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## CHAPTER TWELVE

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### THE BURNING QUESTION • Crisis and Cosmology in the *Secret* • *Secretum*

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For nearly fifty years, the *Secretum* (*The Secret*) has been probably the most widely read, studied, and taught of Petrarch's Latin works.<sup>1</sup> Yet despite the apparent clarity of its structure and debate, it continues to defy definitive interpretation, as if its meaning, like its title, remains a "secret." Petrarch's *Secretum* is structured in the conventional format of three books, which correspond to three days of discussion, and are introduced by a proem. Petrarch sets the scene using an allegorical framework in which late classical and medieval elements predominate.<sup>2</sup> In a dream-like reverie, the author is confronted by Veritas (Truth), a distant kinswoman of Philosophia in Boethius's *Consolation*; and just as Dante's Beatrice had summoned Virgil, so Veritas introduces a venerable authority, Augustine, to counsel Franciscus in his distress (fig. 6).<sup>3</sup> But after the discussion has been launched by this allegorical booster rocket, it falls away. When the debate begins in book 1, with Augustinus reproaching Franciscus as a little man (*homuncio*),<sup>4</sup> Veritas remains silent; and the dialogue ends without any reference to the opening scene.

I have called the work a dialogue, but that is not the author's term for it. Petrarch calls it a *familiare colloquium*, a "conversation with a friend."<sup>5</sup> Although modern readers may view Augustine more as a doctrinal superego than as a boon companion, we should recall that Petrarch, like many humanists after him, spoke in his letters of "conversing" with correspondents both ancient and modern.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, although the strict limits of geography and time form an important topic of the dialogue, the interlocutors Franciscus and Augustinus transcend such boundaries and are more "familiar" with each other's lives and works than, say, Dante and Virgil in the *Divina commedia*. This sort of intertextual penetration is not limited to the *Secretum*; in the *Africa*, Homer appears to Ennius and prophecies about the epic that Petrarch would write in the future. Later in life, Petrarch would use the dialogue form to offer moral guidance that was less personal in nature, although

he did not call the chapters of his *De remediis utriusque fortune* “dialogi.”<sup>7</sup> All the same, *dialogi* is the title of a hagiographic classic that Petrarch knew well and commended to his brother Gherardo, the consolatory dialogues of Gregory the Great.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, we find that Gregory’s opening scene anticipates that of Petrarch’s *Secretum*. Here Gregory describes his retreat (*secretum locum petii*) and, like Petrarch, calls himself a little man (*homuncio*):

One day, when I was overwhelmed with the excessive troubles of secular affairs, which often force us to pay debts that we clearly don’t owe, I sought out a more private place for my companion grief, where everything unpleasant in my tasks would be openly revealed, and all those things that generally caused me pain would freely appear before my eyes. Now, after I had sat there greatly afflicted and silent for some time, my most beloved son Peter the deacon arrived; and seeing that I was tormented by a grave malady of the heart, he asked, “Has something new happened to cause you to suffer more grief than usual?” . . . “If I were only to tell you, Peter, what I have learned, as one little man, about perfect and laudable individuals, either through the witness of good and true men or through my own studies, I think the day would end before my talk was done.”<sup>9</sup>

We should not rule out Gregory as a source for Petrarch. Book 2 of *De vita solitaria* is filled with lives of saints similar to those narrated in the *Dialogi*, and Gregory’s commentary on Ezekiel is quoted in *Invective contra medicum*.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, the *Secretum* also purports to record the “conflict of my personal worries,” and it is clear that Franciscus and Augustinus represent the author’s own contrasting viewpoints, rather than the historical Petrarch and Augustine. Indeed, Petrarch possessed a peculiar gift for dramatizing his inner struggles through dialogue—a literary habit that would markedly shape the writings of Leon Battista Alberti.<sup>11</sup> In Petrarch’s Latin poetry, for example, several of the *Epystole*—most notably 1.6, 1.14 (“Ad seipsum”), and 2.18—employ the question-and-answer technique of soliloquy to dramatize the poet’s inner conflicts. Similarly, the *Bucolicum carmen* uses exchanges between shepherds to illustrate contrasting ways of life. Thus the first eclogue, *Parthenias*, finds clear parallels in Petrarch’s epistles to his brother Gherardo.<sup>12</sup> And in an extreme example of self-dramatization, the epic poem *Africa* casts the poet in three separate incarnations—as Ennius, as Homer, and as the prophesied Tuscan celebrant of Scipio Africanus.<sup>13</sup>

From the very beginning of book 1, the *Secretum* abounds in the literary conventions of ancient genres. For a central model of dialogue as a thera-

peutic treatment of grief and depression, we need only cite Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes*; Seneca's consolations *Ad Helviam*, *Ad Marciam*, and *Ad Polybium*; and Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae*. Moreover, given Petrarch's obsession with love, it is hardly surprising to find that the *Remedia amoris* of Ovid—later cited in book 3 by Augustinus—offers parallels that refer to the key words *secretum* (secluded withdrawal) and *colloquium* (conversation):

You do not need seclusion, for seclusion  
 Makes madness grow; but crowds will do you good  
 . . . . .  
 Flee not from conversation, and keep your door unlocked.<sup>14</sup>

Yet if Ovid considers seclusion a danger, Petrarch regards it as conducive to moral improvement. In his treatise *De vita solitaria* 1.4, he quotes approvingly a passage in which Quintilian lauds solitude (*secretum*) as essential to study: "If we come to them rested and restored, night studies are the best kind of seclusion. Of course, silence and withdrawal and a completely unhampered mind, while greatly to be desired, cannot always be found . . . so in a crowd, on the road, and even at banquets our thoughts can create their own seclusion."<sup>15</sup>

Once the proem has set the scene, the three books of the *Secretum* proceed, according to the norms of ancient dialogue, to record three days of conversation. As book 1 begins, Augustinus assails Franciscus with a series of reproaches, but the discussion soon develops into a debate on the question, can a person be unhappy against his will?<sup>16</sup> The arguments for voluntarism presented by Augustinus draw on a number of sources from ancient Stoic tenets and Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes* to Augustine's *De vera religione*.<sup>17</sup> Book 2 takes a decidedly Christian turn as Augustinus gradually examines Franciscus for all seven of the deadly sins, beginning with pride. But instead of Augustinian confessions, Franciscus seems only to offer Petrarchan concessions about his spiritual shortcomings. In book 3, Augustinus fires a double-barreled accusation against Franciscus: he fails to seek salvation because he is fettered by two chains—love and glory.<sup>18</sup> These charges in fact recall the chains that fettered the saint's will before his conversion:

The adversary held my will, and made it a chain to bind me. For when our will is perverted, lust is created; and when we become slaves to our lust, habit is born; and when we don't resist habit, compulsion arises. Thus, as if by interconnected links—which is why I have called it a chain—harsh servitude held my will in bonds. But

my new will, by which I had begun to wish to worship and enjoy you freely, O God, who are our only certain pleasure, was not yet capable of overcoming my old will, grown strong through many years. Thus, within me two wills—one old and one new, one carnal and one spiritual—battled each other, and their discord weakened my soul.<sup>19</sup>

First, using Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes* and Ovid's *Remedia amoris* as his principal texts, Augustinus urges Franciscus to abandon his love and the poetry it inspires. Then he addresses the problem of Franciscus's love of glory, which means his quest for winning literary fame, especially by his Latin writings. The second half of book 3, which forms the culmination of the *Secretum*, addresses the spiritual crisis of Petrarch as author and poet.<sup>20</sup> In particular, Augustinus challenges the two literary projects that celebrate ancient Rome, the prose compilation *De viris illustribus* and the verse epic *Africa*. By dedicating himself to these massive and unfinished projects, Franciscus has forgotten himself. For the goal of his salvation, he has substituted the short-sighted aim of achieving glory.

It is easy to understand the poet's doubts about his epic poem. This projected masterpiece was responsible for Petrarch's coronation in Rome in 1341, and the speech he delivered on that occasion extols the role of glory in inspiring poetry.<sup>21</sup> If it was easy to deliver that speech, it was not easy to deliver the finished masterpiece. Petrarch's principal model, Virgil's *Aeneid*, portrays the legendary Trojan past as paving the way toward the grandeur of Augustan Rome. But instead of prophesying the advent of a successor to Scipio Africanus, the *Africa* envisions the coronation of a Tuscan poet who will celebrate the Roman hero 1,500 years later.<sup>22</sup> Like Walt Whitman, Petrarch could boast, "I celebrate myself." Yet now that he has been crowned, the poet must answer this "burning question": will the finished epic justify his laurel wreath, or should he consign it to the flames?

Recalling the transience of human life, Augustinus warns that both of Franciscus's planned masterpieces remain unfinished and that death may unexpectedly claim the writer at any moment.<sup>23</sup> This observation causes Franciscus to shudder as he recalls how during a recent illness he in fact contemplated burning his unfinished *Africa*, rather than leaving it incomplete. As Franciscus describes it, the episode is laden with irony. By alluding to Virgil's deathbed wish to burn his *Aeneid*, Franciscus both celebrates the supremacy of his poetic model and mocks the imperfections of his own work. He also puns on the name of his epic: just as Africa is continually burned by the fiery tropical sun and once was put to the torch by its Roman conquerors, so his poem nearly perished in flames lit by its author.<sup>24</sup>

Augustinus now challenges Franciscus's literary ambitions, which he says can win no lasting or widespread fame; for human glory must appear insignificant in the vastness of God's creation:

Augustinus. What great thing do you think you will achieve?

Franciscus. Truly a splendid, rare, and outstanding work.

Augustinus. . . . This splendid work will neither be widely known nor last a long time, for it is restricted by the narrow confines of place and time.<sup>25</sup>

At this point, Franciscus bursts out angrily. "I recognize that ancient and trite fable of the philosophers," he says. "The whole world is like a tiny point, a great year consists of thousands of years, and a man's fame cannot even fill either this point or this year. . . . But in my experience such sayings are more attractive to relate than they are truly beneficial."<sup>26</sup>

What provokes this vehement denunciation of "the philosophers"? Clearly, Augustinus has hit a nerve. In order to condemn the ambitious projects of Franciscus based on the history of Rome, Augustinus has appealed to a philosophical reflection that deflates Roman virtue and fame by viewing them *sub specie aeternitatis*. The phrase *angustie locorum* ("confines of place") echoes a locus classicus dear to Franciscus and thus appropriate to his Roman projects—book 6 of Cicero's *De republica*.<sup>27</sup> While most of the work is lost, the concluding scene, known as the *Somnium Scipionis* (*Dream of Scipio*), was preserved with a commentary by Macrobius, and its cosmological vision thus survived to inspire numerous generations of Latin authors.<sup>28</sup> In the passage, Scipio Africanus and his grandson view the earth from the heavens, and this vantage point allows them to envision the pettiness of the world. The celestial perspective reveals that human fame is insignificant because human life is so short compared to eternity, and because people inhabit only a small part of the earth, which itself is only a tiny point compared to the universe. Evidently, Petrarch found this Ciceronian passage deeply persuasive, for he echoes it in three passages of his *De remediis utriusque fortune*, composed between 1354 and 1366.<sup>29</sup>

The *Somnium Scipionis* was of course inspired by the conclusion of Plato's *Republic*, and in turn it inspired the commentary by Macrobius which preserved it for posterity. Franciscus's allusion to the fiery tropical sun of Africa had demonstrated his familiarity with classical notions of geography; but when Augustine begins to lecture him on the subject, Franciscus denounces it as something that doesn't move him. Augustinus is surprised, for he himself has discussed the earth's geography in his *De civitate dei* (*City*

of God).<sup>50</sup> “Is this a fable,” he asks, “when it uses geometrical demonstrations to describe the narrow confines of the whole earth?”<sup>51</sup>

But Augustinus is a clever advocate of his case and knows how to win over the recalcitrant Franciscus. He turns from science to poetry and cites four passages from Franciscus’s epic *Africa* that both prove his point and flatter the author. Of course, there is a classical precedent for Petrarch’s quotations of his own Latin verse. In book 2 of Cicero’s *De natura deorum*, Quintus Lucilius Balbus quotes at length from the translation of Aratus’s *Phaenomena* that Cicero had made as a young man.<sup>52</sup> The first quotation repeats the thematic adjective *angustus* that Petrarch had used in describing the petty world:

The globe, restricted by confining boundaries,  
Is but a tiny island in extent, which Ocean circles  
In its winding curves. . . .<sup>53</sup>

Soon Franciscus changes his tune and confesses an urge to reject his old ways:

Augustine. You have heard my opinion of glory . . . unless perhaps all  
this still strikes you as fairy tales.  
Franciscus. Not at all. Your remarks have not moved me like fairy  
tales, but have rather given me a new desire to reject my old ways.<sup>54</sup>

Paradoxically, Augustinus succeeds in persuading Franciscus by citing a work—the epic poem *Africa*—which he has relentlessly denounced as a futile endeavor. For it is evident that Franciscus finds poetry (especially his own) far more persuasive than science or logic. And we should note that the “science” in this case—namely, the five-zone model of the earth—was first made canonic by Aristotle’s *Meteorologia*.<sup>55</sup>

But is Aristotle the only figure whose authority must be exorcised? While Augustinus plays the role of Petrarch’s Latin, or African, superego, Franciscus is by birth and profession primarily a Tuscan writer. Small wonder, then, that the invocation of the *Somnium Scipionis* in book 3 evokes Dante’s *Commedia* as a literary subtext. If we review the highlights of the *Secretum*, we note that the work begins by presenting Franciscus with authoritative guides who reincarnate the Beatrice and Virgil of the first cantos in the *Inferno*.<sup>56</sup> Then, in book 2, when Augustinus examines Franciscus’s conscience, we retrace the steps of Dante’s gradual ascent-through-confession in the *Purgatorio*. And book 3 now culminates by invoking the heavenly vision of the earth’s insignificance that Dante describes in *Par-*

*adiso* 22.133–35, creating an indelible image that would inspire the final scene of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*:

My face I turned again toward all the spheres,  
 All seven, and I beheld our globe so small,  
 I smiled at its abject appearance.<sup>37</sup>

This “poetic cosmography,” to borrow Vico’s expression, must have appealed to Petrarch.

Nevertheless, behind the open dialogue of the *Secretum* there looms an ominous specter, an alternative Dante whose intellectual horizons included the mundane as well as the celestial. Returning to terrestrial geography, we recall that Dante embraced Aristotelian cosmology in his treatise *Convivio*.<sup>38</sup> Even more to the point, in 1320 he composed the *Questio de aqua et terra*, a Scholastic disputation that discusses geography in terms of the mathematical demonstrations rejected by Petrarch:

For as is shown by mathematical theorems, the regular circumference of a sphere must always rise up with a circular contour from either a plane or a spherical surface, such as a surface of water must be. And that the earth rises up in a form like a half-moon is made clear by the natural scientists who discuss it, by the astronomers who describe the climatic zones, and by the cosmographers who assign the earth’s regions through all its parts. For as is commonly recognized by everyone, the inhabitable earth extends longitudinally from Cadiz, which lies where Hercules set his boundaries, to the mouth of the river Ganges, as Orosius writes.<sup>39</sup>

Clearly, Dante’s disputation, with its frequent citations of “the Philosopher” (Aristotle), falls into the category of the *ludibria* (ludicrous trifles) mocked in Petrarch’s *Collatio laureationis* (*Coronation Oration*).<sup>40</sup> Thus, by embracing Dante’s poetic adaptation of Cicero while rejecting his profession of Aristotelian cosmology, Petrarch hints at the pointed contrast between poetry and science that would resurface in his *Invective contra medicum* and *De ignorantia*.

Now that Franciscus has expressed a desire to change, Augustinus attempts to dissuade him from continuing his literary projects. He tells him to embrace virtue and to “leave Africa.”<sup>41</sup> Franciscus again objects, and the dialogue ends with a sense of unresolved conflict. But Petrarch took Augustine’s advice. He abandoned the *Africa* and, following in the footsteps of the saint, sought out Saint Ambrose in Milan.

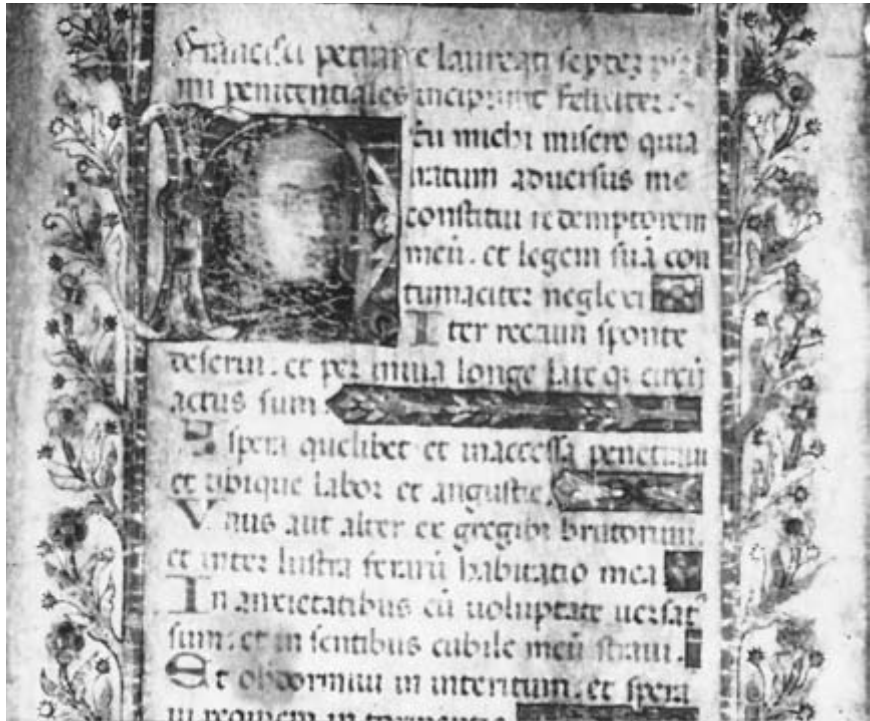


Fig. 7. Petrarch, *Psalmi penitentiales* (title page). Sondersammlung Handschriften und alte Drucke, S. 20, 4°. Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek, Lucerne.



52. Saint Basil the Great was the author of a famous letter to young people in which he exhorted them to study the ancient poets because in teaching virtue, these authors would prepare their souls to receive Christ's evangelical message. The letter, translated in 1400 by Leonardo Bruni, had a wide circulation and became a milestone in the debate on the reform of the curriculum of study.

### *Chapter Twelve*

1. The standard edition is in Petrarch, *Prose*, ed. Guido Martellotti, Pier Giorgio Ricci, Enrico Carrara, Enrico Bianchi (Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1955). Among the most important studies of the work are Francisco Rico, *Vida u obra del Petrarca. I. Lectura del Secretum* (Padua: Antenore, 1974); Hans Baron, *Petrarch's Secretum: Its Making and Its Meaning* (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1985); and Carol Everhart Quillen, *Rereading the Renaissance: Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998). Petrarch, *Secretum*, ed. Enrico Fenzi (Milan: Mursia, 1992), offers an Italian translation and valuable notes.
2. Cf. the allegorical introduction of book 2 of Petrarch, *Rerum memorandarum libri*, ed. Giuseppe Billanovich, Edizione nazionale delle opere di Francesco Petrarca, 5 (Florence: Sansoni Editore, 1943), 43: "Ingredienti michi quidem reverenter velut religioissimi cuiuspian templi fores primogenita sororum occurrit in limine. Ea est Prudentia" [As I entered the portals of a sort of most holy temple, the first-born of the sisters meets me at the threshold. She is Prudence]. On book 1 of the work as a sort of "vestibule" to the following books, cxxiv–cxxv.
3. See the manuscript illumination *Truth, Petrarch, and St. Augustine*, Bruges, Grootseminarie, MS 113/78, fol. 1r (fig. 6, p. 210). On the opening scene, see Marco Ariani, *Petrarca* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1999), 116: "The opening bears some affinity to the introductory cantos of the *Comedy*: Virgil, sent by three ladies, appears to Dante, who is lost in the forest of sin."
4. Petrarch, *Prose*, 28: "A. Quid agis, homuncio? . . . An non te mortalem esse meministi?" [What are you doing, little man? . . . Don't you remember that you are mortal?] The emphasis on memory and writing evokes Augustine's *Soliloquia*. See Francesco Tateo, *Dialogo interiore e polemica ideologica nel "Secretum" del Petrarca* (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Monnier, 1965), 18–19. Petrarch also calls himself *homuncio* in his *Posteritati*: see *Prose*, 2: "Vestro de grege unus fui autem, mortalis homuncio" [I was one of your herd, a mortal little man]. Augustine's reproach seems to echo the opening of Anselm's *Proslogion*: "Eia nunc, homuncio, fuge paululum occupationes [Come now, little

man, briefly leave your worries]: see Bortolo Martinelli, “‘Abice ingentes historiarum sarcinas . . . dimitte Africam’: Il finale del ‘Secretum,’” *Revue des études italiennes* 29 (1983): 58–73, at 66.

5. Cf. Petrarch *Seniles* 14.1 (later printed as *De republica optime administranda*), an epistle written in 1373 to Francesco da Carrara, in which Petrarch refers to the *Somnium Scipionis* as “fictum illud in celi arce colloquium” [that conversation imagined in the citadel of heaven]: see Petrarch, *Opera* (Basileae: Henricus Petri, 1554; Ridgewood, N.J.: Gregg Press, 1965), 1:421. Petrarch also calls his tract *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* a “conversation”: Petrarch, *Invectives*, ed. and trans. David Marsh (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 222–23: “Liber quidem dicitur, colloquium est” [I have called this work a book, but it is really a conversation]. In *Familiares* 4.3.7 (to Robert of Naples, 26 December 1338), Petrarch refers to Cicero’s *De amicitia* as “in dyalogo Lelii, qui de vera amicitia est” [in the dialogue *Laelius*, which is about friendship].
6. See Petrarch *Familiares* 24.5.2 (to Seneca, August 1, 1348 or 1350): “Iuvat vobiscum colloqui, viri illustres, qualium omnis etas penuriam passa est, nostra vero ignorantiam et extremum patitur defectum” [I like to converse with you, illustrious men, who are rare in every age, but unknown and utterly lacking in ours]. Cf. *Familiares* 4.12 (to Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, January 5, 1342), Petrarch writes “Recognosce mecum singula, pater optime, nec de germano colloqui pigeat cum illo qui in fratre tuo decus suum sibi prereptum luget . . .” [Recall each thing with me, holy father, and do not hesitate to converse with someone who mourns the loss of his glory in your brother]. Cf. *De vita solitaria* 1.6, in *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 356: “versari passim et colloqui cum omnibus, qui fuerunt gloriosi viri” [(We must) everywhere dwell and converse with all the glorious men of the past].

Petrarch also uses the verb *alloquor*: see *Familiares* 10.3.3 (to his brother Gherardo, September 25, 1348): “Dum ergo te *alloquor*, ipse res meas ago . . .” [While I speak to you, I deal with my own affairs]; and *Familiares* 24.12.1 (to Homer, October 9, 1360): “Dudum te scripto *alloqui* mens fuerat” [Some time ago I resolved to speak to you in writing].

7. The heading “dyalogus” was introduced in the Basel 1554 edition: see Petrarch, *Les remèdes aux deux fortunes, 1354–1366*, ed. and trans. Christophe Carraud (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2002), 1:22, n. 1. Ariani, *Petrarch*, 357, refers to the humanist’s “model of the man of letters who dialogues with the world solely by virtue of his culture.”
8. Petrarch *Familiares* 10.3.56: “Lege Gregorii dyalogum.”
9. Gregory, *Dialogi*, ed. Umberto Moricca (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1924), 13–16: “Quadam die, nimiis quorundam saecularium tumultibus depraessus,

quibus in suis negotiis plerumque cogimur solvere etiam quod nos certum est non debere, secretum locum petii amico merori, ubi omne quod de mea mihi occupatione displicebat se patenter ostenderit, et cuncta quae infligere dolore consueverant congesta ante oculos licenter venirent. Ibi itaque cum adflictus valde et diu tacitus sederem, dilectissimus filius meus Petrus diaconus adfuit, mihi . . . qui gravi excoqui cordis languore me intuens ait: numquidnam novi aliquid accedit quod plus te solito moeror tenet? . . . Si sola, Petre, referam quae de perfectis probatisque viris unus ego homuncio vel bonis ac fidelibus viris attestantibus agnovi, vel per memetipsum dedici, dies, ut opinor, antequam sermo cessabit.”

10. See Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* 2.1–8 in *Prose*, 406–80, idem, *De vita solitaria*, ed. Marco Noce (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1992), 142–226, and idem, *De vita solitaria: La vie solitaire, 1546–1566*, ed. and trans. Christophe Carraud (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 1999), 176–265. For *Invective contra medicum*, see Petrarch, *Invectives*, 110–11.
11. For some Petrarchan themes in Alberti, see David Marsh, “Petrarch and Alberti,” in *Renaissance Essays in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth*, ed. Sergio Bertelli and Gloria Ramakus (Florence: Giunti-Barbera, 1985), 1:363–75.
12. See *Familiares* 10.3–5, 16.2, and 17.1. *Familiares* 10.4 in fact explicates the allegory of this eclogue. On the affinities of *Parthenias* and the *Secretum*, see Martinelli, “Il finale del ‘Secretum,’” 70–71.
13. See the recent edition with French translation: Petrarch, *L’Afrique, 1538–1574*, preface by Henri Lamarque, intro., trans., and notes by Rebecca Lenoir (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2002), and esp. 27–28 of the introduction, on the poem as “counterpoint” to the *Secretum*.
14. Ovid *Remedia amoris* 581–87: “non tibi secretis (augment secreta furores) / est opus; auxilio turba futura tibi est . . . / nec fuge colloquium nec sit tibi ianua clausa . . .”
15. Petrarch, *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 336, citing Quintilian 10.3.27–30: “Est lucubratio, quotiens ad eam integri ac refecti venimus, optimum secreti genus. Sed silentium et secessus et undique liber animus, ut sunt maxime optanda, ita non semper possunt contingere . . . quare in turba, itinere, conviviis etiam cogitatio ipsa faciat sibi secretum.” This passage may have influenced Lorenzo Valla’s dialogue *De voluptate* (1431), in which Leonardo Bruni observes that seclusion and silence promote discussion: see Lorenzo Valla, *De vero falsoque bono*, ed. Maristella De Panizza Lorch (Bari: Adriatica Editrice, 1971), 143–44: “Secretum et silentium magis disputationibus convenit.”
16. Petrarch, *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 32: “unum illud indignor, quod quenquam vel esse miserum suspicaris invitum.” On this passage, see Rico, *Lectura*, 44–71.

17. On the voluntaristic thesis of book 1, see Petrarch, *Secretum* (ed. Fenzi), 293–95, nn. 9–18.
18. Petrarch, *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 130–32: “A. Duabus adhuc adamantinis dextra levaque premeris cathenis . . . / F. Quenam sunt quas memoras cathene? / A. Amor et gloria.”
19. Augustine *Confessions* 8.5.10: “velle meum tenebat inimicus, et inde mihi catenam fecerat, et constrinxerat me. quippe ex voluntate perversa facta est libido, et dum servitur libidini, facta est consuetudo, et dum consuetudini non resistitur, facta est necessitas. quibus quasi ansulis sibimet innexis— unde catenam appellavi—tenebat obstrictum dura servitus. voluntas autem nova, quae mihi coeperat, ut te gratis colerem, fruique te vellem, deus, sola certa iucunditas, nondum erat idonea ad superandum priorem vetustate roboratam. ita duae voluntates meas, una vetus, alia nova, illa carnalis, illa spiritualis, confligebant inter se, atque discordando dissipabant animam meam” Cf. also *Confessions* 6.12. 21: “trahebam catenam meam solvi timens” [I dragged my chain, fearing to be released].
20. Rico, *Lectura*, 259: “el protagonista es ahora fundamentalmente el Francesco escritor” [the protagonist is now essentially Franciscus as writer].
21. For the text of Petrarch’s coronation speech, see Carlo Godi, “La ‘Collatio Laureationis’ del Petrarca,” *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 13 (1970): 1–27; for its ambitious program, see Stefano Gensini, “‘Poeta et historicus’: L’episodio della laurea nella carriera e nella prospettiva culturale di Francesco Petrarca,” *La Cultura* 18 (1980): 166–94.
22. By the same token, in book 9 of the *Africa* Ennius is crowned with laurel, even though he has not yet written his epic of Roman history. Cf. Aldo S. Bernardo, *Petrarch, Scipio, and the “Africa”: The Birth of Humanism’s Dream* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), 48: “the crowning of Ennius appears strange. He seems, indeed, to be rewarded from something he is yet to do, namely, a poem honoring Scipio.” In *Bucolicum carmen* 3, the shepherd Stupeus (Petrarch) is likewise awarded a laurel wreath.
23. Cf. the observation of Augustinus in *Prose* 210: “Tu quoque nunc etate florida superbus alios calcas, mox ipse calcaberis” [Now in the prime of life, you haughtily tread on others, but soon you yourself will be trodden underfoot]; and the opening dialogue of *De remediis utriusque fortune* 1.1, “De etate florida et spe vite longioris” [On the prime of life and hope for long life], in Petrarch, *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 606–13, and in Petrarch, *De remediis utriusque fortune* (ed. Carraud), 1:22–27.
24. Petrarch’s expressions “solis ardores” and “solis ardoribus” (*Prose*, 194, 200) recall a Sallustian phrase describing Africa—“loca exusta solis ardoribus”

- [regions burned by the sun's hot rays], *Bellum Iurgurthinum* 19.6—which Jerome had echoed in his *Epistle* 22.7 (to Eustochium, on virginity) and which Petrarch cites in book 2 of his *De vita solitaria* (ed. Noce), 180, 375, n. 3; and Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* (ed. Carraud), 218, and 418, n. 486.
25. Petrarch, *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 194: “A. Quid tamen tam grande facturum esse te iudicas? / F. Preclarum nempe rarumque opus et egregium. / A. . . . hoc ipsum preclarum neque late patet, neque in longum porrigitur, locorumque ac temporum angustiis coartatur.” Petrarch also refers to space and time in his letter “To Posterity” (2): “dubium sit an exiguum et obscurum longe nomen seu locorum seu temporum perventurum sit” [it is doubtful whether my paltry and obscure name can travel far in space or time].
  26. Ibid.: “Intelligo istam veterem et tritam iam inter philosophos fabellam: terram omnem puncti unius exigui instar esse, annum unum infinitis annorum milibus constare; famam vero hominum nec punctum implere nec annum. . . . Hec enim relatu magis speciosa quam efficacia sum expertus.” All the same, Petrarch was not averse to using geographical descriptions in his Latin poetry: cf. *Africa* 6.839–84 (the Tuscan coast), and *Africa* 9.189–99 (Homer's vivid description of Greece).
  27. For a detailed description of Petrarch's sources, see Rico, *Lectura*, 391 n. 486.
  28. On Macrobius and Petrarch's *Africa*, see Simone Marchesi, “The *Africa*: Petrarch's Philological Epic,” in this volume, esp. n. 24.
  29. See Petrarch, *De remediis utriusque fortune*, 1:92, 1:96, and 2:68; Latin text with French translation in Petrarch, *De remediis utriusque fortune* (ed. Carraud), 396, 428, and 834; English translation in *Petrarch's Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul*, trans. Conrad H. Rawski (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1991), 1:245, 1: 264, and 3:157.
  30. Augustine *City of God* 16.9 on the existence of the antipodes. On this passage, see Rico, *Lectura*, 401–3; and Petrarch, *Secretum* (ed. Fenzi), 404–6, n. 371.
  31. Petrarch, *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 200: “Ea ne est fabula, queso, que geometricis demonstrationibus terre totius designat angustias?”
  32. Cicero *De natura deorum* 2.204–14.
  33. Petrarch *Africa* 2.361–63: “angustis arctatus finibus orbis / insula parva situ est, curvis quam flexibus ambit / Oceanus.” Cf. also *Africa* 2.470–71: “annorum, nate, locorumque / estis in angusto positi.” Both passages are quoted in Rico, *Lectura*, 392 n. 486.
  34. Petrarch, *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 204: “A. Habes de gloria iudicium meum . . . nisi forte nunc etiam fabulosa tibi hec omnia videntur. / F. Minime quidem, neque michi more fabularum affecerunt animum, quin imo veteris abiciendi novum desiderium iniecerunt.”

35. See J. B. Harley and David Woodward, *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 144–46.
36. Cf. Petrarch, *Secretum* (ed. Fenzi), 289–90, nn. 17, 21.
37. Dante, *Paradiso* 22.133–35: “Col viso ritornai per tutte quante / le sette spere, e vidi questo globo / tal, ch’io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante.” Cf. Chaucer *Troilus and Criseyde* 5.1814–22, in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 479: “And down from thennes faste he gan avyse / This litel spot of erthe, that with the se / Embraced is, and fully gan despise / This wrecched world and held al vanite / To respect of the pleyn felicite / That is in hevene above; and at the laste, / Ther he was slayn, his loking down he caste, / And in himself he lough right at the wo / Of them that wepten for his deth so faste.”
38. See Dante *Convivio* 3.5 in *Le opere di Dante*, Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana, ed. M. Barbi et al., 2nd ed. (Florence: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 203–6.
39. Dante, *Questio de aqua et terra*, 52–54 in *Le opere di Dante*, 438: “Nam, ut demonstratum est in theorematibus mathematicis, necesse est circumferentiam regularem spere a superficie plana sive spherica, qualem oportet esse superficiem aque, emergere semper cum horizonte circulari. Et quod terra emergens habeat figuram qualis est semilunii, patet et per naturales de ipsa tractantes, et per astrologos climata describentes, et per cosmographos regiones terre per omnes plagas ponentes. Nam, ut comuniter ab omnibus habetur, hec habitabilis extenditur per lineam longitudinis a Gadibus, que supra terminos ab Hercule positos ponitur, usque ad hostia fluminis Ganges, ut scribit Orosius.”
40. Cf. *Collatio* 2.47–49, in Carlo Godi, La “Collatio Laureationis” del Petrarca,” *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 13 (1970): 15: “Et ex hoc nimirum fonte procedunt illa ludibria usque ad extremum vite tempus inutiliter et ineffaciter in hac facultate laborantium, qualia non nulla legimus in libris de scolastica disciplina” [And indeed this is the source of those ludicrous trifles, written by men who toil vainly and ineffectually all their lives in such fields, that we sometimes find in reading books of Scholastic teaching].
41. Petrarch, *Prose* (ed. Martellotti et al.), 206: “F. Labores ne meos interruptos deseram? / A. Abice ingentes historiarum sarcinas . . . Dimitte Africam.”

### *Chapter Thirteen*

1. There were actually three versions of the Psalter translated, or at least adapted, by Jerome. The one used in the liturgy, called the Roman Psalter, was, like most biblical texts in medieval liturgies, an ancient translation from