

Modern scholarship's emphasis on the role of Servius as intermediary between Petrarch and Vergil has led to a reading of *Carmen Bucolicum* I as an affirmation of Vergil's program in *Eclogue* I, which, according to the Servian interpretation, amounts to writing an autobiographical, politically tinged allegory for contemporary events (Patterson 1987; Bergin 1974; Hubbard 1998; Lord 1982). Since this reading accords perfectly with what Petrarch writes about his *Carmen Bucolicum* in the preface to his *Epistolae sine nomine*, and since he gives the key to the allegory of *Carmen Bucolicum* I in a different letter (*Fam.* X.4), there is a tendency to think that this simple, straightforward poem has received all the elucidation it requires. I suggest that a reading of *Carmen Bucolicum* I in terms of its dramatic reversal of Tityrus' *recusatio* in *Eclogue* VI would not only contribute to an appreciation of the richness of Petrarch's allusive method, but also highlight a different aspect of Petrarch's reception of Vergil: the teleological *cursus* of the author.

The *recusatio* of *Carmen Bucolicum* I is framed as the poet Silvius' response to an invitation by the monk Monicus to turn away from the roar and tumult of the world. Monicus urges him instead to listen to the sweet sounds of the shepherd David's song *dulci mulcentem sidera cantu* ("soothing the stars with sweet song" I.70). Silvius refuses, rejecting the poet who sings *menia parve...Jerosolime* ("the walls...of little Jerusalem" I.72) in favor of those who sang *Romam Troiamque...et prelia regum* ("of Rome and Troy...and the battles of kings" I.75). More concretely, he sets forth his intention to write of a young man *magnis implentem pascua factis* ("filling the fields with great deeds" I.114) and whom *simul Italides...certatim a litore laudant* ("all the Italians praise in turn from their shores" I.118-9). This reverses the trope as set forth in Vergil *Eclogues* VI in almost every respect: there Tityrus turns away from the world to live in seclusion and is not allowed to sing of *reges et proelia* ("kings and battles" I.3) by a god, whose commands he heeds: *non iniussa cano* ("I will not sing what has not been commanded" I.9). Nor does he sing the *tristia bella* of a famous Roman precisely *namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes, / Vare, tuas cupiant* ("because there will be more than enough who will wish to speak your praises, Varus" I.6-7). More subtle is the contrast of Petrarch I.123 *Orphea promeritum modulabor harundine parva* ("I shall sing of the man who merits the song of Orpheus upon my little reed") with Vergil VI.8 *agrestem tenui meditabor harundine Musam* ("I shall sing a country song upon my slender reed"). It is known that here Petrarch is referring to his future work on Scipio Africanus, a historical Latin epic in hexameters; what then can be the value of the phrase *harundine parva*, not to mention the name of Orpheus and the obvious allusion to the *recusatio* of Vergil's sixth *Eclogue*?

Such seemingly incongruous combinations of Vergilian elements expose a key facet of Petrarch's reception, the notion of the teleological *cursus* of the author, which has been obscured by the Servian tradition's subsumption of Vergil's individual texts into a biographical narrative. From this perspective Petrarch's counter-*recusatio* can be understood as paradoxically embracing its Vergilian model, that is, the whole Vergilian reception. Thus the program of *Carmen Bucolicum* I seems to be not so much to follow any individual *Eclogue* as a model, or even the *Eclogues* as a whole, but rather to create a rich Vergilian pastiche by drawing on the poetry of the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid* all at once.