student of literature was perhaps in less need of the advice in the first place. One feels that one has been usefully instructed and resolves to read Machiavelli again with this book in mind.

The notes are ample and most informative. An especially valuable feature is the use of English translations in the text with the Italian original in the notes. This allows us to discover, for example, what Machiavelli actually said when he is credited with having written of "national character." The absence of such apparatus occasionally leads to problems in Bonadeo's book.

Machiavelli and the Art of Renaissance History is a useful, brief and unpretentious study. Perhaps my only complaint about it—discounting those that arise from a very different set of interests—is a slight sense of dismay (Fowler notwithstanding) at the author's recurrent habit of using "none" as though it were always a plural.

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Francesco Petrarca, *Petrarch's Book without a Name: A Translation of the Liber sine nomine*. Tr. with introduction and notes by Norman P. Zacour. Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973. Pp. 128. \$3.00.

Petrarch's *Liber sine nomine* is a collection of nineteen letters on the corruption of the papal court at Avignon and, secondarily, on Petrarch's hopes for the reestablishment of the temporal and spiritual preeminence of Rome. The title suggests the fact that this collection was revised and rearranged before publication even more carefully than the *Familiars*. The virulence of his attacks on the papacy, which led Petrarch to withhold these letters for posthumous publication, led him also to delete the names of the addressees, most other clues to their identities, and indeed all names of contemporaries.

Professor Zacour's editorial work is unpretentious, as befits an epistolary collection that is relatively slight both in length and in content. A sixteen-page introduction includes material on the relation between the *Liber* and the *Familiars*, some of the sources of Petrarch's feelings toward Avignon and Rome, and the nature of the *Liber*. Introductory notes to individual letters offer information about the presumptive addressees, likeliest dates, and occasions. (None of this material goes beyond previous biographical studies.) Footnotes, in addition to identifying quotations, occasionally illuminate features of the text—e.g., Petrarch's Latin word play and his use of conventional wisdom of the period—that the reader would otherwise miss. The translation is the first complete English version of the letters and is straightforward and clear. I wonder, however, whether the occasional use of contractions and other informalities (e.g., "So what?" for "quid ad me?" [p. 28]) is appropriate. If Petrarch's language, translated literally, seems formal and flowery now, so did the original in the fourteenth century, when classicizing Latin was by no means common.

Zacour points out that the book exhibits "a marked thematic unity": "In effect the work treats of two cities, Rome and Avignon, two women, so to speak, the one majestic, dignified, slowly rousing herself from long slumber, soberly reaching out to reclaim her sceptre, the other a cheeky harlot queening it over the world, heedless of her impending doom" (p. 23). One may add that stylistic unity is equally apparent. Petrarch views his

function here as like that of the Hebrew prophets, and the letters are accordingly filled with quotations from the Old Testament, especially from Psalms. Allusions to the opening of Psalm 137 ("By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion") occur several times, and the verse could serve as an epigraph for the *Liber*. Biblical allusions far outnumber classical allusions, and in general this is one of the works in which Petrarch more clearly anticipates Northern humanists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than his immediate, often secular, Italian successors. Stylistic unity is also imparted by an impressive use of imagery. In addition to employing the imagery of queen and whore, Petrarch repeatedly images Avignon as a western Babylon, a new Labyrinth, Hades, a wasteland, and an Egypt ruled by a Biblical Pharaoh. These images harmonize with one another and powerfully evoke the pompous and sinister world of Avignon as Petrarch sees it. "Here is the dreadful prison, the aimless wandering in the dwelling place of shadows, the urn in which Fate stirs the lots of men, tyrannical Minos, and the voracious Minotaur, memorial of forbidden love—but no healing medicine, no love, no charity, no promises worthy of trust, no friendly counsel, no thread as a silent guide to mark the twisted path, no Ariadne, no Daedalus" (pp. 72-73).

Despite its literary successes, the *Liber* is not as a whole very satisfactory. In part, dissatisfaction stems from the genre: we have lost the taste for fictionalized, rhetorically self-conscious letters. Beyond this fact, the letters do not entirely succeed on their own terms. In Letter 6, Petrarch says that he would like to write a tragedy on Avignon, "I shall write, Truth will dictate, all mankind will be witness. You, Posterity, you be the judge, unless, as it happens, you are so overwhelmed by the evils of your own day that you cannot be bothered with ours" (p. 63). Posterity has been busy enough, but the neglect that the letters have suffered has resulted not only from this circumstance but also from their failure, as a consequence of Petrarch's careful deletion of names and facts, to provide the specifics that would sustain interest and would constitute the necessary foundations for Posterity's judgment. The three instances in which Petrarch gives detailed anecdotes of curial corruption stand out vividly. Almost denuded of particulars, the letters become repetitious in their generalities. Indeed, as Zacour observes, the interest of the book lies principally in its embodiment of Petrarch's personality. As always, Petrarch is able to make his artificial Latin come suddenly alive, through ingenuously-stated perceptions and direct, unembarrassed personal admissions.

Finally, if the letters are of limited use as factual data for social or ecclesiastical history, they are of considerable interest in the history of ideas, since they illustrate one of the ways in which Renaissance humanism represents not a continuation of medieval humanism but a conservative, religious reaction against it. The complaints that Petrarch utters against the curia centre in its secularism, its realpolitik, its greed, and its religious skepticism. This church will admit Judas "if he brings with him his thirty pieces of blood money, while Christ the pauper will be turned away from the gate" (p. 106). Passages of this kind anticipate the middle section of *The Praise of Folly*, and they place Petrarch in opposition to precisely the tendencies in later medieval thought that R. W. Southern identifies as the defining characteristics of medieval humanism: secularism, rationalism, the justification of private property and war.

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