

---

## CHRONOLOGY OF PETRARCH'S LIFE AND WORKS

---

Victoria Kirkham

- 1304 July 20** Born in Arezzo to the notary Pietro di Parenzo (Ser Petracco) and his wife, Eletta Canigiani.
- 1305–11** Lives at Incisa, Valdarno.
- 1305 Nov.** Papacy moves to France; Clement V installed as pope in Lyons.
- 1307** His brother Gherardo born.
- 1311** Family moves to Pisa, where Petrarch may have seen Dante.
- 1312** Father finds employment at papal court in Avignon; family settles fifteen miles away, in Carpentras.
- 1312–16** Studies Latin grammar, rhetoric with schoolmaster Convenevole da Prato. Becomes friends with Guido Sette, future archbishop of Genoa.
- 1314** Clement V dies; John XXII elected new pope.
- 1316 fall–1320** Studies law at University of Montpellier.
- 1318 or 1319** His mother dies; soon afterward (or within a few years) Petrarch will compose a Latin elegy for her, *Breve panegyricum defuncte matri*.
- 1320 fall–1326** Studies civil law at Bologna with Gherardo and Guido Sette. Returns home for intervals in 1321 (after student riots close the university) and 1325. At Bologna he also becomes friends with Giacomo Colonna and his brother Agapito.
- 1325** Begins receiving small income for service to Stefano Colonna the Elder and his son Giacomo
- 1325 Feb.** First recorded book purchase, Augustine's *De civitate dei*, for 12 florins, in Avignon.
- 1326 April** Ser Petracco dies. Petrarch and Gherardo return to Provence.
- 1326 May–1337 summer** Avignon.
- 1327 April 6** Sees and falls in love with Laura, church of St. Claire, Avignon.
- 1328–29** Petrarch works on philological restoration of Livy's *Decades*.

- 1330 summer** Visits Giacomo Colonna, bishop of Lombez, Gascony, in foothills of the Pyrenees. His companions Lello di Pietro Stefano dei Tosetti from Rome ("Laelius") and the Flemish musician Ludwig van Kempen ("Socrates") become his lifelong friends.
- 1330 fall** At Avignon enters service of Giacomo's brother, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna as household chaplain, in which he will remain active until 1337, thereafter serving discontinuously until 1347.
- 1333 spring and summer** Trip to northern Europe. In Liège discovers Cicero's orations, among them *Pro Archia*.
- Ca. 1333–34** Probably in Avignon meets the Augustinian monk Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro, who gives him the copy of Augustine's *Confessiones* he would carry with him always. Makes a list of some fifty of his "favorite books"; writes a comedy, *Philologia Philostrati* (lost). Acquires a house in Vacluse; forges enduring friendship with Philippe de Cabassoles, bishop of Cavaillon.
- 1334** Death of Pope John XXII; accession of Benedict XII.
- 1335 Jan. 25** Canon in cathedral at Lombez in the Pyrenees, appointed by Benedict XII. Petrarch did not take resident possession but received income from it; resigned 1355.
- 1335 June 1** Copies prayer on guard leaf of his manuscript containing Cassiodorus's *De anima* and Augustine's *De vera religione*.
- 1335 summer** In Avignon meets Azzo da Correggio and Guglielmo da Pastrengo, sent as ambassadors by Mastino della Scala, lord of Verona, who had seized Parma. At their request he successfully makes a case for papal support of Mastino.
- 1336** The Sienese painter Simone Martini visits Avignon; paints portrait of Laura at Petrarch's request.
- 1336 April 24–26** Ideal date of ascent of Mount Ventoux (*Familiars* 4.1).
- End 1336–early 1337** Visits Giacomo Colonna in Rome, staying first in Capranica with Orso dell'Anguillara, husband of Agnese Colonna (sister of Stefano the Younger, Giacomo, Agapito, and Cardinal Giovanni).
- 1337 summer–1341 Feb.** Vacluse and Avignon.
- 1337** In his service to Giovanni Colonna, escorts a protégé of the cardinal's to Mary Magdalene's legendary cavern, near Marseilles; writes Latin poem on that saint. Birth of his natural son, Giovanni.
- End of 1337** Begins work on *De viris illustribus*.
- 1337–39** *Epytotele* 1.4, invitation to Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro to visit him at Vacluse.
- 1338 April** Petrarch's father's stolen Virgil manuscript comes back into his possession; he commissions Simone Martini to paint frontispiece.

- 1338 or 1339, Good Friday** Idea for *Africa* comes to him, April 6. Continues *De viris illustribus*.
- 1340** Azzo da Correggio visits Avignon and receives papal support for taking control of Parma from tyrant Mastino della Scala.
- 1340 Sept. 1** Receives invitations to be crowned poet laureate from University of Paris and Roman Senate; accepts latter.
- 1340–41** Petrarch drafts *Collatio laureationis*.
- 1341–42** Conception of *Triumphs*? (or in 1351–52?).
- 1341–43** Continues drafting *De viris illustribus*.
- 1341 Feb. 16** Departs Avignon with Azzo da Correggio for Naples and Rome.
- 1341 Feb.–March** In Naples for coronation examination with King Robert; becomes friends with Barbato da Sulmona and Giovanni Barrili.
- 1341 April 8** Pronounces *Collatio laureationis*; crowned poet laureate and declared Roman citizen by Orso dell'Anguillara in audience hall of Senatorial Palace on Capitoline in Rome.
- 1341 May 22/23–1342 Jan.** Visits Parma at invitation of new Coreggio rulers. Azzo da Correggio provides him with a country home, his "Italian Helicon," south of their city in the valley of the Enza near a wooded highland called Selvapiana. There he returns to his *Africa* and *De viris illustribus*. His friend Giacomo Colonna dies.
- 1342** Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro dies; Petrarch studies Greek with the Basilian monk Barlaam.
- 1342 April 25** Benedict XII dies.
- 1342 May 7** Clement VI succeeds him.
- 1342 May 22** Obtains canonry at Pisa, resigned sometime before March 1355.
- 1342 Aug. 21** First form of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*.
- 1342 spring–1343 Sept.** Vacluse and Avignon. Intense work on "Roman plan" of *De viris illustribus*.
- 1342–43** Ideal date of *Secretum*. Probably begun in 1347.
- 1342 May 22–1355** Clement VI appoints him canon in cathedral of Pisa; he receives its income through a procurator.
- 1343** 23 lives in *De viris illustribus* complete; daughter Francesca born of unknown mother. Petrarch sends fragment of *Africa* to Barbato da Sulmona.
- Early 1343** Cola di Rienzo arrives in Avignon for several months; he and Petrarch become friends. New pope Clement VI in bull of Jan. 27 declares 1350 a year of Jubilee.

- 1343 Feb.** Learns of death of King Robert of Anjou in Naples on Jan. 20.
- 1343 April** Petrarch's brother Gherardo becomes Carthusian monk at Montrieux.
- 1343 summer** Begins *Rerum memorandarum libri*.
- 1343 Aug. 24** Awarded rectory of S. Angelo in Castiglione Fiorentino by Clement VI.
- 1343 Sept.–Dec.** Frustrating diplomatic mission to Naples in wake of King Robert of Anjou's death on behalf of Pope Clement and Cardinal Colonna (*Familiares* 5.6); Barbato da Sulmona copies the Mago episode from *Africa* and publicizes it against poet's wishes.
- 1343 Dec.–1345 Feb.** Petrarch's second stay in Parma.
- 1343–45** Continues *Rerum memorandarum libri*, *Africa*.
- 1344** Buys a house in Parma. Engages Moggio Moggi to tutor his son Giovanni.
- 1345 23 Feb.** Flees Parma (*Familiares* 5.10), under attack by Visconti and Gonzaga enemies of Obizzo d'Este, to whom Azzo da Correggio had ceded city. Via Bologna and Modena retreats to Verona.
- 1345 spring** At Verona his friend Guglielmo da Pastrengo shows him the manuscripts of Cicero's *Ad Atticum*, preserved in cathedral library. Transcribes Cicero's letters. Meets Dante's son Jacopo.
- 1345 spring–summer** Returns to *Rerum memorandarum libri*, then abandons it.
- 1345 fall** Brief return to Parma, then Verona; long journey through Tyrol and Rhone valley.
- 1345 late–1347 Nov.** Vaucluse and Avignon.
- 1346 spring** Composes during Lent *De vita solitaria*, on which work continues to 1366, completed in 1371.
- 1346 summer** Begins *Bucolicum carmen*.
- 1346 Oct. 29** Assigned canonry at Parma by Clement VI.
- Ca. 1347** Cardinal Colonna sends Petrarch a big white dog.
- 1347** Visits his brother in the Carthusian monastery at Montrieux. He writes an ecclesiastical petition to live nearby with Socrates. Writes *De otio religioso*; probably begins *Secretum*.
- 1347 summer** Petrarch demonstrates support of Cola, who seized power May 20; sends him *Bucolicum carmen* 5, under cover letter (*Dispersæ* 11). Cf. *Sine nomine* 2, 3. He breaks with Giovanni Colonna (*Bucolicum carmen* 8, "Divortium"), who represents the political faction Cola opposed.
- 1347 Nov. 20** Departs for Italy as Clement VI's envoy to Mastino della

- Scala in Verona to halt King Louis of Hungary's invasion; mission not accomplished. Disillusioned by Cola's failure (*Familiares* 7.7).
- End of 1347** Abandons support for Cola di Rienzo, who abdicates Dec. 15.
- 1347–48** *Psalmi penitenciales* probably composed at this time.
- 1348** Petrarch in Parma and Verona. Laura (April 6) and Giovanni Colonna (July 3) die from the Black Death, news communicated in letters from Socrates. Period of despairing metrical epistle "Ad se ipsum"; *Bucolicum carmen* 9–11.
- 1348 March–1351 June** Petrarch's third period of (discontinuous) association with Parma.
- 1348 Aug. 23** Clement VI approves Petrarch's petition for the archdeaconate of Parma, a "fat" benefice that he held, almost always in absentia, for many years.
- 1349** Probable first revision of *Secretum*.
- 1349 March** Visits Padua at invitation of Jacopo da Carrara.
- 1349 April 18** Petrarch takes possession of a lucrative canonry in Padua, which he held for at least fifteen years and possibly until his death.
- Late 1349–early 1350** Begins to collect *Familiares*.
- 1350** Conceives collection of metrical epistles and composes dedicatory letter to Barbato da Sulmona (*Epytrole* 1.1); Proemial sonnet of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, "Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono."
- 1350 13 Jan.** Dedicatory letter of *Familiares* to Socrates.
- 1350 Oct.** Trip to Rome for the Jubilee with stops each way in Florence, where he meets Giovanni Boccaccio, Zanobi da Strada, Francesco Nelli, and Lapo da Castiglionchio, who introduces him to Quintilian.
- 1351** *Posteritati* drafted.
- 1351 March** Boccaccio visits him in Padua with offer of a chaired professorship at University of Florence.
- 1351 summer–1353 May** Last period in Vacluse and Avignon. Another version of *De viris illustribus*.
- 1351 fall** Turns down offer of appointment as papal secretary; composes more letters for the *Sine nomine*.
- 1351–52** Conception of *Triumphus*? First versions of *Triumphus Cupidinis* and *Triumphus Fame*?
- 1352–53** *Invective contra medicum*, continually revised late into the 1360s.
- 1352 6 Dec.** Clement VI dies.
- 1352 18 Dec.** Innocent VI is chosen as new pope.
- 1353 May–1361** Petrarch's eight years in Milan.

- 1353 Nov. 8** Oration to the Venetian Senate as Visconti ambassador.
- 1353 Nov.** Godfather at the baptism of Marco, son of Bernabò Visconti and Beatrice della Scala.
- 1354 Oct. 7** Oration to the Milanese on death of Archbishop Giovanni Visconti.
- 1354 Dec.** Emperor Charles IV receives Petrarch at Mantua.
- 1354–60** Composition of *De remediis utriusque fortune*.
- 1355** *Invectiva contra quendam magni status hominem sed nullius scientie aut virtutis*. Receives as gift from Boccaccio a handsome manuscript of Augustine's commentary (*Enarrationes*) on the Psalms.
- 1355 March** Exchanges canonry at Lombez for rural church of S. Maria de Capellis in diocese of Teano, previously held by Ludwig van Kempen (Socrates).
- 1356** Year of earliest surviving datings of the *Triumphs*.
- 1356 May–Aug.** Mission to Basel and Prague to meet with Emperor Charles IV, who names Petrarch a Count Palatine.
- 1356 Oct. 18** Basel struck by earthquake, about which Petrarch speaks in *De remediis* 2.91 and *Seniles* 10.2.
- 1356–58** Correggio form of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*.
- 1357** Completes *Bucolicum carmen* (which will be further reworked) with a twelfth eclogue; sends first eclogue to Barbato with revised proemial letter, written in 1350. Corrects *Triumphus Cupidinis* (on which he continues work until 1360); revises *De otio religioso*.
- 1357–59** Composes last three letters of *Sine nomine* to Nelli.
- 1358 April–May** Writes *Sine nomine* 18.
- 1358 19 June** Oration to the city of Novara as Visconti ambassador.
- 1358–59 winter** In Padua.
- 1358 spring** Writes pilgrimage guide (*Itinerarium ad sepulchrum domini nostri Ihesu Christi*) for Giovanni Mandelli. In Padua meets Leontius Pilatus.
- 1359** Epistle to Jacopo Bussolari on behalf of Bernabò Visconti to send dogs from Pavia to Milan. By this year he had composed a *Vita* of the Roman playwright Terence.
- 1359 spring** Boccaccio visits him in Milan for a month.
- 1359 spring–1361 spring** In Milan.
- 1359–1362/63** Chigi form of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*.
- 1360** Completes first draft of last major work, *De remediis utriusque fortune*. His son comes to live with him.
- 1361** Reworks *De vita solitaria*.

- 1361 Jan. 13** Oration at Paris before King John the Good as Gian Galeazzo Visconti's ambassador.
- 1361 spring–1362 April** Petrarch leaves plague outburst in Milan for Padua.
- 1361 summer** Petrarch's son Giovanni dies in plague epidemic in Milan. Socrates dies.
- 1362 (or 1364?)** Death of Azzo da Correggio.
- 1362 May** Returns to Padua.
- 1362 Sept.–end of 1367** Resides mainly in Venice, the city to which he promises his library.
- 1362 Sept. 12** Innocent VI dies.
- 1362 Sept. 28** Urban V takes the papal tiara.
- 1363 spring** Hosts Boccaccio in Venice.
- 1363 fall** Learns of deaths of Francesco Nelli and Barbato da Sulmona.
- 1363 Oct.–early 1364** Works on *Triumphus Fame*.
- 1364** Makes additions to *Bucolicum carmen*; publishes *Epystole*. Hires Giovanni Malpighini as his scribe.
- 1365** As of this year Petrarch held a canonry at Monselice, near Arquà.
- 1366** Urges Urban V to restore the papacy to Rome (*Seniles* 7.1).
- 1366 Jan. or Feb.** Petrarch's grandson born to his daughter Francesca and Francesco da Brossano at his home in Arquà.
- 1366 spring** Completes *De vita solitaria* and sends a copy to the dedicatee, Philippe de Cabassoles.
- 1366 Sept. 1** Petrarch is revising *De remediis*; writes Donato Albanzani that he has nearly finished it (*Sen.* 5.4).
- 1366 Oct. 4** Completes *De remediis*.
- 1366 fall** Giovanni Malpighini completes transcription of *Familiares*; begins to copy *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (Vat. Lat. 3195). Petrarch concludes *Bucolicum carmen*.
- 1366 Dec.** Receives a copy of the translation of Homer by Leontius Pilatus, whom Boccaccio had brought to Florence to carry out that task.
- 1367–70** Writes *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, which he will dedicate to Donato Albanzani.
- 1367** Giovanni Malpighini leaves the service of Petrarch, who continues copying *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* himself, work that will continue until his death. Death of Guido Sette.
- 1367 June** Urban V returns to Italy.
- 1367–1370** Living in Padua, under Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara. Writes *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*.

- 1368 May 19** Petrarch's grandson Francesco dies in Pavia.
- 1368 summer** Returns to work on *De viris illustribus*, at request of Francesco da Carrara; perhaps begins *De gestis Cesaris*.
- 1369** Begins building his house at Arquà.
- 1370 March–1374 July** Resides at his house in Arquà.
- 1370 April 4** Writes his *Testamentum* in anticipation of journey to Rome.
- 1370 late April** Falls seriously ill in Ferrara en route to Rome, to celebrate Urban V's return to that city in 1366; weakened health forces Petrarch to return to Padua.
- 1370 Sept.** Urban V returns to Avignon.
- 1370 19 Dec.** Death of Urban V in Avignon.
- 1370 30 Dec.** Gregory XI named pope.
- 1371** Petrarch in declining health; defies his doctors; writes a supplement to *De vita solitaria* on the life of Saint Romuald.
- 1371–72** Final revision of *Posteritati*.
- 1371–74** Last version of *De viris illustribus*.
- 1372 Aug.** His old friend Philippe de Cabassoles dies.
- 1372 Nov. 15** Petrarch forced by upheavals of war waged by Carrara on Venice to flee Arquà and seek refuge in Padua.
- 1373** Translates Boccaccio's tale of patient Griselda (*Decameron* 10.10) into Latin as *De insigni obedientia et fide uxoriam* and sends it to Boccaccio (*Seniles* 17.3).
- 1373–74** Last stages of Vatican 3195.
- 1373 Jan. 4** Sends Malatesta form of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* to Pandolfo Malatesta. Queriniana form of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* dates from same year.
- 1373 March** *Invectiva contra eum qui maledixit Italie*.
- Early summer 1373** Returns to Arquà after war between Padua and Venice. Corrections to *Triumphus Cupidinis*.
- 1373 Sept. 27** Petrarch travels to Venice to deliver on behalf of Francesco da Carrara the Elder an oration to the Venetians on Oct. 2 and introduce Francesco Novello da Carrara, who will acknowledge Padua's submission to the Adriatic city.
- 1373 Nov. 28** Letter to Francesco da Carrara the Elder on princely government (*Seniles* 14.1).
- 1374** Ninth and last reordering of poems in *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*.
- 1374 15 Jan.–12 Feb.** Drafts *Triumphus Eternitatis*. Final touches follow.
- 1374 July 18/19** Death of Petrarch.







Fig. 1. Giorgio Vasari, *Portrait of Six Tuscan Poets* (1543–44). Oil on panel. The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.