemendum, quod tres species sunt virtutis: naturalis, spiritualis et animalis. Forma tamen virtutis, quam representare intendo, est moralis in genere, ut ad omnem se moralem hoc genus extendat, et ita idem dico de vitii, que consistunt in omnia. Nee obmico, quamvis aliqui dixerint, quod licet possibile sit representare in figuris virtutes in specie, tamen in genere figurare virtutem impossibile videbatur, quin ad istam generalitatem figurandam procedam non in contendum illorum sed ad quandam qualem novitatis effigiem inducendam in amoris honorem servorumque suorum gaudium aliquale. Et quia facto rei cuilibet fundamento, ut dicitur supra circa principium prohemiibi ibi ubi de amoris forma tractatur [see op. cit.,
Francesco da Barberino’s allegorical image of the virtus generalis remained, it seems, unique of its kind for a long while, and the artists of the Trecento and Quattrocento continued to depict, in accordance with the mediaeval tradition, merely the “special” virtues and vices. It was only a century and a half after the composition of the Documenti d’Amore that another Italian, Antonio Averlino, who chose to call himself Filarete, “the friend of Virtue,” attempted again to design an allegorical image of the supreme virtù, as distinguished from the allegories representing the “special” virtues. In his Trattato d’Architettura, which was written between the years 1460 and 1464, Filarete described an imaginary “House of Virtue and Vice” to be erected in the future city of Sforzinda, and said that this temple was to be crowned by a statue personifying virtù. In this connexion he declared that he tried to find out “through reading and through inquiry whether virtù and virtù had ever been represented in such a way that either one of them could be perceived in a single figure.” But, he said, “I have not found as yet that they were represented in one figure,” whereas there existed, I, 8 f.], igitur reservatis rationibus formarum et locorum hic designatorum infra loco suo antequam ad aliorum expositionem divertatur, et reservato etiam ipsius moralis virtutis tractatu simillimi loco suo hic figuras ipsius generalis virtutis et vitiorum, secundum quod capere potuit mei modicitas intellectus, non sine quaedam magna dubitatione represento.” With the remark: “Vide illas: hic sunt,” Francesco refers to a sketch on the same page which shows the virtus in genere being attacked by ten figures which represent the vices, under the heading: “hec sunt opposita”; see ibid., I, 66, Egidi’s drawing of Francesco’s sketch; a photographic reproduction of the original sketch (from Cod. Barber. 4076, f. 9") was published by Egidi in his earlier article “Le miniature dei codici barbariniani dei Documenti d’Amore,” L’Atte, V, 1902, p. 89. See also Francesco’s discussion of the virtus moralis and the question of its representation, as well as that of the vitia, somewhat later in the same chapter of the Documenti d’Amore, ed. Egidi, I, 72-76.

15 See, e.g., the illuminated German manuscript of the early 15th century, which was described and analysed by F. Saxl, “Aller Tugenden und Laster Abbildung,” Festschrift für J. Schlosser, 1926, pp. 104-121: see esp. the picture of the assault made by the vices upon the castle of the virtues (ibid., fig. 51); see also Panofsky, op. cit., p. 79.

16 The text of Filarete’s Trattato d’ Architettura was edited, partly in the Italian original and partly in German translation, by W. v. Göttingen, Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttechnik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit, N. F. III, Vienna, 1890.
of course, many representations of the four cardinal and the three theological virtues or of the seven principal vices. According to Filarete, the only personifications of virtù and vitio were to be found in the story of the choice of Hercules, as told by Xenophon. Since Filarete considered these latter allegories "unsatisfactory," he decided to use his own mind and imagination and proceeded "to represent virtù and vitio, each alone and by itself in one figure." These remarks indicate that in the second part of the fifteenth century the conception of an allegorical representation of virtus generalis was still as much of "a novelty" as had been the case around the year 1300 when Francesco da Barberino wrote his Documenti d'Amore. In fact, Filarete himself made it very manifest how proud he was of his innovation, which he called "a worthy and memorable enterprise, not yet undertaken in any other place."

It is worth noticing that while Francesco da Barberino, in his

17 The Italian text of this passage in bk. XVIII of Filarete's treatise was published by Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 188 f: "Si che immaginando io più volte, a che cose si potesse asomigliare questa virtù et questo vitio si possa asomigliare che più propria paresse, et leggendo et domandando, se mai alcuno di questi avessi figurati immodo che in una figura comprendere si potesse l'uno essere il vitio et l'altra la virtù, io non o ancora trovato che in una figura figurate fussono come impiù, come a dire le quattro virtù cardinali et le tre theologiche, et così i septe vitii principali, che chi a uno animale et chi a un altro et così ancora la virtù a varie figure asimigliate." Compare the abridged German translation of this passage by v. Oettingen, op. cit., p. 500.

18 Ed. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 189: "Vero è che Seneca [according to Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 194 f., a misreading in the text for Senofonte] le discrive in forma di donna vestita di bianco e 'l vitio pure in forma di donna molto adornata di begli vestimenti et figure, che in sonno venissono dinanzi a Ercole et a dimostragli, che ciascun legge dovessi seguitare le sue vestigie, così il vitio come la virtù, ognuno gli proferiva de' suoi fructi et chi dolci et chi bruschi, et lui, come savio, prese più presto le bruschi che dolci."

19 Ed. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 189: "Si che, vedute tutte queste similitudini et intese, non nella mente mi sodisfaceva, immodo che collo 'ngegnio mi missi a fantasticar et pensare tanto, che pure mi venne nella mente di figurare il vitio et la virtù in una figura sola ciascuna di per se, le quali stanno in questa forma, che qui narrerò et anche per disegno potrete la sua forma vedere." Compare the rest of the passage, ed. Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 189–192, and the reproductions of three of Filarete's drawings, ibid., figs. 117–119.

20 Trattato d'Architettura, bk. IX, ed. v. Oettingen, op. cit., p. 306: "Per la loggia dinanzi dalla porta, sotto il portico, io ò pensato quello a me
discussion of the problem of *virtus generalis* had abided by the mediaeval tradition in so far as he avoided any reference in his *Documenti d'Amore* to the choice of Hercules, Filarete, in his search for previous representations of the single or supreme *virtù* and *vitio*, did recall it. In five or six generations humanistic studies had made so much progress that Filarete could not only tell the story but could allude to its Greek version in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia.* This observation brings us back to Petrarch who, one generation later than Francesco da Barberino, first revived that tale, in two places in his *De vita solitaria.*

The first of these passages (1, 4, 2) reads as follows: “It were an excellent thing, if want of counsel, the unavoidable concomitant of youth, did not stand in the way, that each one of us at the very beginning of his maturity should give careful and earnest thought to the selection of some particular kind of life, nor ever turn aside from the path he had once chosen, except for important reasons or for some grave necessity; Hercules did so on entering manhood as is testified by Xenophon, the pupil of Socrates, and by Cicero.”

Petrarch did not know Greek, and Xenophon had not yet

pare ci stia bene; e sarà cosa degna e memorabile, e non è ancora fatta in altri luoghi. Quello che a me pare, che ui stia bene, si è la Virtù e 'l Vito, e nel modo ch'io l'ho figurato nel libro del bronzo” (a reference to a passage in book IV of the *Trattato*, ed. v. Oettingen, p. 132) See also Panofsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-194 On the “esoteric character” of some late 14th-century French manuscripts of Aristotle’s works, which contain representations of the general Virtue, see Panofsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 150 ff., 160, 193

21 That Filarete derived his account from Xenophon’s text and not from the Latin version of the story in Cicero’s *De officis*, is clearly shown by a comparison of the text in the *Trattato d’Architettura* with that in the *Memorabilia* (2, 1, 21–34)

22 Quoted from the excellent translation of Petrarch’s *Life of Solitude*, which was made by J. Zeitlin, Urbana, III., 1924, p. 133; the Latin text, in Petrarch’s *Opera*, Basle, 1581, p. 234, reads as follows: “Optimum quidem esset, nisi consilii inopia ruris adolescentiae comessabant, ut ab ineunte aetate circa unum aliquod vitae genus apprehendendum unusquisque nostrum accuratissimae cogitaret nec ab illo calle, quem semel elegisset, nisi magnus ex causis aut gravi necessitate diverteret. Quod initio pubertatis fecisse Herculem auctor Xenophon ille Socratus testis est et Cicero”, see also A. Altamura’s edition of *De vita solitaria*, Naples, 1913, pp. 56 ff. On the history of the work, see B. L. Ullman, “The composition of Petrarch’s *De vita solitaria* and the history of the Vatican manuscript,” *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, 1945, IV, 107–142.
been translated into Latin. Therefore Petrarch's source of information was exclusively Cicero's *De officiis* (1, 32, 118; 3, 5, 25). When he very learnedly cited Xenophon as his first authority, he derived that knowledge also from Cicero and not from any personal acquaintance with the *Memorabilia*; there are many similar examples of this method of indirect quotation to be found in Petrarch's writings.

It will be noted that in this first passage Petrarch referred to the decision made by Hercules only in a rather general fashion, without any indication of the specific choice between the two ways of life, personified as they were in Cicero's account by *virtus* and *voluptas*. And it is interesting to observe that somewhat later in the same chapter Petrarch expressed the problem of finding the right way in an entirely Christian fashion and not at all in the terms of pagan antiquity: "If a man has been illumined by the celestial light at his very entrance into life, when, as I have already said, not a spark of judgment is active, and if he has been able to find a safe road or one whose dangers are slight and easily avoided, he has reason for everlasting gratitude to God." 23

In the second passage of *De vita solitaria* (2, 9, 4), Petrarch spoke about people of the past who loved solitude. After a brief discussion of Romulus and Achilles he said: "Hercules too attained in solitude that wholesome plan of life which I have mentioned in the preceding book [1, 4, 2], when, hesitating long and much as though at a parting of the ways, he ultimately spurned the way of pleasure and took possession of the path of virtue, and marching indefatigably along its course, he was raised not only to the apex of human glory but even to a reputation of divinity. Although the fame of this man extends its branches high and wide, if you look for its roots, your mind must turn back to solitude." 24


THE CHOICE OF HERCULES

It is evident that in this passage Petrarch followed the text of Cicero much more closely than in the earlier one although this time he did not cite his authority. But it was obviously Cicero's text which led him to say that Hercules went into solitude and pondered there for a long while over the question of the right choice, and it was also in accordance with Cicero when Petrarch spoke of the two roads as the ways of *virtus* and *voluptas*. Petrarch's remark that Hercules was raised to "the reputation of divinity" likewise agreed with Cicero's statement that "popular belief has given him a place in the council of the Gods." 25

But in this second passage in *De vita solitaria* Petrarch used one very interesting phrase which did not occur in Cicero's text, although one might say that it was implied in it. For whereas

postremum spreta voluptatis via semitam virtutis arripuit, quam indeesse gradiens non ad humanae modo gloriae verticem, sed ad opinionem divinitatis evectus est, quamlibet alio lateque ramos portigat viri fama, si radicem quaeras, ad solitudinem erit animo recurrencum; compare the text edited by Altamura, op. cit., p 137.

25 In the following two passages from Cicero's work, I have italicized those words which Petrarch transcribed in his treatise. *De officiis*, 1, 32, 118: "Nam quod Herculem Prodicus dicit, ut est apud Xenophonem, cum primum subiectum, quod tempus a natura ad deligendum, quam quisque viam vivendi sit impressus, datum est, esse in solitudinem atque ibi sedentem diu secum multumque dubitasse, cum duas cerneret vias, una voluptatis, altera virtutis, utam ingredias melius esset, hoc Herculi Iovis satu edito potuit fortasse contingere, nobis non item, qui imitamur, quos cuique visum est, atque ad eorum studia institutaque impellimus." *De officiis*, 3, 5, 25: "Itemque magis est secundum naturam pro omnibus gentibus, si fieri possit, conservandis aut invaditis maximos liberes molestiasque suscipere imitaret Herculum illum, quem hominum fama beneficiorum membra in concilio caelestium collocavit, quam vivere in solitudine non modo sine ullos molestias, sed etiam in maximis voluptatibus abundanter omnibus eopis, ut excellas etiam pulchritudine et viribus." It may be noted that Petrarch, though following the text of Cicero in other respects, deviated on one rather personal point very markedly from his authority. For, whereas Cicero declared it to be "more in accord with nature to emulate Hercules and undergo the greatest toil and trouble for the sake of aiding or saving the world, if possible, than to live in solitude, not only free from all care but reveling in pleasures . . . .", Petrarch, in accord with his high praise of the solitary life in his treatise of this title, asserted explicitly that, "if you look for the roots of Hercules' fame, your mind must turn back to solitude"; cf. also *De vita solitaria*, 1, 3, 2 (translated by Zeitlin, p. 125). The English translation of the two passages in *De officiis*, is that given by W. Miller in *The Loeb Classical Library*, 1903, pp. 121, 291 f.
Cicero said (De officiis, 1, 32, 118) that Hercules “saw two ways,” Petrarch stated more explicitly that the hero found himself “as it were in bivio,” at a parting of the ways. The assumption seems warranted that Petrarch inserted this particular term in bivio because he remembered that it appeared quite regularly in another traditional allegory symbolizing the two ways of life, the concept of “the Pythagorean letter,” the Y, which was developed in antiquity and remained alive throughout the Middle Ages. For instance, in the second part of the fourth century, Servius wrote in his Commentarii in Vergillii Aeneidos: “As we know, Pythagoras of Samos divided human life according to the form of the letter Y; in the uncertainty of early age men have not yet given themselves to virtues and vices; but the parting of the ways (bivium), [symbolized by the two upper shafts] of the letter Y, begins with adolescence at the time when men follow either the vices, that is the left side, or the virtues, that is the right side.” The allegorical meaning of the bivium as illustrated by the Y was interpreted in a very similar fashion by Ausonius, St. Jerome and Martianus Capella.


Servius, In Aeneid., VI, 136 (ed. G. Thilo, II, 30 f.): “Novimus Pythagoram Samium vitam humanam divisisse in modum Y litterae, scilicet quod prima actas incerta sit, quippe quae adhuc se nec vitii nec virtutibus dedit; bivium autem Y litterae a iuventute incipere, quo tempore homines aut vitia, id est partem sinistrum, aut virtutes, id est dexteram partem sequuntur.” Compare also the much earlier lines in Persius, Satirae, 3, 56–57, where, however, the word bivium does not appear: “Et tibi, quae Samios diduxit littera ramos, / Surgentem dextra monstravit limite callem.”

Martianus Capella, De nuptiis philologiae et Mercurii, 2, 102; Ausonius, De litteris monosyllabis (348), 9; St. Jerome, Epistolae, 107, 6, 3 (ed. I. Hilberg, in Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, LV, 1912, p. 297).
The choice of Hercules

The allegory met, however, also with pronounced opposition among some early Christian theologians, as Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* shows. Lactantius knew that the pagan philosophers had spoken of the two ways and "represented the one as belonging to the virtues, the other to the vices," but he objected that "these men because they were ignorant or in doubt in regard to the fact that the souls of men are immortal, evaluated both virtues and vices in terms of earthly honours or punishments." He also remembered that "they say that the course of human life resembles the letter Y," but again he rejected the purely secular interpretation of that symbol by which "they referred the end of those ways to the body, and to this life which we lead on earth." Lactantius granted that the poets had perhaps more correctly dealt with that *bivium* than the philosophers had done, but nevertheless he felt obliged to ask "what need is there of the letter Y" in a matter, the choice of the right life, concerning which pagans and Christians held so completely divergent views. Thus he stated most emphatically: "We bring forward these ways in a very different manner from that in which the philosophers are accustomed to present them; first of all, because we say that a guide is proposed to each, and in each case an immortal one; but that the one is honoured who presides over virtues and over the good, the other is condemned who presides over vices and the bad."

---


30 *Div. Instit.*, 6, 3, 6: "Dicunt enim humanæ uiæ cursum Y littera similem"; *ibid.*, 6, 3, 9: "Ad corpus ergo et ad hanc utiam, quam in terra ducimus, fines carum uiarum repperunt.


32 *Div. Instit.*, 6, 3, 17: "Quid enim opus est Y littera in rebus contrariis atque diuersis?"

33 *Div. Instit.*, 6, 3, 14: "Hae igitur uiæ longe alter inducimus, quam induci a philosophis solent, primum quod utrique praeposition esse dicimus
In spite of the serious objections expressed by Lactantius, Pythagorean letter was often recalled by Christian writers. For instance, Isidore of Seville declared in his Etymologiae that Pythagoras of Samos was the first to form the letter Υ as an emblem of human life. For its lower shaft signifies early age in infamy, which has not yet given itself either to the vice of incontinence but to the vice of its bearers; its right side is steep but reaches to the base of its left side is easier but leads down to fall and ruin. The inclusion of the traditional concept of the Υ in Isidore's paedia probably accounts for the great popularity with symbol enjoyed from the Carolingian era to the end of the Middle Ages. As Manitius has stated, it became quite a practice to use the phrase ad Pythagoricae litterae bivium nire. For example, the Friar Salimbene of Parma said Cronica that he entered the Franciscan Order at the age of thirteen years, "when I arrived at the parting of the way, Pythagorean letter." In the fourteenth century, Ricardus utrumque immortalem, sed alterum honoratum, qui uirtutibus praestat, alterum damnatum, qui uirtutibus ac malis." Comparative passage, C. Taylor, op. cit., p. 247; see ibid., p. 256, Taylor's remark on the general background of the idea that "the Christian two ways had good and evil angels placed upon them"; see also C. Pascal, pp. 59-61; J. Alpers, op. cit., pp. 60-72, and W. Jaeger's in "Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen," CLXXV, 1913, pp. 590 ff.

31 Isidorus, Etymologiae, 1, 3, 7 (ed. W. M. Lindsay, Oxford). Lettera Pythagoricae Samius ad exemplum vitae humanae primus cujus virgula sub ier primam aetatem significat, incertam quippe adhuc se nee vitis nee virtutibus dedit. Bivium autem, quod sup. adolescentia incipit: cujus dextra pars ardua est, sed ad beatitudinem: sinistra facilior, sed ad labem interitumque deducuntur; concluded with the line quoted above [n. 27] from Persius, Sat.

35 M. Manitius, "Beiträge zur Geschichte römischer Dichter," Philologus, XLVII, 1889, p. 713. n. 3; see also C. Pascal, pp. 65-67; F. Dornseiff, op. cit., p. 24; Die Cambriader Lieder Strecke, 1926, pp. 22 nr. 3a, 37 nr. 3b; H. Walter, in Degering, 1926, pp. 299 nr. 8, 302 f.

36 Salimbene, Cronica, ed. O. Holder-Egger, Mon. Germ. Script., 1905-15, p. 38, lines 16-18: "... ego frater Salimbene, quid perveni ad bivium Pythagoricae litterae, id est finitis tribus libris ordinem fratrum Minorum intravi ..."; Salimbene used the same in four other passages in the Cronica (pp. 166, l. 25 f., 187 l. 33 f., 277 l. 25).
Bury, writing in his *Philobiblon*, accused the corrupt clergy of his era in the following words: “At last, yielding your lives to wickedness and reaching the parting of the ways of the Pythagorean figure, you choose the left branch and, turning backward, forsake the lot of the Lord, which you had first chosen, and become partakers with thieves.”

Petrarch was well acquainted with the traditional interpretation of the symbol Y. Thus he advised a friend who had started on a political career not to despair of his final salvation for that reason, “as if you had chosen the devious and, as the Pythagoreans call it, the left road.” In a letter in which he recommended his young son Giovanni to the care of the grammarian Giberto Baiardi of Parma, Petrarch wrote that the boy “has come in his life to the Pythagorean *bivium*: never is there less prudence, never more peril.” After this allusion Petrarch discussed in the rest of the letter the problem of the two ways very much in Christian terms, beginning with the quotation of the famous passage in St. Matthew (vii. 13–14): “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” But it is very characteristic of Petrarch that within the subsequent string of quotations from the Old Testament concerning the right way of life he inserted also two passages from “our poet,” that is, from Vergil’s *Aeneid*.

---


38 *Famili.*, 3, 12, 5: “Tu igitur ne desperes, quasi devium et ut Pythagorici vocant, levum iter ingressus sis, aut quasi tuorum cura civium, quam geris, divinae quam petis gratie sit adversa.”

39 *Famili.*, 7, 17, 1: “Adolescentulum nostrum, consilii inopem et etatus agitatum stimulis, paterna sollicitudinis ope complectere. Iam, ut vides, ad bivium pithagoricum vivendo pervenit; nusquam prudentie minus, nusquam periculi magis est.”

40 *Famili.*, 7, 17, 11–13 (with quotations from Proverbs ii. 13; iii. 17; iv. 19 and 27; xv. 19; Psalm xxxv. 6, Liber Ecclesiastici, 21, 11; Jerem. 21, 8, Vergil, *Aen.*, 9, 641 and 6, 542–543).
the two ways of life, "one lofty and hard" which leads to the life eternal but is chosen only by the very few, the other extending in "a deep valley" and leading to Tartarus or, as he said in a later line, to eternal death. "What is it," Petrarch asked, "that compels men, at the bivium of the old man of Samos, to deviate to the left side and to hold the right path in such contempt?" 41

The most interesting discussion of the meaning of the letter Y is to be found in a letter which Petrarch addressed to Zanobi da Strada. He described "that grave matter placed before those who are entering the way of life," the choice of "the path which is more to the right, steep and narrow, thorny and stony." This path, Petrarch explained in Christian terms, is the narrow way to "the true life," whereas the left road, and here Petrarch again quoted Vergil, "wreaks punishment of the wicked and sends them on to pitiless Tartarus." Petrarch continued: "Neither our Maro was ignorant of this nor was Pythagoras when he, following the steps of Cadmus, hammered out on the anvil of his mind that letter which, though superfluous as far as writing goes, is useful for life." 42

41 Epistolae metricae, 3, 32, ed. D. Rossetti, Petrarchae poëmata minora, II, Milan, 1831, p. 150, lines 1-15:

"Artibus ut variis agitur brevis orbita vitae
Et per mille vias metat properamus ad unam.
Astart optatum pariter non prenindus omnes,
Altum iter et durum; in primis nec mole gravatis
Corporea ascensus facilis scopolosaque saxis
Undique praeruptis ancesps via turbat cuntes;
Undique terribiles lapsus atque undique mors est;
Per medium securos eas; hoc tramite pauci
Incedunt. Plures videae in valle profunda
Errantes passim coccis ad Tartara gressus
Ferre. Quid heu tantum fessis mortilibus obstat?
Quid Samii senis in bivio deflectere cogit
Ad laevam atque iter usque adeo contemnere dextrum?
Excelso stat vita loco, nos ima sequentes
Vergimus ad mortem."

As Panofsky, op. cit., p. 67, n. 1, has shown, Petrarch used "in freier Weise" the poem of Maximinus (or Pseudo-Vergil), ed. A. Riese, Anthologia Latina, I, 2, 1906, p. 98 nr. 682; on Maximinus, see also C. Pascal, op. cit., pp. 64 f.

42 Famili, 12, 3, 5-6: "Sentis ... illud grande discrimen, illud grave negotium, quod intratibus viam vite hisuis obicitur: longum iter asperumque, breve tempus et adversum; dexterior trames arduus angustus
It is clear that in this passage, as in the previous one, Petrarch supported the allegorical significance of the Pythagorean letter with references to both the Christian and the classical traditions. But this time he commented on the meaning of the symbol in still another and, it seems, entirely personal and original fashion. "The two-horned form of the letter" he found to be "of exemplary value." For, "with its right horn, though it is narrower, the letter reaches to the stars, whereas on the left side the letter is broader but, through the curve of the horn on that side, is bent toward the earth." The editor of Petrarch's Familiar, Vittorio Rossi, has most ingeniously pointed out that for the correct understanding of this passage one has to realize that Petrarch wrote his Y in exactly the same manner in which he described it in this letter: one shaft was drawn in a rather thin stroke, turned somewhat to the right but pointed upward; the left shaft was much broader but on its top the curve was pointed downward. This particular interpretation of the Y, then, was just as much in accordance with Petrarch's handwriting as the explanation of the symbolism of that letter, given by Persius and other Latin writers of antiquity, agreed with their practice of writing it. In their case, "the right way" was represented by the straight main shaft from which the left shaft forked off, at first in a slight angle but after that also going straight up. Thus they could say that the right path rises very steeply and that the ascent on the wrong road seems at first easy and offers

*repriscus scrupens; ea nodas ad veram vitam semita est; 'at levum malorum/* Excret penas et ad impia Tartara mittit' [Men, 6, 512-513]; quod nec Maro noster ignorat nec Pythagoras ignorabant, dum Cadmus vestigiis in sistent scripturae supremae, sed vie utilem literam in incude ingeni malleares." On Cadmus and Pythagoras as inventors of the letters of the alphabet, see F. Dornseiff, op. cit., pp 51 ff., 8, 13 f., 24, 114, 170.

43 Famil., 12, 3. 7; "Bicornis et exemplaris litera dextro cornu arctior tendit ad sidera, levos later in terram curvata reflecttur, ea, ut alium, ad inferos est via, et illa quidem incessu letor ac dulcior, exitu pestis autem atque amarissima est, et eulas omnino nil possit miserie superaddi; dextrum vero iter ingressi ut labor ingens sic finis optimus."

44 See V. Rossi's note in Vol. III, p. 18, of his edition of Petrarch's Le Familiar (with a facsimile showing the form in which Petrarch wrote the letter Y).

45 This observation was made by J. Conington, in a note to his translation of Persius' Satirae, Oxford, 1898, p. 61.
its real difficulties only along its later course. But these ancients could not say that the left way ultimately pointed toward a downfall, as Petrarch was to abstract from his own calligraphical usage.

Original though Petrarch was in this specific interpretation of the allegorical significance of the form of the letter V, in other respects he adhered to the conception of the bivium, which had been customary throughout the Middle Ages. For the above three passages in the Familiaris and the lines in the Epistola metrica indicate clearly that the idea of the parting of the ways was to him symbolized primarily by the Pythagorean letter and was in no way connected with the choice of Hercules, which he did not mention at all in those four places. On the other hand, when he resolved, for the only time, it seems, in his own writings, and for the first time in western literature since antiquity, to include in his treatise De vita solitaria the story of that choice, he put into his account the phrase in bivio, which did not occur in his source, Cicero’s De officiis, but was well known to him through the mediaeval saying ad Pythagoricæ litteræ bivium pervenire. By combining two literary traditions which in ancient times had been related though never completely tied together, Petrarch was the first, it appears, to coin the phrase Hercules in bivio, which for his own era was a real novelty but finally became quite proverbial in Italian as well as in German.46

When Coluccio Salutati wrote his long letter to Giovanni of Siena commenting on Seneca’s tragedy Hercules furens, which he later elaborated into the treatise De laboribus Herculis,47 he included the story of the decision made by the hero in his


47 De laboribus Herculis, 3, 7, 1–4, ed. B. L. Ullman, I, 181–183; (see also 3, 15, 17, ibid., p. 249); Salutati’s letter to Giovanni da Siena was published by Ullman, ibid., II, 585–635, as “prima editio” of the De laboribus; the relevant passages are: 2, 26 and 59 (ibid., pp. 622 and 635).
youth, without taking cognizance, however, of the fact that the tale had made a previous reappearance in Petrarch’s *De vita solitaria*. Salutati took his account from the passage in the first book of *De officiis* and did not refer to the other passage in the third book of the same work. He felt obviously somewhat uncertain about the truthfulness of the story, for he concluded his quotation from Cicero with the words: “Whether this is true, I cannot otherwise ascertain.” But after this cautious remark he added that “a man of the greatest authority, Basilius, testifies” to the moral lesson of the story as it had been taught by Prodicus and related by Xenophon and Cicero. In this allusion Salutati referred to a passage in St. Basil’s treatise *De legendis gentilium libris*, a work known to him through the Latin translation which Leonardo Bruni Aretino had just made and dedicated to him. For the rest of his treatment of the incident it is interesting to note that Salutati, like Petrarch, combined Cicero’s account of the choice of Hercules with the traditional allegory of the Pythagorean letter and also employed once, in the letter addressed to Giovanni of Siena, the phrase *in vivio*, which Petrarch had used in the same connexion.

---

48 Petrarch’s *De vita solitaria* was known, of course, to Salutati; see, e.g., the references to it in two of his letters, one of 1374, the other of 1405 (*Epistolaria*, 3, 15, and 14, 19, ed. F. Novati, I, 180, and IV, 135). In his writings on Hercules, according to the index in Ullman’s edition, Salutati referred only to one work of Petrarch, the *De remedis utriusque fortunae*, his ignorance of Petrarch’s “Life of Hercules” is explained by the fact that Salutati’s manuscript of *De viris illustribus* did not contain the non-Roman biographies of the earlier version; cf. G. Martelletti, “Il codice Ottoboniano 1883 e l’opera di Lombardo della Seta nella tradizione manoscritta del *De viris illustribus*,” *Convivium*, 1947, pp. 739-752; G. Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato*, Rome, 1947, I, 322.

49 Salutati, *De labonibus Hercules*, 9, 7, 1, quoted the passage in Cicero’s *De officiis*, 3, 32, 118, from the words “Herculem Prodicus dicit” to “utram ingredi melius esset” (see Cicero’s text, [n. 25 above]) and then continued, “Hec ille. Quod an verum fuerit, aliter certum non habeo”, after that Salutati said (3, 7, 2): “Miro raro, id est hoc idem testetur maxime auctoritate Basilius . . . .” (ed. Ullman, p. 182).

50 See Basilius, *Ad adolescentes de legendis libris gentilium*, 5, 12, ed. F. Boulenger, 1935, pp. 48-49 (Greek text and French translation); the text of Bruni’s Latin translation of the relevant passage was given by Panofsky, *op. cit.*, p. 52; on Bruni’s translation and its dedication to Salutati, see the remarks made by F. Novati in his edition of Salutati’s *Epistolaria*, IV, 184. n. 1; cf. *ibid.*, IV, 516.

51 The sources used by Salutati (3, 7, 3) in his discussion of the Py-
It ought to be noted that Petrarch, thus reviving a story dormant for almost a millennium, used it only once. This uniqueness stands in marked contrast to Petrarch’s customary habit of alluding time and again in his writings and, above all, in his correspondence, to those historical or legendary figures and events, stories and anecdotes, which allowed him to draw moral lessons from them. In order to account for the apparent reserve which he maintained in regard to that particular tale, it may be permissible to assume that he was conscious of the fact that, from the strictly Christian point of view, the story was somewhat problematic. When Petrarch wrote his De vita solitaria, he knew Lactantius’s works and he must have remembered the passage in The Divine Institutes (6, 3, 9), in which Lactantius protested sharply against the pagans who “referred the end of those two ways to the body, and to the life which we lead on earth.” 52 To be sure, Lactantius had also said that the one path was the via virtutis and that on the other way “cupidity and pleasure (vulputas) dragged men headlong;” 53 but at the same time Lactantius had made it very clear what in the eyes of a true Christian ought to be the nature of “the two ways which God has assigned to human life: . . . in the one case God has pointed out that there will be first temporal evils which will be followed by eternal goods . . .; in the other, first temporal goods which will be

thagorean letter were identical with those quoted by Petrarch in the same connexion: Persius, Sat., 3, 56 f.; Servius, Ad Aen., 6, 196; Vergil, Aen., 6, 541–543; see also De laboribus Herculis, 4, part 2, ch. 9, 3 (ed. Ullman, p. 572). The passage in the letter to Giovanni da Siena (2, 59, ed. Ullman, op. cit., p. 635) reads as follows: “Cum itaque in illo bivio tum carnis sacrina ab illa virtutis ardua et arcta via deterreretur, et voluntate apud terrena detenta ad declivem sinistram viam voluptatis invitaretur, Hercules noster rate, hoc est volutante, relictà virtutem eligendo suggestionibus carnis superatis emersit.”

52 See above, [n. 30]. On Petrarch’s knowledge of Lactantius, compare P. de Nolhac, Pétrarque et l’humanisme, Paris, 1907, 1, 183 f., 259 n. 3; II, 111, 184, 190 n. 4, 211 f.; see also, s.v. “Lattanzio,” in the indices of Billanovich’s edition of Rerum Memorandarum Libri, and of Rossi’s and Bosco’s edition of Le Familiari, the many references to passages in which Petrarch quoted from the Divinæ Institutiones.

53 Divin. Instit., 6, 4, 1: “Una est itaque virtutis ac bonorum uia . . .”; ibid., 6, 4, 10: “Omnes . . . quis cupiditas aut voluptas praecipites trahit . . .”
followed by eternal evils." 54 The goal reached by Petrarch's Hercules in bivio was very different indeed; for after "Hercules had spurned the way of voluptas and taken possession of the path of virtus, . . . he was raised to the apex of human glory." 55 Petrarch must have realized that to Lactantius, as well as to any other Christian thinker, "human glory" represented merely a temporal good and certainly not that "gloria that cometh from God alone." 56 Therefore it seems very likely that he refrained quite consciously from emphasizing the story of Hercules in bivio too strongly and too frequently in his writings.

In spite of the personal reserve which Petrarch may have felt, his revival of the story appears to be hardly accidental but quite logical, both within the whole context of his own writings and within the general framework of the history of the ideas marking the period of transition from mediaeval to Renaissance thought. For the tale implied a basic maxim which is characteristic of one of the aspects of Petrarch's thinking as well as of that of the generations following him: the demand that every man, on reaching in his life the fateful point of the parting of the ways, ought to choose, as Hercules had done, the right path, that of virtus, through which he will obtain fame.

As Panofsky showed, the concept of a supreme Virtue had no proper place within the mediaeval moral system, and it was only in the fifteenth century that "the ancient concept of virtus as a state of perfection in this world was re-established to its full extent and at the same time reconciled with the Christian dogma: no longer was it considered to be a diminution of the divine omnipotence but on the contrary its most profound confirmation that in the centre of the universe stood the free man—free.

54 Pline, Instit., 6, 4, 16: "Itae sunt utae, quas Deus hominum utae designavit: in quibus unguulis et bona ostendit et mala, sed ostine precepitopsique confirmavit. In sua enim monstrat temporaria prius mala cum antiqua bonis, qui est ordo melior, in aliera temporaria prius bona cum neminem mala, qui est ordo deterior . . . ."

55 See the text above. [n. 91]

56 See the text of St. John v. 44, in the Vulgata: "Quamvis autem praeputia crederet, qui gloriari ab inimico accipit, et gloriari, quae a solo Deo est, non quereret?"; compare St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews ii. 6-7.
not any longer because of the aid of heavenly grace but because of his innate virtus.” 57 To a certain degree Petrarch anticipated that idea of the later humanists although he still conceived of it in a somewhat unsystematical fashion since classical and Christian notions often appeared in his work side by side and had not yet become really integrated. 58 This is especially true of his concept of virtus. On one side it would be easy to quote many passages in his writings in which he defined virtus or virtutes in complete accordance with the traditional views of the Middle Ages. On the other side, almost as frequently it seems, he set forth a concept of virtus, which definitely foreshadowed the later concept of virtù. 59 For instance, Petrarch, like many humanists after him, recalled Cicero’s statement that the word virtus is derived from vir, that is to say that virtus is that quality which makes a human being into a man in the fullest sense. 60 “Through the might of virtus,” Petrarch wrote in his Apologia contra cuiusdam Galli calumnias, “do outstanding men conquer everything.” 61 The same fervent belief in the power of virtù manifests itself in the famous lines of the canzone Italia mia: “vertù contra furore prenderà l’arme . . . ,” with which Machiavelli was to conclude Il Principe. Virtus was the basic theme of Petrarch’s main historical work, the De viris illustribus. As he made it clear in the preface to that book, the great men of history were to him the embodiments of virtus; they were “illustrious” because their fame is “the gift of virtus and gloria, not that of fortuna.” 62

57 Panofsky, op. cit., p. 164.
58 This peculiar feature of Petrarch’s thought has been very well characterized by Panofsky, op. cit., p. 165, n. 4, with the remark that Petrarch “hier wie überall die Renaissance-Anschauung in einer eigentümlich zart-verschleiern, man möchte sagen: noch nicht dogmatisierten Gestalt an den Tag treten läßt.”
59 On the history of that idea, compare, e.g., E. W. Mayer, Machiavellis Geschichtsauffassung und sein Begriff virtù, 1912; I. Wyss, Virtù und Fortuna bei Boiardo und Ariosto, 1931.
60 Famili, 23, 2, 28: “At prefecto sive ‘a viro virtus,’ ut vult Cicero [Tusc., 2, 18, 43], sive a virtute vir dicitur, nil hac vere viro carius, nil amabilius esse potest.”
62 See the preface to the first version of De viris illustribus, ed. P. de
the apex of human glory." This close relationship and inter-
dependence existing between virtus and gloria is again one of
Petrarch's favourite ideas, which found expression in many of
his writings and, above all, in his historical work. By his very
deinition of the topic of De viris illustribus he called only those
men "illustrious" whose virtus enabled them to achieve true
fame through great deeds. 68 Glory represented to Petrarch "the
companion and herald of virtus." 67 In one of his cauzoni, gloria
is pictured as "una donna più bella assai che 'l sole," who reveals
to the poet the personification of virtù, "che farà gli occhi tuo
via più felici." 68

It seems worth noticing that in the Documenti d'Amore Fran-
cesco da Barberino set forth a very similar idea by declaring in
regard to the virtus moralis in genere: "It is that virtus which
increases the fame of every man." 69 Just as Francesco da Bar-
berino had been the first artist since the days of antiquity to at-
tempt to create an image of the supreme or "general" Virtue, so
a generation later Petrarch revived the memory of the ancient
story in which Hercules in vivio figured as the representative
of the truly "illustrious" man, that highest type of man who by
his own free decision chooses the path of virtus on which he
will ascend to the peak of earthly glory. These were novel ideas
which form, in Panofsky's words, "a part in that great process
which we still may define as Rinascimento dell' Antichità." 70

The full development of these concepts was left to the later
writers and artists of the Renaissance.

68 See above, [n. 62].
67 Famil., 9, 11, 3: "Hoc nimirum interest, quod ut nos ipsos quos non
vidimus amemus, natura est; ut alios, virtus facit et fama, virtutis comes
ac nuntia"; see also Famil., 1, 2, 25: "... virtutem fama, ceu solidum
 corpus umbra, consequitur" (cf. Cicero, Tuscul., 1, 45, 109); likewise, Famil.,
15, 1, 8; 14, 27; 23, 11, 1; compare De remediis utriusque fortunae, I, dial.
92 (in Petrarch's Opéra, ed. 1581, pp. 76 f.).
68 Le Rime, CXIX, lines 1 and 60; cf. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 165, n. 4.
69 Ed. F. Egidi, op. cit., II, 240: "Est igitur virtus illa, que cuiuslibet
famam auger"; in his commentary on this passage Francesco da Barberino
referred back to his earlier discussion of the virtus generalis (see above,
[n. 14]); compare Francesco's remark in a later section of the Documenti
d'Amore (ed. Egidi, III, 254): "Dicit Seneca in VIIIa epistula [Ad. Lucil.,
79, 11]: 'Gloria ut umbra virtutis etiam invitos commitabitur,'
70 Panofsky, op. cit., p. 166.
The Last Will: A Personal Document of Petrarch’s Old Age*

"I HAVE often reflected on a matter concerning which no one can reflect too much and only a few reflect enough, namely, the last things and death." With these words starts the Testament which Petrarch drew up in Padua on April 4, 1370. That the thought of "the last things and death" had indeed been with Petrarch throughout his life is shown by innumerable passages in his writings and letters.¹ It is the more noteworthy, therefore, that apparently he did not decide to compose a formal will be-


fore he reached the age of almost sixty-six years.² Only a few years earlier he had been seriously wondering whether or not he would safely survive his sixty-third year, as we learn from a letter which he addressed to Boccaccio on the very day on which he entered that year of his life, on July 20, 1366.³ In this letter he recalled “the very old belief” in the unpropitious character of the numbers seven and nine and their even more ominous combination in the number sixty-three, relating in detail the views held by such ancient writers as Aulus Gellius, Censorinus, and, above all, Julius Firmicus Maternus, whose opinions he summed up as follows: “During the sixty-third year of his life man runs extreme danger, either of great misfortune or of sickness, be it of the mind or of the body or, finally, of death.”⁴ It cannot be denied that on this occasion Petrarch “displayed,” in Lynn Thorndike’s words, “considerable anxiety concerning his own safe passage of the grand climacteric . . . year.”⁵ But it also ought to be noted that in this same letter to Boccaccio he expressed quite definite reservations in regard to the value

² In a letter of 1352 (Fam. XIV, 4) Petrarch defended himself against the charge of avarice and declared that the smallness of his estate would become manifest on the day of his death; the very vagueness by which Petrarch referred in this connection to “heredi meo,” seems to exclude the assumption that by that time he had already composed a formal will; see esp. Fam. XIV, 4, 17–19 (here and elsewhere Le familiari has always been quoted from V. Rossi’s publication in the Edizione Nazionale, 4 vols., Florence, 1933–1942).

³ Sen. VIII, 1 (ed. Opera, 1581, pp. 827–830); in my quotations from the Seniles I have always used, if not indicated otherwise, the texts which are found in the (unnamed) Venetian edition of 1501 of Librorum Francisci Petrarchae impressorum annotatione, and have added (in parenthesis) page references to the more commonly available Basel edition of 1581 of Francisci Petrarcae . . . opera quae extant omnia; see also the Italian translations by G. Fracassetti, Lettere senili di F. Petrarca volgarizzate e dichiarate, 2 vols. (Florence, 1869–1876). As to the dates of Petrarch’s letters, see the most helpful bibliographical references which were compiled for each letter by E. H. Wilkins, The Prose Letters of Petrarch: A Manual (New York, 1951).

⁴ Sen. VIII, 1 (ed. Opera, 1581, p. 829); the passages quoted by Petrarch in this letter are: Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae, XV, 7 (see also III, 10, 9); Censorinus, De die natali, XIV, 13–15; Julius Firmicus Maternus, Matheseos, IV, 20. Compare also Fam. I, 7, 8.

⁵ L. Thorndike, A History of Magic and Experimental Science (New York, 1934), III, 220.
was forced by the advice of the doctors to return to Padua, and from there, on May 8, 1370, he notified Urban V of the reason for the frustration of his visit.\textsuperscript{10} Petrarch was never to regain his full health. In a letter which he wrote a few months later to his friend Giovanni Dondi he described his condition as follows: "During this year [1370] I have been reduced to such a state that for many days now I have been unable to move without the help of my servants; I have become a sad burden, noxious to others and odious to myself." \textsuperscript{11} His physical weakness did not prevent him, however, from pursuing his literary activities just as resolutely as ever throughout the remaining four years of his life. "I read, I write, I think; this is the life, this the pleasure, which since my youth have always been mine," he wrote in a letter of 1371.\textsuperscript{12}

Of all the writings and letters belonging to this period of Petrarch's old age his Testament of 1370 may rightly be called one of the most personal documents. There are many indications which bear out the truth of the statement he made toward its end (§ 30): \textsuperscript{13} "I have written this with my own hand." On all technical points and on the legal terminology he must have taken counsel, of course, with the two notaries who subscribed the document (§ 31), and thus we find that the style of the Will deviates in some respects from his customary mode of expression. But the assertion of a literary critic of the sixteenth century, Girolamo Ruscelli, that "it is undeniable that in this Testament Petrarch shunned elegance on purpose in order to keep within the notarial style" can be accepted only in a very limited sense.\textsuperscript{14} For a mere glance at the wording of an-

\textsuperscript{10} Sen. XI, 17.


\textsuperscript{13} The references are to the text and the translation of the Testament . . . [in Mommsen, \textit{Petrarch's Testament}, pp. 68–99].

\textsuperscript{14} In the prefatory remarks to the edition of the Testament which G. Ruscelli included in his publication of the \textit{Canzoniere} (\textit{Il Petrarca nuovamente con la perfetta ortografia della lingua volgare, corretto} [Venice, 1554]), he declared that at first he intended to give an Italian translation but then decided to present the original text so as to enable the reader to see "che
tion by the two notaries.¹⁶ Neither did he hesitate to insert in such a strictly legal document remarks of a very intimate or, occasionally, even humorous nature.

The same personal character manifested itself also in the introductory part of the Testament in which Petrarch stated in the traditional fashion the reasons for making his last will; death, he said, may come at any moment, and intestacy might provoke litigation among his heirs. In this connection he declared (§ 1): “To confess the truth, my possessions are so slight and so few that I am somewhat ashamed to bequeath them.” Although this remark, taken by itself, would not seem at all unusual, it must be noted that Petrarch also stressed the littleness of his worldly estate in some other passages of the Will. Thus he concluded the list of the bequests to his friends by saying (§ 21): “As to the smallness of these legacies, let my aforesaid friends accuse not me but Fortune—if there be any such thing as Fortune.” In order to understand the full meaning of this interesting, though rather casually expressed, doubt concerning the existence of Fortune, one has to turn to a letter which he had addressed a few years earlier to the physician Tommaso del Garbo, because there he had discussed in great detail the whole problem of Fortune and, in agreement with the views of Lactantius and Augustine, had come to the conclusion that “Fortune by herself does not exist.”¹⁷ By telling his friends, then, in the Testament that they should charge Fortune and not himself for the insignificance of his bequests, he told them in fact that they could not bring charges against anything or anybody. But the most startling remark concerning the small size of the estate is to be found at the very end of the Will, where he concludes as follows: “I . . . would have drawn up

¹⁶ It is also possible, of course, to assume with H. Cochin (Le frère de Pétrarque et le livre “Du repos des religieux” [Paris, 1903], p. 148, n. 1) that Petrarch added this last bequest as a codicil to the Will at a somewhat later date.

¹⁷ Sen. VIII, 3 (ed. Opera, 1581, p. 898): “Hiis atque aliis inductus fortunam per seipsam nihil esse dicentibus assentiri cogor, de quo, ne aliena mihi tribuam, a multis, inter quos habiis, quorum supra memini, Augustino et Lactantio Firmiano Institutionum libro, et argute satis ut arbitror et fideliter disputatum est”; see, e.g., De civitate Dei, IV, 18; V, 9; VII, 3; Divin. Institut., III, 29.
a different Testament if I were rich, as the mad rabble believes me to be."

This rather jarring note with which the Testament ends indicates that Petrarch felt self-conscious about his economic status, and there are to be found indeed quite a few passages in his correspondence which reveal his awareness of the fact that his alleged wealth had incited envy against him among many of his contemporaries.13 How large his fortune actually was, we do not know, and the Testament is of no help in this respect since it does not specify the value of the residuary estate. The various monetary legacies add up to a sum of about six hundred gold ducats, which at that time represented a fair though by no means an unusually large amount. In this connection it may also be noted that in the Will (§ 16) he acknowledged himself to be indebted to his friend Lombardo della Seta to the amount of one hundred and thirty-four gold ducats, and he declared in another provision of the Testament (§ 8) that "because of other expenses" he had been unable to buy some land for a bequest to the Paduan Cathedral. These statements seem to be hardly indicative of a rich man. As is well known, Petrarch drew his income exclusively from Church benefices.14 On the basis of a detailed study of his ecclesiastical appointments, Ernest H. Wilkins has reached the following conclusion: "In his earlier years, while his financial status was still precarious, he was, I think, definitely acquisitive"; in later years, Wilkins declares, "he seems to have been, in point of fact, rather well satisfied—though he was willing enough to receive such supplementary appointments as might not interfere with his freedom. . . . He had no desire for great possessions."20

It was in regard to the possibility of such a supplementary appointment that Petrarch described his economic situation in a most objective fashion to Francesco Bruni, then a papal
secretary in Avignon. This letter, written on May 24, 1371, helps us greatly to understand the personal conditions under which, one year earlier, Petrarch had composed his Will, and this letter also clarifies some of the details of the Testament, as we shall see. "If I were to say," Petrarch told Francesco Bruni, "that I lacked anything necessary for the life of a single canon, I should lie; but perhaps I should not be lying when I say that I have more acquaintances and consequently more burdens than almost the whole of the cathedral chapter to which I belong; I do not know whether or not I could avoid these obligations by some device." Not only did he have to entertain the many people who constantly came to visit him, but even more, Petrarch wrote, he needed in his household a large staff of servants—"though I wish I knew how to live without them"—and usually employed five or six copyists; ordinarly he also kept at least two horses.

In regard to Petrarch’s income we learn from a papal bull of the year 1390 that the annual revenue from one of his ecclesiastical appointments, the canonry in Padua, was estimated to be two hundred and sixty ducats. It may be permissible, therefore, to assume that Petrarch’s total income amounted to more than four hundred ducats. In order to evaluate the meaning of this figure it may be useful to observe that in the first part of the fifteenth century a member of the patrician merchant class of neighboring Venice, Andrea Barbarigo, was able to live with his family comfortably on an annual budget of about the same amount. Petrarch himself, as his letter to Francesco Bruni shows, was quite willing to admit that he had a fair income, but he was certainly also justified in asserting that both his fame and his literary activities were forcing upon

21 Var. 15, in G. Fracassetti, ed., F. Petrarcae epistolae de rebus familiaribus et variis (Florence, 1869), III, 331-337. In my quotations from the Vario I have always used Fracassetti’s edition of the Epistolae.

22 Ibid., p. 332.

23 Ibid., pp. 332 f.

24 See also the mention of his horses in a letter of Dec. 24, 1369, in Sen. XI, 16 (ed. Opera, 1581, p. 894) and in the Testament (§ 15).


26 See F. C. Lane, Andrea Barbarigo, Merchant of Venice, 1418-1449 (Baltimore, 1914), p. 33.
him a style of living and the maintenance of a staff of servants and copyists for which his means were barely adequate. He stated his personal situation in a similar way in the treatise *On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others*, which he completed in the year 1370; people know, he said, that “what I have is moderate, not my own property but to be shared with others; it is not magnificent but very modest without haughtiness and pomp; they know that it really does not deserve any envy.” 27 His remark, then, that “to confess the truth, my possessions are so slight and so few that I am somewhat ashamed to bequeath them,” has to be understood as a rhetorical exaggeration; it is contradicted by the very contents of the Will, which show that he was able to afford legacies of rather considerable value. On the other hand, he was right, though perhaps somewhat too vehement in his form of expression, when he declared at the end of the Will that he was not “rich, as the mad rabble believes me to be.”

In the main section of the Testament, Petrarch took up first the matter of his burial. It was in accordance with religious conventions when he voiced the desire (§ 4) to be buried “without any pomp but with utmost humility and all possible modesty,” and it was just as natural that after his death his family and friends paid no attention to this demand but gave him a very ceremonial funeral. 28 When he further asked (§ 5) that “no one is to shed tears for me, but to address prayers for me to Christ,” we find in this request a combination of conventional Christian ideas and of the thoughts expressed in the epitaph of the ancient poet Ennius which he read in Cicero. 29 “As to the burial place,” Petrarch declared (§ 5), “I do not

29 Cicero, *De senectute*, 20, 73; see also *Tuscul. disput.*, 1, 15, 34; for the remark in the preamble to the Will (§ 1) that “et moris omnibus certa sit et hora mortis incerta” and that death “semper nobis impropet,” compare *De senectute*, 20, 74.
care greatly. I am content to be laid to rest wherever it shall please God and those who shall deign to assume this task." But after having made this statement, Petrarch proceeded to enumerate seven different places in which he might possibly die and stipulated specifically in which of the churches situated in these localities he desired to be buried.

That whole list is most characteristic of Petrarch. For it shows that he, who had led a migratory existence throughout his life, still expected to continue his travels into his old age. He said (§ 6 g) of the first six towns that those are the "places which I had been wont to frequent in Italy," and we find indeed, by looking over his itinerary during the decade previous to the date of the Will, that he had resided for longer or shorter periods in five of them, that is, in the two Visconti cities of Milan and Pavia, in Venice, and in the Carrara towns of Padua and Arquà. The inclusion of Rome as the sixth normally frequented place is, of course, accounted for by Petrarch's intention in April 1370 to visit the pope; actually he had not been in Rome since the year 1350. That he no longer ordinarily visited the seventh city mentioned, Parma, Petrarch made clear by the disarmingly frank admission (§ 6 h) that "I have been a useless and almost always absent archdeacon for many years" of the Cathedral there. The silence regarding foreign countries and especially France indicates that Petrarch no longer intended to travel abroad; in fact his embassy to Paris in the year 1360 proved to be his last absence from Italy.

In regard to the various churches which Petrarch selected as possible burial places, he demonstrated a certain preference for those belonging to the mendicant orders (§ 6 a, c, and e), and he showed the same predilection for these four orders, above all the Franciscans, in two other passages of the Testament (§§ 6 i, 9).

In the event that his death were to take place in Padua, Petrarch wished to be buried in the Dominican church of S. Agostino and not in the Cathedral, although he was a canon of the latter church.

He explained this particular wish in one of the most touching passages of the Will (§ 6 a): “For not only is this place [S. Agostino],” he said, “dear to my soul but it is also there that that man lies who loved me very much and who, through his devoted entreaties, brought me to these parts, Jacopo da Carrara of most illustrious memory, sometime Lord of Padua.” His contemporaries, as well as later scholars, have often expressed their regret that Petrarch strove consistently for the favors of the great of his time, and they have charged that he was rather inclined to ingratiate himself with the powerful and the rich through undue compliments and insincere flatteries. There is no doubt that Petrarch knew well on occasion, perhaps even on too many occasions, how to speak the language of the courtier. But he also knew very well how to keep faith with those princes whom he genuinely respected, during and after their lifetimes. His attitude toward King Robert of Naples would be one case in point. But nowhere in his writings did he voice in a more moving fashion the gratitude and the loyalty which he felt for a great patron than he did with these simple words dedicated to the memory of the long-deceased Jacopo da Carrara, in a document which was not, like most of his letters, to be broadcast to the world, but was to be opened only after his own death.31

In discussing the possibility of his dying in Arqua “where my country-place is,” Petrarch declared (§ 6 b) that he desired to be buried in the small chapel which he intended to build there in honor of the Virgin Mary. One year later he referred to the same project in the letter to Francesco Bruni which has been mentioned before; according to this letter of 1371 he had already started the construction and was resolved to carry it through “even if I should have to mortgage or sell my books.” 32 Actually that “little oratory,” as he called it in his letter to Bruni, was never finished,33 and Petrarch was finally buried

31 Petrarch spoke of Jacopo da Carrara with equal warmth in his Letter to Posterity, ed. by Ricci in Petrarch, Prose, pp. 16 f.; see also Fam VIII, 5, 13; XI, 2, 4-5; XI, 3; XIII, 11, 6; compare Billanovich, op. cit., p. 103.
32 Var. 15, in Epistolae, III, 333.
33 Two of the sixteenth-century biographers of Petrarch, Fausto da Longiano (1532) and G. A. Gesualdo (1533), asserted erroneously that
care greatly. I am content to be laid to rest wherever it shall please God and those who shall deign to assume this task." But after having made this statement, Petrarch proceeded to enumerate seven different places in which he might possibly die and stipulated specifically in which of the churches situated in these localities he desired to be buried.

That whole list is most characteristic of Petrarch. For it shows that he, who had led a migratory existence throughout his life, still expected to continue his travels into his old age. He said (§ 6 g) of the first six towns that those are the "places which I had been wont to frequent in Italy," and we find indeed, by looking over his itinerary during the decade previous to the date of the Will, that he had resided for longer or shorter periods in five of them, that is, in the two Visconti cities of Milan and Pavia, in Venice, and in the Carrara towns of Padua and Arquà.\(^{30}\) The inclusion of Rome as the sixth normally frequented place is, of course, accounted for by Petrarch's intention in April 1370 to visit the pope; actually he had not been in Rome since the year 1350. That he no longer ordinarily visited the seventh city mentioned, Parma, Petrarch made clear by the disarmingly frank admission (§ 6 h) that "I have been a useless and almost always absent archdeacon for many years" of the Cathedral there. The silence regarding foreign countries and especially France indicates that Petrarch no longer intended to travel abroad; in fact his embassy to Paris in the year 1360 proved to be his last absence from Italy.

In regard to the various churches which Petrarch selected as possible burial places, he demonstrated a certain preference for those belonging to the mendicant orders (§ 6 a, c, and e), and he showed the same predilection for these four orders, above all the Franciscans, in two other passages of the Testament (§§ 6 i, 9).

In the event that his death were to take place in Padua, Petrarch wished to be buried in the Dominican church of S. Agostino and not in the Cathedral, although he was a canon of the latter church.

\(^{30}\) On Petrarch's itinerary, see the chapter "Peregrinus ubique" in Wilkins, Making of the "Canzoniere," pp. 1–8.
strongly felt attachment to those churches. For more than six years, from 1353 to 1359, he had lived in Milan in a house situated beside the basilica of S. Ambrogio and for that reason had spoken of himself as “the guest of Ambrose.”

The church of S. Pietro in Ciel d’Oro contained the tomb of St. Augustine and, joined with it in “pious and devoted fellowship,” also the remnants of Boethius: “One might wish,” Petrarch wrote to Boccaccio from Pavia in the year 1365, “to lie very close to so holy and so learned men.”

Turning now to the disposal of those things which, in Petrarch’s words (§ 7), “men call goods, although frequently they are rather impediments to the soul,” we find first a number of conventional bequests made to the Church and the poor. The most important of these provisions (§ 8) dealt with the establishment of “a perpetual anniversary mass for my soul,” which was to be celebrated in the Cathedral of Padua, “from which I have received both advantages and honors.” In accordance with the custom of the time, Petrarch wanted to secure the endowment of that mass by deeding some land and the revenues from it to the Cathedral. In this connection there existed certain problems. In the first place, Petrarch had to admit that, “because of other expenses,” he had been unable so far to buy such a piece of land. Moreover, although by 1370 he had been for a number of years a more or less permanent resident of Padua and of the territory ruled by the lord of that city, Francesco da Carrara the Elder, Petrarch had remained, in legal terms, an “alien” in Padua, as he himself stated explicitly in the treatise on good government which he addressed to Francesco da Carrara in 1373.

Being an alien, he needed formal

36 Fam. XIX, 16, 16; XX, 8, 29; see also Fam. XVI, 11, 11; XVII, 10, 14, XXI, 14, 2.


38 In Sen. XIV, 1 (in V. Ussani, ed., F. Petrarcae . . . sermon serilum liber XIV ad . . . Franciscum de Carraria . . . epistola I [Padua, 1922], p. 21), Petrarch told the prince that the swamps around Padua should be drained; he added in this connection: “Utique te in risum cogam, ne nil aliud quam uerba ponere dicar in hanc rem, arculam ipsa meam alienigena in particular impense huius ofero. Quid ciuius debitem? quid domino? Ac si forsitan nominatim auxiliaris quantitas collationis exigitur, scies in tempore.”
outside the parish church of Arquà, in a sepulchral monument which was completed six years after his death by his son-in-law, Francescuolo da Brossano. Although this plan never did materialize, it deserves attention, for it shows that Petrarch in his old age was particularly devoted to the cult of the Virgin Mary, a devotion which manifested itself also in other parts of the Testament (§§ 3, 8, 18). In this connection it is worth remembering that it was just about the time of the composition of the Will that Petrarch himself transcribed his great canzone "Vergine bella" in his own manuscript of the Canzoniere (now Codex Vaticanus Latinus 3195) in such a way as to indicate clearly that this was to be and remain the terminal poem in the collection.  

In the canzone Petrarch used a rather unusual phrase which he most probably adopted from one of the apocryphal sections of the Latin Vulgate, the Oratio Manassae regis Iuda: "I pray," he said in the canzone,  

"to the Virgin with the genuflexion of the mind." In the Testament (§ 3), on the other hand, he prayed to Christ "with the genuflexion of this very soul." No precise date can be assigned to the composition of "Vergine bella," but the similarity between the two passages just quoted may permit us to assume a fairly close connection between the canzone and the Testament. And it is certainly safe to assert that the Virgin Mary occupied a most important place in the thoughts of Petrarch during his last years: just as the beautiful canzone written in her praise was to terminate the collection of his lyrical poetry, so he himself wished to be laid to rest in a chapel erected by him in her honor.

Petrarch's desire (§ 6 d and e) to be buried in the church of S. Ambrogio if he were to die in Milan, or in the church of S. Pietro in Ciel d'Oro if in Pavia, resulted from a long and

Petrarch had actually erected a chapel in Arquà; see the edition of these biographies by A. Solerti, Le vite di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio scritte fino al secolo decimosesto (Milan, 1901), pp. 379 and 408.

34 See Wilkins, Making of the "Canzoniere," pp. 175-180, 358.

35 Petrarca, Le rime, CCCLXVI, vv. 68-65:

"Con le ginocchia de la mente inchine
prego che sia mia scorta
e la mia torta via dirizzi a buon fine."

The Vulgate text of the passage in Oratio Manassae regis Iuda, 15, reads as follows: "Et nunc flecto genu cordis mei, precans a te bonitatem."
After this bequest to the Cathedral of Padua and after further gifts to other churches and to "the poor of Christ" (§§ 9, 10), Petrarch listed his individual legacies. He placed first (§ 12) "my aforesaid magnificent Lord of Padua," then (§§ 13–22) "my friends who are of lesser condition, though they are very dear to me," and finally (§ 23) his servants, of whom he mentioned two by name. It is interesting to compare this list of men who, at the end of his life, were close enough to Petrarch to be remembered by him in his Will with a letter which he wrote in 1350.⁴³ Of the ten men whom Petrarch had enumerated in 1350 as having been closest to him during the first part of his life, we find that in 1370 only two were still alive, his brother Gerardo and Giovanni Boccaccio. With the exception of these two, then, all the other legatees were men with whom Petrarch had become intimate only during the later years of his life. On the other hand, it is evident that these were the people whom Petrarch now considered to be closest to himself, and the nearness of his relations with them can indeed be proved in almost every case by additional material.

Among the intimates of Petrarch's old age there seems to be only one name missing in the Testament, that of Philippe de Cabassole.⁴⁴ Their friendly relationship had begun in 1337, when Petrarch took up residence in Vaucluse, over which Philippe, then Bishop of Cavaillon, held both spiritual and temporal jurisdiction. The two men remained in close contact up to the death of Philippe in 1372, as is shown by the warm tone of Petrarch's numerous letters to Philippe, as well as by the fact that he dedicated to him his treatise On the Solitary Life. In his Letter to Posterity, Petrarch stated explicitly that "he is now the only one alive of all my old friends."⁴⁵ The fact that

---

⁴³ Fum. IX, 2.

⁴⁴ On Philippe de Cabassole see, e.g., Martellotti's introductory remarks to his edition and Italian translation of "De vita solitaria" in Petrarch, Prose, p. 286.

⁴⁵ Ed. by Ricci in Petrarch, Prose, p. 12: "... michi iam solus omnium veterum superstes, non me episcopaliter, ut Ambrosius Augustinum, sed fraterno dilexit ac diliget."
authorization by the prince for the acquisition of any kind of real estate in and around Padua.\textsuperscript{50} When he drew up the article under discussion in the Will, he had obtained, as he said (§ 8), merely "the oral permission" of Francesco, but ten days later, on April 14, 1370, he received, "by decree of the magnificent and mighty Lord Francesco da Carrara, Lord of Padua etc., imperial Vicar General, the favor of buying and acquiring immovable goods and possessions in Padua and the Paduan district." \textsuperscript{40} In spite of this official authorization, Petrarch actually never bought a piece of land for the endowment of his future anniversary mass, and for that reason the alternative provision of the Will became valid, by which he bequeathed the sum of two hundred gold ducats to the cathedral chapter of Padua for that purpose. But as we learn from a recently discovered document, it was only after a protracted litigation with Petrarch's son-in-law and heir, Francesciano da Brossano, that the chapter finally secured that endowment in the year 1391.\textsuperscript{41} From that time on, an annual mass for the dead was celebrated in the Cathedral of Padua on the anniversary of Petrarch's death, as is proved by a number of documents belonging to the first part of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{50} Compare, e.g., A. Zardo, \textit{Il Petrarcha e i Carraresi} (Milan, 1887), p. 71: "Difatti, per gli Statuti allora vigenti in quella città, nessun forestiero poteva acquistare immobili in Padova e nel territorio padovano, se non con la permissione del Principe."

\textsuperscript{40} See the contract for the purchase of land which was negotiated by Lombardo della Seta in the name of Petrarch on June 22, 1370 (quoted above, note 15); according to the document (Malmigiati, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 92), the price for the land was paid with the money "venerabilis et sapientis viri domini Francisci Petrarchae canonici Paduani . . . ad presens Padue habitantis . . . , habentis decretum et gratiam a magnifico et potente domino Francisco da Carraria Padue et cetera imperiali vicario generali, emendi et acquirendi bona immobilia et possessiones in Padua et Paduano districtu, prout de dictis decreto et gratia evidenter constat in quodam publico et autentico instrumento dicti decreti scripto sub anno millesimo et indicione suprascriptis, die dominico, quarto decimo mensis Aprilis." Compare A. Gloria, \textit{Documenti inediti intorno al Petrarcha} (Padua, 1878), pp. 22 f.; Zardo, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 97-101; Billanovich, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 427 f.


\textsuperscript{42} See the documentary material compiled by Billanovich, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 362, n. 1. According to a note in the edition of the Will, which is
into the personal possession of a work by Giotto only in his old age. According to the Testament it was sent to him "by my friend Michele di Vanni of Florence." Recent investigations of Giuseppe Billanovich 61 have identified this friend as a member of the great Albizzi family of Florence, whom Petrarch got to know in Venice in 1365 and to whom he took such an instant liking that he recommended him in very cordial words to Boccaccio: "At the moment I have here," Petrarch wrote from Venice, "a friend who is new but has proved himself to be very good, Michele di Vanni; if I am dear to you, I wish him also to be dear to you." 62 We can assume, therefore, that Petrarch received the Giotto painting from that new friend between the years 1365 and 1370.63

In bequeathing the Giotto picture to Francesco da Carrara, Petrarch added the following comment: "The ignorant do not understand the beauty of this panel but the masters of art are stunned by it." Long before Petrarch wrote this sentence, his friend Boccaccio had expressed the same idea in almost identical terms by declaring in The Decameron that Giotto "brought to light again that art which for many centuries had lain buried through the mistaken notions of those who painted more to flatter the eye of the ignorant than to satisfy the intel-

61 Billanovich, op. cit., p. 275, n. 1.

62 This passage is contained in the text of the original version of Sen. III, 6, which Professor Billanovich found in Cod. 146 B of the Library of Balliol College in Oxford; it reads as follows (op. cit., p. 275, n. 1): "Habeo in presentia amicum novum sed probatum optimum, Michaelem Vannis, quem, si tibi carus sum, carum habeas velim." In addition to the material concerning Michele di Vanni degli Albizzi, which was collected by Billanovich, my friend Professor Gene Brucker of the University of California very kindly furnished me the following information: "Michele was declared eligible for the Signoria in the scrutato of February 1361, but as a result of the prohibition of members of the Albizzi and Ricci families holding office in the commune (Provvisioni of April 1372), his name was removed from the borsa when it was drawn out in November 1373."

63 The picture apparently does no longer exist; see A. Moschetti, "La Madonna trecentesca del duomo di Padova e la creduta sua originale appartenenza al Petrarcha," Padova in onore di F. Petrarca (Padua, 1904), II, 139-156; S. Bettini, "Una Madonna di Giusto de' Menabuoi nella Biblioteca Capitolare di Padova," Bolletino d'Arte, XXIV (1930/31), 70-75; R. Salvini, Giotto. Bibliografia (Rome, 1938), pp. 25, nr. 48; 59, nr. 130; 64, nr. 143; 68, nr. 149, 317, nr. 68; Salvini (p. 5, n. 11), assumed wrongly that Petrarch's Testament dated of the year 1361.
in spite of this undoubtedly very intimate friendship Petrarch did not remember Philippe in his Will is perhaps best explained by the assumption that he could not think of any bequest suitable to a man who through his elevation to the cardinalate in 1368 had become one of the highest dignitaries of the Church.

A similar problem faced Petrarch in regard to the great princely patron of the last period of his life, Francesco da Carrara,46 "since he neither, by the grace of God, is in need of anything," we read in the Testament (§ 12), "nor have I anything else worthy of him." In this case, however, Petrarch was in fact capable of making a bequest truly worthy of a prince. For he left to Francesco da Carrara "my panel or icon of the blessed Virgin Mary, a work of the eminent painter Giotto." Besides Simone Martini there was no painter of the Trecento whom Petrarch esteemed more highly than Giotto.47 Thus he spoke of Giotto's "enormous fame among the moderns" 48 and said that "this fellow-countryman of mine, the prince of painters of our era, left great monuments of his hand and genius" in the royal chapel at Naples.49 But whereas Petrarch had acquired quite early in his life a work of Simone Martini by commissioning the famous miniature of his codex of Virgil's writings, which is now in the Ambrosian Library in Milan,50 he came


48 Fam. V, 17, 6: "Atque ut a veteribus ad nova, ab externis ad nostra transgrediatis, duo ego novi picture egregios, nec formosos: Iottum, florentinum civem, cuibus inter modernos fama ingenis est, et Simonem senensem."


50 A colored reproduction of Simone Martini's illumination is to be found in G. Galbiati's facsimile edition of F. Petrarcae Vergilianus codex (Milan, 1930), fol. 1v.
lowers of Giotto—including Altichiero of Verona, Jacopo Avanzo of Padua, and Giusto de’ Menabuoi—adapted Petrarch’s main historical work, the De viris illustribus, in the decoration of the great hall of the Carrara palace, which had been commissioned by Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara. These painters and other men of their school working in Padua at that time were certainly known to Petrarch, and it is among them that “the masters of art” must be found, who according to Petrarch were “stunned” by the beauty of his Giotto painting. The strength of the Giottesque tradition in the Padua of the late Trecento is further illustrated by a statement made by the humanist Pietro Paolo Vergerio more than twenty years after Petrarch’s death. In a letter, written in Padua in 1396, Vergerio found it logical that “the painters of our era, although they look carefully at the pictures of others, follow nevertheless the example of only one man, Giotto.”

None of Petrarch’s other bequests was quite so outstanding in its kind and value as the unique gift which he left to his “magnificent Lord” Francesco da Carrara. But at the same time it should be noted that every one of the legacies to “the friends of lesser condition” reveals the most thoughtful endeavor on Petrarch’s part to make a present which he considered to be fitting, as well as pleasing, to each individual. Thus it was very appropriate that he bequeathed to two of his socially prominent Paduan friends two of his horses, asking them (§ 15) “to draw lots to decide who shall have the first choice and who the second.” The name of one of these Pavadans, Bonzanello da Vigonza, seems to appear nowhere else in Petrarch’s works or letters. But we learn from contemporary chronicles that the

58 Mommsen, [Art Bulletin, XXXIV], 97–102 [See above, pp. 134–145.]
59 In L. Smith, ed., Epistolario di Pier Paolo Vergerio (Rome, 1934), ep 75, p. 177: “Faciendum est igiur, quod etatis nostre pictores, qui, cum reterorum claras imaginies sedulo spectent, solius tamen Ioti exemplaria sequuntur.”
60 See Guglielmo and Albricetto Cortusi, Chronica de novitatis Padue et Lombardie, in Muratori, ed., Rerum Italicarum Scriptores (Milan, 1728), XII, coll. 759–988; only the beginning of this chronicle has so far been republished in the new edition of Muratori’s Rerum Italicarum Scriptores (Bologna, 1941), vol. XII, pt. v; Galeazzo and Bartolomeo Gatari, op. cit.; see the index, ibid., p. 847, s.v. “Vigonza.”
lect of the wise.” 54 When Petrarch thus, in 1370, expressed the belief which Boccaccio had expressed even earlier, that Giotto’s art appealed primarily to the “intelligent” and not to the “ignorant,” this view differed greatly from the one which a few years later, around 1375, was to be set forth by Benvenuto da Imola, who wrote in his Commentary on Dante’s Divine Comedy: “Giotto still holds the field because no one subtler than he has yet appeared, even though at times he made great errors in his paintings, as I have heard from men of outstanding talent in such matters.” 55 In his discussion of the significance of this passage Millard Meiss has rightly pointed out that “Benvenuto’s comment . . . reflected current criticism of Giotto’s pictorial style,” which was in accordance with, and resulted from, “an important change in style and in taste around the middle of the fourteenth century.” 56 But while it is true that most of the Florentine masters of the latter half of the fourteenth century were, to use Millard Meiss’s term, “in a sense anti-Giottesque,” 57 the situation in Padua was quite different because there the Giottesque tradition was still very much alive. Precisely around the year 1370 a group of those northern fol-

54 G. Boccaccio, Il Decamerón, VI, 5 (ed. by E. Bianchi; Milan and Naples, 1952, p. 440): “E per ciò, avendo egli quella arte ritornata in luce, che molti secoli sotto gli error d’alunci, che più a dilettar gli occhi degli’ignoranti che a compiacere allo ’ntelletto de’ savi dipigneano, era stata sepultà, meritamente una delle luci della fiorentina gloria dir si puote; e tanto più, quanto con maggiore umilità, maestro degli altri in ciò vivendo, quella acquisiò, sempre rifiutando d’esser chiamato maestro”; the above translation, with slight changes, is that of F. Winwar in the Modern Library edition of The Decameron (1955), p. 366. See also Boccaccio’s remarks on Giotto in L’amorosa visione, IV, 15–18 (ed. by V. Branca; Bari, 1939, p. 131).

55 Benvenuto da Imola (Commentum super Dantis Aldigherii Comoediam, ed. by J. P. Lacaita [Florence, 1887], III, 312 f.) remarked in the context of his commentary on the Giotto passage in Dante’s Purgatorio, XI, 91–96, that both Petrarch and Boccaccio had mentioned and praised Giotto and that Boccaccio had stressed above all the naturalness of Giotto’s art; after that Benvenuto continued as follows (p. 313): “Et sic nota, quod Giotitus adhuc tenet campum, quia nondum venit alius eo subtilior, cum tamen fecerit aliquando magnos errores in picturis suis, ut audivi a magnis ingeniis.” The above translation is that given by M. Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death (Princeton, 1951), pp. 4 f.

56 Meiss, op. cit., p. 6.

57 Ibid., p. 7.
the task of having Petrarch’s works copied and distributing them among all the friends and other persons interested in them; indeed, he copied some with his own hand. 65 Petrarch was fully and gratefully conscious of Lombardo’s loyalty toward him, which, he said in a letter of 1373, had manifested itself “not through meaningless words and flattery, a fragile link of transitory friendship, but through the infallible proof of acts by which minds become linked together in a strong and lasting fashion.” 66 In the Testament, Petrarch expressed the love and gratitude which he felt for this faithful friend, not merely by leaving him one of his horses, but by adding a highly personal present, “my little round cup made of silver and gilded”; 67 and he added to this bequest the charming remark (§ 17): “Let him drink water from it, which he drinks with pleasure—indeed with much greater pleasure than he drinks wine.” Of Lombardo’s predilection for water Petrarch spoke approvingly in the same letter of 1373 which has just been mentioned. 68

Petrarch also made a like personal gift to Tommaso Bombasi, a native of Ferrara. 69 Very little seems to be known about this friend, and that information is derived mostly from a letter of

66 Sen. XV, § (XIV, 4, ed. Opera, 1581, p. 933)
67 J. P. P. A. de Sade, Mémoires pour la vie de F. Petrarche (Amsterdam, 1757), III, 748, note b, said in regard to this drinking cup: “C’est sans doute le gobelet que l’Empereur Charles lui envoya l’an 1362 [actually in 1361]”; see also ibid., pp. 559 f. But this identification is contradicted by the fact that according to Petrarch’s letter of thanks (Fam., XXIII, 8, 1-2) the “crater” given by Charles IV was “aurum solidum,” whereas in the Testament he described his little round “scyphus” as “argentum et auratum.”
68 According to Sen. XV, § (ed. Opera, 1581, p. 931), Lombardo had been asked by someone what he liked to drink and, in reply, had simply pointed to his well, on this answer Petrarch commented: “Preclarte: nam quid aliud siquis iliam roget?” In a letter to the physician Giovanni Dondi, who warned him constantly against the drinking of water, Petrarch defined his own attitude toward wine as follows: “Nunc uero bibo et edo ut ceteri, nec tamen laudo, sed consuetudine rapior ad id etiam quod non probo”; Sen. XII, 2 (ed. Opera, 1581, p. 913).
69 On Bombasi, see C. Culcasii, II Petrarca e la musica (Florence, 1911), pp. 19 ff.; N. Leonelli, Attori tragici, attori comici (Milan, 1940), I, 82.
“casa da Vigonza” played quite an active role in Paduan affairs during the fourteenth century, and the memory of at least one member of the family, Corrado da Vigonza, must have been very much alive in the Arquà of Petrarch’s time, for in 1322 he had led a band of Paduan exiles to Arquà and burned down its castle. Three years later Corrado was captured by Niccolo and Marsiglio da Carrara and beheaded in Padua. Of Petrarch’s friend Bonzanello da Vigonza, we learn from the same narrative sources that he participated in Francesco da Carrara’s unsuccessful war of 1372 against Venice and was made a prisoner by the Venetians. He and other Paduan noblemen obtained their freedom only as a result of the peace mission of Francesco the Younger of Carrara and Petrarch, which the older Francesco was forced to send to Venice in 1373.

The second of those two Paduans to whom Petrarch bequeathed his horses was Lombardo della Seta. Whereas Petrarch’s relationship with Bonzanello da Vigonza must be presumed to have been of a purely social nature, there existed the closest possible ties between him and Lombardo, who has rightly been called “Petrarch’s favorite pupil in the last period of his life.” Lombardo was a humanist in his own right, though of rather limited talent and achievement, and he became best known by the fact that he completed the two historical works which had been left unfinished by his master, the De viris illustribus and its abridgment, the so-called Compendium. During Petrarch’s lifetime Lombardo helped him in the management of his financial affairs and acted occasionally as his business agent, as we learn both from the Testament and from other documentary evidence. After Petrarch’s death he served as his literary executor and played a very important, though not altogether fortunate, role in editing and publishing the works of his master. It was he who took charge of most of

---

61 See Gatari, op. cit., pp. 10 and 51.
"my priest," and in the letter of 1371, in which he described to Francesco Bruni his household, he spoke of Giovanni as follows: "I have a priest, a venerable man, who attends to me whenever I am in church." As we may conclude from these passages, it was evidently Giovanni's function to assist Petrarch, or to substitute for him, in the performance of the clerical and administrative duties which were connected with his position of a canon of the cathedral chapter in Padua. Petrarch was in most definite need of such a priestly attendant since he was frequently absent from Padua and, moreover, had himself never taken any priestly orders. In view of this relationship it was fitting that Petrarch left his breviary to Giovanni a Bocheta. After the latter's death the breviary was "to remain in the sacristy of Padua for the perpetual use of the priests," whom Petrarch asked to pray to Christ and the blessed Virgin on his behalf.

While Petrarch was residing in Venice between the years 1362 and 1367, one of the men closest to him there was the grammarian Donato degli Alabianzi, a native of Pratovecchio in the Apennines, "teacher of literature, now living in Venice," as we read in the Testament (§ 14). In 1366 Donato became the godfather of Petrarch's oldest grandson, Franceschino da
1364, in which Petrarch described the festivities with which the Venetians celebrated their successful suppression of a dangerous revolt in Crete. For the direction of one of the equestrian games, which was performed on that occasion by twenty-four young Venetian patricians, Tommaso Bombasi had been called from Ferrara to Venice. Petrarch wished "with a few words to make this man known to posterity," for, he said in his letter, "he is today as renowned in the whole of Venice as Roscius was once renowned in Rome"; and he added: "He is just as dear and close to me as Roscius was to Cicero." In 1364 the friendship between the two men must already have been at least five years old. For, although Petrarch did not choose to include in his epistolary collections any of the letters which he may have written to Tommaso, we know from several marginal notes in the autograph manuscript of the Canzoniere that on October 8, 1359, as well as on another occasion, he sent some copies of his sonnets to Tommaso in Ferrara. To this friend who, if we may judge from the account of his activities in Venice and from the comparison with the famous Roman actor Roscius, must have been a combination of stage director, actor, and musician, Petrarch bequeathed "my good lute," and he added the characteristic admonition (§ 20) "that he may play it, not for the vainglory of this fleeting world, but in praise of God everlasting."

In the Testament, Petrarch mentioned specifically only one other of his personal possessions, "my great breviary which I bought in Venice for the price of one hundred pounds." He bequeathed it (§ 18) to "the priest Giovanni a Bocheta, custodian of our cathedral." Giovanni a Bocheta appeared under the same title of "custos ecclesiae maioris Paduanae" in a Paduan document of 1358. Petrarch called him in two of his letters

70 *Sen. IV, 3*, ed. by Martellotti in Petrarcha, Prosae, pp. 1082 f.
73 Gloria, *op. cit.*, p. 27, nr. 1. On Giovanni a Bocheta see also G. Citadella, "Petrarca a Padova e ad Arquà," *Padova a Petrarcha* (Padua, 1874),
a mere trifle but represented "a rather ample share of goods," as Boccaccio himself acknowledged in the letter of November 3, 1374, in which he expressed to Francescuolo da Brossano his sincere gratitude for "the munificence" of the bequest forwarded to him by Da Brossano. Boccaccio’s friends knew him to be poor, "a fact which I have never denied," as he stated in a letter in which he told Petrarch how, on his departure from Venice in the summer of 1367, Francescuolo da Brossano "gripped my poor small arms with his giant hands and pressed on me, despite my reluctance and blushes, a liberal sum of money." In full knowledge of the straightened circumstances under which Boccaccio lived, Petrarch with great tact avoided embarrassing him with an outright monetary present, but gave to his bequest a nicely intimate and personal note by asking his learned friend (§ 18) to purchase with the money "a winter garment to be worn by him while he is studying and working during the night hours."

To his Paduan friend Giovanni Dondi dall’Orologio, the famous scientist and physician, Petrarch bequeathed fifty gold ducats, the same amount which he left to Boccaccio. There is, however, a marked difference between these two bequests. In


83 Ep. 14, in Massèra, ed., op. cit., p. 181; the above translation is that of F. MacManus, Boccaccio (New York, 1917), pp. 268 f. The fact that Boccaccio’s material means were much more limited than those of Petrarch becomes evident also from a comparison of his Testament of 1374 (in Corazini, ed., Le lettere edite e inedite di G. Boccaccio [Florence, 1877], pp. 425-433) with Petrarch’s Will; but Michel de Montaigne exaggerated greatly when, after a perusal of Boccaccio’s Will, he commented on it in his Journal de voyage en Italie (ed. by A. Armaingaud, Paris, 1929, II, 169) as follows: "Questo testamento mostra una mirabile povertà e bassezza di fortuna di questo grand'uomo."

Brossano, and two years later the two friends shared their grief over the simultaneous deaths of Franceschino and of one of Donato’s sons. When Petrarch departed from Venice in 1367 or early in 1368, he left his library in charge of Donato, and it was to Donato that he dedicated in 1370 the treatise *On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others* in which he polemized sharply against some of his Venetian critics. Donato served later in the chancery of the Este princes, and at the end of the century, while in Ferrara, he translated Petrarch’s work *De viris illustribus* into Italian. From Petrarch’s correspondence we learn that Donato showed himself quite concerned about the fact that he was under certain financial obligations to Petrarch and thus seemed to have gained material advantages from their friendship. Petrarch called Donato’s worries “laughable,” and declared that he was not certain whether “you have said this jokingly or whether you have made a mistake in regard to the state of our accounts.” In another letter he told Donato: “Between friends the principle holds that in the event of an exigency there is nothing which belongs only to one of them.” It was in accordance with this notion of friendship that in the Will he remitted to Donato “whatever he owes me on loan” and at the same time depreciated very tactfully that gift by adding: “How much it is I do not know, but in any case it is little.”

In the case of Giovanni Boccaccio, Petrarch even offered an explicit apology in the Testament for the bequest of fifty gold florins which he made to this very old and intimate friend, by saying (§ 19) that he was “ashamed” to leave “such a trifling legacy to so great a man.” In fact, this sum of money was not

79 See Petrarch’s remark in *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* (ed. by Ricci in *Petrarca, Prose*, p. 759): “bibliotheca nostra tuis in manibus relict a . . .”
80 *Sen. VIII, 6* (ed. *Opera*, 1581, pp. 840 f.).
81 In *Sen. X, 5* (ed. *Opera*, 1581, p. 881) Petrarch complained about the frequent gifts which Donato had sent him and objected to them as follows: “Non est operosa res amicitia mea, quippe que nec magni ei ciam precii res est, ut sit autem maximi, nihil erit operiosor. Et amare et amari gratis didici. Si necessitas amicorum ingratu, nil cuiquam proprium uolo. Ubi id cessat, quid sibi uult, precor, ista largitio?”
"to mark the courses of the planets instead of merely the hours." 88 The two Dondi clocks from which the family derived the name dall'Orologio are unfortunately no longer in existence, but we still possess a treatise entitled *Planetary or Opus Planetarum* in which Giovanni Dondi dealt with the problem of mechanical clocks. 90 If the text of the stipulation concerning Giovanni Dondi which appears in the *editio princeps* of the Testament were authentic, it would indicate that Petrarch used this particular opportunity to give specific recognition to the scientific achievements of his friend; for according to this version he spoke of him as follows: "Giovanni dei Dondi, physician, easily prince of astronomers, who is called dall'Orologio because of the admirable astronomical clock (planetary) made by him, which the ignorant rabble believe to be an ordinary clock (orologium)." 91 But although both the style and the didactic tone of these remarks seem quite characteristic of Petrarch, the authenticity of this version of the text appears highly dubious in view of the fact that it is not to be found in any of the various other traditions of the Testament, whether manuscript or printed.

In the legacies to his servants (§ 23) Petrarch followed the conventional pattern by leaving them small sums in cash, varying in amount according to their positions in his household. In passing we may note the surprisingly direct and personal admonition which he added to his bequest of twenty ducats to Bartolomeo da Siena called Pancaldo (§ 23 a): "May he not use them for gambling." Petrarch evidently had certain reservations about this particular servant, for we find that in a letter of 1373 he called Pancaldo "a great simpleton." 92

---

90 See [Mommsen, *Petrarch's Testament*], p. 84, n. 51, in the edition of the text of the Will, the variant readings provided by the b- and m-traditions. The Paduan editors of 1904 of *Sen. XII*, 1 (see above, note 83) accepted *op. cit.*, p. 79 the authenticity of this insertion on the basis of the Comino-edition of 1782 of the Will which, however, was simply derived from the m- and b traditions; see *op. cit.*, p. 61.
91 Var. 9, in *Epistole*, III, 332: "Et nunc tandem per Pancaldum sim-
contrast to Boccaccio, Giovanni Dondi was a wealthy man, and in his case, therefore, Petrarch stipulated (§ 22) not the purchase of a utilitarian object such as a warm cloak, but rather asked Dondi to buy for that amount "a small finger-ring to be worn by him in my memory." Petrarch held Dondi in high esteem, as he stated clearly in the Testament: "I have postponed to the last him who deserved to be the first." But throughout their relationship Petrarch left never any doubt in Dondi's mind that he respected him, not because of, but rather in spite of the fact that he was "the prince of doctors of this era," and time and again he professed very frankly to this friend the deep-rooted aversion which he felt against most of the physicians of his day.  

Thus he wrote to Dondi on November 17, 1370: "Looking at you I see a double personality, that of the friend and that of the physician; with the friend I find myself in such a complete accord that nothing which seems right and pleasing to you does not also seem right and pleasing to me, and I cannot conceive of any other kind of friendship than that by which two minds are becoming one; on the other hand, with the physicians I have a long and unresolved quarrel over many and important matters."  

One of Giovanni Dondi's special claims to distinction was the famous clock on which he had worked in Pavia between the years 1348 and 1364 and which was placed in the tower of the Visconti palace there. According to Lynn Thorndike, Giovanni's work was not an ordinary clock but an even more elaborate astronomical clock than the one which had been built earlier by his father Jacopo Dondi for the Carrara palace in Padua; both instruments were devised, in Thorndike's words,

---

55 Sen. XII, 1, in Seminario di Padova, ed., op. cit., p. 45: "Et non quidem artem ipsam, sed artifices parvipendi, preter aliquot raros, quos dilexi, quoniam veri michi medi ci viderentur; quomodo inquam talis ego cum principe medicorum huius temporis, aut unico aut uno ex paucis, disputarem de rebus ad medicum spectantibus?"


57 On these two clocks see Thorndike, op. cit., III, 586-588; compare the letter written by Petrarch in Milan in 1353 (Forcisi, op. cit., pp. 279-285.
relationship between master and servant from a letter which Petrarch addressed to two cardinals on the day after Monet’s death on January 4, 1353: “The earth has never borne, I believe, a more faithful being,”94 Petrarch declared, and added that during the fifteen years of their relationship Monet’s house had become to him “a temple of loyalty.”95 In almost identical terms he stated in a letter written to Francesco Bruni many years after Monet’s death that “he was loyalty personified.”96 Through the legacy made in memory of the humble bailiff “who was most obedient and faithful to me,” Petrarch revealed the same feeling of gratitude and devotion to a man long departed but still vividly remembered which we found in the words of the earlier passage of the Testament, in which he conjured up the friendship and love once shown to him by one of his great princely patrons, Jacopo da Carrara.

In the last of the addenda to the Testament (§ 32) Petrarch made provisions for his brother Gerardo, who lived as a Carthusian monk in the monastery of Montrieux near Marseilles.97 Although the two brothers always remained very close to one another, we find in the whole collection of Petrarch’s correspondence during the later period of his life, the Seniles, only one letter addressed to Gerardo.98 From this letter, which was probably written around 1373, we learn that four years earlier he had been asked by Gerardo “to leave him in his Will a certain sum of money to be transmitted in small payments appropriate to his occurring needs.” 99 It was apparently in accordance with that request that Petrarch stipulated in the Testament (§ 32) that “immediately after my death my heir is to give

---

Petrarch declared (Fam XVI, 1, 3): “bibliotheca mee, quam michi in filiam adoptavi, sustinet deesse custodem.” See also Fam. XII, 6, 6, and XVII, 5, 9. In Sen. X, 2 (ed. Opera, 1581, p. 870) is a reference to the good care which one of Monet’s sons (“villici mei filius”) had taken so as to prevent Petrarch’s books from being robbed on Christmas Day of the year 1333.

94 Fam. XVI, 1, 4.
95 Fam. XVI, 1, 7.
97 See Cochin, op. cit.
98 Sen. XV, 5; see the analysis of this letter by Cochin, op. cit., pp. 145-155.
99 Sen. XV, 5 (XIV, 6, ed. Opera, 1581, p. 939): “Scriptus interdum, ut si ante te moreret . . . certam pecunie summam tibi testamento legarem ad te minutiis pro occurrenti necessitate solutionibus peruenturam.”
As has been mentioned before, Petrarch added to his list of individual legacies some further provisions at the end of the Will. One of them, he said (§ 27), "concerns that little piece of land which I own beyond the Alps . . . in the village or castle district of Vaucluse. . . . Since undoubtedly it would cost somewhat more than the property is worth to go there or send someone, I stipulate that this piece of land become the property of the hospital of the said place and be used for the poor of Christ." In the case of legal obstacles to this bequest, Petrarch provided that the land in Vaucluse was to become "the property of the brothers Jean and Pierre, sons of the late Raymond of Clermont, commonly called Monet, who was most obedient and faithful to me"; in the event that one or both of the two brothers mentioned had died, "the land should fall to their sons or grandsons in memory of the said Monet."

With this alternative bequest to the descendants of Raymond Monet, Petrarch remembered the services of the man who for fifteen years had tended "the few acres of arid land," which he owned in Vaucluse.\footnote{See the letter of Jan. 5, 1353 (Fam. XVI, 1, 1), in which Petrarch told the cardinals Elie de Talleyrand and Guy de Montfort that "villicus . . . meus vobis non ignotus, qui michi paucu itidem sicci ruris iugera colebat, hesterno die obit." See also the reference to Vaucluse in Sen. VI, 3 (ed. Opera, 1551, p. 808): "tellus ipsa licet aridula et angusta."} Ever since Petrarch had begun to live in Vaucluse in 1337, Monet had been his caretaker in the fullest sense of the word, a man whom he could trust, not only with the management of his small estate there, but above all with the custody of his most treasured possession, his library.\footnote{On Raymond Monet see Fracassetti's notes to his translations of Fam. XVI, 1 (op. cit., III, 412 f.) and of Sen. IX, 2 (op. cit., II, 62 f.). In Fam. XVI, 1, 5, Petrarch said that "totum me illi [i.e., Monet] et res meas librosque omnes, quos in Gallis habeo, commiseram"; Monet had always taken such diligent and loving care of the books that now, after his death,
membered in the charterhouse of Montieux that this anniversary mass for Petrarch was to be celebrated annually on St. Michel's day (September 29). 104

Petrarch bequeathed his whole residuary estate, consisting, as he said (§ 25), "of all my movable and immovable goods which I have now or may have in the future, wherever they are or may be," to Francesco da Brossano. Francesco, or, as he was commonly called, Francescuolo, was a native of Milan, who held administrative positions first in the service of the Visconti, later in the service of the Carrara. 105 In or about the year 1361 he married Petrarch's daughter Francesca, by whom he had a number of children. Since Petrarch's only other child, his son Giovanni, had already died in 1361, it may be assumed that Petrarch resolved long before the formal composition of his Testament to bequeath his estate to his son-in-law and his family, and thus it seems most likely that it was Francescuolo da Brossano whom he had in mind when he wrote in a letter of the year 1363: "My heir himself—if indeed it will be he whom I desire and upon whom I have decided—hopes for more from me being alive than having died." 106 Petrarch always showed a deep affection for Francescuolo and for "the little family" of the Da Brossano who shared his life and household during his old age. 107 But in view of the fact that both Francesca and Giovanni were of illegitimate birth, it is worth noticing that

104 Cochin, op. cit., pp. 150, 155, 237 f.
106 Sen. III, 7 (III, 6, ed. Opera, 1581, p. 777): "Certe, nisi fallor, nullus est hominum, cui aut damnosa uita aut mors utilis mea sit. Ipsa heres meus, si tamen est erit, quem cupio quemque disposui, plusculum ex uita mea sperat, ut arbitrator, quam ex morte."
107 Sen. V, 6 (V, 7, ed. Opera, 1581, p. 803): "Franciscus meus quo nemo ... adulescens melior, ... charitatis et constantiae plenus ... "; see the references in Sen. XIII, 17 (XIII, ed. Opera, 1581, p. 930) and in Var. 9 (in Epistolar, III, 321) to "familiola mea."
written notice of this event to my brother Gerardo Petracco . . . and let him choose whether he wishes one hundred florins [at once] or five or ten florins annually, as he may please.” Naturally enough Petrarch did not notify his brother of this testamentary provision of 1370. It was evidently only in reply to a renewed request by Gerardo for financial help that around 1373 Petrarch finally decided to write to his brother and discuss the entire matter with him. In this letter he declared that he would have gladly anticipated Gerardo’s requests for help, “if I had not known that the small sum of money which I once sent you never reached you because the severe rule of your monastic order, I assume, prevented it.”

In regard to the small legacy for which Gerardo had asked previously, Petrarch assured him that he had already acted upon it and left him in his Will “a sum three times as large as the one requested by you.” Moreover, he asked his brother to let him know whether he would like to have some part of this legacy transmitted immediately to him, “for,” he explained, “both to you and to myself will be more welcome what I shall have done personally than what my heir will do.” In the absence of any further letters we do not know whether Gerardo actually expressed some preference concerning the disbursement of the amount of money promised to him. But it has been ascertained through the archival investigations of Henry Cochin that three years after Petrarch’s death, in 1377, at least one part of that bequest to Gerardo, the sum of twenty florins, was used in the monastery of Montrieux for the endowment of a mass “for the soul of the venerable lord Francesco, son of Petracco, the most eloquent poet of late”; many centuries later it was still re-

100 *Ibid.:* “Scribe modo, quid fieri uelis; non frustrabor tuum desiderium nec differam neque uero ut pateres expectarem sed uolens occurrerem, nisi didicissem, quod pecuniola illa, quam aliquotei tibi misi, non peruenit ad manus tuas, rigore ut credo tue religionis obstante.”

101 *Ibid.:* “Enimmo esto id iampridem factum noris et legato quantitas tripllo maior quam petebatur inserta est.”

102 *Ibid.:* “Nec tamen expectari mortem testamenti confirmatricem expedit; iube, parebitur; et tibi gratius crit et mihi, quod ipse fecero quam quod heres meus.”

103 See the excerpts from a contract of Dec. 31, 1377, which were published by Cochin, *op. cit.*, pp. 232–236; see also *ibid.*, pp. 145 f., 223, 236–238.
pletely veiled terms by instructing Francescuolo as follows: (§ 25) "I ask him—not only as an heir but also as a very dear son—to divide into two parts whatever money he may find in my possession... Let him keep one part for himself and count out the other part to the person to whom he knows I wish it to go; and in regard to the latter sum he is to follow my wishes, which are also known to him."

In the event that Francescuolo da Brossano were to die before his own death, Petrarch stipulated (§ 29) that "my heir is to be the aforementioned Lombardo della Seta." In view of everything we know about Petrarch's love for his daughter, coupled with the discreet language used by him in referring to her, and also in view of his close ties with Lombardo, the assumption seems justified that through this provision Petrarch did not really mean to bequeath to Lombardo the full possession of his residuary estate for his own benefit but wanted him merely to act as a fiduciary in the interests of Francesca and her children. This interpretation appears to be implied in the words with which Petrarch referred in this connection to Lombardo (§ 29): "He knows my mind fully, and I hope that he whom I have found to be most faithful during my lifetime will be no less faithful after my death." No problem ever arose on this particular point, since Francescuolo da Brossano survived both Petrarch and Francesca.

At the end of this survey of Petrarch's testamentary provisions, attention must be turned to one most notable omission. Of all his possessions there was none which he personally treasured more highly than his library, "which," he once said, "I have adopted as my daughter"; 114 the large collection of books which he had brought together with so much zeal and so systematically throughout his life certainly represented also in material terms a very considerable investment. 115 But besides the bequest of "my great breviary" to the priest Giovanni a Bocheta (§ 18), there is not a single reference to the library in

114 Petrarch said of Monet that he was the custodian "bibliothecae mee, quam michi in filiam adoptavi" (Fam. XVI, 1, 3).
115 See the list of books owned by Petrarch which De Nolhac, op. cit., II, 239–242, compiled.
throughout his correspondence Petrarch carefully avoided making any direct statement as to the exact nature of the existing relationship. As long as Giovanni was alive he spoke of him simply as “our boy” or “our youth” or used even vaguer terms,108 and only after his death he called him “my Giovanni.” 109 In the same way he always referred to his son-in-law as “my Francescuolo” 110 or, more familiarly, “our Checcus.” 111 His daughter he never mentioned by name, not even in the letter of 1368 in which he expressed to Donato degli Albanzani his deep sorrow over the death of his little grandson Franceschino da Brossano: “He was the son of the two people who for a long time have been closest to me,” he wrote to his friend; and he added, “He was called by the same name as myself and as both his parents and thus he became the fourth Francesco, a great solace in our life and the hope and delight of the whole house.” 112 It will be noted that even in these highly personal words the actual relationship between Petrarch and Francesca’s son Franceschino is merely implied.113 It was in accordance with his customary practice, then, that in the Will Petrarch did not call Francescuolo outright his son-in-law and that he chose to couch his bequest to Francesca in com-

108 See, e.g., Fam. VII, 17, 1 and 3; XIII, 2, 1 and 3; XIX, 5, 1; XIX, 17, 9; XXIII, 12, 15; Var. 35; see also the two letters addressed to Giovanni (Fam. XVII, 2, and XXII, 7).

109 Sen. I, 2 (I, 1, ed. Opera, 1581, p. 786). See also the note in which Petrarch recorded the death of “Johannes noster” in his Vergil manuscript, in De Nolhac, ed., op. cit., II, 284. At the beginning of Sen. I, 3 (2), Petrarch spoke of the death “adolescentis mei.”

110 Var. 4 and 12; Sen. V, 6 (7).

111 See Petrarch’s autograph note in one of his manuscripts (now Cod. Vatic. 2193, fol. 156v; published by De Nolhac, op. cit., II, 267), in which he referred to some trees “quas donavit nobis Checcus noster.”


113 See Serena’s observation (in Atti d. R. Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, LXXXIV, pt. II [1924/25], 382), that Francesca was “cinta di geloso silenzio” by Petrarch throughout his life; compare also Fracassetti’s remarks in the preface to his translation of Lettere delle cose familiari, I, 50 f.
the Will. Petrarch's silence on this matter appears the more remarkable as we know that eight years earlier, in 1362, he had shown great concern about the question as to what was to become of his books after his death. At the beginning of that year Boccaccio advised him of his decision to give up once and for ever all his literary and scholarly work and to sell his books. In a long letter, dated on May 28, 1362, Petrarch endeavored to dissuade his friend from such a radical renunciation of his previous studies. In the event, however, that Boccaccio were to insist on his intention Petrarch declared himself willing to make use of the option on the library, which had been offered to him by Boccaccio. He explained this, not merely by admitting that he was indeed "covetous for books," as Boccaccio had said, but by giving an even better reason: "I do not wish that the books of so great a man as you are be scattered here and there and be handled, as it may happen, by profane hands; as the two of us, though separated in body, are one in spirit, so I desire if God will aid my wish, that after our deaths these scholarly instruments of ours may go together and undivided to some pious and devout place in perpetual memory of us." Petrarch had conceived that plan, he told Boccaccio, "since he died who, I had hoped, would succeed me in my studies"—an evident allusion to the death of his son Giovanni in the previous year 1361.

The project of combining those two libraries was not materialized because Boccaccio mastered his emotional crisis and decided to keep his books. When in his Will of 1374 Boccaccio bequeathed his entire library to Father Martino da Signa and, after Martino's death, to the monastery of S. Spirito in Florence, he may have remembered Petrarch's words that a collection of scholarly books ought not to be dispersed but preserved as a whole in "some pious and devout place." It was in accordance with the same principle that Petrarch himself acted almost

116 See the letter (Sen. I, 5, or, in ed. Opera, 1581, I, 4), which he addressed to Boccaccio on May 28, 1362.
118 Ibid., pp. 744 f.
immediately after he had propounded it to Boccaccio. For in August 1362 he entered into negotiations regarding his library with the government of Venice, where he had just decided to take up residence. In a proposal which he submitted to the Venetian authorities he declared his wish "to have Saint Mark the Evangelist as [my] heir of those books, unknown in number, which [I have] now or will have in the future." He stipulated that "these books were not to be sold nor dispersed in any way but perpetually preserved . . . in some fire- and rain-proof location to be assigned for this purpose." He made this donation "in honor of the said saint and in [my] own memory and also for the encouragement and the benefit of those noble and superior minds of this city, to whom it will be given to take delight in such things." He wished to do this not because he thought that "the books are very numerous or very valuable" but because he hoped "that later from time to time this glorious city will add other books at public expense and that also private individuals—noble and patriotic-minded citizens, as well as perhaps even foreign-born persons—will follow the example and leave in their last wills a part of their books to the church of San Marco; in this fashion it might easily be possible to establish a large and famous library, equal to those of antiquity." At the end of his proposal Petrarch declared that "he desired to obtain for himself and his books a house, not large but respectable," in which he promised to reside as extensively as would be feasible for him. On September 4, 1362, the Grand Council met to discuss the proposal made by Petrarch, "whose fame," the official records of that meeting stated, "is so great today in the whole world that in men's memory there never was nor is now a moral philosopher and a poet comparable to him." The offer was gratefully accepted, and authorization was given for
the expenses necessary for the house which was to be used by Petrarch during his lifetime and in which his books were to be installed. For more than five years Petrarch lived in fact on the Riva degli Schiavoni in "a vast palace—flanked by two square towers—which this free and munificent city has dedicated to my use." 123

This is not the place to discuss the general implications of Petrarch's highly original and novel plan to bequeath to the Republic of Venice his collection of books as the nucleus of a future "public library," as he called it in a letter to his friend Benintendi dei Ravignani, the head of the Venetian chancery, who helped him in his negotiations with the state authorities. 124 Here it suffices to state that the silence concerning his books, which Petrarch observed in his Will, must be accounted for by the agreement which he had concluded eight years earlier with Venice. To be sure, he had departed from Venice at the end of the year 1367 and in fact never returned to Venice except on the occasion of a brief diplomatic mission in the service of Francesco da Carrara in 1373. But even in the treatise On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others, in which, after his departure, he dealt sharply with a group of Venetian critics of his works and ideas, he still called Venice "that most noble and good city" against which he raised merely one objection: "Much freedom reigns there in every respect, and what I should call the only evil prevailing—but also the worst—far too much freedom of speech." 125 There seems to be no indication whatsoever that at the time of the composition of the Will Petrarch was already definitely resolved never again to live in his house on the Riva degli Schiavoni. In this connection it must be remembered that in the Testament (§ 6 c) he placed Venice third in the list of places normally frequented by him; it is listed as a possible burial place right after Padua and Arquà. Even more

123 See Sen. II, 3 (ed. Opera, 1581, p. 760). This house was the Palazzo Molin which became later the Convento del Sepolcro and finally the Caserma Aristide Cornoldi; it was located near the Ponte del Sepolcro; see Guida d'Italia; Venezia (Milan, 1951), p. 177; compare M. Oliphant, The Makers of Venice (London, 1889), pp. 347 ff.
124 Var., 43, in Epistolae, III, 414: "bibliothecae decus publicae."
125 Trans. by Nachod, op. cit., p. 121; Capelli, ed., op. cit., pp. 84 ff.
the expenses necessary for the house which was to be used by Petrarch during his lifetime and in which his books were to be installed. For more than five years Petrarch lived in fact on the Riva degli Schiavoni in "a vast palace—flanked by two square towers—which this free and munificent city has dedicated to my use." 123

This is not the place to discuss the general implications of Petrarch's highly original and novel plan to bequeath to the Republic of Venice his collection of books as the nucleus of a future "public library," as he called it in a letter to his friend Benintendi dei Ravignani, the head of the Venetian chancery, who helped him in his negotiations with the state authorities. 124 Here it suffices to state that the silence concerning his books, which Petrarch observed in his Will, must be accounted for by the agreement which he had concluded eight years earlier with Venice. To be sure, he had departed from Venice at the end of the year 1367 and in fact never returned to Venice except on the occasion of a brief diplomatic mission in the service of Francesco da Carrara in 1373. But even in the treatise On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others, in which, after his departure, he dealt sharply with a group of Venetian critics of his works and ideas, he still called Venice "that most noble and good city" against which he raised merely one objection: "Much freedom reigns there in every respect, and what I should call the only evil prevailing—but also the worst—far too much freedom of speech." 125 There seems to be no indication whatsoever that at the time of the composition of the Will Petrarch was already definitely resolved never again to live in his house on the Riva degli Schiavoni. In this connection it must be remembered that in the Testament (§ 6 c) he placed Venice third in the list of places normally frequented by him; it is listed as a possible burial place right after Padua and Arquà. Even more

123 See Sen. II, 3 (ed. Opera, 1581, p. 760). This house was the Palazzo Molin which became later the Convento del Sepolcro and finally the Caserma Aristide Cornoldi; it was located near the Ponte del Sepolcro; see Guida d'Italia; Venezia (Milan, 1951), p. 177; compare M. Oliphant, The Makers of Venice (London, 1889), pp. 347 ff.

124 Var. 43, in Epistolae, III, 414: "bibliothecae decus publicae."

125 Trans. by Nachod, op. cit., p. 121; Capelli, ed., op. cit., pp. 84 f.
But we can state definitely that by spring 1371 he felt free to make dispositions concerning his library if need arose. For in the letter of May 24 of that year, in which he told Francesco Bruni, as has been mentioned before, about his plan of building a little chapel in Arquà, he declared to be determined to carry that project through, “even if I should have to mortgage or sell my books.” Petrarch would have hardly inserted that phrase in his rather businesslike letter to Bruni if he had still felt to be under obligation to his contract with Venice.

Petrarch never added to his Will a codicil concerning the library. He may have expressed his wishes as to the eventual fate of his books in a less formal fashion, for instance by giving instructions to his son-in-law Francescuolo da Brossano, or to his friend Lombardo della Seta. If he did so, we seem now to be just as ignorant of his ultimate intentions in regard to this question as the circle of his Florentine intimates was at the time of his death. For we read in the letter of condolence which Boccaccio addressed to Francescuolo da Brossano on November 3, 1374: “I should like to hear what has been decided about the most precious library of the illustrious man; for among us some believe this, others report that.” From a strictly legal point of view the answer to that question was simple. Petrarch himself obviously considered his former agreement with the Republic of Venice to be void, and we have no evidence to show that after his death the Venetian authorities ever attempted to lay claim to the library on the basis of the contract of 1362. In the absence of any other explicit testamentary provision it was clear, then, that the library formed a part of the residuary estate and was covered by the following article of the Will (§ 25): “Of all my movable and immovable goods which I have now or may have in the future, wherever they are or may be, I institute as

bibliotheca.” See the text of Bonaventura’s oration, edited by Solerti, op. cit., p. 270.

129 Var. 15, in Epistolae, III, 333.

130 The only book which we definitely know Petrarch to have given away after the composition of the Will was the copy of St. Augustine’s Confessions which he had once received from Dionigi di Borgo San Sepolcro and which he sent as a present to Luigi Marsili in January 1374 (Sen. XV, 7).

the heir general Francescuolo da Brossano." Since Francescuolo was not a scholar himself, he could hardly be expected to be interested in keeping the collection as a whole in the possession of the family; on the contrary, it was natural that he would attempt to dispose of this highly valuable property to the best interest, as he saw it, of his own family, of his employer, Francesco da Carrara the Elder, of Petrarch's friends, and of the cause of scholarship in general; he was probably advised in this entire matter by Lombardo della Seta.\textsuperscript{122}

"\textit{Habent sua fata libelli}"—the truth of this saying is certainly borne out by the history of Petrarch's library, which has been investigated and is still being investigated in great detail and with most revealing results by some of the most outstanding scholars in the field of Petrarch studies, including Pierre de Nolhac and Giuseppe Billanovich, who found Petrarch's former books dispersed over all of western Europe, from London and Paris to Florence, Rome, and Naples. Thus the very thing happened against which Petrarch had endeavored to warn his friend Boccaccio in the year 1362: "I do not wish that the books of so great a man . . . be scattered here and there and be handled . . . by profane hands" And the establishment of a "public library" in Venice had to wait another hundred years until the year 1469, when the great Greek humanist, Cardinal Bessarion, bequeathed his vast collection of books to the Republic of Venice\textsuperscript{133} and through this donation laid the foundation of the Biblioteca Marciana, which has fulfilled the hopes voiced by Petrarch in 1362 and has become "a large and famous library, equal to those of antiquity."

Rudolph Agricola’s Life of Petrarch

AMONG the many personal faults with which Petrarch, in his dialogue entitled The Secret or The Soul’s Conflict with Passion, let himself be charged by St. Augustine, there was one which he found harder to renounce than any other. In reply to Augustine’s reproach: “You are seeking fame among men and the immortality of your name more than is right,” Petrarch could only say: “This I admit freely and cannot find any remedy to restrain that desire.” 2 In fact, throughout his life Petrarch was well aware that “to the whole people I have been a favola,” as he declared in the introductory sonnet of his Rime Sparse, and he showed himself constantly determined to perpetuate his fame beyond death, as his Epistle to Posterity and numerous other autobiographical documents demonstrate. His effort bore fruit, for the life of no other literary figure of the fourteenth century, not even that of Dante, was told more frequently and fully by the writers of the Renaissance than that of Petrarch. 3 Among his biographers we find some of the greatest Italian humanists, including Giovanni Boccaccio, Filippo Villani,

* Reprinted from Traditio, VIII (1952), 367–386.
1 This paper was first read in the University Seminar on the Renaissance at Columbia University.
2 Petrarca, Opera Omnia (ed. Basel 1581) 364; compare the translation by W. H. Draper, Petrarch’s Secret (London 1911) 166.
3 See the collection of biographies published by A. Solerti, Le vite di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio scritte fino al secolo decimosesto (Milan 1904) 237–359.
Leonardo Bruni Aretino, Pietro Paolo Vergerio, and Gianozzo Manetti. But, interestingly enough, for the period of the first century after Petrarch's death in 1374, there exists not a single biography which was composed by a non-Italian writer. This fact is the more notable when we remember the tremendous reputation which Petrarch enjoyed, during his own era and afterwards, in France and Germany, and even in remote England, where Chaucer, in *The Clerk's Prologue*, sang the praise of "this clerk whose rethoryke so sweete enlumed al Itaille of poertye." The anonymous Bohemian scholar who, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, brought together an anthology of Petrarch's works, did not himself write a biography but simply used the one written by Vergerio. Interest in the personalities and achievements of the great poets and artists arose first in Italy, and it was there that the traditional literary form of "the lives of the illustrious men" was filled with a new spirit and content. From this point of view it appears characteristic that the first biography of Petrarch by a non-Italian was composed only after the passage of a hundred years following his death and that it was written by a man like Rudolph Agricola who was more than any of his northern fellow humanists influenced by Italian traditions and who, at the same time, was to become "the founder of the new intellectual life in Germany." 6

Agricola's *Life of Petrarch* was not included in the edition of his works published by Alardus in Amsterdam in 1539, neither was it mentioned in some of the early biographies of Agricola 6

---

This omission seems to explain why it remained relatively little noticed although Trithemius and some scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries referred to it.\textsuperscript{7} It was only in 1873 that the biography became more widely known through a brief notice by Ludwig Geiger.\textsuperscript{8} Professor Geiger and, following him, a number of German and Dutch scholars writing on Agricola, gave short accounts of Agricola’s Life of Petrarch,\textsuperscript{9} but did not edit the full text. These notices did not come to the attention of the Italian scholars working on Petrarch. For instance Angelo Solerti knew of the existence of the Life but not of the extant manuscripts and therefore did not include it in his collection of Le Vite di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio (1904). Thus, it was only fairly recently that the Life of Petrarch was finally edited in the original Latin—by the Dutchman J. Lindeboom and by the German Ludwig Bertalot, who published their texts independently of each other.\textsuperscript{10}

Since the autograph of Agricola’s work seems to be lost, both editions were based on two copies, one of which was written around the year 1500 (now preserved in the State Library at Stuttgart, Cod. Poet. et Philol. nr. 36, 4\textsuperscript{o}, fol. 284\textsuperscript{r}–297\textsuperscript{r}) and the other in the first part of the sixteenth century (now in the State Library at Munich, Cod. Lat. 479, fol. 1\textsuperscript{r}–19\textsuperscript{r}). Of these

\textsuperscript{7} Trithemius, at the end of a short biography published as preface to the edition of Agricola’s De inventione dialectica (Cologne 1548), began his list with “Vita F. Petrarchae, liber unus.” See also G. F. Tomasini, F. Petrarca reditivus (2nd ed. Padua 1650) 36; J. de Sade, Mémoires pour la vie de F. Pétrarque I (Amsterdam 1764) p. xlviii.

\textsuperscript{8} L. Geiger, “Die erste Biographie Petrarca’s in Deutschland,” Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes 42 (1873) 613–614; see also Geiger’s summary of Agricola’s works in “Petrarca und Deutschland,” Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturgeschichte, N. F. 3 (1874) 224–228.

\textsuperscript{9} Cf. (titles at n. 5 supra) Bezold, op. cit. 6, 10, 12–14, 17; Ihm, op. cit. 7 f.; van der Velden, op. cit. 108–111.

\textsuperscript{10} J. Lindeboom, “Petrarca’s Leven, beschreven door Rudolf Agricola,” Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis, N. S. 17 (1923) 81–107; L. Bertalot, “Rudolf Agricolas Lobrede auf Petrarca,” La Bibliofilia 30 (1928) 382–404. The Dutch edition is preceded by a detailed summary of the content of the biography. Bertalot supplied his text with a valuable apparatus in which he identified Petrarch’s direct quotations from the classical authors; furthermore, he accompanied his edition with a brief critical appraisal of Agricola’s work.
two manuscripts the earlier is of some special interest.11 It owed its existence to the initiative of two of Agricola’s pupils and closest friends, the brothers Dietrich and Johann von Plieningen.12 They planned an edition of the principal works of their late teacher.13 Johann von Plieningen, at the request of his older brother, Dietrich, had a large number of Agricola’s writings and letters copied by a certain Johannes Pfeutzer. According to his own statement, Johann von Plieningen supervised and corrected the work of the copyist.14 On the basis of his personal recollections he also wrote a short Life of Agricola which he meant to use as the preface to the prospective edition.15 However, neither Johann von Plieningen’s Life of Agricola nor his collection of Agricola’s works and letters was published in the sixteenth century, for Johann himself died in 1506 and his brother Dietrich was apparently too much involved in public affairs16 to take care of the edition.


12 On the two brothers, see T. Schott, in Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie 36 (1888) 299 f.

13 See the letter (ed. Pfeifer, op. cit. 99) in which Dietrich von Plieningen asked his brother that “locos insuper dialecticos et reliqua sua opuscula excribii unumque in volumen redigi facias.” Dietrich concluded his letter as follows: “Debes præterea hoc universè reipublice litterarie, quod cui satisfacies, si curaveris omnia monumenta sua unum in volumen scribantur, quo tandem, quemadmodum cupio, imprimi in vulgusque edì emittique possint.”

14 See the letter in which Johann von Plieningen told Dietrich about the completion of his collection (ed. Pfeifer, loc. cit.). “Satisfecit desiderio tuo

15 Johann von Plieningen’s Life of Agricola was published by Pfeifer, op. cit. 101–107, 113–115.

16 According to the letter to his brother (ed. Pfeifer, op. cit. 99) Dietrich did not take upon himself the preparation of the edition, but rather entrusted Johann with it, “dum assidua negotia reipublice me impediant.”
The text of Agricola’s *Life of Petrarch* in the Stuttgart manuscript is unfortunately not as good as one would be led to expect from the fact that it was copied under the supervision of one of Agricola’s intimate friends, who even stated that “I myself have collated everything with the originals.” For that reason the other manuscript, which is now in the State Library at Munich, demands some attention although it has a few omissions and other shortcomings of its own.

Agricola dedicated his *Life of Petrarch* to Antonio Scrovigni of Pavia. This is the same friend to whom he addressed, during the time of his stay at Pavia, another little work, a Latin translation of a letter written by Arnold de Lalaing, provost of St. Mary’s at Bruges. Antonio Scrovigni became later a professor of medicine at the University of Pavia.

The exact date of the composition of *The Life of Petrarch* presents a certain problem. According to the Stuttgart manuscript (fol. 284r) Agricola wrote it “in the year 1477 in Pavia”; the Munich manuscript (fol. 1r) gives the same year but omits the place. From some of Agricola’s other works and his letters we learn that he studied in Pavia for several years until 1475 and left the city at that time in order to study Greek at the University of Ferrara, where he was still in 1477. Agricola’s latest biographer, as well as some other scholars, attempted to save the date indicated by the two manuscripts and therefore set forth the hypothesis that the work was written during a brief second sojourn in Pavia, of which we have no other information. This assumption is, however, contradicted by two passages in the *Life of Petrarch* itself which clearly date the

---

17 See the passage quoted above (n. 14). On the shortcomings of the Stuttgart manuscript in general, compare Hagen, *loc. cit.* (n. 11 supra); K. Hartfelder, *Unedierte Briefe von Rudolf Agricola: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Humanismus* (Karlsruhe 1886, also in *Festschrift der Badischen Gymnasien, gewidmet der Universität Heidelberg*, pp. 1-56).

18 On the Munich manuscript, see Bertalot, *op. cit.* 583.

19 See Allen, *op. cit.* (n. 11 supra) 510 f.; Bertalot, *op. cit.* 399.

20 Antonio Scrovigni is first mentioned as professor of medicine in Pavia in the year 1493: see *Memorie e documenti per la storia dell’Università di Pavia e degli uomini più illustri che v’insegnarono* (Pavia 1878) 121.

work. For there (pp. 394 and 395) Agricola spoke of the death of Duke Amedeo IX of Savoy as having taken place "superiore anno"; Amedeo actually died on March 3, 1472, and therefore the biography must have been written in 1473 or perhaps 1474. This earlier date is confirmed by a statement made by Johann von Plingen, who stayed with Agricola both in Pavia and in Ferrara. In his Life of Agricola he mentioned the legal studies which Agricola pursued in Pavia before he turned to the study of Greek in Ferrara, and declared in this connection: "At that time he wrote The Life of Petrarch, at the request of, and persuaded by, Antonio Scrovvigni." Agricola explained why he wrote his Life of Petrarch as follows (p. 384):

... in view of the large number of men distinguished through their eloquence, who have been flourishing in our era, it seems to me to be inappropriate that nobody has elucidated the achievements and the life of that man [i.e., Petrarch] in an oration; although I, because of the smallness of my mind, do not dare to hope to do justice to his glory, nevertheless I shall try, to the best of my abilities, to treat this subject in the form of a survey, limning it in rough strokes after the fashion of the less accomplished painters.

This statement is somewhat puzzling. To be sure, Agricola might have been right in saying that nobody before him had celebrated Petrarch in an "oration," and if he actually delivered his work as a speech at the University of Pavia, he could indeed claim that this was a novel honor he rendered

22 The pages, here as elsewhere in the paper, refer to the edition of the Life of Petrarch by Bertalot, op. cit. 385-398.
23 According to Bertalot, op. cit 399, it was begun in 1473 and finished in 1474.
24 Ed. Pfeifer, p. 102 "Id quoque temporis, precibus ac suauis Anthonii Scrophini, viri haud illusteri, permutus vitam Petrarchae, viri præstantissimi et quem cunctis ingenii seculi sui haud cunctanter pretulit cuique sua sententia omnis erudito seculo nostri plurimum honoris debetur, doctissime descripsit."
25 From Johann von Plingen's biography we learn that in fact Agricola "pictura... mirum in modum delectabatur" (ed. Pfeifer, pp. 114 f.); on Agricola's interest in drawing and in the other arts, cf. Woodward, op. cit 81, 92, 103.
to his hero. But this oration in its finished form was, in fact, a biography and as such it had, of course, quite a few precursors. When Agricola did not mention the existence of any previous biography, he differed in that respect quite markedly from his contemporary Girolamo Squarzafo, who said, at the beginning of his Life of Petrarch, that "many have described it," and who stated even more definitely in his epilogue: "I have followed Vergerio, Sicco Polenton, Leonardo Bruni and Filelfo."  

Agricola's silence on this point raises the question as to whether or not he was actually ignorant of all the earlier biographies of Petrarch. A comparison of his work with the other extant lives of Petrarch shows definitely that it was not based on independent investigation but, on the contrary, that its factual details were derived almost exclusively from one source, and moreover one which at that time was much more easily accessible than any other, because it had appeared in print precisely at the time of Agricola's coming to Italy.  

That source was a Life of Petrarch written in Italian and first published in the second edition of the Rime Sparse, which came out in Rome in the year 1471. Neither this edition nor two others of the Rime Sparse, which appeared in Rome and in Venice in the year 1473, indicated the name of the author of the biography, and this fact may, perhaps, explain Agricola's failure to acknowledge his indebtedness. Only in the year 1477, that is, a short time after the composition of Agricola's oration, another editor of the Rime Sparse, Domenico Siliprandi, assigned an author's name to the previously anonymous Life, asserting that it was written by "il doctissimo  

In this case we must assume that the beginning of the Life, in which Agricola dealt in a rather personal fashion with Antonio Scrovigni and his grandfather Enrico, was added later, when he edited the speech for publication. On several other orations composed by Agricola in Pavia, see Allen, op. cit. 310 f.


See Bertalot, op. cit. 401.

On these editions, see M. Fowler, Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection of the Cornell University Library (London and New York 1916) 71–73.
Iurista Missir Antonio da Tempo." It has been proved that this attribution to Antonio da Tempo, a mediocre poet of the early fourteenth century, is entirely impossible, and that the printed version of that biography was actually a condensation of a *Life of Petrarch* composed, also in Italian, in the middle of the fifteenth century by either Francesco Filelfo or Pier Candido Decembrio. Whoever wrote the original version based his account primarily on Petrarch's own *Epistle to Posterity*. The unknown editor of the *Rime Sparse* of 1471 abridged the text considerably but at the same time inserted a number of facts concerning Petrarch's later years, which he took from Leonardo Bruni's biography.

A careful analysis of Agricola's *Life of Petrarch* shows that for most of his factual data he depended on his printed source, which he simply translated into Latin. Unlike most of the other biographers, Agricola did not make any direct use of Petrarch's *Epistle to Posterity*. If he had done so, it would have been easy for him to correct, for instance, the erroneous statement of his source that Petrarch's birth had taken place on the Calends of August instead of the thirteenth day before the Calends. Or, to give another example, when Agricola found in his source the somewhat ambiguous phrase that Petrarch's "eyesight was singularly good to the time of his old age," he translated this by saying (p. 395) that "the sharpness of his eyes was very great and singular to the very end and never dulled." If he had read the *Epistle to Posterity*, he would have found that Petrarch himself declared that his eyesight

30 See Fowler, *op. cit.* 75 f.
31 See Quarta, *op. cit.* 274 f., 288-293, 317. The longer version was first published by Solerti, *op. cit.* (n. 3 supra) 329-335; the shorter one, which appeared in the early editions of the *Rime Sparse*, was republished by Solerti, pp. 335-338, and, more correctly, by Quarta, pp. 320-322. In the following I shall always quote Agricola's source, the short Italian *Life* of 1471, from Quarta's reprint.
32 See Quarta, *op. cit.* 290.
33 L. Geiger, in *Zeitschrift fur deutsche Kulturgeschichte*, N. F. 3 (1874) 245 n. 3, and Lindeboom, *op. cit.* (n. 10 supra), passim, assumed that Agricola used the *Epistle to Posterity*. Bertalot, *op. cit.* 400 n. 4, believed that Agricola undoubtedly knew the *Epistle* but made no direct use of it.
34 Ed. Quarta, p. 320, compare Agricola's *Life* (pp. 384 f).
35 Ed. Quarta, p. 312: "di singular vista insino nella sua vechieza."
was excellent through most of his life but that after his sixtieth year he was forced, to his great dismay, to resort to glasses.\textsuperscript{36} In his account of Petrarch's relationship with Laura, Agricola did not make any use of the personal note which Petrarch had inserted in his copy of Vergil's works. The omission is interesting in view of the fact that this famous document and also Petrarch's letter about Laura addressed to Bishop Giacomo Colonna (\textit{Famil.} 2.9) were reprinted in the same editions of the \textit{Rime Sparse} which contained the source of Agricola's biography.\textsuperscript{37} In another case Agricola's exclusive reliance on his source led him to repeat a serious error made there. For the author of the Italian \textit{Life} of 1471 misunderstood the title of Petrarch's treatise \textit{De secreto conflictu curarum suarum} \textsuperscript{38} and made two works out of it, calling them \textit{De secreto combattimento} and \textit{De le sue sollecitudine}.\textsuperscript{39} These titles Agricola in his turn translated (p. 394) as \textit{De secreta pugna} and \textit{De sua sollicitudine}.

In connection with Agricola's shortcomings it must also be stated that he proved himself to be quite ignorant of historical chronology. In his enumeration of Petrarch's works (p. 394) he listed the \textit{Invectiva contra medicum quendam}. The "certain doctor" in question was the personal physician of Pope Clement VI (1342–1352), but Agricola believed that in this \textit{Invectiva} Petrarch advised "Pope Innocent III to stay away from the mass of doctors"; \textsuperscript{40} the most charitable explanation might be that Agricola confused the earlier Innocent who died in 1216 with another pope of that name, Innocent VI (1352–1362), who actually was a contemporary of Petrarch. Agricola accepted without hesitation (p. 387 f.) the statement of his source that it was Pope Urban V who suggested a marriage between Petrarch and Laura.\textsuperscript{41} This curious story will be discussed later in more


\textsuperscript{37} See Fowler, \textit{op. cit.}, 72 ff.

\textsuperscript{38} Under this title the work was listed by Villani, Vergerio, and Manetti; see Solerti, \textit{op. cit.} 279, 299, 317.

\textsuperscript{39} Ed. Quarta, p. 322.

\textsuperscript{40} In the list of Petrarch's works in the Italian \textit{Life} of 1471, the pamphlet was merely called "\textit{Invectiva contra medico bestiale}.

\textsuperscript{41} Ed. Quarta, p. 321.
detail; at this point we have only to say that Agricola evidently did not know that Urban V reigned at the end of Petrarch’s life, from 1362 to 1370. Even worse was Agricola’s assertion (p. 385) that it was the same Pope Urban V who transferred the Papal See to Avignon, because this confusion of Urban V with Clement V (1305–1314) cannot be attributed to Agricola’s source but was entirely his own responsibility. Agricola’s contemporary Squarzafico was obviously a better historian. In his Life of Petrarch he spoke correctly of Clement V as the first of the Avignonese popes, and when he assigned the proposal of marriage to Benedict XII (1334–1342), this would have been, chronologically speaking, more easily possible than the attribution to Urban V.

After this enumeration of a number of rather gross errors in Agricola’s Life of Petrarch we have to state in all fairness that on two points at least it contains factual information that is not to be found in any of the biographies previous to its own era or even, to be more precise, previous to the late nineteenth century. Both these informative statements were made in connection with the list of Petrarch’s works drawn up by Agricola.

In regard to the Africa, Agricola mentioned the tradition (p. 394) that in his later years Petrarch always sighed when this work came up in conversation. This attitude, Agricola apparently thought, had its most likely explanation in the fact that the poet, “driven by a youthful desire for fame,” had pub-

42 The Italian Life of 1471 said simply (ed. Quarta, p. 320): “[Petrach] senando Avignone, dove la corte Romana nuovamente era transferita.”


44 A comparison of Agricola’s enumeration of Petrarch’s works with that given in the Italian Life of 1471 shows that his list can be called quite complete. For, although he did not mention the Septem psalmi poetentiales and the little Itinerarium Symiacum, which were listed there (ed. Quarta, p. 328), he added, on the other hand, as a separate item, Petrarch’s Latin rendering of Boccaccio’s Novella di Griselda, which was contained in the collection of Petrarch’s Seneis (8 3); the title given to the work by Agricola, De constanza Griseldis, is very similar to the one used in the edito princeps, published in Cologne around the year 1472 (cf. Fowler, op. cit. 47).

45 Agricola referred here to a tradition which is to be found in both Verrerio’s and Manetti’s biographies of Petrarch; see Solerti, op. cit. 300, 317.
lished his epic much too early and later found it impossible to call it back and revise it although his mature judgment made him want to do so. Another explanation, Agricola declared, might have been that Petrarch had come to realize that "the palm of victory had been snatched away from him, because, in the times of Nero, Silius Italicus had already written on the second Punic War." But Agricola considered this second alternative to be less probable, for he added: "I do not believe, however, that those books [i.e., Silius' Punica] were known to Petrarch, since it is certain that they were found only within our memory." With this remark he referred obviously to the fact that around the year 1417 a manuscript of Silius' epic had been discovered by Poggio Bracciolini in a monastery near Constance and its text had become accessible to the Italian humanists. That scholars of the later fifteenth century were familiar with the history of that recent discovery of the Punica is proved, to name only one witness, by several letters written by Filelfo in 1460 and 1464. It was therefore easy for Agricola to obtain this information from one of his humanist friends in Pavia. If this observation had not remained unpublished and therefore unknown, it would have prevented the later charge that Petrarch had plagiarized his Africa from Silius' poem. This accusation was first made in 1781 by a French editor of the Punica, Lefebvre de Villebrune, and was repeated by several other scholars during the first part of the nineteenth century.

In the same enumeration of Petrarch's works (p. 394), Agricola listed the Invectiva contra Gallum with the following comment: "This [Frenchman] was Ioannes Hesidensiensis; when the pope had left Avignon and returned to Italy, he grieved over that change and disgorged many insults against Italy."

---

46 Cf. H. Blass, "Die Textquellen des Silius Italicus," Jahrbücher für classische Philologie, Supplementband 8 (1875/6) 162–172; see also J. Duff's preface to his edition of the Punica (London 1934) I p. xvi.

47 See Blass, op. cit. 168 ff.

48 On this curious question, see the long note which G. Fracassetti added to his translation of Petrarch's Variae 22 (in Lettere delle cose familiari V 290–292); see also P. de Nolhac, Pétrarque et l'humanisme (2nd ed. Paris 1907) I 193.
explanatory remark is of some interest.\textsuperscript{49} For Petrarch himself, in accordance with his consistent practice of not honoring a literary adversary by mentioning his name,\textsuperscript{50} never indicated who "the Frenchman" was whom he attacked so vehemently in the treatise he addressed to Ugucione da Thiene in 1373; he even asserted that "he was unknown to me by face and name."\textsuperscript{51} The occasion of the controversy was the return of Pope Urban V to Rome in the year 1367. That papal decision was, of course, highly welcome to Petrarch, who throughout his life had implored the popes to transfer the Papal See back to Italy and had always spoken of Avignon as another "Babylon." But the departure of the pope from Avignon, as well as Petrarch's fulminant censures of France, naturally aroused strong resentment among the French. As the spokesman of the French interests and sentiments, Jean de Hesdin, a Cistercian monk in the entourage of Cardinal Guido of Boulogne, composed between the years 1367 and 1370 a pamphlet directed against Petrarch. The quality of Jean de Hesdin's treatise was of such a nature that Petrarch felt compelled to take it very seriously and to reply to it. Both pamphlets were frequently copied and later often printed. But Petrarch succeeded so well with his customary tactic of condemning his opponents to oblivion that Jean de Hesdin's authorship was soon totally forgotten. For example, in the two editions of Petrarch's \textit{Opera omnia} published at Basel in 1554 and 1581, Jean de Hesdin's treatise appeared under the title of \textit{Galli cuiusdam anonymi in Franciscum Petrarcham invectiva}, and that of Petrarch under the title \textit{Francisci Petrarchae contra cuiusdam anonymi Galli calumnias ad Ugutionem de Thiennis apologia}.

\textsuperscript{49} In the Life of 1471, the work is simply listed as "Invecua contra i Franciosi" (ed Quarta, p. 322).

\textsuperscript{50} See the discussion of Petrarch's polemical writings by E. Cazzara, \textit{Petrarcha} (Rome 1937) 77-84; Jean de Hesdin's treatise and Petrarch's reply to it were edited by E. Cocchia, in \textit{Atti d. R. Accad. d. Archeol., Lett. e Belle Arti di Napoli}, N. S. 7 (1920) 91-202.

\textsuperscript{51} Ed. Cocchia, p. 140: "nihil nec vultu nec nomine notus est."

\textsuperscript{52} See P. de Nolhac, "Le Gallus calumniator de Petrarque," \textit{Romana} 21 (1892) 598-606.
man. It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that two scholars, a Frenchman and a German, simultaneously but independently of each other, determined the identity of Petrarch's hitherto unknown adversary by finding some early manuscripts of Jean de Hesdin's treatise in which his name was given.\footnote{See B. Hauréau, "Jean de Hesdin," Romania 22 (1893) 276–281; M. Lehnerdt, "Der Verfasser der Galli cuiusdam anonymi in F. Petrarcham invectiva," Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte, N. F. 6 (1893) 243–245; see also Cocchia, op. cit. 110 f.}
The explanation for the fact that, of all the biographers of Petrarch, Agricola alone established the identity of the anonymous must be that he had seen, either in Pavia or elsewhere in Italy, a manuscript containing the two treatises and giving the name of Jean de Hesdin.\footnote{It seems quite possible that Agricola saw such a manuscript in Pavia, for it is well known that a number of Petrarch's books and of his own writings were preserved there at that time; see P. de Nolhac, Pétrarque et l'humanisme (2nd ed. 1907) I 100 ff.; G. Billanovich, Petrarcha letterato I (Rome 1947) 372 ff.}

Agricola's observations concerning Petrarch's ignorance of Silius Italicus' Punica and his identification of Jean de Hesdin are noteworthy achievements, but his biography as a whole does not add much to our knowledge of the details of Petrarch's life. If, nevertheless, it can claim a definite value, this value is to be found in the information we obtain from it about its author and in the insight it gives us about his conceptions regarding the development and the nature of the humanist movement. The most interesting chapters in the Life of Petrarch are, therefore, those in which Agricola elaborates on, or disregresses from, his source. That such passages are very numerous, is indicated by the fact that Agricola's work is more than twice as long as the Italian Life of 1471.

Agricola's Life of Petrarch has a deeply personal, in parts almost autobiographical character which is accounted for by the fact that the author identified himself to a large extent with his subject and closely associated his own outlook on life, his basic interests and his sincerest aspirations with those of the kindred hero.\footnote{Compare the remarks made by Bertalot, op. cit. 403, concerning "die Seelenverwandtschaft des Friesen und des Toskaners."}

For instance, when he told the story (p. 385)
of how Petrarch was compelled by his father to study law, Agricola expanded the account given in his source by adding: “His mind was too noble to be wasted on things of slight and small importance like those of which the civil law consists for the most part, and he did not take lightly his being tied down to them.” Agricola spoke here from his own experience. For he, too, had seen himself forced to comply with the wishes of his family and to start his studies at the University of Pavia as a student of the law. Therefore he was only too well able to appreciate Petrarch’s relief when he could finally devote himself fully and without subterfuge to the “humanitatis artes.” It is interesting to note that in his Life of Agricola, Johann von Plenningen quoted explicitly the passage just cited when he related how Agricola renounced his legal studies and turned to humanist scholarship. Both Petrarch and Agricola professed their profound respect for “the great authority and the dignity of the civil law,” but both men also shared the conviction that law and justice had become deeply degraded through the invidious, or even openly corrupt, practices of the lawyers of their times. Thus Petrarch quoted, in his Rerum Memorandarum Libri (3.93.2),77 “the old proverb” cited by Cicero (De officiis 1.10.33): “Summum ius summa iuris,” and Agricola quoted (p. 385) the similar saying from Terence’s Heautontimorumenos (796): “Ius summum saepe summam malitiam.”

In the same connection (p. 385 f.), Agricola made some very bitter remarks about the customary disparagement of the “poliores litterae”: they were considered “sterile,” he declared, “by the opinion of perhaps all the people in Petrarch’s days

66 Ed Pfeifer (see nn. 15, 11 supra) pp. 101 f.: “Ac primis annis iuris civilis auditor fact magisque id agebat, ut suorum obsequeretur voluntati quam quod eo delectaretur studio. Fuit namque in homine animus excelsior atque generosior quam ad levia illa exiguaque rerum momenta, quibus magna ex parte, ut ipsius verbis utar, ius civile constat, ab jure posset neque passus est se ad ipsum alligari, precipue cum cutaret vix constanti fide ac integritate a quoquam posse tractari. Relicto itaque iuris studio ad majora elucdans, litteris pollicitibus et artibus, quis humanitatis vocant . . . animam applicuit.”

77 Ed G. Billanovich (Florence 1943), p. 180

88 See also Petrarch’s remarks concerning law and justice in his Epistola Posteritati, ed Carrara (see n. 36 supra), p. 302 § 17.
and by the opinion of certainly the great majority in our time.” 50 In that earlier period, Agricola said, even more than now, the vulgar crowd was interested only in mercenary activities directed at the gain of empty splendor and the accumulation of material goods: “they have no knowledge of the better things because they have never desired the better.” In another chapter (p. 386) Agricola exclaimed: “By Hercules, great praise deserve those men who despised the price of ‘the more salable arts,’ to use Cicero’s words, 60 and devoted themselves to the ‘litterae,’ contented with the sole pleasure of knowledge.” To Agricola, Petrarch had proved to be a man of such a real and true dedication because in his studies of the ancients “he did not merely touch upon them but offered himself wholly to them.” 61 To the very same studies Agricola finally resolved to devote his own life, as he stated in a letter to a friend, which he wrote in Ferrara, shortly after he had discussed this whole problem of the “studia humanitatis” in his Life of Petrarch. 62

Another personal aspect becomes apparent in the great interest which Agricola took in Petrarch’s travels. From his source he learned that Petrarch, in his early thirties, “felt a youthful desire to get to know new lands and thus undertook a journey through France and Germany.” 63 Agricola evidently considered “a youthful desire” to be a rather weak and in-

50 In a letter written in Ferrara (ed. Hartfelder, op. cit. [n. 17 supra] 17 no 8), Agricola spoke about his own studies as follows: “studia nostra cadem sunt que semper, hoc est steriles et contumaces melioris consilii litterarum nostrae, quibus omnem dedicavimus vitam.”

60 See Cicero, De fin. 1.4.12. Agricola used the same phrase in his treatise De formando studio (ed. J. Rivius [Augsburg 1539] p. 77), where he talked about the study of law and medicine and then continued: “Et quas certe uendibiliores, ut Ciceronis uerbo utar, sciam et plane fatuar, aliis nonnullis, quas steriles et ieiunas uocant, ut quae magis possunt animum expulre quam arcum.” See also Cicero, De off. 1.42.150–151.

61 Johann von Plieningen again used exactly the same words in his Life to characterize Agricola’s devotion to these studies (ed. Pfeifer, p. 102):
“... studiosissime non solum attigit, sed totum eis se ingessit.”

62 See n. 59 supra.

63 Italian Life of 1471 (ed. Quarta, p. 321): “Inquesto tempo mosso per-giovinile desiderio divedere nuove regioni lafrancia et lamagna accerchar simisse”; this is a literal translation of the statement made by Petrarch himself in his Epistola Posteritati (ed. Carrara, p. 303 §21): “Quo tempore juvenilis me impulit appetitus, ut et Gallias et Germaniam peragrarem.”
appropriate motive in this case. Therefore he omitted this phrase entirely and said instead (p. 389): "At that time it came to Petrarch's mind how much 'auctoritas' and useful aid it would convey to him if he had viewed the sites, customs and civilizations of foreign people." Agricola was himself a great lover of travelling and consequently he took occasion, in this place as well as in others, to stress its educational value. Thus, in his dedicatory chapter (p. 389) he emphasized the many journeys which Enrico Scrovigni, the grandfather of his friend Antonio, had made all over the world. Agricola was convinced that Enrico had acquired through his travels more than mere knowledge, for "he had proved through experience those things which the great majority of people have to accept on belief by simply reading about them" (p. 389). His own experiences encouraged Agricola to add to the account of his source a few remarks (pp. 389 and 392) glorifying the University of Paris, the number and the erudition of her professors of philosophy and theology, and the multitude of her students "coming from the ultimate ends of the world, from Scythia, Norway and Denmark." In view of Petrarch's rather critical attitude towards everything French, one wonders whether he himself would have been pleased by such an unreserved recognition of the greatness of the city and the University of Paris as his biographer imputed to him.

The discussion of Petrarch's numerous journeys led Agricola to a long digression in another direction. He was aware of the fact (p. 390 f.) that some people, "if they do not make it a cause of accusation, then at least they wonder why it could have been pleasing to a man, who in all other respects was steadfast in purpose, to change his residence so frequently and to live continuously in different places." Agricola admitted that this kind of unsettled existence might be considered harmful to any consistent pursuit of scholarly studies, and he quoted a statement made by Aristotle (Physics 8.3) to the effect that "knowledge is acquired by sitting quietly." But in spite of these plausible

---

64 On Enrico Scrovigni, see Bertalot, op. cit. 404 n. 3.
65 On this quotation, see the interesting remarks made by Bertalot, op. cit. 390 n. 7.
objections to a migratory life, Agricola believed that still better arguments could be brought forth in its defense. In the first place he declared that steady and ever new exercises are just as necessary for the mind as they are for the body "if people want to avoid becoming lax and burdened down by their own weight." Thus, Agricola asserted, some of the most studious men of antiquity lived now in the country, now in the city, while others delighted in hunting, in sports, in games or in drinking. Agricola followed up this first argument with another that he obviously deemed even more striking. He stated: "We are a composite of opposite elements and therefore we are made over by the alternation of things diverse; hence what is pleasant and agreeable to one part of our nature, necessarily will weigh heavily upon another part if we do it too long." By referring to the authority of Plato, who had defined the soul as "that which is agitating in perpetual motion," he considered his thesis to be valid that the most learned man must find his "re-creation"—this word must obviously here be understood in its basic meaning—in a variety of things and actions and not in exclusive attention to any one single matter. The rather personal tone of this long digression makes it quite evident that Agricola wrote this apology for Petrarch's "peregrinations" in self-defense, to justify his own innate aversion against the settled life.

The same personal character manifested itself in the way in which Agricola elaborated on the account which his source gave of the central event in Petrarch's life, his love for Laura. He showed himself deeply concerned both with the problem of love as a general phenomenon and with the question whether or not Petrarch's particular love was praiseworthy. In regard to the first problem he pointed out (p. 387) that the Stoics counted among the vices every state of mind which was not in accord with reason, whereas Aristotle and his followers took a much more tolerant view.  

66 According to Bertalot, op. cit. 391 n. 8, this is a reference to Timaeus 56 and 43; one may also think of Phaedrus 245 C-E.  
67 Agricola probably derived this information concerning the views of the Stoics and the Peripatetics from Cicero, De fin. 3.10.35; 3.12.41 f.; Tusc. Disput. 4.9.22 f., 17.38 f., 19.43, 21.47.
those contradictory views since he did not consider his *Life of Petrarch* the right place for a discussion of the whole problem in all its aspects. Although one might perhaps sense a certain inclination on his part to condemn every over-ardent passion, he made sure to state at the same time that a compensation for the faults common to mankind may be found in the possession of great virtues, and in his opinion Petrarch certainly possessed such great virtues. Thus Agricola declared (p. 387): "The steadfastness and the moderation of his mind, with which he restrained himself, burning as he was with such a fire, will assuage even a stern censorer."

In this connection Agricola chose to insert into his *Life of Petrarch* one of the longest and most curious elaborations of his source. As has been mentioned before, he found there the apocryphal story that Pope Urban V had encouraged Petrarch to marry Laura and had promised to provide him with a living in the case he did. Agricola not only accepted the story at face value but even decided to expand it greatly. Whereas his source related the whole incident in a few short sentences, Agricola let Petrarch reply to the papal proposition in a long and rather rhetorical speech (p. 387 f.). It was still in agreement with the original source when Petrarch, in this speech, rejected the marriage with Laura because he did not wish to make himself ridiculous by becoming "a domestic panegyrist," and because he also feared that "in those things which are most desired, abundance yet has often brought about weariness." But Agricola went far beyond his source when he made Petrarch offer himself and his conduct as a model of exemplary value for mankind in general. Thus we read in this speech to the pope: "Above everything else I must endeavor to make people understand that I could be afflicted and agitated by the fervor of my heart but that I could not be conquered by it; through the authority of Petrarch all men ought to learn that they can abstain from those things which they have desired

---

68 Italian *Life of 1471* (ed. Quarta, p. 321): "Et quantunque l'ovolse essere data perdonna adinstanza di papa Urbano quinto il quale lui singolarmente amava concedendoli ditener colla donna i benefici insieme; nol volse mai consentire; dicendo che il frutto che prendea dell'amore ascrivere dipoi; che la cosa amata conseguito avessei tutto siponderia."
vehemently." Agricola let this speech conclude with a sentence which, like the ones just quoted, seems to reflect remarkably well the spirit and the mode of thought of the biographer, as well as of his hero: "How powerful the *virtus* of anything is, you will never know if you do not test it through an adverse experience."

This whole imaginary speech illustrates clearly the way Agricola felt about Petrarch's love for Laura. He admired greatly the sonnets and *canzoni* which testified to that love, and he declared (p. 388) that "in that art Petrarch surpassed everybody who wrote before or after him." Nevertheless Petrarch was to him primarily the great scholar and humanist and not the poet of the *Rime Sparse*. Therefore Agricola had to regret, to a certain degree at least, the fact that Petrarch fell victim to such an ardent and long-lasting passion, and he could even find some justification (p. 393) for the criticism of "those malevolent critics of another man's distress, who said that he took Laura's death in a weaker manner than befitted his years and his erudition." Agricola seems to have become reconciled with that passion for Laura only because Petrarch had always succeeded in restraining and sublimating it. For the right understanding of Agricola's attitude toward the problem of love and enduring attachment to one woman, one might remember that he himself stayed a bachelor throughout his life.

The numerous additions which Agricola made to his source reveal not only his personality but also demonstrate that he possessed a considerable knowledge of the classical authors, both Latin and Greek. Ludwig Bertalot, in his edition of the *Life of Petrarch*, has ascertained that in this work Agricola quoted from Vergil's *Aeneid*, the odes of Horace, Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*, Cicero's *De finibus*, Seneca's *De tran-quillitate animi*, Suetonius' *Julius Caesar*, Plato's *Timaeus* (or *Phaedrus*) ⁶⁰ and Aristotle's *Physics*. To this list can be added quotations from the following works: Cicero, *De senectute* ⁷⁰ and *Pro L. Murena*, ⁷¹ Seneca's letters *Ad Lucilium*, ⁷²

⁶⁰ See n. 66 supra.
⁷⁰ See n. 80 infra.
⁷¹ When Agricola (p. 387) called Stoicism "asperioris frontis philosophiam," it seems likely that he thought of *Pro L. Murena* 29.60, where Cicero spoke of Stoicism as "doctrina paulo asperior et durior."
⁷² See n. 74 infra.
and Juvenal's satires. Because of his interest in the symbolism of numbers, Agricola found it significant (p. 391) that Laura died precisely twenty-one years after she and Petrarch had met; the figure twenty-one represents a combination of the numbers three and seven, "both of which," according to Agricola, "are celebrated among those who scrutinize the more occult mysteries of things." In the same connection Agricola declared, evidently on the basis of information he found in one of Seneca's letters (Ep. 58.31), that Plato had died at the age of eighty-one, that is nine times nine, and that he was therefore considered semi-divine by the magi. It appears also worth noticing that in his brief discussion of the literary form and the metre of the sonnet and the canzone Agricola pointed out (p. 388) that the word "rhythmus" had assumed a meaning in modern times which it did not have in antiquity, that of "rhyme."

The short statement of his source that Petrarch had died of epilepsy caused Agricola to write a brief but quite learned commentary on that disease, in which he said (p. 394 ff.): "The general public calls it the falling sickness ('morbus caducus') but the ancients called it the 'morbus comitialis' because it was considered to be an unfavorable omen when somebody was afflicted by it during an assembly of the people." Like some of the other humanists of the Renaissance, Agricola believed (p. 395) that epilepsy found its victims particularly among great men, and as examples he pointed out that Julius Caesar

---

73 When Agricola (p. 385) said: "ora ut dictur praebere capistro bene momentis," he referred probably to Juvenal, Sat 6.42 ff.: "... si moechorum notissimus olim / stulta maritali iam porrigit ora capistro."

74 On this belief, see G. Boas, "Fact and Legend in the Biography of Plato," The Philosophical Review 57 (1948) 459 n. 21 Bertalot, op. cit. 393 n. 3, did not identify the passage in Seneca's letter but quoted a remark very similar to that of Agricola made by Ficino in a letter written in 1477, that is, shortly after the composition of Agricola's Life of Petrarch.

75 Italian Life of 1471 (ed. Quarta, p. 322): "... del male della epilepsia diche per la eta sua era stato molto molestato lo estremito di della sua vita virtuosamente conclusa."

76 The same explanation of the name "morbus comitialis" is to be found in the writings of some of the later humanists, e.g., Erasmus and Johann Agricola; on this whole problem, see the detailed study of O. Temkin, The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology (Baltimore 1947) esp. pp. 7, 83, 131, 152 ff.

77 On this belief, see Temkin, pp. 152 ff.
had suffered from it and that "in the preceding year Duke Amedeo [IX] of Savoy had died of it."  

Agricola liked to quote old proverbs and sayings. These are sometimes easily identified, like the proverb taken (p. 397) from Cicero's De senectute (3.7), which Robert Burton in his Anatomy of Melancholy turned into the saying: "Birds of a feather will gather together." In other cases it seems to be impossible to discover Agricola's sources. When he asserted (p. 395), for instance, that "according to an old proverb one ought to beware of those whom nature has marked," he might have referred to a medieval and not a classical saying; a century and a half later this idea found again its literary expression in George Herbert's warning in the Jacula Prudentum: "Take heed of a person marked." Although Agricola's Latin style was often quite involved and even faulty, he succeeded occasionally in coining a very fortunate phrase. Perhaps the most striking example of that sort is offered by the maxim he pronounced in the course of his discussion of the value of traveling: "Nothing can appear to be more proper to man than the knowledge of man." With this epigram, written at the end of the fifteenth century, Agricola expressed an idea which was to be formulated in almost identical terms by Pierre Charron at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and by Alexander Pope in 1733.

In Agricola's opinion Petrarch certainly had been a true student of man. Indeed he considered him (p. 389) the initiator of that kind of studies in modern times, "to whom all the erudi-

---

78 Suetonius, Divus Julius 45.1.
79 This fact is correct; see Encyclopedie Italiana 2 (1929) 829 f.
80 Bertalot, op. cit. 397 n. 2, referred this quotation to Jesus Sirach (= Liber Ecclesiasticus) 13.20; but Agricola's phrasing ("in veteri proverbio est pares paribus facillime convenire") makes it more likely that he quoted from Cicero's De senect. 3.7: "Pares autem vetere proverbio cum paribus facillime congruantur." See also A. Otto, Die Sprichwörter der Römer (Leipzig 1890) 264.
81 The proverb is, however, not listed in J. Werner's collection, Lateinische Sprichwörter des Mittelalters (Heidelberg 1912).
82 Life of Petrarch (p. 389): "hominis magis proprium nihil videri potest quam hominem nosse."
83 P. Charron, De la sagesse (Bordeaux 1601) I 1: "La vraye science et le vraye estude de l'homme, c'est l'homme."
tion of our century is owed.” He called (p. 383 f.) Petrarch “another father and restorer of the ‘bonae artes,’ who single-handedly recalled from the dead the ‘litterae’ which were almost extinct and nearly buried; he filled them with life through the infusion of a new spirit as it were.”

This conception of Petrarch as the restorer of the “studia humanitatis” did not, of course, originate with Agricola, for he found that idea expressed in a very similar figure of speech in his source, which, in its turn, had taken it over from Leonardo Bruni’s Life of Petrarch. There is, however, in spite of this similarity, a marked difference between Agricola and the other biographers of Petrarch. Explanation of this difference might be found in the fact that the northern scholar, being an outsider, was more detached from the development of Italian humanism and consequently could view the whole movement, and Petrarch’s position within it, with better historical perspective than Italians themselves could. To be sure, Leonardo Bruni and his contemporaries were willing to acknowledge that Petrarch stood at the fountain-head of the new scholarly and literary current and “had opened the road to the perfection of their own days.” But they also began to voice rather severe criticism of the style of his works, as we learn, for example, from the Dialogi ad Petrum Histrum, which Bruni composed around the year 1406. This critical attitude became gradually

---

84 This statement was repeated by Johann von Plieningen in his Life of Agricola (ed. Pfeifer, p. 102). “[Petrarchae] sua sententia [i.e., that of Agricola] omnis eruditione seculi nostri plurimum honoris debit.”

85 Italian Life of 1471 (ed. Quarta, p. 330). “Et ebbe tanta gratia dingegeo che fu il primo che questi sublimi studii lungo tempo caduti in oblivione rivocò alluce.”

86 Ed. Solerti (see n 3 supra), p. 389. “[Petrarca] ebbe tanta gratia d’intelletto che fu il primo che questi sublimi studii lungo tempo caduti ed ignorati rivocò a luce di cognozione.”—The same phrase is to be found in Gianozzo Manetti’s Life of Petrarch (ed. Solerti, pp. 366 f.).

87 See, e.g., Bruni’s Life of Petrarch (ed. Solerti, p. 290). “Petrarca fu il primo ... che riconobbe e rivocò in luce l’antica leggadria dello sile perduto e spento, e posto che in lui perfetto non fusse, pur da se vide ed aperte la via a questa perfezione ... e per certo feco assai, solo a dimostrare la via a quelli che dopo lui avessero a seguire.”

more and more outspoken and vociferous until in the middle of the fifteenth century, in the words of Georg Voigt, "people usually passed their judgment on Petrarch with a sense of superiority and condescension," which allowed them to find the only excuse for his stylistic and other shortcomings in the "barbarousness" of his era.\footnote{L. G. Voigt, Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Altertums I (3rd ed. Berlin 1893) 381; see also E. Carrara, in Annali dell' Istituto Superiore di Magistero di Torino 3 (1929) 338 ff.}

Agricola was, of course, familiar with that kind of criticism but he made a conscious effort to get beyond its merely negative aspects and to reach a more positive evaluation. He not only knew the general charges which were made against the deficiencies of Petrarch's Latin style but he showed himself also acquainted (p. 398) with a very specific accusation according to which "Petrarch, since his childhood, had been misled by too great an admiration for Seneca and had expressed himself, therefore, in a fashion which was too abrupt and too disorderly." Agricola did not state the source of his information but it seems likely that this sort of criticism was widespread among the scholars and students at the Italian universities of that period. It is interesting to note that Girolamo Squarzafico, who was in northern Italy at the same time that Agricola was there,\footnote{On Squarzafico's stay in northern Italy during the 1470's, see Quarta, op. cit. 283.} wrote in his Life of Petrarch: "Because Petrarch imitated more the 'densitas' of Seneca than the 'amplitudo' of Cicero, I have frequently called him the modern Seneca."\footnote{Ed. Solerti, p. 357.}

Agricola made a very astute observation in regard to this criticism of Petrarch's style (p. 397 f.). He admitted that Petrarch did not, perhaps, follow the best model. At the same time, however, he suggested that the critics ought not to excuse this shortcoming simply with "the barbarousness of that era" but that they rather ought to give recognition to the much more important fact that Petrarch, working as he was under such unfavorable conditions, did, after all, turn to "stricter precepts" than were customary at that time. Agricola, who had grown up north of the Alps under circumstances which somewhat re-
sembed those under which Petrarch had lived, understood much better than the Italian scholars of the third and fourth generations of humanism what it meant to work in "an era of barbarousness," that is among people whose outlook on life and expression of thought were still primarily bound by medi eval and not by classical traditions. Throughout his Life of Petrarch, Agricola emphasized a fact never particularly stressed by the other biographers—that "he became his own teacher since there was no other from whom he might learn" (p. 384).

In Agricola’s opinion, then, Petrarch's greatest claim to fame was that he was a self-made man. This chief theme of the Life of Petrarch is clearly indicated at its very beginning, where Agricola quoted a saying of Enrico Scrovigni with wholehearted approval and with specific application to Petrarch's case (p. 383):

It is glorious to have deserved praise on account of some achievement, and the glory of whatever has been excellently done remains; but it is most glorious to create for oneself those things for which one is praised. . . . To such a glory, it seems to me, nobody is more entitled than Francesco Petrarca, to whom all the erudition of our era is owed.

Petrarch's fame would have been great, Agricola asserted (p. 393), "even in an age of learning but in that scarcity of erudite people it shone with still greater splendor." If in one respect, then, the dearth of erudition and the absence of competition naturally enhanced Petrarch's reputation in his own century, in another respect the uniqueness of that position put him at a very definite disadvantage. For, as Agricola said (p. 398), "whereas even the most learned people of earlier times [i.e., of antiquity] received the counsel of other men in regard to their writings, it is a fact that Petrarch lacked a critic and emendator." That the creative mind needs for its own develop—
ment and productivity the stimulation provided by the constructive criticism of others, could also be realized much more readily by Agricola than by his Italian contemporaries. Agricola, like Petrarch, had been forced to make his intellectual start in comparative isolation and after his return from Italy to Germany he found himself again very much alone and thrown on his own resources. He stated the problem of intellectual isolation most clearly in a letter he addressed to Alexander Hegius in 1480; he told his friend that he had done little writing, and very poorly at that, ever since he had left Italy, and he attributed that unproductiveness to the lack of exchange of ideas and the absence of friends who could help his work through their approval or disapproval.93

Considering all the difficulties under which Petrarch labored, Agricola came to the conclusion that his literary and stylistic achievements deserve very high praise. But in Agricola’s opinion, Petrarch deserved even greater acclaim because he had revived the “studia humanitatis” in his own era and had continued to spur on those studies long beyond his death. The other biographers of the fifteenth century were willing to give recognition to Petrarch as the initiator of the humanist movement. But to them, as well as to the later humanists, Petrarch’s importance was a thing of the past. Probably only a few of them would have subscribed to the condemnation expressed by the representative of extreme Ciceronianism in Erasmus’ Dialogus Ciceronianus, who declared that Petrarch’s “whole style smacks of the horrible character of an earlier age.” Most of the humanists of the fifteenth century, however, would have accepted the more moderate statement made by the other interlocutor in Erasmus’ dialogue to the effect that Petrarch was “the first leader of eloquence flowering anew among the Italians, a man celebrated and great in his own times, but whose works are now scarcely in anyone’s hands.” 94

93 See Allen, op. cit. 321, n° 21; Ihm, op. cit. (n. 5 supra) 67.

94 The whole passage in the Ciceronianus concerning Petrarch reads as follows (Erasmus, Opera omnia [Leyden 1703] col. 1068): “(Bulephorus:) Age redibimus ad aliud scriptorum genus nostro seculo vicinius. Nam aliquot aetatis videtur fuisse sepulcta prorsus eloquentia, quae non ita pridem reviviscere coepit apud Italos, apud nos multo etiam serius. Itaque
Rudolph Agricola certainly did not share such views, for he was firmly convinced that his own generation, though it had made great progress in erudition, still was under deep obligation to Petrarch as an ever-living example of the pursuit of true scholarship. And so he concluded his *Life of Petrarch* as follows:

Petrarch was in truth the liberator and the restorer of the “literae.” When they lay prostrate and altogether oppressed, he suffused them with new light and lustre. Through his great and memorable example he taught us that that end which is desirable is also realizable by the best of men, since nature has ordained that nothing that is honorable is impossible.

reflorescentis eloquentiae princeps apud Italos videturuisse Franciscus Petrarcha, sua aetate celebris ac magnus, nunc vix est in manibus ingenium avdens, magna rerum cognitio, nec mediocris eloquenti vis. (Nosoponus:)

Fateor Atqui est ubi desideres in eo linguae Latinae peritiam, et tota dictione resipit seculi prioris horrorem. Quis autem illum dicit Ciceronianum, qui ne affectaret quidem?" Cf the English translation of the *Ciceronianus* by L. Scott (New York 1908) 94.
PART III

Studies in Early
Christian Historiography
St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of The City of God

IN the summer of the year 410 Rome fell to a Visigothic army under King Alaric. Since the city suffered relatively little external damage, modern historians have sometimes been inclined to regard that conquest or sack of Rome as a rather insignificant incident. We should be wary, however, of any tendency to belittle the event, remembering that it impelled Augustine to write The City of God. In view of the impact this work has


1 This article was already in the hands of the printer when I got a copy of the essay by J. Straub, "Christliche Geschichtsapologetik in der Krise des römischen Reiches," Historia (1950), 52-81. Prof. Straub's article does not discuss the idea of progress and the other Christian and pagan conceptions of history which were current before and throughout the fourth century. His main objective is rather, for the period from 378 to the aftermath of the fall of Rome in 410, to deal "mit der Rolle, welche die christlichen Apologeten in jenem epochalen Umwandlungsprozess gespielt haben, in dem der römische Staat zugrundeging, aber die mit dem Staat aufs engste verbundene Kirche ihre eigene Existenz zu behaupten und sich für die Teilnahme an der neu zu bildenden Volkergemeinschaft der Welt des Mittelalters freizumachen suchte" (p. 54). Of particular value is Prof. Straub's clarification of the views which Augustine and Orosius had concerning the Christian attitude toward the Roman empire. Unfortunately, I was unable to consult the articles by H. v. Campenhausen, O. Herding, and W. Loewenich, all of which, according to Straub, i.e., p. 52, n. 1, deal with Augustine's historical conceptions.
had upon the development of Christian thought, it can certainly be said that the fall of Rome in the year 410, which motivated its composition, marks a momentous date in the intellectual history of the western world.

Moreover, Augustine was not the only contemporary to be profoundly impressed by that event, as several other writings show. It may suffice here to quote a few sentences from St. Jerome, who was at that time living in Bethlehem. When he received the news of "the havoc wrought in the West and, above all, in the city of Rome" (Epist. 126, 2), he expressed his feelings in the preface to the first book of the Commentaries on Ezekiel, which he was then writing: "When the brightest light on the whole earth was extinguished, when the Roman empire was deprived of its head and when, to speak more correctly, the whole world perished in one city, then 'I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good, and my sorrow was stirred' (Psalm 39, 2)." And in the preface to the third book of the same work Jerome asked: "Who would believe that Rome, built up by the conquest of the whole world, has collapsed, that the mother of nations has also become their tomb?"

To understand the profound consternation of Jerome and his contemporaries we must realize that the fate of Rome meant infinitely more to the people of late antiquity than the fate of any city, even the most renowned, would mean to the western world today. For many deeply rooted ideas and beliefs, and numerous superstitions, were connected with the very name and existence of that city. One need recall only the famous lines of Vergil's Aeneid (1, 278 f.), in which Jupiter says: "To the Romans I assign limits neither to the extent nor to the duration of their empire; dominion have I given them without end." This notion of "the eternal city," the capital of a universal empire, "the golden Rome," we find reflected in the works

---

2 Throughout this article I have based the text of my quotations from the Church Fathers on the translations in the three series of The Select Library of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, and of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (1885-1909); very frequently, however, I have found it necessary to make changes in the translations, for which I have to take the responsibility.
of almost all the pagan writers and poets of the first centuries of our era, whether they were of Latin, Greek or Oriental origin. Thus, at the end of the fourth century, the pagan general and historian Ammianus Marcellinus declared (Histor., 14, 6, 8) that “as long as there are men, Rome will be victorious so that it will increase with lofty growth.” And around the year 400 the Christian poet Claudianus wrote (On the Consulate of Stilicho, 3, 159 f.): “There will never be an end to the power of Rome, for luxury and pride resulting in vices and enmities have destroyed all other kingdoms.”

During the same period the attitude of the Christians toward the Roman empire was divided. On the one hand there ran within early Christianity an undercurrent of strong hatred of the Roman state and of everything that state stood for. This hostility, nourished by Jewish traditions and strengthened by the persecutions, manifested itself in the apparently widespread expectation that some day the prediction of the angel in the Book of Revelation (14, 8) would be fulfilled: “Babylon [i.e., Rome] is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” On the other hand, the official spokesmen of the early Church always remembered that Jesus himself had ordered his disciples to “render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s” (Matthew, 22, 21), and that St. Paul had demanded obedience to the empire when he wrote in his Epistle to the Romans (13, 1): “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” In accordance, then, with these explicit orders of Christ and St. Paul, every adherent of the faith had to pay his outward respect, at least, to the established authorities of the state.

But many Christians showed themselves willing to go even farther and actually hoped and prayed for the continuance of the Roman empire. This affirmative attitude grew out of certain historical and eschatological ideas which went back to both pagan and Jewish traditions. In the Hellenistic era there had

4 The most recent treatments of this question have been given by J. W.
developed in the East a theory which saw history take its course in a sequence of great or, rather, universal monarchies. Four of these empires were to follow one another, and the series was to conclude with a fifth monarchy which, it was believed, would last to the end of the world. This idea of the four or five monarchies was adopted by some of the Roman and Greek historians, and it appeared likewise in Jewish literature. For the great image seen in a dream by Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel, 2, 31 ff.) and the four beasts seen by Daniel himself (7, 1 ff.), were explained by the pre-Christian tradition in terms of an interpretation of world history: these visions were believed to signify symbolically that history takes its course through the succession of four universal monarchies; the disintegration of the last of the four empires was assumed to usher in the end of the world.

In the latter part of the second century and in the first part of the third century Christian theologians like Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian and Hippolytus adopted these pagan and Jewish traditions and expressed their opinion that the Roman empire "which now rules" (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 5, 26, 1), should be considered to be the fourth monarchy. All these Christian authors shared the belief that the fall of the last empire would be a most ominous event. Thus, Tertullian said in his treatise On the Resurrection of the Flesh (ch. 24), in which he interpreted a passage in St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (2, 7), that the Antichrist will appear after the Roman state has been scattered into ten kingdoms. On the basis of this eschatological belief Tertullian declared very emphatically in his Apology (ch. 32, 1): "There is also another and greater necessity for our praying in behalf of the emperors and the whole status of the empire and Roman affairs. For we know that only the continued existence of the Roman Empire retards the mighty power which threatens the whole earth, and post-


See the list of authors who identified the fourth monarchy with the Roman empire, which has been compiled by H. H. Rowley, Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel (1935), 73 ff.
pones the very end of this world with its menace of horrible afflictions." In the early fourth century Lactantius stated even more explicitly in his *Divine Institutions* (7, 25, 6-8): "The fall and the ruin of the world will shortly take place, although it seems that nothing of that kind is to be feared as long as the city of Rome stands intact. But when the capital of the world has fallen . . . who can doubt that the end will have arrived for the affairs of men and the whole world? It is that city which still sustains all things. And the God of heaven is to be entreated by us and implored—if indeed His laws and decrees can be delayed—lest sooner than we think that detestable tyrant should come who will undertake so great a deed and tear out that eye by the destruction of which the world itself is about to fall."

During the fourth century a number of commentators on the *Book of Daniel*, including Eusebius and John Chrysostom in the East, Jerome and Sulpicius Severus (*Sacred Histories*, 2, 3) in the West, continued to identify the fourth monarchy with the Roman empire. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catechetical Lectures*, 15, 12) followed even more closely the line of Irenaeus, Tertullian and Lactantius, by declaring: "The Antichrist is to come when the time of the Roman empire has been fulfilled and the end of the world is drawing near."

In view of the persistence of this concern for the continuance of Rome it seems safe to assume that in the year 410 many contemporaries regarded Alaric's conquest of Rome as the realization of the long-dreaded "fall of Rome" and considered the end of the world to be imminent. A reflection of this superstitious fear we find, I think, even in the words of Jerome, that "the whole world has perished in one city."

Augustine was, of course, well aware of both the pagan belief in "eternal Rome" and the eschatological speculations of his fellow-Christians. He rejected emphatically the one idea as well as the other. As to the pagan notion, he pointed out (*Sermon* 105, 9) that "the earthly kingdoms have their changes" and that only of the Kingdom of Christ it can be said: "There shall be no end" (*Luke*, 1, 33). He continued (*ibid.*, § 10): "They who have promised this to earthly kingdoms have not
been guided by truth but have lied by flattery.” He quoted the famous line from Vergil—whom he calls rather slightlying “a certain poet of theirs”—and remarked: “This kingdom which you [Jupiter] have given ‘without limits to its duration,’ is it on earth or in heaven? Certainly it is on earth. And even if it were in heaven, yet ‘heaven and earth shall pass away’ (Matthew, 24, 35). Those things shall pass away, which God Himself has made. How much more rapidly shall that pass away which Romulus founded?” As to the meaning of the passage in St. Paul’s Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (2, 7): “Only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way,” Augustine was much less certain than Tertullian, who had concluded from these words that the duration of this world is bound up with the duration of the Roman empire. Augustine knew (City of God, 20, 19 E–F) that “some think that this refers to the Roman empire,” and he granted that such an interpretation, in contrast to some others, “is not absurd.” But at the same time he felt obliged to state: “I frankly confess that I do not know what St. Paul meant.”

In reply to those Christian thinkers who attempted to figure out the exact date of the end of the world and connected the coming of that event with concrete developments and with definite historical incidents like “the fall of Rome,” Augustine declared (City of God, 18, 53 A–B) that such a question “is entirely improper.” For he pointed out that Christ himself told his disciples: “It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power” (Acts, 1, 7). “In vain, then,” Augustine stated, “do we attempt to compute and determine the years which remain to this world.” Whoever undertakes that kind of calculation, Augustine concluded, “uses human conjecture and brings forward nothing certain from the authority of the canonical Scriptures.”

6 The above translation is based on the text of the Italæ quoted by Augustine; the version in the King James Bible reads: “Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.”

7 My quotations from De civitate Dei are based on the Latin text edited by J. E. Welldon, 2 vols. (1924), and on the translation by M. Dods, The City of God, 2 vols. (1872); frequently, however, I have replaced Dods’ translation with my own.
Another argument which in several of his sermons Augustine employed, though in a more incidental fashion, is the observation that, after all, Rome was still standing, in spite of the disaster of the year 410. For instance, in the *Sermon on the Ruin of the City* he said that Rome, unlike Sodom, was not completely destroyed, and in another discourse (*Sermon 105, 9*) he declared: "The city which has given us birth, according to the flesh, still abides, God be thanked." He added (§ 11): "An end there will be to all earthly kingdoms. If that end be now, God alone knows. Perhaps the end is not yet, and we, because of a certain weakness or mercifulness or anguish, wish that it may not yet be." Augustine confessed (§ 12) that he himself was "entreating the Lord for Rome," not because he believed the duration of that one city would guarantee the duration of the whole world, but simply because there were many fellow Christians in Rome, dear to him as all other Christians were.  

Since Rome did, in fact, survive, the old belief in its eternity also survived for many centuries to come, and with it persisted the popular superstition, in spite of its rejection by Augustine, that the final "fall" of the city would signify the coming end of the world. Only one of many testimonials to that belief may be quoted. In a British text of the early eighth century, which was wrongly ascribed to the Venerable Bede, we find the following lines:

As long as the Colosseum stands, Rome also stands.
When the Colosseum falls, Rome also will fall.
When Rome falls, the world also will fall.

The denial of the pagan belief in the eternity of Rome and the rejection of any connection between Christian eschatology and specific historical events occupy, however, only a rather

---

8 Cf. also *Sermon 81, 9*; all three sermons mentioned were preached in the years 410 and 411; see A. Kunzelmann in *Miscellanea Agostiniana* (1931), II, 449 f., 500. On these sermons see also M. Pontet, *L'exégèse de S. Augustin prédicateur* (1944), 454, 471-475.

minor place in the whole context of *The City of God*. Augustine felt justified in making short shrift of these ideas because he regarded them as either mere superstitions or futile conjectures.

The real purpose of his great book he stated in a number of places but nowhere more concisely than in the work entitled *Retractions* (2, 68, 1), which he wrote after the completion of *The City of God* in the year 426. He defined his primary objective as follows: "In the meantime Rome had been overthrown by the invasion of the Goths under king Alaric and by the vehement of a great defeat. The worshippers of the many and false gods, whom we commonly call pagans, attempted to attribute that overthrow to the Christian religion, and they began to blaspheme the true God with even more than their customary acrimony and bitterness. It was for that reason that I, kindled by zeal for the house of God, undertook to write the books on *The City of God* against their blasphemies and errors."

The accusation was very old that Christianity was responsible for the miseries of the world. The pagans claimed that the Christians, through their refusal to honor the traditional deities, were provoking the wrath of the very gods whose favor had raised Rome to her universal power. The Christian apologists found it easy to refute the charge. One of the most precise expressions of their customary reply is contained in Tertullian's *Apology* (40, 3, 5). Tertullian addressed the pagans as follows: "Pray, tell me, how many calamities befell the world as a whole, as well as individual cities, before Tiberius reigned, before the coming, that is, of Christ?" He asked: "Where were your gods in those days when a deluge effaced the whole earth or, as Plato believed, merely its plains?" And he concluded: "The truth is that the human race has always deserved ill at God's hand. . . . Therefore one ought to know that the very same God is angry now, as he always was, long before Christians were so much as spoken of."

Augustine used exactly the same kind of argument throughout the first five books of *The City of God*, only in a much more elaborate and detailed fashion than Tertullian, Arnobius,
Lactantius and other apologists of the third century had done before him. He went still further and commissioned his younger friend Orosius to write an entire history of the world from a point of view which is best described by Orosius himself in the dedication to Augustine of his Seven Books of Histories against the Pagans: "You bade me to discover from all the available data of histories and annals, whatever instances past ages have afforded of the burdens of war, the ravages of diseases, the horrors of famine, terrible earthquakes, extraordinary floods, dreadful eruptions of fire, thunderbolts and hailstorms, and also instances of the cruel miseries caused by murders and crimes against man's better self." 10 Orosius proved himself indeed "the true compiler of the evils of the world," as Petrarch (Familiares, 15, 9, 10) was to characterize him scornfully many centuries later. But in spite, or perhaps because, of their admitted prejudices and their preconceived ideas, Augustine's and Orosius' systematic expositions of the old apologist conceptions of world history in general and of Roman history in particular were to determine the historical outlook of most western writers to the time of the Italian Renaissance.

However, that traditional apology fills only one section in the first part of The City of God. 11 In the second half of the work (books XI to XXII) Augustine wanted to offer much more than a mere defense, as he stated himself in his Retractations (2, 68, 2): "In order that no one might raise the charge against me that I have merely refuted the opinions of other men but not stated my own, I devoted to this objective the second part of the work."

Of the vast number of ideas which Augustine set forth as his "own opinions," only one problem will be discussed here, that of "History": how does history take its course and is there any

10 Quoted from J. W. Woodworth's translation of Orosius's Seven Books (1936), 1.
11 The second section of the first part of the work, which consists of books VI to X, can be passed over in this article because Augustine did not deal in it with historical problems but set out to disprove the assertions of those philosophers who "maintain that polytheistic worship is advantageous for the life to come" (Retractations, t. 68, 1).
meaning to be found in the sequence of events from the beginning of this world to the present age and to the day of the Last Judgment. 12

How deeply Augustine was concerned with the question of the philosophical or rather, from his point of view, the theological interpretation of the meaning and course of history, is shown by those chapters of The City of God in which he discussed the problems of the origin of the world and the uniqueness of its creation. He rejected the view that this world is eternal and without beginnings, and he stated that it was definitely created in time and will come to an end in another definite moment in time, a moment known to God alone. In connection with his discussion of "this controversy about the beginnings of things temporal" (12, 13 E) Augustine wrote (12, 14 A): "The philosophers of this world believed that they could or should not solve that controversy in any other way than by introducing cycles of time, in which they asserted that the revolving of coming and passing ages would always be renewed and repeated in the nature of things and would thus go on without cessation." In this sentence Augustine was obviously referring to the cyclical theory of history held by Platonists, Stoics and other Greek schools of philosophy. 13 But although he mentioned no name, it becomes evident from the context of

12 See the comprehensive analysis of the main body of ideas of Augustine’s main work, which has been recently presented by W. J. Oates in his introduction to Basic Writings of St. Augustine (1948), I, ix–xl; and by E. Gilson in his introduction to D. B. Zema’s and G. G. Walsh’s translation of The City of God (1950), I, pp. xi–xviii.—Of the vast literature dealing with Augustine’s historical ideas, I can list only some of the most recent treatments: R. J. Deiser and M. Keeler, “St. Augustine’s City of God: Its Plan and Development,” American Journal of Philology (1929), L, 109–137; U. A. Padovano, “La Città di Dio: teologia e non filosofia della storia,” Rivista di Filosofia Neo-scolastica (1931), suppl. vol. to vol. XXIII, 229–263; H. I. Marrou, S. Augustin et la fin de la culture antique (1938; see esp. 151–155, 417–419, 461–467); H. Fuchs, Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt (1938); C. N. Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture; A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine (1944; esp. 397–510); W. M. Green, “Augustine on the Teaching of History,” University of California Publications in Classical Philology (1944), XII, 315–332; K. Löwith, Meaning in History (1949), 160–173.

the passage just quoted that he knew that this cyclical view was also maintained by Origen, who attempted to support it in a somewhat qualified fashion through quotations from the Scriptures, for instance the famous sentence in Ecclesiastes (1, 9): "There is no new thing under the sun." In his Latin translation of Origen's text Rufinus considerably modified these views, but this did not prevent Jerome from attacking them sharply. Augustine was even more emphatic in his refutation when he exclaimed in The City of God (12, 14 E): "Far be it from the right faith to believe that by these words of Solomon [i.e., Ecclesiastes] those cycles are meant in which [according to these philosophers] the revolving of the same periods and things is repeated." He found it logical that those thinkers "erroneously wandering around in cycles, find neither entrance nor exit," for he was convinced that "they do not know how the human race and this mortal condition of ours took its origin nor how it will be brought to an end" (12, 15 A). Those "false cycles which were discovered by false and deceitful sages," he believed, "can be avoided in the sound doctrine, through the path of the straight road (tramite recti itineris)."

To Augustine, then, history takes its course, not in cycles, but along a line. That line has a most definite beginning, the Creation, and a most definite end, the Last Judgment. Within this definite period of time the greatest single event was, of course, the appearance of Christ. "For," Augustine said (12, 14 F), "Christ died once for our sins and 'raised from the dead dieth no more' (Romans, 6, 9); . . . and we ourselves, after

14 City of God, 12, 14 B — C. N. Cochrane, l.c., 245, stated that "we find Origen, for instance, protesting vigorously against the Platonic theory of cycles." But Cochrane and, following him, R. Niebuhr, Faith and History (1949), 65, based their assertion exclusively on one passage in Origen's writings (Against Celsius, 4. 68) and neglected the much more detailed treatment of this problem in Origen's book On First Principles, 2, 3, 1–5, 3, 5, 3, 4, 13. P. Koetshau, in his edition of Rufinus' translation and of the Greek fragments of On First Principles (Origines Werke [1913], V. 113 f., 120), commented on Rufinus' modifications of the original text and printed the relevant remarks made by Jerome on Origen's belief in a series of many worlds, see the English translation of Koetschau's edition by G. W. Butterworth, Origen, On First Principles (1935), 83–89, 236 ff., J. Baillie, l.c., 74 ff., seems to overlook, too, the fact that Origen shared the cyclical theory, although in a modified form.
the resurrection, 'shall ever be with the Lord' (I Thessalonians, 4, 17)." It seems that here Augustine was arguing again indirectly against Origen who, according to Jerome, "allowed himself to assert that Christ has often suffered and will often suffer, on the ground that what was beneficial once, will always be beneficial," and who also, "in his desire to confirm the most impious dogma of the Stoics through the authority of the Divine Scriptures, dared to write that man dies over and over again.\textsuperscript{15}

From Augustine's conception of the course of history it follows that every particular event that takes place in time, every human life and human action, is a unique phenomenon which happens under the auspices of Divine Providence and must therefore have a definite meaning. The roots of this linear conception of history, as distinguished from the cyclical theories of the Greeks, went back to Hebrew ideas which had been further developed by the early Christian theologians.\textsuperscript{16} But it was Augustine who elaborated those ideas most fully and consistently and thus determined the theology of history which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages and was to influence the philosophies of history of modern times.

When Augustine decided to combat the cyclical theories, he was probably motivated, as we have seen, by his knowledge that this pagan view was shared, to a certain extent at least, by a prominent, though suspect and even heretical, Christian thinker, Origen. But it appears that there existed still another philosophy of history at that time, which from Augustine's point of view was even more dangerous than the cyclical theory because it was very widespread among the Christians of his own as well as previous generations. To Augustine the truly problematic and the most objectionable theory of history must

\textsuperscript{15} See Butterworth, l.c., 88 n. 4 (Jerome, Apology, 1, 20) and 83 n. 1 (Jerome, Epist., 96, 9).

have been a conception which may be called "the Christian idea of progress."

When in 1920 J. B. Bury published his book The Idea of Progress, he wrote (20 f.) that "the idea of the universe which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages and the general orientation of men's thoughts were incompatible with some of the fundamental assumptions which are required by the idea of progress." But more recently, a number of scholars have pointed out that, to a certain degree, such an idea can actually be found among some of the early Christian thinkers. A systematic treatment of this complex topic does not yet exist and it cannot be given in a brief essay. But in the following an attempt will be made at least to set forth some examples from early Christian writings, which may serve to illustrate the nature of that idea.

One might be inclined to find the first instance of the conception of progress in that part of Christian literature which dealt with the question of the Millennium. For some of the early theologians, including Justin, Irenaeus and Lactantius, interpreted the apocalyptic prediction of Christ's future reign of one thousand years in terms of a very material bliss. But this peculiar notion cannot be truly said to express a belief in "progress," because the Messianic kingdom of the future was not to come into existence through a gradual or evolutionary process but rather through the dramatically sudden second coming of Christ. Moreover, even before Augustine's time thinkers like Origen and Tychonius had successfully discredited that very materialistic notion of the Millennium and had interpreted the conception in a primarily spiritual sense. This became Augustine's own opinion also, because in the writings


of the later period of his life, which dealt with eschatological speculations, he made it very clear that the question of the Millennium has nothing to do with any kind of earthly prosperity but has reference only to the necessarily imperfect realization of the divine in this world.

But apart from these speculations concerning the Millennium we find that some of the most prominent Christian apologists voiced views which implied the belief that under the auspices of Christianity the world had made concrete progress in historical time and that further progress could be expected. Those writers asserted that the new creed was bringing blessings to the whole of mankind, not merely to its own adherents. They pointed to the historically undeniable fact that the birth of Christ had taken place at the time of the foundation of the Roman empire by Augustus and the establishment of the Pax Romana on earth. As the appearance of Christ coincided with a marked improvement of all things secular, so, the early apologists argued, the growth of the new faith will be accompanied by further progress.¹⁰

The first testimony to this conception is to be found in the Apology which Bishop Melito of Sardis addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius in the middle of the second century. According to Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History (4, 26, 7–8), Melito wrote: “Our philosophy [i.e., Christianity] flourished first among the barbarians; then, during the great reign of your ancestor Augustus, it spread among your people and, above all, it has become to your own reign an auspicious blessing. For from that time the power of Rome has grown in greatness and splendor. To this power you have succeeded as the desired heir and you will continue it with your sons if you safeguard that philosophy which grew up with the empire and took its start under Augustus. . . . The best evidence that our doctrine has been flourishing for the good of an empire happily started is this: since the reign of Augustus no misfortune has befallen it; on the contrary, all things have been splendid and glorious, in accordance with the wishes of all.”

¹⁰ On the discussion of these arguments, see also E. Peterson, Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem (1935), 66–88; J. Geffcken, Zwei griechische Apologeten (1907), esp. 63, 92.
Around the year 200, Tertullian expressed the same idea, though somewhat more cautiously. He wrote in his *Apology* (ch. 40, 13): "And for all that is said, if we compare the calamities of former times [with those of our own era], we find that they fall on us more lightly now, since the earth has received from God the believers of the Christian faith. For since that time innocence has put restraint on the wickedness of this world and men have begun to plead with God for the averting of His wrath."

These two apologists, then, did not merely content themselves with rejecting the pagan accusation that Christianity was responsible for the misfortunes of the era; on the contrary, they dared to take the offensive and claimed that their faith was making a positive contribution to the well-being of the Roman empire.

From this assertion there was but a single step to the expression of the belief that the universal acceptance of the Christian religion by the Roman world would lead to a still greater degree of security and prosperity. The pagan Celsus, in the middle of the third century, raised the question as to the consequences of such an event. Origen replied to Celsus' question with utmost confidence (*Against Celsus*, 4, 69): "If all the Romans were to pray together in full harmony, then they would be able to put to flight many more enemies than those who were discomfited by the prayers of Moses when he cried to the Lord." Fifty years after Origen, around the year 300, Arnobius expressed the same belief in his treatise *Against the Pagans* (1, 6): "If all without exception, who consider themselves men, not in form of body, but in power of reason, were willing to lend, for a little while, an ear to [Christ's] salutary and peaceful prescriptions and were not, swollen with pride and arrogance, to trust to their own senses rather than to His admonitions, then the whole world, having turned the use of iron into more peaceful occupations, would live in the most placid tranquillity and would unite in blessed harmony, maintaining inviolate the sanctity of treaties."

This conviction that the appearance of Christ has led to a general improvement of the material conditions of the world and that its universal acceptance will lead to a still greater
progress, was set forth by Melito and Tertullian, by Origen and Arnobius, during a period when their faith was suppressed by the official authorities of the Roman state. When, in the reign of Constantine, the great turning-point arrived and Christianity was not only tolerated but became the religion most favored by the emperor, it was natural that hope for progress rose still higher. Thus even Lactantius, once the champion of eschatological ideas in their most extreme and pessimistic form, dared to express rather optimistic expectations at the very end of his book *On the Death of the Persecutors* (ch. 52): "The Lord has destroyed and erased from the earth those proud names [of the anti-Christian rulers]. Let us therefore celebrate the triumph of God with joy. Let us frequently praise the victory of the Lord. Day and night let us offer our prayers to the Lord that He may establish for all time the peace which has been given to His people after [a warfare of] ten years."

Constantine showed himself most eager to adopt the idea that the worship of the true and omnipotent God was bound to benefit his empire in a material sense. In a letter written shortly after his decisive victory at the Milvian Bridge in the year 312, he declared (Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, 10, 7, 1): "From many facts it appears . . . that the lawful recognition and observance [of the Christian faith] has bestowed the greatest success on the Roman name and singular prosperity on all affairs of mankind, blessings which were provided by the divine beneficence." Constantine's highly materialistic conception of his relationship with the Christian God was very much in accordance with the religious notions of the ancient Romans.\[20\] It was the old principle of *do ut des*: "I give that you may give." The emperor argued: I, Constantine, do something for you, God, so that you may do something for me; likewise, of course, God himself was assumed to expect gifts in return from those to whom he had extended favors. This idea of a commutative contract between God and man found reflection in the politico-ecclesiastical writings of quite a few of the Christian authors of the fourth cen-

tury, beginning with Constantine’s court-bishop, Eusebius of Caesarea. It was a complete ideological reversal: once the pagans had charged that the worship of the Christian God was the source of all the calamities of the empire; now, Constantine had the symbol of the cross displayed in the principal room of his new imperial palace in Constantinople; according to Eusebius’ *Life of Constantine* (3, 49), “this symbol seemed to the beloved of God [Constantine] to have been made as a safeguard of the empire itself.”

The principle of *do ut des* was most emphatically rejected by Augustine, for it was wholly contrary to his conception of the relationship between God and man, even the great of this world. Thus he stated in *The City of God* (4, 33) that in God’s eyes earthly power and all similar things temporal are not important gifts and that therefore God “bestows them on both the good and the bad.” In discussing the question of the *imperator felix*, Augustine admitted (*City of God*, 5, 25 A) that God “gave to the emperor Constantine, who was not a worshipper of demons but of the true God Himself, such fulness of earthly gifts as no one would even dare to wish for.” But Augustine continued: “Lest, however, any emperor shall become a Christian in order to merit the blessed felicity of Constantine—when everyone ought to be a Christian for the sake of the eternal life—God took away [the Christian prince] Jovian far sooner than [his pagan brother, the emperor] Julian, and He allowed [the Christian emperor] Gratian to be slain by the sword of a tyrant.”

These sentences in *The City of God* sound as if they were written expressly against Eusebius, who had declared in his *Life of Constantine* (1, 3, 3), with specific reference to the emperor: “God, that God who is the common Saviour of all, has treasured up with Himself, for those who love religion, far greater blessings than man can conceive, and He gives even here and now the first-fruits as a pledge of future rewards, thus assuring in some sort immortal hopes to mortal eyes.”

Eusebius based his belief in the effectiveness of the principle of *do ut des* on a very definite interpretation and philosophy.

---

21 Cf. Berkhof, *l.c.*, 205-209
of history. He emphasized (*Demonstratio Evangelica*, 3, 7, 139) even more strongly than Melito and other Christian thinkers during the previous centuries, that "it was not through human merit that at no other time but only since the time of Christ most of the nations were under the single rule of the Romans; for the period of His wonderful sojourn among men coincided with the period when the Romans reached their summit under Augustus, who was then the first monarch to rule over most of the nations." This concurrence of the appearance of Christ on earth and the founding of the universal empire by Augustus "was not by mere human accident" but it was "of God's arrangement." Whereas the earlier interpreters of that concurrence had stated it simply as a historical fact, Eusebius believed himself capable of adducing proof from the Scriptures that those events were long before predicted by God. Thus he quoted in all the works in which he discussed the "synchronising" of the birth of Christ with the reign of Augustus, the following passages from the Old Testament: "In His days the righteous shall flourish and abundance of peace" (*Psalm* 72, 7); "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (*Psalm* 72, 8); "And they shall beat their swords into pruninghooks, and their spears into plowshares, and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (*Isaiah*, 2, 4).

These quotations are highly remarkable. For according to tradition those prophecies were to be understood as predictions of the future Messianic Kingdom, as we can learn from their interpretation by men like Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*, 4, 56, 3), Tertullian (*Against Marcion*, 3, 21) and Lactantius (*Divine Institutions*, 4, 16, 14). It seems that previous to Eusebius only Origen (*Against Celsus*, 2, 30) had ventured to refer the passage in *Psalm* 72, 7 to the *Pax Romana*. But the full elabora-

23 See the similar passages in Eusebius' *Theophania*, 3, 2; *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 5, 1.
24 It may be noted that Origen interpreted the passage in *Isaiah*, 2, 4 in an entirely spiritual sense; see *Against Celsus*, 5, 33; *Against Heresies*, 6, 16.
tion of Origen’s suggestion was left to Eusebius, who gave the most bluntly secular interpretations to these scriptural texts. Witness the passage in Eusebius’ *Praeparatio Evangelica* (1, 4): “In accordance with these predictions [i.e., of Psalm 72 and of Isaiah, 2, 4], the actual events followed. Immediately after Augustus had established his sole rule, at the time of our Saviour’s appearance, the rule by the many became abolished among the Romans. And from that time to the present you cannot see, as before, cities at war with cities, nor nation fighting with nation, nor life being worn away in the confusion of everything.” Eusebius saw a close parallel between the victory of Christian monotheism and the growth of the Roman monarchy. Thus he stated in his *Theophania* (3, 2): 23 “Two great powers sprang up fully as out of one stream and they gave peace to all and brought all together to a state of friendship: the Roman empire, which from that time appeared as one kingdom, and the power of the Saviour of all, whose aid was at once extended to and established with everyone. For the divine superiority of our Saviour swept away the authority of the many demons and gods, so that the one Kingdom of God was preached to all men, Greeks and barbarians, and to those who resided in the extremities of the earth. The Roman empire, too—since those had been previously uprooted who had been the cause of the rule by many—soon subjugated all others and quickly brought together the whole race of man into one state of accordance and agreement.”

To Eusebius the greatest gains made by mankind since the days of Christ and Augustus were the abolition of wars, foreign and civil, and the establishment of peace and security, the time-hallowed ideals of the *Pax Romana.* But he saw also other improvements. For instance, he declared in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* (1, 4): “Of the benefits resulting from God’s doctrines which have become manifest on earth, you may see a clear proof if you consider that at no other time from the beginning until now, and not through the merits of any of the illustrious men

23 Translated from the Syriac by S. Lee, *Eusebius on the Theophania* (1853), 156 f., cf. the very similar passage in Eusebius’ *Praise of Constantine,* 16, 4–5.
of old but only through Christ's utterances and teachings, diffused throughout the whole world, the customs of all nations have been set aright, even those customs which before were savage and barbarous." Because of the strict discipline of the new faith men have learned to lead a moral life, to refrain from hostility toward others and to master their own emotions and passions. Eusebius concluded his enumeration of all the improvements made in the political, legal and moral spheres by asking: "How, then, can anyone . . . refuse to admit that our doctrine has brought to all men good tidings of very great and true blessings, and has supplied to human life that which is of immediate advantage toward happiness?"

There was no doubt in Eusebius' mind that mankind, under divine guidance, had made progress from the pre-Christian era through the three centuries of the gradual ascent of the new Church to the reign of Constantine in which he himself lived. He declared in his Praise of Constantine (16, 8): "As those predictions concerning our Saviour [i.e., Psalm 72, 7–8, and Isaiah, 2, 4] were foretold and delivered in the Hebrew tongue many ages before, so in our own times they have become really fulfilled and the ancient testimonies of the prophets clearly confirmed." Great as the advances made by mankind were, still further progress was expected by Eusebius. For he asserted (ibid., 6): "Although the object of the Roman empire to unite all nations in one harmonious whole has already been secured to a large degree, it is destined to be still more perfectly attained, even to the final conquest of the ends of the habitable world, by means of the salutary doctrine and through the aid of that Divine Providence which facilitates and smooths the way [of the Empire]."

In his recent essay on The Idea of Progress, G. H. Hildebrand stated 26 that this idea includes three principles: "First, the belief that history follows a continuous, necessary, and orderly course; second, the belief that this course is the effect of a regularly operating causal law; and third, the belief that the course of change has brought and will continue to bring

26 The Idea of Progress; a Collection of Readings; selected by F. J. Teg- gart; revised edition with an introduction by G. H. Hildebrand, 4.
improvement in the condition of mankind.” The first two of these principles were always implied in the Christian belief that every single event and consequently also the course of historical events as a whole take place under God’s will and in accordance with the plan of Divine Providence. But it remained for Eusebius to add the third principle, the optimistic belief in continuous improvement, and thus to develop a full-fledged Christian idea of progress.

Eusebius’ idea was taken up by some of the most prominent theologians of the fourth and early fifth centuries, both in the eastern and the western parts of the Church. This is shown by the interpretations which John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret of Cyrus gave in their various commentaries on Psalm 72 and Isaiah (2, 4), and we may add, on the passage in Psalm 46 (v. 9), which reads: “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth.” Like Eusebius all the writers just mentioned explained these passages in terms of the Pax Romana and its earthly achievements, and it seems that of the great theologians of the fourth century only Athanasius and Basil expounded them in a strictly spiritual sense.

When Augustine wrote his Enarrations on the Psalms, he replaced the explanations of the above passages with interpretations wholly different and entirely his own. For instance, Origen, Eusebius, John Chrysostom and Ambrose had declared that the words of Psalm 46: “He maketh wars to end,” had been realized in the reign of Augustus; Basil alone had explained that passage in exclusively religious terms. But whereas Basil had contented himself with simply setting forth his personal exposition, Augustine accompanied the commentary which he wrote in 412, two years after the fall of Rome, with a polemic directed against the interpretation given by so many of his famous predecessors. For although he did not mention any name, there seems to be no doubt that he was taking issue with

27 Cf. E. Peterson, l.c., 71-88.
the current view when he denied categorically that the prediction of a reign of peace had been fulfilled in any material or historical sense: "There are still wars, wars among nations for supremacy, wars among sects, wars among Jews, pagans, Christians, heretics, and these wars are becoming more frequent" (Enarration on Psalm 45, 13 = 46, 9). In Augustine's opinion, external peace was not yet achieved and, in fact, it would not even matter if it actually had. Only that peace matters which, through divine grace, man finds in himself, by his complete submission to the will of God. "When man learns that in himself he is nothing and that he has no help from himself," Augustine said, "then arms in himself are broken in pieces, then wars in himself are ended. Such wars, then, destroyed that voice of the Most High out of His holy clouds whereby the earth was shaken and the kingdoms were bowed; these wars He has taken away unto the ends of the earth."

In his Enarration on Psalm 71, 10 (= 72, 7), Augustine commented on the passage: "In His days righteousness (iustitia) shall arise and abundance of peace until the moon be exalted." 20 These words, Augustine declared, "ought to be understood as if it were said: there shall arise in His days righteousness to conquer the contradiction and the rebellion of the flesh, and there shall be made a peace so abundant and increasing 'until the moon be exalted,' that is until the Church be lifted up, through the glory of the resurrection to reign with Him." Righteousness and peace in the words of the psalmist ought not to be confused, then, with the notions of iustitia and pax of the earthly state. Those highest Christian ideals have not yet been nor will they ever be embodied in the secular organization of the Roman empire, but they will be realized in the spiritual community of the eternal Church. The theologically untenable identification of the Messianic ideal with the historical reality of the Imperium Romanum could not have been rejected more radically than was done by Augustine in his commentary.

20 The above translation of Psalm 72 is based on the text of the Itala used by Augustine.— This Enarration was written between 415 and 416; see S. M. Zarb, op. cit., Angelicum (1955), XII, 77–81.
Augustine was fully aware of the fact that in his exegetical works he was frequently deviating from his predecessors on essential points. No less a man than Jerome had told him so very bluntly in two letters written in the year 404 (Epist. 105 and 112), that is, long before Augustine wrote his Enarrations on Psalms 45 and 71. It is interesting to note that Jerome specifically referred to Augustine’s “little commentaries on some of the Psalms, which, if I were disposed to criticise them,” Jerome said (Epist. 105, 2), “I could prove to be at variance, I shall not say with my own opinion, for ‘I am nothing’ (1 Corinth., 13, 2), but with the interpretations of the older Greek commentators.” In his reply Augustine stated in unmistakable terms (Epist. 82, 3) that he felt justified in deviating from views held by previous commentators in any instance in which he considered himself to be in full accordance with the Scriptures; for he declared that “of only those books of the Scriptures, which are now called canonical, do I most firmly believe that their authors have made no error in their writing.” He continued: “But the others I read in such a way that, however outstanding the authors are in sanctity and learning, I do not accept their teaching as true on the mere ground of the opinion held by them, but only because they have succeeded in convincing my judgment of its truth either by means of those canonical writings themselves or by arguments addressed to my reason.” The definite nature of this statement entitles us to ascribe great significance to the fact that Augustine interpreted the Messianic predictions of the Old Testament in a fashion so fundamentally different from that of some of the most renowned earlier theologians, both Greek and Latin, who had found in those passages the promise of material well-being and progress to be achieved by man on earth and in the course of history.

Augustine’s rejection of these conceptions appears even more noteworthy when we remember that it was during his own lifetime that the Christian idea of progress as developed by Eusebius became the crucial issue in a basic controversy. This

---

30 We do not know to which of Augustine’s “little commentaries” Jerome referred. Augustine started writing his Enarrations in the last decade of the fourth century, cf. Zarb, op. cit.
was the famous affair of the Altar of Victory in Rome, the great
cntlict, the last one in history, between pagan traditionalism
and Christian progressivism. That incident, with its later
repercussions, forms the immediate background of the com-
position of The City of God.

Ever since the days of the Republic the statue of Victory had
stood in the building of the Roman Senate, and the meetings
of the Senate used to be opened with the burning of incense at
the altar of the goddess. In the mid-fourth century emperor
Constantius ordered the removal of the statue, but Julian the
Apostate had it restored to its old place. It was taken away once
again in the year 382. The pagan members of the Roman Senate
were naturally very much disturbed, and in the year 384 the
most highly respected member of that group, Symmachus, sub-
mited an impressive plea to the reigning emperors for the
restoration of the Altar of Victory. Symmachus argued on the
basis of the principle of do ut des, but he used the principle, of
course, according to the pagan mode of thought. The ancient
deities, he declared, have raised Rome to her great position,
and for that reason Rome owes them gratitude (Symmachus' Relatio, §§ 3 and 8). Symmachus let the personification of Rome
address herself to the emperors (§ 9): "Excellent princes, fathers
of the country, respect my years to which pious rites have
brought me. Let me use the ancestral ceremonies, for I do not
repent of them. Let me live after my fashion, for I am free.
This worship has subdued the world to my laws, these sacred
rites repelled Hannibal from my walls and the Gauls from the
Capitol." In the same spirit Symmachus sounded an emphatic
warning (§ 4): "We are cautious as to what may happen in the
future, and we shun portentous actions."

The leading Christian figure of that time, Bishop Ambrose of
Milan took it upon himself to reply to the plea made by the
great pagan statesman. In his refutation of Symmachus' asser-
tion that Rome rose to power through the favor of the pagan

---

31 On this affair, see esp. J. R. Palanque, S. Ambroise et l'empire Romain
um den Altar der Viktoria (1939); L. Malunowicw, De ara victoriae in curia
Romana quomodo certatum sit (1937); M. Lavarenne in his edition of the
works of Prudence (1948), III, 85–90.
gods, Ambrose employed, of course, the old arguments of the Christian apologists. But he went farther. He, too, let Rome speak for herself (Epist. 18, 7). But whereas Symmachus' Roma had pleaded for the preservation of the time-honored traditions of the past, Ambrose's Roma appealed to the idea of progress. "It is no disgrace," she declared, "to pass on to better things." And in answer to Symmachus' traditionalist argument that "the rites of our ancestors ought to be retained," Ambrose asked (§ 23): "Why should we do so? Has not everything made advances in the course of time toward what is better?" In both the memoranda which he addressed to the then reigning emperors, Ambrose made it clear that he shared the current belief that Christianity was a progressive factor in history. It may be remarked in passing that Ambrose, like Eusebius and Symmachus, believed that the relationship between God and man is largely determined by the principle of merit and reward. For instance, in his treatise On Faith (2, 16), Ambrose did not hesitate to find the explanation for the defeat of the emperor Valens in the battle of Adrianople in 378 in the fact that Valens was an Arian heretic: on the other hand he predicted with full confidence the victory of the emperor Gratian over the Visigoths because the new ruler confessed the orthodox faith.\footnote{\textsuperscript{32}}

In the year 384, the question of the Altar of Victory was settled in accordance with Ambrose's wishes, but during the next two decades the pagan faction of the Roman Senate continued to work, with varying success, for the restoration of the statue. Thus around the year 403, the poet Prudentius decided to present once more the Christian point of view in regard to that problem.\footnote{\textsuperscript{32}} His poem entitled Against Symmachus was the greatest poetical expression the Christian idea of progress ever found in early western Christendom. According to Prudentius, God had assigned to the Romans the task of conquering the world and establishing a universal empire so as to pave the way for the spread of the universal religion. The mission of the Roman empire was to become finally the


Christian empire. That great turn took place under Constantine who, in Prudentius' words (1, 539 f.), "accustomed Romulus' state to be powerful for ever in a dominion derived from above." In his description of the universal and eternal Christian empire as it was established by Constantine, Prudentius used phrases (1, 541-43) which are almost identical with those which Vergil once had made Jupiter say: "[Constantine] did not set any boundaries nor did he fix limits of time; he taught an imperial power without end so that the Roman valor should no longer be senile nor the glory which Rome had won should ever know old age." This Christian Rome, Prudentius said (1, 587-90), "has dedicated herself to Thee, O Christ, and has passed under Thy laws, and is willing now, with all her people and her greatest citizens, to extend her earthly rule beyond the lofty stars of the great heavens." Prudentius recalled Symmachus' assertion that it was only because of the help of the ancient gods that neither the Gauls nor Hannibal had succeeded in completely overwhelming Rome. He let his personification of the Christian Roma reply as follows (2, 690-95): "Whosoever tries to impress me again with the memories of past defeats and ancient calamities, he ought to see that in this age of yours [i.e., that of the Christian emperors] I no longer suffer anything of that sort. No barbaric enemy shatters my walls with a javelin and no man with strange weapons, attire and hairdress wanders around the city he has conquered and carries off my young men into transalpine prisons."

These lines were written around the year 403. In 410 Rome fell to Alaric and Visigothic "strangers wandered around the city they had conquered." Under these circumstances many contemporaries, pagan as well as Christian, must have remembered the sombre warnings of Symmachus, which had been so recently discussed again and so optimistically rejected by Prudentius. In the year 410 Alaric had achieved that complete conquest of Rome which hundreds of years before Hannibal had failed to accomplish, and the long-dreaded "fall of Rome" had taken place almost immediately after a Christian poet had assured his listeners that it could not happen now and never would.
The reactions of the pagan and Christian contemporaries were profound and radical, as we learn from the Sermon on the Fall of the City, which Augustine preached shortly after the event.\textsuperscript{34} The pagans said to the Christians (§ 9): "As long as we brought sacrifices to our Gods, Rome stood; now when the sacrifice to your God is triumphant and abounds and the sacrifices to our gods are prevented and forbidden, see what Rome is suffering." And the Christians, according to Augustine's sermon (§ 6), were shocked and bewildered by the fact that in spite of the many holy places in the city, in spite of the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul and many other martyrs, "Rome is miserable and devastated. Rome is afflicted, laid waste and burnt." Augustine was naturally much more concerned about the reactions of the Christians than about those of the pagans. For in the aftermath of the year 410 it had become evident that Christianity included within its ranks many people who had been won over to the new faith simply because of its external triumph. To them Christianity meant primarily the belief in the effectiveness of the principle of do ut des, which had been taught by Eusebius and his followers. Such a faith, based as it was on essentially materialistic foundations, and such a shallow optimism were of necessity badly shaken by the turn of events. How deeply conscious Augustine was of the problem presented by those worldly-minded Christians is revealed by another sermon which he preached after the fall of Rome. In bitter words he condemned (Sermon 105, 13) "those blasphemers who chase and long after things earthly and place their hopes in things earthly. When they have lost them, whether they will or not, what shall they hold and where shall they abide? Nothing within, nothing without; an empty coffer, an emptier conscience."

This was the situation, from the ideological point of view a very critical situation, which motivated Augustine to write The City of God. He realized that one single event, the "fall of Rome," had an impact upon the thinking and the feeling of his contemporaries which went far beyond its material im-

\textsuperscript{34} The Latin text of Sermon 296 has recently been re-edited by G. Morin, in Miscellanea Agostiniana (1930), I, 401-419
portance. The significance attributed to the event resulted from the central position which the destiny and fate of "eternal" Rome occupied in the existing conceptions of history, whether they were pagan or Christian. If Augustine, then, wanted to combat in a truly fundamental fashion the interpretations of that "fall of Rome," he could do so only by setting forth his own ideas concerning the course and the meaning of history. Therefore he was willing to devote thirteen years of his life to the most comprehensive study of the problem of history, a problem which up to the year 410 had been of merely incidental interest to him.

In attempting to solve that problem, Augustine found, as we have seen, that he had to reject practically all the current conceptions of history. He did not share the sentiments of those among the early Christian writers to whom any concern about history was superfluous in view of the presumably imminent end of this world, and he had no interest in eschatological speculations and calculations regarding the future Millennium. Neither could he, of course, accept the cyclical theory as it was held by some of the pagan schools of philosophy and, in a modified form, by Origen. And he saw most clearly how perilous it was for the Christian faith to proclaim, as Eusebius and others had done during the fourth century, a belief in "progress," if that notion was understood in any kind of materialistic sense. For under the existing circumstances it was inevitable that "most of the pagans," as Augustine said in his Enarration on Psalm 136, 9, asked the question: "Is it not true that since the coming of Christ the state of human affairs has been worse than it was before and that human affairs were once much more fortunate than they are now?" 35 Every emphasis on the idea of secular progress was bound to lay the Christian cause wide open to attacks by the pagans and to the disillusionment of the half-hearted Christians. Both groups could rightly find that all promises of worldly success were totally disproved by the catastrophe of the year 410—and there might be more and worse disasters to come.

35 This Enarration was written between 410 and 413; see Zarb, l.e. (1939), XVI, 289 f.
In contradistinction to all these conceptions Augustine's own views concerning history represent a basic reiteration and systematic elaboration of Hebrew and early Christian ideas. To him history was the *operatio Dei in time*, it was "a one-directional, teleological process, directed towards one goal—salvation," the salvation of individual men, not of any collective groups or organizations. Ever since the creation of the world there have existed two cities, the city of God or the community of those who "wish to live after the spirit," and the earthly city or the community of those who "wish to live after the flesh" (*City of God*, 14, 1 C). Of the twelve books of the second part of *The City of God*, eight books deal with the origin (*exordium*) and the end (*finis*) of those two cities, that is with the Creation and the Last Judgment. Only the middle section (books XV to XVIII) deals with that period of time which is commonly considered to be the historical era, and even within that section Augustine gave his main attention to those men and events which belonged to "the heavenly city which is a pilgrim on earth" (18, 54 K). The fact that only one book of *The City of God* (b. XVIII) treats historical developments proper, shows clearly that Augustine regarded the purely secular aspects of the drama of mankind as relatively insignificant.

The content of that middle section of *The City of God* comprising books XV to XVIII has been defined by Augustine as follows (15, 1 C): "It now seems right to me to approach the account of the course [of the two cities] from the time when those two [i.e., Adam and Eve] began to propagate the race to the time when men shall cease to propagate. For this whole time or world-age, in which the dying give place and those who are born succeed, is the course of the two cities which are under discussion." Twice in the passage just quoted, and in two other passages (11, 1 C and 18, 54 K), Augustine used the word *excursus* to define the historical process which is taking place between the Creation and the Last Judgment. In other

---

36 See above, note 16
38 *Cf.* *City of God*, 15, 9 D: *praeterit saeculi excursus.*
passages of *The City of God*, and more frequently, he employed the words *procursum* and *proccurrere* for the development within the same span of time. What is the meaning of these words? When we look in the translations of *The City of God* by John Healey and by Marcus Dods, we find that they translated the noun *procursum* most frequently with "progress," but also with "history," "proceedings" and "advance," the verb *proccurrere* with "run its course," "run on," "proceed" and "progress," and the word *excursus* with "progress," "progression," "career" or "course." In their recent translation of *The City of God*, Fathers Demetrius B. Zema and Gerald G. Walsh translated the word *procursum* with "progress" and *excursus* with "development." Do we have to assume, then, that Augustine believed that the course of the two cities on earth takes place in some form of evolutionary progress? Such an assumption appears highly improbable. For not only were the two words *procursum* and *excursus* used interchangeably throughout *The City of God* and in the description of this work in Augustine's *Retractions* (2, 69, 2), but in a letter which was written shortly after the completion of *The City of God*, Augustine said explicitly that the section under discussion "sets forth the *procursum* or, as we have preferred to say, the *excursus* [of the heavenly city]." In retrospect, then, Augustine himself considered the term *excursus* more adequate. To equate that word with "progress" seems very questionable, both from the linguistic point of view and in consideration of the modern connotation of this term.

The best key to the right understanding of this particular terminology seems to be provided by a passage in *The City of God* of

---

30 E.g., *City of God*, 1, 35 B; 10, 32 U; 15, 1 D; 16, 12 A, 35 A and 43 I; 17, 1 A, 4 A and 14 A; 18, 1 A, B, C and 2 G.


41 The text of this newly found letter to Firmus has been published by C. Lambot in *Revue Bénédictine* (1939), LII, 212; the passage reads: *procursum sive dicere malum excursus*; it has been translated by Zema and Walsh, *l.c.*, I, 400, with "its progress, or, as we might choose to say, its development."
God (15. 21 E), in which Augustine said: "The reckoning of the times [in the Scripture] begins after the two cities have been set forth, the one founded in the business of this world, the other in the hope for God, but both coming out from the common gate of mortality, which is opened in Adam, so that they might run on and run out (procurent et excurrunt) to their separate proper and merited ends." The history of the two cities, according to this passage, has the same starting-point, the fall of Adam; from that point they follow each its own course to the terminal point in time, the Last Judgment. Thus Augustine conceived of the historical process in the form of two tracks the courses of which have been laid out by God and are to be followed by the successive generations of the citizens of the two communities. In the terms of that figure of speech it was possible for Augustine to use the words "run on" and "run out" as synonyms and to say that the city of God on earth "proceeded in running out its course." 42

With regard to the course of the heavenly city it may be said that there is a "progress," not of any materialistic nature, but in the sense that there is a gradual revelation of the divine truth communicated by God to man, especially through the prophecies predicting the future Messiah (see, e.g., 18, 27). 43 Augustine declared (10, 14 A): "Like the correct knowledge of an individual man, the correct knowledge of that part of mankind which belongs to the people of God, has advanced by approaches through certain epochs of time or, as it were, ages, so that it might be lifted from the temporal to the perception of the eternal and from the visible to that of the invisible." In the spiritual realm, therefore, according to Augustine, mankind has grown up from the time of its infancy through the phases of childhood, adolescence, young manhood and mature manhood to its old age (senectus) which has begun with

42 City of God, XIX, 5 A: ... ista Dei civitas ... progrederetur excursion. ...

43 Cf. K. Löwith, l.c., p. 172: "... there is only one progress, the advance toward an ever sharper distinction between faith and unbelief, Christ and Antichrist ..."; according to J. Daniélou, l.c., 70, it was Irenæus of Lyons who first saw that "the reason for this progression is of a pedagogical nature."
the birth of Christ. That growth of the spiritual enlightenment of the human race found its clearest expression in the scheme of "the six ages," to which Augustine alluded in the passage just quoted and into which he divided the course of the heavenly city on earth.\textsuperscript{44} The summit has been reached with the appearance and the gospel of Christ, and no further fundamental change will take place in the spiritual realm to the end of time.

In regard to the developments in the sphere of the earthly city, Augustine emphasized repeatedly in his historical survey the mutability and the instability of human affairs. Cities, kingdoms and empires have risen and fallen throughout the course of history, and this will always be the case. For, Augustine declared (17, 13\textsuperscript{C}) "because of the mutability of things human no security will ever be given to any nation to such a degree that it should not have to fear invasions inimical to its very existence." Augustine admitted that the Roman empire had achieved more than any other state, and he granted that the pagan Romans had possessed certain qualities which might be called virtues, though not in the full and true sense of the word. At the same time Augustine, like his pupil Orosius, maintained that for many centuries the Roman empire was involved in a process of moral disintegration, in a decline which had started long before the times of Christ and Augustus.\textsuperscript{46}

Eusebius and the other Christian progressivists of the fourth century had strongly stressed the coincidence of the birth of Christ and the reign of Augustus, for they saw the counterpart of the religious summit in the erection of the "eternal" Roman empire and in the establishment of the "universal" Pax Romana. Whereas that observation occupied a central position in their conceptions of history, Augustine passed over it in a single sentence, by simply stating (18, 46\textsuperscript{A}): "While Herod reigned in Judaea and, after the change of the republican government, Caesar Augustus was emperor in Rome and paci-

\textsuperscript{44} See City of God, 15 C A; 16, 24 F and 43 G; 22, 30 O–P; the most detailed exposition of that scheme is to be found in Augustine's treatise De Genesi contra Manichaeos, I, 23–24, in Migne, Patrologia Latina, XXXIV, 190–194; cf. W. M. Green, l.c., 320–327.

\textsuperscript{46} Besides many passages in The City of God, see a letter written by Augustine in the year 412 (Epist. 138).
fied the world, Christ, man manifest out of a human virgin, God hidden out of God the Father, was born of Judah in Bethlehem." Whereas according to Eusebius and his followers the history of man had taken a fresh start at that time and had "progressed" toward a new culminating-point under Constantine, when the Roman empire reached the fulfillment of its mission by becoming Christian, Augustine stopped his historical account precisely with the appearance of Christ. To him the period following that event and extending to his own days and to the end to come, was not a modern era but it was "the senectus of the old man, the last age in which the new man is born who now lives according to the spirit." 46 God has revealed all the truth that is to be communicated to man in this world, and henceforth the history of both the heavenly and the earthly cities has no fundamentally new lessons to teach. Augustine did not share the optimism of Eusebius and others; on the contrary, he spoke of his own era as "this malignant world, these evil days" (18, 49 A), and he reckoned even with the possibility of future persecutions of the Church and the faith (18, 52). He reminded his readers (16, 24 H) that, according to Christ's own words, the terminal period of history will not be an era of secular peace and earthly prosperity but just the opposite: "About the end of this world the faithful shall be in great perturbation and tribulation, of which the Lord has said in the Gospel: 'For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be' (Matthew, 24, 21)."

In Augustine's opinion, then, there is no true "progress" to be found in the course of human history. He was, of course, well aware of the fact that "the human genius has invented and put to practical use many and great arts ... and that human industry has made wonderful and stupefying advances" (22, 24 K–L). But at the same time he pointed out a fact which has been overlooked all too often by believers in the blessings of material progress, the fact that the ingenuity and the inventiveness of man have also their destructive aspects: "And for the

46 Augustine, De Genesi contra Manichaeos, I, 23, 40, in Migne, Lc., XXXIV, 192.
injury of men, how many kinds of poison, how many weapons and machines of destruction have been invented." This dual aspect of the development of human history results from the very nature of the forces determining its course. "In this river or torrent of the human race," Augustine said toward the end of *The City of God* (22, 24 A), "two things run the course together, the evil which is derived from the parent [Adam], and the good which is bestowed by the Creator."
Aponius and Orosius

on the Significance of the Epiphany

IN the history of the feasts of Christmas and Epiphany, the
carly fifth century marks an important period. By that time,
the Roman practice of celebrating the birth of Christ on

* Reprinted from *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of

1 The interest in the topic and the idea for this article grew out of a
number of highly stimulating conversations concerning questions of the
Western and Eastern liturgy, which I had during the last few years with
Albert M. Friend and Ernst Kantorowicz. On the general history of the
development of these two festivals, see esp. H. Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest,*
Bonn 1889 (reprinted in *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen,* and ed.
1. Bonn 1914); K. Holl, “Der Ursprung des Epiphanielstes,” *Gesammelte
Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte,* Tubingen 1928, II. 129–154; B. Botte, *Les
origines de la Noc et de l’Epiphanie,* Louvain 1938, K. Prüm, “Zur Entste-
hung der Geburtsfeier des Herrn in Ost und West,” *Stimmen der Zeit,* 155
(1939), pp. 207–225; H. Lietzmann, *Geschichte der alten Kirche,* Berlin
314–322), A. Strittmatter, “Christmas and the Epiphany, Origins and Ante-
tecedents,” *Thought,* xvii (1942), 600–696; O. Cullmann, *Weihnachten in
romischen Weihnachtsfestes im Lichte neuerer Forschung,” *Archiv für
Liturgiewissenschaft,* ii (1938), i–14 (with an excellent critical bibliog-
raphy); H. Engberding, “Der 25. Dezember als Tag der Feier der Geburt
des Herrn,” *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft,* ii, 25–45; C. Mohrmann,
*Epiphania,* Nijmegen 1953.
December 25 had found an almost general acceptance both in the Western and the Eastern churches, above all in Antioch and Constantinople. In only a few of the oriental provinces, for instance in Egypt and Palestine, the faithful still adhered, and continued to do so for some time to come, to their old custom of commemorating the birth of Christ on January 6, a practice observed even today in Armenia.

As for the significance of the feast of the Epiphany, however, two entirely different traditions had started to develop in the Christian world by the beginning of the fifth century. On the one hand, the Church of Rome had made the decision that the day of January 6 should be dedicated almost exclusively to the commemoration of the adoration of Christ by the Magi; this view was shared by St. Augustine, who, in all of his six sermons on the feast of the Epiphany, preached that this was the day on which Christ had been worshiped by the three Magi from the East and was thus "manifested to the firstlings of the gentiles." On the other hand, in most of the remaining parts of


4 See Botte, op. cit., pp. 11 f.; Strittmatter, op. cit., pp. 604 f.


6 See K. Holl, op. cit., p. 126, n. 1; Botte, op. cit., pp. 30 f.

7 On the reasons for this decision, see Strittmatter, op. cit., pp. 624-626; Cullmann, op. cit., pp. 19-24; cf. also the eight Epiphany sermons preached by Pope Leo the Great (Sermones 31-38), which were thoroughly analyzed by E. Flicoteaux, "L'Epiphanie du Seigneur," Ephemeredes Liturgicae, xliv (1925), 901-912.

Christendom, the feast of the Epiphany was given a much more far-reaching and deeper meaning than the Church of Rome and St. Augustine were willing to grant to it. As Dom Anselm Strittmatter has said, the day of January 6 "became in the East, once the Western feast of December 25 had been introduced, the commemoration of Christ's Baptism and in addition to Easter a day set aside for the public baptism of the catechumens." To the present day, the Eastern Christian churches celebrate on the day of the Epiphany primarily the memory of Christ's baptism on the Jordan River and the establishment of the sacrament of baptism. In the West, however, the Church of Rome, supported by the great authority of St. Augustine, was gradually, in the course of the following centuries, to succeed in enforcing the almost complete exclusion of the liturgical commemoration both of Christ's baptism and of the foundation of the sacrament itself, and in reducing the significance of the feast of the Epiphany to the celebration of the adoration of the Magi.

But around the year 400 this Roman conception of the feast, though clearly stated, was as yet by no means universally accepted by the Christians of the occidental world. Most of the important churches—including Milan under the leadership of St. Ambrose, Spain, Gaul, and Ireland—still continued the practice of solemnizing on January 6 the baptism of Christ, as well as the adoration of the Magi and the miracle of Cana. This state of affairs is best illustrated by a remark which John Cassian made in his Conferences, written between the years 420 and 428. He observed that in Egypt "the priests regard

---

9 Strittmatter, op. cit., p 623: see also Holl, op. cit., p. 123; Botte, op. cit., pp. 82 f.
the Epiphany as the time both of our Lord’s baptism and of His birth in the flesh, and consequently they celebrate the commemoration of either mystery on the single festival of this day, and not separately as in the western provinces.” From the last part of this statement, it becomes evident that John Cassian believed that in the Western churches of that time the celebration of Christ’s baptism was just as generally observed on the day of the Epiphany as the celebration of Christ’s birth was universally observed in them on Christmas Day.

In view of the basic divergence of opinion concerning the significance of the Epiphany, which existed within the church as a whole at the beginning of the fifth century, it may be warranted to introduce into the discussion of the problem two passages which, it seems, have not hitherto gained sufficient attention in this connection. Both of the authors of these passages, Aponius and Orosius, wrote in the early fifth century, both held views which differed widely from those held by the Church of Rome and by St. Augustine, and finally both of them attempted in a most curious fashion to relate the Epiphany of Christ to events in the realm of secular history, which took place in the reign of the Emperor Augustus.

Aponius is a rather obscure figure among the early theologians of the church. His name, it seems, is not mentioned by

13 Johannes Cassianus, Conlatio, x, 2 (ed. M. Ptschenig, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, xiii, 2, Vienna 1886, 286): ... peracto Epiphaniorum die, quem illius provinciae [i.e. Egypt] sacerdotes uel dominici baptismatis uel secundum carnem nativitatis esse definuint et idcirco utriusque sacramenti sollemnitatem, non bifarie ut in occiduis provinciis... sed sub una diuii huius festivitatis concelebrant...; English translation by E. C. S. Gibson, in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, xi (1894), 401; see Strittmatter, op. cit., pp. 604 f.

centered his whole exposition of this passage on the theme of peace: “Just as at the time of the birth of Christ the angels proclaim peace to men of good will (Luke 2:14), and just as Christ, according to the power of divinity, is all things to men, being God of gods, Lord of lords, King of kings, Prince of princes, Prophet of prophets, Anointed of the anointed, Judge of judges, Emperor of emperors, Saint of saints, Martyr of martyrs, so now according to the nature of the flesh, He asserted with proof and reason that He himself is ‘the Wall of walls.’”

Aponius declared that the peace taught by Christ “is not the peace and perpetual tranquillity which the saints will enjoy after the end of this secular world, of which the prophet said (Psalm 37:11): ‘The meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace’ . . . , but it ought to be understood as the peace of re-atonement found again between God and man.”

Aponius’ interpretation of the passage in The Song of Songs concluded by attributing to the peace, given to man through the birth of Christ, still another meaning—one which lay outside the strictly spiritual sphere. By the very fact that Christ assumed a human body and “in humanitate died most voluntarily for those who hate peace,” Aponius said, “it was shown to the world that not only a peace of souls illuminates the world.” He proved this point by con-

---


21 Ibid., p. 236: Docuit utique non illam pacem perpetuamque tranquillitatem, quam fructuri sunt sancti post huius saeculi finem, de qua dixit prophetæ: “Mansueti possidebant terram et delectabantur in multitudine pacis”; sed tantum, quam possit capere mundus, se reperisse nascendo pronuntiat, non illam quam iudicando daturus est dignis, sed illam quam iudicatus ab indignis reperit mundo. Non enim inconcussa pax est nec pacis est multitudo, ubi innumerabila et antiqua bella grassantur quotidie; ubi dicitur: Vae mundo a scandalis; ubi in collucatione positi sunt fideles; ubi non coronatur, nisi qui legitem certaverit; ubi adiutorii auxilia a bellatoribus quotidie implorantur; sed illa intelligitur repropitiationis pax, inter Deum et hominem reperta, per quod docuit a protoplasto Adam usque ad partum Virginis, tellum fuisse inter Creatorem et creaturam.
tinuing: "When the Roman Empire was exalted, foreign as well as civil wars were laid to rest and all peoples, civilized and barbarian, rejoice in the peace which has been found; since that time, the race of men wherever on earth it is located, is bound together by one bond of peace." Aponius supported this argument as follows: "On the day of His apparitio, which is called the Epiphanie, Caesar Augustus, after his return from Britain, announced to the Roman people during the spectacles, as Livy says, that the whole world was subjugated in the abundance of peace to the Roman Empire, by means of war as well as through alliances." As an example of that pacification of the world, Aponius pointed to the fact that "when at that time, at the instigation of the Devil, wars broke out in Syria, it is proved that they were settled as quickly as possible through the intervention of peace, that is, through the presence of Christ." Aponius concluded in this way: "In His indescribable fabrica was fulfilled the prophecy predicted by David (Psalm 72, 3 and 7): 'The mountains shall bring peace and the hills righteousness,' and 'In His days shall righteousness flourish and abundance of peace.' If any of his readers still doubted that the peace established on earth through the birth of Christ had also to be interpreted in a secular sense, Aponius stated explicitly that "the gift of peace, which the Creator has given us through the reatonement," manifested itself in the sphere of earthly kings.
and judges. To be sure, Aponius granted that "there are still some kings who, in their desire for money, break the peace, and there are still judges who dispense justice blinded by bribes." Nevertheless, he asserted, "they do not rage as insanely and revel as much in evil as kings and judges of diverse peoples used to do before the coming of Christ, as we learn from the histories of ancient times; for how much so ever the aforesaid judges vent their fury against their subjects, or the most cruel kings wage wars among one another, still they are prevented, even against their own will, from their evil intentions by Christ, the author of peace, on account of the misery of the helpless and the lamentations of the poor and innocent who invoke Him." This invocation led Aponius to the discussion of the next verse in The Song of Songs (8:11), telling of Solomon's vineyard, which does not concern us here.

It has seemed necessary to quote rather extensively from the text of Aponius' discussion of the nature of the peace established by Christ on earth because his remarks raise several interesting questions. In the first place, which event in Christ's life did Aponius have in mind when he spoke of "the day of his apparitio, which is called Epiphany"? From the context it is evident that he meant the day of Christ's birth. For twice, once at the beginning of his comment on that verse in The Song of Songs and also a few lines before he discussed the earthly peace, he quoted the announcement of the angels to the shepherds, which he explicitly declared to have taken place in eius nativitate (or in eius ortu). Furthermore, in the whole context there

26 Ibid.: Quod utique in regibus et iudicibus terrae accipiendum est. Qui, ex quo facta est saepedicta gloriosa anima, quae nobis Creatorem reproduciendo pacis munus donavit, et reges inter se pacis dulcedinem et iudices iustitiae obtinent suavitatem. Quamvis enim, ut diximus, fame pecuniae perurgente, nonnulli reges pacem irrumant vel iudices excaecati muneribus solvant iustitiam, tamen non usque adeo insaniant vel debacchantur in malis, sicut ante eius adventum fecisse reges et iudices diversarum gentium antiquitatem historiis edocemur. Quantumvis igitur saeviant contra subiectos praedicti iudices vel contra se crudelissimi reges bella indicant, prohibentur licet inviti a malis intentionibus a pacis auctore Christo propter miseriam inopum geminumque pauperum vel innocentem invocantium eum.

27 See above, note 20, and Aponius, op. cit., p. 236: Quae magnitudine humilitatis suae sola inter Creatorem Deum et hominem, quem utrumque
and judges. To be sure, Aponius granted that “there are still some kings who, in their desire for money, break the peace, and there are still judges who dispense justice blinded by bribes.” Nevertheless, he asserted, “they do not rage as insanely and revel as much in evil as kings and judges of diverse peoples used to do before the coming of Christ, as we learn from the histories of ancient times; for how much so ever the aforesaid judges vent their fury against their subjects, or the most cruel kings wage wars among one another, still they are prevented, even against their own will, from their evil intentions by Christ, the author of peace, on account of the misery of the helpless and the lamentations of the poor and innocent who invoke Him.” 26 This invocation led Aponius to the discussion of the next verse in The Song of Songs (8:11), telling of Solomon’s vineyard, which does not concern us here.

It has seemed necessary to quote rather extensively from the text of Aponius’ discussion of the nature of the peace established by Christ on earth because his remarks raise several interesting questions. In the first place, which event in Christ’s life did Aponius have in mind when he spoke of “the day of his apparitio, which is called Epiphany”? From the context it is evident that he meant the day of Christ’s birth. For twice, once at the beginning of his comment on that verse in The Song of Songs and also a few lines before he discussed the earthly peace, he quoted the announcement of the angels to the shepherds, which he explicitly declared to have taken place in eius nativitate (or in eius ortu). 27 Furthermore, in the whole context there

26 Ibid.: Quod utique in regibus et iudicibus terrae accipiendum est. Quis, ex quo facta est saepedicta gloriosa anima, quae nobis Creatorem reprobitando pacis munus donavit, et reges inter se pacis dulcedinem et iudices iustitiae obtinere suavitatem. Quamvis enim, ut diximus, fame pecuniae perurgente, nonnulli reges pacem irruptament vel iudices excaecati muneriibus solvant iustitiam, tamen non usque adeo insaniunt vel debacchantur in malis, sicut ante eius adventum fecissent reges et iudices diversarum gentium antiquitatum historiis edocemur. Quantumvis igitur saeviant contra subjectos praedicti iudices vel contra se crudelissimi reges bella indicant, prohibentur licet invitati malis intentionibus a pacis auctore Christo propter miseriam inopum gemitumque pauperum vel innocentum invocantium eum.

27 See above, note 26, and Aponius, op. cit., p. 236: Quae magnitudine humiliatis suae sola inter Creatorem Deum et hominem, quem utrumque
he declared, the Emperor Augustus "announced to the Roman people . . . that the whole world was subjugated to the Roman empire in the abundance of peace, by means of war as well as through alliances." 38 Whether or not there actually existed in Livy's Ab Urbe Condita a statement to that effect, as Aponius claimed, need not concern us in this connection; likewise, it does not matter that the passage in Livy, even if it is authentic as it seems likely, must be referred to a much earlier date, the year 24 B.C. 39 What is important, however, is that Aponius believed it to be an undeniable historical fact that the birth of Christ in Bethlehem and the proclamation of universal peace made by Augustus in Rome were events which took place on the same day.

With this expression of the belief in the providential coincidence between the appearance of Christ and the establishment of the Pax Romana on earth, Aponius placed himself within an old and very common tradition of Christian thought. 40 Ever since Bishop Melito of Sardis and Tertullian, the early Christian thinkers had strongly emphasized the fact that the birth of Christ occurred at the time of the foundation of the Roman empire by Augustus, and after the triumph of Christianity under Constantine, the champions of the faith, led by Eusebius and other theologians of the fourth century, had stressed the providential character of that coincidence with even greater conviction than ever before. As we have seen, Aponius did not hesitate, in the passage just quoted and in another place, 41 to use the Biblical phrase "abundance of peace" in reference to the peace established by Augustus. According to the original tradition, as represented by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Lactantius, these words of the Psalm 72:7: "In his days shall righteousness flourish and abundance of peace," were to be

38 See above note 29.
39 I have dealt with this problem in an article "Augustus and Britain: A Fragment from Livy?," American Journal of Philology, LXXV, 1954, 175-183.
41 See above note 29.
understood as predictions of the future Messianic Kingdom. But in delineating his own bluntly secular interpretation, Aponius could feel supported by the fact that some of the greatest ecclesiastical authorities of the third and fourth centuries, including Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Jerome, had explained that prophecy of the psalmist in terms of the Pax Romana and its earthly achievements.42

Aponius found still another Biblical reference which, he believed, illustrated the role assigned to the Roman Empire in the plan of divine providence. In commenting on the passage in The Song of Songs (4:16): “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out,” he maintained that “just as the rigor of the north wind and the warmth of the south wind, through the tempering of the air, effect the growth of fruit in paradise,” 43 so there existed also in the secular sphere the need for “a tempered air,” to be brought about by the coexistence of, or rather the conflict between, two opposite elements. “While the almighty God,” declared Aponius, “exalts above all kingdoms of the world the kingdom of the north wind, which is the kingdom of the Romans, He commands the prophets to arise, lifting them up from the south and bringing forth through the Virgin His Christ of whom the prophets sang that He would come from the South, as the prophet Habakkuk says: ‘God will come from the South.’” 44 Aponius considered the persecutions of the Christians to be the work of the Devil who operated through the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, in his opinion, “the evil

42 See [above, pp. 282–285].
43 Aponius, op. cit., p. 136: “Surge Aquilo et veni Auster, perfla hortum meum, et fluent aromata illius”; ut rigor Aquilonis et calor Austri temperato aere efficiant poma paradiso provenire, quo possint commixto rigore tribulationis, non inane nitium securitatis calore baecae animarum paradisi defluere ad terrenos actus delapsae.
44 Ibid.: Exaltando igitur regnum Aquilonis super omnia regna orbis terrarum omnipotens Deus, quod est regnum Romanum, surgere iubet suscitando ab austro prophetas, ostendendo Christum suum per Virginem, quem prophetae ab austro cessenerunt venturum, ut ait Abacuc prophetae: “Deus ab austro veniet,” idest sermo Patris: “Et sanctus de monte umbroso” (Habakkuk, 3:3), qui assumptus intelligitur homo, et condensum intactoque corpore processisse.
spirit of the north wind," with all the harm wrought by it, worked, "though unknowingly," for the ultimate good of mankind. "In the struggles," Aponius asserted, "which the north wind and the south wind, that is, infidelity and faith, impiety and piety, the spirit of sorrow and that of consolation, fought against each other, while the bride [i.e., the Church] looked on, it is proved that the precious fragrant liquid, the blood of the martyrs, was shed." From this point of view, Aponius found it meaningful that the Roman Empire or, as he said, "the kingdom of the north wind, is permitted to arise, like a very harsh wind, above all other kingdoms." 45

In this way Aponius assigned to the Roman power a role which differed considerably from the peace-giving mission he ascribed to it in his comment on the later verse in The Song of Songs (8:10). Both passages, however, reveal with equal clarity how deeply Aponius was convinced that the universal dominion of Rome occupied a central position in the divine plan of his-

tory. In stating this conviction he remained in accordance with the views held by many of the most prominent Greek and Latin theologians of both his own and earlier times. Only in one respect did he go further than those thinkers had gone. They stressed merely the providential character of the fact that the birth of Christ had taken place sometime during the reign of the founder of the Augustan peace. Aponius believed himself capable, mistakenly to be sure, of proving from a passage in Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* that the earthly peace had actually been proclaimed on the day of the Epiphany, the very day of the birth of the founder of "the peace of re-atonement found again between God and men."

When we turn to Orosius' *Seven Books of Histories against the Pagans*, we find there at the end of the sixth book (vi, 20, 1-2), in the account of the deeds of Augustus, the following passage: "In the seven hundred and twenty-fifth year after the founding of the City, when Caesar Augustus was consul for the fifth time and the other consul was L. Apuleius, Caesar returned as conqueror from the East and entered the city in triple triumph on the sixth of January. It was at that time when all the civil wars had been laid to rest and brought to an end, that he first ordered the closing of the gates of Janus. It was at that time, too, that he was first saluted as Augustus. This title . . . signifies that such seizure of the supreme rule over the world was legitimate; and from that time on the sum of all things and powers began to rest in the hands of one man and remained there, [a form of government] which the Greeks call

46 The fact that Aponius' views on this particular point conformed so closely to the opinions of many of the prominent theologians of the fourth century speaks in favor of the assumption that he composed his work in the early fifth century and not as late as the seventh century (see above, note 14). It is worth noticing in this connection that neither Bede nor Angelomus seems to have made any reference in their commentaries on *The Song of Songs* to Aponius' interpretation of the Augustan peace and the role of the Roman Empire within the plan of divine providence, although Bede knew Aponius' whole work and Angelomus the first six books, of which he made ample use (see Laistner, *op. cit.*, pp. 40 ff.); compare Bede's commentary on *Canticus Canticorum*, 4:16 and 8:10 (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, 91, coll. 1150 ff. and 1217) and Angelomus' commentary on *Canticus Canticorum* 4:16 (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, 115, col. 611).
monarchy.” 47 Orosius continued as follows (vi, 20, 3): “No-
body of those who believe or even of those who are opposed to
the faith, is ignorant of the fact that that day, i.e. January 6,
is the same day on which we observe the Epiphany, that is, the
apparitio or manifestatio of the Lord’s Sacrament.” 48

This passage shows clearly that the feast of the Epiphany
signified to Orosius the celebration of the establishment of
the sacrament of Baptism: 49 it commemorated the day on
which Christ, through his baptism by John, was manifested
to mankind by the voice from heaven, saying: “This is my be-
loved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). For the
evaluation of his view we have to remember that Orosius was
a member of the Spanish church, in which he was ordained
priest. It has been asserted that the celebration of Christ’s
baptism on the day of the Epiphany did not start in Spain be-
fore the sixth or seventh centuries. 50 The validity of these late

47 Orosu historiarum adversum paganos libri vii, ed. K. Zangemeister.
Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, v, Vienna 1882, 418: “Anno
ab Urbe condita iucundum aequo imperatore Caesare Augusto quiunque et L.
Apuleio consulibus Caesar victor ab Orice redivi, usque ad iunx Iunarias
Urbem triplici triumpho ingressus est ac tunc primum ipse iani portas sopitis
finitisque omnibus bellis ciuilibus clausus. Hoc die primum Augustus con-
salutatus est; quem nomen, cunctis antea [inulatum] et usque ad nuac
ceteris inausum dominus, tantum Orbis hice usuatum apicem declarat
imperiu, atque ex eodem die summa rerum ac potentatum penes unum esse
eoepit et manusit, quod Graeci monarchiam vocant.” The above and later
translations are, with slight modifications, those given by I. W. Raymond in
his English rendering of Orosius’ Seven Books of History against the Pa-
gans, New York 1936, p 310.

48 Ed Zangemeister, op. cit., p. 418: “Sotto autem hinc esse eundem
diem, hoc est VIII idus Ianuarius, quo nos Epiphaniam, hoc est apparitionem
sue manifestationem Domini sacramentum, observamus, nemo crederum
sit etiam fidei contradictium nescit.” Translated by Raymond, op. cit.,
Geschichte und Sage des Mittelalters,” Historisches Jahrbuch, xlvi (1926),
86-123; see esp. 90 ff.

49 A parallel for Orosius’ use of the phrase Dominicum sacramentum in
the sense of “the sacrament of baptism” is offered in a later passage of
Historiarum adversum paganos, vi, 35, 7 (ed. Zangemeister, p. 517) in which
Orosius related that Count Theodosius, the father of the emperor, before
his execution baptizat in remissionem peccatorum praecipuam et postquam
sacramentum Christi quod quosserat adseruitus est, willingly died.

50 Flicotcaux, op. cit., p. 410, n. 33 (and also Botte, op. cit., pp. 67 ff.)
considered it likely that the celebration of Christ’s baptism and of the
dates has already been questioned by some scholars on the basis of evidence from the late fourth century, especially that of a letter which Pope Siricius wrote after his election in 385 to Bishop Himerius of Tarragona. As Dom Anselm Strittmatter has pointed out,\(^{52}\) this letter indicates that in Spain, as well as in many other regions in the West, "January 6 was one of the days on which catechumens were publicly baptized." The passage in *The Seven Books of Histories* provides us now with the definite proof that this practice resulted from the fact that on that day the Spanish church, as Orosius said, "observed the Epiphany, that is, the *apparitio* or *manifestatio* of the Lord's sacrament." It may be noted in passing that in some of the manuscripts of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* the word "Epiphany" is defined in terms which are almost identical with those used by Orosius.\(^{53}\)

When Orosius made his statement concerning the Epiphany, apparently he knew quite well that St. Augustine, at whose suggestion he had undertaken, and to whom he was to dedicate his book, held a view according to which this festival commemorated merely the adoration of the Magi and not the baptism of Christ. Orosius' awareness of this divergence of opinion between himself and his master found expression in the rather

---


\(^{52}\) Strittmatter, *op. cit.*, p. 624.

\(^{53}\) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, vi, 18, 6–7 (ed. W. M. Lindsay, i, Oxford 1911): "Epiphania Graecæ, Latine *apparitio* [sive *manifestatio*] (the last two words appear in three manuscripts and are omitted in three others) vocatur. Eo enim die Christus sideris indicio Magis apparuit adorandus. Quod fuit figura primitiae credentium gentium. Quo die [et] Dominici baptismatis sacramentum et permutatae in vinum aquae, factorum per Dominum signorum principia extiterunt." In his discussion of the Epiphany in *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, i, 27, 1–3 (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, 89, cols. 762 f.) Isidore stated likewise that the feast commemorated the adoration of the Magi, the baptism of Christ and the miracle of Cana, and declared that "it is called in Latin *apparitio vel ostensio*"; cf. P. Séjourné, "Saint Isidore de Séville et la liturgie wisigothique," *Miscellanea Isidoriana*, Rome 1936, pp. 237 f. See also Botte, *op. cit.*, pp. 50 f.: "Le terme d'*apparitio*, pour désigner l'Epiphanie, est caractéristique de la liturgie espagnole."
curious words with which he accompanied his remarks on the meaning of the feast (vi. 20, 1): "In order that we might seem to have laid it open for inquirers and not to have inflicted it upon those who disregard it, there is no reason now nor does the occasion call for a fuller discussion of this sacrament which we must faithfully observe." It seems permissible to assume that Orosius, when he asserted that "we most faithfully observe this sacrament," referred to himself and the Spanish Christians, and when he said "that we might seem... not to have inflicted it upon those who disregard it," he alluded to St. Augustine and to everybody else who had accepted the Roman interpretation of the meaning of the feast.

When Orosius dared in such a polite and respectful but yet very determined fashion to disagree with the view held on this question by St. Augustine, he may have felt encouraged by the knowledge that his opinion was shared by the other great Latin theologian of the time, St. Jerome, whom he had just visited in Bethlehem. For St. Jerome, too, the day of the Epiphany solemnized the baptism of Christ, as he stated most explicitly in a sermon preached on the feast of the Epiphany: 55 "The day of the Epiphany is thus called by a Greek word; for what we call apparitio or ostensio, the Greeks call εισφορα. The reason is that [on that day] our Lord and Saviour appeared on earth. Although he was born of Mary and had already reached the age of thirty, he was nevertheless not yet known to the world. He became known at that time when he came to John the Baptist in order to be baptized in the Jordan River and when


56 This sermon was published by Dom B. Capelle, Revue Bénédictine, xxxvi (1924), 169: "Dies epiphaniorum Graeco nomine seipsum vocatur. Quod enim nos adpatruerunt seu ostensionem dicitur, hoc Graeci εισφορα vocant. Hoc autem ideo quia dominus noster et salvator adparuit in terris, hic enim alium natus esset ex Maria et xxx iam annorum explesset acta, sumendo ignotam e mundo. Ed tempore cognitus est, quo ad Iohannem Baptistam, ut in Jordane baptizaretur, aduenit et nunc de caelo patris intonantis audita est: 'Hic est filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.'" This passage is also quoted by Struttmatter, op cit., p. 607, n. 25.
the voice of the Father was heard sounding from heaven: ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” St. Jerome, it must be noted, occupied a rather interesting position in the history of the interpretations of the festivals of Christmas and the Epiphany. On the one hand, in regard to Christmas, it has rightly been said that in all likelihood he “urged the Roman feast upon his eastern friends.” On the other hand, in regard to the Epiphany, he believed that this feast commemorated primarily the baptism of Christ, signifying the spiritual rebirth as distinguished from his birth in the flesh, and thus he maintained a view which was very different from that held by the Church of Rome and by St. Augustine, but conformed closely with the opinions of all of the great contemporary theologians of the Eastern church. To give just one example, St. John

56 Strittmatter, op. cit., p. 600, n. 1.
57 The fact that St. Jerome represented the Roman point of view only in regard to the celebration of Christmas day on December 25, but not in regard to the meaning of the feast of the Epiphany, does not seem to have found sufficient attention. For instance, H. Frank, Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft (1952), 11, 7, noted that “der dem Papst Damasus so nahestehende heilige Hieronymous von seinem römischen Standpunkt aus (auch wenn er in Bethlehem lebte und predigte) Epiphanie als Geburtstag des Herrn kategorisch ablehnte,” and in this connection Frank and also Strittmatter, op. cit., p. 607, n. 24, rightly quoted the passage from the sermon preached by St. Jerome on Christmas day 410 in Bethlehem, which begins with the words (ed. Dom G. Morin, Anecdota Maredsolana, 11, 2, Oxford 1897, 396): “Alli putant quod in Epiphaniiis nascitur; non damnamus aliorum opinionem, nostrum sequimur doctrinam.” But neither Strittmatter nor Frank quoted the continuation of this passage, in which St. Jerome told the members of the Church of Jerusalem what his own interpretation, as opposed to theirs, was concerning the meaning of the Epiphany (ed. G. Morin, op. cit., p. 397): “Nos ergo dicimus, quia hodie (i.e. on Christmas day) Christus natus est, post in Epiphaniiis renatus est. Vos adstruete nobis generationem et regenerationem, vos qui dicitis in Epiphaniiis nutum: quando ergo accepti baptismum, nisi verum eventum dicitis, ut in eadem die nutus sit et renatus?” From this passage, as well as from those quoted in notes 55 and 59, it must be concluded that St. Jerome believed, contrary to the view of the Church of Jerusalem, that the birth of Christ should be celebrated on December 25, and not on January 6; but it must also be concluded that he believed, contrary to the view of the Church of Rome, that the day of the Epiphany on January 6 was to be dedicated to the commemoration of Christ’s “rebirth,” that is, his baptism by John.
Chrysostom used exactly the same argument which St. Jerome set forth both in the Epiphany sermon just quoted and in his Commentaries on Ezekiel (1:3), namely, that Christ was virtually unknown to the world during the first thirty years of his life and “appeared” in the true sense of the word only on the day of his baptism, which for that reason is called the “Epiphany” in Greek, or the apparitio or manifestatio in Latin. St. Jerome, who resided at that time in the East, apparently did not feel any need for an explicit defense of his own opinion on this point against the quite different attitude taken by the Roman church. Orosius, on the other hand, who wrote in the very presence of the greatest champion of the Roman point of view, granted implicitly the existence of two different interpretations of the meaning of the Epiphany, but evidently felt himself sufficiently supported by the tradition of his own Spanish church and by St. Jerome’s opinion to maintain his personal standpoint even against the authority of St. Augustine. Since we know very little about Orosius’ personality, this observation may have a certain value because it enables us to see that in spite of his intimate relationship with, and tremendous respect for, St. Augustine, he endeavored to maintain his independence on issues which were important to him.

After he had given his account of the events which took place on Augustus’ return to Rome on January 6 of the year 29 B.C.—the closing of the gates of Janus and the proclamation of the universal monarchy—and after he had commented upon the

58 In his Sermon on the Baptism (Migne, Pat. Gr., 49, col. 366), St. John Chrysostom asked, “Why is this day called the Epiphany?” and he answered this question thus. “For the reason that Christ did not become manifest to all when he was born but only then when he was baptized; for until that day he was unknown to the many.” To prove the assertion that Christ was virtually unknown, St. Chrysostom quoted St. John 1:26: “There standeth one among you, whom ye know not.” On this sermon of Chrysostom’s, cf. Botte, op. cit., pp. 22 f.

59 Migne, Pat. Lat., xxv, col. 18 f., “Quintam autem diem menstrum (on this date see Holl, op. cit., p. 194, n. 3) adjungit, ut significet baptismum, in quo aperti sunt Christo coeli, et Epiphaniorum dies huiusque venerabilis est, non, ut quidam putant, Natus in carne; tunc enim absconditus est et non apparuit: quod huic tempori congruit, quando dictum est: ‘Hic est filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complaci.’”
meaning of the feast of the Epiphany, Orosius concluded thus: "It was right to have recorded faithfully all this, so that the empire of Caesar might be proven in every respect to have been prepared for the sake of the future coming of Christ." The sentence just quoted served as the leitmotiv for a summary account of three miraculous events in the reign of Augustus, in which, according to Orosius, the hand of God manifested itself. That they are events which took place in Rome and on occasions when Augustus made his entry into the capital is common to all three of these miracles. The first of them occurred on Augustus' return to Rome after Julius Caesar's assassination, when "a circle resembling a rainbow suddenly formed around the sun's disk." The second miracle happened after Augustus' victory over Lepidus when "an abundant spring of oil... flowed through the course of a whole day from an inn" in Trastevere. The third marvelous event was the closing of the gates of Janus and Octavian's acclamation as Augustus on Epiphany day, which has been discussed before. At the end of this summary, Orosius pointed ahead to the account which he was to give in some of the later chapters of his history concerning the events which occurred "on the occasion of a fourth return" of Augustus to Rome during the year of Christ's birth. In this later narration, Orosius emphasized once more the close correspondence between "the firmest and truest peace which Caesar (Augustus) established through God's ordinatio," and that peace which had been announced to mankind by the angels. He also called to the attention of his readers the fact


61 vi, 20, 5 (ibid., p. 419); cf. Frauenholz, op. cit., pp. 93 f., 104 f.

62 vi, 20, 6-7 (ibid., pp. 419 f.); see also vi, 18, 34 (ibid., p. 413); cf. E. v. Frauenholz, op. cit., pp. 101 ff.

63 vi, 20, 9 (ibid., p. 421): "Quid autem in quarto reditu, cum finito Cantabrico bello pacatisque omnibus gentibus Caesar Urbem repetit, ad contestationem fidei, quam exponsorimus, actum sit, ipso melius ordine proferetur."

64 vi, 22, 5 (ibid., p. 428): "Igitur eo tempore, id est eo anno quo firmisimam uerissimamque pacem ordinatione Dei Caesar composuit, natus est Christus, cuius adventui pax ista famulata est, in cuius ortu audientibus
that it was at that time that Augustus declined the appellation of "lord (dominus) on the ground that he was only a man." 66
And finally, Orosius found it noteworthy that in the very year Augustus had ordered the taking of a universal census and that consequently "Christ's name was entered in the Roman census list immediately after his birth." 67

In drawing these parallels between the establishment of the universal monarchy by Augustus and the founding of the universal religion by Christ, Orosius stood at the end of a long tradition which had started early in the history of Christianity, had been greatly developed by Eusebius of Caesarea, and had remained quite generally accepted throughout the fourth century. But nobody before Orosius had ever attempted to set forth such an elaborate religio-political ideology, a veritable "Augustus-Theologie," as Erik Peterson rightly called it. 67

The peculiarity of Orosius' thought becomes particularly evident in the way he treated the above-mentioned closing of the gates of Janus and Octavian's acclamation as Augustus. For, when he interpreted these two facts as signifying the proclamation of universal peace and the establishment of the world monarchy, he was in complete accordance with his source, St. Jerome's translation of Eusebius' Chronica. But when he declared that these two events had taken place on January 6, he made a statement which is supported neither by St. Jerome nor, as far as we can see, by any other extant source. 68

The insertion of the reference to that specific day, however, enabled Orosius to draw the closest possible analogy between the figures of Augustus and Christ: "Since the establishment of peace, the bestowal of the name [Augustus] and the day [Epiphany] oc-

67 vii, 22, 6–8 (ibid., pp. 428 f).
68 See Zangemeister's notes (op. cit., p. 418) on the passage in Orosius (vi, 20, 1–2), the actual date was January 11 (see Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie, xi, 1 [1917], col. 338).
curred together for the purpose of such a *manifestatio,*" he asks, "what can be believed and recognized more faithfully and truly than that, by the hidden order of events, Augustus was predestined to accommodate the preparation for Christ? For Augustus carried forward the banner of peace and assumed the name of supreme power on the same day on which a little later Christ was to be manifested to the world." ⁶⁹ We have to remember that a few paragraphs earlier Orosius had spoken of the *manifestatio Dominici sacramenti* in connection with the occasion of Christ’s baptism on Epiphany day. When we now find that in the passage just quoted he used the same word *manifestatio,* not only in regard to Christ, but also in regard to the secular peace and power established by Augustus, we may be justified in concluding that the Christian Orosius credited the pagan world monarch and bringer of earthly peace with a sort of mundane Epiphany.⁷⁰

Orosius was destined to be one of the most widely read and most frequently quoted historians during the Middle Ages. In view of his authority, it is interesting to note that none of the medieval historians who used *The Seven Books against the Pagans* seems to have adopted his ideas concerning the Epiphany and the significance of that day in the life of Augustus. For instance, Paulus Diaconus mentioned the miracles of the rainbow around the sun and of the spring of oil, but in connection with Octavian’s third entry into Rome he related only that he was saluted as Augustus and thus recognized as the supreme and universal monarch, and omitted any reference to the specific

⁶⁹ vi, 20, 8 (ibid., pp. 420 f.): “… quid fidelius ac uerius credi aut cognosci potest, concurrentibus ad tantam manifestationem pace nomine die, quam hunc occulto quidem gestorum ordine ad obsequium praeparationis eius praedestinatum fuisse, qui eo die, quo ille manifestandus mundo post paululum erat, et pacis signum praetulit et postestatis nomen adsumpserit?”

by this time it has been brought to accomplishment, namely that Christ not only reigns in heaven but also governs all kings on the earth.”

Like Orosius, then, Otto of Freising stated that one of the most important events in Augustus’ life had taken place on the day of the Epiphany, but from this coincidence he drew an analogy between the figures of Christ and Augustus, which was totally unlike the one drawn by Orosius. To Otto, in agreement with the tradition and the practice of the Roman church which by that time prevailed all over the Western world, the feast of the Epiphany commemorated no longer the “manifestation” of Christ through the baptism by John, as Orosius had believed, but rather the adoration of the Magi. Otto illustrated his interpretation of the meaning of the Epiphany by specifically referring to the liturgy of that feast.

“Whence the Church,” he said, “with beautiful fitness sings to His praise on that day on which, as we have said, this was foreshadowed: ‘Behold the Lord, the Conqueror, comes, and in His hand are the kingdom and the power and the empire,’ and in the offertory: ‘And all the kings of the earth shall worship Him, and all nations shall serve Him.’” Otto’s explanation concluded: “In that

77 Ibid.: “Iste natus humiliterque in carne latens similiter eadem die, id est viii. Ian., quam nos epiphaniam diximus, stella duce ab oriente trinis adoratur muneribus apparensque, qui ante laterat, augustus ac rex regum declaratur. Quod quidem tunc prefigurabatur, sed iam completum esse, Christum scilicet non solum in caelis regnare, sed et in terris regibus omnibus imperare, luce clarius cernitur.”

78 Cf. L. Arbusow, Liturgie und Geschichtsschreibung im Mittelalter, Bonn 1951, p. 20.

79 11, 6 (ed. Hofmeister, op. cit., p. 142): “Unde pulchre ea, qua hoc prefiguratum esse diximus, die in laudem eius canit ecclesia; ‘Ecce advenit dominus dominus, et regnum in manu eius et potestas et imperium.’ Et in offertorio: ‘Et adorabunt eum omnes reges terrae, omnes gentes servient ei.’”

80 Missale Romanum (Milan 1474), ed. R. Lippe (H. Bradshaw Society, xvii), London 1899, 31, in Epiphania Domini; introitus; see also the so-called Liber Antiphonarius of Pope Gregory the Great (ed. Migne, Pat. Lat. 78, col. 619).

81 Missale Romanum, op. cit., p. 32, offertorium; Liber Antiphonarius of Gregory 1, op. cit., col. 619. It may be added that in the Liber Responsale of Gregory, ed. Migne, op. cit., col. 742 (responsio in tertio nocturno) and col. 743 (Antiph. in matutinis laudibus), we find the tria
He is called 'the Lord, the Conqueror,' the name Augustus is ascribed to Him; and in that 'the kingdom' and 'the empire' are said to be 'in His hand,' imperial dignity is ascribed to Him; and in that it is said that 'kings worship Him and all nations serve Him,' the supreme power of monarchy, that is, the singular principate over the whole world, is declared to be His.”

Through Orosius' exposition of the significance of the Epiphany, as Erik Peterson has rightly said, “Augustus became christianized and Christ who had been made a civis Romanus became romanized.” This ideology represented the culminating point of a trend of thought which had started among some of the earliest theologians of the church and which had been fully developed by Eusebius of Caesarea and other thinkers of the fourth century. Aponius belonged in the same tradition, although he and Orosius certainly set forth their theories in complete independence from each other and even interpreted the meaning of the feast of the Epiphany in entirely different ways. The fact that the universal world monarch had proclaimed his Augustan peace in Rome on the very same day on which the universal saviour of mankind was born in Bethlehem, was very strongly emphasized by Aponius. With this interpretation, he made exactly the same point which Orosius endeavored to make with his observation that the public recognition or "manifestation" of the supreme monarch and peace-giver occurred on the day on which Christ was later to be made "manifest" to the world through His baptism. On this particular question, Aponius undoubtedly could have subscribed to Orosius' statement that "by the hidden order of munera mentioned to which Otto referred (see above, note 77). The phrase stella duce (see note 77) appears in the Musaeol Romanum (op. cit., p. 51) in the oratio: "Deus, qui hodie tua die unigenitum tuum genitibus stella duce revelasti"

82 MM, 6, ed. Holmeister, p. 142: "Per hoc enim, quod 'dominator dominus' vocatur, augusti ei nomen attribuitur, per hoc vero, quod 'regnum et imperium in manu eius' dictur, imperatoris et dignitas asseritur, per hoc autem, quod 'reges eum adorare omnesque gentes servire' asservatur, monarchiae apex, id est singularis super to tum mundum principatus, eius esse declaratur."

83 Peterson, op. cit., p. 100.
events, Augustus had been predestined to accommodate the preparation for Christ." 84 With Otto of Freising we are in a different world. He was much more interested in "imperializing Christ" than in "christianizing" Augustus. Octavius, he admitted, had returned from the East as conqueror, he had made kings subject to him and he entered Rome in triple triumph. But the fact that this supreme moment in Augustus' life fell on the day on which later the three kings from the East were to worship Christ with their three kinds of gifts, indicated to Otto of Freising that Divine Providence had now prepared the world for the coming of the true "Augustus and King of Kings" whom "all the kings of the earth shall worship and all nations shall serve."

84 See above, note 69.
Orosius and Augustine*

About a year ago a rather curious controversy took place in the correspondence columns of the New Statesman and Nation. In an article dealing with Jacob Burckhardt and the problem of "the universal historians," H. R. Trevor-Roper declared that Karl Marx, "as a historian . . . is dead as mutton, or at least as dead as Orosius, Baronius and Bossuet." To this statement the Marxian author E. J. Hobsbawn replied: "Orosius, Baronius and Bossuet are dead as historians because no historian today cares a rap what they wrote, thanks their views worth a minute's consideration, or modifies his work because of theirs." In his rebuttal, Mr. Trevor-Roper asserted: "Orosius may be dead as a historian, but he supplied the essential material for St. Augustine's City of God, which has had greater influence in history even than Das Kapital." ¹

This English debate shows that the memory of Orosius as one of the outstanding "universal historians" is still quite alive.

*Mommsen left three drafts of this paper. The first was read at a meeting of the Medieval Club in New York, the second to the Cornell University Research Club on November 14, 1956. The text printed here is, with minor revisions, the third draft, as it was read to the Yale Classical Club on April 15, 1957. The references have been added by the editor. Without exception, however, notes which do more than identify quotations are based on indications by the author in the margins of his typescript.

¹ August 6, 20, and 27, 1955, pp 164, 217, and 245.
(regardless of the fact that no modern writer, whether Marxian or not, "modifies his work" because of his). Therefore Orosius' ideas may deserve, *pace* Mr. Hobsbawn's categorical rejection, a minute's (or even an hour's) consideration.

When Mr. Trevor-Roper defended the importance of Orosius' work in the history of ideas by saying that "he supplied the essential material for St. Augustine's *City of God,*" he was echoing a common medieval view. In the *Paradiso,* for example, Dante calls Orosius "that defender of Christian times of whose treatise Augustine availed himself."  

For some medieval thinkers, moreover, the relationship between the two men was not only close but reciprocal as well. As Augustine had availed himself of Orosius' *Seven Books of Histories against the Pagans,* so, it was generally assumed, Orosius was even more indebted to Augustine, under whom he had studied and whose fundamental ideas he reflected in his historical work. John of Salisbury concluded a long paraphrase of a passage from *The Seven Books* as follows: "Thus in substance Orosius, whose text and thought I use the more readily since I know that he, as a Christian and as a disciple of the great Augustine, . . . searched diligently for the truth."  

The medieval opinion that *The Seven Books* offers an interpretation of history from the Augustinian point of view is still maintained by most modern scholars who have written on Orosius. For instance, in 1936 I. W. Raymond stated in the Introduction to his translation of *The Seven Books* that the "basic principles upon which he [Orosius] founded his philosophy of history were those which he held in common with his guide and friend St. Augustine."  

The belief that there existed a definite personal relationship

---

2 X, 118–120:

"Nell'altra piccioletta luce ride
quello avvocato de tempi cristiani
del cui latino Augustin si provide."


between the two men and a close connection between their historical works and ideas is well supported by the few established facts of Orosius’ life. We know that around the year 414 Orosius went from his native Spain to Hippo in Africa, "prompted by the report," as Augustine said in one of his letters, "that he could learn from me whatever he wished on the subjects on which he desired information." Augustine gained a favorable opinion of Orosius, for he called him "a man of quick understanding, of ready speech and burning zeal who desires to be in the Lord’s house a vessel rendering useful service." After Orosius had been in Hippo for about a year, studying under Augustine, the master felt in his own words that "I have taught him all that I could," and therefore urged him to go to Palestine and visit St. Jerome, "from whom," Augustine said, "he may learn those things which I could not teach him." When in the following year, 416, Orosius returned from that journey, Augustine honored him with the greatest mark of confidence which the master could show his former pupil. He asked him, as Orosius himself put it, "to reply to the empty chatter of those who, as aliens to the city of God, are called pagans": he commissioned him to write his Seven Books of Histories against the Pagans.

That derogatory reference to "the empty chatter" of the pagans illuminates clearly the background against which the composition of Orosius’ work has to be placed. A few years earlier, in 410, the city of Rome had fallen to the onslaught of the Visigoths under King Alaric. In a purely material sense, this event was of slight importance. The city suffered relatively little damage. But this was not the way in which contemporaries viewed the event. All of them, whether Christian or pagan,

---


8 Pauli Orosii Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII, I, Prolog, 9 (ed. K. Zangemeister, CSEL, Vienna, 1882, V). All references to Orosius' Seven Books are to this edition. Translations are based on those of I. W. Raymond.
were profoundly disturbed by the fall of "eternal" Rome; and all of them asked why it had fallen, thus posing, more urgently than ever before, the old problem of the causes of the splendors and miseries of human history. To the pagans the answer was obvious: they attempted, said Augustine, "to attribute that overthrow of Rome to the Christian religion, and began to blaspheme the true God with even more than their customary acrimony and bitterness" ([Retractiones, II, xliii, 1]. It was in these circumstances that Augustine began to write The City of God. He went far beyond his immediate purpose, that of an apology, and propounded the most comprehensive philosophy of history ever written from the Christian point of view. At the same time he evidently realized the need for another kind of apology, one which would present, in a strictly historical way, the calamitous aspects of the human record throughout the ages. Orosius obeyed Augustine's "instructions" and finished his work in little more than a year. When he dedicated it to Augustine, he expressed once more his deeply felt obligation to the master: "I humbly owe all that I have accomplished to your fatherly advice, and my entire work is yours, because it proceeds from you and returns to you, so that my only contribution must be that I did it gladly."  

In view of Orosius' undoubted closeness to St. Augustine and especially in view of his own conception of the task assigned to and carried out by him, it seems hardly possible to question the view held throughout the Middle Ages and also by most modern scholars that The Seven Books represents basically the Augustinian interpretation of history. Nevertheless certain doubts have been expressed recently, above all by German theologians such as Erik Peterson and Wilhelm Kamlah, doubts which suggest that the problem can be usefully re-examined.  

7 I, Prol., 8. In the Liber apologeticus Orosius called Augustine and Jerome the "columnae et firmamenta Ecclesiae catholicae" (1, 4) and referred again to Augustine as "beatus pater meus" (31, 3).
8 Wilhelm Kamlah, Christentum und Geschichlichkeit, 2nd. ed. (Stuttgart, 1951), pp. 176 ff. and Erik Peterson, "Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem," in Theologische Traktae (Munich, 1951), p. 97. Very full Orosius bibliographies will be found in G. Fink, "Recherches bibliographiques sur Paul Orose," Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos,
In my own approach to the problem of the relationship between *The Seven Books* and *The City of God* I wish to deal primarily with two questions. First, if indeed Orosius wrote under the influence of Augustine's ideas, then in what sense did he interpret those ideas and how did he apply them in his own account? In other words, to what extent do Orosius' historical ideas actually reflect those of Augustine? The second question will be: what did Augustine himself think of the work and ideas of his pupil and to what degree, if any, did he "avail himself" of Orosius' treatise, as Dante asserted he did?

The dating of the composition of *The City of God* puts us in the fortunate position of being able to look for answers to both of these questions. For we learn from Orosius' Preface that at the time when he had finished his book and dedicated it to his master, Augustine was "intent on completing the eleventh book" of *The City of God* [I, Prol., 11]. Since we know that Augustine "published" each individual book or section of his work immediately after its completion, this means that Orosius had been able to use, while writing his own history, the whole first part of *The City of God*, which consists of Books I to X. Therefore a comparison of *The Seven Books of Histories* with the first part of *The City of God* will permit us to determine to what degree Orosius' ideas agree with, or differ from, those of Augustine. On the other hand, since Augustine worked on the second part of *The City of God* (Books XI to XXII) only after he had received Orosius' text, we can learn from an analysis of that section to what extent he utilized the factual material and the historical interpretation of his pupil.

If we start our investigation by comparing the basic themes of the two works, each taken as a whole, one essential difference becomes immediately evident, a difference which has not been sufficiently stressed by most modern scholars but which was clearly noticed by one of the greatest historians of the high

---

Middle Ages, the German Bishop Otto of Freising. Bishop Otto observed that Augustine "has discoursed most keenly and learnedly on the origin, the course and the ordained end of the glorious city of God, setting forth how it had ever spread among the citizens of the world and who of its citizens or princes stood forth preëminent in the various epochs among the princes and citizens of the world." Orosius, on the other hand, "has composed a very valuable history of the fluctuations and wretched issues of human actions, of wars and the hazards of wars, and of the shifting of thrones, from the foundation of the world down to his own time." In other words, Otto put Orosius among the numerous historians, both pagan and Christian, who related "the tale of human miseries" or dealt "with the temporal and earthly city of the Devil." He considered Augustine unique because of his primary concern with the eternal and heavenly city of Christ.

Bishop Otto's observation is correct. Throughout his Seven Books of Histories Orosius used the words "heavenly city" and "earthly city" only once, in the Preface addressed to St. Augustine [I, Prol., 9]. Nowhere else in his account did he attempt to interpret actual events or people in accordance with these two terms which are of such crucial importance in Augustinian thought. Yet the consistent avoidance of these terms need not be explained by the assumption that Orosius meant to slight, or even deviate from, Augustinian principles. The omission indicates rather that he simply conceived of his task more narrowly than Augustine had done. In fact, this limitation was imposed upon him by Augustine himself; for in his dedication Orosius said to Augustine: "You bade me discover from all the available data of histories and annals whatever instances past ages have afford of the burdens of war, the ravages of disease, the horrors of famine, of terrible earthquakes, extraordinary floods, dreadful volcanic eruptions, thunderbolts and hailstorms, and also of the cruel miseries caused by parricides and by crimes against man's better self; I was to set forth these

9 Ottonis Episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitati-
bus, ed. A. Hofmeister (Hanover and Leipzig, 1912), p. 6, ll. 22–26; 7, ll. 5–10; 9, ll. 8–20.
matters systematically and briefly in one volume” [I, Prol., 10]. It is obvious that the man who assigned this kind of historical account to his disciple had a rather narrow and, from a non-theological point of view, perhaps questionable concept of the task of the historian. But this was evidently Augustine’s view, as is shown by a remark he made in the first part of The City of God (which Orosius almost certainly knew). In this passage Augustine began to enumerate the various disasters resulting from the second Punic War, but suddenly decided to break off his narrative by saying: “Were we to attempt to enumerate [all those calamities], we should become nothing but mere writers of history.”¹⁰ Augustine’s own purpose, then, was to discuss fully “the origin, the course, and the end of the two cities” [XVIII, i, i–4], especially of the heavenly city, whereas the task assigned by him to Orosius was to tell the tale of human misery in history.

Limited though this theme was in one sense, it was very comprehensive in another. For, as we have seen, Orosius’ declared intention was to collect his material “from all the available data of histories and annals.” Thus he began his history with the first man, Adam. In doing so, he rejected explicitly a tradition shared both by pagan and Christian writers according to which history began only with Ninus, King of the Assyrians and alleged contemporary of Abraham [I, i, i–4]. In his own choice of Adam as the true starting point of the history of mankind, Orosius felt himself supported by the authority of Augustine. This marks an important change in the development of Christian historiography. For Augustine’s and Orosius’ contemporary St. Jerome and, before him, Eusebius, Bishop of Cesarea, had still begun their famous chronological tables with King Ninus and Abraham, following in that respect the models of earlier pagan authors of universal histories.¹¹ On the


¹¹ Eusebii Pampphilii Chronicæ Canones latine vertit, adauxit, ad sua temporæ produxi S. Eusebii Hieronymi, ed. J. K. Fotheringham (London, 1923), p. 11: “Verum in curiositate ne cesses, et cum divinam scrip-
other hand, most of the world chronicles and annals which were written by western Christians after the publication of Orosius’ Seven Books were to begin, as he did, with Adam.

Starting, then, with Adam and continuing his account to his own time, the early fifth century, Orosius related whatever instances he could find in his sources of the miseries which mankind as a whole, individuals as well as nations, had been suffering throughout history—a catalogue raisonné, as it were, more or less chronologically arranged in accordance with one of his main sources, St. Jerome’s translation of Eusebius’ chronological tables. There is no need here to go into details of the historical picture drawn by Orosius. It suffices to state that he performed his task in a painstakingly thorough and, one must admit, inevitably rather tiresome way. There is justification for the sarcasm of Petrarch who called Orosius “that collector of the evils of the world.” But in fairness to Orosius we have to realize that this was precisely what Augustine wished him to be, “a collector” of all earthly miseries. A comparison of Orosius’

Seven Books with the first part of The City of God shows indeed a close similarity between the ways in which the theme of material calamity was handled by the two authors. On occasion Orosius cut his own account short by referring explicitly to Augustine's treatment of the same topic, "Where your reverence," he said in one passage, "has exercised your zeal for wisdom and truth, it is not right for me to venture beyond it" [III, 4, 6]. In general, however, Orosius had ample opportunity to elaborate and prove, with innumerable historical details, the point that "the local miseries of the individual peoples have existed from the beginning" [I, 2, 106]. Augustine, after all, had dealt with that particular problem only incidentally; Orosius, in his own words, was to treat it "systematically."

Moreover, in the first part of The City of God Augustine confined his historical discussion almost entirely to events which had taken place in ancient Rome. In Orosius' opinion, too, "the deeds of the Romans have to be evaluated most of all," but he added in the same sentence that "the deeds of the Greeks must not be omitted" [I, 12, 3]. He even included in his narrative accounts of the principal misfortunes which had occurred in the great oriental monarchies: Assyria and Egypt, Babylonia and Persia. (When in his treatment of the pre-Christian era Orosius dealt primarily with pagan, and only very seldom with Jewish calamities, we have to remember that he wrote his work, as its title indicates, in the traditional form of an apology directed "against the pagans.")

Orosius concentrated so exclusively on the somber aspects of human history that hardly a bright spot appears in his picture, or at least not in that of pre-Christian times. He showed no interest in the development of the basic institutions of state and society or in the cultural achievements of the ancient world. Nor was he willing to concede that there had been great personalities during that era, who through their deeds had truly benefited mankind. To him, for example, Alexander the Great was nothing but "a veritable whirlpool of evils" [III, 7, 5]. But although Orosius' representation of ancient history is definitely one-sided and frequently unfair,
it offers in one respect a notable, and perhaps necessary, corrective of views which were quite commonly held in his own time. Many of the ancient historians had emphasized and praised above all the glory of individual personalities and particular states and had devoted most of their attention to the victorious achievements of the leading men and nations. To Orosius it appeared that those historians had looked at things merely through the eyes of the victors, men who had gained great fame for themselves but had brought nothing but untold misery upon their vanquished enemies. "Times and events," Orosius declared, "must be considered not from the standpoint of one place only, but by taking the whole world into account; then it will become clear that just as much as Rome was made happy by having been the conqueror, so the non-Roman lands were made unhappy by having been conquered" [V, 1, 3]. When Orosius emphasized in such strong terms the reverse side of imperialism, he was partly influenced by St. Augustine, who expressed himself in a very similar vein in several passages of The City of God.12 But his profound and often deeply moving comprehension of the problems of greatness and glory in history also manifestly resulted from his personal background. As a Spaniard he belonged to a people which had once been conquered by the Romans and was now, in his own lifetime, overrun by Germanic invaders. At one point he exclaimed: "Did I not make the terrible experiences of my ancestors my own, seeing in them the common lot of man?" [III, 20, 5]. And at the end of the account in which he recalled some of the harrowing incidents of his flight from Spain, he made a remark which might be addressed just as well to his own contemporaries as to all those historians who have found only grandeur and triumph in history: "Only men who themselves have never undergone suffering are insensible to the suffering of others" [III, 20, 7].13

12 For example, III, x, or III, xiv, 55-65.
13 Compare Orosius on the conquests of Philip of Macedon (III, 14) and of Alexander (III, 20). He reminds his pagan opponents that the "destruction wrought by an enemy is one thing, the reputation of a conqueror is another," and warns them that should the Goths master the Roman world, posterity "will call mighty kings those whom we now regard as our most savage enemies" (III, 20, 12).
In giving the fullest possible attention to the occurrence of material calamity as a constant in history, Orosius certainly believed himself to be in complete accord with Augustine. Augustine had made this topic the main theme of the third Book of *The City of God*, beginning it as follows: "I see that now I must speak of those evils which are the only things the pagans do not wish to suffer—famine, disease, war, pillage, captivity, massacre and similar horrors" [III, i, 4–7]. But it should be noted that Augustine attributed to physical disasters merely secondary importance. As he saw it, "the things which are to be avoided above all others are the evils afflicting men's morals and souls [III, i, 1–2]; for that reason he discussed these matters at length in Book II of *The City of God*—before he took up the question of material calamities. For his part, Orosius certainly paid some attention to the moral and spiritual evils which had beset the pagan world of antiquity, but within the general framework of his narrative and interpretation of events this theme was definitely stressed much less than in Augustine's system of thought. The fact that Orosius put his primary emphasis on the material aspects of man's misery throughout history again was the result of the very commission he had received from his master. It was Augustine's view that physical evils were "the only things really dreaded by the pagans," and he knew that ever since the beginnings of Christianity pagans were wont to blame all natural and other catastrophes on the adherents of the new faith. Two hundred years earlier, as we learn from Tertullian, whenever there were earthquakes or epidemics the cry had been: "Throw the Christians to the lions" [*Adversus Gentes*, xl]. In Augustine's and Orosius' own era there still existed "a common proverb: when the rain fails to fall, it is because of the Christians" [*De Civitate Dei*, II, xii, 3–4]. It was inevitable that the "Fall of Rome" in 410 should confirm the pagans in their conviction that "the present times are to an extraordinary degree infested with evils for the sole reason that Christ is venerated . . . and the pagan idols are worshipped less" [Orosius, I, Proel., 9]. Augustine had already taken it upon himself in *The City of God* to provide the theological refutation of that belief. But at the same time he thought it necessary to fight the pagans on their own ground
and with material and arguments adapted to their own mode of thought. Thus he commissioned Orosius to prove, through a purposely nontheological account of secular history, the absurdity of the charges which the pagans had for many centuries made against the Christians. Orosius' very title, *The Seven Books of Histories against the Pagans*, makes clear his audience and his purpose. His book is an "Apology" in the conventional sense.

The preoccupation with the material evils of this world and the relative lack of emphasis on the spiritual and moral evils of mankind represent, then, the basic approach of Orosius to his task. This was the approach to universal history Augustine considered necessary in the particular circumstances created by the "Fall of Rome" in 410. The question now arises whether in the actual execution of his plan Orosius always adhered, at least on significant issues, to those views of his master with which he could have acquainted himself through his reading of the first part of *The City of God*. In the search for an answer only a few points can be taken up within the compass of this lecture.

One topic which both Augustine and Orosius considered of crucial importance was the evaluation of the role played by the Roman state and the people of Rome in the course of history. If we examine the first part of *The City of God* from this point of view, we find that Augustine showed rather mixed feelings in his attitude toward the Roman people. On the one hand as a Christian theologian, he had time and again to stress the fundamental fact that "by the hidden judgment of Divine Providence the true religion was not offered to their choice" [II, xxix, 9–10]. For that reason all the achievements of the Romans during the pre-Christian era belonged exclusively to the sphere of the earthly city. In fact Rome represented to him the outstanding embodiment of that earthly city: Rome was "the second Babylon" [XVIII, ii, 65–66]. But although he made it unmistakably clear that there could be no true virtues except those inspired by, and directed toward, things spiritual and supramundane, Augustine was ready to concede that the Romans possessed at least what we may call relative virtues; and
among these laudable mores [I, xxxvi, 9] he singled out specifically “liberty and the desire for fame, which impelled the Romans to admirable deeds” [V, xviii, 20–21]. To clarify his meaning he devoted the whole fifth Book of The City of God to the question “Why God . . . has seen fit to grant such vast and long-lasting dominion to the Roman Empire?” [V, Pract., 5–8]. His answer was as follows: the establishment of Roman supremacy “was God’s way of overcoming the many evils which existed among the nations; He put this task in the hands of men who sought their own fame in striving for the honor, praise and glory of their fatherland, and who were willing to sacrifice their private interests to the common good.” Thus the ancient Romans, in Augustine’s words, “conquered greed for wealth, and many other vices, for the sake of their one vice, the love of glory” [V, xiii, 1–9].14 It was in accordance with this idea that throughout the first five Books of The City of God Augustine praised highly a number of great Romans and even went so far as to hold up some of their acts of self-sacrifice as commendable models for imitation by his fellow Christians [V, xviii].15 It may be noted that nine hundred years later Dante was to adopt Augustine’s view, and even his specific choices of the illustrious men of Rome; but Dante went still further than Augustine and called the great Romans “instruments through which Divine Providence proceeded in the Roman Empire; for there the hand of God was many times manifest.” 16

Orosius’ attitude toward Rome was completely different. While Augustine could speak of indoles Romana laudabilis [II, xxix, 1], Orosius wrote: “Like an insatiable stomach that consumes everything and yet remains always hungry, that city, more wretched than other cities which she has made wretched,

15 Augustine especially praised Regulus (I, xv, for example) Orosius mentions Regulus several times (IV, 8–10, passim), but without any specific praise.
left nothing untouched, and yet she herself had nothing; and she was forced by the pinch of hunger at home to continue in that state of unrest which war engenders” [V, 18, 29]. While Augustine spoke with open, though necessarily qualified, admiration of some of the great Romans, Orosius showed no respect for any figure of the pre-Christian era and made no attempt to explain the rise of Roman dominion in terms of the human qualities or personal virtues of the Romans, relative in value though such virtues might have been, or in fact were, from the Augustinian point of view. His explicit purpose was to “teach that all historical events have been arranged by the ineffable mysteries and the most profound judgments of God, and have not taken place either on the strength of human forces or as the results of fickle chance” [II, 2, 4]. His conception of the workings of Divine Providence prevented him, quite in contrast to Augustine, from assigning any importance to the role played by individuals, and even from taking any interest in their personal qualities. Consequently his answer to the question why God had granted so vast an empire to the Romans differed entirely from Augustine’s. Orosius started from the Pauline statement that “the powers that be are ordained of God” [Rom., 13:1]; if this was true, then “all the more are the kingdoms, from which all powers proceed, ordained of God”; and he concluded: “If the kingdoms, however, compete with one another then it is better that some one kingdom be supreme, and to it all the other kingdoms be subject” [II, 1, 3-4].

In other words, Orosius believed it to be God’s will that there exist in the political sphere the ordinatio ad unum [VI, 1, 6], the subjugation of all the separate states in the world to one universal monarchy. He saw the course of history as a succession of “four main kingdoms, pre-eminent in successive stages at the four cardinal points of the earth, to wit the Babylonian kingdom in the East, the Carthaginian in the South, the Macedonian in the North, and the Roman in the West” [II, 1, 4-5]. Apart from the inclusion of Carthage in the series, and apart, too, from the curious geographical distribution of these powers, Orosius reproduced the ancient idea of the four
great monarchies, an idea accepted by the early Christians and given a prominent place in the universal chronicles of Eusebius and St. Jerome. (It ought to be noted, however, that in this connection Orosius never alluded to the famous passages in the Book of Daniel [Chapters 2 and 7] on which all earlier Christian writers had based their adaptations of the originally pagan concept of a succession of predominant monarchies.) Orosius' treatment of the scheme differs from those of his predecessors only in its more elaborate detail; while his attempt to draw the closest possible parallels between the two most important monarchies, those of Babylon and Rome, led him to construe some historical dates and chronological coincidences in ways which were not only peculiar but on occasion not even in accordance with his own sources, among them Jerome's Chronicl Canones. It is relevant to our question about Orosius' dependence on, or independence from, Augustine that nowhere in the first part of The City of God did Augustine even mention in any explicit way the scheme of the four monarchies.

Since Orosius thought that none of the great monarchies, not even the Roman Empire, owed its dominion to the personal merits of its leaders and people, we must ask: according to Orosius, how did God work during the pre-Christian era for the attainment of His object, the elimination of the rivalry of the many by the hegemony of one state? Orosius evidently believed that for the most part God used the various pagan nations, regardless of their actual unworthiness, as mere puppets or tools for the furtherance of His divine purposes. But he was apparently convinced that on certain very important occasions God also influenced the turn of events by means of natural phenomena. Let me give one striking example. From Livy's account of Hannibal's siege of Rome Orosius learned that on two successive days heavy rainstorms had prevented the two armies from joining battle and for that reason "the Carthaginians, overcome by religious awe" finally decided to withdraw from the city [Livy, XXVI, xi, 4]. To Orosius it was "evident ... that this rain, coming as it did at the necessary and opportune moment, was sent by Christ alone who is the true God." Thus in Orosius' opinion not Roman bravery preserved
Rome but it was "beyond dispute . . . the ordinatio of Jesus Christ . . . which in those days saved the city of Rome so that she might accept the faith in the future" [IV, 17, 8–11].

Orosius climaxed his analysis of the workings of Divine Providence in history when he came to discuss the fact that the birth of the Universal Saviour of mankind coincided with the establishment of the universal monarchy by Augustus. In this case he was willing to admit that Augustus was "most brave and most clement," epithets he hardly ever used in reference to pagan figures. But at the same time Orosius made it very clear that Augustus owed his outstanding position to God alone, who "through his ordinatio conferred all things upon one emperor" [VI, 1, 6]. The fourth world monarchy was established by God; and world peace was secured not through Augustus' personal greatness but "through the power of Christ who made his appearance in the days of Augustus." The divine purpose was that "the glory of the new Christian name and the report of the promised salvation might spread abroad quickly and without hindrance in the midst of the state of great tranquility and universal peace that prevailed" [VI, 1, 8]. Many earlier Christian writers and, above all, Eusebius, had also stressed the providential character of the coincidence of the birth of Christ and the reign of Augustus and had explained the raison d'être of the Roman Empire in very similar terms. But it was left to Orosius to elaborate those ideas in the most systematic fashion. There were especially three miraculous events—a circle which formed around the sun, a fountain of oil which burst forth in Trastevere, and the closing of the gates

17 His other source, Florus, I, xxii, 44–45 (ed. E. S. Forster, 1929, p. 108), explained the storms even more pointedly as meaning "that the gods . . . resisted Hannibal's progress." ("Quid ergo miramur moventi castra a tertio lapide Annibali iterum ipsos deos—deos inquam, nec fateri pudebit—restitisse? Tanta enim ad singulos illius motus vis imbrirum effusa est, tanta ventorum violentia coorta est, ut divinitus hostem summoveri non a caelo, sed ab urbis ipsius moenibus et Capitolo videretur.") Again we may note that Orosius developed this special kind of reasoning in complete independence of Augustine, who made no attempt to explain the rainstorms as signifying an intervention of the Christian God (III, xx, 28 ff.).
God. The original intentions of both men were identical: they wanted to prove that the calamities of their own era were not unique and that they could not be blamed upon the prevalence of the Christian religion; for history taught that there had been many disasters in the past when the various pagan gods had allegedly protected their peoples. But while Augustine contented himself with that thesis and accepted the constant misery of this world as the divinely ordained fate of mankind, Orosius came to turn the argument in quite different directions. As a result of his researches he “discovered that the days of the past were not only as oppressive as those of the present but that they were the more terribly wretched the further they were removed from the consolation of true religion” [I, ProI., 14]. As Orosius saw it, there had been not only more grievous disasters in the period before the rise of Christianity than afterwards, but there existed now, in his own times, positive “blessings which our ancestors never had in their entirety: the tranquility of the present, the hope for the future and the possession of a common refuge” [V, 2, 8]. When we compare the last of *The Seven Books against the Pagans*, which deals exclusively with the Christian era, with the previous books, we find indeed that there emerges in Orosius’ account a definite pattern of progress made by mankind with the help of the Christian God. Thus the emperor Claudius easily succeeded in conquering Britain in the year 43 A.D., Orosius declared, while Divine Providence had not favored Julius Caesar’s earlier attempts. Or, to give even more curious examples of Orosius’

10 Cf. I, 21, 17–19: “What we at present find difficult to bear is any interference whatsoever in our pleasures or any restraint placed upon our passions, even for a moment. There is this difference, however, between men of that age and of this: the men of that age endured with patience those unbearable burdens because they were born and raised amid them and knew no better times, whereas men of our age, accustomed to perpetual peace in a life of tranquility and pleasure, are disturbed by every little cloud of anxiety that envelops them. If only they would pray to Him who can end this period of unrest, trifling though it be, and to whom they owe this continued peace which was unknown to other ages!”

20 VII, 6, 9–11. Orosius goes on to point his moral sharply: “Any person of the present day who pleases may make comparisons in regard to this one island, period with period, war with war, Caesar with Caesar. I say nothing of the outcome, since in this case it was the most fortunate
notions concerning the material blessings bestowed upon mankind by the appearance of the Christian faith, there were now much less terrible plagues of locusts [V, 11, 6], and the volcano Aetna, "which in former days used to boil over from frequent eruptions that brought ruin upon fields and cities, at present only smokes harmlessly, as if to prove that it had been active in the past" [II, 14, 3].

With these and similar remarks Orosius clearly placed himself in that tradition of thought which may be described as the school of "Christian progressivists," a school whose most outstanding representative had been Eusebius of Caesarea. According to this view the universal faith and the universal empire had been established simultaneously by God and were destined by the same divine providence to grow together for all future times; it was the conviction of Eusebius, and in even greater degree of Orosius, that the larger the number of people to accept the spiritual truth, the more material benefits would befall mankind as a whole.

Both Eusebius and Orosius derived this conviction from their belief that the relationship between God and man was based on a kind of commutative contract which resembled strongly the old pagan principle of do ut des. If one does something that pleases God, the argument ran, God will do something for him in return; on the other hand, if one does something that displeases God, one must just as surely expect God's wrath. For example, the pagan and, later, the heretical emperors persecuted faithful Christians; consequently, Orosius asserted, God punished those imperial "tyrants" by allowing the outbreak of civil wars and by causing natural catastrophes [VII, 22 and 27].

---

of victories, previously the bitterest of disasters. Thus Rome may finally come to see that the God through Whose Providence she formerly enjoyed partial success in her undertakings is the God through Whose recognition she now enjoys success in all its fullness to the extent that she does not become corrupted through the stumbling block of her blasphemies"

21 Cf. VI, 22, 14: "... ut, quoniam ab initio et peccare homines et puniri propter peccata non tacui, nunc quoque, quae persecutiones Christianorum actae sint et quae ultiones secutae sint, absque eo quod omnes ad pecundum generaliter proni sunt atque ideo singillatim cornpluntur, expediám"
In Orosius good and evil men are almost always punished or rewarded on earth and not only at the Last Judgment, a notion echoed across the centuries in the final chorus of Don Giovanni: "This is the end of evildoers; and the doom of the wicked always corresponds to the life they lead." Orosius expressed this idea most succinctly in his summary of the career of the Theodosian general Mascezel: "By his own fate Mascezel showed that the judgment of God ever watches with a double purpose; for when he trusted in it, he received help, and when he despised it, he was put to death" [VII, 36, 13].

For this confident belief in the possibility of "a partial exposition of God's ineffable judgments" in history [II, 3, 5], Orosius certainly could draw no support from anything he had read in the first part of The City of God. Augustine was very far indeed from asserting, as Orosius did, that virtue and good deeds will usually receive their earthly rewards. On the contrary, he declared that in God's eyes neither the good nor the bad things of this world are of any real significance and value, and consequently that God "bestows them on both good and bad men . . . according to an order of things and times which is hidden from us but thoroughly known to Himself" [IV, xxxiii, 1–4]. Augustine demonstrated the mysterious workings of that divine providence in a specific reference to a number of fourth century emperors, Christian and pagan as well as orthodox and heretical [V, xxv, 1–19]. When Orosius discussed the same rulers—Constantine, Julian, Jovian, and Gratian—in the seventh Book of his history [chs. 28, 30, 31, 34] and drew his own lessons from their lives, he gave no evidence whatever of having understood the meaning of the profound warning which his master had directed against Eusebius' overoptimistic belief in the idea of progress and against the Christian acceptance of the pagan principle of do ut des. Any assumption of a direct, causal connection between things spiritual and material, any

22 Cf. De Civitate Dei, I, viii, 13–19: "Placuit quippe diuinæ prouidentiæ praeparare in posterum bona iustis, quibus non fruentur inusti, et mala impiis, quibus non excruiciabantur boni; ista uero temporalia bona et mala utrisque voluit esse communia, ut nec bona cupidius adpetantur, quae mali quoque habere cernuntur; nec mala turpiter euitentur, quibus et boni plerunque adficiuntur."
assumption of a commutative contract between the Creator and his creatures, had to be most emphatically rejected by Augustine as wholly contrary to his conception of the relationship between God and men, even the great and best of this world.

This divergence of opinion concerns points of central importance in the systems of thought of Orosius and Augustine. Other differences between the views of the two men resulted, as we have seen, from the very nature of the task assigned to Orosius, or they can be explained by the fact that Orosius took the right of developing his own ideas in regard to problems to which his master appeared not to have given definite answers. But when Orosius came to the most crucial questions, the interpretation of the course of history as a whole and the elucidation of the workings of God and divine providence in time and on earth, then, it must be said, he set forth views which ran directly counter to much of what Augustine had said or left unsaid in the first part of The City of God. Perhaps Orosius himself was completely unaware of these fundamental deviations and believed himself in full accord with Augustine. But in spite of this subjective conviction, it is objectively impossible to maintain that "the basic principles upon which Orosius founded his philosophy of history were those he held in common with his guide and friend St. Augustine." On the contrary, we must say that the basic principles of Orosius' philosophy of history were those of Eusebius and his Greek and Latin followers in the fourth century, principles most explicitly rejected by Augustine in the first part of The City of God.

There still remains the second group of questions asked at the beginning of this lecture: how much use of Orosius' work did Augustine make in the second part of The City of God, and what did he think of the ideas of his pupil? In answer to these questions we must notice first that in the entire latter part of The City of God Augustine did not mention once either the name or the work of Orosius. When he referred to "our [i.e., Christian] historians who have written chronicles," he always meant Eusebius and St. Jerome, not Orosius [XVIII,
viii, 49–50]. This omission is the more remarkable since for some of the events he discussed Augustine could have found more information in The Seven Books than he himself presented. For example, in regard to the question of the role played by the four universal monarchies in world history, Augustine completely disregarded Orosius’ elaborate treatment and instead referred the reader to Jerome’s Book on Daniel, “which is written with sufficient care and erudition” [XX, xxiii, 42–46]. Another point which, it will be remembered, was strongly stressed by Orosius, was the providential coincidence of the birth of Christ and the foundation of the Roman Empire by Augustus. In the first part of The City of God Augustine had paid no particular attention to this fact. Evidently he remained unwilling to attribute to it any true significance, for in the second part of his work he still stated simply that Christ was born “when Herod was king in Judea and . . . Augustus was emperor in Rome” [XVIII, xlvi, 1–3]. The brevity of this one sentence contrasts most sharply with the long discussion of the same fact in no less than seven chapters of Orosius’ work. It seems permissible to conclude from this difference of treatment that Augustine not only was uninterested in, but even disapproved, that whole “Augustus-theology” which occupied such a central position in Orosius’ philosophy of history.

There is at least one important passage in the second part of The City of God which represents an outright rejection of an argument set forth in The Seven Books against the Pagans. In one of the last chapters of his work Orosius drew a curious and rather absurd parallel between the ten plagues of Egypt and the ten persecutions of the Christians by the pagan emperors; and from that parallel he drew the comforting conclusion that there would be no further persecutions of the Christians before the coming of Antichrist [VII, 27]. Such optimism was in full accord with Orosius’ acceptance of the Eusebian idea of progress, but it was just as definitely contrary to everything Augustine believed. Indeed Augustine refuted the validity of the whole comparison by pointing out that there had actually been more than ten persecutions before the reign of Constantine and that there had also been persecutions since
that time, by both pagan and heretical emperors. For that reason it seemed to him "an audacious presumption . . . to attempt foretelling what further persecutions may come from rulers." The whole context of Augustine's remarks makes it certain that it was Orosius with whom he took issue here, although he avoided any direct disavowal of his former student, who, after all, had dedicated his work to him. He therefore contented himself with stating: "I think that no one should rashly say or believe, as some have done or do, that until the time of Antichrist the Church will suffer no more than the ten persecutions she has already suffered" [XVIII, lii, 1—5].

Augustine may have felt toward quite a few other points of Orosius' philosophy of history what he felt concerning the parallels "drawn so nicely and ingeniously" between the ten plagues of Egypt and the ten persecutions: "I can see here no prophetic spirit, but mere human guess-work which sometimes hits the truth and sometimes misses it" [XVIII, lii, 17—20]. He did not choose, however, to give open voice to his criticism. But as far as his own work was concerned, he most definitely did not "avail himself" of The Seven Books of Histories, as Dante was to assume in The Divine Comedy. And as far as his personal attitude to Orosius is concerned, it is worth noting that we find but one mention of Orosius by name in any of the later writings and correspondence of Augustine, whereas he had praised him quite highly, as we have seen, in some letters written before the composition of The Seven Books. Only at the very end of his life did Augustine refer to Orosius, but, interestingly enough, in a noncommittal, perhaps even rather slighting fashion. For in his Retractions he said that he wrote his book Against the Priscillianists (415) in reply to an inquiry from "a certain Spanish priest, Orosius" [II, xlv]

Whether or not the condemnatory character of Augustine's silence was understood by his contemporaries, we do not know. But it is certain that later generations were completely unaware of it. They were bound to remember the close master-pupil relationship which had once existed between the two men, and above all they must have been deeply impressed by the words with which Orosius concluded his final address to Augus-
tine at the end of his work: "If you publish it, you approve it; if you destroy it, you condemn it" [VII, 43, 20]. Since the work obviously had not been destroyed, it was logical to assume that it had met with Augustine's full approval and therefore to accept the interpretation of the course and the meaning of history which The Seven Books contained as an authoritative expression of Augustinian thought. There is no doubt that the practicing historians of the Middle Ages were more apt to read The Seven Books of Histories than The City of God. Consequently we find that most medieval universal histories set forth ideas and judgments and reflect a philosophy of history which cannot be called truly Augustinian. Rather they reflect a philosophy of history which rightly may be called Orosian.
Bibliography of the Writings of Theodor E. Mommsen

BOOKS


INTRODUCTIONS

Introduction to Petrarsh's Sonnets and Songs (New York, 1946), pp. xv-xlii.


ARTICLES


"Beiträge zur Reichsgeschichte von 1315-1319. Aus Handschriften..."


“The Date of Petrarch’s Canzone Italia Mia,” Speculum, XIV (1939), 28–37.

“Football in Renaissance Florence,” Yale University Library Gazette, XVI (1941), 14–19.


"Rudolph Agricola's Life of Petrarch," Traditio, VIII (1952), 357-386.


REVIEW ARTICLES


REVIEWS

P. E. Schramm, Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio Neues Archiv, XLIX (1932), 577-578.


K. Schunemann, Die Entstehung des Stättegewesens in Südosteuropa. Neues Archiv, XLIX (1932), 677-678.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Shorter notices among the Nachrichten of the Neues Archiv will be found in vol. XLIX (1932), pp. 575-576, 577, 590, 605, 627-628, 660-661, 667, 677, 679, 706-707, 716 and in vol. L (1933), 649, 651, 654, 653-654, 736, 743, 755.


Lauri Houvinen, *Das Bild vom Menschen im politischen Denken*

---

2 Cf. Mommsen’s letter to the Editor of the *William and Mary Quarterly* on the article by A. P. Adair, “The Mystery of the Horn Papers,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, IV (1947), 409–445. He writes that the committee appointed to investigate the Horn Papers not only succeeded “in fully proving the spuriousness of the ‘primary’ material contained in *The Horn Papers*, but it solved this task with such methodological precision and completeness that its Report ought to be widely used in graduate Seminars on methods of historical research . . .” (William and Mary Quarterly, V [1948], 468).
Niccolò Machiavellis. American Historical Review, LVII (1952), 1012.


