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Exile and Petrarch's Reinvention of Authorship

LAURENCE E. HOOPER, *Dartmouth College*

*This article demonstrates a systematic connection between the novelty of Petrarch's authorship and his self-definition as an exile. Petrarch employs the unusual term *exilium/esilio* to substantiate his unprecedented claim that literature is a legally valid officium (civic role). Following Dante, Petrarch grounds his exilic authorship in the Christian discourse of peregrinatio: life as pilgrimage through exile. But Petrarch's new officium allows him a measure of control over literary creation that no prior Italian writer had enjoyed. This is especially true of the "Canzoniere," Petrarch's compilation of his vernacular lyrics, whose singularity functions as a proxy for its author's selfhood.*

INTRODUCTION

PETRARCH (1304–74) IDENTIFIED all his life as an exile: the opening letter of his *Familiars* (1366) declares, "I was conceived in exile and I was born in exile."¹ The claim has a biographical foundation: the poet was born at Arezzo, some two years after his father, Ser Petracco di Parenzo (1267–1326), had been banished from Florence. During his long life, Petrarch resided in numerous places on the Italian Peninsula, except Florence, the city he called *patria* (homeland). Nonetheless, many modern readers have characterized Petrarch's claims to exile as little more than posturing because of the prosperity he achieved.² Some have allowed that Petrarch was a *peregrinus* (wanderer), but not an exile because he suffered none of the travails of an unfortunate like Dante (1265–1321).³

Prior readings of Petrarch's exile have concentrated largely on personal intentions and motivations, leaving the legal-historical background unexplored.⁴

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¹Petrarch, 1975–85, 1:8 (*Familiars* 1.1).

²Most recently, Fenzi; Marcozzi, 2011.

³Cachey, 1997; Greene.

⁴Giamatti, 13–20; Wojciehowski; Marcozzi, 2015. But see Milani, 2003, xxiv–xxx.

This missing context has resulted in an incomplete understanding of Petrarch's innovations in authorship. A close examination of the vocabulary of exclusion in his vernacular works will illustrate the poet's sustained engagement with the historical precedents for his exile. In particular, there has been scant recognition of the distinction Petrarch makes between exile as an existential condition and the Trecento legal status of banishment. The result is a dialogue between the specificity of Petrarch's internal world and the historicity of the terms that describe it. His invocations of exile, as opposed to banishment, help Petrarch legitimate two unprecedented immunities necessary to his work: one from his obligations as a citizen to maintain residency and participate in civic affairs,⁵ and another from potential sanctions resulting from his father's condemnation.⁶

Petrarch's self-definition as an exile implies a connection between his social detachment and his work's consistent expressions of solitude. The definitive expression of his subjectivity is the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, or *Canzoniere* (hereafter *RVF*; ca. 1356–74): a compilation of his own vernacular lyrics on which he labored into his final days.⁷ As with the *Familiars*, exile is essential to the *Canzoniere*: from *RVF* 1's depiction of the protagonist's life as "vain sorrow,"⁸ the collection embarks on a quest to reconfigure the poet's alienation from the world around him as the embodiment and justification of poetic authorship.⁹ The work's final autobiographical act emphasizes Petrarch's lifelong and painful distance from his homeland: "Since I was born on the bank of the Arno, / searching in this and now this other direction, / my life has been nothing but troubles."¹⁰

Petrarch carefully positions his vernacular work vis-à-vis the rich tradition of writing by Italian exiles that preceded it.¹¹ He recognizes these predecessors, especially Dante, but also Guido Guinizzelli (ca. 1230–75) and Cino da Pistoia

⁵Costa, 1:42–48; Grossi, 1995, 195–201.

⁶Cf. Petrarch, 1991–94, 1:6 (*Familiars* 1.1.14–15): "I have stayed far away from civic duties and my good reputation . . . has not to this day suffered the wound of a court ruling." Translations are mine except where a published English version is cited. For immunity and the late medieval legal system, see Vallerani, 188–96.

⁷Chartier, 20: "Even before the time of the printed book . . . the link between a codicillary and a textual unity which refers to the singularity of the author is confirmed . . . , for example with Petrarch." See also Antonelli.

⁸Durling, 1976, 36 (*RVF* 1.6): "van dolore." Petrarch, 2004, 5. English quotations of the *Canzoniere* come from Durling's prose translations, with line breaks added by me to approximate the original versification.

⁹See "Il van dolore," in Cherchi, 81–106; Picone, esp. 154–63.

¹⁰Durling, 1976, 580 (*RVF* 366.82–84): "Da poi ch'i' nacqui in su la riva d'Arno, / cercando or questa et or quel'altra parte, / non è stata mia vita altro ch'affanno." Petrarch, 2004, 1415.

¹¹Starn; Zanni.

(ca. 1270–1336/37), as models and as points of departure for his own work. Alongside these vernacular precedents, Christian typology plays an essential authorizing role in Petrarch's poetics. The idea that life on earth constitutes a pilgrimage through exile (*peregrinatio*) was strongly present in the religious thought of Petrarch's time, for example, among the Franciscans,¹² who received it from the Bible and from Latin fathers including Augustine and Gregory the Great.¹³ The universal nature of *peregrinatio* allows for considerable slippage between the biographical aspects of exile and exile as an existential metaphor for human desire.¹⁴ Petrarch takes advantage of this indistinction to cast his solitary authorship as an exemplary burden.¹⁵

The novelty of Petrarch's career was apparent to contemporaries such as Boccaccio (1313–75). However, to call Petrarch innovative in his own time is not to reopen the familiar question of whether he was the first modern author.¹⁶ It is uncontroversial to note the continuities between Petrarch's self-presentation and a postromantic conception of the author as at once exemplary and radically different from the rest of humanity.¹⁷ Yet influential analyses describing Petrarch's work as timeless or "without history" have tended to diminish the equally significant disparities between Petrarchan authorship and its modern counterpart.¹⁸ In truth, literary works can fairly be called timeless only with the establishment of copyright in the eighteenth century, when creative acts became transferable pieces of intellectual property belonging in perpetuity to someone: the author, the publisher, the public.¹⁹ Petrarch lacked the conceptual apparatus, not to mention the desire, to claim ownership of his writings.²⁰ Instead, he invokes the legal institutions of citizenship and exile in order to define his authorship as an *officium* (civic office) requiring a privileged, exemplary detachment.

¹²For a brief, persuasive account of the importance of Franciscan theology to Petrarch, see Mazzotta, 2009, 193–94.

¹³See, for example, "Our spirits are exiled [*peregrinamur*] from the Lord's presence so long as they are at home in the body": Knox, 382 (2 Corinthians 5:6). A fuller discussion with bibliography is in Hooper, 2011, 6n3, 9n12.

¹⁴For exile and the limits of linguistic reference in Augustine, see Ferguson.

¹⁵Cf. the relationship of the Franciscans to their founder: McGinn, 93–112.

¹⁶See, for example, Freccero; Dotti, 2001.

¹⁷Bennett, 55–71.

¹⁸The classic statement of Petrarch's timeless style is Contini's "Preliminari sulla lingua di Petrarca," in Petrarch, 1964, vii–xxxv. For the phrase "Petrarca senza storia," see Bosco, 1961, 7–8.

¹⁹Rose; Woodmansee, 35–55.

²⁰Modern intellectual property law asserts an analogy between the ownership of physical or social goods and an interest in creative projects: see Fisher. But such an analogy was effectively impossible under the medieval conception of *dominium* (property), which was plural and highly conditioned by the *species facti* (fact pattern): see Grossi, 1968, 144–82.

FATHERHOOD AND EXILE: SER PETRACCO AND DANTE ALIGHIERI

In late medieval Italy, *exile* (Latin *exilium*; Italian *esilio*) was not a standard word for the legal act of banishment: the terms of art were *bando* (Italian) and *bannus* (Latin), both derived from the Germanic *ban*.²¹ In October 1302, the notary Ser Petracco was convicted of filing a fraudulent petition, fined one thousand petty (silver) lire, and threatened with the amputation of his right hand if he failed to pay promptly.²² Instead, Petrarch's father fled Florence with his wife, Eletta Canigiani (1270–1319),²³ whereupon he was resentenced and banished.²⁴ The couple remained in Tuscany for some years, moving to a property owned by Ser Petracco's family at Incisa soon after Francesco's birth.

In 1309, the Florentine authorities granted Ser Petracco a pardon from his conviction and his ban.²⁵ But there is no record that he completed the required penance: a humiliating walk through the city wearing a pointed hat to make an oblation at the baptistery.²⁶ His banishment was then reaffirmed in September 1311, when he was excluded from a general amnesty.²⁷ In late 1311, Petracco left Italy with his family and settled permanently near the papal seat of Avignon, where many Italian notaries found employment.²⁸ Petrarch lived in Southern France from the age of eight until sixteen, when he went to study law at Bologna. He returned to Avignon, without graduating, on his father's death in 1326 and kept his primary domicile in the region until 1353. But, despite these decades of residency, Petrarch never felt like a native of Provence: his *Letter to Posterity* (*Posteritati*, ca. 1350–55; rev. 1370–71) calls it "that Avignonese exile."²⁹ The *Posteritati* also describes Petrarch as "born in exile at Arezzo."³⁰ The term used

²¹Cavalca, 17–22, collates and analyzes the relevant sources. Throughout this essay, the English noun *ban* and verb *banish*, with their cognates, will be used to translate Italian words derived from *bando* and Latin ones derived from *bannus*.

²²Ser Petracco's sentence is laid out in his 1309 absolution, edited in Barbadoro, 1:431n(a).

²³For biographical data on Ser Petracco, see *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (hereafter *DBI*), s.v. "Petracco dall'Incisa," by Francesco Bettarini: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/petracco-dall-incisa_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/petracco-dall-incisa_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). For Eletta Canigiani, see Corazzini.

²⁴The minutes of the meeting of the Council of One Hundred for 10 February 1309 mention Ser Petracco's conviction of October 1302 and a ban against him not stipulated in the former judgment: Barbadoro, 1:431 (§2).

²⁵*Ibid.*, 1:431–32.

²⁶See Zenatti, 503–18.

²⁷The *Libro del Chiodo* records as excluded from the 1311 amnesty, Ricciardelli, 305: "The sons of [Petrarch's paternal grandfather] Ser Parenzo of Ancisa [sc. Incisa]."

²⁸Bombi, 437–40.

²⁹Petrarch in Boccaccio, 2004, 114 (*Posteritati* 18).

³⁰*Ibid.*, 112 (*Posteritati* 13).

both for Avignon and Arezzo is *exilium*, and it is carefully chosen. Petrarch's legal education would have taught him that medieval jurists defined the communal ban as analogous to but separate from *exilium* — the term used in Roman law.³¹ The development of the ban codified the right of the commune to banish *sui iuris* its citizens, without the imperial authorization that *exilium* required.³² When applied in a contemporary context, *exilium/lesilio* was habitually figurative or generic: it could indicate alienation, distance from the divine, or even a disaster.³³

Petrarch's nonmetaphorical deployment of *exilium* constitutes a noteworthy departure from this usage. It has a certain cogency because the infant Francesco was ineligible to share in his father's punishment until he turned fourteen.³⁴ Meanwhile, as the male relative of a political exile, Petrarch the law student was fortunate that the Florentine authorities did not extend his father's judgment to him.³⁵ Absentee citizens could be summoned before a magistrate, then declared contumacious when they failed to appear: a de facto admission of guilt that transformed their absence into banishment.³⁶ Because Petrarch did not suffer this fate, it is incorrect to call him stateless, as many scholars have.³⁷ The term assumes that the poet could not, or would not, assert his Florentine citizenship. In fact, despite a manifest ambivalence toward the city, Petrarch always called himself a Florentine;³⁸ nor did Florence banish and disenfranchise him. Eventually, the poet achieved an equilibrium where his circumscribed affiliation to his father's city and his literary success became mutually reinforcing.

But this outcome was by no means preordained. In his *Life of Petrarch* (1342), written when its subject's fame was relatively new, Boccaccio makes Ser Petrarco's criminal ban into a "voluntary withdrawal,"³⁹ with the likely aim of

³¹Watson, 4:373 (*Digest* 48.22.5): "Exile [*Exilium*] is of three kinds: prohibition from certain determined places . . . , imposed banishment . . . , or a tie to an island." For medieval jurists' reception of Roman *exilium*, see Cavalca, 65–100; Ghisalberti, 6–24.

³²See Ghisalberti, 19–24; cf. Watson, 4:373–75 (*Digest* 48.22.6–7). In the 1310s, Henry VII tried, unsuccessfully, to reclaim the authority to banish from the *comuni*: Milani, 2003, 413–20.

³³Jacopone da Todi in Bettarini, 506: "Every shadowy soul . . . wanders in exile [*escillo*]." See also Du Cange, s.v. "exilium."

³⁴See Milani, 2003, 226n90, 419–20. The *Posteritati* also uses the term for Petrarch's mother, who was ineligible for banishment because of her sex: Petrarch in Boccaccio, 2004, 112 (*Posteritati* 14).

³⁵For examples of this practice, see Cavalca, 112–13.

³⁶For contumacy in relation to the late medieval ban, see *ibid.*, 159–87; Milani, 2003, 147–50.

³⁷The locus classicus is Bosco, 1980. See, most recently, Marcozzi, 2015, 105.

³⁸Špíčka.

³⁹Boccaccio, 2004, 72 (*Vita Petrarce* 2). By contrast, Petrarco's White Guelph comrades "were condemned to exile [*exilio*]:" *ibid.*

shielding Petrarch from the infamy and loss of legal rights associated with his father's condemnation.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Petrarch's Quattrocento commentator Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481) expounds the statelessness thesis: he views Ser Petracco as a civically dead *ribello* (enemy of the state) and reasons, therefore, that his son “was not a Florentine.”⁴¹ Yet Petrarch rejects both of these interpretations: he uses the term *exilium* to underline his own freedom from criminal charges, while insisting, somewhat implausibly, on his father's respectability in spite of his condemnation.⁴² He thereby lays claim to a status quite unlike the exiles of his father's generation: Petrarch was not a formally banished enemy of the state, nor did he join a corporation of fugitive Florentines.⁴³ Moreover, this exceptional status implied an individualism that contravened the communitarian norms of Trecento citizenship.⁴⁴ The special rights and protections a citizen enjoyed over a mere resident brought with them obligations in the shape of personal and financial contributions to the commonwealth — the most fundamental of which was residence in the city.⁴⁵ So Petrarch needed a basis for his absence that protected his legal rights while demonstrating that he discharged his social responsibilities. He achieved this by formalizing the role of poet into a civic office (*officium poetae*) that depended, paradoxically, on the burdensome solitude of exile.⁴⁶

Petrarch's *officium poetae* will be examined in greater detail in the next section. For now, it is enough to note that Dante Alighieri was its key precedent, having written the *Commedia* (ca. 1307–21) while subsisting on patronage.⁴⁷ Dante was, moreover, the first to challenge the distinction between Roman *exilium* and the medieval ban by using the Italian term *esilio* to describe his own banishment

⁴⁰For the law of infamy and reputation in this period, see Migliorino.

⁴¹Filelfo in Petrarch, 1513, 53^v–54^r (commentary to *RVF* 68; here numbered sonnet 53). Cf. Watson, 4:309 (*Digest* 48.1.2): “Capital proceedings are those where the penalty is death or exile . . . because by these penalties civil status is taken away.”

⁴²Petrarch in Boccaccio, 2004, 112 (*Posteritati* 13): “I was born in exile at Arezzo to respectable parents of Florentine origins . . . who had been driven out of their homeland.”

⁴³For Ser Petracco's associations with the corporation of White Guelph fugitives and the exiled branch of the Frescobaldi banking company, see Bombi, 434–36.

⁴⁴Costa, 1:9–18.

⁴⁵See the sources cited and commentary in Bowsky, 1967; Cortese, 136–38; Costa, 1:23–36.

⁴⁶The *Collatio Laureationis* (1341) develops the Virgilian theme of love leading the poet up the “lonely slopes of Parnassus,” into an expression of authorship as “arduous” and “lonely”: Petrarch in Wilkins, 1955c, 301–04.

⁴⁷Inglese, 82: “[After breaking with his Florentine allies,] all that remained for the poet was to put himself forward as a freelance professional in *dictamen* [rhetoric] . . . to the only entities who might wish to benefit from that service: the small- and medium-sized *signorie* of the Apennines and Po valley.”

from Florence.⁴⁸ In Dante's hands, the word had gained a classicizing echo of *exilium* under the Roman Republic, where it signified the citizen's liberty to exit the city voluntarily instead of standing trial.⁴⁹ The poet amalgamates Republican-era *exilium* with the Christian existential resonances the term had since acquired, thereby transforming his banishment into a prophetic exclusion.⁵⁰

Petrarch's sole encounter with Dante came shortly before his family relocated across the Alps.⁵¹ He recalls the boyhood meeting in *Familiare* 21.5, originally a letter to Boccaccio from 1359, which denies rumors of jealousy for his predecessor. The laureate poet praises Dante in terms that evoke the character of Ulysses from the *Inferno*: an exile who set aside the love of his family to pursue "the course . . . he had embarked [on]," namely literature.⁵² Moreover, in *Familiare* 1.1, Petrarch likens his own wanderings to those of the Homeric hero.⁵³ So when *Familiare* 21.5 talks respectfully of Dante's Ulyssean peregrinations in service to letters, Petrarch doubtless intends to echo his own literary autobiography.⁵⁴

In the letter, Ser Petracco serves as a proxy who further underlines the resemblances between his son's situation and Dante's. Petrarch even omits significant differences between Ser Petracco's exile and Dante's: his admiration for Dante's principled but haughty refusal to sue for readmission ignores the reality of Ser Petracco's far more conciliatory response to banishment.⁵⁵ Indeed,

⁴⁸This claim rests on a search of the *Opera del vocabolario italiano* database (<http://www.oiv.cnr.it/>) for all spellings listed in the *Tesoro della lingua italiana delle origini* (hereafter *TLIO*), s.v. "esilio." See also Brilli, 2011, 21–22; Ferrara, 2012, 45–50.

⁴⁹Cf. Sallust, 113 (*Bellum Catilinae* 51.22): "Roman citizens, even when found guilty, shall not lose their lives, but shall be permitted to go into exile [*exilium*]." Crifò, 50–70, compiles and discusses other relevant sources; see also Ferrara, 2012, 52–57.

⁵⁰Cf. Dante, 2011b, 515 (*Rime* 44.76): "I count as an honor the exile [*essilio*] that is given to me." And see Brilli, 2012, 271–354.

⁵¹The meeting occurred in late 1311 or 1312, probably at Pisa. See Indizio for a full account.

⁵²Petrarch, 1975–85, 3:203 (*Familiare* 21.5). Cf. Dante, 1996, 403 (*Inf.* 26.94–98): "Neither the sweetness of a son, nor compassion for my old father, nor the love owed to Penelope, which should have made her glad, could conquer within me the ardor that I had to gain experience of the world."

⁵³Petrarch, 1975–85, 1:8 (*Familiare* 1.1): "Compare my wanderings to those of Ulysses. If the reputation of our name and of our achievements were the same, he indeed traveled neither more nor farther than I."

⁵⁴Cachey explores the "pointed rewriting of Dante's Ulysses" in *Familiare* 21.5: Cachey, 2009, 20–28; see 20 for quotation. But such speculations on motives are unnecessary if one recognizes how Petrarch's diverse legal status transforms his authorial subject position.

⁵⁵For Dante's disdain for amnesty, see Dante, 2012, 90–95 (*Epistole* 12), esp. 92 (§3); and cf. the discussion in Steinberg, 2013, 16, 172–74.

Petrarch arguably had his father's socially enmeshed behavior to thank for avoiding the co-banishment inflicted on Dante's sons Pietro (ca. 1300–64) and Iacopo Alighieri (ca. 1300–ca. 1348), whom Florence sent to join its persistent enemy once they reached maturity. A metrical epistle Petrarch wrote to Pietro Alighieri in 1345 explores the contrasting fates of these two sons of banished Florentines. Petrarch admits to Pietro's greater love for Florence because of his birth and upbringing in the city. Nonetheless, he reflects that, as an unbanished exile, he can yet hope for Florence's acceptance; Pietro, meanwhile, whose ban appears to have remained in force, might never be free from the effects of his father's adherence to principle.⁵⁶

In 1351, Petrarch received from Florence the desired offer of residency. However, just as Dante had stuck to "the course . . . he had embarked [on]," Petrarch proved unwilling to abide by contemporary norms of citizenship to the detriment of his literary endeavors. Almost a half-century after Ser Petrarco's exclusion, Boccaccio visited Petrarch in Padua to deliver an invitation from the Florentine authorities to become a full resident citizen.⁵⁷ The letter relies on the legal concept of *mendum* (recompense), a cornerstone of the process of *ribandimento* (return from exile).⁵⁸ Florence acknowledged the poet's grievance and offered reparations deemed to represent the city's fatherly love and concern for its lost citizen: permission to reside in the city, an *officium* in the shape of a professorship at the new university, and the restitution of the "ancestral farm and pasture" confiscated from Ser Petrarco.⁵⁹

Petrarch's response is fulsome but flatly rejects the letter's compensatory justice. Instead, he asserts that his exile is voluntary and redefines Florence's offer from compensation to an act of charity so generous it admits him to a pantheon of exiled luminaries: Cicero, Rutilius, Metellus, Furius Camillus, Alcibiades.⁶⁰ Just as Dante had refused to offer up penance in exchange for amnesty, so Petrarch would not accept a restitution contingent on residency and civic participation.⁶¹ In a verbal message confided to Boccaccio, Petrarch rejected

⁵⁶Wilkins, 1955b; *DBI*, s.v. "Alighieri, Pietro," by Arnaldo D'Addario: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-alighieri_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-alighieri_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). For the legal condition of those whose bans had been lifted, see Cavalca, 249–52.

⁵⁷Edited in Azzusas, 234–40.

⁵⁸For a detailed exploration of *ribandimento*, see Milani, 2003, 315–64.

⁵⁹Azzusas, 235.

⁶⁰Petrarch, 1975–85, 2:95 (*Familiares* 11.5): "But when was a citizen, absent by choice, ever recalled by plebiscite or by senate decree when a country was not in danger? . . . What son ever had his land, lost by his father or his ancestors, restored by public decree? These are rare examples of piety and generosity."

⁶¹In the same period, Petrarch turned down ecclesiastical positions requiring his time and attention. See Wilkins, 1955a, 15–17.

Florence's offer and never resided in his father's city. When Petrarch moved to the Italian Peninsula for good in 1353, he outraged his Florentine friends by settling in Visconti-dominated Milan. Boccaccio sent a letter parodying the pastoral style of Petrarch's Latin works; it notes sarcastically that Florence had long since rescinded the offer to make him whole.⁶² But the laureate poet's fame gave him multiple options for sustenance, and he chose one that circumvented the participatory elements of communal citizenship. Only in exile could Petrarch be Italy's first fully professional author.⁶³

PETRARCH, DANTE, AND THE *OFFICIUM POETAE*

A crucial step toward creative autonomy had come in 1341, when a comparatively green Petrarch received the poet's laurels at Rome.⁶⁴ Scholars have aligned Petrarch's coronation with that of Albertino Mussato (1261–1329) at Padua in 1315, given that the explicit grounds for both were poetic and historical writings in Latin.⁶⁵ But Mussato's coronation was an intracommunal affair wherein the Paduan elite recognized one of its number for literary achievements focused on the city's recent past.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Petrarch's ceremony was pan-Italian: a Florentine domiciled near Avignon received the crown in Rome at the behest of the king of Naples. The accompanying *privilegium* (legal benefit) recognizes the importance of the commonwealth in conferring rights, albeit on Petrarch's own terms.⁶⁷ It establishes an *officium* specific to his solitary poetic practice and grants him citizenship, but of Rome not Florence.⁶⁸

Dante had also devised his own coronation: the *Paradiso* hopes for a triumphal return to Florence, complete with a coronation at the baptistery — a mirror image

⁶²Boccaccio, 1964–98, 5:580 (*Epistole* 10.23–25).

⁶³Coccia and Piron, 562–63: “It is not until Petrarch, and largely because of him, that the poet as a figure detached from all other social engagement becomes established.” See also Santagata, 2004, 118–19.

⁶⁴See Wilkins, 1951.

⁶⁵For example, Sturm-Maddox, 295–300. In fact, Petrarch's Latin publications by 1341 were scanty, especially by comparison with Mussato's output. See Wilkins, 1951, 29–34.

⁶⁶*DBI*, s.v. “Mussato, Albertino,” by Guido Martellotti: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/albertino-mussato_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/albertino-mussato_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

⁶⁷Mertens, 241: “He [Petrarch] has manifested an honorable desire for the most worthy laurels, professing before us and the Roman people that he aims not for his own glory but to stimulate a similar desire in the minds of other learned men.” For the nature and significance of a *privilegium*, see Steinberg, 2013, 89–126.

⁶⁸For the coronation as the establishment of Petrarch's *officium poetae*, see Kantorowicz, 1965, 354–55, 362–63. For the commonwealth's broad discretion regarding citizenship, see Bartolus in Kirshner, 713; and *ibid.*, 694–711, for Kirshner's exposition.

of the hatted oblation required of would-be returnees from banishment.⁶⁹ Although the details of his vision went unrealized, the coronation Dante eventually received at his funeral in 1321 certainly depended on his vernacular *Commedia*.⁷⁰ This precedent hints at the “unthinkable” idea that Petrarch’s vernacular lyrics may have had a significant role in establishing the solitary poet figure canonized at his coronation.⁷¹ These poems in the Florentine language to an Avignonese lady boasted a readership that far exceeded that of Petrarch’s slender record of Latin publications.⁷² Moreover, the exiled poet they depict subsists in the coronation ceremony, despite the strategic omission of the lyrics.⁷³

Once Petrarch began work on the *Canzoniere* in the 1350s — the same period in which he transferred his primary residence to Italy — he managed the release of its redactions in order to refine his author figure.⁷⁴ The poet of the *Canzoniere* is not only the creator of exilic love lyrics from the 1330s and 1340s, he is furthermore the curator of an author’s book that forms the definitive canon of his selfhood.⁷⁵ This book’s ideal audience coincides with Petrarch’s ideal friendship network: politically powerful figures and fellow intellectuals with whom he conversed as peers.⁷⁶ This actualizes an equivalence Petrarch makes throughout his work between poetic authority and princely power, both of which he sees as founded on glory.⁷⁷ The *Canzoniere* solidifies both Petrarch’s *officium* and his exile by disassociating his authorship from a temporal and spatial coherence with the act of composition and associating it instead with the act of

⁶⁹Dante, 2011a, 501 (*Paradiso* 25.1–9): “Should it ever come to pass that the sacred poem, to which both heaven and earth have set their hand so that for many years it has made me lean, should overcome the cruelty that locks me out of the fair sheepfold where I slept as a lamb, an enemy of the wolves that make war on it, I shall return as a poet, with another voice by then, with another fleece, and at the font of my baptism I shall accept the wreath [literally ‘hat’].” For echoes of *ribandimento* in this passage, see Steinberg, 2013, 167–74.

⁷⁰Sturm-Maddox, 294; Wilkins, 1951, 24.

⁷¹Wilkins, 1951, 31. Cf. Sturm-Maddox, 296.

⁷²Wilkins, 1951, 31–34. Cf. Santagata, 2004, 27: “The distinct predominance of his vernacular poetic production . . . is striking because it is so curiously discordant with his contemporaneous self-portrayal as a scholar and historian.”

⁷³The *privilegium* describes Petrarch as a Florentine residing near Avignon: Mertens, 241–42. Boccaccio, meanwhile, connects Laura the lyric beloved to the historical Petrarch’s receipt of the laurels: Boccaccio, 2004, 86 (*Vita Petrarce* 26).

⁷⁴Santagata, 2004, 243–72.

⁷⁵Steinberg, 2009a, 281: “[MS Vatican Latin 3195] functions as a sort of profane Veronica, guaranteeing the true face of the artist.”

⁷⁶Steinberg, 2009b, 90–91.

⁷⁷Petrarch in Bergin, 189 (*Epistola Metrica* 2.10.20–21): “What flowers are to maidens, so the laurel [wreath] is to both [princes] and [poets], who share alike the same [glory]” (translation modified). See Mertens, 238–39, for the same equation in the *privilegium*.

dispositio (arrangement). The result is “a touch-relic emanating from the pen of the author”:⁷⁸ the apograph MS Vatican Latin 3195.

Late in life, Petrarch sent a copy of his lyric collection to the condottiero Pandolfo Malatesta (ca. 1325–73), with a cover letter later revised as *Seniles* 13.11. The letter likens this gift volume’s authority to that enjoyed by those at the pinnacle of the prevailing social hierarchy, in stark contrast to the “mangle[d]” collections of the “multitude.”⁷⁹ A postscript to the original letter, omitted from the *Seniles* version, gives further insight into Petrarch’s understanding of poetic discretion. It informs Pandolfo that, if Petrarch decides that further lyrics are worthy of inclusion in his apograph, he may forward them for transcription into the gift volume.⁸⁰ Even after his powerful correspondent has received the gift, the poet claims an ongoing authority to dictate alterations to it in order to maintain its nobility of form.

Petrarch’s audacious claims to discretion do not reject human society and its foundations in natural law and divine justice; rather, they assert certain immunities and privileges within that system as essential to the role of poet.⁸¹ This subtle attitude toward the political sphere — neither antinomian, nor yet submissive — finds support in the work of Augustine, who believed that “from the eternal law are derived all just laws. . . . But those who with a good will cleave to the eternal law do not need the temporal law.”⁸² By adopting Augustine’s nuanced approach to the institutions of his time, Petrarch builds on a literary-theoretical claim central to Dante’s mature work: that a marginal social position can render literary authorship universally relevant. The centrality of exile connects both poets’ work to a Christian rhetorical tradition rooted in the self-humbling of the Incarnate Word.⁸³ Nonetheless, there is an important distinction between the two authors: Dante asserts immunity to banishment unilaterally as a necessary response to an emergency in the body politic; Petrarch, meanwhile, was fortunate enough to have his exceptional status recognized within the regular legal order.⁸⁴

Two examples from the *Canzoniere* will put these general considerations in concrete terms. *RVF* 237, a sestina on alienation from the city in favor of the

⁷⁸Steinberg, 2009a, 280–81.

⁷⁹Petrarch, 1992, 2:500 (*Seniles* 13.11).

⁸⁰Feo, 2001, 148.

⁸¹Kennedy, 36, argues that Petrarch’s exile frees him to establish “his supraregional identity as an Italian inheritor of Roman culture.” But this obscures the significant dialogue with contemporary social and legal realities.

⁸²Augustine, 1953, 131 (*De libero arbitrio* 1.15.31).

⁸³Daley, 108: “The humility of the Incarnate Word is, for Augustine, the most fundamental truth in the Gospel of salvation.” And see Zinn for the Franciscan devotion to an Augustinian symbolism of the Word in Petrarch’s lifetime.

⁸⁴For Dante’s “emergency poetics,” see Steinberg, 2013, 57–82.

countryside, contains an illuminating instance of the *Canzoniere's* use of technical political terminology in the declaration "Love made me a citizen of the woods."⁸⁵ What seems at first glance a traditional love poet's adynaton refers, on closer examination, to a contemporary historical phenomenon. Many communal statutes recognized a category of "sylvan citizens": naturalized citizens from the *contado* (rural periphery) who had switched their residence to the city and met certain fiscal and personal requirements.⁸⁶ But compliance was far from universal: the rules were complex and variable over space and time, desirable immigrants often received exemptions, and others used wealth and influence to evade their obligations.⁸⁷ A significant population of sylvan citizens therefore lived in the countryside while retaining the legal rights and privileges of metropolitan citizenship.⁸⁸ The line may even allude to the sylvan citizenship or related status once held by Petrarch's family. Florentine documents routinely identify Ser Petrarco by the demonym "from Incisa,"⁸⁹ the village in the city's *contado* where a very young Petrarch learned to speak his mother tongue.⁹⁰ Be that as it may, the legal-historical context makes clear that the term "citizen of the woods" implies an exceptional form of citizenship divorced from the obligation to live in the city.

RVF 16 provides a more systematic example of the interplay between history and authorship. The sonnet imagines Petrarch searching for an alternative beloved to Laura and compares this to an old man journeying to Rome to see the Veronica:

The little white-haired pale old man leaves
 the sweet place where he has filled out his age
 and his fear-stricken little family,
 who watch their dear father disappear;
 thence dragging his ancient flanks
 through the last days of his life,
 as much as he can he helps himself with good will,
 broken by the years and tired by the road;
 and he comes to Rome, following his desire,
 to gaze on the likeness of Him
 whom he hopes to see again up there in Heaven.

⁸⁵Durling, 1976, 296 (*RVF* 237.15): "Amor femmi un cittadin de' boschi." Petrarch, 2004, 978.

⁸⁶A discussion and citations to pertinent sources are in Bowsky, 1965.

⁸⁷For examples of doctrine and practice in this area, see Bowsky, 1967, 209–13.

⁸⁸See Bowsky, 1965, 73.

⁸⁹For example, Barbadoro, 1:431n(a). The family moved to Florence around 1291, when Petrarco was in his twenties: *DBI*, s.v. "Petracco dall'Incisa."

⁹⁰Petrarch in Boccaccio, 2004, 112 (*Posteritati* 14): "I spent the six following years [sc. 1305–11] . . . in Incisa at a rural property owned by my father fourteen miles from Florence."

Thus, alas, at times I go searching
 in others, Lady, as much as is possible,
 for your longed-for true form.⁹¹

The failure of the poet's search for an alternative beloved exemplifies the fundamental poetic process of the *Canzoniere*: Petrarch's scrutiny and comparison of his interactions with the world around him and his collation of these moments into a cohesive, yet open-ended, whole.

The first eleven lines externalize this process via the model of the old pilgrim. Santagata's commentary notes that the pilgrim's sought-after destination, the Veronica, is an image that points to a referent that is inaccessible in this world: Christ's divine visage.⁹² The old man's journey, and with it Petrarch's literary autobiography, blend into the sacred narrative of *peregrinatio*, in which the believer experiences an exile that cannot end outside of paradise.⁹³ The unbridgeable distance between image and desired referent, shroud and Christ, was well known to Dante, who compares himself to a traveling pilgrim and Beatrice to the Veronica in the *Vita nova* (1292–95).⁹⁴ Once in exile, Dante transforms his unfortunate sojourn on earth into an ironic privilege.⁹⁵

RVF 16 signals a debt to Dante's famous vindication of his exile in the canzone "Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute" (Three ladies have gathered round my heart). Five rhyme words from "Tre donne" recur in *RVF* 16.⁹⁶ Moreover, both poems display an antistrophic structure in which the poet's voice enters the work only after a third-person narrative has taken up the lion's share of the verses.⁹⁷ In the first-person closing section, the exemplary value of this narrative transfers to the poet himself and to the hermeneutic process his poem invites. Finally, the endpoint of each poet's desire is itself a model or signifier, which refers on to a further desideratum, making this hermeneutic

⁹¹Durling, 1976, 50 (*RVF* 16): "Movesi il vecchierel canuto e bianco / del dolce loco ov' à sua età fornita / et da la famigliuola sbigottita / che vede il caro padre venir manco; / indi trahendo poi l'antiquo fianco / per l'extreme giornate di sua vita, / quanto più pò, col buon voler s'aita, / rotto dagli anni, et dal camino stanco; // et viene a Roma, seguendo 'l desio, / per mirar la sembianza di Colui / ch' ancor lassù nel ciel vedere spera: / così, lasso, talor vo cerchand'io, / donna, quanto è possibile, in altrui / la disiata vostra forma vera." Petrarch, 2004, 68.

⁹²Santagata in Petrarch, 2004, 68–69: "The search for an *imago* behind which the author hopes to discover the *res*, or authentic reality . . . [is] typical of sacred *peregrinatio*."

⁹³See Cachey, 1997; Greene.

⁹⁴Dante, 2009, 167–70 (*Vita nova* 29).

⁹⁵Ferrara, 2012, 50–51, 64–65; Mazzotta, 1993, 174–96.

⁹⁶The rhyme words are "vita," "s'aita," "sbigottita," "stanca" ("stanco" in *RVF* 16), and "manca" ("manco" in *RVF* 16). Dante, 2011b, 513 (*Rime* 44.4, 8, 9, 10, 11). See Santagata in Petrarch, 2004, 69.

⁹⁷Cf. Dante, 2011b, 515 (*Rime* 44.73–90).

process very difficult to complete. Dante declares himself “afire” with desire for his “bel segno” (literally “fair sign”),⁹⁸ which could indicate a lady or Florence, while the attraction of Petrarch’s poet to other women betokens his search for the “forma” of Laura.

Petrarch’s sonnet is a microcosm of the complex interplay between external referents and internal reflection that makes exile an essential theme in the *Canzoniere*. The physical distance here may not apply directly to the poet himself, yet the old pilgrim’s spatial journey blends smoothly into the poet’s amorous gaze, drawing it into the hermeneutic structure of *peregrinatio*. The multiple echoes of “Tre donne” draw an analogy between Petrarch’s estranged poetic interiority and Dante’s establishment of *exilium* as an ironically privileged situation for authorship. And Dante’s Ulysses is again an intertext in *RVF* 16 as the aged pilgrim “leaves . . . his fear-stricken family.” The undesirable consequences of pilgrimage in the eyes of the old man’s loved ones mirror the transgressive aspects of Petrarch’s exile: absence from the *patria*, dereliction of familial and civic duties, an insouciance to the opinions of others. In this, the poem echoes the Christian understanding of the conscience as *forum mentis* (mental court),⁹⁹ presenting both the positive theological side and the negative social aspects of this Ulyssean choice. Nevertheless, it is a court that reaches no definitive moral verdict.

CINO DA PISTOIA AND POETIC EXILE AFTER DANTE

Petrarch engages broadly with the vernacular literary culture of his era, staking out a characteristic praxis that is well versed in what had gone before, and yet experimental.¹⁰⁰ Dante looms large, but Petrarch also pays attention to his contemporaries and successors. The *Triumphs* (ca. 1352–74), for example, are singular in their incorporation of classical myth and contemplation of divine love.¹⁰¹ Yet they follow in a trend of using *terza rima* for longer vernacular poems on allegorical or didactic subjects begun by Boccaccio’s *Amorosa visione* (1342–43) and the *Dittamondo* (1346–67) of Fazio degli Uberti (ca. 1305–ca. 1367).

Given this approach and the prevalence of exile among vernacular poets of the period, Petrarch’s vernacular works inevitably engage with writers like Sennuccio del Bene (ca. 1279–1349) who, like Dante, experienced exile in the early 1300s. Another such figure is Cino da Pistoia, whose death Petrarch commemorates in *RVF* 92:

Let rhymes weep also, let verses weep,
for our loving Messer Cino

⁹⁸Foster and Boyde, 1967, 1:181 (Dante, *Rime* 44.80): “I bel segno.” Dante, 2011b, 515.

⁹⁹See the sources cited in Padoa Schioppa, 257–58, 260–64.

¹⁰⁰See Santagata, 2004, 33–35.

¹⁰¹Barański, esp. 75.

has recently departed from us.
 Let Pistoia weep and her wicked citizens,
 who have lost so sweet a neighbor;
 and let Heaven be glad, where he has gone.¹⁰²

Cino's legal writings, which argue for the intellectual independence of the civil law and its practitioners from the Church and canon law, were a greater source of fame in his lifetime than his love lyrics.¹⁰³ But Petrarch's sonnet concentrates instead on Cino's poetry, recapitulating its primary theme: *lontananza* (absence/remoteness) from the beloved and the consequent division of the poetic self.¹⁰⁴ Petrarch ironically juxtaposes the jurist-poet's passing over to the afterlife to his banishment from Pistoia some thirty years earlier, mercilessly condemning Cino's townsmen in spite of the jurist-poet's readmission and the long career in public life he enjoyed thereafter.¹⁰⁵

Cino used the vernacular lyric to express an alienation or dissidence that transgresses the norms of civic or professional discourse.¹⁰⁶ This is especially evident in his poet figure's frequent self-presentation as a foreigner or exile, which continues even after his *ribandimento*.¹⁰⁷ As late as 1330–31, in the canzone “Deh quando rivedrò ‘l dolce paese” (Oh, when will I see again the sweet land),¹⁰⁸ his poetic “I” remains almost unchanged since his exchange of exile sonnets with Dante a quarter-century earlier. One of those epistolary sonnets is especially relevant to *RVF* 92:

Dante, since I have been from my birthplace,
 by painful exile [*esilio*] made a stranger [*peregrino*]
 and banished from the highest pleasure
 that the infinite Pleasure ever formed,
 I have gone weeping through the world,
 disdained by death like a wretch;

¹⁰²Durling, 1976, 194 (*RVF* 92.9–14): “Piangan le rime anchor, piangano i versi, / perché ‘l nostro amoroso messer Cino / novellamente s’è da noi partito. / Pianga Pistoia, e i cittadini perversi / che perduto ànno sì dolce vicino; / et ralleghesi il cielo, ov’ello è gito.” Petrarch, 2004, 450.

¹⁰³De Robertis, 288–89. For Cino's legal career, see Libertini, 23–40; Monti.

¹⁰⁴Keen, 2000 and 2002. Cf. the canzone “La dolce vista e ‘l bel guardo soave” (The lovely sight and the sweet glance), quoted at *RVF* 70.40: Cino in Marti, 684–88.

¹⁰⁵Libertini, 27–29, 32.

¹⁰⁶Ferrara, 2005, 236–39.

¹⁰⁷Keen, 2002, 103–10. In the sonnet “Con gravosi sospir traendo guai” (With heavy sighs I drag my troubles), the poet asks if he is so “giudeo” (“wicked,” literally “Jewish”) as to deserve his lady's merciless treatment: Cino in Marti, 536–37.

¹⁰⁸Cino in Marti, 865–68. The poem refers to a course of lectures in civil law that Cino gave at Naples in 1330–31: *ibid.*, 865.

and whenever I have found a similar beauty,
 I have written that she injured my heart.
 And, although my certain despair could free me
 from the arms of that first Pity,
 I have not left them, because I expect no help.
 One pleasure always binds and entwines me,
 and requires that, in place of its beauty
 I delight myself with many scattered ladies.¹⁰⁹

Cino's sly justification for philandering is more openly erotic than anything in Petrarch's poem. Still, both sonnets mention crying, a chorus of ladies, and divine love, while the rhymes *-ino* and *-ito*, dominant in Cino's octave, appear in Petrarch's sestet. *RVF* 92 does not take up the term *esilio*, but it does appropriate the key related idea of *lontananza* from a city and its virtuous ladies.¹¹⁰

Cino's sonnet, probably written between 1303 and 1306, marks one of the earliest uses in the Italian vernacular of the term *esilio* to describe communal banishment; the only likely precedent is Dante.¹¹¹ It is implausible that Cino the jurist would have overlooked his friend's implicit challenge to Florence's ban: he authored a *consilium* (legal opinion) upholding a city's power to banish and disenfranchise opponents of the regime.¹¹² Moreover, the central doctrine of Cino's controversial disputed question *Rector civitatis* was the commonwealth's universal jurisdiction over its citizens, notwithstanding their physical absence.¹¹³ Nonetheless, as a poet, Cino co-opts Dante's terms *esilio* and *peregrino* to his persona of dissident alterity, albeit without embracing Dante's systematic rejection of communal judgment.¹¹⁴

Although Cino does not aspire to a prophetic vocation, his Dantean diction remains significant for Petrarch: it shows that Dante's exilic authorship is transferable to another poet with a radically different biography. *RVF* 92's echoes of Cino's poem add another link in this chain of exemplarity. By taking Cino's

¹⁰⁹Cino in Dante, 2011b, 604: "Poi ch'ì' fu', Dante, dal mio natal sito / fatto per greve essilio peregrino / e lontanato dal piacer più fino / che mai formasse 'l Piacer infinito, / i' son piangendo per lo mondo gito / sdegnato del morir come meschino, / e s'ho trovato di lui alcun vicino, / dett'ho che questi m'ha lo cor ferito. // Né da le prime braccia di Pietate, / onde 'l fermato disperar m'assolve, / son mosso, perch'aiuto non aspetti: / ch'un piacer sempre mi lega ed involve, / il qual convien, ch'a simil di beltate / in molte donne sparte mi diletta."

¹¹⁰For the convergence between amorous *lontananza* and communal exile, see Zanni.

¹¹¹Again, the evidence for this claim comes from a search of the *Opera del vocabolario italiano* database.

¹¹²Cino da Pistoia, 1942, 112: "Once banished, he is considered an enemy of the commonwealth."

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 59–74. For the controversy, see Ferrara, 2005, 236–37.

¹¹⁴Keen, 2002, 96–99.

excluded poetic self at face value and marginalizing his civic career in law and politics, *RVF* 92 solidifies Petrarch's hold on a poetic archetype that it is now time to analyze in depth: the exile in thrall to divine love.

THE POET AS EXILE IN THE *CANZONIERE*

Petrarch talks of himself as exiled in the *Canzoniere* using all three of the key terms highlighted above: *exilio* (i.e., *esilio*), *bandol/sbandire*, and *pellegrino* (i.e., *peregrino*). In reverse order, *pellegrino* usually signifies "foreign/foreigner," as in Roman law, with excursions into more Augustinian territory.¹¹⁵ *Bando* implies a specific, historicized authority to exclude and will be treated in a separate section. *Exilio* means absence and hardship without a formal judgment; it is reserved for the poet himself, while the other terms may also apply to other characters in the narrative. The poet's particular use of the term *exilio* adopts Dante's redefinition of banishment as liberty and reassigns it to his own retreat from urban society.

In part 1 (*RVF* 1–263), the poet entwines the lexicon of citizenship and exile with the erotic *lontananza* motif to establish the emblematic solitude of the Petrarchan author. Throughout, Petrarch strongly thematizes the experience of physical distance, and its consequent subjective alienation, whether from Laura or from other addressees, such as Sennuccio del Bene:

Every place makes me sad where I do not see
 those lovely sweet eyes
 that carried off the keys
 of my thoughts, which were sweet as long as it pleased God;
 and — so that harsh exile [*exilio*] may weigh me down even more —
 if I sleep or walk or sit,
 I call out for nothing else,
 and all I have seen since them displeases me.¹¹⁶

In this canzone, *RVF* 37, the memory of the beloved causes a division in the lyric "I," which, whether he is "sleep[ing], walk[ing], or sitt[ing]," juxtaposes the here and now unfavorably with the far-off place and time of his last encounter with Laura. As

¹¹⁵Cf. the "foreign swords" ("pellegrine spade") of *RVF* 128.21 to the "members within which dwells pilgrim [*peregrinando alberga*] a valorous, knowing, and wise lord" of *RVF* 53.1–3: Durling, 1976, 256, 124.

¹¹⁶Durling, 1976, 98 (*RVF* 37.33–41): "Ogni loco m'atrasta ov'io non veggio / quei begli occhi soavi / che portaron le chiavi / de' miei dolci pensier', mentre a Dio piacque; / et perché 'l duro exilio più m'aggravi, / s'io dormo o vado o seggio, / altro già mai non chieggo, / et ciò ch'i' vidi dopo lor mi spiace." Petrarch, 2004, 199.

in Cino's sonnet, the topos of the estranged poet's divided self gains new precision through the use of the term *exilio*. For Cino, that precision was legal and political, whereas Petrarch's exile is intrinsically theological: it casts the self's imagined projection of itself to the lost homeland/beloved as indicative of divine displeasure ("as long as it pleased God").¹¹⁷ The internal contemplation of a beloved visage reflects Augustine's adoption of the Stoic process of *recordatio* (recall) in his hermeneutics.¹¹⁸ The church father comments that, on reading Saint Paul, "who . . . does not draw a picture in his mind of the countenance of the Apostle himself, and of all those whose names are there mentioned."¹¹⁹ By theologizing both the distance from Laura and his memory of her, Petrarch's special term *exilio* transforms a traditional account of *lontananza* into a truly exemplary status.

In part 1 the poet retains ambitions to intervene in this theologized space. Take the political poem "Italia mia benché 'l parlar sia indarno" (My Italy, although speech does not aid; *RVF* 128), which appears in a five-canzone sequence (*RVF* 125–29) devoted to erotic separation. By placing "Italia mia" alongside four other canzoni, the boldest display of technical prowess in the collection, the poet claims a special capacity to intervene in history from his amorous vernacular exile. The vatic tone combines with a fatalism that echoes Christ's maxim, "no prophet is accepted in his own country":¹²⁰

My Italy, although speech does not aid
those mortal wounds
of which in your lovely body I see so many,
I wish at least my sighs to be such
as Tiber and Arno hope for,
and Po, where I now sit sorrowful and sad.
Ruler of heaven, I beg
that the mercy that made You come to earth
may now make You turn to Your beloved, holy country.¹²¹

The poet recasts the theme of erotic distance and solitude in political terms by speaking out on behalf of Italy, which he personifies as a beautiful but wounded lady. Personified Italy alludes to the sovereign's body politic, which, like Christ's

¹¹⁷McMenamin.

¹¹⁸Byers, 162; cf. McGinn, 93–112, for the Franciscan tradition.

¹¹⁹Augustine, 2002, 10 (*De Trinitate* 8.4.7).

¹²⁰Edgar and Kinney, 6:319 (Luke 4:24).

¹²¹Durling, 1976, 256 (*RVF* 128.1–8): "Italia mia, benché 'l parlar sia indarno / a le piaghe mortali / che nel bel corpo tuo sì spesse veggio, / piacemi almen che' miei sospir' sian quali / spera 'l Tevero et l'Arno / e 'l Po, dove doglioso et grave or seggio. / Rettor del cielo, io chaggio / che la pietà che Ti condusse in terra / Ti volga al Tuo dilecto almo paese." Petrarch, 2004, 616.

divine nature, subsists eternally notwithstanding the absence of a prince's body natural. The obscurity of the poem's literal sense furthers the prophetic connotation, since the mystical unity of Christ's two natures resists analogical or metaphorical interpretation.¹²² Petrarch locates himself in Italy by the Po River, a geographical marker that signifies an internal division between the poetic "I" and his vision of a peaceful end to the conflicts among Italian states of the 1340s. The poem's language also suggests it is native to Italy, although its poet did not reside there at the time of writing.¹²³ Despite its nonamorous subject matter, "Italia mia" gives a good example of the technique of the poems in part 1: it evokes the poet's alienation by relating it to geographical space, while also claiming a broader, theologized significance for his words.

After Laura's death at poem 267, the distinction between distance as metaphor for alienation and the subjective experience of alienation breaks down, casting doubt on the borderline between interior and exterior worlds.¹²⁴ *RVF* 331 epitomizes this process: it opens on an ostentatious enjambment that runs on to the compound infinitive "allontanarme" ("I [used] to go far"), a cognate of *lontananza* whose six syllables occupy the whole first hemistich of line 2. The poem then reviews the experience of physical alienation from Laura in part 1, using all three key terms of exile, before contrasting this *in vita* estrangement with the poet's condition after his beloved's death:

I used to go far from the fountain of my life
and search through lands and seas,
following not my will, but my star
and (Love gave me help) I always went
into those exiles [*exilii*], as bitter ones as he had ever seen,
feeding my heart on memory and hope.

.....

A cloud or dust in the wind,
I flee in order to be no longer a traveler [*pellegrino*],
and so be it if that is indeed my destiny.

.....

In her eyes, where my heart was wont to dwell
(until my harsh fate envied it
and banished it [*il pose in bando*] from so rich a dwelling),
with his own hand Love had written

¹²²Kantorowicz, 1997, 49: "The expression itself *gemina persona* [the king's union of a body natural and body politic in one person] does not represent a poetical metaphor but is a technical term derived from and related to christological definitions."

¹²³Santagata dates the poem to the mid-1340s: Petrarch, 2004, 619–21.

¹²⁴Antonelli, 61–62.

in letters of pity what would soon
become of my long yearning.¹²⁵

The term *exilii* suggests a challenge Petrarch voluntarily confronts; *pellegrino* has its Augustinian sense of a sojourner in this world; *bando* describes fate's imperious removal of Petrarch's heart from its residence in Laura's eyes. All three terms are understood broadly, but not necessarily metaphorically: each implies the corporeal referents of Laura and Petrarch and the physical distance between them. The three types of exile construe Petrarch's detachment in different ways, but each implies a connection to the sphere of law and politics, itself grounded in Christology.¹²⁶

When the poem moves to the *Canzoniere*'s second alienation — the poet's spiritual distance from Laura's soul in heaven — the spatial metaphors of part 1 continue. Now, however, they express a tension between the idea of the poet's time on earth as a journey toward Laura in heaven and the radical dissimilarity that separates him from his beloved, whose divine nature his earthly faculties failed to grasp:

If my little intellect had been
with me at need, and another hunger
had not driven it elsewhere [*l'avesse disviando altrove vòlto*],
on my lady's brow I might have read:
"You have reached the end of all your sweetness
and the beginning of great bitterness."
Understanding that, and sweetly shaking off
in her presence my mortal veil
and this noisome heavy flesh,
I could have gone on before her
to watch her throne being prepared in Heaven:
now I will follow her, with changed hair.¹²⁷

¹²⁵Durling, 1976, 518, 520 (*RVF* 331.1–6, 22–24, 37–42): "Solea da la fontana di mia vita / allontanarme, et cercar terre et mari, / non mio voler, ma mia stella seguendo; / et sempre andai, tal Amor diemmi aita, / in quelli exilii quanto e' vide amari, / di memoria et di speme il cor pascendo. . . . Nebbia o polvere al vento, / fuggo per più non esser pellegrino: / et così vada, s'e pur mio destino. . . . Nelli occhi ov'habitar solea 'l mio core / fin che mia dura sorte invidia n'ebbe, / che di sì ricco albergo il pose in bando, / di sua man propria avea descritto Amore / con lette di pietà quel ch'averrebbe / tosto del mio sì lungo ir desiando." Petrarch, 2004, 1289–90.

¹²⁶Kantorowicz, 1997, 42–86, 496–506.

¹²⁷Durling, 1976, 522 (*RVF* 331.49–60): "Se stato fusse il mio poco intellecto / meco al bisogno, et non altra vaghezza / l'avesse disviando altrove vòlto, / ne la fronte a madonna avrei ben lecto: / — Al fin se' giunto d'ogni tua dolcezza / et al principio del tuo amaro molto. — / Questo intendendo, dolcemente sciolto / in sua presentia del mortal mio velo / et di questa noiosa et grave carne, / potea inanzi lei andarne, / a veder preparar sua sedia in cielo: / or l'andrò dietro, omai, con altro pelo." Petrarch, 2004, 1290.

The gerund “disviando” (“diverting,” literally “unroading”) describes desire’s hindrance of Petrarch’s understanding of Laura while she lived. The loss of the *via* (way) reflects a favored Augustinian metaphor for expressing humanity’s exile in the “region of unlikeness.”¹²⁸ Augustine’s terms characterize this world as a faulty analogy of the divine oneness, questioning any distinction between figurative and proper reference, since both intra- and extramental worlds share in this dissimilar similitude.¹²⁹ The necessary mediator between the faulty analogies of human thought and the divine is linguistic — the Incarnate Word. To put it another way, the sole path out of earthly exile is figural interpretation: the access to one signifier, the ultimate one, through another.¹³⁰ Petrarch’s employment of Augustinian hermeneutics shows through in another spatial metaphor in the stanza, “now I will follow her,” which casts Laura as the conduit from exile to a new, postspatial existence, free from estrangement.

RVF 331 further explores the question of mediation through an allusion to Isaiah’s prophecy of the Man of Sorrows, widely interpreted as prefiguring Christ’s passion.¹³¹ The Man of Sorrows is a hermeneutic challenge that humanity fails: “his look [*vultus*] was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not”;¹³² analogously, Petrarch is unable to “read” Laura’s “brow.” Moreover, the rhyme-word “volto” (“driven”) in the line immediately preceding the recapitulation of Isaiah creates a paronomasia on the Man of Sorrow’s “vultus” (“features”). In a parallel that will be treated below, the biblical reference casts Laura as a *figura Christi* and Petrarch as the prophet/author who records what he can of his vision, while acknowledging his own fallibility.

¹²⁸ Augustine, 1997, 173 (*Confessions* 7.10.16). Boulding glosses “region of unlikeness” as “the idea that distance from God is equivalent to unlikeness” in Augustine, 1997, 173n72; see further Ferguson, 72–86. For the term *via*, see Augustine, 1997, 181 (*Confessions* 7.10.26): “Insight would be mine to recognize the difference between . . . those who see the goal but not the way to it and the Way to our beatific homeland.” Cf. the “straight way” that is lost at *Inferno* 1.3: Dante, 1996, 27.

¹²⁹ Ferguson, 78: “‘Dissimilitude’ is a distance from God that is not a distance of space.” Cf. Augustine, 1997, 58 (*Confessions* 1.18.28): “Not . . . by traversing great distances do we journey away from you or find our way back.”

¹³⁰ Augustine, 1957–72, 3:431 (*De civitate Dei* 11.2): “For inasmuch as he [Christ] is man, he is the Mediator, and as man he is the way [*via*]. . . . Now the only way that is completely proof against mistakes is the way created when the same person is both God and man, God being the goal and man the way.” Cf. Lee, 63–112, on grace and imperfect cognition in the *Secretum*.

¹³¹ For the importance of the Man of Sorrows to Petrarch’s vernacular predecessors, see Martinez.

¹³² Edgar and Kinney, 4:225 (Isaiah 53:3).

RVF 331's retrospection across the caesura of Laura's death leads to a reimagination of part 1's theologized physical exile. Now the emphasis falls on the spiritual separation between Petrarch's continued life on earth and Laura's elevation to heaven. As the analysis of *RVF* 16 showed, the poet's reinterpretation of his past self bleeds into the author's fundamental task of compiling the collection. This ongoing dialectic between narrative and lyric voices, process and result, connects the internal world of authorship to the time-bound and utterly material task of copying and revising his book.¹³³

Petrarch's avowed division of selfhood between composer and compiler models for the reader the mental cleavage of the exile, who lives in one place and desires another. The division of the self, for Petrarch, leads inexorably to Augustine: when he encountered the theme in Horace's first ode, the poet inserted in the margin a textual parallel from the *Confessions*.¹³⁴ The next section argues that the *Canzoniere*'s author's book is structured around two key lessons from Augustinian hermeneutics: the assertion of a divine unity behind the apparent diversity of the biblical text, and the consequent acceptance and even welcoming of obscurity when reading. The uncertain boundary between Petrarch's poems and his book reflects these theories of biblical signification, the limits of which inhere only in the reader's own radical separation from the divine oneness.

THE *TRIUMPHI* AND THE *CANZONIERE*: FROM POEM, TO BOOK, TO WORLD

To understand the *Canzoniere*'s boundaries, it helps to look beyond them to Petrarch's other principal vernacular work, the *Triumph*i — a first-person allegorical verse narrative in six parts. Whatever the title *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* may suggest, the *Triumph*i are much more fragmentary than the *Canzoniere*: there is no equivalent to MS Vatican Latin 3195 for Petrarch's long poem.¹³⁵ Still, as a narrative poem rather than a lyric compilation, the *Triumph*i's account of Petrarch's poetic "I" is naturally more fleshed out. Indeed, in the years after Petrarch's death, readers looked to the *Triumph*i to provide biographical glosses on the lyrics.¹³⁶ The border between the two works is thus a porous one, as Petrarch's inclusion of Laura as a character in the *Triumph*i implies.¹³⁷

¹³³See Steinberg, 2009a and 2009b; Petrucci, 161–68.

¹³⁴Santagata in Petrarch, 2004, 529.

¹³⁵Santagata in Petrarch, 1996, xvi–xx. Barański, 63–65, considers that narrow philological disputes have obscured the *Triumph*i's important statement of Petrarchan poetics.

¹³⁶For the *Triumph*i's manuscript circulation, see Guerrini, 129, 132–33.

¹³⁷Santagata, 2004, 200–02.

Exile lies at the heart of a key episode in the *Triumphus*: the dialogue with Laura in *Triumphus Mortis* 2. Here, Laura speaks at greater length than anywhere in the *Canzoniere* to give a description of her death and ascension that echoes Beatrice's rebuke of Dante in *Purgatorio* 30–31. Laura likens her soul's journey to heaven to "someone returning to his sweet dwelling out of exile":¹³⁸ the only time Petrarch uses the term *exilio* in the vernacular to refer to someone other than himself. But Laura's use of exile still pertains to the poet, albeit not exclusively: it is the earthly state to which he will return when his vision comes to an end.

By comparison, *RVF* 285, also set after Laura's death, contains a description of an equivalent condition of *exilio* that is personal, not generic, because it connects to Petrarch's alienation. Sonnet 285 inverts the story of *RVF* 37 and tells of Laura's spirit appearing to Petrarch in his "heavy exile [*exiglio*]":

[Laura] who, seeing my heavy exile
 from her eternal home,
 often returns to me with her usual affection
 and with her brow adorned with double pity,
 now that of a mother, now that of a lover. Now she fears, now she burns
 with virtuous fire; and in her speech she shows me
 what in this journey I must avoid or pursue,
 telling over the events of our life,
 begging me not to delay in lifting up my soul.
 And only while she speaks do I have peace — or at least a truce.¹³⁹

The poet's condition here is equivalent to the *exilio* that Laura claims to have left behind in the roughly contemporaneous *Triumphus Mortis* 2 — in other words, exclusion from heaven.¹⁴⁰ Across the two episodes, therefore, the poet asserts a special insight into the human condition gained through dialogue with Laura. And yet he communicates this information in a fragmentary manner. Only the *Canzoniere*, not the *Triumphus*, personalizes the earthly sojourn of exile to the poet himself. Meanwhile, the one point of release that the sonnet allows him, Laura's words, is absent there but appears in the

¹³⁸Petrarch, 1996, 324 (*Triumphus Mortis* 2.74): "Qual d'exilio al dolce albergo riede."

¹³⁹Durling, 1976, 465 (*RVF* 285.5–14): "Come a me quella [sc. Laura] che 'l mio grave exiglio / mirando dal suo eterno alto ricetto, / spesso a me torna co l'usato affecto / et, di doppia pietate ornata il ciglio // or di madre or d'amante, or teme or arde / d'onesto foco, et nel parlar mi mostra / quel che 'n questo viaggio fugga o segua, / contando i casi de la vita nostra, / pregando ch' a levar l'alma non tarde: / et sol quant'ella parla, ò pace o tregua." Petrarch, 2004, 1141.

¹⁴⁰Santagata dates *RVF* 285 to 1351–53 in Petrarch, 2004, 1134, 1141. Pocco places the composition of *Triumphus Mortis* 2 in 1348–51 in Petrarch, 1996, 93–96.

Triumph. The gaps in the *Canzoniere*'s story of Petrarch and Laura send the dedicated reader in search of a gloss from the *Triumph*. However, by combining the two texts, perhaps even copying them into the same codex, the reader's dedication undermines the authorial *dispositio* of the *Canzoniere*.¹⁴¹

In establishing a privileged association between the order of his collection and the intention of the author, the *Canzoniere* relies on Augustine's figural reading of the rhetorical unity of the Bible despite the diversity of its texts.¹⁴² Histories, prophecies, wisdom, and law, Old Testament and New, all represent God's will, thanks to their marvelous arrangement decreed by divine wisdom.¹⁴³ The conversion narrative of the *Canzoniere* claims an analogous privilege for Petrarch's *dispositio* of his sonnets, canzoni, sestinas, and madrigals into a two-part autobiography. What looks like order to the modern eye, more acquainted with plot than prosody, was radical disorder for the reader of Petrarch's day because Trecento anthologies grouped poems metrically — canzoni in one section, sonnets in another, and so on.¹⁴⁴ Just as the pagan Augustine could not discern the Bible's mysterious unity on first reading because he focused on its poor Latin in comparison to Cicero's,¹⁴⁵ so Petrarch's lowly vernacular requires a unifying authority to elevate his unorthodox mingling of poetic forms.

Glossing the *Canzoniere* with the *Triumph* can obscure as well as enlighten. *Triumphus Mortis* 2, for example, describes Laura as "the one who first turned / your steps from the public journey,"¹⁴⁶ whereas sonnet 285 uses the same noun in a more positive sense, suggesting that Laura could guide Petrarch in a progression toward heaven.¹⁴⁷ The verbal and thematic echoes that unite Petrarch's microtexts encourage a hermeneutic comparison that becomes more problematic the further it is pursued. In a process well known to readers of Dante's *Commedia*, these inconsistencies and obscurities in the self's narrative spur the reader to ponder its deeper ethical and epistemological dimensions. Again, Augustine provides an authoritative precedent by arguing that all of the biblical text, including its obscurities, possesses *decorum* (suitability), consideration of which will benefit the reader

¹⁴¹Steinberg, 2009b, 89–90.

¹⁴²Augustine, 2000–04, 5:167 (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 103.4.1): "There is but one single utterance of God amplified throughout all the scriptures." Cf. Cameron, 2012, 203–05.

¹⁴³Cameron, 2010, 61–67.

¹⁴⁴Borriero, 202–05.

¹⁴⁵Augustine, 1997, 80 (*Confessions* 3.5.9).

¹⁴⁶Petrarch, 1996, 312 (*Triumphus Mortis* 2.13–14): "Coi che 'n prima torse / i passi tuoi dal pubblico viaggio."

¹⁴⁷Picone treats the many contrasting images of the journey in the *Canzoniere*.

ethically and spiritually.¹⁴⁸ By analogy, the obscure or apparently contradictory passages of the *Canzoniere* can also provoke both ingenuity and humility. One might also think of an excluded citizen like Ser Petracco or Dante, opting for exile in response to legal coercion. For Petrarch's reader, there comes an analogous point of strategic withdrawal when the impossibility of full intersubjective communion with the author becomes apparent.¹⁴⁹

As well as the intertextual reference to the *Triumphs*, sonnet 285 also contains internal allusions to other microtexts in the *Canzoniere*. These intratextual echoes create a complex interplay of hermeneutic consonance and dissonance that points to the authorial hand behind the collection's *dispositio*.¹⁵⁰ RVF 284, for example, also describes an apparition of Laura:

Love who has bound me and keeps me in torment [*in croce*],
trembles when he sees her at the gate
of the soul, where she still slays me, so alert
so sweet to see, and so gentle of voice.
She comes like a lady to her dwelling [*albergo*], proud,
with her clear brow driving out [*scacciando*]
of my dark heavy heart the sad thoughts.¹⁵¹

If RVF 285 represents Petrarch's exile as exemplary of a universal and theologized exclusion, RVF 284 highlights its political significance. The poet remains the downcast figure identified with part 2: here he is in Christological torment (literally "on the cross"), with Love as his torturer.¹⁵² Yet his heart is construed as Laura's *albergo*: the word she uses for heaven in *Triumphus Mortis* 2, whose overtones of protection and security are antithetical to those of banishment.¹⁵³ *Exilio* does not appear, but there is the related verb [*di*]scacciare,

¹⁴⁸Cameron, 2012, 203: "Seeming contradictions and ambiguities typically resolve themselves when set within the framework of God's accommodating speech; they even become the occasion for finding deeper truths." Cf. Augustine, 1996, 131–32 (*De doctrina christiana* 2.6.7–2.6.8).

¹⁴⁹See Hooper, 2012, for the affinity between suspension of judgment and the phenomenology of exile.

¹⁵⁰See Santagata in Petrarch, 2004, 1134–44; for the phenomenon in context, see Santagata, 1979.

¹⁵¹Durling, 1976, 462 (RVF 284.5–11): "Amor, che m'`a legato et tienmi in croce, / trema quando la vede in su la porta / de l'alma ove m'`ancide, anchor s'`i scorta, / s'`i dolce in vista et s'`i soave in voce. // Come donna in suo albergo altera v`ene, / scacciando de l'oscuro et grave core / co la fronte serena i pensier' tristi." Petrarch, 2004, 1139.

¹⁵²For torture and social undesirability, see Steinberg, 2013, 28–40, 71–82.

¹⁵³TLIO, s.v. "albergo," esp. §§1.2 and 1.3: <http://tlio.oiv.cnr.it/voci/001830.htm>.

which indicates the process of driving out an interloper or enemy independent of legal process.¹⁵⁴ The sonnet casts Laura as a member of a band of political exiles, intent on taking back by force the dwelling that her political rivals — the poet's "sad thoughts" — had occupied. At this point, Petrarch's solitude metamorphoses from exclusion to election, just as the medieval city could be construed as diabolical and hellish or figurative of the New Jerusalem.¹⁵⁵

In its abasement of the poet figure, *RVF* 284 constitutes a literary reflection on the authority that Petrarch's poetic laurels granted him in discursive writings such as his letters. Despite strong norms conditioning rhetorical intervention on participation in civic affairs,¹⁵⁶ Petrarch would write directly to those in political authority to proffer his advice.¹⁵⁷ The sonnet imagines a scenario in which Laura's power over Petrarch represents total sovereignty, without the need for rhetorical suasion. Still, the verb *scacciare* subtly limits Laura's routing of Petrarch's thoughts to an act of *potestas* (political power), reserving judgment on the authorizing function (*auctoritas*) required to legitimate such an act.¹⁵⁸ The poet of the sonnet does not step in to supply this; nonetheless, the author figure of the *Canzoniere* silently establishes his own access to such authority by incorporating *RVF* 284 into his narrative of contemplation and conversion.

BANISHMENT: HISTORICITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

Despite the points of difference between *RVF* 284 and 285 one could nonetheless view them as complementary, with 284 setting the scene of Laura's advent, while 285 describes its aftermath. There is, however, a still more sharply contrasting account of Laura's relationship to exile in *RVF* 76, which furnishes an important example of the terminology of banishment in the *Canzoniere*: "Love led me back to my former prison / and gave the keys to that enemy of mine / who still keeps me banished [*in bando*] from myself."¹⁵⁹ Although the *Canzoniere* subscribes to conflicting accounts of exclusion, the ban of *RVF* 76 will not invalidate the exile of poems 284 and 285; rather, the contrast presents a hermeneutic challenge for the reader.

¹⁵⁴ *TLIO*, s.v. "discacciare": <http://tlio.ovi.cnr.it/voci/017069.htm>. The *Vita nova* describes Dante's spirits as "chased out [*discacciati*]" by the sight of Beatrice: Dante, 2009, 75 (*Vita nova* 7.8).

¹⁵⁵ Brilli, 2012, 131–239.

¹⁵⁶ Milner, 166–71.

¹⁵⁷ See Kirkham.

¹⁵⁸ For *auctoritas* and *potestas*, see Ziolkowski.

¹⁵⁹ Durling, 1976, 176 (*RVF* 76.1–4): "Amor con sue promesse lusingando / mi ricondusse a la prigionie antica, / et die' le chiavi a quella mia nemica / ch'anchor me di me stesso tene in bando." Petrarch, 2004, 399.

Dante had replaced *bando* with *esilio* in order to negate Florence's judgment against him. Petrarch followed Dante both in reviving *esilio* and in attacking Florentine justice. However, the poets' invectives received starkly differing responses that may shed light on Petrarch's greater readiness to apply the language of communal banishment to himself. In a letter to the city authorities from 1349, Petrarch harshly condemns Florence's failure to secure the Apennine passes of the Via Francigena — the main pilgrimage route from France to Rome. Petrarch warns that Florence's reputation will be damaged if pilgrims cannot reach Rome during the upcoming jubilee of 1350.¹⁶⁰ In an indication of the weight that Petrarch's *officium poetae* carried in the political arena, the city authorities raised a force to free the passes from the control of the Ubaldini, many of whom were the descendants of Ghibelline fugitives from Florence after the Guelph takeover of 1267.¹⁶¹ Moreover, the vigor of Petrarch's rhetoric would not dissuade the city from offering him residency and a professorship just two years later. The contrast with Dante, whose anti-Florentine invectives only solidified his own banishment and caused that of his sons, could not be starker.

Even allowing for Petrarch's more comfortable legal status, *RVF* 76's banishment of the poetic "I" still requires further exploration given his careful use of *exilium* elsewhere. For example, *RVF* 76's affirmation that Laura can banish Petrarch echoes a canzone from the third quarter of the Duecento, "Madonna il fino amor ched eo vo porto" (My lady the pure love I bear for you), by the poet and judge Guido Guinizzelli:¹⁶²

It might be less damage for me alone to suffer
since Love has proclaimed [*fa bandire*]
that every base urge be exiled [*sia in bando*]
and he dismisses the charge
at the complaint of one who has suffered.¹⁶³

Both poems attribute to love the force of law by internalizing legal imagery, including the ban, the prison, and the courtroom. All the same, there are distinctions that point to the changes in the law of exile underway at the time. Guinizzelli presents the ban as reversible under the right circumstances: Love,

¹⁶⁰Petrarch, 1975–85, 1:429–35 (*Familiars* 8.10). Petrarch's insinuation that he can declare Florence infamous arrogates a power reserved for the judge in court: Migliorino, 188–89.

¹⁶¹Caferro.

¹⁶²*DBI*, s.v. "Guinizzelli, Guido," by Giorgio Inglese. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-guinizzelli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-guinizzelli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

¹⁶³Edwards, 7 ("Madonna il fino amor ched eo vo porto," lines 31–35): "Fiemi forse men danno a sofferire / ch'Amor pur fa bandire / che tutta scanoscenza sia in bando / e che ritrae 'l comando / a l'acusanza di cui ha 'l male."

the judge of Guinizzelli's *forum mentis*, acts both to issue and to annul decrees. The Duecento poet, moreover, plays on the polysemy of the term *bando*, juxtaposing its original meaning of an official declaration of any sort (cf. English *wedding banns*) to its newer technical sense of banishment. The legal metaphors of Guinizzelli's stanza thus imply confidence in the poet's autonomy in matters of the heart. This optimism may stem from professional experience: in 1268, the Bolognese authorities twice agreed to rescind bans on the strength of Guinizzelli's opinions.¹⁶⁴ But the ban of the 1300s that Petrarch knew had become more punitive and less revocable than the judgments set aside at Guinizzelli's behest in the 1260s.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, the vision of banishment in Petrarch's lyric is closer to Cino da Pistoia's uncompromising attitude in his sonnet and *consilium* cited earlier. In *RVF* 76, Love is a mere intermediary: it is Laura, Petrarch's "enemy," who holds the authority to banish him from himself. Moreover, Laura's judgment appears much more definitive than the exclusion of *scanoscenza* (base urge[s]) in "Madonna il fino amor."

While Laura's authority in *RVF* 76 contradicts sonnet 284 — where she drives out "sad thoughts" but lacks *auctoritas* — the two Petrarchan poems contrast still more sharply with Guinizzelli's canzone in that they locate the authority to banish outside the lyric "I." Petrarch's more rigid understanding of banishment requires the additional authority of the *Canzoniere's dispositio* to reconcile his expression of estrangement with the redemptive love narrative inherited from Guinizzelli. A further use of the language of banishment in a sonnet excluded from the *Canzoniere*, but preserved among Petrarch's drafts, provides further substantiation:

Many times a day I turn crimson and dark,
Thinking of the painful harsh chains
with which the world involves and holds me back
so that I cannot come to you.
For to my weak distorted sight
it seemed that at your hands I had some hope,
and then I said: "If life sustains me,
there will be time to return to the air of Tuscany."
From both those territories today I am in exile [*in bando*],
for every smallest stream is a great obstacle to me,
and here I am a slave, though I dream of liberty.
Not a laurel crown, but a crown of sorbs

¹⁶⁴Guinizzelli in Orioli, 33–36.

¹⁶⁵For the developments in the ban between the Due- and Trecento, see Milani, 2003, 275–314; Milani, 2011.

weighs down my brow. Now I ask you
if yours is not a sickness similar to mine.¹⁶⁶

Scholars have connected Petrarch's exclusion of these so-called *rime disperse* from the *Canzoniere* to the poems' realism or historicity, while the lyrics admitted to his author's book are supposedly more idealized.¹⁶⁷ Yet the comparison to Guinizzelli suggests that *RVF76*'s deployment of banishment is more historically precise, not less: the use of the term *bando* in a manner specific to Trecento Italy collocates author and work in space and time. Furthermore, *RVF76* identifies the authority to banish with the exemplary figure of Laura, while in the excluded sonnet it is impersonal. The absence of Laura, symbolized by the poet's missing laurel wreath, dislocates political and poetic authority and fractures Petrarch's cherished equivalence between poetic discretion and princely sovereignty.

The sestet of the discarded sonnet invites its addressee to reflect on the similarity between his own condition and the poet's by means of an explicit, and melodramatic, analogy to Christ.¹⁶⁸ The passage calls to mind the influential reading of Petrarch's love for Laura as "idolatrour" in its use of Christian iconography.¹⁶⁹ As was seen above, the *Canzoniere* scrupulously conditions its evocations of the *figura Christi* on Laura's mediation. In the theology of Petrarch's time, there was nothing unorthodox about this: hallowed, yet human, figures such as the Virgin Mary or Saint Francis of Assisi could serve as intermediaries in the contemplation of the Divine Mediator himself.¹⁷⁰ Instead, it is in the absence of Laura that Petrarch's ironic self-abasement implies an unjustified, and potentially sacrilegious, claim to Christlike status.

When seen in this light, the *Canzoniere*'s use of Christian iconography claims for its poet not so much the position of Christ himself, but the biblical authors who described him.¹⁷¹ These writers' authority, while great, flows indirectly from the divinity via their capacity to transmit in writing what they witnessed

¹⁶⁶Durling, 1976, 588 (*Estravaganti* 2): "Più volte il dì mi fo vermiglio et fosco, / pensando a le noiose aspre catene, / di che 'l mondo m'involte et mi ritene / ch'ì non possa venir ad esser vosco. / Ché, pur al mio vedere fragile et losco, / avea ne le man' vostre alcuna spene; / et poi dicea: 'Se vita mi sostiene, / tempo fia di tornarsi a l'aere toscò.' // D'ambidue que' confin son oggi in bando, / ch'ogni vil fiumicel m'è gran disturbo, / et qui son servo, libertà sognando. / Né di lauro corona, ma d'un sorbo / mi grava in giù la fronte: or v'adimando / se 'l vostro al mio non è ben simil morbo." Petrarch, 1996, 654.

¹⁶⁷For example, Steinberg, 2009b, 89.

¹⁶⁸Cf. Knox, 423 (Philippians 2:7): "He [Christ] dispossessed himself, and took the nature of a slave, fashioned in the likeness of men, and presenting himself to us in human form."

¹⁶⁹Freccero, 38–39; Durling, 1971.

¹⁷⁰Auerbach, 1984. Petrarch's habitual likening of Laura to a sun echoes a common Christological epithet for Saint Francis: Boyle, 122–28.

¹⁷¹Minnis, 31–34.

through grace. And, in a further example of mediation, Petrarch's authorship moreover resembles that of subsequent Christian writers who expounded the Gospel of the scriptures,¹⁷² especially Augustine in his openness to retrospection and autobiography.¹⁷³ The historicity of the ban, the exemplarity of Laura, and the Italian vernacular all situate Petrarch as a new Trecento Italian participant in this chain of witness.

LEGAL AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN *RVF* 360

As the preceding discussion has shown, there is a consistent dialogue in Petrarch's vernacular works between concrete politico-legal terms he uses and the phenomenology of exile they enunciate. The particularity of this dialogue to Petrarch presupposes his discretion in matters of poetry. His discretionary use of legal language fits with contemporary visions of the law as hermeneutical and nonabsolute: the written law lacked intrinsic force except as an act of *interpretatio* (hermeneutics) on divine justice.¹⁷⁴ The prince's *interpretatio* was supreme; in practice, however, it was seldom exercised, leaving the legal profession to operate using discretion.¹⁷⁵

The final text this essay will analyze in depth is *RVF* 360, "Quel'antiquo mio dolce empio signore" (My sweet old cruel lord), a canzone built around the *forum mentis* trope that epitomizes the issues of authority and discretion. The poet seeks respite from his feelings for Laura by summoning Love before the tribunal of Reason, the mental faculty responsible for creating and interpreting law.¹⁷⁶ *RVF* 360's mental courtroom echoes a controversy among jurists of the Due- and Trecento between those who limited judicial discretion to the rational application of the positive law to the evidence, and those who thought it permissible, in certain instances, for the judge to follow his own conscience.¹⁷⁷

In the fourth stanza of *RVF* 360, the poet puts the case for the plaintiff. He attributes his itinerant life to the love narrated in his songbook:

¹⁷²Auerbach, 1993; Vessey, 2008. Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, 104 (*Didascalicon* 4.2), on the inclusion of "the writings of the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church" in the New Testament.

¹⁷³Vessey, 2002, 52: "The bishop's writings . . . [are] conceived . . . as markers of the process of divinely enabled learning-and-teaching that he elsewhere calls *doctrina Christiana*." Cf. Quillen on Petrarch's Latin works.

¹⁷⁴Grossi, 1995, 168.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 41–56, 154–68.

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 135–42. Cf. Aquinas, 3 (*Summa Theologiae* 2.1.Q1.a1.ad 3): "For an act of will about what is commanded to have the character of law, it must be regulated in some way by reason."

¹⁷⁷For the details of this debate, see Padoa Schioppa, 253–77.

He [Love] has made me search among wildernesses,
 wild beasts, rapacious thieves, bristling dunes,
 hard peoples and customs,
 and every wandering that entangles travelers [*pellegrini*],
 among mountains, valleys, marshes, and seas and rivers,
 a thousand snares spread everywhere,
 and winters in unaccustomed months,
 with present peril and labor.¹⁷⁸

The poet-advocate stresses the painful aspects of his traveling existence in the service of art. Elsewhere, the *Canzoniere* evokes extra-urban settings as a voluntary retreat in search of productive solitude: a "shield . . . to protect me / from people's open knowing."¹⁷⁹ But here the emphasis falls on the exile's virtuous forbearance in a harsh and foreign environment reminiscent of Ovid's Tomis.¹⁸⁰

One might assume that Love would respond to the poet's forceful statement of his suffering with an equally vigorous defense of Petrarchan solitude as optative and privileged. Instead, he grounds his case on the social benefits the poet has derived from his writings:

I had so carried him under my wings
 that his speech pleased ladies and knights;
 and I made him rise
 so high that among brilliant wits his name
 shines, and in some places
 collections are made of his poems;
 who now would perhaps be
 a hoarse murmerer of the courts, one of the mob!¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸Durling, 1976, 563 (*RVF* 360.46–53): "Cercar m'à fatto deserti paesi, / fiere et ladri rapaci, hispidi dumi, / dure genti et costumi, / et ogni error che' pellegrini intrica, / monti, valli, paludi et mari et fiumi, / mille lacciuoli in ogni parte tesi; / e 'l verno in strani mesi, / con pericol presente et con fatica." Petrarch, 2004, 1378.

¹⁷⁹Durling, 1976, 94 (*RVF* 35.5–6): "Altro schermo non trovo che mi scampi / dal manifesto accorger de le genti." Petrarch, 2004, 190.

¹⁸⁰Ovid, 55, 57 (*Tristia* 3.10.4–5, 69–70): "I live now in mid-barbary, hemmed about / by wild Sarmatians, Bessi, Getae"; "Here . . . the soil, abandoned, lies fallow, iron hard."

¹⁸¹Durling, 1976, 566 (*RVF* 360.110–17): "Sì l'avea sotto l'ali mie condotto, / ch'a donne et cavalier' piaceva il suo dire; / et sì alto salire / i' 'l feci, che tra' caldi ingegni ferve / il suo nome et de' suoi detti / conserve si fanno con diletto in alcun loco; / ch'or saria forse un roco / mormorador di corti, un huom del vulgo." Petrarch, 2004, 1380. Cf. Petrarch, 1991–94, 1:6 (*Familiars* 1.1.14): "I have stayed far away from civic duties."

Love claims that he made possible the life that won Petrarch his coronation: his devotion to writing, the opportunity to spurn a career practicing law among the people, and his audience of “ladies and knights.”

Love further asserts responsibility for the fact that “in some places / collections are made of his poems.” The remark seems in tension with Petrarch’s pervasive elitism: the concern he expresses to Boccaccio that the masses may “mispronounce and lacerate” his lyrics.¹⁸² But Love’s allusion to the widespread compilation of Petrarch’s poems acknowledges their broad ideological appeal and its importance to Petrarch’s reputation.¹⁸³ Indeed, the assumption that the collation of his lyrics renders a poet authoritative underlies the *Canzoniere* itself. Petrarch’s compilation does not deny its kinship with the anthologies and songbooks of Trecento Italy; instead, it seeks a privileged status because of the unprecedented authorial practice that created it.¹⁸⁴

There is a clear analogy between Laura in *RVF* 360 and the prince in the contemporary law court in that both are sovereign but absent. In their place an officeholder must make a *dispositio*, in legal terms a verdict or judgment, whose force depends on the sovereign authority.¹⁸⁵ But the magistrate of *RVF* 360 defers determination of the case, saying “more time is needed for so great a lawsuit.”¹⁸⁶ This leaves open the question whether any human lawcourt, internal or external, is powerful enough to wield the delegated authority received from Christ via Laura.¹⁸⁷ The suspension of judgment at the end of *RVF* 360 leads into the vital sequence *RVF* 361–66, where Petrarch’s love for Laura blends, enigmatically, into divine charity. Many have seen these poems as a staged repudiation of Laura and erotic love.¹⁸⁸ But it is Reason, not Love, who is the unsuccessful judge of Petrarch’s *forum mentis*, unlike in prior poets’ use of the trope.¹⁸⁹ More apposite, given the failure of the poet’s suit, is

¹⁸²Petrarch, 1975–86, 3:204 (*Familiars* 21.5).

¹⁸³Feo, 1983, esp. 14–20. For the centrality of ideology to the compilation of lyric anthologies, see Borriero.

¹⁸⁴Antonelli, esp. 51–58.

¹⁸⁵Du Cange, s.v. “dispositio,” §4; Grossi, 1995, 166.

¹⁸⁶Durling, 1976, 358 (*RVF* 360.157): “Più tempo bisogna a tanta lite.” Petrarch, 2004, 1381.

¹⁸⁷Note the lack of an ecclesiastical intermediary; see Ferrara, 2005, 234–36, for Cino’s assertion of the civil law’s sovereignty independent of the papacy and canon law.

¹⁸⁸For example, Santagata in Petrarch, 2004, lxxv–xcvi; Santagata, 2004, 209–42. For a counter-argument, see Cherchi, 153–87.

¹⁸⁹Cf. Guinizzelli’s “Madonna il fino amor,” and Cino’s sonnet “Infin che gli occhi miei non chiude Morte” (Until Death closes my eyes): Edwards, 7; Marti, 547–48.

Augustine's advice, quoted above, to discard the temporal law and cleave to the eternal.¹⁹⁰

The turn toward the eternal law is evident in the final stanza of the *Canzoniere's* last poem — "Vergine bella" (Beautiful virgin; *RVF* 366) — which declares: "now conscience, now Death pierces my heart."¹⁹¹ Cino da Pistoia acknowledged that the human law receives its understanding of conscience from the study of divinity.¹⁹² Meanwhile, the Franciscan Bonaventure (1221–74), a great admirer of Augustine, argued that "the natural law is written in our conscience" and that the supreme mental faculty *synderesis* (the spark of conscience) "is part of the *affectus* [feelings/desires]."¹⁹³ This theological vision of conscience as incorruptible and affective takes *RVF* 366 beyond *RVF* 360's court of Reason. The piercing sensation of conscience in the poet's heart elevates his erotic exile to a divinely justified love.

CONCLUSION: THE AFTERLIFE OF PETRARCHAN EXILE

Petrarch's authorship is novel for its time in that it demands his complete dedication and thus his unconventional withdrawal from civic participation. He justifies his solitude by calling it *exile*, a term that solidifies Dante's aggrieved reaction to banishment into a formal *officium*. The *Canzoniere*, Petrarch's ultimate expression of his subjectivity, resembles a modern literary work in that it exists in total interdependence with its author figure, its singularity acting as a proxy for his selfhood. As a Trecento author, Petrarch does not own his work; instead, through it he implies his legal entitlement to the isolation necessary to produce it.¹⁹⁴ The resulting author's book transmits the poet's *dispositio*, the authority of which is delegated, not absolute, and essential to navigating the *Canzoniere's* ambiguities.

Few Trecento readers grasped Petrarch's subtle distinction between *exilio* and *bando*: Boccaccio surely did, but he preferred to conflate the terms — perhaps with a view to undoing Dante's rejection of Florentine justice.¹⁹⁵ Meanwhile, the law of exile continued to evolve: the power to banish became a regular part of the

¹⁹⁰For Tateo, 65–69, the end of *RVF* 360 overturns that of the *Secretum*, where Franciscus rejects Augustinus's commendation of spiritual over worldly goods. But this ignores an important continuity: both Petrarch and Franciscus continue to write.

¹⁹¹Durling, 1976, 583: "e 'l cor or conscientia or morte punge" (*RVF* 366.134). See Cherchi, 172–80.

¹⁹²Cino da Pistoia, 1578, 73^v: "What would the divine law say if, following the evidence, a judge condemned a man he knew to be innocent? The theologians say that the judge committed no sin." And see the discussion in Padoa Schioppa, 260–64.

¹⁹³Bonaventure, 2:899 (*In librum sententiarum* 2.dist.39.a1.Q1). And see Langston, 91–95.

¹⁹⁴Chartier; Petrucci.

¹⁹⁵See Boccaccio, 1964–98, 4:21 (*Decameron* 1, intro. 57): "those whom . . . the authority of the public laws have condemned to exile [*essilio*]."

sovereign's prerogative, increasingly converging with *exilium* under the Roman principate.¹⁹⁶ For example, Francesco Filelfo's *De exilio* (ca. 1440) uses *exilium* as the normal term for experiences of banishment and exclusion from any era.¹⁹⁷ Yet Filelfo's commentary on the *Canzoniere* appreciates exile's hermeneutic importance in bridging literature and history in the work, albeit he assumes Petrarch rejects Florence completely.¹⁹⁸

With the Cinquecento revival of vernacular authorship, theorists like Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) made Petrarch the idealized standard-bearer of a resurgent golden age; in so doing, they established the now-familiar view that he had disavowed his own time and place.¹⁹⁹ Yet Petrarch the exile furnished a more historicized model for certain writers who sought to innovate from a marginal position that remained within the regular order. Vittoria Colonna's (1492–1547) lyrics communicate the fideistic ideals of the *spirituali* reformers via Petrarchan motifs such as the beloved/Christ as "sun."²⁰⁰ Meanwhile, Petrarch's exilic authority is keenly relevant to *Il Principe* (1513), which Machiavelli (1469–1527) wrote in voluntary exile after suffering punitive sanctions from the restored Medici regime.²⁰¹ Nonetheless, he ends his treatise on a daring, prophetic exhortation of Italian unity that quotes from "Italia mia" (*RVF* 128):

Under your standard our country may be ennobled, and under your auspices
these words of Petrarch will come true:

Manhood shall take up arms
against rage, and the fighting shall be short:
for ancient valor
is not yet dead in Italic hearts.²⁰²

Il Principe's Petrarchan climax unites historicity with exemplarity, alterity with continuity. Machiavelli turns to Petrarch, pioneer of literary authorship in the Trecento, to complete his revolutionary political intervention of the Cinquecento because the poet prefigures his desired status: one whose words may legitimately intervene in the here and now, despite the absence of his body.²⁰³

¹⁹⁶For the new law of exile up to the Cinquecento, see Brown; Milani, 2003, 448–53.

¹⁹⁷Filelfo.

¹⁹⁸See Kennedy, 39–42; cf. Filelfo in Petrarch, 1513, 53^v–54^r.

¹⁹⁹McLaughlin, 624.

²⁰⁰Brundin, 37–65.

²⁰¹See Dotti, 2003, 222–43.

²⁰²Machiavelli, 91 (ch. 26). Translation of *RVF* 128.93–96 taken from Durling, 1976, 260.

²⁰³For the redemptive power of poetry in Machiavelli, see Viroli, 41–45.

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