

Who was Francesco Landini's antagonist in his defense of Ockham?*

Elena Abramov-van Rijk

meir.vanrijk@mail.huji.ac.il

§ L'interesse di Francesco Landini per la filosofia di Guglielmo di Ockham è testimoniata dal suo poema in esametri latini in difesa della Logica di Ockham. Il poema *Vix bene dimidium* – una dura invettiva contro un non meglio specificato detrattore della filosofia di Ockham – è fatto normalmente risalire alla fine degli anni Settanta, inizio degli anni Ottanta del Trecento. Di conseguenza il bersaglio della critica landiniana dovrebbe essere rintracciato fra i colleghi di Landini attivi in quel periodo. Ancora, il poema contiene un'allusione al suddetto bersaglio, che venne notato inizialmente da Antonio Lanza. In questo contributo viene proposta una nuova identificazione del «ydiota rudissimus», secondo la definizione di Landini stesso. Questa ipotesi permette di risolvere numerose questioni problematiche, ad esempio perché il compositore abbia inviato il poema ad Antonio Pievano da Vado e perché una copia del testo sia sopravvissuta ad Avignone.

§ Landini's interest in the philosophy of Ockham is testified by his poem in Latin hexameters defending Ockham's logic. The poem *Vix bene dimidium* – a harsh invective against a certain antagonist of Ockham's philosophy – is generally considered to date from the end of 1370s beginning of 1380s. Consequently, the target of Landini's critique was sought among Landini's colleagues active at this time. Yet, the poem contains a hint at the target of Landini's criticism, first noticed by Antonio Lanza. In this essay a new candidate for the antagonist, or «ydiota rudissimus», as Landini called him, is introduced. My suggestion supposes a much earlier dating, and considers the poem to be the product of a young Landini. This hypothesis resolves a number of further difficult points, for example, the reasons why the composer sent the poem to Antonio Pievano da Vado, and why its copy survived in Avignon.

AMONG Francesco Landini's intellectual interests, the philosophy of William Ockham holds an important place. The most significant testimony of Landini's interest in Ockham is his poem in 176 Latin hexameters *Vix bene dimidium* defending Ockham's logic (*facti in laudem loyce Ocham*).¹ The poem is a harsh and extremely emotional invective against a certain antagonist of Ockham's philosophy. It describes Landini's night dream vision, in which the spirit of Ockham appears and complains of a certain ignorant man, «ydiota rudissimus», who has attacked the basis of his philosophy.

Modern scholars consider the poem *Vix bene dimidium* to have been composed at the end of the 1370s and certainly before 1382, the date of the only extant copy, made in Avignon and now in the manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 688, fols. 132r-135v. Yet, scholarly opinion has diverged regarding the target of Landini's critiques, since the only basis on which to form conjectures was the content of the poem, which is quite intricate and often unclear. There are several details in the text that can be interpreted in favor of this or that candidate for the role of the antagonist.² However, it is not easy to distinguish, in a poem of this kind, between factual data and the conventional features of the genre of invective. For example, the Ydiota's scant knowledge of grammar, or the low level of his speech, better suited to the ignorant public and women, could well have been standard accusations.³

* This essay is a revised version of the paper presented at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference in Certaldo, on July 4-7, 2013. I wish to thank my colleagues and friends – Dorothea Baumann, Aldo Menichetti, Agostino Ziino and Bonnie Blackburn – for discussing various aspects of this research with me. I am especially grateful to Bonnie for her attentive editing and to Leo Franc Holford-Strevens for his very helpful comments on the Latin texts.

¹ J.J. Stinson lists six modern editions of Landini's poem in defense of Ockham (STINSON 1984, p. 278), the first of which was the edition in *Il Paradiso degli Alberti* 1867, vol. II, pp. 296-301. The most relevant recent editions are by Antonio Lanza (LANZA 1971, pp. 233-238), LONG 1981, pp. 219-222, with an English translation at pp. 136-141. Also, the text of his ballata *Contemplan le gran cose* reflects an important tenet of Ockham that religious and spiritual postulates have no need to be proven; they must be accepted as they are. Michael Long quotes from the American historian of the Middle Ages Carl Stephenson on Ockham's approach to the postulates of the Christian religion: «The articles of the Christian faith, Ockham declared, should be accepted as such. They cannot be proven by reason; nor can they be made the basis of knowledge. In other words, science is science and theology is theology; the two are essentially different and must not be confused» (LONG 1981, p. 134). See STINSON 1984, p. 271. Daniele Sabaino also linked the ballata *Contemplan le gran cose* to the Ockhamist philosophy, given that it «condensa nel breve giro d'una ballata monostrofica la *Weltschauung* d'una invettiva "in laudem loyce Ocham" lunga centottanta esametri latini» (SABAINO 1999, p. 262).

² Antonio Lanza has surveyed conjectures about the addressee of Landini's invective made so far by other philologists (LANZA 1971, pp. 118-119).

³ «Il poemetto latino in esametri in lode di Guglielmo di Occam, che il L. dedica ad Antonio pievano di Vado, maestro di Giovanni Gherardi, rappresenta un caso letterario assai dibattuto, in quanto vera e propria invettiva contro un personaggio della vita culturale fiorentina lasciato anonimo. Varie ipotesi sono state formulate sull'oggetto di questi animosi versi: Salutati, Marsili, Niccoli e Francesco Petrarca. Quale che ne fosse il destinatario, esso è probabilmente destinato a rimanere sconosciuto; di molte persone appartenenti al circolo delle frequentazioni landiniane potrebbero difatti essere scomparse completamente le tracce» (FIORI 2004).

Nevertheless, one point in the description of our ignoramus has been seen by the scholars, among them Antonio Lanza and Michael Long, as a remarkable and clearly individual characteristic of the hero, or rather antihero, of Landini’s poem: his irreverent attitude to the great ancient philosophers Cicero and Seneca. The spirit of Ockham complains that the Ydiota calls Cicero «his very own Cicero» and Seneca «his father»:

Teque suum appellat Ciceronem... (v. 133) **And calls you his very own Cicero...**

Odit eam obscurus, quam liquit in orbe celebrem	This nobody loathes the worldwide fame that
Questivique diu virtutum limite famam	left behind him and long sought by the path of
Seneca ; quando suum rudis his ydiota fatetur	when this untutored ignoramus asserts that he
Appellatque patrem , negat ille, antroque	[Seneca] is his father and so calls him, he
rubescit	denies it,
Conditus obscuro, sua quaeque volumina	and blushes in a dark cave, damning all his
damnans.	books.

(LONG 1981, p. 140)

Lanza and Long have examined the interest of their proposed candidates in the philosophy of Cicero and Seneca. Lanza assumed him to be the late Trecento humanist Niccolò Niccoli, for whom the both philosophers were his favorite authors.⁴ Yet, Long rejected this surmise as hardly tenable, since Niccoli would have been at most seventeen years old when the poem was copied in the only extant manuscript.⁵

Long was not very categorical regarding the addressee of Landini’s invective, considering a number of possible candidates, among them even Petrarch. As he noted, some passages may indeed point to Petrarch, considering his deeply affectionate relationship to Cicero and Seneca: Petrarch addresses Cicero with a similar appeal, «Franciscus Ciceroni suo salutem» (*Familiares* (XXIV, 3), on 16 June 1345), although from what is extant of Petrarch’s legacy it does not appear that he ever called Seneca his ‘father’.⁶ Long discarded Petrarch’s candidacy, since «the notion of applying such a term [ydiota] to one of the great lights of literary history may seem bizarre» (LONG 1981, p. 147), notwithstanding evidence that Petrarch «was viewed in this way by some of his contemporaries», mainly the followers of Aristotle’s philosophy. This

⁴ «erano gli autori prediletti» (LANZA 1971, p. 127).

⁵ «Niccoli was born in 1364, and thus would have been in his teens at the time the poem was written. His earliest academic training was undertaken (in part under Marsili’s tutelage) only after his retirement from the family wool business around 1385, following the death of his father. Consequently, Niccoli must be considered as unlikely candidate for the demagogue described by Landini» (LONG 1983, p. 91).

⁶ «Petrarch also referred often to the works of Seneca, although I have found no evidence that he “names Seneca his father”. It is not at all unlikely that he did, whether in writing or speaking, for in 1360 he wrote that he “loved Cicero as if he were my father” (*Seniles*, II, 28, August 1364)» (LONG 1983, p. 92).

evidence comes from Petrarch himself; he reports the opinion of some of his Venetian colleagues in an invective begun in 1367:

Virum bonum, imo optimum dicunt, qui, o
utinam non malus, utinamque non pessimus in
iudicio Dei sim! Eundem tamen illiteratum
prorsus et ydiotam ferunt.⁷

They say I am a good man, and even the best of
men. If only I were not bad, if only I were not
the worst, in God's judgment! At the same
time, they call me completely illiterate and an
ignoramus.

Long's opinion, agreeing with the surmise by Giuseppe Saitta, is that the most probable candidate was the Florentine humanist Luigi Marsili, prior of the Augustinian monastery of Santo Spirito in the 1380s.⁸ Yet, Gianluca D'Agostino finds Long's arguments unconvincing, particularly those considering Landini's affinity with Augustinians. Bearing in mind several inner contradictions related to the poem *Vix bene dimidium*, D'Agostino notes: «What critics agree on the poem is that ... it might have expressed the voice of an academic, 'conservative' party, engaged in one of those cultural diatribes that flourished at the end of the 14th century between the 'ancients' and the 'moderns'» (D'AGOSTINO 2009, pp. 212-213).

The adversary's profile, as extracted from Landini's verses, can be applied, with more or less conviction, to different persons, so that a definitive conclusion in favor of one of them hardly seems feasible. However, there is additional information in the text regarding the identity of the antagonist; it was noticed by Antonio Lanza, though scarcely considered, and was completely ignored by Michael Long. It is the following (vv. 149-153):

Sed longe cunctis, longe infelicioꝛ iste
Qui gemit hic – cuius clarum et venerabile nomen
Siluit, impositum tanquam cognomen eidem –
Quid memorem prisce laceratum dentibus avum
Indocti agricolę durique satellitis hujus?

(LONG 1981, p. 222)

Unfortunately, the literary style of the poem is less than perfect, and it strongly resists an adequate translation, especially this particular passage. Lanza proposed the following translation in Italian of this excerpt, recognizing in it a hint at yet another ancient philosopher:

Ma di gran lunga, di gran lunga più infelice degli altri due spiriti è questo
che qui geme, il cui illustre e venerabile cognome,
imposto come soprannome a quello, Occam tacque.
Perché dovrei menzionare l'avo lacerato dai denti
di questo antiquato ignorante villano, che ne è un ottuso seguace?

(LANZA 1971, p. 118)

⁷ *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, II. See PETRARCA 2003, pp. 232-235.

⁸ «For a number of historical reasons, Luigi Marsili would be an ultimately more satisfactory suggestion» (LONG 1981, p. 150).

I suggest the following English translation, encouraged by the help and comments of Leofranc Holford-Strevens:

But far more miserable, far more indeed than the other two spirits [Cicero and Seneca],
Is this man who is groaning over here - whose famous and revered name,
Imposed on that one as a by-name, [Ockham] has not revealed.
Why should I mention the grandfather, rent by the teeth
Of this ancient uneducated hick, who is a boorish follower of him?

What clearly follows from this passage is that this third philosopher appears to be even more injured by the Ydiota than Cicero and Seneca. Indeed, of Cicero he adopted 'only' the works, as noted here:

sibi quem temerarius iste (Proh scelus) ascribit, divina volumina namque Allegat, recitat non intellecta popello	whom this brazen man (oh what a crime!) Counts to his own credit, for he cites divine books, Recites them, though they are not understood by the [rabble]
Nec sibi: percurrit tua cuncta volumina , Marce...	Or by himself: he runs through all your books , Marcus...
(vv. 128-131)	(LONG 1981, p. 140)

From the third philosopher, «far more miserable», our Ydiota stole the name. In other words, he adopted it as his own pseudonym, under which he became known among the larger public. Landini, thus, counted on his readers' familiarity with the situation, not giving more than obscure hints at the target of his critiques («Why should I mention the *grandfather?*»)⁹ Therefore, the name of this ancient philosopher, *avus*, is crucial in the present inquiry.

Since Lanza considered the antagonist to be Niccolò Niccoli, he searched for the philosopher among the ancient authors who were most preferred by Niccoli.¹⁰ He suggested Marcus Terentius Varro, Niccoli's favorite author, but he failed to ascertain whether Niccoli had used the name Varro, or any other name of an ancient philosopher, as his pseudonym.¹¹ The same is true regarding Marsili, and in fact all other candidates within Landini's Florentine circle: no one is known to have used the name of an ancient philosopher as his own.¹² Therefore, we must search for someone else who was known under the

⁹ Besides, it was typical of the genre of invective to conceal the name of a criticized person under different clues, intelligible only to those in the know.

¹⁰ «Chi è l'avum che compare dopo Cicerone e Seneca e il cui nome, taciuto da Landini, divenne il soprannome di Niccoli stesso?» (LANZA 1971, p. 127).

¹¹ «Ma c'è una difficoltà: per quante ricerche abbia fatto, non sono riuscito ad avere la prova che il Niccoli fu effettivamente soprannominato Varrone. Mi risulta, però, dall'invettiva del Benvenuti che il nomignolo del Niccoli fu Aristarco (egli lo chiama esplicitamente, infatti, nostri temporis Aristarcus). Del resto, per un letterato che aveva interessi prevalentemente grammaticali non c'era soprannome più consona» (LANZA 1971, p. 128).

¹² One may recall the music theorist of the thirteenth century Lambertus, who was largely known among his colleagues as Aristotle.

name of an ancient philosopher no less famous than Cicero and Seneca. That will be our starting point.

«Famous and revered name»

Following Landini's logic, if Seneca was called *pater*/father, the term *avus*/grandfather or ancestor, applied to the third philosopher, suggests a philosopher more ancient than Seneca and Cicero. It seems, however, that it was not so much a question of pure chronology, but of the concept; that is, for ancient Roman philosophy the 'paternal' one was Greek. Hence, we need to find someone who was using the name of a venerable Greek philosopher in Landini's time. As it turns out, we know only one person in the period after about 1350 (the year of Ockham's death) who precisely fits this requirement: Socrates (called by Petrarch «quasi philosophorum pater» (*Fam.* XVII, 8), that is, definitely *avus*).

The name Socrates was used as a pseudonym by Ludwig van Kempen, also known as Ludwig van Beringen, Lodewijk Heyligen or Ludovicus Sanctus, a music theorist of Flemish origin. The identification of van Kempen with Socrates was first proposed by Ursmer Berlière in 1905, and then convincingly proved by Henry Cochin in 1918 (BERLIÈRE 1905; COCHIN 1918-19.).

Not very much is known about this person with certainty.¹³ He entered the papal court in Avignon in 1329, where he served as *magister in musica* to Cardinal Giovanni Colonna. He survived the plague of 1348 and seemingly stayed in Avignon until his death in 1361. He was probably the author of two music treatises: *De musicae commendatione* (now lost) and *Sentencia in musica sonora subiecti Ludovici sancti*.¹⁴ More recently, Andries Welkenhuysen reedited and commented on the treatise *Musica sonora* and also on a letter by van Kempen (or Beringen) of April 1348 containing a description of the plague (WELKENHUYSEN 1983).

However, the main significance of Ludwig van Kempen in our context is that he was Petrarch's best friend, to whom the great poet dedicated his *Familiarium rerum liber*:

Hec igitur tibi, **frater**, diversicoloribus, ut sic dicam, licis texta dicaverim.

(*Fam.*, I, 1)¹⁵

Thus, I will dedicate to you, **my brother**, these woven canvases made of, so to speak, threads of various colours.¹⁶

¹³ See also GIGER 2001.

¹⁴ The first editor of the *Musica sonora*, Ambrogio Amelli, supposed the author to be the bishop of Toulouse (b. 1274; see AMELLI 1909). The treatise is available online from a Florentine MS: <http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/14th/LUDSENT_MFAB1051.html>.

¹⁵ All Petrarch's letters are cited from PETRARCA 2004-9.

¹⁶ I use the English translation by Aldo S. Bernardo (PETRARCA 2005), when possible. In this specific case, however, it was not completely accurate, since the word *frater*, very important for the context of relationship between the two, was dropped.

He was the addressee of 20 letters in the *Familiars*, and of a number of letters in other collections. Petrarch mentioned Socrates several times in letters to other persons, calling him *Socrates suus*, or *meus* (and *Socrates noster* in the letters to their common friends). Petrarch’s correspondence with his Socrates encompasses a large spectrum of topics, from current news to elevated philosophical subjects, and, curiously, even a «visio nocturna», in which Petrarch and his Socrates find a pile of gold («monete pervetuste auree»), which could have changed their lives (*Familiars*, VII, 3). Unfortunately, not a single one of Socrates’s letters to Petrarch has survived. Since our main information about Ludwig van Kempen stems from Petrarch’s writings, it will be useful to summarize it here.¹⁷

Van Kempen’s year of birth was apparently 1304, since Petrarch mentioned that they both were born in the same time:

Hec te igitur michi talem virum genuit atque in lucem misit illo ipso tempore quo ego procul alio terrarum orbe nascebar. (<i>Fam.</i> , IX, 2)	Thus, this country [Nunia of Campinia] bore for me such an illustrious man, and brought him to light at the very time I was being born far away in another part of the globe. (PETRARCA 2005, II, p. 4)
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

From this letter we also learn about their trip to Lombez¹⁸ in 1330, the year their friendship began. An important feature of the relation between the great poet and Ludwig van Kempen was, indeed, their extraordinary closeness, which Petrarch stresses on any occasion, often calling his Socrates «mi frater» (my brother), as here:

Mi frater, mi frater, mi frater ... heu michi, frater amantissime, quid dicam? (<i>Fam.</i> VIII, 7, ad Socratem suum)	Oh brother, brother, brother ... alas dearest brother, what shall I say? (PETRARCA 2005, I, p. 415)
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

and «alter idem», as in the letter to *suo Socrate* («amicus est **alter idem**» (*Fam.* IX, 9)). The great poet dreamed about some kind of brotherhood that would include Ludwig van Kempen and his other friends, Luca Cristiani and Mainardo Accrusio, in *una domus*:¹⁹

cur non tandem domus una coniungit, quos olim iunxit unitas voluntatum.. (<i>Fam.</i> VIII, 4, A Olimpico, May 19 1348)	Why does not a single home unite us, who were once willingly united? (PETRARCA 2005, I, p. 407)
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

¹⁷ See also BILLANOVICH 1996, Ch. XVIII, *Tra Italia e Fiandre nel Trecento. Francesco Petrarca e Ludovico Santo di Beringen*, pp. 362-376.

¹⁸ Lombez is situated in southwestern France and was where Cardinal Giovanni Colonna had a residence.

¹⁹ In some of the *Familiars* (XVIII, 10 and XX, 9) Petrarch mentions his project of a certain «philosophic convivium», in which his Florentine friend Francesco Nelli would participate. Regarding other participants, opinions diverge: some scholars suppose that among them was Boccaccio, while Ernst H. Wilkins thinks Socrates was as well (WILKINS 1990, p. 208).

Later, in the first half of 1350, Petrarch had serious thought about settling with his Socrates in Padua or Parma (*Fam.* IX, 2 and 9); he repeated his invitation in 1359, asking his Socrates to come to Milan (*Fam.*, XXI, 9). Though, this plan never worked out.²⁰

Yet, their friendship was put to a severe test when Petrarch accepted the invitation of the archbishop Giovanni Visconti, governor of Milan, to settle there in 1353. Many of Petrarch's correspondents condemned him for this unexpected decision, which was very problematic from their viewpoint.²¹ In Petrarch's correspondence with Ludwig van Kempen there is a break of six years, between the letter to his Socrates sent from Vaucluse to Avignon on April 1, 1353 (*Fam.*, XVI, 7) and the letter *Fam.*, XX, 15, on February 10, 1359, written in Milan. The correspondence resumes after that with some other letters and continues up to the death of Socrates in 1361. The reason for the interruption of their correspondence was van Kempen's strong objection to Petrarch's decision to settle in Milan. As becomes evident in a letter to Giovanni Aghinolfi, chancellor of the Gonzaga in Mantua, on January 1, 1354 (*Fam.*, XVII,10), Petrarch did not expect van Kempen's negative reaction, so that he decided to wait for an occasion to explain his motives to his Socrates when they would meet in person:

Eodem enim forte tempore quo in frontem argumentorum tuorum ictus excipio, transalpinus amicus literis quoque non minus validis quam urbanis, nudum, ut ita dixerim, tergum ferit, querens itidem ex me quid est quod ego, tantus ruralis affectator otii, in tot urbana negotia sim relapsus sponte, ut sibi videtur, mea...

For nearly simultaneously with the blows of your arguments upon my brow, a transalpine friend in a touching but courteous letter struck my defenseless back, so to speak, likewise asking why I, so taken with rural tranquility, have willingly fallen, in his opinion, into so many urban affairs...

Ecce ut duos amicos e diverso terrarum tractu in idem pugne genus similitudo quedam contraxit ingenii...

So here we have two similar ways of thinking, prompting two friends from different regions of Europe to engage me in a similar kind of battle...

Amico sane alteri viva voce, si illuc vivus integerque pervenero — questio enim subdifficilis et, nisi fallor, utilis comunis est illi tecum —, tibi autem scripto trepidante respondeo...

To my other friend I shall respond in person, if I ever do arrive there alive and well — for his inquiry is somewhat difficult and, I believe, has much in common with yours...

(PETRARCA 2005, III, p. 31)

²⁰ Most of Petrarch's letters to Ludwig van Kempen were written from Italy, during his trips in 1343-1345 and 1348-1351, when they were separated. There are a few letters written in Vaucluse before Petrarch's final departure for Italy, at the end of 1352 and the beginning of 1353.

²¹ This issue has been discussed by many scholars, for example by DOTTI 1972, FENZI 2006 and FENZI 2004.

Though this transalpine friend is not named in this letter, Ugo Dotti rightly supposed him to be Petrarch’s Socrates.²² Indeed, the friend mentioned was not an Italian, for he came from another part of Europe than Aghinolfi. It is also clear that he must have been the closest friend, since Petrarch, apparently deeply shocked by his rejection («struck my defenseless back»), reserved for him an exclusive form of personal explanation at their future meeting. Actually, there is no letter to van Kempen in which Petrarch tries to explain himself. However, their meeting never happened, and the silence was interrupted only when their common friend Lelio asked Petrarch to resolve a certain conflict with Socrates, in 1359:

Iandudum, mi Socrates, cessat inter nos
vicissitudo illa literarum, magnum absentie
remedium, cuius cessationis et occupatio
utriusque nostrum et multe forte alie sunt
cause.

(*Fam.*, XX, 15)

It has been a long time, my Socrates, that we
have ceased corresponding, that great cure for
absence, because of our affairs and perhaps
other reasons.

(PETRARCA 2005, III, p. 164)

Petrarch considered his Socrates to be a very learned man and highly esteemed his musical talents. In this regard, Petrarch’s remark about the reasons why Ludwig van Kempen was called Socrates is especially interesting:

Nomen tibi a gravitate morum ac iocunditate
indictum, cumque te ars musica in qua
regnas, Aristoxenum dici vellet, vicit
iudicium amicorum ut noster Socrates
dicereris.

(*Fam.*, IX, 2)

You name was given you because of the dignity
and cheerfulness of your character; although the
art of music in which you excel suggested the
name of Aristoxenus, the judgment of friends
prevailed that you must be called our Socrates.

(PETRARCA 2005, II, 4)

That Ludwig van Kempen was an impressive personality, gifted with many talents, including eloquence, also appears from Petrarch’s description in another letter.

Sed incredibilitatem audientium vigor animi
et facundia loquentis excutiet. Multum
Socrati meo de re qualibet, sed multo plus
autoritatis ac fidei fuerit amico de secretis
amici consiliis disserenti; ...

(Petrarch, *Fam.* VII, 6).

But the strength of your mind and the eloquence
of your speech will drive out the incredulity of
your listeners. My Socrates has always been
worthy of authority and of trust in whatever he
discusses...

(PETRARCA 2005, I, p. 348)

A propos, in Landini’s critique the Ydiota is especially good at moving effeminate crowds with his agile speeches:

²² «un’altra [lettera] da un amico transalpino, quasi certamente Ludovico di Beringen, il suo Socrate...» (PETRARCA 2004-9, vol. IV, p. 2437).

Ille, supercilio gravis elatoque superbus	That man, severe with his superciliousness [and proud
Ore, per indoctas vulgi reboare catervas	Of his open mouth, seeks to resound through [the uneducated masses
Queritat, atque inter muliebria phylosephatur	Of the rabble and philosophizers among the [effeminate
Agmina ... (vv. 95-98)	Crowds.

(LONG 1981, pp. 221 and 139)

Striking is Petrarch's remark that although his best friend «Lodovico»²³ came from the northern lands, his soul and behavior were so Italian that his non-Italian provenance was barely credible:

Quem origo fecit alienigenam, mansuetudo animi et conversatio longior atque in primis amor mei magna italicum ex parte te fecerit. (<i>Fam.</i> , IX, 2)	Though your origin was foreign, the gentleness of your spirit, your extensive sociability and especially your love for me has made you in large measure Italian. (PETRARCA 2005, II, p. 4)
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Licet enim extra orbem italicum natus sit, nemo tamen animo et voluntate magis italicus vivit; quod ut ita esset, nos duo ante omnes mortales fecimus. (<i>Fam.</i> , XX, 13)	For though he may not have been born in Italy, no one was ever more Italian in mind and inclination; we two, more than anyone else, made him that way. (To Lelio). (PETRARCA 2005, III, p. 155) ²⁴
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Barbarice nato homini rarum prorsus! Sed consuetudo longior et convictus assiduus nosterque amor sic illum moribus, sic affectibus nostris imbuerant, quasi media natus esset Italia. Noster erat, nostra omnia mirabatur et pene iam oblitus originis, nil in terris nisi Italiam suspirabat (<i>Seniles</i> I, 3)	It is really surprising for someone who was born in barbaric lands: but our long acquaintance, our being together, and our love have so much filled him with our customs and feelings, that he seemed to be born in the heart of Italy. He was ours, and admirer of all our things, and had almost forgotten his origins, and desired only Italy. (To Francesco Nelli)
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

However, there are no documents to prove Ludwig van Kempen's closer connection with Italy, or anything that would have testified to his presence there. Petrarch himself does not tell us whether Socrates was ever in Italy. In the letter to his Socrates on June, 23 1359, Petrarch notes that

Ea nunquam ex quo primum distrahi cepimus, tandiu nobis ante hoc tempus erepta est; iam michi septimus sine te in hac regia urbe annus agitur. (<i>Fam.</i> , XXI, 9)	Never before has this been so long denied us, ever since our first separation; already seven years have passed since I have been living in this royal city [Milan] without you. (PETRARCA 2005, III, p. 183)
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

²³ In the earlier autographs of the *Familiars*, Socrates was called Lodovico or Ludovico. Roberta Antognini reports an inscription in the margins of the Codex Vaticano latino 3196: «1353, veneris. 15 februarii, circa solis occasum, digresso ante vesperos Ludovico magistro (venerdì 15 febbraio 1353, verso l'ora del tramonto, dopo una visita di Ludwig [van Kempen] prima di sera)» (ANTOGNINI 2008, p. 40).

²⁴ Angelo Tosetti, a Roman politician in Avignon, was named Lelio in Petrarch's Helicon.

Yet, it is intriguing that Ludwig van Kempen was known in Tuscan circles of literati specifically under the name Socrates.²⁵ The convincing evidence with this regard stems from Giovanni Boccaccio’s letter, written in Verona on July 18, 1353, in which he too criticized Petrarch’s decision to settle in Milan. Boccaccio used Petrarch’s bucolic name Silvanus and asked him about the reaction of his friends:

quid suus sacer Monicus²⁶ dicet? quid suus Socrates? What will your sacred Monk say? What your Socrates?

(Giovanni Boccaccio, *Epistolae*, IX)
(*Lettere a Petrarca* 2012, p. 250)

Of course, Boccaccio could have received this information from Petrarch’s letters or directly during his trip to Italy in 1350-51, when Petrarch passed through Florence for a few days in 1350, renewing his friendship with Boccaccio (begun in Naples in 1341), and making friends with some other Florentine literati. In the above-cited letter (*Fam.*, XXI, 9), Petrarch himself testifies that Socrates was already familiar to his Italian friends, insisting on his invitation to join him in Milan:

michi simul tibi que morem gesseris multisque preterea quibus pridem carus, nondum notus, magnam tui opinionem – quam presentia, michi crede, non minuet – premisisti You will be doing [by coming to Italy] something for me as well as for yourself and for many others to whom you have long been dear, though not personally known, who held you in great esteem – which, believe me, your presence will not diminish.

(PETRARCA 2005, III, p. 183)

Some Florentines could have become acquainted with Socrates when visiting Avignon, for example the above-mentioned Francesco Nelli (d. 1363), Petrarch’s Simonides, the prior of the Florentine church of Santi Apostoli and the addressee of the greatest number of Petrarch’s *Familiars*, as well as the dedicatee of the *Epistolae Seniles*. In the spring of 1357, Nelli moved to Avignon, on business of the Curia, where he remained for a year. In his letter to Petrarch of September 8, he described his stay in Avignon, where he met many of Petrarch’s friends. As soon as they heard Petrarch’s name, they all became very friendly with Nelli, among them Ludwig van Kempen:

²⁵ Petrarch mentioned Socrates in a letter to his relative Giovanni dall’Incisa (*Fam.*, VII, 12), when he commissioned to him to search for books in Tuscan libraries. From the letter to Niccolò dei Vetuli (d. 1385), the bishop of Viterbo since 1350, written at the beginning of 1353 before Petrarch’s definitive return in Italy, we learn that Socrates was also a good friend of Niccolò (*Fam.*, XVI, 6). Petrarch mourns the death of «his Socrates» in a letter to his Florentine friend Francesco Nelli, called Simonides, in the *Seniles*, in 1361, and later to Giovanni Boccaccio in 1364 (*Seniles*, III, 1).

²⁶ Francesco’s brother Gherardo, a Cistercian monk.

nec non Socratem hunc novum, virum fidelem
ac secundum cor tuum, quem tibi equus et
simplex animus longaque consuetudo
conciliant...

(*Lettere a Petrarca* 2012, p. 140)

It was not different with this new Socrates, the
faithful man and close to your heart, who is
equal to you both in his simple soul and
because of your long-lasting acquaintance.

Nelli too notes the outstanding similarity, spiritual of course, between Petrarch and his Socrates. Hence, Petrarch's curriculum may shed light on Socrates's philosophic preferences, since both friends apparently did not differ in their philosophic tastes. It may therefore be conceivable that van Kempen, like Petrarch, prized Cicero and Seneca in a similarly intimate way, and even more, by calling Seneca «his father» and adopting the name of the 'grandfather' Socrates, being his «satellitius durus». Significantly, the only work of van Kempen that has survived, the treatise *Musica sonora*, reveals a purely philosophic approach to the essence of music. He uses traditional scholastic methods of logical demonstration, a series of syllogisms, for example:

Illud debet esse subiectum in scientia de quo
determinatur per totam scientiam sive artem.
Sed de tali ente relato ad sonum determinatur
per totam musicam. Ergo ens tale discretum
relatum ad sonum est subiectum in ipsa
musica.

In knowledge, that thing must be its subject
which is determined through the entire field of
knowledge or art. But through the essence
related to sound the whole of music is
determined. Thus, such a discrete essence
related to sound is the subject of music.

(AMELLI 1909, p. 380)

We know that Petrarch did not agree with the new English school of dialectics. He criticized it in a series of letters to his companion in studies at the University of Bologna, Tommaso Caloiro da Messina (1302-1341), written between 1333 and 1337 (*Fam.*, I, 7-12). This was one of the reasons that Michael Long seriously considered Petrarch as the possible target of Landini's critiques. Ludwig van Kempen, being Petrarch's *alter idem*, must have had similar convictions in philosophy.

How would Francesco Landini have heard about Ludwig van Kempen? If not directly from Petrarch in 1350, it could have been from their common friends, namely from those who frequented Avignon, where they could have encountered him. For a blind composer any information perceived by hearing must have been, indeed, valuable and considerable. Yet, how should a foreign musician, in all likelihood personally unknown to Landini, have become a focus of his attention? What could have motivated Landini to give time to such a 'power-consuming' labor as a long poem in Latin hexameters?

Antonio Pievano da Vado, an excellent teacher

The questions above seem difficult, in the absence of any documented evidence of Landini's intentions. Yet, one more detail related to the poem *Vix bene dimidium* may bring us closer to the solution of this enigmatic problem.

As the inscription in the only extant copy informs us, Landini sent his poem to Antonio pievano da Vado: *Incipiunt versus Francisci organiste de Florentia, missi ad Dominum Antonium plebanum da Vado, gramatice, loyce, rethorice optimum instructorem, et facti in laudem loyce Ocham*. Who was this man, to whom Landini wanted to show his Latin exercise?

Information about Antonio da Vado is even less forthcoming; somehow he has escaped scholarly attention. Even the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* has no separate entry for him; however, he appears in two other entries, where he is mentioned with regard to Landini's poem (FIORI 2004) and presented as a teacher of the Florentine man of letters Giovanni Gherardi da Prato.²⁷

Antonio Lanza provided a short description of Antonio da Vado in his discussion of Gherardi's poem *Philomena*. Like Landini's father, the painter Jacopo, Antonio da Vado was a native of Casentino. As Lanza writes, unlike other Florentine humanists of the last quarter of the Trecento (Salutati, Marsili, Niccoli), Antonio belonged to the trend in Florentine philosophic circles in which the newest tendencies in scholastic philosophy, promoted mainly by the English logicians, were highly esteemed. He was in contact with Coluccio Salutati, being the addressee of Salutati's letter of 25 October, 1382, from which Lanza inferred that Antonio had been chosen as an assistant of Domenico di Bandino in the Studio fiorentino. From the inscription of Landini's poem we learn, indeed, that Antonio was «grammaticae, loycae, rhetoricae optimus instructor», an excellent teacher of grammar, logic and rhetoric. He was a friend of Sacchetti, with whom he exchanged a number of sonnets (CCXVI-CCXVIII a/b) (SACCHETTI 1990, pp. 337-340). Moreover, as Lanza states, Antonio gave a private lecture on the *Commedia* of Dante in 1381 (LANZA 1971, pp. 184-185).

Regarding the latter, the only basis for such a deduction is evidently the caption that introduces the three pairs of sonnets of correspondence between the two in Sacchetti's autograph codex Ashburnham 574 (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence). It states: *Franco Sacchetti mandò a messer Antonio pivovano, eccellente dantista e di quello lettore, anno MCCCLXXXI*. Does it mean that Antonio gave a lecture on Dante once in 1381, or that he was giving lessons on the *Commedia* (and perhaps other writings) on various occasions, whereas the date 1381 refers only to Sacchetti's sonnet? I think the latter is more reasonable, since, as it appears in Sacchetti's chronological arrangement, this date nicely accords with the surrounding dated poems (between 1378 and 1380/85).²⁸ On the other hand, in sonnet CCXVIII b Sacchetti praises Antonio's style of reading, or recitation («l'alto stil sereno / de la

²⁷ «Il poema *Philomena* ... indica quale maestro del G. anche Antonio di Vado (Antonio pievano di S. Martino a Vado, nel Valdarno casentino, amico di Coluccio Salutati e di Franco Sacchetti), che a Firenze espose privatamente la *Commedia* nel 1381 e che, nello stesso periodo, fu coadiutore del maestro di grammatica Domenico di Bandino d'Arezzo» (BAUSI 2000).

²⁸ Regarding Sacchetti's arrangement of his verses in the autograph codex Ashburnham 574 there is a consensus that it is «grosso modo ... cronologico», according to BRAMBILLA AGENO 1953, p. 257.

lettura che mostrate apieno» [the elevated serene style/ of the reading (declamation) that you show completely] vv. 6-7), supporting thereby the information given in the caption regarding Antonio's activity as reciter of verses.²⁹ In the absence of any other documents on Antonio da Vado, the analysis of his correspondence with Sacchetti and the content of Salutati's letter to him may provide further information.

The main topic of Franco Sacchetti and Antonio da Vado's exchange of sonnets is the question of the continuity in Italian literature after the passing away of the 'tre corone': Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. Sacchetti sees Antonio da Vado as a successor, recognizing the rhetorical perfection of his poetry and its stylistic supremacy over his own poems; he compares Antonio's poetry to a sweet viol versus his own rude trumpet («perché tromba o corno/ tra la dolce viola è duro trono»). In Sacchetti's opinion, Antonio deserves the laurel wreath, but the latter modestly rejects this idea.

The reasons why Sacchetti thinks him worthy of this honor are remarkable. In sonnet CCXVII a (the first of the second pair), Antonio confirms his innate passion for the art of poetry, but states that his true talent lies instead in the ability to discover those who are blessed with poetic fervor:

Virtù, ...
m'accende d'amar in fra' mortali,
s'alcun fra gli altri conosco, ne' quali
più si diffunda del suo gran valore.

Virtue...
Made me love, among the people, when I find
one amidst many others who is blessed with
this particular talent (in poetry).

Sacchetti responds (sonnet CCXVII b) that Antonio is among those who were chosen by Virtue to elevate unpolished persons. Sacchetti himself prefers such men to incompetent rhymesters, even if they have not produced a solid poetic corpus. He wonders why they should not deserve the laurel wreath. Here we may see a portrait of the perfect teacher, «optimus instructor», capable of finding talented persons and carefully developing them.

Virtù, ch'a' vostri fece sempre onore,
eletto v'ha tra' suoi razionali

The virtue, which always praised your (verses?),
Has chosen you among her followers blessed by
[intelligence,

per diriz<z>ar molti materiali,
che volesson gustare sommo sapore;
e io, che son del numero maggiore

So that you would educate many unpolished persons,
Who desire to taste the most exquisite flavors.
And I, who am among the greater number of the
[unpolished

tra gl'ignoranti, e minor tra' morali,
pur ho disio d'amare i vostri equali,
ben che di pochi se ne veggia il fiore.

And the lesser of the elevated,
Give preference to persons of your kind,
Even though one sees the flower (poetic composi-
[tions) of few.

Lasso, perché nessun degna l'alloro?
(SACCHETTI 1990, p. 339)

Alas, why does none of them merit the laurel
[wreath?

²⁹ In all likelihood, the idea of Anonio's act of reading Dante in 1381 goes back to Alessandro Wesselofsky, namely to a misinterpretation he made in 1867, in his edition of *Paradiso degli Alberti*: «amico di Franco Sacchetti e lettore di Dante nel 1381» (*Il Paradiso degli Alberti* 1867, vol. II, p. 21).

From this exchange we also infer that Antonio da Vado was an older person, and not only because of Sacchetti’s highly respectful tone. Antonio speaks of his tiredness in trying to reach Parnassus, and also, while expressing his hope to taste the water of the Castalian spring due to Sacchetti’s talent, he says: «Ma ’nanzi che ’l mio dì venga a l’ocaso» (before my day comes to a close) (CCXVI b). It is unlikely that these could have been the feelings of Sacchetti’s and Landini’s peers, who were then about 46-47 years old. Rather, it seems that Antonio da Vado belonged to the older generation, approximately of the age of Boccaccio; that is, he could have been born in the 1310s or so.

The above-mentioned letter of Coluccio Salutati of 1382 about a certain conflict between Antonio da Vado and Domenico di Bandino regarding the issue of the lessons proposed for the Studio fiorentino, namely about Seneca’s tragedies, testifies in favor of Antonio’s older age and reputation. I disagree with Lanza’s reading that Antonio «has been chosen as his [Domenico’s] assistant»,³⁰ which characterizes him as a younger man making his first steps in an academic career. Quite the reverse: from Salutati’s words it is clear that it was Antonio’s own choice to be the assistant (for some unnamed reason), and that this decision was seen by Salutati as humble and ill befitting Antonio’s status. He praises Antonio, however, for his modesty, and only implores him not to contend with his colleague:

Decrevisi et verbis tuis ligatus es, ut
legendis auctoribus in scolis grammaticae
potius famulere quam presis. Postquam ad
hanc humilitatem pellectus es, tue fame
consultum puto, si te alteri non ostenderis
emulari.

(LANZA 1971, p. 185)

You have declared, and you were firm in your words, that for lessons on ancient authors in the school of grammar you would rather be an assistant than a senior lecturer. Since you opted for such a humble position, I think that it would be wise for your reputation if you did not attempt to compete with others.

It is not clear whether Sacchetti was Antonio’s pupil, or perhaps he had not been for a long time, since he aligns himself with the *materiali* [unpolished] rather than the *moralis*, that is, with those lifted up by Antonio. Perhaps Sacchetti was too modest with regard to his own poetic abilities, since Antonio says of him, in sonnet CCXVI b, that he hopes to reach Parnassus due to Sacchetti’s poetry («Ma voi, che state a l’onorato legno/ con le nove sorelle intorno afisse, / atatemi (*sic!*) salire a questo regno!»). That would be logical if Sacchetti had been his student. The same question is relevant with regard to Landini, namely whether he could have been Antonio’s pupil.

In this respect, it will be useful to outline Antonio da Vado’s academic profile as it surfaces in the poem *Philomena* by Giovanni Gherardi da Prato.³¹ Gherardi was working on his *Philomena* over several years, but left it unfinished. Lanza characterized the *Philomena* as a boring allegoric-didactic poem,

³⁰ «era stato scelto come suo assistente» (LANZA 1971, p. 185).

³¹ To recall, Landini too was one of the most revered protagonists of Gherardi’s novel *Paradiso degli Alberti*.

whose artistic value is close to zero.³² The poem, in two books (the second one unfinished), is modeled on Dante's *Commedia*, in which the author, guided first by the Muses and Virtues and later by Dante in person, reaches the world beyond the grave, where he meets various spirits, among them his dead friends and his teacher Antonio («Antonio che viene/ Di Casentin, tuo maestro infiammato» [Antonio who comes/ from Casentino, your passionate teacher]). The first version of the first book of the *Philomena*, which contains the episode of the meeting between the author and Antonio's spirit, was written by 1389. Thus, Antonio da Vado must have died elsewhere between 1382 and 1389. In the second book, the author meets the spirit of Dante, who becomes his guide, and in one of the episodes of their itinerary Dante presents to Gherardi the philosophers of the English (or rather Oxford) school of logic, Ockham among them. The scene in which the author meets the crowd of philosophers vividly resembles the one from Landini's *Vix bene dimidium*:

... quell c'ha l'aspra gonna Si è Guglielmo Occam; con Tisber vène:	... the one with the rough robe Is William Ockham, who comes together with [(William) Heytesbery.
mira che vanno retro a lor colonna. Quell'altro che Alberto per man tène è Clientone con Burleo dallato;	Look at those who follow them: The one that Albert [of Saxony] holds by hand Is [Richard] Kilvington with [Walter] Burley next to [him.
filosofò sillogizzando bene. (LANZA 1971, p. 183)	He philosophized well through syllogisms.

The unambiguous orientation toward Dante and the glorifying of logicians, including Ockham, were apparently the most salient marks of Antonio da Vado's school. Regarding Landini's place in this educational program, I will introduce evidence, so far unnoticed by modern scholars, which is found in the second redaction of Filippo Villani's book of famous Florentines, recently published by Giuliano Tanturli (VILLANI 1997). Thus far, scholars were dependent on the earlier redaction, the so-called version α (of the early 1380s) and also the later Italian version, both of which are shorter and more deficient in comparison with version β , prepared at the beginning of the 1390s. Version β was corrected and emended by Salutati, who also added some new information, unknown to Villani.

From version β we learn that Landini wrote comments on Dante's *Commedia* in Latin hexameters:³³

Preter hoc ad laudis sue cumulum accedit quod gramaticam atque dyalecticam plene	Besides, to crown the pile of praises I may add that he [Landini] learned grammar and dialectics
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

³² «La *Philomena* è un noioso poema allegorico-didattico... ovviamente il valore poetico dell'opera è nullo» (LANZA 1971, p. 182).

³³ This suggests that Salutati was acquainted with Landini and knew some events in his life quite well (thus, it was not a sheer whim of Gherardi's that that he put them together as protagonists in the *Paradiso degli Alberti*), as he also knew Antonio da Vado.

didicerit artemque poeticam metro fictionibusque tractaverit eaque sic arte molitus Comediam Dantis metro heroico pertractare, vulgaribus insuper rithimis egregia multa dictare.

(VILLANI 1997, p. 410)

in depth and treated the art of poetry in meter and inventions, and thus through this art he made the effort of commenting on Dante’s *Commedia* in heroic meter [Latin hexameters], and also produced many excellent works in vernacular verse.

Landini’s poetic commentary on Dante’s *Commedia* does not survive. But if it indeed existed, it could well have been made with the aid of Antonio da Vado, a specialist in and reader of Dante. The blind Landini could have known Dante’s *Commedia* only by hearing it, perhaps through Antonio’s «serene» declamation. Moreover, in the poem in defense of Ockham, the very idea of a crowd of ghosts, one of whom is lamenting in front of a shocked and silent author, shows an explicitly Dantesque imprint, and accords well with Villani’s information about Landini’s poetic commentary on Dante. It seems highly probable that Antonio was Landini’s instructor in grammar, logic and rhetoric. Thus, Landini’s works in Latin hexameters – the poem *Vix bene dimidium* and the comments on the *Commedia* – could have been encouraged by Antonio da Vado and may be seen as demonstrations of Landini’s boldness and skill before his teacher.

If the poem in defense of Ockham was thus the poetic effort of the much younger Landini, the date of its writing must be reassessed. Instead of the years 1378-1382, it appears to have been written no earlier than the beginning of the 1350s and of course no later than 1361, when Petrarch reported to his Florentine friend Francesco Nelli (Simonides) about the death of Socrates (*Seniles*, I, 1). Possibly, the idea of writing such a poem could have been stimulated by Ockham’s death in about 1350, or when news of it reached Florence. The very fact that Ockham’s spirit complains that he can no longer personally refute the insinuations against him suggests that the philosopher’s death was a quite recent event:

Quot syllogizantes, quot vana sophismata levi	How many syllogizers, how many empty
Destruerem vento! Sed ineluctabile fatum	Could I destroy with a soft breath! But
Obstat...	Stands in the way...
(vv. 53-55)	

(LONG 1981, pp. 137 and 220)

Dating the poem to the 1350s means that Landini was still a young man, while his anti-hero must have been much older, since he calls him «priscus» – ancient, old. Indeed, Ludwig van Kempen was the elder by 30 years, whereas all the other candidates, when related to Landini at the end of the 1370s, are of the same age or much younger. Stylistically, the tone of the poem reveals a young author, one who still has to prove his excellence and expertise, sometimes with fairly aggressive means.

Why Ludwig van Kempen?

Now we need to ask why Ludwig van Kempen should have inspired Landini to compose this invective. In order to respond to this difficult question, I propose the following.

Landini must have been informed about van Kempen and his particular customs and ideas either by someone who had visited Avignon, or he learned of him through other channels of information of the time, as we have seen in the case of Boccaccio and Francesco Nelli. We do not know whether Antonio pievano da Vado himself visited Avignon, or it was another person of Antonio's circle who went there and became acquainted with Petrarch's Socrates. Whoever this witness could have been, he apparently was deeply distressed by the rejection and distortion of Ockham's ideas by this «Ydiota rudissimus», communicating his impressions to his friends in Florence.

In all likelihood, Landini's source of information shared with the young blind musician his personal impressions of Socrates, perhaps imitating his manner of speaking. Indeed, in the final part of his poem (vv. 154-159), Landini assails the Ydiota's untrained manner of speaking in Latin («Cujus quam grossa est atque intractabilis omni/ Lingua sono!» (vv. 154-155); LONG 1981, p. 222), with long syllables shortened and short ones lengthened, and with wrong cases after transitive verbs, etc. Such critiques hardly seem believable with regard to any of the Florentine men of letters, but they are more likely to fit a foreigner, whose pronunciation must have sounded quite strange to the ear of an Italian. Moreover, grammatical arguments such as these seem to be very pertinent for a teacher of grammar before whom Landini wanted to display his expertise.

Yet, the present hypothesis has also another aspect, somewhat more conspiratorial, if we take into account specific historical and even psychological circumstances relevant to this case. They relate to the philosophical tensions within the Florentine cultural elites described by Lanza (LANZA 1971, Ch. 1). To recall, in the first half of the Trecento, traditionalist philosophy, especially as improved and modernized by the English logicians, was in great favor among Florentines such as Antonio da Vado. But at the same time some Italian literati were beginning to criticize it for its formality and inattentiveness to human nature. As Lanza notes, the first assault on English dialectics was by Petrarch.³⁴ His first thoughts were expressed, as mentioned above, in his letters to Tommaso da Messina in 1333-37. In Florence they were apparently repeated by the poet himself during his short journey there in 1350 and then in his correspondence with his Florentine companions, as in 1352 in a letter to Zanobi da Strada, sent from Avignon:

³⁴ «A scagliarsi per primo contro il futile e meccanico formalismo della nuova dialettica fu proprio il Petrarca» (LANZA 1971, p. 7).

idque omnibus modis ago et ob eam causam in primis philosophiam amo; non illam loquacem scolasticam ventosam qua ridiculum in modum literatores nostri superbiunt, sed veram et non in libris tantum sed in animis habitantem, atque in rebus positam non in verbis.

(*Fam.*, XII, 3)

I do this in every considerable manner, and consequently love philosophy above all else; not that loquacious, scholastic kind with which our men of letters ridiculously pride themselves, but the true one which dwells more in minds than in books and deals with facts and not with words.

(PETRARCA 2005, II, p. 142)

These were the first shoots of humanistic ideology, which championed not the newly improved methods of logical demonstration, but methods of conviction based on rhetoric that appeal instead to human feelings and common sense.

From the viewpoint of this ideological conflict, modern scholars were right in thinking that the Ydiota should be sought in the circles of the early Florentine humanists. However, as Long rightly wondered, Landini could hardly have written such an insulting poem about someone with whom he was on friendly terms, like Luigi Marsili, and in fact all the other candidates. Ludwig van Kempen in the role of our «ydiota rudissimus» was a person quite extraneous to Landini – an *oltremontano*, towards whom he had no obligations or sentiments. With him, this problem did not exist. In addition, one more reason in favor of van Kempen is that he was a fellow musician (which could have been another good reason to inform Landini about his transalpine colleague); there could have been certain feelings of rivalry and jealousy that also might have prompted Landini to burst out in his invective.

Moreover, for those who knew about the especial closeness between Petrarch and his Socrates, it was not difficult to extend this chain to Petrarch himself, who was, in effect, the main opponent of this new view of traditionalist philosophy. Moreover, we need to keep in mind that in the period between 1353 and 1359 Petrarch became fairly unpopular in Florence for his decision to accept the invitation of Giovanni Visconti to move to Milan. In this respect, I agree with Long that Petrarch could have been another intended target of Landini’s poem, whom Landini perhaps did not dare to attack openly. Astonishingly, this was not the only case where Ludwig van Kempen could have been served as a ‘substitute’ for Petrarch, we learn from the letter to him in *Fam.* XXI, 9 (on June 23, 1359). The essence of this case is not clear enough, but Socrates certainly felt himself seriously offended, even up to considering leaving Avignon. Somehow, it was linked to Petrarch:

Sentio te persecutionem pati propter meum nomen; quod in me non audent, in te lividum virus effundunt. Curabo ne noceant; sed quod invidie proprium est, se se malo suo crucient, eo miseriores quo nobiscum agi senserint felicius. Non patiar ut mali plusquam boni tibi attulisse nostra dicatur amicitia.

I hear that you are suffering persecution because of me; against you they direct the spiteful poison that they dare not direct against me. I shall see to it that they not harm you, but rather torment themselves in their own evil – a characteristic of evil – and feel more wretched the more successfully they operate against us. I shall not let it be said that our friendship has brought you more evil than good.

(PETRARCA 2005, III, p. 182)

From this we can infer that Socrates had already for some time been in a certain unpleasant situation, not so much because of official persecution, but rather because of unfriendly atmosphere in Avignon, which had turned against him. In fact, if we accept that he was the promoter of Petrarch's humanist ideas and modes of thinking in Avignon, we will not be surprised that he might have made a bizarre impression on the people there. It must have happened after 1353 and before 1359, that is, during those six years of silence between him and Petrarch.

Could Landini have participated in this campaign against Socrates, while having Petrarch in the back of his mind? Perhaps he did. This surmise could explain the connection of Landini's poem with Avignon, namely, how and why it reached there, where the only extant copy was made. It could have been someone who, recognizing Ludwig van Kempen as the subject of the critique, brought or sent the poem to Avignon.³⁵ Alternatively, it could have even been Antonio da Vado himself, if he was personally in Avignon in this time, that is, between 1353 and 1359. Recall that Landini sent («missit») this poem to Antonio. This detail indeed confirms that Antonio was absent from Florence at the time the poem was composed. Perhaps there still exists a chance to trace him in documents related to the Avignonese Curia.

As Michael Long informs us, MS Riccardiana 688 was, «according to the scribe's own inscriptions, begun in the year 1381 and completed in 1382. The document was written at the papal court in Avignon by a Florentine cleric, Johannes de Empoli, a member of the retinue of Cardinal Piero Corsini» (LONG 1981, p. 152). If this Latin poem in defense of Ockham was indeed an exercise of the young Landini, written in the 1350s, it may explain why it was not preserved in Florentine sources. It seems that at a more advanced age, toward the 1380s, Landini moderated or even revised his philosophic views, having restrained his youthful nihilism and apparently accepting the humanist way of thinking. Not by chance he is depicted in such a harmonious unity with the leading Florentine humanists of the time, among them Marsili and Salutati, in Gherardi's novel *Paradiso degli Alberti*, whose plot goes back to the year 1389. Very like, he was not interested in preserving his zealous exercise in the later stages of his life, destroying any copies that were available in Florence.

At the beginning of 1380 Landini was already a famous Florentine citizen, so that it is reasonable that Giovanni d'Empoli, when coming across this unknown work of Landini's in Avignon, made a copy of it (and also two other short Latin and Italian poems by him).³⁶

³⁵ Stinson notes the Landini could have written his poem intentionally for Avignon and not for Florence (STINSON 1984, p. 272).

³⁶ There are two other verses by Landini whose didactical nature is clearly recognizable. The first one, introduced with the rubric «Item sequuntur alii versus Francisci organistae de Florentia», is a fourteen-line poem in Latin hexameters on a moral topic, the choice of the true way in the itinerary of one's life: one who strives to be satisfied with his choice, either in obtaining fame and gold, or in studying, will not be happy if he does not put at the fore of his enterprise faith in the

To conclude, the proposed hypothesis of the identity of Landini's Ydiota with Ludwig van Kempen resolves a number of difficult points that are otherwise unresolvable: the very aggressive poetic style, implausible with regard to other candidates, all of whom were Landini's friends; the description of a strange manner of Ydiota's speaking, impossible for an Italian *letterato*; the unique copy found in Avignon; and other odd features in Landini's poem discussed above. The main moral of this story is that any creative personality, even in more distant times, deserves to be regarded not as an impeccable statue of marble but viewed in his dialectical development, with its necessary trials and errors.

benevolence of God. The second poem, with the inscription «Supradicti versus exponuntur sonitto inferius hic scripto», is a literal translation of the first poem into the vernacular in sonnet form (*Il Paradiso degli Alberti* 1867, vol. II, pp. 301-302).

Bibliography

- AMELLI, A. (1909), *Di uno scritto inedito di S. Lodovico vescovo di Tolosa intorno alla musica*, «Archivum franciscanum historicum», 2, pp. 378-383.
- ANTOGNINI, R. (2008), *Il progetto autobiografico delle Familiars di Petrarca*, Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto, Milano.
- BAUSI, F. (2000), *ad vocem* «Giovanni Gherardi da Prato», *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 53, Roma, <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-gherardi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/>.
- BERLIÈRE, U. (1905), *Un ami de Pétrarque: Louis Sanctus de Beerlingen*, Rome and Paris.
- BILLANOVICH, G. (1996), *Petrarca e il primo Umanesimo*, Antenore, Padova.
- BRAMBILLA AGENO, F. (1953), *Per una nuova edizione delle rime del Sacchetti*, «Studi di filologia italiana», 11, pp. 257-320.
- COCHIN, H. (1918-19), *Sur le Socrate de Pétrarque: le musicien flamand Ludovicus Sanctus de Beerlinge*, «Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire», 37, pp. 3-32.
- D'AGOSTINO, G. (2009), *Some Musical Data from Literary Sources of the Late Middle Ages*, in *L'Ars Nova Italiana del Trecento: «Dolci e nuove note» VII*, a cura di F. Zimei, LIM, Lucca, pp. 209-236.
- DOTTI, U. (1972), *Petrarca a Milano: Documenti milanesi 1353-1354*, Ceschina, Milano.
- FENZI, E. (2006), *Petrarca a Milano: tempi e modi di una scelta meditata*, in *Petrarca e la Lombardia. Atti del Convegno di Studi, Milano, 22-23 maggio 2003*, a cura di G. Frasso – G. Velli – M. Vitale, Antenore, Roma-Padova, pp. 221-263.
- _____ (2004), *Ancora sulla scelta filo-viscontea di Petrarca e su alcune sue strategie testuali nelle Familiars*, «Studi petrarcheschi», 17, pp. 61-80.
- FIORI A. (2004), *ad vocem* «Landini, Francesco (Francesco Cieco, Francesco degli Organi, Franciscus de Florentia)», *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 63, Roma <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-landini_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/>.
- GIGER, A. (2001) *ad vocem* «Ludovicus Sanctus [Ludwig van Kempen]», *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second Edition, ed. by S. Sadie, Macmillan, London, vol. 15, p. 280.
- LANZA, A. (1971), *Polemiche e berte letterarie nella Firenze del primo Rinascimento, 1375-1449*, Bulzoni, Roma.
- Lettere a Petrarca* (2012), a cura di U. Dotti, Nino Aragno Editore, Torino.

- LONG, M. P. (1981), *Musical Tastes in Fourteenth-Century Italy: Notational Styles, Scholarly Traditions, and Historical Circumstances*, Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, Princeton.
- (1983), *Francesco Landini and the Florentine Cultural Elite*, «Early Music History», 3, pp. 83-99.
- Il Paradiso degli Alberti: ritrovi e ragionamenti del 1389, romanzo di Giovanni [Gherardi] da Prato dal codice autografo e anonimo della Riccardiana* (1867), a cura di A. Wesselofsky, 2 voll., presso Gaetano Romagnoli, Bologna.
- PETRARCA, F. (2003), *Invectives*, ed. and trans. by D. Marsh, Cambridge (Mass.) and London, I Tatti Renaissance Library, Harvard University Press.
- (2005), *Letters on Familiar Matters*, trans. by A. S. Bernardo, 3 voll., Italice, New York.
- (2004-9), *Le familiari. Libri I-V*, trad. e cura di U. Dotti, 5 voll., Nino Aragno Editore, Torino.
- SABAINO D. (1999), *Per un'analisi delle strutture compositive nella musica di Francesco Landini: il caso della ballata Contemplant le gran cose (3^a)*, in «Col dolce suon che da te piove». *Studi su Francesco Landini e la musica del suo tempo. In memoria di Nino Pirrotta*, a cura di A. Delfino – M. T. Rosa Barezzani, Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze, pp. 259-321.
- SACCHETTI, F. (1990), *Il libro delle Rime*, a cura di F. Brambilla Ageno, Leo S. Olschki and University of Western Australia Press, Firenze.
- STINSON, J. J. (1984), *Francesco Landini and the French Connexion*, «Australian Journal of French Studies», 21, pp. 266-280.
- VILLANI, PH. (1997), *De origine civitatis Florentie et de eiusdem famosiss civibus*, a cura di G. Tanturli, Antenore, Padova.
- WELKENHUYSEN, A. (1983), *La peste en Avignon (1348): décrite par un témoin oculaire, Louis Sanctus de Beringen*, in *Pascua Mediaevalia: Studies voor Prof. Dr. J.M.de Smet*, ed. by R. Lievens – E. Van Mingroot – W. Verbeke, Leuven University Press, Leuven (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, 1), pp. 452-492.
- WILKINS, E.H. (1990), *The Life of Petrarch*, Feltrinelli, Milano.

Elena Abramov-van Rijk è una ricercatrice non affiliata, i cui interessi di ricerca riguardano principalmente la musica e la poesia dal Trecento fino al Cinquecento. Su questo tema ha pubblicato due monografie: *Parlar cantando: The Practice of Reciting Verses in Italy from 1300 to 1600* (Peter Lang, Bern 2009) e *Singing Dante: The Literary Origins of Cinquecento Monody* (Ashgate 2014; RMA Monographs, 26).

Elena Abramov-van Rijk is an independent scholar with a particular interest in music and poetry from the Trecento to the Cinquecento. She has published two monographs, *Parlar cantando: The Practice of Reciting Verses in Italy from 1300 to 1600* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009) and *Singing Dante: The Literary Origins of Cinquecento Monody*. Ashgate, 2014 (RMA Monographs, 26).