

The Italian Renaissance and Popes of Avignon

measure to the protection accorded him by the Popes of Avignon. Was it not, too, at the Papal Court of Avignon that Petrarch's father, an exile from Florence, had sought an asylum, and in the sunshine of whose favor the poet himself had grown in peace and security?

Nor should it be forgotten that it was from the Papal Curia of Avignon that the order first went out to search for the Latin manuscripts which were of so great service in the study of the ancient literature and language of Rome. The work of copying also went on, so that a manuscript copy of nearly every valuable Latin work was soon to be found in the Pontifical Library.

In collecting thus the scattered literary remains of antiquity the Popes gave proof of an enlightened taste for letters, while at the same time they favored the movement born of humanism. As in our own day, the Apostolic Library was thrown open to scholars, and the poet Petrarch, in several passages of his familiar letters, testifies to the fact that he himself had full access to the books and manuscripts of the Pontifical Library at Avignon.

Again, the missionary work carried on in Africa and Asia during the residence of the Popes at Avignon did much to bring in contact the mind of the Orient and the Occident. Towards the close of the thirteenth century,