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Petrarch's Literary Empire

Danielle Charette
*University of Virginia**

I was with the princes in name, but in fact the princes were with me.

Francesco Petrarch, Letters of Old Age

Francesco Petrarch (1303–1374) thought Aristotle's *zoon politikon* could be a man of letters. In a revealing mistranslation, the father of modern humanism argued that his defense of the solitary life was not opposed to "Aristotle's saying that man is by nature a social animal [*sociale animal*]."[1] Petrarch's substitution of "social" for "political" is notable not only because it diminishes Aristotle's emphasis on ruling and being ruled in the *polis* but because it elevates the contemplative life into a form of literary community.[2] Petrarch maintains throughout *De Vita Solitaria* that solitude differs from reclusiveness: "It will never be my view that solitude is disturbed by the presence of a friend but that it is enriched." Scholarly leisure embraces friendship with likeminded readers and writers. It establishes an intellectual equality between men who recognize that "our city is that of our mind, our army that of our thoughts."[3] Like much of Petrarch's Latin prose, *De Vita Solitaria* is written in the form of a letter to a "friend."[4] Petrarch was always on the lookout for friends. His *Letters on Familiar Matters*

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(*Familiares*) and *Letters of Old Age* (*Seniles*) extend literary community to a remarkable range of figures, living and dead. Recipients include close acquaintances like Boccaccio and Ludwig van Kemplen (nicknamed "Socrates"), as well as members of the powerful Colonna family, various Visconti princes, the pope, the emperor, and even Cicero and Seneca. The letters ignore distances in space, time, and social power. Petrarch writes to classical authors and contemporary statesmen as potential friends and equals.

The modern epistolary genre owes much to Petrarch's reinvention.[5] While he is today best remembered for his Tuscan love poetry, Petrarch placed equal if not more weight on his Latin epistles. The *Familiares* consist of 350 letters, which Petrarch composed between 1325 and 1366 and then facetiously edited between 1345 and 1366. These letters to friends are intimately connected to Petrarch's mission to recover classical culture. Petrarch calls on correspondents throughout Europe to send him rare books and information concerning the discovery of classical manuscripts—information he then circulated throughout his own republic of letters.[6] Petrarch's most significant manuscript discovery came in 1345 in the cathedral library in Verona, where he uncovered Cicero's collected letters to his close friend Atticus, along with Cicero's letters to Brutus and his brother Quintus. Petrarch was shocked by Cicero's fickle tone, which was so at odds with what he knew of the politician's public character.[7] In private, Cicero struggled to reach consistent judgments and was prone to quarrels. His letters seemed to belie a pure loyalty to the Roman republic, since Cicero was friendly with Octavian and at times confessed that the republic had already collapsed.[8] Petrarch rebuked Cicero for his inconstancy and love of glory, even as Petrarch made clear that his own epistolary project would be modeled after Cicero's private style. He admits in the first letter of the *Familiares* to delighting in Cicero's inclusion "of the highly personal [*familiaria*], unusual, varied goings-on of his time."[9] Petrarch's own letters would be similarly personal, styled not for the forum or courtroom but for individuals engaged in an unmediated conversation.[10]

Petrarch's many conversations—often initiated across great distance—speak to his vision for forging community in exile. The son of a Florentine notary, Petrarch spent his childhood not in Italy but in southern France, where his father served the papal court in Avignon.[11] His legal studies took him to Montpellier and then Bologna, though Petrarch was relieved to abandon a legal career to pursue his own humanist scholarship. In need of patronage, Petrarch joined the household of the cardinal Giovanni Colonna and traveled with the powerful family's entourage throughout the 1330s. He held canonries in Pisa, Parma, and Padua during the 1340s, while periodically retreating to his country home in Vaucluse. To the great disappointment of his friend Giovanni Boccaccio, Petrarch turned down the offer of a professorship at the University of Florence and spent his final decades in the courts of Milan and Padua.

Petrarch's incessant writing and travels made him one of the best-connected private figures of the fourteenth century. Yet the range of political views expressed across his correspondence poses an interpretative challenge. Was Petrarch a Machiavellian *avant le lettre*?[12] A Senecan advisor to princes?[13] Or just a confused and inconsistent poet? Readers will find Petrarch admiring Brutus in one letter and praising Julius Caesar in the next. He championed the cause of the republican revolutionary Cola di Rienzo, only to side with the emperor and pope who later imprisoned Cola. And despite hailing from a Guelf family in Florence, Petrarch accepted the patronage of Ghibelline lords in Milan.[14] The Renaissance historian Hans Baron responded to the twists and turns of Petrarch's political allegiances by attempting a "genetic" reconstruction of the letters. Baron regretted that Petrarch's refusal "to release the master-copies of his writings" made it difficult for scholars to track when letters were originally drafted and which ones were later revised.[15] Still, Baron thought there was enough manuscript evidence to trace the general chronology of the letters, which would in turn reveal the evolution of Petrarch's political thought. Baron concluded that Petrarch displayed an early preference for republicanism, before reverting to "medieval monarchism" in

middle age.[16] However, subsequent scholars have faulted Baron for underestimating the *literary* nature of Petrarch's project.[17] Many letters were indeed sent to real historical actors, while others—like the letters addressed to Cicero or Livy — are obviously fictive. But all are part of a carefully curated body of work.

The present article seeks to do justice to Petrarch's political and literary ambitions by highlighting one source of relative consistency across the letters: Petrarch's praise for Caesar Augustus. Petrarch regarded Rome's first emperor as someone who had reached the "summit of mortal power and human greatness." Although Petrarch admitted that Augustus's public responsibilities prevented the emperor from pursuing a truly contemplative life, he was tempted to include him in *De Vita Solitaria* anyway. Petrarch characterized Augustus as a ruler who longed for rest and reading, someone who "drew breath at the mere naming of the solitary life."[18] The reign of Augustus inaugurated the *Pax Romana* and saw the advent of the Christian savior. But Petrarch admired Augustus, first and foremost, for his friendship with poets. A number of Petrarch's letters draw from Suetonius's *Divus Augustus*, a second-century biography that foregrounds the emperor's imperial wisdom and cultural patronage.[19] Petrarch took a special interest in Augustus's support for Virgil and Horace, poets who rose from non-patrician origins to commemorate Rome in its golden age.[20] It is not surprising that Petrarch would esteem the emperor whom Suetonius credited with making Roman culture "safe . . . for the future [*posterum*]."[21] Petrarch himself hoped to effect an intellectual renaissance and explicitly addressed his final letter to "posterity."[22] What is puzzling is that Petrarch would insist on comparing such dissimilar contemporary statesmen to Augustus.

I focus in what follows on Petrarch's correspondence with three would-be Augusti. First there was Robert of Anjou, King of Naples (1309–1343). Second came the revolutionary Roman "tribune" Cola di Rienzo (1313–1354). Third was the holy roman emperor Charles IV of Bohemia (1316–1378). Each of these men drew Petrarch's attention to Italian politics during the 1340s and 1350s, and each receives repeated comparisons to Caesar Augustus.

Yet they were otherwise very different figures, divided between the pro-papal Guelfs and pro-imperial Ghibellines. Perhaps Petrarch was an ineffective courtier, but my purpose is not to charge him with hypocrisy.[23] The more interesting question is why Petrarch the artist and editor insisted on incorporating such disparate political actors into his final body of work. What attracted Petrarch to King Robert, Cola di Rienzo, and Charles IV? And how did Petrarch arrange his correspondence with them after their respective political ambitions fell short of his expectations?

The answer to these questions showcases an important early modern vision for cosmopolitan citizenship. Petrarch imagined a world in which art and politics might be mutually reinforcing, a world where poets and statesmen work in tandem to reconstruct an empire of culture.[24] It was on the basis of his poetry that Petrarch received honorary Roman citizenship, and it was from the position of a Roman citizen that Petrarch called on Italy's leaders to rescue their capital from centuries of decay. Ultimately Petrarch was not a partisan for either republics or principalities. What mattered for him was the regime's character.[25] Petrarch evaluated wise leadership according to the ruler's receptivity to promoting virtuous advisers and artists, and he saw Augustus as the embodiment of such wisdom. Augustus's cultural patronage rescued Rome from civil war and elevated poets like Virgil as voices for peaceful empire. The priority Petrarch placed on rulers' receptivity to art and virtue nurtured his relative indifference toward the regime's institutional form. However, Petrarch's letters are not without a political ideal. Sheldon Wolin defines the "political field" as a created space "whose boundaries have been marked out by centuries of political discussion."[26] Petrarch sought in his collected letters to dramatically expand the geographic and temporal horizons of that discussion, connecting authors of the past with readers of the future.

It is important to remember that Petrarch assembled the *Familiares* during an era when the Plague had devastated the sense of a public space. Petrarch begins the letters by mourning that the Black Death of 1348 left an "incurable wound [*immedicabile*

vulnus]" throughout Italy, burying many of his hopes and personal friends.[27] Petrarch goes on to suggest that the process of re-collecting (*recolligere*) his scattered correspondence might help bind these social wounds.[28] He resolves to collect the otherwise disparate parts (*membra*) of his correspondence into one body, even if this process makes the "deformity" of the overall collection (*deformitas uniti corporis*) easier to discern.[29] In binding together his letters, Petrarch exposes future readers to his own wounds and disappointments, while still asserting final editorial control. Wolin speaks of the political philosopher as an "encompasser of disorder," someone who sets out to "reconstruct a shattered world of meanings" by "fashion[ing] a political cosmos out of political chaos."[30] This, to be sure, is a fantastical approach to politics, more attuned to the ways theorists construct and reconstruct their canon than to the statesman's mode for effecting practical change. Yet Wolin's notion of political theory as an "architectonic vision" captures Petrarch's sense that his letters were written in the service of a different future.[31] The collected *Familiares* become Petrarch's domain for asserting order out of chaos and for preserving discussions that will outlast the human body. Within this literary domain, Caesar Augustus stands as a representative for health and order: a synecdoche for the unified body of Latin letters.

Petrarch looked to Robert, Cola, and Charles as similar facilitators of cultural posterity. Petrarch regarded these men not just as politicians but as the potential patrons of poets, whose rule would lay the groundwork for the literary revival that he consistently associated with Rome. Petrarch hoped his letters would spur a recovery of the literature and statesmanship needed to make virtuous citizenship once again possible. Such a vision was highly idealistic and at times self-aggrandizing. Yet Petrarch was not wrong to think his art could have a galvanizing effect on political thinkers. Even Machiavelli—who shared none of Petrarch's affection for Augustus—saw fit to end *The Prince* with the last lines of Petrarch's *Italia Mia*: Italy must unite and welcome her redeemer "because the ancient valor in Italian hearts / is not yet dead."[32]

Robert, King of Naples: The Augustan Judge

Petrarch's first candidate for a new Augustus was Robert of Anjou, King of Naples, who occupies a prominent position at both the beginning and conclusion of Petrarch's epistolary project.[33] King Robert was a vital ally of the papacy and theoretically served as vicar general for all of Italy, *vacante imperio*. Petrarch esteemed the king's erudition.[34] Robert "the Wise" was known for amassing one of Europe's finest royal libraries and for commissioning a number of court artists, including laymen and early humanists like Petrarch himself.

Robert first appears in *Fam.* 1.2, in which Petrarch decries the current state of letters and pleads, "Where will you find an Augustus as a judge?"[35] This early letter, written sometime in the 1320s but likely revised in 1350, is framed around the conflict between envy and glory. Petrarch counsels his Sicilian friend Tommaso da Messina that only death can put an end to the envy (*invidia*) that lives in the human body. The wise man knows to ignore the criticism he receives in his own lifetime because "death lays the foundation for the praises of men."[36] Petrarch assures Messina that in death they can "appeal to the more equitable judges of posterity." But Petrarch wavers on this point. At first he asserts that good writers should anticipate that their contemporaries will misunderstand them. Augustus was exceptional in his capacity to discern Virgil's talents, but who, other than Augustus, can rise above the opinions of the crowd? Petrarch complains that the kings of their own day judge "tasty dishes" rather than true talents. Rulers admire the ancients without knowing how to befriend them, such that their praise of the dead is in fact an "insult to the living."[37]

Yet the tone of the letter shifts a few lines later when Petrarch again asks, "Where do we look for a judge like Augustus?" This time he has an answer:

> Italy does have one, indeed the entire world has only one, Robert, the King of Sicily. Oh fortunate, Naples, whose good fortune has given you the incomparable happiness of

> having the only ornament of our age. I say fortunate and enviable [*invidiosa*] Naples, most venerable home of letters [*literarum domus augustissima*] . . . the place where the foremost judge of talent and learning lives.[38]

What qualifies Robert as Italy's greatest king and philosopher is his artistic patronage. Robert confirms his worth as a ruler through his rare "familiarity with noble talents" and through his "conversation with outstanding men." Petrarch admires Robert's "character more than his crown and his mind more than his kingdom"[39] The king of Sicily thus proves to be the rare contemporary statesman learned enough to examine Petrarch for the coveted laurel crown.

Petrarch would recall this quest for the laurel wreath in his "Letter to Posterity" (1373). On Good Friday of 1341, Petrarch reportedly received two competing offers for poetic coronation: one from the Senate of Rome and the other from the University of Paris. Petrarch saw that "the authority of the city of Rome" must take precedence but decided it would be best to arrive in Rome with an external endorsement. He therefore appealed to Robert, "the only king of our age who was at once the friend of knowledge and of virtue."[40] Christopher Celenza notes Petrarch's keen "sense for public relations" throughout the coronation affair.[41] Petrarch had already informed several well-placed friends that he wished to receive the laurel prize, so the invitations from Rome and Paris must not have come as a complete surprise. Petrarch traveled to Robert's court in Naples to secure the necessary financial sponsorship and "social capital" before proceeding to Rome.[42]

The ancient practice of "laureation" represented the union of poetic and political culture. Petrarch was familiar with the practice not only through Suetonius's account of the Capitoline contests but also because the honor had been revived during Petrarch's schooldays, when the University of Padua coronated the poet Albertino Mussato in 1315.[43] The most recent precedent was Dante. The University of Bologna nominated Dante in 1319, though the poet declined the offer because he hoped (without success) to receive the crown in his native Florence.[44] Petrarch set his eyes on Rome,

"the capital of the world and queen of cities."[45] He submitted to a three-day examination at Robert's court in Naples, where he performed passages from his Latin epic *Africa*. Modeled after Virgil's *Aeneid*, the poem fittingly recalls the triumph of Scipio Africanus, whose defeat of Hannibal saved the Italian peninsula from foreign powers. King Robert—the poem's dedicatee—bestowed his "royal judgment" on Petrarch's performance and supplied the necessary "letters and envoys" for Petrarch to carry his nomination to the Roman senate.[46]

This was to be Petrarch's second trip to Rome. The first occurred several years earlier in 1337, while Petrarch was traveling with the Colonna family. He discovered a city that was at once plagued by factional violence and surrounded by classical splendor. Petrarch initially feared that seeing medieval Rome with his own eyes might diminish the ideal image he had cultivated in his studies. But he told friends that even the city's ruins exceeded his expectations and "conquered" his imagination.[47] The laurel ceremony invited Petrarch to return to these ruins. On Easter of 1341 he delivered his "Coronation Oration" from the Capitoline Hill, where he proclaimed that "the aged Republic" was at last returning to "a beauteous custom of its glorious youth."[48] The laurel crown signaled the restoration of the historic relationship between poets and princes:

> [T]here was a time, there was an age that was happier for poets, when we were held in the highest honor, first in Greece and then in Italy, and especially when Caesar Augustus held imperial sway, under whom flourished excellent poets, Virgil, Varus, Ovid, Horace, and many others.[49]

This is a relationship Petrarch would invoke for the rest of his career: Illustrious men like Augustus know they rely on poets to preserve their legacy. Wise rulers offer patronage to poets, who will in turn carry their "praises to posterity."[50] Petrarch accepted the laurel wreath as a dual honor, a tribute to both poets and their princes.

Among the classical sources that Petrarch cites in his oration is Cicero's *Pro Archia*, a text that Petrarch himself recovered in a monastery in Liège in 1333.[51] It is not difficult to see why Cicero's defense of the Greek poet Aulus Licinius Archias would appeal to Petrarch. In answering the accusation that his client Archias was not a Roman citizen, Cicero delivers a spirited digression on the *humanitas* and the role poets play in preserving cultural memory. Archias counts as a citizen not only because eyewitnesses could confirm his residence in Rome but, more importantly, because the poet dedicates his genius to memorializing the Roman people's accomplishments.[52] Petrarch applies Cicero's argument to his own case: his inborn desire to celebrate heroes like Scipio Africanus in verse proved Petrarch's status as a rightful Roman citizen, ready to lend his pen to Rome's glory.

Petrarch concludes his oration by addressing the Roman senator Orso dell'Anguillaro, whom King Robert had tasked with bestowing the laurel crown:

> To you . . . there have been conveyed the requests . . . of the most illustrious King of Sicily, by whose high and profound judgment I, though unworthy, have been approved—to whom, moreover, by ancient custom the power of approval has been entrusted by the Roman people.[53]

Petrarch here appeals to both his benefactor Robert and the Roman people, the future beneficiaries of the cultural renaissance Petrarch promised to initiate.[54] The citizens of Rome become the final authorizers of Petrarch's cultural ideal—the ideal that made Petrarch himself a Roman citizen.

In a letter dated a few weeks after his coronation, Petrarch assures Robert that his honor has decorated Rome with fresh leaves, which will surpass the crown of any "temporal kingdom."[55] *Fam*. 4.7 twice compares Robert to Augustus. What Suetonius said of the emperor is also true of Robert: "He fostered the talents of his century in every possible way."[56] In nominating Petrarch, Robert proves that he, too, is a patron of posterity.

Yet Petrarch was not always so triumphant about his laurel crown. He told Boccaccio at the end of the *Seniles* that had he been more "mature," he would never have sought the prize. The laurel's "half-fledged leaves" came to him when he himself was still "half-fledged in age."[57] Petrarch repeats this self-reproach in the "Letter to Posterity." He regrets that the crown was bestowed on him when he was still an "ignorant student." The prize earned him "envy" (*invidia*) rather than knowledge.[58] Even at the beginning of the *Familiares*, Petrarch hints that the whole coronation affair may have been rushed. He wanted to seize the moment, given Robert's advanced age.[59] But perhaps this revealed a preoccupation with worldly affairs, or what Petrarch admits might be the "vanity of vanities."[60] In the same old-age letter to Boccaccio, Petrarch points to a different lesson that Suetonius attributes to Augustus: "Whatever is done well is done fast enough."[61]

Robert's death in January 1343 precipitated a crisis for the Anjevin dynasty and southern Italy. The consort of Robert's successor Joanna I was soon assassinated, prompting an invasion from the king of Hungary. For Petrarch the crisis was as literary as it was political. In *Fam.* 5.3 he decries the differences between Robert the Wise and this "other Robert," Giovanna's consort. Where the first Robert was serene and scholarly, the second was arrogant and physically hideous—a sign of the "eternal dishonor of our age."[62] Remembering King Robert in the *Seniles*, Petrarch mourns, "[I]f only his tongue had found ears and minds like his!"[63] Petrarch's solution is to continue eulogizing Robert throughout his letters, incorporating the king into a private network of friends and readers capable of outlasting his political successors in Naples. Petrarch never forgot that it was Robert whose endorsement elevated his reputation throughout Italy, and Petrarch repaid his patron by supplying Robert with the likeminded audience he failed to secure during his own reign.

Cola di Rienzo: An Oracle for a Wounded Rome

Robert's death did not turn Petrarch into a political quietist. Petrarch took seriously the idea that the laurel crown had

transformed him into a Roman citizen, and he thereafter took a keen interest in the city's reform. He met Cola di Rienzo in early 1343 and soon threw his support behind Rome's self-declared "tribune of the people." Cola was a man very unlike Robert. Said to be the son of an innkeeper and a washerwoman, Cola acquired enough schooling to rise as a public notary.[64] His innate gift for oratory earned Rienzo a star role in a delegation sent by the Roman people to request the pope's return to the Vatican. The papacy had been exiled in Avignon since 1305, leaving the city of Rome in a protracted civil war between the Colonna and Orsini family factions. In late 1342 the Roman people attempted to wrest control from their warring barons by forming a communal government, drawn from the city's merchant and craft guilds. It was this communal government, known as The Thirteen Good Men, that sent Cola to Avignon, where he dazzled both Pope Clement VI and Petrarch with his eloquence.

Petrarch was then in residence at the papal court, where he befriended the charismatic notary. He confessed in a letter to Cola that his words seemed more divine than human. Cola was like an "oracle" sent to "probe our wounds [*vulnera*] with the fingers of your speech [*digitos eloquii tui*]."[65] Upon returning to Rome, Cola used his talent for speechmaking and symbolism to attract the popular support needed to declare the city a *buono stato* in 1347. On the morning after Pentecost, Cola summoned a people's assembly on the Capitoline Hill and announced a series of popular ordinances and edicts against the barons. Rienzo would serve as this *buono stato*'s head and "tribune" for seven remarkable months, during which he established alliances with Italy's major free communes and urged their leaders to send ambassadors for a governing coalition based in the capital city. However, Cola was an incendiary leader whose tribunate soon threatened the pope's authority. His penchant for religiously charged ceremonies—including his infamous bath in Constantine's basin—lost Cola his allies in Avignon. By the end of the year, Cola had abdicated the tribunate and fled from Rome. He passed two years in exile before resurfacing in Prague, where Cola switched allegiances and

attempted to persuade the emperor Charles IV to rescue Italy from the pope's control. Charles was charmed by Cola's oratory but still had Cola imprisoned and eventually returned him to Avignon, where Cola was tried for heresy and sentenced for execution. In another eventful twist, Pope Clement VI died before the sentence could go into effect, and his successor, Innocent VI, pardoned Cola in 1353. But Rienzo's political recovery was short lived. In October 1354, just a year after his return to Rome as a senator and papal agent, Cola was tortured to death by an angry mob on the steps of the Capitoline.

Commentators have not been particularly kind to Petrarch's choice in revolutionary. Machiavelli observed in the *Florentine Histories* that Cola earned a reputation for restoring the Roman republic to its "ancient form," before "he turned coward under so great a burden."[66] Jacob Burckhardt described Cola as a "poor deluded fool," whose uprising amounted to an "extravagant comedy."[67] For Hans Baron, the Cola episode marked an unfortunate turning point in Petrarch's political thought. Baron claimed that it was Cola's political failure that extinguished Petrarch's enthusiasm for civic republicanism and that precipitated his return to monarchism.[68] But what drew Petrarch to Cola is not necessarily so different from what attracted him to Robert's court. What Petrarch prioritized were statesmen who appreciated the power of words, and Cola's rise looked like an opportunity to reestablish the Augustan relationship between politics and poetry.

In a *Hortatoria* jointly addressed to Cola and the Roman people, Petrarch laments that "the very city in which Caesar Augustus, the ruler of the world, and the lawgiver of nations" once reigned had ceded its government to barbarians.[69] Petrarch speaks in the *Hortatoria* as a Roman, urging his fellow citizens to remember that they are descendants of freemen. Even in his most republican epistle, Petrarch holds up Brutus *and* Augustus as examples of illustrious ancestors worthy of imitation. Cola resembles Brutus—Caesar's assassin—in his determination to rescue Rome from tyranny.[70] But he also takes after Augustus—Caesar's chosen successor—in his dedication to literature. Petrarch again quotes

from Suetonius and encourages Cola to read at every spare opportunity, even at meals or in the middle of the night. "In so doing he will be imitating the most worthy Augustus."[71] An appreciation for classical study must accompany Cola's reforms.

The *Hortatoria* closes with a promise from Petrarch that his own "duty as a Roman citizen" will soon call him to celebrate Cola in verse: "I shall recall the Muses from their exile, and shall sing resounding words in abiding memory of your glory, words that will ring throughout the ages."[72] This vow to serve as Cola's Virgil has sometimes been read as an allusion to the *Spirto gentil*,[73] the patriotic poem in which Petrarch summons Rome's avenger and redeemer:

> On the Tarpeian Mount, Song, you will see
> a knight whom all Italy honors,
> who cares more for others than for himself.
> Say to him: "One who has not yet seen you from close by,
> except as one falls in love through fame,
> says that Rome now
> with her eyes wet with tears
> keeps crying out to you for mercy from all her seven hills."[74]

Petrarch assumes a poetic and civic obligation to reclaim the city's glory.

However, it is notable that the *Hortatoria* to Cola and the Roman people does not appear in Petrarch's official body of letters. Today scholars know it as *Variae* 48, one of the sixty-five miscellaneous letters that Joseph Fracassetti assembled in the mid-nineteenth century.[75] These were not letters Petrarch could fully suppress, given his and Cola's notoriety.[76] Yet Petrarch severed most of their correspondence from his main collection. Of the eight extant letters written to Cola, only one is included in the *Familiares*. Petrarch relegated the rest to his *Liber Sine Nomine* ("Book without a Name") or left them uncollected altogether.

The *Sine Nomine* is what Ronald Martinez aptly calls a "truncated" collection.[77] Petrarch explains in the preface that he arranged these nineteen fragmented letters separately from his main epistolary body (*epistolarum corpus*) so that they might constitute a part (*partem unam*), without deforming the whole work (*sine totius operis deformitate*).[78] This editorial strategy is the reverse of what Petrarch proposes in *Fam* 1.1, where he accepts that re-collecting the parts of his correspondence will make the "deformity of the collection [*deformitas uniti corporis*]" easier to see.[79] The difference between the *Familiares* and the *Sine Nomine* is that the latter collection addresses figures related to the papacy's shameful exile in Avignon—a situation that Petrarch says has forced him to conceal his own name, along with those of his recipients. Petrarch leaves us to wonder whether a letter that redacts the name of both its sender and its addressee is really a letter at all.[80] Certainly it cannot be a "familiar" one. Petrarch complains in the opening line of the book that "truth is now a capital crime [*nunc capitalis est veritas*]."[81] He prepares us to read *Sine Nomine* as a decapitated body of work. The letters reflect Rome as a city without a head.

Petrarch's second address to the Roman people during the Cola affair appears as *Sine Nomine* 4, a letter composed in autumn 1352, while Rienzo was imprisoned in Avignon. This time Petrarch's tone is more circumspect. He complains to his fellow Roman citizens that their former "head and ruler [*caput et rector*]" is now a foreign prisoner—a captive within the Babylonian captivity.[82] Petrarch criticizes Cola for abandoning his republican mission and does not argue for Cola's innocence. Instead the letter addresses the obligations of the Roman people. At the very least, they should insist on holding Cola's trial in Rome—where his alleged crimes were committed—rather than in Avignon. Without absolving Cola's misdeeds, Petrarch argues that the former tribune was correct to affirm that the Roman empire must be seated in Rome.[83] From here he launches into a panegyric for the age "when the world had only one head [*unum caput*], and that head was Rome."[84] Petrarch recalls the age of Augustus as a time when Christ was born of a virgin and the empire possessed one temporal ruler. It was an age

when Virgil could write, "[W]hile the race of Aeneas shall live by the steadfast rock of the Capital . . . Rome's lord shall hold sway."[85] Petrarch saw the Roman people as the final authorizers of the citizenship he attained through the laurel prize.[86] He similarly believed that the citizens of Rome should have the authority to determine their former tribune's fate.

Petrarch rearranged the letters in *Sine Nomine* after Cola's death. The first edition, probably assembled in 1353, was bracketed at the beginning and end by letters concerning Cola, as if to suggest that Rienzo's revolution would contain the corruption of the papal court and restore virtuous leadership to Rome. But by the 1350s, Petrarch had moved the Cola letters to the front of the collection, implying that his relationship with Cola was a thing of the past.[87] The one letter to Cola that appears in the collected *Familiares* is quite negative. Petrarch pleads with his "tribune" in *Fam.* 7.7 not to betray his past reasons for praise:

> Do not, I beg you: disfigure with your own hands the very lovely appearance of your fame . . . [for] if you turn your steps backward you descend, the descent is by nature easier. For the path is wide, and what the poet has to say does not apply only to those in infernal regions: "Easy is the descent to Avernus."[88]

The politician who once seemed a balm for Italy's wounds now risks injuring Petrarch's reputation. Cola was supposed to lead the path out of Avignon but has instead chosen a decent into pagan hell. Petrarch uses *Fam.* 7.7 to announce his own change of direction. He will no longer regard Cola as a familiar confident, or other self. He bids Cola farewell and grieves, "Oh how very different the end is from the beginning; oh ears of mine that are too sensitive."[89] Petrarch's ambitions as an artist led him to overestimate Rienzo's potential as a political reformer. He breaks off the relationship to preserve his integrity as an author.

Still, Petrarch was intrigued by rumors during Cola's trial that the people's tribune was in fact a famous poet. This was a subject

worthy of inclusion in the *Familiares*. Writing to his friend Francesco Nelli, Petrarch reports in *Fam*. 13.6 that the Curia might spare Cola out of fear that it would be sacrilegious to do violence to a poet.[90] Petrarch was excited by the parallels between Cola's trial and Cicero's *Pro Archia*. Each case suggested that patriotic poetry could serve as a defense from prosecution.[91] Petrarch clarifies that he himself does not regard the tribune as a poet. Cola is a fluent orator and has perhaps "read all the poets" available to him, though this does not make Cola a poet any more than wearing another man's robes would make him a weaver.[92] Still, Petrarch delights in the notion that merely mentioning the name of the Muses might protect a man from capital punishment:

> Could they [i.e., the Muses] have expected anything more under Caesar Augustus, when they enjoyed the highest esteem and when poets from every land gathered in Rome to view the face of that distinguished ruler, friend of poets and master of kings?[93]

While Cola himself might not deserve the Muses' shield, Petrarch interprets the appeal to poetry as a sign that the Augustan renaissance is still possible. Petrarch distances himself from Cola without renouncing his cultural project. He tells Nelli that he stands by his early praise for Rienzo and continues to believe that the seat of the empire belongs in Rome. The problem with Rienzo is that he lost sight of this mission; his later deeds did not match his glorious beginning.[94] Petrarch would have to look elsewhere for Augustan order.

Charles IV: *Augustus noster*

Petrarch's third candidate for a modern Augustus was Charles IV of Luxenberg, the same man Cola begged for freedom in Prague. By February 1351 Petrarch was imploring the king of the Romans to descend into Italy to claim his rightful role as "our Augustus [*Augustus noster*]."[95] Charles IV was elected as holy roman emperor in 1347 but would not be crowned until 1355. Petrarch

acknowledges the "precipice" separating his letter from Bohemia but urges Charles to cease all delay. The emperor must descend into Italy "like a messenger from heaven" to "reveal to us the desired light of your august face [*nobis augustissime tue frontis lumen ostendas*]."[96]

Petrarch's first letter to Charles begins by echoing Augustine's moment of conversion in the *Confessions*, when Augustine hears a voice say, "'Pick it up and read it, pick it up and read it' [*Tolle lege, tolle lege*]." Petrarch instructs the emperor to read his epistle thoroughly: "Read it [*perlege*], I pray, our honor, read it [*perlege*]."[97] This same passage from the *Confessions* appears earlier in the *Familiares*, when Petrarch's recounts his famous climb up and down Mount Ventoux as an allegory for his conversion to the life of the mind.[98] *Fam*. 10.1 also attempts to initiate a conversion. Petrarch must convince Charles to fulfill his imperial role by turning his mind toward Italy: "Each time you look back at Germany, think of Italy [*quotiens Germaniam respexeris, Italiam cogita*]."[99] The verb *respicere*, "to look back," recalls the opening line of the *Familiares*, when Petrarch asks himself:

> What stops you from looking behind [*in terga respicere*] like a tired traveler from a vantage point after a long journey and slowly recalling [*recognoscere*] the memories and cares of your youth?[100]

Looking back on his years of travel is what first inspires Petrarch to re-collect the parts (*membra*) of his correspondence that are otherwise scattered across various regions of the world. The purpose of the *Familiaries*, he tells us, is to unite his epistolary corpus "at one time and in one place [*unum in tempus locumque*]."[101] Petrarch extends this same metaphor of physical and spiritual reunion to the emperor, who was partly educated in Italy:

> You were born there [i.e., in Germany], but raised here [i.e., in Italy]. There you have a kingdom, here you have a kingdom [*regnum*] and an empire [*imperium*], without

> offense to any nation or land, where you will find the very head [*caput*] of the monarchy whereas elsewhere you will only find its members [*membra*]. . . . It will be a great achievement to gather together so many scattered pieces [*fragmenta colligere*].[102]

The letter is at once political and pedagogical. Charles can demonstrate that he has studied Petrarch's lesson in ancient history by swiftly moving to reunite a divided Rome.

However, Charles was not especially receptive to Petrarch's instruction. In a remarkable reply, the emperor warned Petrarch that his search for a modern Augustus was quixotic:

> These ancient times that you recall did not know the difficulty of the actual situation. Who today is more powerful than Caesar or greater than Augustus? . . . And whatever the succession of Italy is, in her long hunger for peace, she should not rashly hurl herself toward Augusti like a ravenous babe to its nurse. . . . We ought not slide into the unworthy conduct of Caesars while waiting to be rescued by worthy Caesars.[103]

In short, times had changed, and Petrarch was failing to appreciate the necessary balance of power. Charles shared an agreement with Pope Clement VI that he would not interfere in Italian affairs—which is why Charles quickly retreated from the peninsula after his official coronation as emperor in April 1355.[104] By some accounts, the emperor's frank response to Petrarch was drafted by none other than Cola di Rienzo during Cola's time as a political prisoner in Charles's court.[105] The same leader who assumed the title "Tribune August" was now telling Petrarch to abandon his idealistic search for new "Augusti."[106] But Petrarch refused to accept Charles's (and Cola's) premise that ancient and modern times were categorically different. When the emperor's response finally reached him two years later, Petrarch answered, "[B]elieve me, O Caesar, the world is as it has always been . . . virtue alone has

waned"[107] If Rome seemed wealthier and more virtuous in antiquity, it was because its citizens and leaders then dedicated themselves to the empire. Charles must do the same and follow the "level and easy" path back into an Italy that would quickly yield to his sword. Ironically, Petrarch invoked Cola to support his case. If a man who assumed the lowly title of tribune could win admiration across Europe, then "[w]hat might the title of Caesar accomplish?"[108]

Sounding like a frustrated schoolmaster, Petrarch chastised Charles for misreading Suetonius's *De Vita Caesarum*. Charles had argued in his reply that Petrarch's understanding of empire was unrealistic, for even Emperor Augustus was wont to complain, "What a monster the empire is."[109] Petrarch seized on the error. The quotation from Suetonius appeared in the "Life of Tiberius," *not* the "Life of Augustus." Charles had confused Rome's wisest ruler with one of its worst. Petrarch found the misattribution so shocking that he marked it in one of his personal copies of Suetonius. Next to Tiberius's protest that the empire was a burden, Petrarch recorded, "The emperor of our time wrote this saying to me. I replied to him."[110]

In fact Petrarch sent several further replies to the emperor, in letters that vacillate between long rebukes and bursts of hope and praise. At news that Charles had arrived on Italian soil in October 1354, Petrarch wrote to assure the emperor that Italy would welcome her "head" (*caput*) with "Virgilian voices" (*vocibus virgilianum*).[111] But Petrarch wrote again in 1355 to express his disappointment at the emperor's flight back to Bohemia. Petrarch compared Charles's greetings with "a double-edged sword." The ruler in a position to follow the same path "carved" by Julius Caesar was instead inflicting "a fatal wound" through his retreat.[112] As their correspondence progresses, Petrarch begins to concede that Charles's intervention was unlikely. The letters instead dramatize what it means for a writer to invite—and then await—a messenger. Will Charles prove himself a sincere friend of Romans letters? Or will he refuse the terms of Petrarch's invitation?

Petrarch and the emperor met for the first time in Mantua in December 1354, during Charles's trip to receive the imperial crown. The results of their conference were ambiguous. Petrarch reported to another friend that although he was impressed by Charles's conversation, he would wait to judge the emperor's actions, rather than his words, before determining whether Charles is "a true Caesar." When Charles requested a copy of Petrarch's unfinished collection of Roman biographies, *De Viris Illustribus*, Petrarch responded that he would dedicate such a book to the emperor only if he led the kind of life that would be worthy of readers in posterity.[113] Petrarch then used the occasion to present several gold and silver coins bearing the portraits and inscriptions of ancient rulers. Among these "was the head of Caesar Augustus, who almost appeared to be breathing." Petrarch instructed Charles that this was the ruler he must admire and emulate.[114] Augustan Rome once again appears as a metonym for Petrarch's poetic and political ideal. Augustus stands for an intellectual world where like-minded men communicate sincerely, unobstructed by time, geography, or political contingency.

In his final "exhortation" to Charles, Petrarch inverts the excuse he offered for Cola's failures. Whereas Cola deserved his praise because of his glorious beginning, Charles still has time to achieve "a glorious ending [that] will excuse a slow beginning."[115] The maxim Petrarch cites in this letter could apply to either Charles or Cola: "[T]rue are the words of Caesar Augustus, 'Whatever may be done well enough, may be done fast enough.'"[116] Should Charles intervene at this late hour, Petrarch's message might look prophetic—like the words of a poet who successfully persuades his prince to perform memorable deeds. But Petrarch did not collect the *Familiares* to enact a specific set of policy outcomes. He finds satisfaction in incorporating selections from his exchange with Charles into his edited letters, where he can go on projecting the dream of a restored empire.

Petrarch and Charles met on several further occasions—in Prague, Udine, and Padua—while Petrarch was an ambassador in the employ of Milan.[117] Their meetings were sufficiently

cordial that Charles named Petrarch a member of the Counts Palatine and consulted Petrarch's classical expertise on certain diplomatic matters, most notably concerning a dispute over forged documents, which Charles's rivals in Austria falsely attributed to Julius Caesar and Nero.[118] Petrarch detected the forgery and assured Charles that he was the true Caesar.[119] But Petrarch's vision for an imperial rescuer would never become concrete. An elderly Petrarch wondered if he had been too indiscriminate in answering every letter he received. "I desire . . . to say farewell to my follies before they say it to me . . . even if a letter comes, even if the Roman Emperor [Charles IV] writes me—which he has often done—I would not reply other than in the vernacular."[120] This time it was Petrarch's turn to spurn Charles. It is striking that he names the emperor as an example of an unworthy correspondent, someone whose political dispatches risk distracting Petrarch from the contemplative life. Most of the emperor's concerns are apparently unworthy of Petrarch's collected letters. Petrarch reminds us that he has excluded messages that fail to meet his expectations for mutual conversation and recognition.

Conclusion

Late in the *Seniles*, Petrarch assured Boccaccio, "I was with the princes in name, but in fact the princes were with me."[121] This was an indirect answer to his friend's protest that Petrarch spent too much time in the service of Florence's enemies, not least the Visconti of Milan.[122] Petrarch insisted that he never engaged in political activities that sacrificed his freedom or studies; the time he devoted to princely counsel was always in the service of his larger art. Petrarch's reply suggests that his political letters should not be read as isolated works of flattery. Petrarch wanted each letter to stand as a part of his collected epistolary body. His selected correspondence with princes like King Robert, Cola di Rienzo, and Charles IV appears as part of an Augustan ideal, a timeless empire in which poets and politicians discover a mutually reinforcing respect for Latin letters.

This essay has traced Petrarch's attempts to draw three otherwise dissimilar statesmen into his literary orbit—in his pursuit of a cosmopolitan citizenship that would be Roman in culture, if not in political or geographical fact. Such a pursuit was highly intellectualized and at times exasperating. It is safe to say that Petrarch was not a man who felt constrained by the "effectual truths" of his day. The historian C. C. Bayley once remarked, "It is difficult to be just towards Petrarch, if we regard him from the exclusively Aristotelian point of view as a political animal."[123] Petrarch never prioritized the *vita activa* and had no concrete plans for restoring Roman rule. However, his letters do convey a political vision, and that vision appears quite consistently if we are prepared to read Petrarch on his own terms. His ideal politician was someone he could invite into his world of transhistorical friendship—the literary community Petrarch calls "posterity." Today Petrarch is better remembered than either Robert, Cola, or Charles. Yet all three statesmen participate in Petrarch's empire of culture. Robert revived the *laurea*, Cola reclaimed the Roman tribunate, and Charles wore the imperial crown. Together they serve as representatives in Petrarch's cultural epic, in which a circle of poets and politicians exist in perpetual conversation.

Notes

1. Petrarch, *The Life of Solitude*, trans. Jacob Zeitlin (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1924), 309. For Latin, see *De vita solitaria = La vie solitaire, 1346–66*, ed. Christophe Caraud (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 1999). On Petrarch as the "father of humanism," see Theodor Mommsen, "Petrarch's Conception of the 'Dark Ages,'" *Speculum* 17, no. 2 (1942): 242; and Angelo Mazzocco, "Petrarch: Founder of Renaissance Humanism?," in *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Angelo Mazzocco (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 215–42.
2. For discussion, see James Hankins, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 174–91.
3. Petrarch, *Life of Solitude*, 164, 183.
4. Petrarch, *Life of Solitude*, 97. In this case, the addressee is Philippe de Cabassoles, Bishop of Cavaillon, whose diocese included Petrarch's beloved retreat in Vaucluse.

5. There are 638 extant Latin letters by Petrarch. Boccaccio, by comparison, has only 24 letters attributed to him, and Dante has 13. See Albert Russell Ascoli, "Epistolary Petrarch," in *The Cambridge Companion to Petrarch*, ed. Albert Russell Ascoli and Unn Falkeid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 121. On the reinvention of personal letter-writing, see Kathy Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).
6. On the connection between friendship and manuscript-hunting, see Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski, "Petrarch and his friends," in *The Cambridge Companion to Petrarch*, 26–35.
7. Petrarch, *Fam*. 24.2 in *Letters on Familiar Matters (Rerum Familiarium Libri)*, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo, 3 vols. (New York: Ithaca Press, 2005), 3:314–16. All English quotations refer to this edition by volume and page number. Latin quotations are from *Le familiari*, ed. Vittorio Rossi (vols. 1–3) and Umberto Bosco (vol. 4) (Florence: Sansoni, 1933–1942). Citations refer to volume, page, and line number.
8. Petrarch, *Fam*. 24.3; Bernardo 3:317–18.
9. Petrarch, *Fam*, 1.1; Bernardo 1:10, Dotti 1: 9-10, 32-33.
10. Petrarch, *Fam*, 1.1; Bernardo 1:6–14.
11. For an accessible intellectual biography, see Christopher Celenza, *Petrarch: Everywhere a Wanderer* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017).
12. Gian Mario Anselmi, *L'età dell'Umanesimo e del Rinascimento* (Roma: Carocci, 2008), 44.
13. Peter Stacey, *Roman Monarchy and the Renaissance Prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 119–70.
14. For this list of Petrarch's paradoxes, see Giuseppe Ferrari, *Filosofia della rivoluzione*, vol. 2 (London, 1851), 323.
15. Hans Baron, "The Evolution of Petrarch's Thought: Reflections on the State of Petrarch Studies," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 24, no. 1 (1962): 7.
16. Baron, "The Evolution of Petrarch's Thought," 7–41; Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty and the Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1955), 86–87.
17. Craig Kallendorf, "The Historical Petrarch," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 1 (1996): 130–41; Giuseppe Mazzotta, *The World of Petrarch* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 6
18. Petrarch, *Life of Solitude*, 282–83.

19. David Marsh, "Petrarch and Suetonius: the Imperial Ideal in the Republic of Letters," in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Bonnensis: Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, Bonn, 3–9 August, 2003* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), 527–32.
20. Marsh, "Petrarch and Suetonius," 528–30. See, e.g., *Fam.* 3.11; (Bernardo 1:144); *Fam.* 4.7 (Bernardo 1:194–95); and *Fam*. 23.2 (Bernardo 3:257). See also *Sen*. 16.4, in *Letters of Old Age* (*Rerum Senilium Libri*), trans. Aldo S. Bernardo, Saul Levin, and Reta A. Bernard (New York: Ithaca Press, 2005), 2:617. All English quotations to the *Seniles* refer to Bernardo et al. by volume and page number. Latin quotations are from *Rerum Senilium Libri*, ed. Elvira Nota and Ugo Dotti, 3 vols. (Turin: Nino Aragno Editore, 2004), cited by page and line number.
21. Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, in *Lives of the Caesars*, trans. J. C. Rolfe, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 28.2, pp. 192–93.
22. *Sen.* 27.1; Bernardo et al. 2:672. On Petrarch's philosophy of posterity, see Rocco Rubini, *Posterity Inventing Tradition from Petrarch to Gramsci* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2021), chap 1.
23. Petrarch preempts this charge when he concedes in *Fam.* 1.1 that the collected letters are riddled with "contradiction." Bernardo 1:9.
24. I borrow the term *empire of culture* from Giuseppe F. Mazzotta, "Petrarch's Epistolary Epic: *Letters on Familiar Matters (Rerum familiarum libri)*," in *Petrarch: A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, ed. Victoria Kirkham and Armando Maggi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 318–19.
25. This point is well developed in Hankins, *Virtue Politics*, esp. 153–73.
26. Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 6.
27. *Fam.*1.1; Bernardo 1:3, Rossi 1:3, 2.
28. *Fam.*1.1; Bernardo 1:13, Rossi 1:13, 45.
29. *Fam.*1.1; Bernardo 1: 10, Rossi 1:9, 31.
30. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 9.
31. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 19.
32. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 2nd ed, trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 105.
33. Cf. Petrarch, *Fam*. 1.2, Bernardo 1:17*; Sen*., 28.1; Bernardo et al. 2:677.

34. For a biography that emphasizes Robert's learning and patronage, see Samantha Kelly, *The New Solomon: Robert of Naples (1309–1343) and Fourteenth-Century Kingship* (Boston: Brill, 2003).
35. Petrarch, *Fam*. 1.2; Bernardo 1:16.
36. *Fam.*1.2; Bernardo 1:15, Rossi 1:14-15, 1.
37. *Fam.*1.2; Bernardo 1:16.
38. *Fam.*1.2; Bernardo 1:16–17, Rossi 1: 16, 9.
39. *Fam.* 4.2; Bernardo 1:182.
40. *Sen.* 28.1; Bernardo et al. 2:276–78. See also *Fam.* 4.2–7.
41. Celenza, *Petrarch: Everywhere a Wanderer*, 71.
42. Celenza, *Petrarch: Everywhere a Wanderer*, 73.
43. Ernest H. Wilkins, "The Coronation of Petrarch," *Speculum* 18, no. 2 (1943): 159–60, 163–64.
44. Wilkins, "The Coronation of Petrarch," 164–65.
45. *Fam*. 4.6; Bernardo 1:192.
46. *Sen.* 28.1*;* Bernardo et al. 2:677.
47. *Fam*. 2.14; Bernardo 1:113.
48. "Petrarch's Coronation Oration," trans. Ernest Hatch Wilkins, in *Studies in the Life and Works of Petrarch* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1955), 304.
49. Petrarch, "Coronation Oration," 303.
50. Petrarch, "Coronation Oration," 308–9.
51. Petrarch, "Coronation Oration," 301, 308. For Petrarch's account of this discovery, see *Sen*. 16.1.
52. Cicero, *Pro Archia Poeta*, in *The Speeches*, trans. N. H. Watts (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923).
53. Petrarch, "Coronation Oration," 312–13.
54. See Dennis Looney, "The Beginnings of Humanistic Oratory: Petrarch's *Coronation Oration:* (*Collatio laureationis*), in *Petrarch: A Critical Guide*, ed. Kirkham and Maggi, 139.
55. *Fam*. 4.7; Bernardo 1:193–94.
56. *Fam*. 4.7; Bernardo 1:194–95. The allusion is to Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 89. Petrarch marked this passage in one of his personal copies of Suetonius's *Lives*. See Giuseppe Billanovich, "Un altro Svetonio del Petrarca (Oxford, Exeter College, 186)," *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 3 (1960): 51. A digital facsimile of Exeter College MS. 186 is now online: https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_11072.
57. *Sen*. 17.2; Bernardo et al. 2:652.
58. *Sen.* 18.1; Bernardo et al. 2:677.

59. *Fam*. 1.2; Bernardo 1:17. Robert was too elderly to attend the ceremony in person.
60. *Fam*. 4.6; Bernardo 1:192.
61. *Sen*. 17.2; Bernardo et al. 2:647. See Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 25. See below for Petrarch's repetition of this maxim in his correspondence with Charles IV.
62. *Fam.* 5.3; Bernardo 1:234.
63. *Sen*. 2.1; Bernardo et al. 1:45.
64. For biography, see Ronald Musto, *Apocalypse in Rome: Cola di Rienzo and the Politics of the New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
65. Petrarch, *Liber Sine Nomine* 7, trans. Norman P. Zacour (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), p. 64. Translation slightly altered. For Latin, see Petrarch, *Sine Nomine: Lettere Polemiche e Politiche*, ed. Ugo Dotti (Rome: Laterza), p. 86.
66. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, trans. Lauren F. Banfield and Harvey Mansfield (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), bk. 1, chap. 31, p. 43. For Machiavelli's critique of Petrarch, see Danielle Charette and Michael Darmiento, "A Tribune Named Niccolò: Petrarchan Revolutionaries and Humanist Failures in Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*," *History of European Ideas* 44, no. 8 (2018): 1046–62.
67. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (New York: Penguin, 1990), 27, 123.
68. Baron, *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, 86–87. On Baron and Petrarch, see Hankins, *Virtue Politics*, 174–75.
69. Petrarch, *Variae 48*, in *The Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*, 3rd ed., ed. Mario Emilio Cosenza and Ronald Musto (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 12–13.
70. *Variae 48*, 13–14.
71. *Variae 48*, 20. See Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 78, 79.
72. *Variae 48*, 23–24.
73. See *The Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*, ed. Cosenza and Musto, 24n3.
74. *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, trans. Robert Durling (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), no. 53, ll. 99–106, pp. 130–31.
75. Aldo Bernardo, "The Selection of Letters in Petrarch's *Familiares*," *Speculum* 35, no. 2 (1960): 281, 284. *Variae* 38, 40, and 42 are also addressed to Cola and are translated in *The Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*.

76. Petrarch admits there are extant letters to Cola in *Fam*. 13.6; Bernardo 2:194. In another uncollected letter to his "tribune," Petrarch advised Cola to choose his words carefully, bearing in mind that his dispatches from Rome were being read and deciphered by so many. *Variae 38*, in *The Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*, 40.
77. Ronald Martinez, "The Book without a Name: Petrarch's Open Secret," in *Petrarch: A Critical Guide*, ed. Kirkham and Maggi, 292.
78. Petrarch, *Sine Nomine*, trans. Zacour, pp. 27–28; Dotti, p. 4.
79. Cf. *Fam.*1.1; Bernardo 1:10; Rossi 1: 9, 31.
80. *Sine Nomine* 11, trans. Zacour, p. 76. See Martinez, "The Book without a Name: Petrarch's Open Secret," 292.
81. *Sine Nomine*, trans. Zacour, p. 27; Dotti p. 3.
82. *Sine Nomine* 4, trans. Zacour, pp. 46–49; Dotti p. 40.
83. *Sine Nomine* 4, trans. Zacour, pp. 45–57. Petrarch repeats this evaluation in *Fam.* 13.6; Bernardo 2:176.
84. *Sine Nomine* 4, trans. Zacour p. 47; Dotti p. 42.
85. *Sine Nomine* 4, trans. Zacour p. 49. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 9.448–49.
86. Petrarch again invokes his status as a Roman citizen in *Sine Nomine* 4, trans. Zacour, 53. Compare with the "Coronation Oration," 312–13.
87. Martinez, "The Book without a Name," 293.
88. *Fam*. 7.7; Bernardo 1:349–50. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 6.126.
89. *Fam*. 7.7; Bernardo 1:351.
90. *Fam*. 13.6; Bernardo 2:196.
91. *Fam*. 13.6; Bernardo 2:196.
92. *Fam*. 13.6; Bernardo 2:196–97.
93. *Fam.* 13.6; Bernardo 2:196.
94. *Fam.* 13.6; Bernardo 2:194–96.
95. *Fam.* 10.1; Bernardo 2:50–51, Rossi 2:280, 10.
96. *Fam.* 10.1l; Bernardo 2:49–50. Rossi 2: 279, 6. Translation slightly altered.
97. *Fam.* 10.1; Bernardo 2:49, Rossi 2:277, 1. Translation altered. See Augustine, *Confessions, Volume I: Books 1–8,* trans. Carolyn J. B. Hammond (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 8.6.29.
98. *Fam.* 4.1; Bernardo 1:177–78. For analysis, see Ascoli, "Petrarch's Middle Age: Memory, Imagination, History and the 'Ascent of Mount Ventoux'" *Stanford Italian Review* 10, no. 1 (1989): 5–43.
99. *Fam*. 10.1; Bernardo 2:50, Rossi 2: 279, 7. Translation altered.
100. *Fam.* 1.1; Bernardo 1:3–4, Rossi 1:4, 4.

101. *Fam*. 1.1; Bernardo 1:10, Rossi 1: 10, 31.
102. *Fam*. 10.1; Bernardo 2:50, Rossi 2: 279, 7.
103. *Lettere all'Imperatore: Carteggio con la Corte Imperiale di Praga* (1351–1364), ed. Ugo Dotti (Reggio Emilia: Diabasis, 2008), 37–39. For discussion, see C. C. Bayley, "Petrarch, Charles IV, and the 'Renovatio Imperii,'" *Speculum* 17, no. 3 (1942): 328–30.
104. Bayley, "Petrarch, Charles IV, and the 'Renovatio Imperii,'" 331.
105. Cited in Musto, *Apocalypse in Rome*, 279; Bayley, "Petrarch," 329.
106. For Cola's title, "Tribune August," see the chronicle, *The Life of Cola di Rienzo*, trans. John Wright (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1975), pp. 94, 152.
107. *Fam*. 18.1; Bernardo 3:38.
108. *Fam*. 18.1; Bernardo 3:38.
109. *Fam*. 18.1; Bernardo 3:39.
110. Exeter College MS. 186, fol. 25v. Cited in R. W. Hunt, "A Manuscript from the Library of Petrarch," *Times Literary Supplement*, September 23, 1960, p. 619; and Billanovich, "Un altro Svetonio del Petrarca," 39–40.
111. *Fam.* 19.1; Bernardo 3:74, Rossi 3: 318, 3. Translation altered.
112. *Fam*. 19.12; Bernardo 3:101–2.
113. *Fam*. 19.3; Bernardo 3:79.
114. *Fam*. 19.3; Bernardo 3:79.
115. Cf. *Fam*. 13.6; Bernardo 2:196; *Fam.* 23.21; Bernardo 3:305–6.
116. *Fam.* 23.21; Bernardo 3:305.
117. Bayley, "Petrarch," 332–35.
118. Bayley, "Petrarch," 332. Petrarch discusses these honors in *Fam* 21.l; Bernardo 3:166–67 and *Sen.* 16.5; Bernardo et al. 2:621–25.
119. *Sen.* 16.5; Bernardo et al. 2:621–25.
120. *Sen.* 16.3; Bernardo et al. 2:610.
121. *Sen*. 17.2, 2:650.
122. On this exchange, see Gur Zak, "Boccaccio and Petrarch," in *The Cambridge Companion to Boccaccio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 146–49.
123. Bayley, "Petrarch," 337.