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Liber sine nomine

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A Fifteenth-Century Warmian Reworking of Petrarch's *Liber sine nomine*

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ABSTRACT: This article examines a reworking of Francesco Petrarca's *Liber sine nomine* transmitted in a group of three mid-fifteenth-century manuscripts of German provenance—namely, Gdańsk, Biblioteka Gdańska Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1947; Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 1260; and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 5354. The article brings to light the mechanisms of this rewriting—in which Italy and the principal Italian cities mentioned in Petrarch's epistles *Sine nomine* are replaced by Prussia and the town of Olsztyn in Warmia—as well as its likely ideological aims. The study also considers the possible origin of this textual reworking and the historical and cultural context in which it may be situated.

KEYWORDS: Petrarch, *Liber sine nomine*, Prussia, Warmia, Olsztyn, Textual Reworking, Textual Criticism.

The *Liber sine nomine* (*Book without a name*; cited as *Sine nom.*),¹ a collection of nineteen letters written from 1341 to the late 1350s but not assembled until the end of 1359 or early 1361,

¹ This article is the result of research conducted within the framework of the PRIN 2022 PNRR *Petrarch and the Reformation: Paths of a Troubled Reception* (CUP: J53D23016560001; CI: P2022XB5PM). Works by Petrarch will be cited according to the abbreviation system adopted by the series *Petrarca del Centenario*, managed by the Commissione per l'Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Francesco Petrarca. I am grateful to Sofia Brusa, Laura Refe, Francesco Tripodi, and Jakub Kujawiński for their careful reading of the manuscript and valuable suggestions. Translations from Latin are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

is unquestionably the work of Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch, 1304–74) in which he showed his most profound engagement with the politics of his time.²

Notoriously, Petrarch's relationship with the highest ecclesiastical authorities was tense and problematic.³ Aware that, in the event of specific need, the pope could order the transfer of the papal see, Petrarch expressed nonetheless deep disappointment with its relocation from Rome to Avignon, harshly condemning the abandonment of the Eternal City to inevitable decadence. When the opportunity for a radical change in Rome arose—namely, Cola di Rienzo's (1313–54) “revolutionary” attempt to restore the city to the heights of ancient republicanism—Petrarch offered his full support to Cola. This decision led to painful ruptures with friends and protectors. The two main themes around which the *Liber sine nomine* was constructed are the anti-Avignon polemic and Petrarch's endorsement of Cola's political endeavor.

One of the most striking features of the letters included in the *Liber sine nomine* is the cautious suppression of the names of the addressees, a choice deliberately made to avoid the potential retaliation from those Petrarch called “the enemies of truth” (*Sine nom.*, pref., 5–6). In the

² Regarding the interpretation of the work's title, see Petrarca 2015, 25–30, and Ertl 2012. For a comprehensive presentation of the *Liber sine nomine*, including its historical and cultural context as well as relevant bibliography, see the introductory section of the edition: Petrarca 2015, 7–32. The monograph by Piur 1925 remains useful at several levels. For the dating of the collection, see Cascio 2014. Additional observations, particularly regarding source identification, can be found in Piacentini 2016 and Ertl 2018.

³ The best-known episode illustrating this contrast is represented by the so-called Babylonian sonnets (*sc. R/F* 136–38), which deliver a harsh condemnation of the Avignonese church, with radicality comparable to that found in the *Liber sine nomine*. “Babylon” is the name Petrarch consistently uses to denigrate Avignon (not only in the *Liber sine nomine*). See, e.g., *Sine nom.* 5, 3: “Nunc me gallicus orbis habet et occidentalis Babilon, qua nichil informius sol videt, et ferox Rodanus estuant Cocyto vel tartareo simillimus Acheronti, ubi piscatorum inops quondam regnat hereditas, mirum in modum oblita principii” (“Now the Gallic world holds me, and the western Babylon—than which the sun shines on nothing more deformed—and the savage Rhone, so like hell's boiling Cocytus or Acheron. Here are enthroned the heirs of the fishermen—once poor, now remarkably forgetful of their origins”; trans. Zacour 1973, 58–59).

collection, popes and other high-ranking prelates are portrayed as having squandered the legacy of the Gospels in luxury, falsehood, and fornication. Avignon, the morally illegitimate seat of the papacy, is depicted as a fetid sewer, a labyrinth without exit, a living hell inhabited by specters destined for eternal damnation.

Another noteworthy feature, albeit less conspicuous, is the high degree of depersonalization characterizing the letters. This results not only from the structural design of the collection but also from the radical process of onomastic purification operated by the author. Petrarch did not limit himself to omitting names only at the beginning and at the end of the epistles. Instead, he systematically expunged any mention of personal names—or references thereto that could lead to specific identifications—except for a few carefully selected toponyms and some mythological names used in a negative fashion to discredit the contemporaries to whom such derogative nicknames referred. From a scholarly perspective, these features have initiated a search for the possible recipients of the letters that continues to this day.⁴

The history of the “*fortuna*” of this controversial tract—beginning immediately after Petrarch’s death—involved, initially, his friends and admirers, especially in Padua and Florence, the two cities most receptive to his legacy. Over time, its circulation expanded beyond Italy, notably through wide manuscript transmission in German-speaking regions from the late fourteenth century onward. Its prominence increased significantly during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation era, largely due to its vehement attacks against the papal curia.⁵ This article aims to examine an extraordinarily

⁴ See, e.g., Cascio 2014.

⁵ Some episodes of this troubled reception have been examined in studies by Coogan 1983, Knape 1997, Cerrón Puga 2009, Zuliani 2014–15, and, in a more detailed and comprehensive manner, Cascio 2020, which incorporates, with substantial modifications, Cascio 2017 and 2018. The modes, forms, and environments of Petrarchan reception in German land have been extensively studied by Agostino Sottilli, whose research is now compiled in Sottilli 2015.

peculiar episode of the dissemination of the *Liber sine nomine* in the German-speaking territories.

* * *

According to the philological reconstruction proposed in my critical edition, the *Liber sine nomine* is transmitted by sixty-five manuscripts in three different redactional forms.⁶ Three of the nearly fifty witnesses to the final version—the so-called text α , according to the classification model adopted by Vittorio Rossi in the national edition of the *Res familiares*⁷ and now considered canonical in Petrarchan studies—preserve, among other writings by Petrarch, a selection of twelve *Sine nomine* letters: these include the preface and epistles 1–4, 11–16, and 19.⁸ The manuscripts under consideration, which belong to the extensive family designated as b in the critical edition,⁹ are as follows:

⁶ A complete list of the manuscripts of the *Liber sine nomine* can be found in Petrarca 2015, 13–15; Cascio 2010–11, 40–43; and, above all, Petrarca 2011, which offers a description of each item and a thorough reconstruction of the textual relationships among all the censured and fully collated witnesses.

⁷ Petrarca 1933–42.

⁸ The *Liber sine nomine* is transmitted in three redactional stages: for three letters (*Sine nom.* 1, 5, and 6), the original version—referred to as the text γ —has been identified in several witnesses. This version corresponds to the actual letter sent by Petrarch to the recipients. An intermediate redaction (text β), characterized by some minor authorial adjustments, has been recognized in three manuscripts (Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals 200 [= C]; Genève, Bibliothèque de Genève, lat. 105a [= G]; Trieste, Bibl. Civica ‘Attilio Hortis,’ I 22 [= Tr]). Two of these, C and G, transmit the first thirteen letters in a different order compared to the canonical version attested elsewhere in the tradition. Such a different architecture of the collection most likely originates from Petrarch himself (Petrarca 2015, 17–21).

⁹ In addition to the testimonies mentioned below, the following manuscripts belong to the group b : Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, F VI 5 (= Ba); Città del Vaticano, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, Archivio della Basilica di San Pietro, H 46 (= A); Ottob. Lat. 1532 (= O); Vat. Lat. 4518 (= Vat); Vat. Lat. 4527 (Vat¹); Mantova, Bibl. Comunale, A IV 31 (= M); Modena, Bibl. Estense Universitaria, α . O. 6. 1 (lat. 167) (= Mo); Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, 11 Aug. 4^o (= Wo). The *editio princeps*, published in Basel in 1496 in the typography of Johannes Amerbach for the care of Sebastian Brant, also belongs to this group. The remaining prints from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries descend in succession from the *editio princeps*.

(D) Gdańsk, Biblioteka Gdańska Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1947. Paper, XV¹ (*ante* 1449), ff. 342. Humanistic miscellany copied by several (presumably three) German hands. It belonged to the imperial chancellor Kaspar Schlick (1396–1449),¹⁰ then to a Johannes decanus Varmiensis (sixteenth century) and to Heinrich Schwartzwald (seventeenth century).

Bibl.: Günther 1903, 86–88; Kristeller 1989, 398; Berté 2006, 77–78; Petrarca 2011, XCVI; Brovia 2019, 39 (no. 86); Rauner 2005; Petrarca online 2025 (S. Vettorelli).

(L) Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 1260. Paper, ff. 269, XV² (a. 1460). Collection of humanistic texts written by a copyist of German origin (Bavaria).

Bibl.: Kristeller 1983, 422–23; Berté 2006, 79; Petrarca 2011, XCVII–XCVIII; Brovia 2019, 39 (no. 59). Rauner 2005; Forner 2011, 38; Petrarca online 2025 (S. Vettorelli).

(M²) München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 5354. Paper, ff. III–389, XV² (c. 1470). A humanistic miscellany (mainly texts by Petrarch) written, according to Agostino Sottoli, by several German hands, though Frank-Rutger Hausmann argues that only a single copyist was involved in its transcription. It belonged to Bernhard von Kraiburg (1412–77), who served as bishop of Chiemsee and auxiliary bishop in Salzburg.¹¹ Subsequently, it was held at the Chapter Library of Salzburg (of which Chiemsee was a suffragan diocese), to which Bernhard had donated his books. Later, in the early nineteenth century, it became part of the Royal Library of Munich.

¹⁰ See at least Fuchs 2007.

¹¹ For Bernhard von Kraiburg, see Naimer 1996.

Bibl: Piur 1925, 289; Sottili 1970, 355–60; Hausmann 1993, 118–19; Berté 2006, 79–80; Petrarca 2011, XCIX–C; Brovia 2019, 32–33 (no. 64). Rauner 2005; Petrarca online 2025 (S. Vettorelli).

These three testimonies originate from a common source:¹² the manuscript of uncertain origin, Greifswald, Universitätsbibliothek, 682 (= Gr; Parch., XVⁱⁿ).¹³ An important aspect is that Gr belonged to Johann Abezier (c. 1375–1424), an ecclesiastic and prominent figure of the Teutonic knights, provost at Frauenburg (today Frombork) in Warmia (in German, Ermland)—an area in the northeastern part of present-day Poland—and later prince-bishop of that region, who took part in the Council of Constance.¹⁴ According to a widespread and generally accepted hypothesis, the manuscript may have been transcribed in Constance in the years 1417/18 from an exemplar belonging to Cardinal Giordano Orsini, who was also present at the council. However, Gr was not the direct model for D, L, and M²; instead, they derive from an *interpositus*, designated *b*⁴, whose existence can be demonstrated by a dense layer of shared erroneous readings. I here adduce a highly representative selection of these conjunctive errors, taken from *Sine nom. pref.*, 1–4.¹⁵

¹² See the philological reconstruction in Petrarca 2011, CCXLVIII–CCLI.

¹³ The manuscript bears glosses and corrections either by Abezier himself or by a somewhat later reader. In 1424, after Abezier's death, it was acquired by the cathedral chapter of Ermland in Frauenburg and was later likely housed in the bishop's palace library in Heilsberg. Following its looting in 1703/4, it came into Swedish possession. Between 1741 and 1743, it was owned by Johannes Boetticher, the school rector of Wolgast (c. 1690–1748), and it entered the University Library of Greifswald as part of his personal book legacy in 1748. On the manuscript, see Piur 1925, 282; Kristeller 1983, 403; Berté 2006, 78; Petrarca 2011, LXIII–LXIV; Rauner 2005; Petrarca online 2025 (S. Vettorelli); and, above all, Geiß 2009, 220–22.

¹⁴ An important insight into the circulation and reuse of the anti-Avignonese letter collection among some figures who participated in the council is provided by Ruiz Arzalluz 2015, who publishes a critical edition of a letter written in Constance in July 1415 by the Franciscan Diego de Moxena to Ferdinand I of Aragon, largely based on extracts from the *Liber sine nomine*.

¹⁵ A more extensive list is in Petrarca 2011, CCXLVIII–CCLI.

Table 1

Pref. 3 forsitan] forsan; pref. 4 gustus] gestusque; *om.* idem; pref. 7 sim] sum; obierint] obierunt; pref. 8 meque] me; pref. 10 partam] partim; tonent, fulminent] fulminent, tonent; pref. 11 Satyrico] Satyrico reprehensori satirica reprehensio ut; pref. 14 fore sibi] si forte; 1, 1 quid cogitas] quem cogitas; 1, 2 equorei] equore; 1, 3 Arthon] ariori; fidam] fidem; 1, 4 hec inter vino] hic inter vina; soporifero] sopifero; 1, 6 fluitantem] fluitantes; suam] sumus; 1, 7 igitur est] est igitur; reddenda] reddi; hortatu] hortato; 1, 9 canibus] casibus; 1, 10 nauclerus] neuclerus; 2, 2 aggredi] agrede; 2, 4 Durentia] dinentia (diue- D); mitiores] minores; irreverentes] irruentes; 2, 5 *om.* sic tui~es; 2, 6 perspexerit] prospexerit D prospexerat LM²; 2, 8 magnalia] mirabilia (-la D); 2, 9 *om.* an Provincie~descendat; oblivio] periculum oblivio; 2, 16 nomini] nomine; 2, 23-26 *om.* inquirant~venerante; 2, 28 *om.* facilius~transnatasset; 2, 32 *om.* omne; ita] itaque; 2, 35 propositum simul] simul propositum; 3, 1 leve] bene; obsit] absit; 3, 2 romani] Allenstenii; Italorum] Prutenorum; animis] animus; 3, 5 Romam] Allenstenii; Italian] Prusiam; 3, 6 queso, vir] vir, queso; populo romano] populo Allenstenii (-steii D); *om.* meis; 3, 10 romanum populum] allensteniensem populum; Italian] Prusiam; 4, 3 proditor] traditor; 4, 14 *om.* cui~biceps; 4, 16 gloria quamque] gloriaque; 4, 17 tutum et] tantum quam; 4, 18-22 *om.* an romanum~cessasse; 4, 23 igitur] autem; fixumque] fixum quia; 4, 32-36 *om.* verum~verbis; 4, 36 *om.* accusat et; Augustinus] Augustinus quod in persona non propria sed Iovis loquebatur, sed in propria persona veritatem poeta non tacuit ubi ait: 'Res romana perituraque regna [Verg. *ge.* 2, 498]' (which is a reshaping of § 33); *om.* secundum~dicam; 4, 37 certe] etiam; 4, 38-39 *om.* senescent¹~non durent; 4, 52-53 quinetiam~veniat] et cetera; 4, 55 *om.* nec dubitari~peccatis; 4, 60-66 *om.* quodsi~videretur; 4, 68 Siculos~Samnitium] et cetera.

Each of the three aforementioned manuscripts contains unique errors and, for this reason, cannot be the progenitor of the others. A representative sampling for each manuscript is provided below:

Table IIa–c

a.

D¹⁶: 2, 30 *vera est*] *est vera*; 4, 4 *laude*] *lauda* (*ante corr.*); 4, 5 *audietis* *audetis* (*ante corr.*); 4, 7 *ancipi*] *anticipi* (*ante corr.*); 4, 25 *excusatum*] *ex cantum* (*ante corr.*); 4, 30 *terram*] *terramque* (*ante corr.*); 4, 51 *veritate*] *veritati*.

b.

L: pref. 5 *noluerit*] *noverit*; pref. 12 *odiosa*] *odisa*; 1, 7 *et vera*] *vera*; 2, 17 *i fortiter*] *et fortiter*; 2, 18 *admota*] *admotu*; 2, 20 *impulsore . . . lenitore*] *impulsare . . . lenitare*; 3, 8 *enim*] *autem enim*; 4, 7 *serenare solitus es*] *servare solitus esse*; *fulmine*] *sublimem*; 4, 56 *iustius*] *nescius*; 4, 68 *varietati*] *veritati*.

c.

M²: pref. 6 *deformitate*] *deformitatem*; pref. 14 *obiecit*] *iniecit*; 1, 3 *fudit* *vidit*; 1, 9 *om. hoc*; 2, 4 *Ruentia*] *ruendo*; *indevoti*] *devoti*; 2, 18 *quantum largitate*] *quamquam largitate*; 2, 27 *om. presumpsisset~amicitie*; 2, 30 *infirmissimis*] *firmissimis*; 3, 8 *fortasse*] *forte*; 4, 3 *iuste*] *iustos*.

However, D is less erroneous than L and M², which, by contrast, appear to be linked through a handful of shared innovations and errors (an extensive sample of which is provided in Table III). This pattern suggests that they derive from an intermediate transmission node, which I designate as *b*⁵:

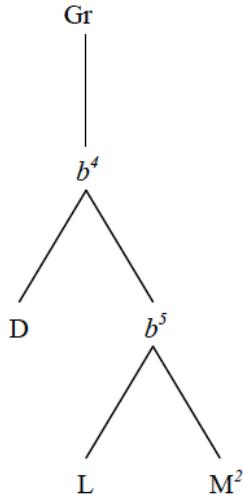
Table III

Pref. 2 *sepe*] *secum*; pref. 4 *notus*] *notos*; pref. 5 *odiosiora*] *odiosora*; *om. scilicet*; pref. 7 *et lectori*] *a lectori*; *odio si*] *odiosi*; pref. 12 *ipse*] *ipsa*; 1, 8 *scalmum*] *scalmi*; 2, 11 *compotem*] *compatem*; 2, 18 *obiecta*] *obitam*; 4, 2 *om. ipsam*; 4, 7 *humanarum miseriarum*] *humanorum miseriorum*; 4, 14

¹⁶ Most of these errors are corrected by a later hand.

diversorum seseque] diversorumque sese; 4, 48 emittere] omittere; 4, 54 solemnibus] solemnitatibus.

The relationships among the witnesses under examination may thus be illustrated as follows:¹⁷



As can be seen from Table I, some of the listed *lectiones* are not merely copying errors but deliberate rewritings of the original text, intended to steer and reorient it in a precise local and political direction.¹⁸ The first variants I refer to are taken from *Sine nom.* 3, a letter presumably written in September 1347 and addressed to Cola di Rienzo, during a period when the hostility of the Avignon curia toward

¹⁷ Similar conclusions were drawn by Berté 2006, 123–26, 130, 136, with regard to her edition of *Contra eum qui maledixit Italie* (Petrarca 2005).

¹⁸ Rewriting by copyists is a widespread phenomenon in medieval literature but generally pertains to other textual typologies characterized by a lower degree of authorship. On this subject, see Guglielmetti 2019, to which I also refer for the relevant bibliography.

Cola's policies was growing. We will now examine the text in its rewritten form:¹⁹

Sine nom. 3, 2

Ita michi visum est, ita tibi visum iri certus sum, et, si latius innotescat, totius populi *Allenstenii* atque omnium *Prutenorum* animis incussurum iustissime indignationis aculeos spero, excussurumque gravedinem torporis, quo nunc priscus generose indolis vigor tepet.

Allenstenii] romani ed.

Prutenorum] Italorum ed.

So it seemed appropriate to me, and so I am certain it will seem so to you as well; and should this become more widely known, I hope it will be able to impress upon the minds of the entire people of Olsztyn and of all Prussians the stimulus of an absolutely legitimate indignation, and may shake the oppressive inertia, due to which the ancient vigor of a noble lineage is now numb.

Sine nom. 3, 5–6

5 Nuper equidem inter quosdam ex his qui sibi videntur sapientes —aliis forte non ita—, dubitatum et in questionis formam propositum fuit expedire ne terrarum orbi urbem *Allenstenii* et *Prusiam* esse unanimes atque pacificas, et, quamvis ipsa rerum dubitatio satis puerilis et inepta sit, tamen disputandi studio utcunque poterat excusari, nisi multis argumentis ultro citroque iactatis is, qui omnium sapientissimus habebatur, cum plausu et favore omnium nullatenus expedire venenata diffinitione firmasset. 6 Quod tu, queso, vir eloquentissime, cum primum, ut soles, in publico perorabis, populo *Allenstenii* meis verbis nuntia, ut intelligat que sunt horum procerum de nostra salute sententie [. . .].

5 *Allenstenii] Romam ed.* *Prusiam] Italiam ed.* 6 *Allenstenii] romano ed.*

¹⁹ In the apparatus, I indicate the critical *lectiones* of the edition; I voluntarily omit the numerous errors peculiar to the three manuscripts, as well as those specific to *b⁴* and *b⁵*, limiting myself to emphasizing the textual variants deliberately introduced.

Not so long ago, therefore, among some of these who considered themselves wise—others, perhaps, would disagree—it was questioned and a debate was opened on whether or not it is convenient for the world that the city of Olsztyń and Prussia live in peace and harmony; and though a doubt on this subject might seem childish and senseless enough, it could, to some extent, be justified by the interest stirred up by the dispute, if the person considered the wisest of all, after developing countless arguments from top to bottom, with applause and general approval, had not concluded with poisonous peremptoriness that it was absolutely not convenient. Please, at the first opportunity, according to your custom, to speak in public, eloquent sir, inform the people of Olsztyń through my words of this episode, so that they may know the thoughts of these powerful people concerning our welfare [. . .].

Sine nom. 3, 10

Teque ante alios et *allensteniinensem* populum atque universam *Prusiam*, ut quod ego verbis assero rebus approbetis per omnes celicolas supplex oro, et ut in statu prospero diu vivas et rempublicam fortiter liberatam feliciter regas opto.

allensteniinensem] romanum *ed.* *Prusiam*] Italiām *ed.*

By all the creatures of heaven, as a suppliant, I implore you especially, the people of Olsztyń and all Prussia, to confirm by your deeds what I support with words, and I hope you may live long in prosperity and successfully govern that republic which you have freed with your valor.

A similar variant is preserved in *Sine nom.* 14, the first letter of the collection to be written in Milan on April 29, 1357, and sent, via the embassy of Sagremor de Pommiers, along with the *Fam.* 21, 1 to the archbishop of Prague, Arnošt of Pardubice.²⁰ Below is a particularly interesting rewriting of the final, ideologically dense paragraph:

²⁰ See Cascio 2014.

Sine nom. 14, 31–32

31 Sin, ut est animus honesti motus appetens —quoniam quod eruditissimis quibusdam placitum viris scio, unum hoc nobis celestis originis argumentum est, ut motu perpetuo delectemur—, loco te movere volueris, ad nos veni. 32 *Vide Allenstenii et castrum bene munitum Allam preterfluente*,²¹ postremo quidlibet vide, Indos quoque, modo ne videas Babilonem neque descendas in infernum vivens.

32 *Vide Allenstenii~preterfluente*] *Vide Romam, vide Mediolanum, vide Venetas, vide Florentiam, vide Patavum tuum, vide Bononiam, ubi honestis in studiis egisti adolescentiam et integritatem patriam italicis artibus adornasti ed.*

If, however, you feel inclined to travel, since the soul seeks honest motions—and I know that, as very wise men believe,²² the only proof of our celestial origin is in the pleasure we feel for perpetual movement—come to us. Come and see Olsztyń and the fortress well protected by the Łyna that flows nearby; finally, go wherever you wish, even to the Indians, as long as you do not see Babylon²³ and do not descend into hell alive.²⁴

The text of the common source *b*⁴ is clearly refunctionalized: the anonymous reworker alters the topical references within the letters to suit his needs. To this end, Italy and the Italians are replaced by Prussia and the Prussians, while Olsztyń (still called Allenstein in German), a

²¹ In all likelihood, the “castrum bene munitum” is the Olsztyń castle, which was erected between 1346 and 1353. It was surrounded by a line of fortifications and a ditch connected to the Łyna River via a bascule bridge. The reading “preterfluente” is found in L M², while D preserves “preterfluentem.” From the cited passage, it is plausible to infer that the anonymous rewriter favors indeclinable forms, such as “Allenstenii,” which occurs multiple times, and “Allam.”

²² The reference goes to Sen. *Cons. ad Helv. (Dial.* 12), 6, 6–7.

²³ On Babylon/Avignon see above, 2.

²⁴ The passage in the original text has been translated by Zacour 1973, 90: “See Rome, Milan, Venice, Florence, see your Padua, see Bologna where you spent your youth in honourable studies and embellished your native character with the Italic arts. Indeed, go as far as the Indies if you like, only do not look upon Babylon; do not descend to the living inferno.” In the final section, the reference is to the fact that the addressee studied at both the universities of Padua and Bologna (see Cascio 2014 and Hledíková 2001).

small town on the Łyna River in Warmia, replaces the most important Italian cities (notably Rome). Whereas the reasons for this peculiar recasting of Petrarch's text are evident—the prestige of the original, along with its distinctly ideological framework and polemical tone, fully justify such an operation—the broader historical and cultural context in which this reshaping may have occurred is unclear.

While the rewriter, who operates at the level of the *interpositus b⁴*, must be someone connected to Olsztyn, given the central role the town plays, it remains to be determined where and when this recasting may have taken place. Certain elements can be inferred based on the origin and chronology of the four manuscripts under consideration. Regarding the dating, the chronological bounds are defined by the transcription of Gr and D. The Greifswald codex provides a *terminus post quem*: as previously noted, it can be dated—if this hypothesis is correct—between 1417 and 1418 or, at latest, 1424, the year of Abezier's death. The *terminus ante quem* is instead 1449, the year of Schlick's death, possessor of the D manuscript. The possible origin of the recasting is even less identifiable: although the content clearly indicates Warmia, all three testimonies originate from southern German regions—Schlick, as mentioned, was imperial chancellor in Vienna;²⁵ M² is originally from the library of Chiemsee in Bavaria; and the manuscript currently held in Leipzig also comes from this area.

Regardless of its origin, one thing remains certain: this reshaping reflects a specific reality and reveals a clear ideological matrix upon which contingent circumstances must have necessarily exerted influence. Indeed, its context may be linked to the wartime events involving the Teutonic knights and the kingdom of Poland in the 1430s and 1440s.²⁶ Notably, the presence of Abezier in the background can

²⁵ Only later did the manuscript pass into the hands of a yet-to-be-identified Johannes decanus Varmiensis.

²⁶ Olsztyn became part of the Prussian Confederation in 1440. In 1454, upon the outbreak of the Thirteen Years' War, it rebelled against the Teutonic knights to join the kingdom of Poland under King Casimir IV Jagiellon.

hardly be considered incidental: he held leadership positions within the Teutonic knights and was elected bishop of Warmia precisely during his embassy in Constance.²⁷ However, lacking conclusive evidence—evidence that may nonetheless emerge from research by local historians, to whom I ideally entrust this brief scholarly note—it would be premature, and perhaps even counterproductive, to propose more in-depth hypotheses.

The fact remains that what is presented here, on the one hand, offers yet another example of the breadth and diversity of Petrarch's reception. On the other, from a strictly philological perspective, it confirms how manuscripts that do not directly contribute to the *constitutio textus* can still possess intrinsic cultural relevance.

²⁷ After the death of Heinrich IV of Heilsberg of Ermland (June 4, 1415), Abezier was elected unanimously by the cathedral chapter as the new bishop as early as June 8, 1415. In 1416, he received confirmation from Johannes Wallenrode of Riga. His official consecration took place only after his return from Constance, in June or July 1418. On this, see Koeppen 1974.

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