



Making of the Western Mind Institute for the Study of

Western Civilization Week 18. Boccaccio





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



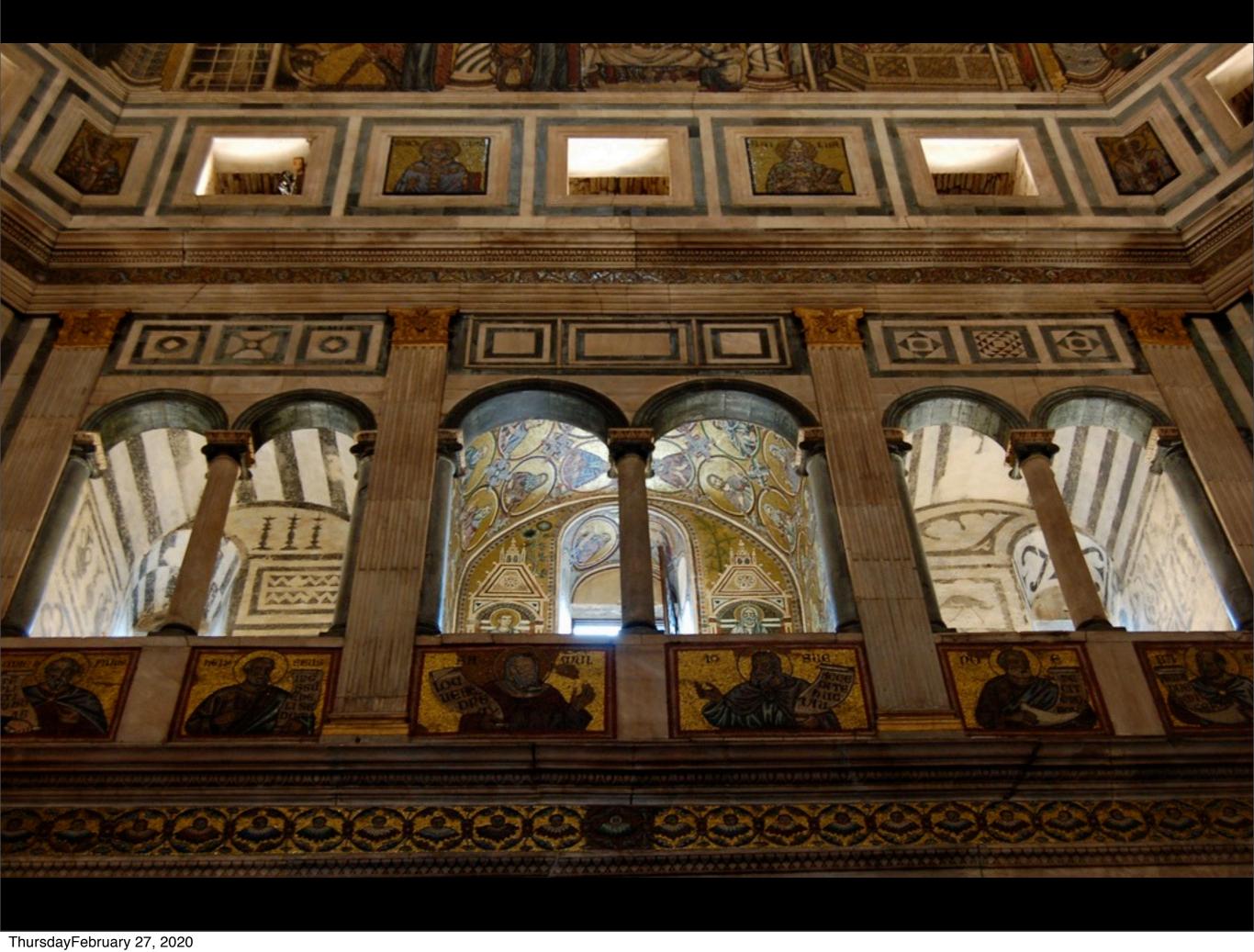
resides in the Florence for long periods



Begin Building New Baptistry 1050





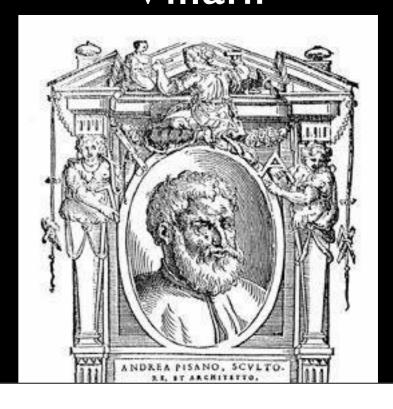






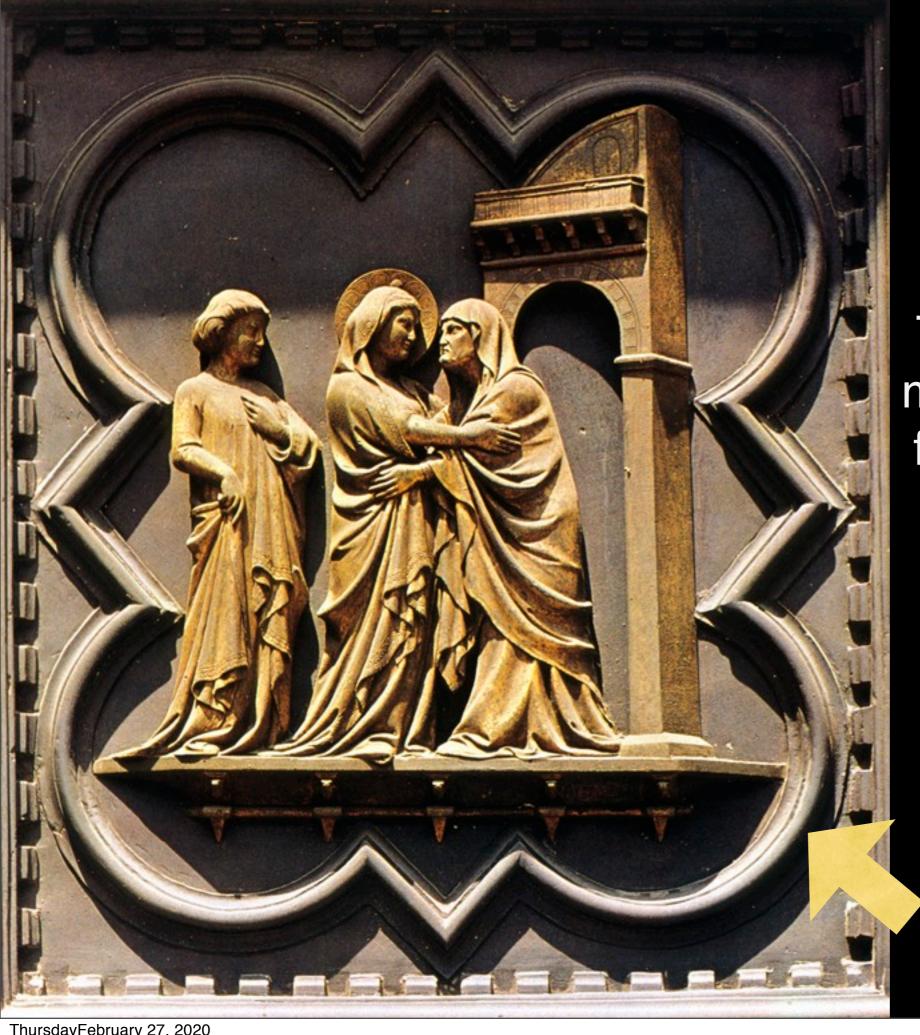


The Baptistry Doors South Doors Stories of John the Baptist Andrea Pisano (1290-1348)Project Super: Giovanni Villani

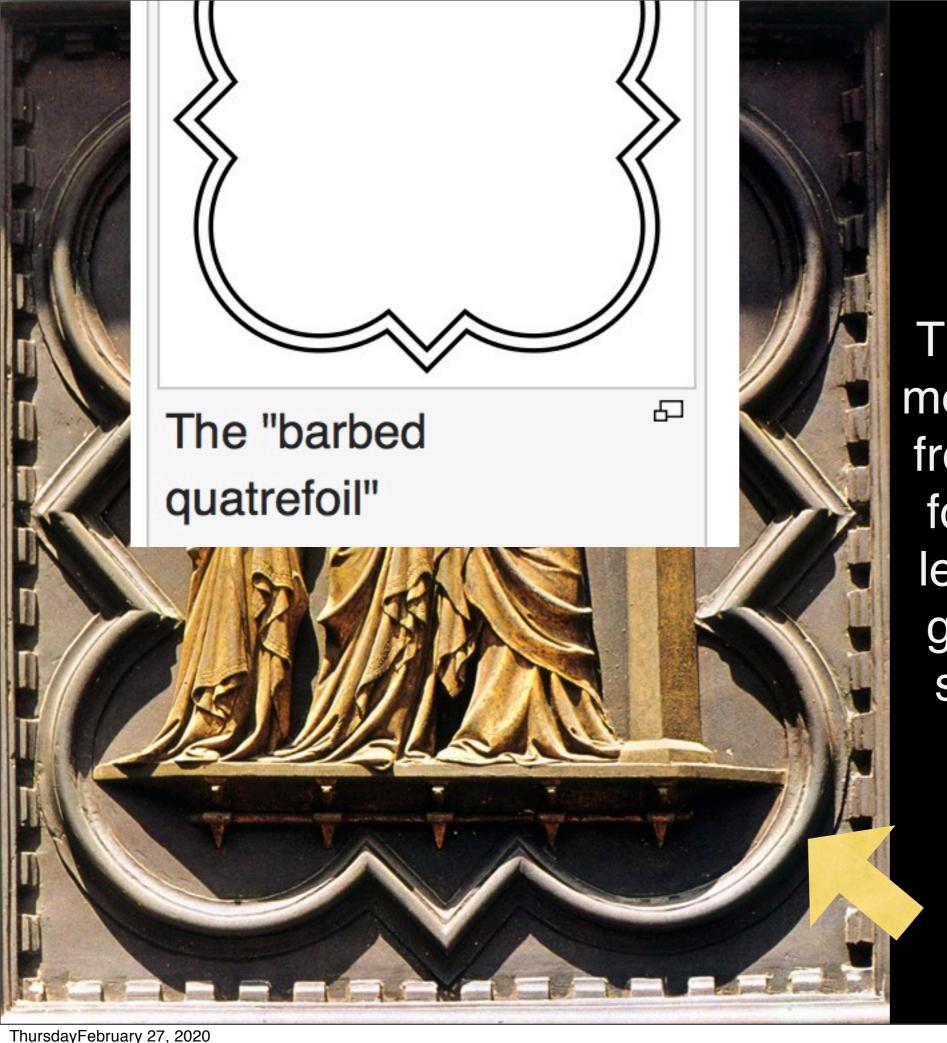






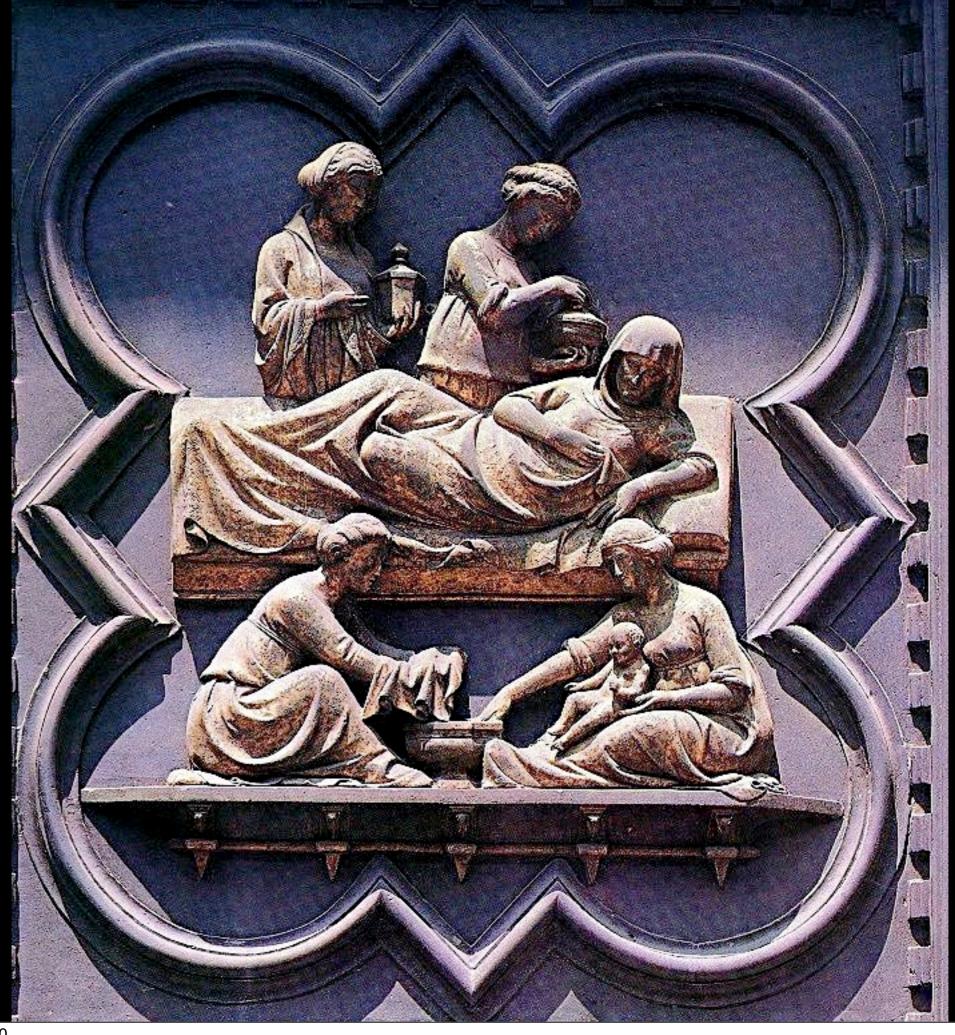


QUATREFOIL The word quatrefoil means "four leaves", from Latin quattuor, four, plus folium, a leaf) and applies to general four-lobed shapes in various contexts.



QUATREFOIL
The word quatrefoil
means "four leaves",
from Latin *quattuor*,
four, plus *folium*, a
leaf) and applies to
general four-lobed
shapes in various
contexts.



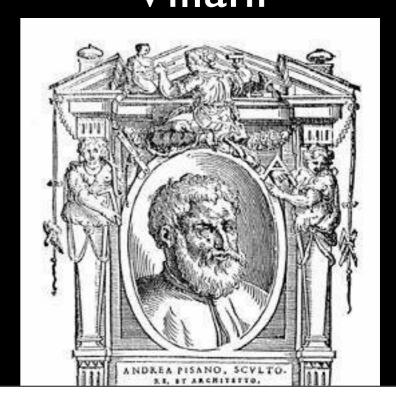








The Baptistry Doors South Doors Stories of John the Baptist Andrea Pisano (1290-1348)Project Super: Giovanni Villani







ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





1294

Florence signs contracts for new cathedral:
Santa Maria del Fiore
Architect: Arnolfo di Cambio 1240-1310









ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020

1300 Santa Maria del Fiore biggest cathedral in world





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



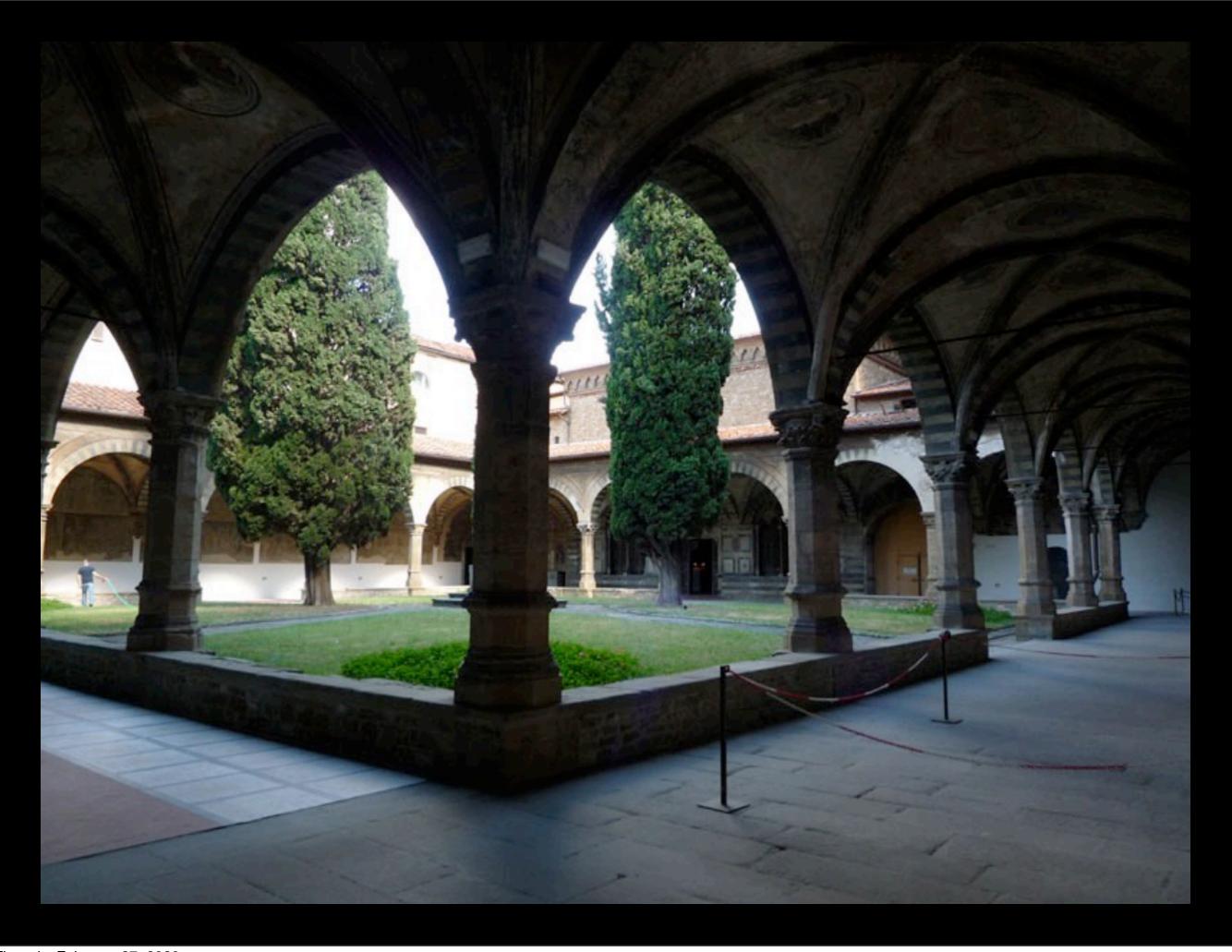




ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020













Palazzo dei Priori (now Palazzo Vecchio)

Architect: Arnolfo di Cambio

Construction: 1299





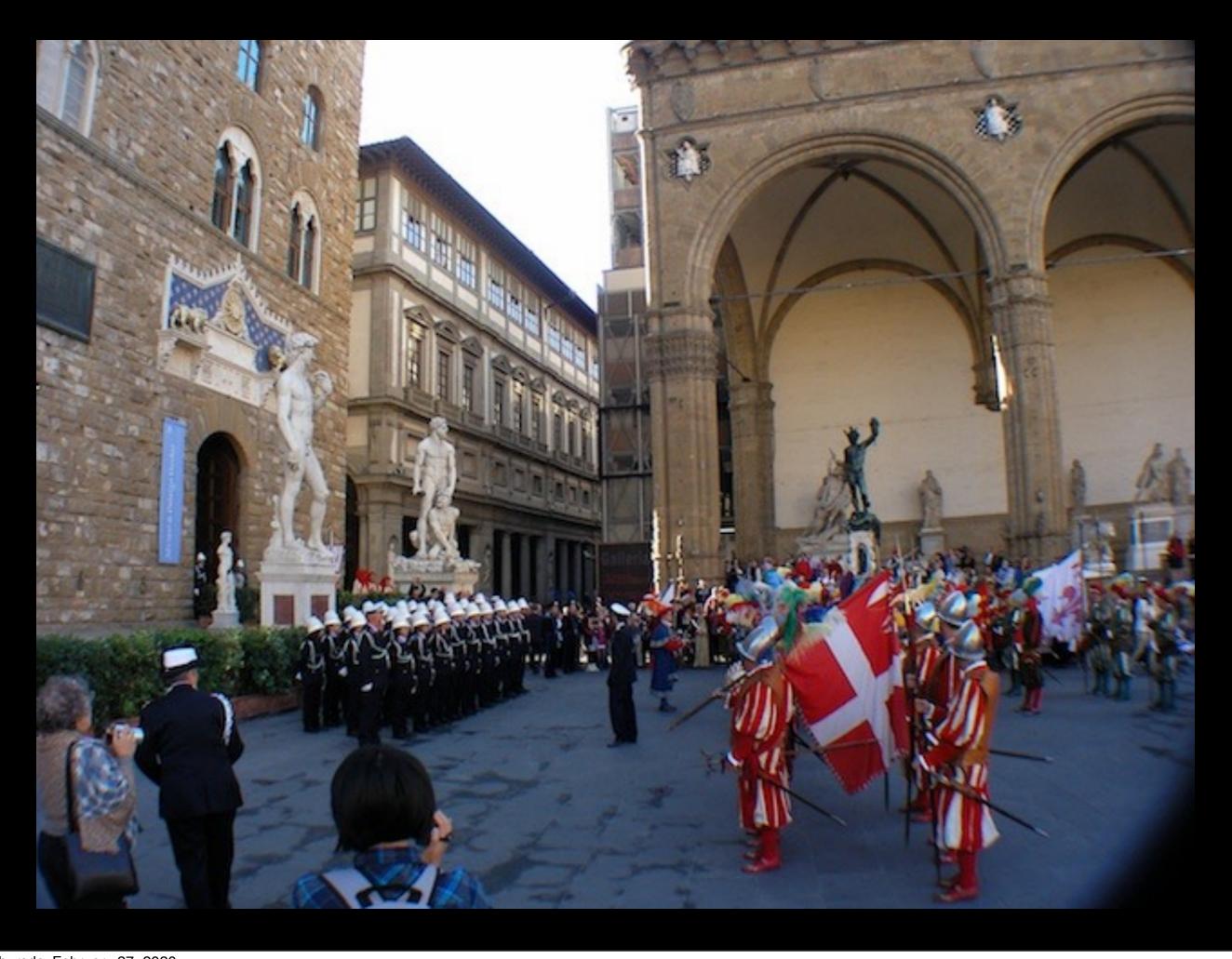
ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020







ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020









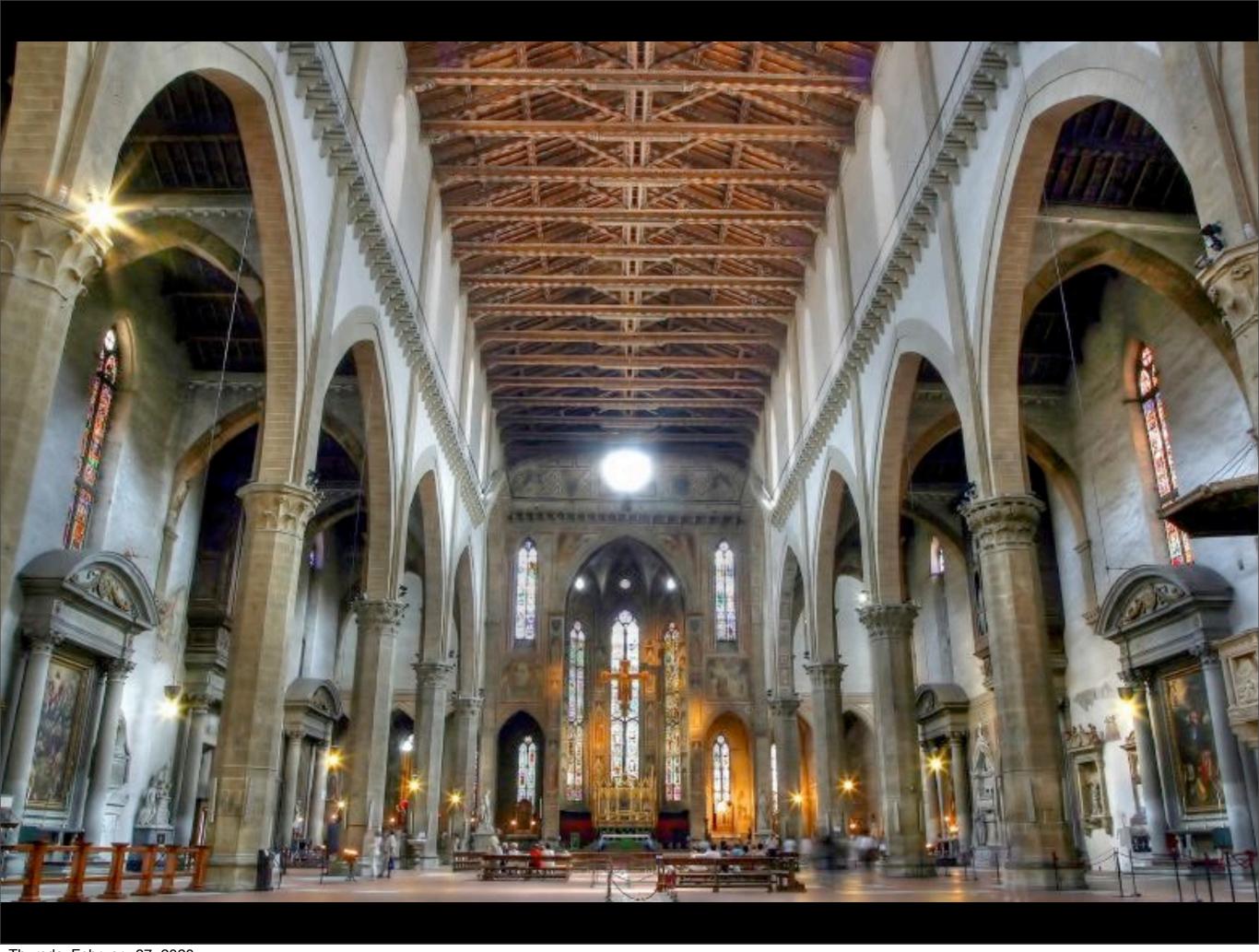
ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





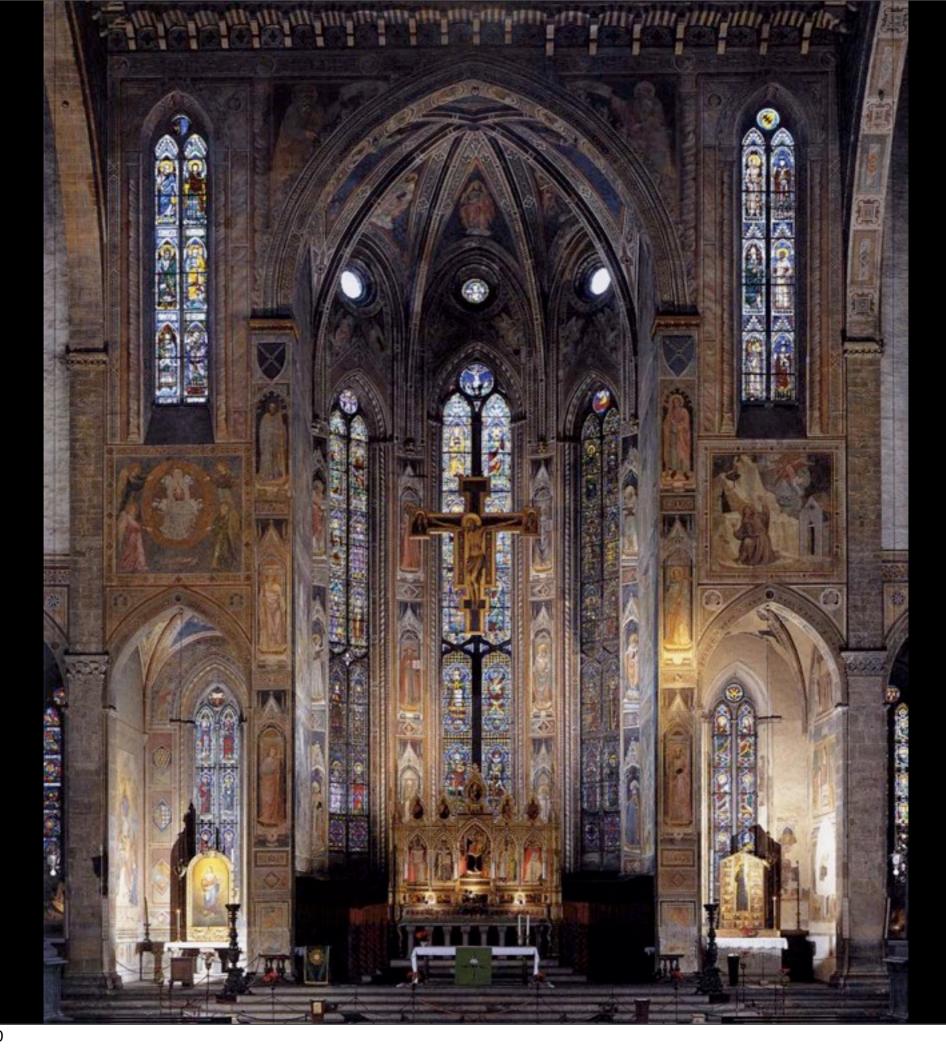


ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



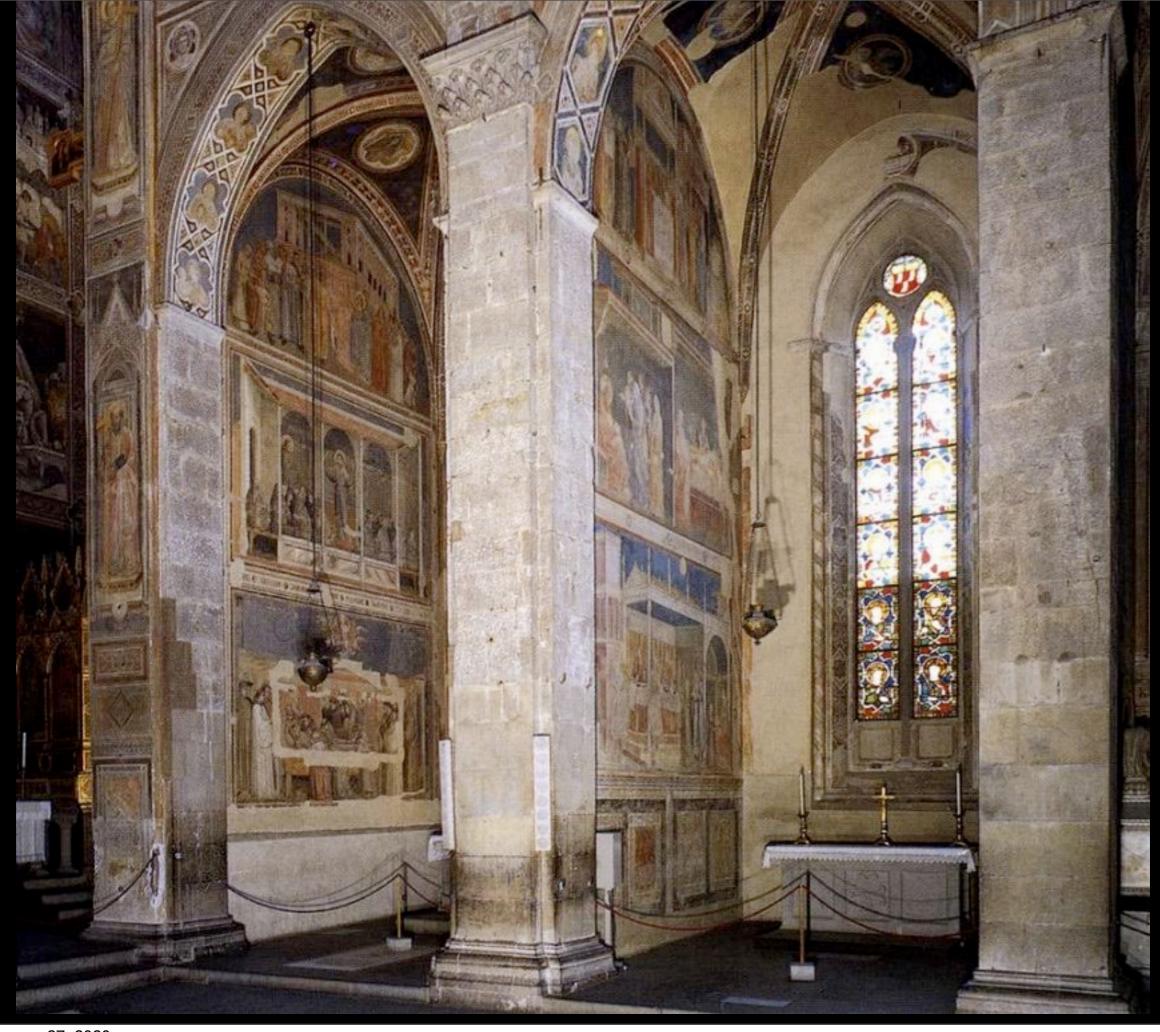


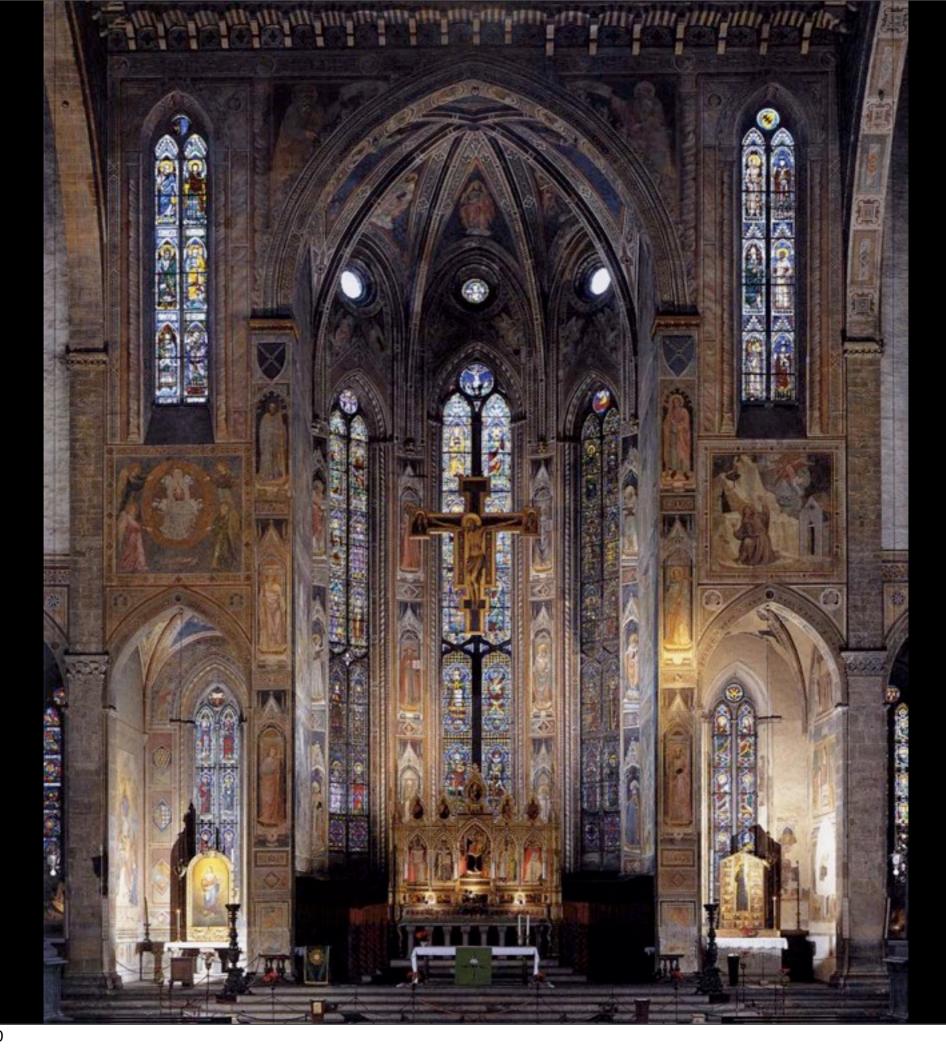
ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020







ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



1300, Medieval Walls of Florence Biggest architectural project in all of Europe







ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



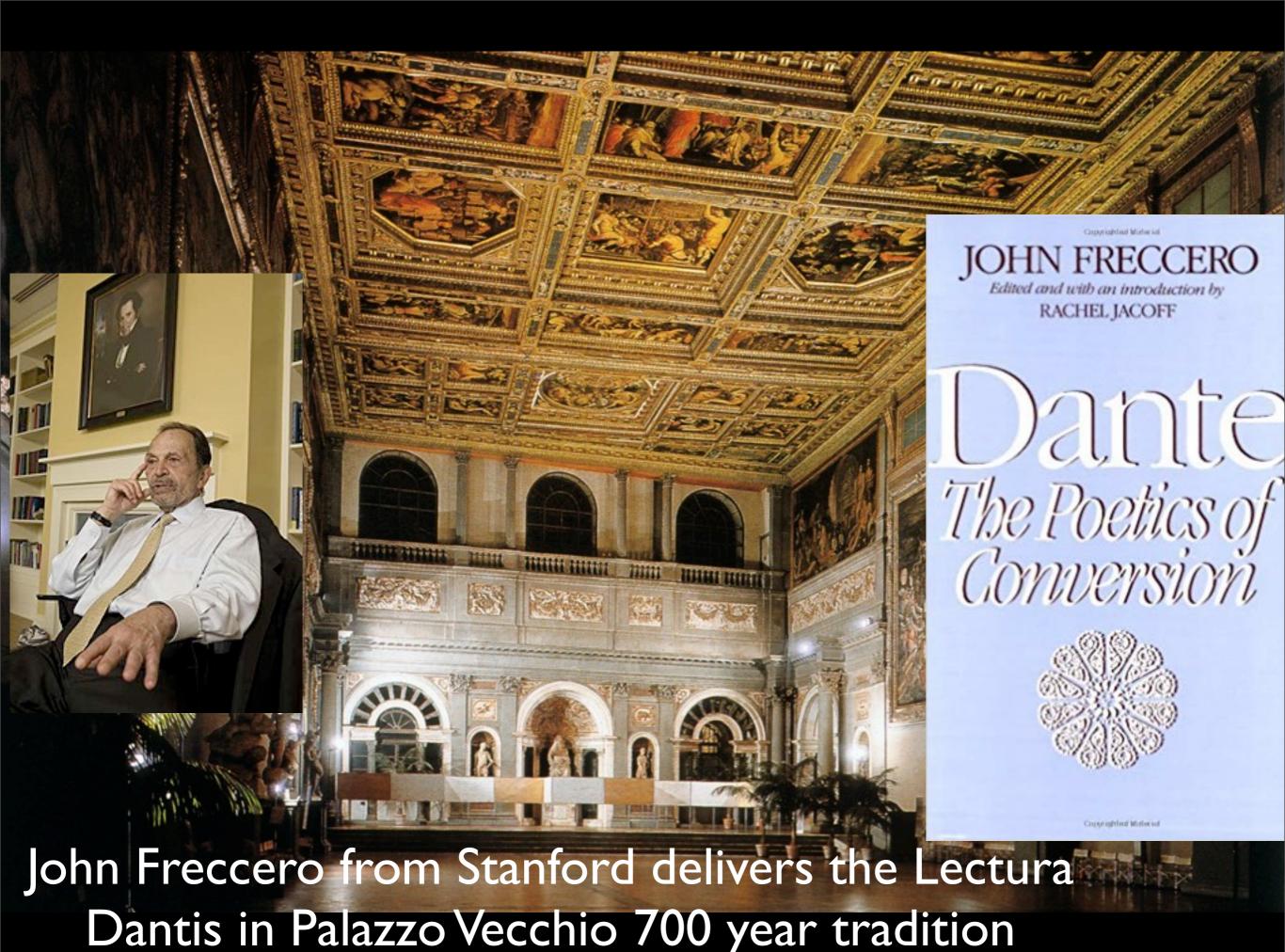
1313 born in Certaldo 1315 father marries noblewoman 1315 father successful merchant 1313-1320 Gio gets very good education in Flo 1327 father goes Naples for business takes Giovanni (big city, big commerce, big world) 1332 father and son goes Paris, edu, lectures 1333 Gio writing, reads Petrarch 1340 writes publishes Filocolo (romance) 1340 Gio back in Florence, writing 1347 in Ravenna visits Dante tomb 1348 back in Flo to witness Black Death father dies serving city in crisis 1350 meets Petrarch in Florence 1351 begins Decameron (collecting for years) 1352 Decameron published, immediate hit 1357 several meetings with Petrarch 1360s active in Flo politics (like Dante) 1365 travels to Avignon, Pope, as Flo amb. 1373 delivers first annual "Lectura Dantis" 1374 Chaucer meets Boccaccio in Flo 1373-75 retire to Certaldo 1375 dies at Certaldo







1313 born in Certaldo 1315 father marries noblewoman 1315 father successful merchant 1313-1320 Gio gets very good education in Flo 1327 father goes Naples for business takes Giovanni (big city, big commerce, big world) 1332 father and son goes Paris, edu, lectures 1333 Gio writing, reads Petrarch 1340 writes publishes Filocolo (romance) 1340 Gio back in Florence, writing 1347 in Ravenna visits Dante tomb 1348 back in Flo to witness Black Death father dies serving city in crisis 1350 meets Petrarch in Florence 1351 begins Decameron (collecting for years) 1352 Decameron published, immediate hit 1357 several meetings with Petrarch 1360s active in Flo politics (like Dante) 1365 travels to Avignon, Pope, as Flo amb. 1373 delivers first annual "Lectura Dantis" 1374 Chaucer meets Boccaccio in Flo 1373-75 retire to Certaldo 1375 dies at Certaldo

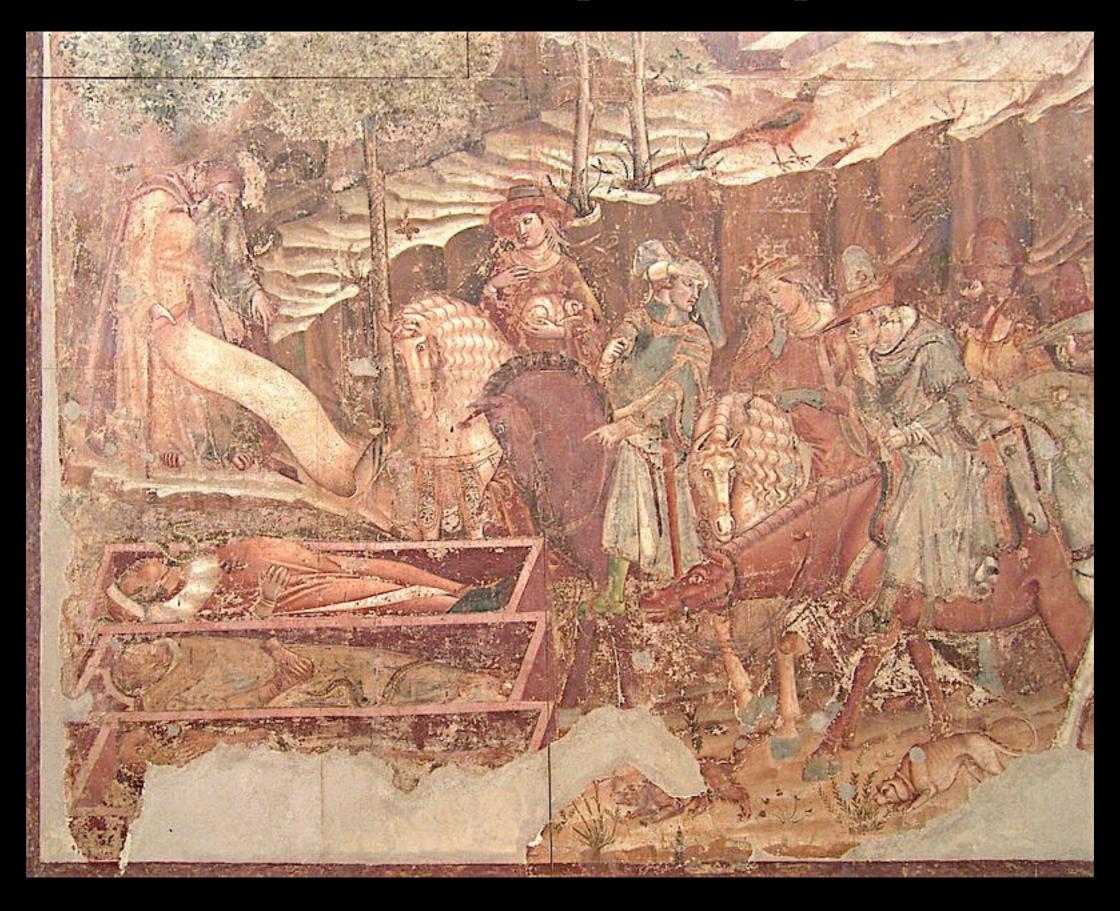


ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



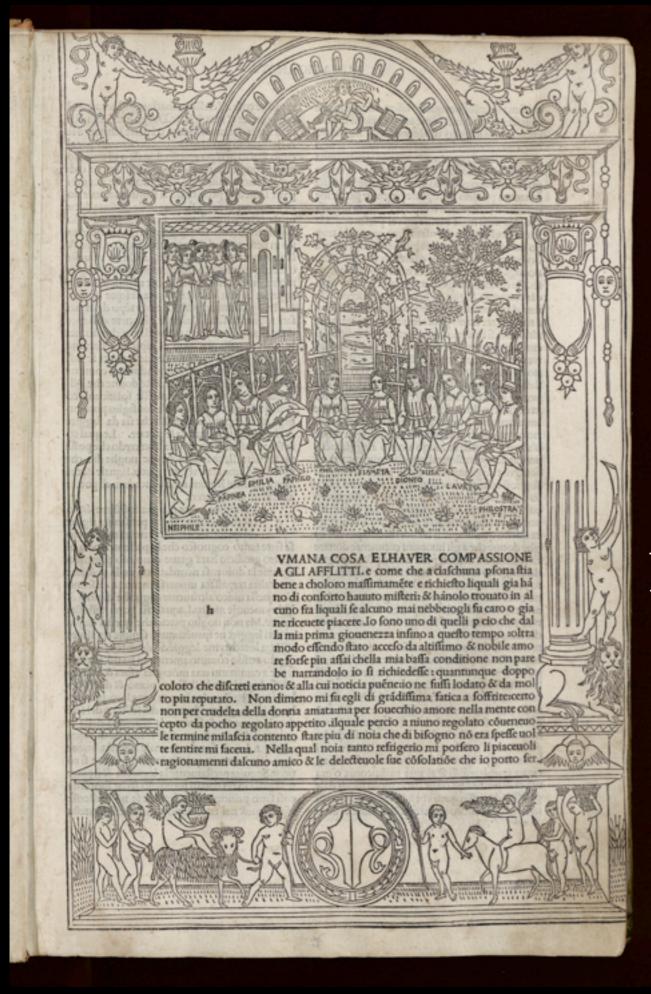
1313 born in Certaldo 1315 father marries noblewoman 1315 father successful merchant 1313-1320 Gio gets very good education in Flo 1327 father goes Naples for business takes Giovanni (big city, big commerce, big world) 1332 father and son goes Paris, edu, lectures 1333 Gio writing, reads Petrarch 1340 writes publishes Filocolo (romance) 1340 Gio back in Florence, writing 1347 in Ravenna visits Dante tomb 1348 back in Flo to witness Black Death father dies serving city in crisis 1350 meets Petrarch in Florence 1351 begins Decameron (collecting for years) 1352 Decameron published, immediate hit 1357 several meetings with Petrarch 1360s active in Flo politics (like Dante) 1365 travels to Avignon, Pope, as Flo amb. 1373 delivers first annual "Lectura Dantis" 1374 Chaucer meets Boccaccio in Flo 1373-75 retire to Certaldo 1375 dies at Certaldo

1348, Black Death the most important experience of his life









Decameron
Florence
1352
Earliest printed edition,
Venice, 1492

tettetene lecines ce fant aulante ciple due ils penene cachecumut de men ne et penferent deute efforquer de illene. Silen alcurut a naples mar intomenate ploment marten mant et confora en plentant denni dente fon pot de datair moutait. Ce par and fou amour malterance pull fin apais apres ce que la ciple dit forne par mames fornes de me fine bug der dillene apola bue diancon qui encellui pape ele enco tre chautre en tel tefirm ajanuar arthau fur cellui qui mon baltur

le papies leuline la lome dela vor vi nomette compere y pamphile fur la un courne cont filoftinte eft top.

cuibla, am

ne noble connenente natie de biece une ace de tombuedi c anna bug tounenced ap pelle gubitot. elle nouice anduote incompen a fon ann bug longe fon parelle et u a elle en mopen ving antar. Sabuot foutememat mou mit entre les bias de laune anduo te. Candisque elle et bue fiermeler uence porcoient a lottel lecorpe de gn buot most elles fuent punice pur muct des leigens du prenolt. auto le qui confecta la vente au pienole il wille pur force conqueiltre la ion newfie ou pas ne fourth la dole. le peur de la feure our compter le as et delum la fille trounce marner. et elle qui du tout irfula effir ou monde woule buit en habit ce in fottis ngle des nonnames.

(| Cyapicoleuline la contunatio

be la norte a la norte nomele coper par priptite fur la une courner copie filothinte ca top,

ttij-tolice.

a nouncile comptre parà tomene fue trefagmable any dames memanas for elles anoient our la chances mue le refirm ed a dequisefarpe e onques en demendand ettes nanot cue peu lanour pour quele amfeta duncen end ede fir apare from que la rech' nouncile fue fince le repm pola a primpine qui finant lorbre. pampine acone bile le fonge mep te en la deflutbicte nonnelle me ben ne mattere de renter bue nounclem in quete eft fir mennen be deux fore qui preliguifioreur autames doles futures foute apparent de defee in padees. les tenx amas qui enche nonnelle coptet leurs bilions dia pentes orent enterrmant reattie ocure longes quils emporene wour late ner accomplie, pour cone bous dens Amourentes bener lanour qenconste mes et frines elt bue grueinle pidi on de beon diniertes moles endemo et combien que a centr qui bormen tourrs leurs bilions on longre fam blent a cult effit are mambles, et quant ils font eneiller ils marie aulams fonges beau-ce anlams braiffamblables et en pat hors be toute brite. Toutenaics leu comit mames longes auer elle manpir quer antams abiculturantion gre and genebe for come it fewer and distraqued vention entel land. of thut que pour leurs forts ils le trembleur et elgenfent felona que per tels fonges ils one preuren

longe delatter a faur les biens plin propoles ne faire auth ciples paruer anlams fonces ne avient qu autom les ne mamailes combienque les lo gange four war intiques a requity bour ges famblene efter fauorabies a bien cuir cont drus es pritts pausur tens ou a maifaur. et quits famblent on encement te ne appronne ne les bus forer par autame argumes a uni ncies antare qui amin aviene aux lo resquels len ne doit avire. et anifi grs. car tous tours ne fout brais.ce par opposite boune chose nest une ad suficure ne fout funtr- civilain de iouter for a rous longre. mais laif nous a per par lop congresifir que le Consamur des fougres et benons a 515 HE COURTED PAS TOULOUS DIRILLETO comperede neftre xxxb; nonnelle-Affinset monthe q'longes meletent me confore funix enta post neuner rempre per fromene et come tep anant ap dit. Je lentens monfrer en

Crapes fendur antong le com per be la vocisi nonnelle compere p pamphile fur la quatrictine iourne mue fileftente eft top:-1

emicion bentu bente bitter ne doie po

n brefer bue are belomber but fire auter for ving no le tome a melle fire noir

mor micruit work nouncile par quey

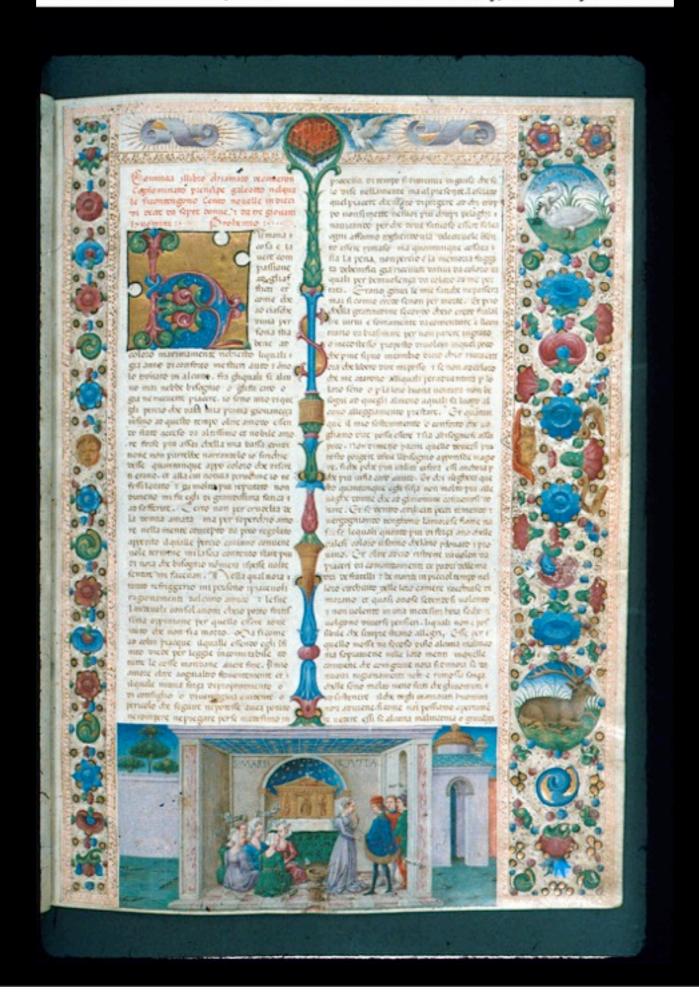
nopleion mon ingrinaut quelome

aulturs cufans anow bue fille nom mer anderole mene et affe; belle et a concuent appropries and mon for the mon mountientotha auxile grapuotion

Decameron Vaticano, 14th Century illustrated Ms.

藥

荟



ommaa illibio elejamato recameron Como minato piencipe galeotto nelqua le ficontengono Cento nonelle in vicci of recte on fepte conne 't ba tre gionani louomini :- = Drolximo

NO CONCERNO CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF THE P

Mmana 4 cofa e la nere com paffione avallaf flicti et come de ao ciafdx and tenna fond tha

coloro marimamente nebretto liquali e gia anne vi conforto methen auto 7 ano of lo tronaro in alcuno, fra gliquali fe alcu? no mai nebbe bisognio o glifii ciro o gia ne riceuette piacere, to fono uno vique gli percio de valli mia prima gionanecca mfine at questo rempo olere amore effen to stato acceso va alussimo et nobile amo re forfe più affai cixella una baffa conoi none non parrelbe narrancolo to finchie teffe quantinque appo coloro de orfere n erano, et alla em nonda peruenne to ne de de pin unfa euro aunto. Ce det neglem que fossitorato 7 pamolto pur reputato non ounced in fit eght or granoulling fatica t an fofferire. Certo non per cruzelta ac la conna amata ma per fojerdate amo re nella mente concepto da poco regolato appento dqualle jercio cantinno conuene uole termine milafeia contento fane piu or nora de bifognio nomera ifpeffe nolte fennre im faccuan . Il Cella qual nota i tanto refrigerrio un prefono

processo or rempe frommun inquist de fo le orfe nellamente ma al prefente l'afciate quel pracere deutate orporgere ao de crop po nonfimette nefuor più doura pelagiot a nautanto per de tout fancofo effere fotes ogni affanno rogliento uta odecreuole ifen to ellere rimafo ma quantinque ceffara + fia la pena non percio e la memoria fingui ta relemfia guarrecoun canun va coloro m quali per temnolença on coloro ao me per tata. Crang grant le mie fandx nepattera mai fi comio creco fenon per moite. Er peto a della grantuvine feconto delo creto fialal Prire urrai e fomamente vi comentare e ilcon tranto ea biafimare per non parere ingrato o mecostesto proposto vinolere inquel peco de pine figue membre victo chio recenten oza de libero vire misposse Tse non avecloso de me atarono alliquali perapuentina plo loto feno o pla loto buona ucumpa non be form ar quegit almeno aquali fa luogo al euno alleggiamento prestare. Er quatun que il mie fostemmente è conforte ele ue ghamo our posta effere Tha abifoguiofi affai poce. Hon rimene panni quelle renerfi più tofte pergere cone Ilbifognie apponicie magie re. fielx pelx pun unlies unfara effi anchosa p sto quantinque egh fisia non molto pin alle magic come die ao glinonina connenini co nare. Et fe witte avillein peen temente ? uergognianco rengiono limotofe fiame na forfe lequali quanto pur or forer ano delle palefi colore ufanno deline pionare i pro nano. Cr ofne avoio ritheme vanolen va pracert on commitment or proti willema Ton te fratelli T'e manti in preciol tempo nel mount will along camere mech

Who was I show the series of the



Early illustrated Manuscript of Decameron

MS. Holkham misc. 49, fol. 5r

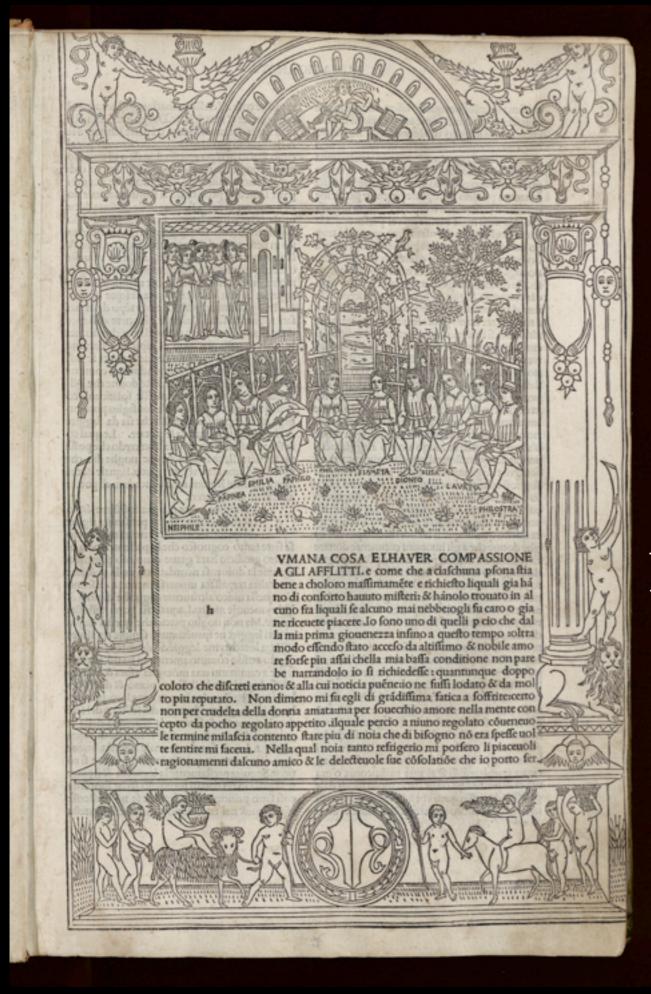
© Bodleian Library, University of Oxford







ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



Decameron
Florence
1352
Earliest printed edition,
Venice, 1492

I say, then, that in the year 1348 after the Son of God's fruitful incarnation, into the distinguished city of Florence, that most beautiful of Italian cities, there entered a deadly pestilence. Whether one believes that it came through the influence of the heavenly bodies or that God, justly angered by our iniquities, sent it for our correction, in any case it had begun several years earlier in the east and killed an innumerable mass of people, spreading steadily from place to place and growing as it moved west.

No human wisdom or provision was of any help. Huge amounts of filth were removed from the city by officials charged with that task; sick people were forbidden to enter the city; advice was given on how to stay healthy; devout persons made humble supplication to God not once but many times, in processions and by other means; but in the spring of that year the sad effects of the plague nonetheless began to appear in an almost miraculous manner. It was not as it had been in the east, where nosebleeds had signaled that death was inevitable. Here the sickness began in both men and women with swelling in the groin and armpits.

The lumps varied in size, some reaching the size of an ordinary apple and others that of an egg, and the people commonly called them gavoccioli. Having begun in these two parts of the body, the gavoccioli soon began to appear at random all over the body. After this point the disease started to alter in nature, with black or livid spots appearing on the arms, the thighs, everywhere. Sometimes they were large and well spaced, other times small and numerous. These were a certain sign of impending death, but so was the swelling. No doctor's advice, no medicine seemed to be of any help.

Either the disease was incurable or the doctors simply didn't know how to cure it. Many tried, though. The number of doctors became huge as a multitude of people, male and female, with no medical training whatsoever took their place alongside those who were properly educated. But no one knew the cause of the pestilence and thus no one could do much about curing it, so not only were few people healed but most of them died by the third day after the aforementioned signs appeared, some a bit sooner or a bit later. Most of them died without any fever or other symptoms.

This pestilence was so powerful that it spread from the ill to the healthy like fire among dry or oily materials. It was so bad that it could be communicated not only through speaking or associating with the sick, but even by touching their clothing or anything else they had touched. What I must say here is so strange that if I and others had not seen it with our own eyes I would hesitate to believe it, let alone write about it, even if I had heard it from trustworthy people. The pestilence spread so efficiently that, not only did it pass from person to person, but if an animal touched the belongings of some sick or dead person it contracted the pestilence and died of it in a short time

I myself witnessed this with my own eyes, as I said earlier. One day when a poor man had died and his rags had been thrown out in the street, two pigs came along and, as pigs do, they pushed the rags about with their snouts and then seized them with their teeth. Both soon fell down dead on the rags, as if they had taken poison. Such experiences or others like them gave birth to a variety of fears and misconceptions among the living, and the cruel strategy they pursued was to avoid, even flee the sick and their belongings. They thought that by doing so they could stay healthy themselves.

There were some who thought moderate living and the avoidance of excess had a great deal to do with avoiding illness, so they lived apart from others in small groups. They congregated and shut themselves up in houses where no one had been sick, partaking moderately of the best food and the finest wine, avoiding excess in other ways as well, trying their best not speak of or hear any news about the death and illness outside, occupying themselves with music and whatever other pleasures they had available.

Others were of the opposite opinion. They believed that drinking a good deal, enjoying themselves, going about singing and having fun, satisfying all their appetites as much as they could, laughing and joking was sure medicine for any illness. Thus, doing exactly as they prescribed, they spent day and night moving from one tavern to the next, drinking without mode or measure, or doing the same thing in other people's homes, engaging only in those activities that gave them pleasure. They found this easy to do because people had abandoned their possessions as if they no longer had to cope with the problem of living, and most of the houses had become common property with complete strangers making use of whatever homes they arrived at as if they owned them. And they combined this bestial behavior with as complete an avoidance of the sick as they could manage.

Others were of the opposite opinion. They believed that drinking a good deal, enjoying themselves, going about singing and having fun, satisfying all their appetites as much as they could, laughing and joking was sure medicine for any illness. Thus, doing exactly as they prescribed, they spent day and night moving from one tavern to the next, drinking without mode or measure, or doing the same thing in other people's homes, engaging only in those activities that gave them pleasure. They found this easy to do because people had abandoned their possessions as if they no longer had to cope with the problem of living, and most of the houses had become common property with complete strangers making use of whatever homes they arrived at as if they owned them. And they combined this bestial behavior with as complete an avoidance of the sick as they could manage.



The idea of "youthful indiscretion" has its origins right in the first generation of critics and beginning with **Petrarch**. See his letter to Boccaccio about Decameron. (Thompson, p. 233)

Humanists

The Petrarchian take on Decameron was continued in the writings of the Humanists who all admired Boccaccio as an active Florentine citizen but all believed that Antique Latin studies were the most important intellectual activity thus they admired Boccaccio's Latin & Greek works and discounted his vernacular works.

Ex: Giannozzo Manetti wrote a joint biog of all three, <u>Three Illustrious</u> <u>Florentine Poets</u> in his section on Boccaccio never mentions the Decameron!

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

Modern Critics

The tradition begun by Petrarch and the 15th C Humanists was followed uncritically by later critics for 600 years. Thomas Bergin Charles Singleton Vittore Branca all accept the youthful indiscretion approach.

The "youthful indiscretion" argument suffers on its face right from the start.



Was he "youthful" when he wrote it? Boccaccio was 35 when he started. (1348) Did he or anyone else consider that "youthful?"

Dante considered it in the middle of one's life.

Boccaccio loved Dante.

Therefore we face problem:

was not the youthful part of his life.

Idea that it was "youthful" indiscretion came from idea that he wrote it while young and never went back to it.

Hamilton Autograph

Discovery of the Hamilton Autograph in Berlin by Michele Barbi one of the great experts on 14thC Italian literature in the 1930s.

The Hamilton Autograph is an entire MS, of the Decameron in Boccaccio's own hand.

The Autograph was brought to Laurenziana Library in Florence where Barbi looked it over and exclaimed "E Lui!" but took the secret to his grave. Autograph sent back to Berlin and Barbi never said another thing about it. Later another expert Petrucci went, and examined the Hamilton Autograph and concluded: "E lui!" There was no doubt.

Why did Barbi hide it?

Because Barbi knew that this discovery changed every single article written about the Decameron and its being a youthful indiscretion.

Hamilton Autograph 1948

This all came to light in 1948 when his assistant <u>Alberto Chiari</u> revealed the secret and <u>Charles Singleton</u> went to Berlin to confirm the news.

The discovery of the Hamilton autograph was so shocking to Barbi that he sent the Hamilton autograph back to Berlin and never published a word about his find. Never told anyone about it. The only way we know is that his assistant, Alberto Chiari, told later....in 1948 seven years after the death of Barbi. Barbi couldnt face the meaning of the autograph.

At that time, in 1948, the great American expert Charles Singleton was preparing a new edition of the Decameron so he asked the world's expert on Boccaccio, <u>Armando Petrucci</u>, to come with him to Berlin.

Petrucci went, and examined the Hamilton Autograph and concluded: "E lui!" There was no doubt.

Why did Barbi hide it?

Because Barbi knew that this discovery changed every single article written about the Decameron and its being a youthful indiscretion.



The most important book of his life.

The Hamilton Autograph Ms. showed that in the last years of his life as he lectured on Dante he went back to work to produce his own definitive edition, an incredible labor for this man approaching 70, and in bad health, and already committed to lecturing on Dante. He copied a whole new edition of his great work himself in his last two years of life.

Seriousness of Decameron

In addition to the history of criticism and the Hamilton Autograph there are other reasons to treat the Decameron as serious work with serious purpose.

1. the warning at the beginning that like Galeotto, the book may be tricky.

If it is tricky how could it be so?

Well it would seem other than it is.

And it seems simple: funny stories, diversions, which are presented to us as such by their tellers...stories for ladies.

So if the book is other than what it seems it would be other than a mere set of funny stories to divert silly ladies.

Appearances and Reality

Why so much confusion about the Decameron?

If I am right then there has been a 600 year misunderstanding.

Why this confusion?

It is built into the project right from the start and Boccaccio knew it.

1. Galeotto.

Who was Galeotto?

Divine Comedy,

Canto 5, lines 136-138.

Francesca and Paolo.

la bocca mi bació tutto tremente

Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse:

quel giorno piú non vi leggemmo avante.

Who is Galeotto?

A trickster.

A fooler.

The book was a Galeotto that fooled them and led them down the path.



Boccaccio warns us:

Decameron is tricky. Be careful!

"This book is for the ladies."



. The Ladies. (Prologue and Introduction)

Does anyone believe that the Decameron was really written for the Ladies? only for the ladies? only for ladies in love? (p. 3) especially when we read the stories about the ladies and their stupidity and thick headedness.....their vanity which they themselves reveal to us?(see end of first day).

No one in the 14th Century believed it. We have ample letters of young men writing to friends to get them a copy.

and not ever has anyone thought this was just a book for the ladies. But if not what is the whole Prologue/Intro. about and why there? Is it a trick? A game?

An ironic statement to create a chuckle and or to throw us off our assumptions about books and about serious books or especially about the great big serious book he admired so much that he knew he could not write 1348?

Irony

American Heritage Dictionary: Irony

- 1. "The use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning."
- 2."An expression or utterance marked by such a deliberate contrast between apparent and intended meaning."

Boccaccio and Irony

Given what we know about Boccaccio and the D. and Galeotto and his statement that book only for ladies which is hard to believe, is it possible that this is all the **opposite of his intention** and that the whole of the Decameron is constructed on the basis of Irony?

That nothing is as it seems?

That the statement it is all for the ladies is the opposite of what he intended and that his intentionis signaled in his warning to you with the reference to Galeotto?

If so, WHY????????????????????

Why Irony?

Because preaching was all wrong for 1348.

This was a world turned upside down.

Cant use the usual procedures.



Dante's long sermon would have been laughed out of the drawing room in the aftermath of 1348.

Thus the author has to adopt the **appearance of play**, of sweet unimportant stories that all the time mask his true very serious purpose.

Decameron and Black Death

Everything we say and write about the Decameron must begin with the Black Death and its total transformation of the European world in 1348.

Everything had been turned upside down.

(Example: Church and death and burial)

Nothing was ever the same; all the pieties were now suspect. all categories were now rejected. (Categories that Dante could depend upon)

What worked for Dante in 1300 could not work for Boccaccio in 1348.

And it is this "Ironic" structure that most distinguished the DC from the Decameron.

Just as DC is DIRECT so the Decameron is INDIRECT/IRONIC.

Thus it is possible that Boccaccio deliberate chose an "Ironic" structure to his very moral tale.

That he presents it to us and to the world of 1350 as a totally frivolous diversion when inside is something totally other. A moral tale every bit as serious to its author as was the Divine Comedy was to its author.

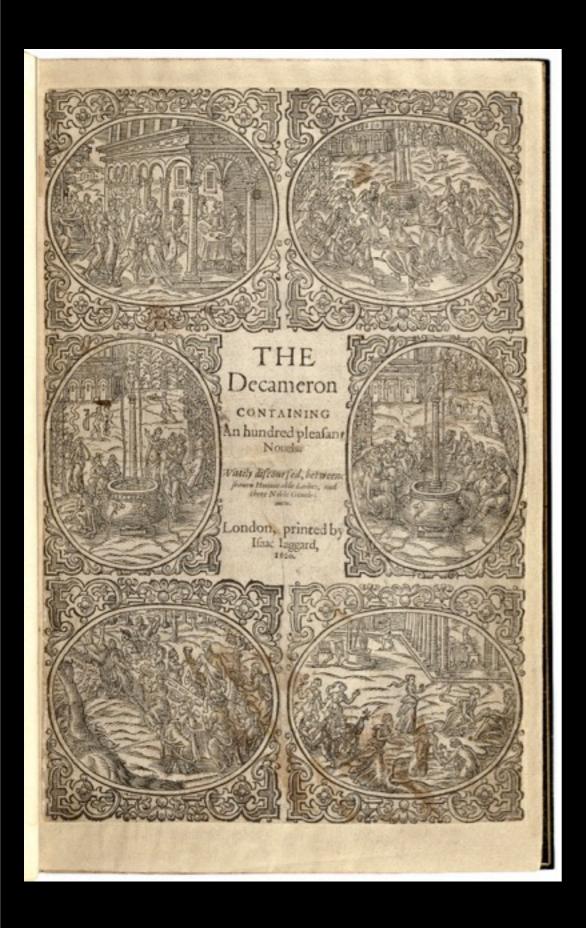


Structure of Decameron

The whole of the architecture of the Decameron is based on a <u>dualistic structure</u> that establishes right from the start a kind of tension for the reader between the two main aspects of the structure.

- 1. The Frame
- 2. The Stories

This means that in opposition to the clarity and directness of the <u>Divine Comedy</u> in which all action moves along a single line always moving toward that one goal from the beginning, here the reader is constantly torn back and forth in and out of two different worlds that clash sharply with one another. Thus there is tension ever present, contrast, ambiguity.



The old and the new (Modern)

This <u>formalistic split</u>, this formal choice by Boccaccio

mirrors perfectly the condition in which he felt he was living with the Black Death marking this terrible cleavage between the old and the new coming almost exactly at mid-century.

Thus the Decameron looks <u>back and forward</u> at the same time mirroring the feelings Boccaccio and his people had of being caught in the middle of some terrible cataclysmic divide.

The old chivalric world was passing, the world of courtiers, of jousts, of knights, and ladies of courtly love. (France)

The new world was the commercial world of the middle class: money, commerce, travel, anything for a buck!!!!!!(Italy)

The World of the Frame ESCAPE FROM DEATH (The journey to the country) This is the old world that is passing, the medieval world.

FRANCE

queens, palaces, servants aristocracy courts and courtiers courtly love fairy tales music dancing games poems stories vanity, mirrors, makeup, self indulgence escapist lack of reality escape from the real escape from death escape from the city

escape from the ugly real world

LANGUAGE:

rhetorical,
unreal,
phony,
strained,
superficial,
a phony "courtesy,"
is a French world
(vs the new Italian world
Boccaccio knows).

World of the Stories: NEW WORLD OF THE MERCHANT

earthy,

direct,

vernacular,

Italy

new men
goodbye to chivalry
real people
people from all classes all stations(vs queens)
lower classes present too for first time in lit
not just sweet world of French courtier
now Egypt, Tunisia, Cyprus etc.
the world of tough commerce
tough bankers
tough lawyers
every real day experience
vivid presentation of sex

(vs sweet euphemisms of courtly love)

LANGUAGE

rough,
language of the people,
none of the rhetorical phoniness,
talk of rough bodily functions,
shit and fucking.

ITALY

here we see the new world of new commercial cities of Italy: Flo/Genoa/Pisa Decameron registers the <u>new world of triumphant Italy</u> coming in the 15thC when the Renaissance will make Italy the cultural center of the world xt

travel

sex-lots of it.

The Decameron is Modern

The Tension Between the Two Worlds Structure and Reader Experience

Boccaccio's choice of creating two completely different worlds and the pushing them together and thereby the reader too, is the most significant formal aspect of the Decameron.

Whereas the <u>Divine Comedy is unilinear</u>, one straight line, with Dante always present, and his personal voyage always making progress towards its goal, <u>The Decameron is dual</u> and plunges the reader into **constant tension**, tension between two different worlds.

This choice between the structure of the Divine Comedy and the Decameron alerts us to the difference between the age of Dante and the post-Black Death of the age of Boccaccio.

The Decameron reflects age of moral confusion, crisis, pain and suffering, of INSECURITY

which is the most distinct result of the structure of the Decameron.

The Decameron is Modern

The Decameron is distinguished right from the start by the tone of irony and trickery and this is echoed in many stories including the first one - a false confession.

These two worlds confront the reader with the reality of mid-14thC Europe caught in the horrors of the Black Death and all the doubt that ensues.

STRUCTURE AND READER

Thus the structure (with a warning...) FORCES reader into an experiential tension structure forces reader into condition of tension structure forces reader into condition....questioning.....what is truth?

which is what he wants......

The Decameron is Modern

Boccacio one of first people to use the word "modern."

In doing so he alerts us to the beginning of something new in his age.

He and Petrarch are living in new age when all the verities of the age of Dante are up for discussion.

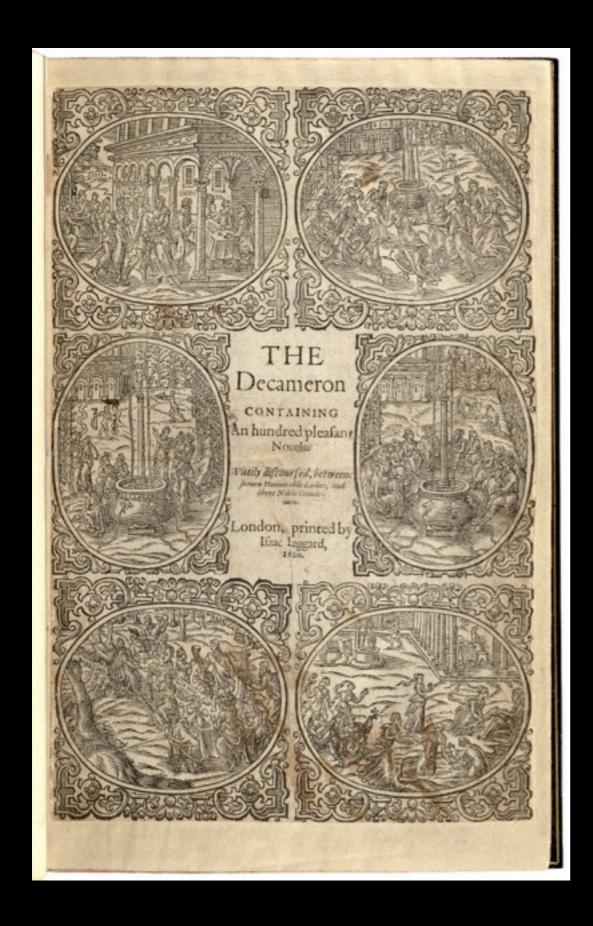
Black Death changed everything.....turned everything upside down.

Thus the Decameron is a work for the modern age.

It anticipates the **Modern Condition** which is insecurity, relativity, every man his own philosopher every man his own theologian.

In the Modern Age we all have to **CONSTRUCT our own reality our own values**. That is the Modern dilemma.....to feel alone in the world without security..without foundation.

The Decameron in its brilliant structure introduces us to that condition with a great technique....the structure forces us into the condition of ambiguity as readers and thus we EXPERIENCE the modern condition in reading the book.









Fourteenth Century Background

- 1. Universal chronology breaks down into "ages."
- 2. Church breaks down into schism and heresy.
- 3. Empire breaks down, thanks to collapse of Pope-Emperor partnership.
- 4. Christendom breaks down into "Europe."
- 5. Europe breaks down into nation-states.
- 6. Italy breaks down into communes.
- 7. France breaks down into the Hundred Years War. (1337)
- 8. International language of Latin breaks down into vernaculars.
- 9. Literatures break down into national/vernacular works.
- 10. Art breaks down into personal point of view (Giotto).
- 11. Traditional religion of church breaks down into personal piety, personal inspiration, personal secret religious communication, and mysticism.
- 12. Christian confidence, piety breaks down under burden of Black Death.
- 13. Philosophy breaks down into subjectivism, intuition (Ockham).
- 14. Social cohesion, labor cooperation, entrepreneurial/labor unity breaks down under the impact of Black Death. End of "happy" family manor, beginning of modern labor, unions vs. owners (example: Ciompi Rebellion in Florence, 1381)
- 15. Agriculture breaks down under over-extension, famine, drought, and then Black Death; no workers, land values explode, overpopulation.







Making of the Western Mind Institute for the Study of

Western Civilization Week 18. Boccaccio









ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020

















ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020











ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020





ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020









ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



















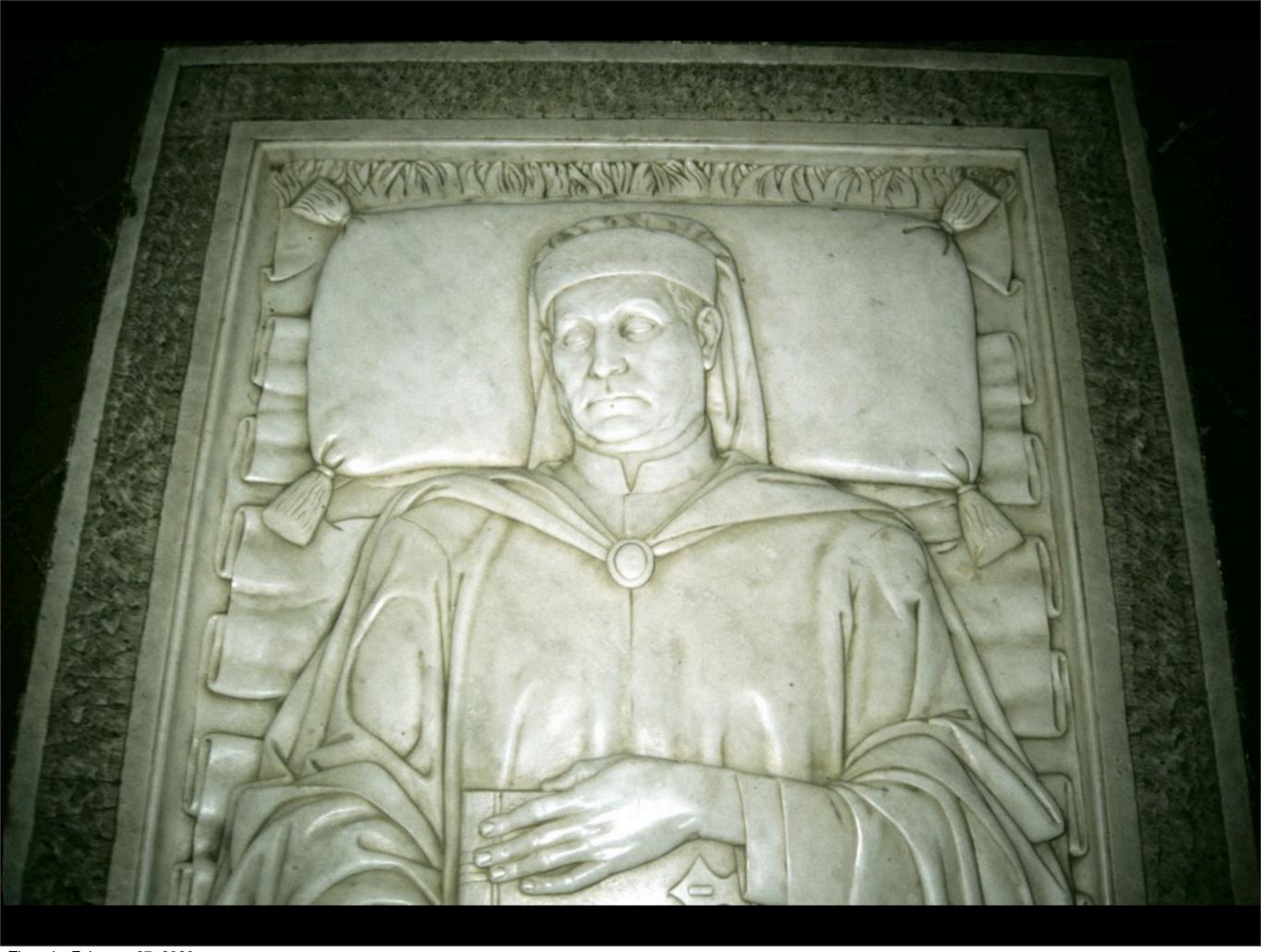
ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020



ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020











ThursdayFebruary 27, 2020

























Making of the Western Mind Institute for the Study of

Western Civilization Week 18. Boccaccio



