II. THE AUTHORITY OF VISUAL PARATEXTS

THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT AS READER'S GUIDANCE: THE CASE OF FRANCIS PETRARCH

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The portrait seems to convey one of the most important paradigms of Renaissance culture. This goes for the pictorial genre as a whole, as well as for singular portraits of Renaissance individuals. The portraits of Leon Battista Alberti, the condottiere Bartolomeo Colleoni, Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, Federico da Montefeltro and others seem to offer us immediate access to the very core of Renaissance culture, which ever since Burckhardt's *Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* has been connected with the 'discovery of the individual' and the cult of personality.[1] While Burckhardt himself modestly speaks of 'ein Versuch', it is fascinating to see that for later scholars, his construction of the 'Renaissance individual' represents something like a scholarly dogma with a high degree of certainty. For example, the *Lexikon der Renaissance* (2000) explains the Renaissance portrait essentially by reference to the notion of individuality ('Individualität'): 'Die Darstellung der menschlichen Individualität, der *Einmaligkeit* und *Einzigartigkeit von Personen* aus der Welt der Politik und der Religion, der Kunst und der Gelehrsamkeit ist ein mit der Renaissance *untrennbar* verbundener Vorgang […]. *Das Interesse wendet sich energisch dem einzelnen zu*'.[2] In artistic, literary and historical terms, the uniqueness of the Renaissance seems to be closely related to the interest of Renaissance people in the 'individual'. 'Individualism' is a quality of attitude or behaviour attributed to persons living during the Renaissance. It denotes an increasing self-awareness and pursuit of self-interest in presumed contrast to a prior prevalence of various sorts of group-consciousness.[3] Scholars who subscribe to the *concetto* of Renaissance individuality

[1] Burckhardt Jacob, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien. Ein Versuch*, durchgesehen von W. Goetz (urspr. 1860; 10. Aufl. Stuttgart: 1976), section II "Entwicklung des Individuums" 121–157, esp. "Die Vollendung der Persönlichkeit" 128ff.

[2] Münkler H. – Münkler M., *Lexikon der Renaissance* (Munich: 2000) 319 (italics mine).

[3] Grendler P.F. et alii (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (New York: 1999) vol. III, 259 (lemma "Individualism").

are inclined to think that this remarkable phenomenon could have happened only during a comparatively short historical period – the Renaissance – a true highlight of civilisation, in marked difference to the culture of the Middle Ages.[4] In my paper, I want to discuss a category of portraits that – although it is rooted in a long medieval tradition[5] – seems to be closely related to the notion of 'Renaissance individuality': the author's portrait. For my case-study, I have chosen to focus on a writer who was always connected with the cult of Renaissance individualism,[6] a writer who was even hailed as 'the first modern man':[7] Francis Petrarch. Petrarch deserves special attention not only because he is one of the icons of 'Renaissance individualism', but also

[4] Münkler – Münkler, *Lexikon der Renaissance* 319: 'Aber als Individuum vermag sich der Dargestellte nur zu behaupten, wenn und solange er gegenüber den Zeichen seines Berufes, seines Standes und seiner Funktion in seiner Besonderheit und Einmaligkeit die Oberhand behält. *Das ist aber nur für eine begrenzte Zeit der Fall gewesen*'; 322: 'Das Porträt als Darstellung von Individualität hat nicht zu den Zielen und Absichten der mittelalterlichen Kunst gehört […]. Dagegen wird im 15. Jahrhundert in der europäischen Kunst der Weg zum *Individualporträt* eingeschlagen […]' (italics mine).

[5] Especially useful are Meier-Staubach Ch., "Ecce autor. Beiträge zur Ikonographie literarischer Urheberschaft im Mittelalter", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 34 (2000) 338–392, Wenzel H., "Autorbilder. Zur Ausdifferenzierung von Autorenfunktionen in mittelalterlichen Miniaturen", in Andersen E. – Haustein J. – Simon A. – Strohschneider P. (eds.), *Autor und Autorschaft im Mittelalter* (Meissen: 1995) 1–28, Peters U., "Werkauftrag und Buchübergabe. Textentstehungsgeschichten in Autorbildern volkssprachiger Handschriften des 12. bis 15. Jahrhunderts", in: Kapfhammer G. – Löhr W.-D. – Nitsche B., *Autorbilder. Zur Medialität literarischer Kommunikation in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Münster: 2007) (Rhema 2) 25–62; and Peters U., "Autorbilder in volkssprachigen Handschriften des Mittelalters. Eine Problemskizze", *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 119 (2000) 321–368; cf. Also Prochno J., *Das Schreiber- und Dedikationsbild in der deutschen Buchmalerei bis zum Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: 1929); Meier Ch., "Illustration und Textcorpus. Zu kommunikations- und ordnungsfunktionalen Aspekten der Bilder in den mittelalterlichen Enzyklopädiehandschriften", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 31 (1997) 1–31. Furthermore, there is a rich variety of studies on certain literary genres of medieval literature and of individual medieval authors. For a detailed bibliography on these aspects cf. Kapfhammer G. – Löhr W.D. – Nitsche B., "Einleitung", in idem, *Autorbilder* 9–24.

[6] Grendler et alii (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, vol. III, 260, lemma "Individualism" (Ch. Trinkaus): 'The Renaissance breakthrough toward individualism came in the third quarter of the fourteenth century with Petrarch's emphatic concern with the course of life of individuals'. Cf. Trinkaus Ch., *The poet as Philosopher: Petrarch and the Formation of Renaissance Consciousness* (New Haven, Conn.: 1979).

[7] Already Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance* 277: '[…] Petrarca, einer der frühesten völlig modernen Menschen' (there, with respect to his aesthetic appreciation of landscape). This has become a dogma, endlessly repeated in encyclopaedias, and occurring even in book titles from 1898 on. Cf. Robinson J.H. (ed.), *Francis Petrarch. The First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters* (London: 1898; New York: 1909).

because we possess a large number of author's portraits of the man; indeed, he was one of the most frequently depicted persons of early modern culture.

In my contribution, however, I want to look at Petrarch's author's portraits from a different angle. I will not focus here on the portraits' physical likeness or authentic individual expression, but in the first place regard them as *texts*, or, more precisely, as paratexts, elements which are closely connected, if not intertwined with the main text of literary and scholarly works. I think that in the period 1350–1650, the texts that precede and surround the main text are of crucial importance for understanding and interpreting literary works and that, therefore, they require careful analysis. This goes, of course, not only for the author's portrait but for a broad spectrum of texts: title inscriptions, tables of contents, letters of dedication, prefaces, indices, poems in praise of the author, testimonia, biographies, accompanying letters of various people and so on.[8] I want to query what the paratext of an author's portrait tells us about the usage of the text it is attached to. In doing so, I am following more recent attempts to interpret authors' portraits by focusing on the functions of a text's illustrations, on the part they play in the process of receiving and transmitting knowledge and on their symbolic meaning.[9] As will soon become evident, I come to conclusions different from those to be found in important studies

[8] Currently, I am preparing a monograph on *Die Stiftung von Autorschaft in der neulateinischen Literatur (ca. 1350–ca. 1650). Zur autorisierenden und wissensvermittelnden Funktion von Widmungen, Vorworttexten, Autorbildern und anderen paratextuellen Figurationen*, which originated in the international interdisciplinary research group *Discourses of Self-Reflexion and Meditation in Literature and the Arts, 1300–1600*, that I coordinated in 2008–2009 at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (*NIAS*). Cf. Enenkel K. – Melion W. (eds.), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self. Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture* (Leiden – Boston: 2011) (Intersections. Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 17); Enenkel K., "Meditative Frames as Reader's Guidance in Neo-Latin Texts", in ibidem 27–44.

[9] Cf., inter alia, the studies quoted in n. 5. I am also indebted to Trapp J.B., "The Iconography of Petrarch in the Age of Humanism", in idem, *Studies on Petrarch and his Influence* (London: 2003) 1–117, although less from a methodological point of view. Unfortunately, I could not use the unpublished dissertation of Löhr W.D., *Lesezeichen. Francesco Petrarca und das Dichterbild bis zum Beginn der Renaissance* (Ph.D. Berlin: 2003). Trapp (2003) still organizes his discussion of the 'iconography of Petrarch' along the lines of the well known "authenticity discourse"; cf. Trapp, "Iconography of Petrarch" 5 (ff.) 'the authentic type' [of Petrarch's portrait].

on Petrarch's portraits, by De Nolhac, Mardersteig, and Trapp, among others.[10]

I would like to start with two author's portraits of Petrarch which puzzled me for various reasons. The first, generally considered to be "the" authentic portrait of Petrarch, constitutes the single most famous example of the discourse of authenticity that has to a large extent dominated the discussion of Petrarch's portraits: it is the portrait in the Paris manuscript, Bibliothèque Nationale, cod. Lat. 6069 F, containing the treatise *De viris illustribus* [Fig. 1]. The portrait is generally ascribed to the North Italian artist Altichiero who painted two other portraits of Petrarch in the Oratorio di San Giorgio, next to the Basilica di Santo in Padua. According to Giovanni Mardersteig, who wrote a study on Petrarch's portraits[11], this drawing is 'without any doubt' the most authentic portrait of Petrarch: 'è indubbiamente *la più* […] *fedele* raffigurazione del poeta'.[12] Because of the high value he attaches to it as a physical likeness, he avers that the portrait must have been made by a master 'con occhio acuto', 'with a sharp eye', and, therefore, he concurs that it must be by Altichiero. Probably for the same reasons, J.B. Trapp, author of the "Iconography of Petrarch in the Age of Humanism", considers the attribution to Altichiero convincing.[13] Although this attribution is a *communis opinion* in the scholarly literature, I am afraid that it remains almost impossible to prove that this artist was the draughtsman.[14] Mardersteig, in ascribing to the artist 'a sharp eye', seems remarkably enough to infer that the

[10] de Nolhac P., "L'iconographie de Pétrarque", in idem, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme* (1892; nouvelle edition, Paris: 1909) vol. II 245–257; Mardersteig G., "I ritratti del Petrarca e die suoi amici di Padova", *Italia medioevale ed umanistica* 17 (1974) 251–280; Trapp, "Iconography of Petrarch".

[11] Mardersteig, "I ritratti del Petrarca"; for Altichiero cf. Bobisut D. – Gumiero Salomoni L., *Altichiero da Zevio* (Padua: 2002); Plant M., "Portraits and Politics in Late Trecento Padua: Altichiero's Frescoes in the S. Felice Chapel, S. Antonio", *Art Bulletin* 63, 3 (1981); Biaggio L. – Colalucci G. – Bortoletti D., *Altichiero da Zevio nell'Oratorio di San Giorgio. Il restauro degli affreschi* (Padua – Rome: 1999); D'Arcais F., "La decorazione della Capella di San Giacomo", and idem, "La decorazione della Capella di San Giorgio", in *Le pitture del Santo a Padova* (Vicenza: 1984) 15–62; Schubring P., *Altichiero und seine Schule* (Leipzig: 1898); Pettenella P., *Altichiero e la pittura Veronese de trecento* (Verona: 1961); and, of course, most complete, Mellini G.L., *Altichiero e Jacopo Avanzi* (Milano: 1965).

[12] Ibidem 263.

[13] Trapp, "The Iconography of Petrarch" 5.

[14] For example, the Altichiero scholar Mellini has embraced it; cf. Mellini, *Altichiero*, Fig. 285.

Fig. 1. Portrait of Petrarch. Drawing. Manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, cod. Lat. 6069 F (containing the treatise *De viris illustribus*), fol. Av.

portrait was drawn from life. Trapp, who looked at Petrarch's portraits in terms of iconography, tried to single out certain types: he characterised the presumed Altichiero-portrait as the father of what he calls the 'authentic type'.[15] In truth, the Paris portrait has a long scholarly history within the discourse of authenticity. Pierre de Nolhac had already attributed to it the highest authenticity and an 'exceptional authority'.[16] Its authenticity, he claims, is guaranteed by that fact that it was Petrarch's close friend and *exécuteur testamentaire* Lombardo della Seta who ordered the Paris manuscript, and thus, its status is grounded in the intimate relationship between the portrayed and his friend.[17] This is the reason why – according to De Nolhac – one can be sure that the portrait is trustworthy and realistic, and one may even suppose that it was *drawn from life*. If the artist did not draw the portrait from life, De Nolhac argues, he must at least have known some very realistic and recent portraits of the mature Petrarch.[18] Thus, if not the portrait itself, then at least its ancestor must have been painted from life. In a telling detail, Pierre de Nolhac underlines the authenticity of the portrait by linking it to Petrarch's verbal self-portrait in his *Epistola Posteritati*,[19] in which the poet characterizes himself as having 'a vivid complexion somewhere between light and dark, with lively eyes, and for a long time very keen vision, which unexpectedly abandoned me after the sixtieth year […]'.[20] De Nolhac's link with this passage, however, is not very convincing. First of all, one keep in mind that Petrarch's "self-portrait" is not purely descriptive, but much more a rhetorical reaction to Boccaccio's ideal portrait in his hagiographical

[15] Trapp's 'authentic type', however, is somewhat problematic, since he lists under this header very different portraits from different genres, including mural paintings.

[16] de Nolhac, "L'iconographie de Pétrarque" 250: 'Le portrait que je croix le plus sérieux, et d'une indiscutable authenticité, a été […] exécuté à Padoue et dans des conditions qui lui donne, semble-t-il, une autorité exceptionelle'.

[17] Ibidem 253: 'Ce portrait offer, par sa provenance meme, des garanties assez rares pour les monuments de l'ancienne iconographie'.

[18] Ibidem 254: 'Si le peintre ná pas travaillé d'apres nature, il a connu, du moins, parmi les portraits de la maturité du poète, celui quón jugeait le plus ressamblant et il l'a fidèlement reproduit'.

[19] Ibidem.

[20] *Epistola posteritati* 4. See my edition in see Enenkel K. – de Jong-Crane B. – Liebregts P. (eds.), *Modelling the Individual. Biography and Portrait in the Renaissance. With a Critical Edition of Petrarch's Letter to Posterity* (Amsterdam – Atlanta: 1998) 258–259: 'colore vivido inter candidum et subnigrum, vivacibus oculis et visu per longum tempus acerrimo, qui preter spem supra sexagesimum annum me destituit'.

Life of Petrarch.[21] In the autobiographical letter, Petrarch in fact puts glasses on his nose because his sharp eyes have dulled.[22] As a whole, his literary "self-portrait" resembles more an ironical commentary than a "trustworthy" description. Furthermore, the Paris portrait does not after all render the complexion of Petrarch's skin. It is interesting to see that in other scholarly comments as well, the Paris portrait is closely linked with Petrarch's verbal "self-portrait" or is treated as if it were a true *self-portrait* of the poet who is known to have made little drawings.[23] That authenticity discourse implicitly evaluates self-portraits as the most authentic portraits, is especially remarkable in the case of a scholar who was himself by no means a skilful painter. By way of comparison, one may look at Erasmus's self-portrait in his scholia to the Letters of Saint Jerome (1515) [Fig. 2].[24] How authentically does a portrait like this, though certainly *manu ipsius*, render the writer's face? The Paris drawing, of course, cannot possibly be a self-portrait, since the manuscript was written either in December of 1378 or January 1379, more than four years after the death of the poet, and nor for the same reasons can it have been drawn from life.

The Paris drawing – although the *communis opinio* considers it the most authentic portrait – represents a remarkable if not strange portrait type. First of all, it does not correspond to other authors' portraits, which are generally small paintings incorporated into initials, depicting an author in the process of writing (e.g., at a desk), reading from his work, or presenting his book to a dedicatee (mostly a prince

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[21] For this aspect, see Enenkel K., "Gesichter wie Kleider. Die Manipulation des Äusseren durch Intertextualität", in idem, *Die Erfindung des Menschen. Die Autobiographik des frühneuzeitlichen Humanismus von Petrarca bis Lipsius* (Berlin – New York: 2008) 102–105, and idem, "Modelling the Humanist: Petrarch's *Letter to Posterity* and Boccaccio's Biography of the Poet Laureate", in: Enenkel – de Jong-Crane – Liebregts (eds.), *Modelling the Individual* (11–49) esp. 37–43.

[22] The passage continues as follows: 'so that, to my disgust, I had to resort to glasses' ('ut indignanti michi ad ocularium confugiendum esset auxilium'), ed. Enenkel, ibidem.

[23] For example, Petrarch's sketch of the Vaucluse in his Pliny, manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 6802, fol. 143v, with the autograph "caption": 'Transalpina solitudo mea iocundissima'. Cf. Contini G., "Petrarca e le arti figurative", in Bernardo A.S. (ed.), *Petrarch, Citizen of the World* (Washington: 1974) 122 and 124–129; Chiovenda, "Die Zeichnungen Petrarcas", *Archivum Romanicum* 17 (1933) 1–61; Masséna V. Prince d'Essling – Müntz E., *Pétrarque: ses etudes d'arts, son influence sur les artistes, ses portraits et ceux de Laure. L'illustration des ses écrits* (Paris: 1902).

[24] *Scholia Erasmi in D. Hieronymi epistolas*, Manuscript Basel, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, HS. A.IX.56, fol. 226r.

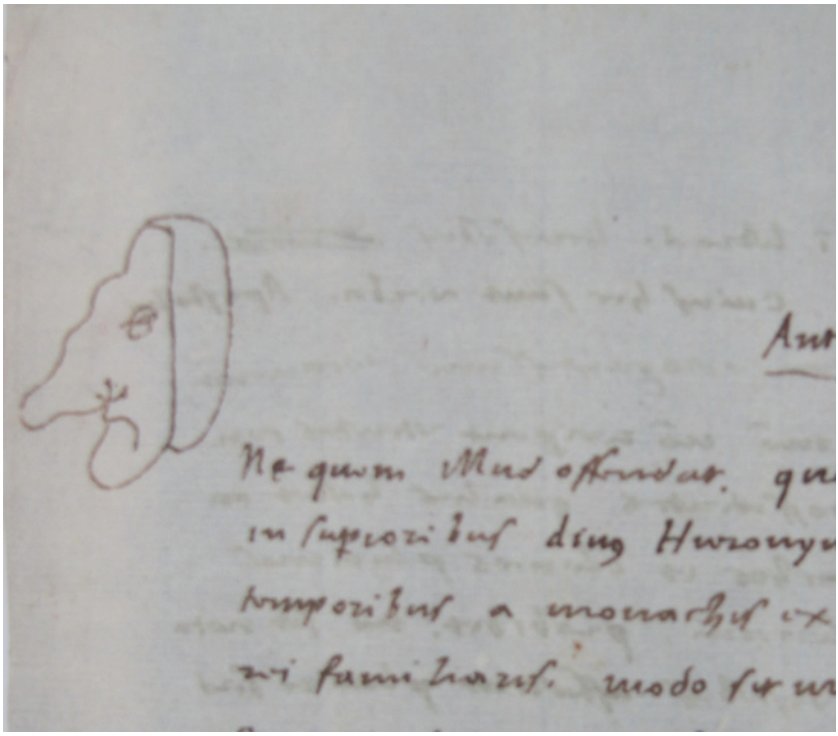

Fig. 2. Erasmus, 'Self-portrait', from: *Scholia Erasmi in D. Hieronymi epistolas*, Manuscript Basel, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, HS. A.IX.56, fol. 226r.

or a high cleric), or portrays the author as teacher.[25] The Paris portrait is obviously about something else: it does not give the impression of vividness and liveliness, as claimed by various scholars, but instead signals remoteness. Moreover, the author seems to resemble a statue, elevated above quotidian life. This disturbing effect is even reinforced by the realistic impression which the artist obviously wanted to attain. How might one explain this contradictory mixture of remoteness and realism? How does it combine with the intended function of the written word? We will come back to this later on.

My second example is the introductory miniature in a Florentine manuscript containing Petrarch's *Canzoniere* [Fig. 3], dating from ca. 1440. As Trapp interpreted it, the painting shows Petrarch receiving his admirers 'en plein air' in his favourite place for writing, the famous valley of the Vaucluse near Avignon, where the poet owned a

[25] Cf. Meier, "Ecce autor" 347–351 ("Der Autor als Schreiber seines Werkes"); 353–355 ("Der Autor mit seinem Buch oder seinen Lehrinhalten"); 372–378 ("Die Dedikation des Werkes"); 383–385 ("Der Autor als Lehrer").

Fig. 3. Author's portrait of Petrarch (ca. 1440). Illumination. Manuscript Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, MS. Strozzi 172, fol. 1r.

small country house.[26] The painting, although it displays the symbolic *cathedra*,[27] seems to bear elements characteristic of a kind of genre scene. It is easy to imagine on this basis how the poet might have received visitors, and if one reads his Latin letters one does indeed find a couple of descriptions of such visits. Also, it seems justified to identify the landscape with the Vaucluse because of the river gushing forth from the mountain scenery. This must refer to the Fontaine de Vaucluse, frequently mentioned by Petrarch in his letters and elsewhere, which was very close to the spot where the poet's house was situated.

However, this seemingly realistic author's portrait comprises a couple of disturbing features. First of all, the young woman at the head of the visitors is Laura, Petrarch's beloved lady, unmistakably characterised by the twig of laurels. Laura, a married woman, had never actually visited Petrarch in the Vaucluse. Second, the poet 'receives' his visitors on a strange throne adorned with architectonic details typical of the Trecento. It is of course hardly plausible that Petrarch would have considered it appropriate to receive his guests like this. Third, on the right side of his throne, lies Petrarch's cat. This does not fit with the Vaucluse, where Petrarch kept a large hunting dog, a present from his Maecenas, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna – but no cat. The cat may point to Petrarch's stay in Padua, more precisely to his country house in Arquà, where the cat loved to sit in his study. After Petrarch's death, the cat was embalmed and functioned – although it looked rather miserable after losing all its hair – as a kind of relic for the intellectuals who made a pilgrimage to the poet's house in the Eugenean hills. In Tomasini's guide, the *Petrarcha redivus*, for example, the cat is described as if it were a monument, on a marble block carved with antique Roman capitals: PETRARCHAE MVRILEGA [Fig. 4].[28] These several features cause me to wonder whether we should interpret this author's portrait in a different manner.

Let us then take a closer look at this author's portrait. I think that it has little to do with a kind of genre scene but is instead meant to

[26] Trapp, "The Iconography of Petrarch" 11.

[27] Ibidem.

[28] Iacobus Philippus Tomasinus, *Petracha Redivivus* […] (Padua, Paolo Frambotta: 1640) 130 (illustration); 125: 'In istac Francisci Petrarchae Domo verenda supersunt vetustate magna cura a fundi hero religiose conservata ex illius suburbana supellectili, […] et supra ostium cubiculi apud Mausoleum in loculamento est FELIS integer servata, quam Poeta in deliciis habuit'.

Fig. 4. Petrarch's cat. From: Iacobus Philippus Tomasinus, *Petracha Redivivus* […] (Padua, Paolo Frambotta: 1640) 130. Private collection. © Photo: Karl Enenkel.

function primarily as a symbolic representation that offers guidance to the reader. More precisely, the image sets out the relationship between the author and his readers. The group of people to the right (8 persons plus 1) represents the intended readership of the book that the author holds in his left hand. He presents his book to his audience with a demonstrative gesture expressive of authority. The gesture seems to tell the audience: this is an important book. If you use it in an appropriate manner, you will benefit from it. This message is conveyed to the audience even more clearly by the kind of throne on which the author sits. It represents a medieval *cathedra*, the chair on which mediaeval university professors sat when teaching. The chair represents the author as an authority of learning and a teacher of wisdom.

In order to understand this discourse, it is illustrative to compare Petrarch's image with those of the mediaeval university professor and teacher of wisdom par excellence, Thomas Aquinas.[29] For example in the beautiful fresco by Andrea Bonaiuto in the Dominican Chiostro Verde (Spagnoli Chapel) of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, painted in 1365–1367, Thomas is depicted as the *doctor egregius* sitting on a cathedra and holding a book forth to his audience [Fig. 5].[30] The image presents him as a teacher of wisdom and virtue. His works are seen to contain the four *virtutes cardinales*, among other virtues, as the personifications above indicate. The text of the open book – a few lines from the *Book of Wisdom* – authorises Thomas as a teacher: 'I asked for sense, and it was given to me. I called for the spirit of wisdom, and it was given to me, and I explained it to the kingdoms and the powerful […]'.[31] Thomas teaches us wisdom, while at his feet

[29] For portraits of Thomas Aquinas, cf. Winckel A.W. van, *S. Thomas van Aquino. Bijdragen over zijn tijd, zijn leer en zijn verheerlijking door de kunst* (Hilversum: 1927).

[30] For Andrea Bonaiuto's frescoes cf., among others, Gardner J., "Andrea di Bonaiuto and the Chapterhouse Frescoes in S. Maria Novella", *Art History* 2 (1979) 107–138; idem, *Patrons, Painters and Saints* (London: 1993); Offner R. – Steinweg K., *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting* IV, 6 (Locust Valley, N.J.: 1979); Tripps J., *Tendencies of Gothic in Florence. Andrea Bonaiuti* (Florence: 1996); Polzer, J., "Andrea di Bonaiuto's 'Via Veritatis' and Dominican Thought in Late Medieval Italy", *Art Bulletin* 77, 2 (1995) 262–289; Gregori M. (ed.), *Mural Painting in Italy. The Late 13th to the Early 15th Centuries* (Turino: 1995) 58–59; Lunardi R., *Arte e storia in Santa Maria Novella* (Florence: 1983).

[31] *Sap.* VIII, 7: 'Optavi et datus est mihi sensus et invocavi et venit in me spiritus SAPIENTIAE et praeposui illam regnis et sedibus'. This was an important text, which was indissolubly connected with Thomas Aquinas's image. These were the first words of the scriptural lectio read on the feast of Saint Thomas.

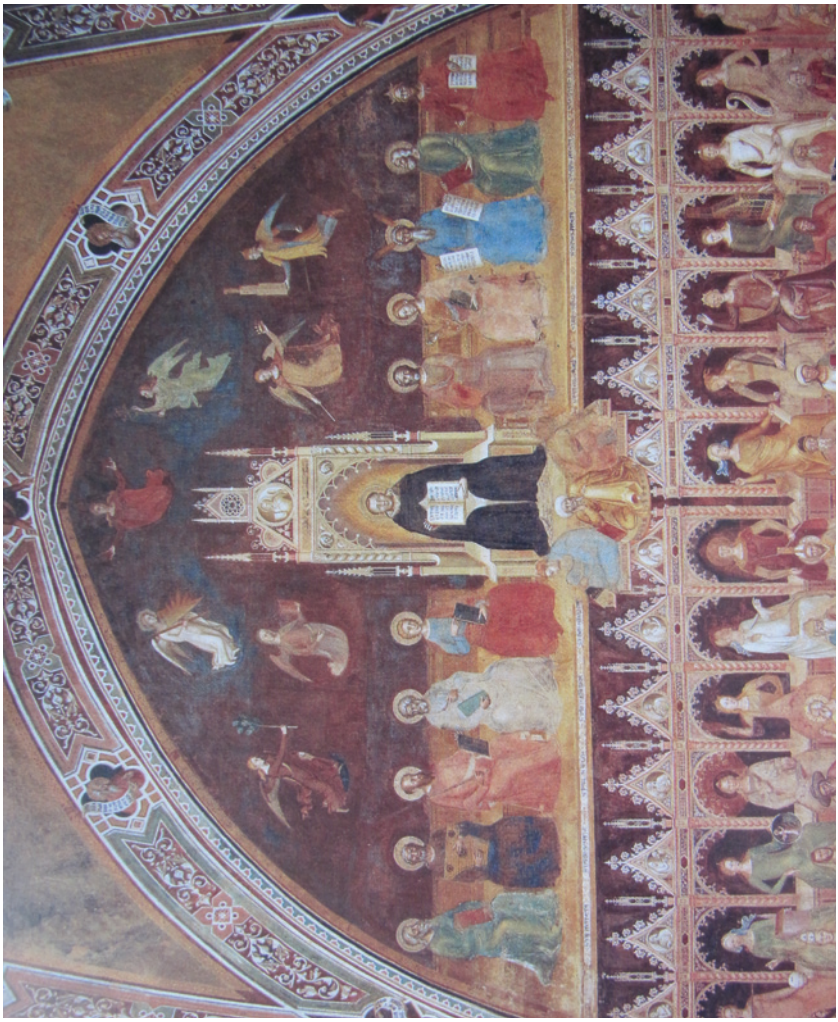

Fig. 5. [Col. pl. II] Andrea Bonaiuto, Thomas Aquinas as doctor egregious (painted in 1365–1367). Fresco in the Chiostro Verde (Spagnoli Chapel) of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.

are located the teachers of heresy he had conquered: Arius, Averroes and Sabellius. The *inventio* of the fresco probably goes back to the prior of the Dominican monastery of S. Maria Novella, Fra Zanobi de' Guasconi, who was professor of theology at the University of Florence until his death in 1366. The iconography of Thomas as a teacher of truth and wisdom was widespread, and it was also used in Aquinas' writings to portray the author, at least until the beginning of the sixteenth century. The title-page illustration that accompanies Thomas' commentaries on Aristotle, the *Commentaria in libros perihermeneias et posteriorum Aristotilis et eiusdem fallaciarum opus*, an incunabula printed in Venice by Oddone Luna in 1496, may serve as an example [Fig. 6]. The author Aquinas is seated on a cathedra and teaches an audience consisting of two times eight pupils, both lay and clerical. Under Aquinas's cathedra, we again find Averroes, Aristotle's heretical interpreter. I am inclined to interpret the image as a source of guidance for the reader: the book on the lectern of the *cathedra* of course represents the author's *Commentaria*. The intended reader is supposed to discern in Aquinas' exegetical commentary the authoritative and truthful interpretation of Aristotle, and to accept, as scholastic pupils would have done, the '*sententia magistri*' as decisive.

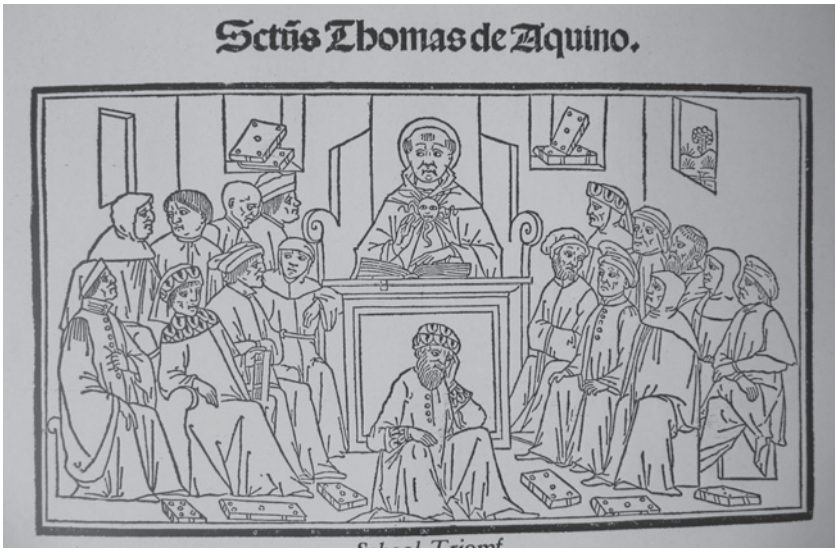

Fig. 6. Author's portrait of Thomas Aquinas. Title-page to Thomas Aquinas, *Commentaria in libros perihermeneias et posteriorum Aristotilis et eiusdem fallaciarum opus* (Venice, Oddone Luna: 1496).

There are other author's portraits of Petrarch that display features similar to those in the iconography of Aquinas. An important example is a Milanese manuscript of ca. 1400, that includes Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortune*.[32] The author's portrait at the beginning of the work [Fig. 7] resembles that of Thomas by Andrea Bonaiuto. Petrarch sits on a cathedra, thus identifying himself as an authoritative teacher of wisdom. With his left hand, he presents an open book to the reader: this is his work *De remediis*. To his left and right, the image depicts Petrarch's audience: two times five persons, clerics and laymen, both men and women. To the left, the first three persons are clerics: the pope, a nun and a monk; the fourth is a minstrel, the fifth a jester with a monkey and birds. To the right, the audience consists exclusively of lay people: a king, a knight, a nobleman, a noble lady and a shepherd. The image functions as a very distinctive guide to the reader, who is invited to receive the work as an authoritative source of Christian moral philosophy. The author is represented as a cleric wearing the dark robe of a canon, and also as a scholastic teacher: as such, he will put in a certain order the different opinions pertaining to a philosophical topic, and he will make a final decision regarding which of these contains the authoritative truth.

This is an especially interesting case of guidance to reader, given the structure of *De remediis*: the work is organised as an inner dialogue between four emotions and the *ratio*. Technically speaking, the author Petrarch does not himself claim to have a voice in the work, except of course in the prologue. Modern interpretations of dialogues insist that it would be a "biographic fallacy" to identify the author's opinions with one (or more) of the dialogue's participants, but remarkably enough, the author's portrait guides the reader to reach precisely this conclusion: it invites the reader firstly to construe Petrarch's *De remediis* as a dialogue between a *teacher* and a *pupil*, and secondly to identify one of the dialogue's participants – Ratio – with Petrarch. The reader should not interpret Ratio's words as one particular opinion or option, but as the authoritative truth. The guidance on offer is also remarkable with respect to the content of the work: the arguments Ratio (or Petrarch) unfolds are largely taken from antique Stoic

[32] Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS AD XIII 30. Trapp, *Studies on Petrarch and his Influence* 123 (Fig. 3); Bollati M., in Boskovits M., *Miniature a Brera 1100–1422. Manoscritti della Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense e da collezioni private* (Milano: 1997) 230–233.

Fig. 7. Author's portrait of Petrarch (ca. 1400). Illumination. Manuscript Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS AD XIII 30, fol. 1r.

philosophy, especially Seneca the Younger. Time and again, they take on a radical harshness that is somewhat removed from mainstream Christian thinking, which would not argue for the total extermination of the emotions. The fact that the reader is guided to accept, as a pupil, Ratio's words as authoritative, is reinforced by an image in the initial of the first dialogue [Fig. 8]. The personification of Ratio is depicted as a queen or empress sitting on a cathedra. Her authority is emphasised by the crown, sceptre and a kind of 'Reichsapfel'. In front of her stands a very young nobleman, the personification of the emotions 'Hope and Joy' ('Spes et Gaudium'). He takes the part of the pupil, Ratio the part of the teacher. As in the author's portrait, the reader is invited to identify with the audience, viz. the pupils who surround the author's cathedra. Thus, in the first dialogue the reader is supposed to learn from Ratio that it is wrong merely to enjoy young age. The dedicatee, Azo da Correggio, bodies forth further guidance: in the initial he is shown sitting in front of the authoritative teacher Petrarch, who is dressed in a clerical robe and explains to him (with book open on his knees) the content of *De remediis*.

Fig. 8. Ratio and Gaudium/Spes. Petrarch, *De remediis utriusque fortune*, Manuscript Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense MS AD XIII 30, fol. 3r.

There exists a variety of authors' portraits that guide the audience to receive *De remediis* as a didactic dialogue between a teacher and his pupils. In a manuscript of 1388, written and illuminated in Milan and now preserved in St. Petersburg, an author's portrait painted above the first initial represents Petrarch sitting at a lectionary.[33] His robe characterises him as a university teacher and a cleric. His work lies open on the lectionary, and he handles it with his left hand. He raises his right hand and index finger, making a demonstrative gesture that signifies teaching. Here again, the author Petrarch acts the part of a university lecturer, on the model of Thomas Aquinas, reading and explaining his work to his pupils [cf. Thomas, Luna, in Fig. 6]. This time the pupils are not depicted, although the bench to the right would leave room for a student. It could very well be that the reader is supposed to take this place in his imagination and let himself be taught by the '*magister*'. In a manuscript of 1432, preserved in de Bibliothèque Nationale, we again encounter the master in a clerical robe, making the well known teaching gesture [Fig. 9]. With his left hand, he holds up the work he is about to explain to his pupils. They are not depicted, but the reader is invited to substitute for the academic audience.

In another beautiful author's portrait of *De remediis*, made in France ca. 1400, now preserved in Cambrai, Petrarch again appears as a teacher, wearing the robe of a university professor, sitting on a cathedra and gesturing instructively [Fig. 10].[34] He is explaining his work to four pupils grouped in front of him. This miniature clearly encourages the reader to identify the author Petrarch with Ratio: the author's pupils are the emotions (Spes, Gaudium, Metus, and Dolor), who depend on Fortune, hanging on her wheel. An interesting detail forms the pinnacle of the *cathedra*. Petrarch had of course never been a university professor, although he received and declined the offer of a professorship from the city of Florence in 1351. On the other hand, he was crowned poet laureate in Rome in 1341.[35] The detail on top of the cathedra is the laurel crown. What have the laurels of the poet to do with a university chair? They symbolically represent the authority

[33] St. Petersburg, Saltykov-Scedrin Public Library, MS. Lat. Fv. XV., no. 1, fol. 72r.

[34] Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS. B+239 (229), fol. 1r.

[35] Wilkins E.H., "The Coronation of Petrarch", *Speculum* 18 (1943) 155–197 (more recently in German, "Die Krönung Petrarcas", in Buck A. (ed.), *Petrarca* (Darmstadt: 1976) 100–167); Flood J.L., *Poets Laureate in the Holy Roman Empire* (Berlin – New York: 2006) lxiv–lxxi; Petrarch's coronation speech was edited by Godi C., "La Collatio laureationis del Petrarca", *Italia medioevale ed umanistica* 13 (1970) 13–27.

Fig. 9. Author's portrait of Petrarch (ca. 1432). Manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, cod. Lat. 10209 (containing the treatise *De remediis*), fol. 5r.

Fig. 10 Author's portrait of Petrarch (ca. 1490). Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS. B+239 (229) (containing the treatise *De remediis*), fol. 1r.

of teaching. The ceremony performed by Orso, Count of Anguillaria and the knight Giordano de' Orsini in the name of the senate of Rome and Robert d'Anjou, King of Naples, was modelled on medieval university graduation ceremonies with an *examen privatum* and *examen publicum*, the *magister* title and a diploma.[36] Petrarch's diploma of coronation is preserved:[37] it gave the poet, amongst others, the title of "magister" and a *venia docendi ubique*.[38] Thus, in the Cambrai portrait, the laurel crown authorizes the poet Petrarch as a university teacher, as much as does the other symbol of honour, the *cathedra*.

Let us now return to the author's portrait on the first page of the Florentine manuscript of the *Canzoniere* [Fig. 3]. It has now become plausible to identify the people to the right as the readers, viz. pupils, who are being taught by the author. Laura, who leads them, fulfils a triple function: she embodies the work's main topic, authorizes Petrarch (as a teacher of wisdom) and operates as the work's first reader. The laurels she holds in her right hand are not only meant to help the viewer ascertain her name. Laura is about to offer them to Petrarch, and thereby to license him as a teacher. The whole scene is meant to impel the reader to the *Canzoniere* as didactic literature. The cat in combination with the didactic *cathedra* now fulfills the function of a symbolic attribute of a wise man or saint. This may or may not be connected with the Arquà cult of Petrarch.[39] One may compare the cat with the iconography of S. Jerome who is depicted regularly with the lion at his feet.[40] In medieval literature, moreover, Solomon

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[36] Sottili A., "Petrarcas Dichterkrönung als artistische Doktorpromotion", in Von Martels Z. – Steenbakkers P. – Vanderjagt A. (eds.), *Limae labor et mora. Opstellen voor Fokke Akkerman ter gelegenheid van zijn zeventigste verjaardag* (Leende: 2000) 20–31; Flood, *Poets Laureate* lxv.

[37] Mertens D., "Petrarcas 'Privilegium laureationis'", Borgolte M. – Spilling H. (eds.), *Litterae Medii Aevi. Festschrift für Johannes Autenrieth* (Sigmaringen: 1988) 225–247; Flood, *Poets Laureate* lxvii–lxx; Franciscus Petrarcha, *Opera quae extant omnia* […] (Basel, Henricus Petri: 1554) 1254–1256.

[38] Flood, *Poets Laureate* lxix: 'prefatum Franciscum hodierno videlicet paschalis solemnitatis die in Capitolio Romano […] tam dicti regis quam nostro et populi Romani nomine *magistrum*, poetam et historicum *declarantes praeclaro magisterii nomine insignivimus* […] nos, Ursus comes et senator prefatus […] *dantes eidem* tam in dicta arte poetica atque in historia quam in omnibus spectantibus ad easdem […] tam in hac sacratissima urbe […] quam alibi ubicunque locorum *legendi, disputandi, interpretandi* […] *liberam* tenore presentium *potestatem* […]' (Italics mine).

[39] Cf. above.

[40] Riderbos B., *Saint and Symbol. Images of Saint Jerome in Early Italian Art* (Groningen: 1984); Russo D., *Saint Jérôme en Italie. Étude d'iconographie et de spiritualité* […] (Paris – Rome: 1988).

is known as the keeper of a cat. It may not be farfetched to suggest that Petrarch is here being associated with the medieval wise man *par excellence*. One may now ask how it might make sense to understand the *Canzoniere* as didactic literature. Canzone 1, accompanied by the author's portrait, in fact provides an answer. Petrarch speaks directly to his readers: having finally come to the realization that his love was mere idleness, he avows both regret and shame and endorses *contemptus mundi* as the only right response.

> Ma ben veggio or si come al popol tutto
> Favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente
> Di me medesmo meco mi vergogno;
>
> Et del mio vaneggiar vergogne è 'l frutto,
> E 'l pentersi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente
> Che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.
>
> But now I see well how for a long time I was the talk of the crowd
> For which often I am ashamed of myself within;
>
> And of my raving, shame is the fruit and repentance, and the clear knowledge
> That whatever pleases the world is a brief dream.[41]

By this, he invites the reader to understand the *Canzoniere* in an autobiographical and teleological way. The poem demonstrates the poet's process of learning and inner development. Petrarch, in a sense, presents himself as an example of how to deal with earthly love. One must resist fleshly lust, refusing to surrender to its charms, striving instead to sublimate it into spiritual love. The solemn handing over of the laurels enacts the result of this process. The author's portrait guides the reader to an understanding of Petrarch as the master of spiritual love.

The location of the didactic cathedra in the natural landscape likewise helps to guide the reader. The landscape is constituted as a *locus amoenus*, which functions as the ideal place of poetic inspiration. At the same time, the *locus amoenus* is the ideal place of love. Love may be taught 'en plein air'. An interesting parallel is provided by manuscripts of Ovid, who was considered the Master of Love. A Flemish manuscript of ca. 1497, including the *Ars amatoria*, the *Art of Love*,

[41] For the text and translation see Petrarch's *Lyric Poems. The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*, transl. and ed. by R.M. Durling (Cambridge, Mass. – London, England: 1976) 36–37.

now preserved in Holkham Hall, starts with an author's portrait of Ovid:[42] he is depicted as a university professor teaching from a *cathedra*. With his right hand he makes a teaching gesture, explaining his work to his readership of pupils, represented by four couples of different age, who sit upon the grass and indulge in physical contact. Whereas Ovid's *Art of Love* was considered a manual of earthly love, Petrarch's *Canzoniere* was thought to teach how earthly love could be sublimated into the spiritual.

We have numerous examples of Petrarch's author's portrait being used as a reader's guide to moral interpretation of the *Canzoniere*. For instance, in the intriguing introductory miniature of a codex painted by Francesco del Chierico in 1476,[43] once owned by Lorenzo il Magnifico, now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, we find a double author's portrait that demonstrates the moral development the poet has undergone, and is also intended to serve as a moral example for the reader [Fig. 11]. In the tondo in the lower part of the page, one observes the love-sick poet sitting under a laurel tree. Both the laurel tree and the poet reappear in the large miniature in the middle of the page: here we see Petrarch as a shipwrecked lover saving his life by clutching the laurel tree. The natural landscape, the ideal setting of love, has been flooded by the dangerous tide of emotion. The laurel tree alone has the power to save, since it represents the sublimation of the emotions and opposes *ascesis* to fleshly lust.

The didactic understanding of love comes surprisingly close to the mortification of the emotions in *De remediis utriusque fortune*.[44] For example, in Book I, chapter 69, "Love Affairs", Ratio or the *doctor egregius* Petrarch endeavours strongly to dissuade from engaging in such affairs. Love is described as a sweet poison, a pleasant illness that will ultimately cause death, by which spiritual death is meant. Ratio underlines the argument that Love leads to death, by invoking the mythological examples of Leander, Biblis, Procris, and Pyramus.

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[42] Holkham Hall, MS. 324, fol. 159v. Cf. Trapp, "Portraits of Ovid in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance", in idem, *Studies of Petrarch and his Influence* (341–383) 374 [Fig. 4].

[43] MS. Ital. 548, fol. 1v.

[44] There is no modern critical edition of *De remediis*. The best text is probably the one offered by Jean le Preux: Francisci Petrarchae *De remediis utriusque fortunae libri duo* (ed. 2a; Bern: 1600). For an English translation with annotations see C.H. Rawski's *Petrarch's Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul* (Bloomington – Indianapolis: 1991) 5 vols.

Fig. 11. Petrarch as shipwrecked Lover (1476). Manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Ital. 548 (containing the Canzoniere), fol. 1r.

> JOY: I enjoy pleasant love.
> REASON: You are entangled in pleasant snares.
> JOY: I am aflame with pleasant love.
> REASON: You say correctly "aflame", because love is an invisible fire, a welcome wound, a savoury poison, sweet bitterness, delectable affliction, delightful torment, *alluring death*.
> […]
> REASON: You think you will hear from me what the *Master of Love* has said – that you should rejoice in blissful ardour and sail before the wind of your desire. But this is not my counsel.
> I advise that the more sweetly you burn, the more carefully you should shun the flames of passion. The most dangerous evils are those that delight; and often such sweetness ends in utter despair.
> JUY: I love and I am loved.
> REASON: If this is so, what is it but a double knot, a tighter bond, a grave peril? […].[45]

The Master of Love Ratio mentions is Ovid,[46] the same teacher of love who was depicted in the author's portrait of the *Ars amatoria* manuscript at Holkham Hall. Petrarch or his Ratio, however, is a master of a totally different kind. He is closer to the ancient Stoic philosopher Seneca, who is quoted time and again in *De remediis* and is seen to partake of the common Christian philosophy of the *contemptus mundi*.

Let us return now to Altichiero's famous portrait in the Paris manuscript [Fig. 1]. In what way does it function as a guide to the reader? The portrait, to be sure, was not taken from life. It is a *post mortem* construction. It is regrettable that this portrait is always taken out of its codicological context. It is located on the first page of Petrarch's treatise *De viris illustribus*, *On Famous Men*, which commemorates the important and predominantly Roman men of Antiquity. I think that the author's portrait functioned firstly as an intermediary between the reader and the content of the work and secondly as an instrument authorizing the writer with respect to his text's content. The author's portrait is placed directly above the table of contents, the *rubricae*, which is a list of famous men from the past. The author is, I believe, depicted as one of them, as a *vir illustris*. This also implies that the portrait does simply not represent a living person. The artist has stripped away all details that would point to life lived in the present. There is

[45] *Petrarch's Remedies for Fortune* transl. Rawski vol. I 197–198.
[46] Petrarch alludes to Ovid, *Remedia amoris* 13–14: 'Siquis amat quod amare iuvat, feliciter ardet:/ Gaudeat et vento naviget ille suo'.

no background, no construction of space, no narrative, and no rendering of any bodily activity, such as writing, teaching or reading. It would seem that this was a choice consciously made by the artist or the man who ordered the image, Petrarch's admirer and friend Lombardo della Seta. The depiction *en profil* also contributes to the solemn effect of this author's portrait. A portrait of this kind tells the reader that the person depicted must be a famous, important man. Since the portrait renders Petrarch as a *vir illustris*, it authorises him as a person competent to transmit and administer the lives of the *viri illustres* from Antiquity. A man like the portrayed is able to make contact with the dead, the *mortui*, to talk to them and to bring them back to life. This concept of Petrarch as a transmitter of Antiquity, who engages in conversation with the men of the past, is always present in his writings – the *Familiar Letters*, the *Letters of Old Age, De vita solitaria* etc. It is also worth recalling that Lombardo della Seta, the man who ordered the manuscript and the portrait, was familiar with this concept. In a short dialogic treatise describing his manner of life, written in imitation of Petrarch's *De vita solitaria*, he is asked by a puzzled visitor, 'With whom do you talk? What is your company?'. Lombardo's lapidary answer is 'the dead' ('mortui').[47] In this respect, Lombardo della Seta was an extremely good pupil of Petrarch. In the preface added to the *De viris illustribus* manuscript, which follows directly after the portrait, he underlines this function of speaking with the dead: the author Petrarch, a man of godly spirit blessed with eternal glory, has succeeded in assembling all famous men, whatever their place of origin, within this single book, as if into a hall of fame: 'in uno volumine tamquam in clarissimo domicilio'.[48] Petrarch is described as the owner of this 'domicilium', whom the famous men have honoured by accepting his invitation. In his house, Petrarch asks them one by one to have a conversation with him. The list of names, written directly under

[47] Cf. Enenkel K.A.E., "*Lucilius redivivus*. Zur Seneca-Rezeption des Frühhumanismus: Lombardo della Setas Briefdialog 'De dispositione vite sue'", in: Leonardi C. (Hrsg.), *Gli umanesimi medievali. Atti del II Congresso dell' "Internationales Mittellateinerkomitee", Firenze, Certosa del Galluzzo* (Tavarnuzze – Impruneta – Florence: 1998) 111–120.

[48] Fol. 2v.; Petrarca, *De viris illustribus*, ed. G. Martellotti (Florence: 1964) xxv: 'Franciscum Petracam [sic] cuius ingenii divinitatem animadvertimus […] viros omnes prestantissimos, quos illustres appellat, diversis librorum monimentis quasi quibusdam regionibus dissipatos in uno volumine tanquam in clarissimo domicilio collocare molientem et nunc hos evocantem nunc illos […]'.

Petrarch's portrait, is conceived, so to say, as a list of spiritual guests. The owner of the manuscript was the Lord of Padua, Francesco da Carrara. It was the dedication copy Lombardo gave to him. Francesco da Carrara was so impressed by this concept of *De viris illustribus*, that he ordered a large hall in his palace, the Sala dei Giganti, to be painted as a hall of fame, with the heroes of Antiquity. In the middle he had painted an author's portrait of Petrarch, acknowledging him as the host who had invited these famous men into his 'domicilium' [Fig. 12].[49] Thus, the Paris portrait of Petrarch provides very strong guidance to the reader, compelling him to meditate on the relationship between virtue and eternal fame, antiquity and fame, history and fame, and literature and history.

[49] On the images in the Sala die Giganti cf. Mommsen Th.E. Jr., "Petrarch and the Decoration of the Sala virorum illustrium in Padua", *Art Bulletin* 34 (1952) 96–116; repr. in idem, *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (2nd ed. Ithaca, N.Y.: 1966) 130–174.

Fig. 12. Portrait of Petrarch, Padua, Sala dei Giganti.

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