

DOWNLOAD PDF PETRARCH AND HIS INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH LITERATURE

Chapter 1 : Petrarch's Canzoniere in the English Renaissance

PETRARCH AND HIS INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH LITERATURE BY PETER BORGHESI o s BOLOGNA NICHOLAS ZANICHELLI Sin BY TABLE OF CONTENTS Preface Pag. i The XIV and XV centuries 5 The XVI century.,. 23 PREFACE It was our wish to know something about the influence which Petrarch had on English literature.

Shakespeare, even the great Shakespeare, could not escape the influence of the Petrarchists and therefore of Petrarch himself, but, as we do not want to be misunderstood, we say at once just what we said about Spenser: In order to show that he is not a Petrarchist it is enough to compare his sonnets with those of Watson, Barnes, Fletcher, Daniel, Drayton and other contemporaries: We say so because we are of the opinion of those who think that Shakespeare knew Italian, if not to perfection, doubtless in such a degree as to be able to discern the drift of an Italian poem or novel. Were it otherwise it would be very difficult to explain how he could found not less than fourteen of his dramas on Italian fiction. But of course it is not of his dramas we are going to speak, although the lyrical element peculiar to his time is to be seen in all his plays: There is also some connection between his 26th sonnet and that of Petrarch beginning "Amor, che nel pensier mio vive e regna. In fact at first Shakespeare was very fond of the Italian sonnet although afterwards he ridiculed it. Again, as Petrarch wrote about his own feelings for the lady he loved, so perhaps Shakespeare derived the subject-matter of his sonnets from his personal relations with the men and women at court. It appears to us that it is impossible to deny the influence of Petrarch and the Petrarchists on Shakespeare. The Elizabethan love-poets made use of the Platonic idealism of the Petrarchan school, and Shakespeare adopted its phraseology in his sonnets where we find much which is common to the other sonneteers of the day: In a word his language is so figurative that it becomes difficult to understand and it is even quite unintelligible here and there. It is therefore easy to see that the sonnet was limited to a particular subject, and if to that we add that the spirit of the chivalry of the Middle Ages was decaying, we can easily guess that the language to use in this kind of composition could only be cold, mechanical and conventional. Consider the great difference which exists between the enthusiasm of Petrarch for Laura and that of Fletcher for Licia and also perhaps that of Surrey for the Fair Geraldine and the truthfulness of our statement will be at once admitted. As every artist is, to a certain extent, the product of his own time, so Shakespeare could not escape this universal law, therefore his critics are divided into two parties. Thomas Tyler, Courthope and many others say that his sonnets are sincere; several others, among whom we find Lee, do not agree with this opinion. Karl Elze and E. Stengel say that perhaps Shakespeare wrote his sonnets to exercise his fancy and to amuse his friends, which leads us to the opinion that his sentiment was fictitious. But, to express our modest opinion, we think that as Dante and Petrarch could not have written so well if their feelings had not been genuine, so Shakespeare could not have presented mankind with his beautiful sonnets had he not really felt what he wrote, and we really think that his passion was born of the heart and not of the head. But by whom were these sonnets inspired? To whom were they addressed? They were first published in and dedicated to a person whose name began with the initials W. Critics have now changed their opinion and they are inclined to think they were addressed to a male friend, and this is not improbable when we consider the Platonism of the time. But then, why did not Shakespeare write the name in full? The fact of using initials only might cause even the least carping mind to think of a woman rather than of a man. She is not a perfect beauty, or a beauty womanly perfect, but she has the power of fascinating the poet almost in spite of himself. It may be that Shakespeare never sympathized with any Laura, and, as he wrote his sonnets at different periods of his life, perhaps they were, as we have already suggested, inspired by several persons, both male and female, although they were dedicated only to one. If Shakespeare had no Laura, or, at least, if he did not know how to love his lady and sing of her after the manner of the Petrarchists, he also did not know the somewhat complex system of rhyme adopted by Petrarch in his sonnets and by nearly all the best English sonneteers. Only rarely does a single sonnet form an independent poem, and, as in the sonnets of of Sidney, Spenser and Drayton, the same thought is pursued continuously

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through two or more. It has been said that the sonnet writers of the Shakespearean age have left little really memorable work, nevertheless that little, in our opinion, cannot be neglected by a conscientious student of English literature. How to cite this article: Petrarch and his influence on English literature. Love is a passion, kindling heart, brain, and senses alike in natural and happy proportions; ardent but not sensual, tender but not sentimental, pure but not ascetic, moral but not puritanic, joyous but not frivolous, mirthful and witty but not cynical. His lovers look forward to marriage as a matter of course, and they neither anticipate its rights nor turn their affections elsewhere. They commonly love at first sight and once for all. Love-relations which do not contemplate marriage occur rarely and in subordination to other dramatic purposes.

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Chapter 2 : Petrarch - Poet | Academy of American Poets

Excerpt. In the course of our researches we have observed that, although the English have never been slavish imitators of any particular people or individual, yet they owe to Petrarch much more than we at first believed.

What To Do Ask students to bring in lyrics to songs about the pain of love and share them. Share some popular musical renditions if you have the time. Consider together why this is still such a popular subject. Briefly explain who Petrarch and Laura were, and list some characteristic themes of the Petrarchan sonnet: Review the typical relationship of octave and sestet: Eyeless I see and tongueless I protest. And long to perish while I succor seek; Myself I hate and would another woo. I feed on grief, I laugh with sob-racked breast And death and life alike to me are bleak: My lady, thus I am because of you. Divide the class into two groups, one for octave, one for the sestet. Give them 10 minutes to prepare a dramatic reading with exaggerated movements and gestures. Octave group is on one side of the room, sestet is on the other. Students can speak chorally, or break up the lines and parcel them out. The presentations will be funny. Mention that the object is not to ridicule Petrarch, a great artist, but to demonstrate the extremes of feeling he articulated and which served as models for later poets. Have students write their reactions to Petrarch in their journals and then share responses. If time permits, have students role-play Petrarch and Laura in contemporary idiom. Did they connect the sentiments of the songs they brought in with Petrarch? Do they understand the Petrarchan conventions and how they continue to influence writing today? Do they appear interested in the sonnet as a formalized way of expressing feeling? A great next sonnet:

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Chapter 3 : Petrarch and Shakespeare - Did Petrarch Influence Shakespeare?

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The family eventually moved to Avignon, in the Provence region of southern France, the home of the exiled papal court, at which an Italian lawyer might hope to find employment. From there he returned to Italy with his younger brother Gherardo to continue these studies at Bologna. Meanwhile, his knowledge and love of the Classical authors increasing, he made his acquaintance with the new vernacular poetry that was being written. Returning to Avignon, he took minor ecclesiastical orders and entered the household of the influential cardinal Giovanni Colonna. Petrarch enjoyed life in Avignon, and there is a famous description of him and his brother as dandies in its polished courtly world; but he was also making a name there for his scholarship and the elegance of his culture. As well as a love of literature, Petrarch also had during his early youth a deep religious faith, a love of virtue, and an unusually deep perception of the transitory nature of human affairs. There now followed the reaction—a period of dissipation—which also coincided with the beginning of his famous chaste love for a woman known now only as Laura. Vain attempts have been made to identify her, but Petrarch himself kept silent about everything concerning her civil status, as though he thought it unimportant. He first saw her in the Church of St. Clare at Avignon on April 6, and loved her, although she was outside his reach, almost until his death. From this love there springs the work for which he is most celebrated, the Italian poems *Rime*, which he affected to despise as mere trifles in the vulgar tongue but which he collected and revised throughout his life. Classical studies and career —40 He spent the summer of at Lombez, France, the bishop of which was an old friend from Bologna, Giacomo Colonna. In he received a canonry there but continued to reside at Avignon in the service of the Cardinal, with whom he stayed until. Quite apart from his love for Laura, this period was an important one for Petrarch. These were years of ambition and unremitting study notably in the field of Classical Latin. They were also years of travel. In Paris he was given a copy of the *Confessions* of St. Augustine by a friend and spiritual confidant, the Augustinian monk Dionigi of Sansepolcro, and he was to use this more and more as the breviary of his spiritual life. By making a synthesis of the two seemingly conflicting ideals—regarding the one as the rich promise and the other as its divine fulfillment—he can claim to be the founder and great representative of the movement known as European humanism. He rejected the sterile argumentation and endless dialectical subtleties to which medieval Scholasticism had become prey and turned back for values and illumination to the moral weight of the Classical world. In he visited Rome for the first time, to be stirred among its ruins by the evident grandeur of its past. Moral and literary evolution —46 Meanwhile, his reputation as a scholar was spreading; in September he received invitations from Paris and Rome to be crowned as poet. He had perhaps sought out this honour, partly from ambition but mainly in order that the rebirth of the cult of poetry after more than 1, years might be fittingly celebrated. He had no hesitation in choosing Rome, and accordingly he was crowned on the Capitoline Hill on April 8, afterward placing his laurel wreath on the tomb of the Apostle in St. From Rome he went to Parma and the nearby solitude of Selvapiana, returning to Avignon in the autumn of. At any rate, this is a common reading of the *Secretum meum* — It is an autobiographical treatise consisting of three dialogues between Petrarch and St. Augustine in the presence of Truth. In it he maintains hope that, even amidst worldly preoccupations and error, even while absorbed in himself and his own affairs, a man might still find a way to God. It was an evolution in his thinking that led him to break through the barriers of his too-exclusive admiration for antiquity and to admit other authoritative voices. Break with his past —53 The events of the next few years are fundamental to his biography, both as a man and as a writer. Finally, in the jubilee year of he made a pilgrimage to Rome and later assigned to this year his renunciation of sensual pleasures. In Verona in he made his great discovery of the letters of Cicero to Atticus, Brutus, and Quintus, which allowed him to penetrate the surface of the great orator and see the man himself. The letters spurred him

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on to write epistles to the ancient authors whom he loved and to make a collection of his own letters that he had scattered among his friends. Toward the end of he returned again to the peace of Vaucluse and spent two years there, chiefly revising *De vita solitaria* but also developing the theme of solitude in a specifically monastic context, in *De otio religioso*. Much of the time was spent in advancing his career in the church; the manoeuvring and animosities this involved resulted in an intense longing for the peace of Vaucluse; not even a visit from his lifelong friend the poet Boccaccio, who offered him a chair to be established under his guidance in the University of Florence, could deflect him. He left Rome in May for Vaucluse. Here he worked on a new plan for the *Rime*. The project was divided into two parts: The theme of his *Canzoniere* as the poems are usually known therefore goes beyond the apparent subject matter, his love for Laura. For the first time in the history of the new poetry, lyrics are held together in a marvellous new tapestry, possessing its own unity. By selecting all that was most polished and at the same time most vigorous in the lyric tradition of the preceding two centuries and filtering it through his new appreciation of the classics, he not only bequeathed to humanity the most limpid and yet passionate, precise yet suggestive, expression of love and grief, of the ecstasies and sorrows of man, but also created with his marvellous sensibility the form and language of the modern lyric, to provide a common stock for lyric poets of the whole of Europe. Later years 1374 But the death of his closest friends, dislike of the newly elected pope, Innocent VI, increasingly bitter relations with the Avignon court, all finally determined Petrarch to leave Provence. He found rooms in Milan and stayed there for most of the next eight years. During these eight years he also completed the first proper edition of the *Rime*, continued assiduously with the *Familiars*, worked on the *Trionfi*, and set in order many of his earlier writings. Early in he went to Padua, hoping to escape the plague. He remained there until September, when, again a fugitive from the Black Death, he sought shelter in Venice. He was given a house, and in return Petrarch promised to bequeath all his books to the republic. He was joined by his daughter Francesca, and the tranquil happiness of her little family gave him great pleasure. There he wrote the defense of his humanism against the critical attack from Venice, *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*. He was still in great demand as a diplomat; in he was called to Rome by Urban V, and he set off eager to see the fulfillment of his great dream of a new Roman papacy, but at Ferrara he was seized by a stroke. Yet he did not stop working; in addition to revision he composed more minor works and added new sections to his *Posteritati*, an autobiographical letter to posterity that was to have formed the conclusion to his *Seniles*; he also composed the final sections of the *Trionfi*. His abiding achievement was to recognize that, if there is a Providence that guides the world, then it has set man at the centre. But, even more important, the humanist attitudes of the Italian 15th century that led into the Renaissance would not have been possible without him.

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Chapter 4 : Petrarch, Father of the Sonnet | Folger Shakespeare Library

Excerpt from Petrarch and His Influence on English Literature In the course of our researches we have observed that, although the English have never been slavish imitators of any particular people or individual, yet they owe to Petrarch much more than we at first believed.

He was taken to Avignon in 1336, and there he spent most of his life until 1374, except for a period as a student of law at Montpellier and Bologna and several long journeys to Italy. Petrarch held several ecclesiastical benefices and also enjoyed the patronage of the Colonna and the Visconti. His Latin writings include poems, orations, invectives, historical works, a large body of letters, and a few moral treatises. Petrarch was no philosopher in the technical sense, and even his treatises on moral subjects are loosely written and lack a firm structure or method. Much of his thought consists of tendencies and aspirations rather than of developed ideas or doctrines, and it is inextricably linked with his learning, reading, tastes, and feelings. He was the first great representative of Renaissance humanism, if not its founder; as a poet, scholar, and personality, he had a vast reputation during his lifetime and for several subsequent centuries. In many ways he set the pattern for the taste, outlook, and range of interests that determined the thought of Renaissance humanism down to the sixteenth century. He attacked astrology as well as logic and jurisprudence and dedicated entire works to criticizing the physicians and the Aristotelian philosophers. These attacks, though sweeping and suggestive, are highly personal and subjective and rarely enter into specific issues or arguments. When Petrarch rejects the authority of Aristotle or of his Arabic commentator Averroes, he does so from personal dislike, not from objective grounds; when he criticizes such theories as the eternity of the world, the attainment of perfect happiness during the present life, or the so-called theory of the double truth that is, of the separate validity of Aristotelian philosophy and of Christian theology, his main argument is that these doctrines are contrary to the Christian religion. Yet the positive value that Petrarch opposed to medieval science was neither a new science nor mere religious faith but the study of classical antiquity. All his life Petrarch was an avid reader of the ancient Latin writers; he copied, collected, and annotated their works and tried to correct their texts and appropriate their style and ideas. He felt a strong nostalgia for the political greatness of the Roman Republic and Empire, and the hope to restore this greatness was the central political idea that guided him in his dealings with the pope and the emperor, with the Roman revolutionary Cola di Rienzo, and with the various Italian governments of his time. His polemic against dialectic and other branches of scholastic learning and his emphasis on moral problems seem to be modeled after the more moderate skepticism which Seneca expresses in his Moral Epistles with reference to the subtle dialectic of the older Stoics. To Seneca, Petrarch owes his taste for moral declamation and the Stoic notions that appear in his writings—the conflict between virtue and fortune, the contrast between reason and the four basic passions, and the close link between virtue and happiness. We might even say that Petrarch and other humanists owe to their imitation of Cicero and Seneca not only the elegance of their style, but also the elusive and at times superficial manner of their reasoning. Petrarch could not fail to notice the numerous references to Greek sources in the writings of his favorite Roman authors. He made an attempt to learn Greek, and although he did not progress far enough to read the ancient Greek writers in the original, his awareness of Greek philosophy and literature did affect his outlook and orientation. He owned a Greek manuscript of Plato and read the *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*, which were available to him in Latin translations. He also gathered information on Plato in Cicero and other Roman authors and cited some Platonic doctrines. Petrarch assigned second place to Aristotle, but he was far from holding him in contempt. Petrarch thus pointed the way to a new attitude toward Aristotle that was to take shape in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Aristotle was to be studied in the original Greek text and in the company of other Greek philosophers and writers; his medieval Latin translations were to be replaced by new humanist translations, and his medieval Arabic and Latin commentators were to give way to the ancient Greek commentators and to those modern Renaissance interpreters who were able to read and understand Aristotle in

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his original text. Thus, Petrarch was the prophet of Renaissance Aristotelianism, as he had been of Renaissance Platonism. Although Petrarch opposed the classical authors to the medieval tradition, he was by no means completely detached from his immediate past. Christian faith and piety occupy a central position in his thought and writings, and there is no reason to doubt his sincerity. Whenever a conflict between religion and ancient philosophy might arise, he is ready to stand by the teachings of the former. The *Secretum*, in which Petrarch subjects his most intimate feelings and actions to religious scrutiny, is a thoroughly Christian work, and his treatise *De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae* is equally Christian, even specifically medieval. In his treatise on his ignorance, Petrarch goes so far as to oppose his own piety to the supposedly irreligious views of his scholastic opponents. This shows that it was at least possible to reject Scholasticism and remain a convinced Christian, and to reconcile classical learning with religious faith. In accordance with this attitude, Petrarch liked to read the early Christian writers, especially the Church Fathers, along with the pagan classics but without the company of the scholastic theologians. His favorite Christian author was St. Augustine, who occupies a position of unique importance in his thought and work. Besides these and a few other general attitudes, there is at least one theoretical problem on which Petrarch formulates views akin to those of many later humanists. He keeps asserting that man and his problems should be the main object and concern of thought and philosophy. This is also the justification he gives for his emphasis on moral philosophy, and when he criticizes the scholastic science of his Aristotelian opponents, it is chiefly on the grounds that they raise useless questions and forget the most important problem, the human soul. This is also the gist of the words with which Petrarch describes his feelings when he had reached the top of Mont Ventoux. Petrarch expresses for the first time that emphasis on man which was to receive eloquent developments in the treatises of later humanists and to be given a metaphysical and cosmological foundation in the works of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. This is the reason that the humanists were to adopt the name "humanities" *studia humanitatis* for their studies to indicate their significance for man and his problems. When Petrarch speaks of man and his soul, he refers at the same time to the blessed life and eternal salvation, adding a distinctly Christian overtone to his moral and human preoccupation. He thus comes to link the knowledge of man and the knowledge of God in a distinctly Augustinian fashion and also to discuss an important problem of scholastic philosophy that had its root in Augustine: In discussing this scholastic problem, Petrarch follows the Augustinian tradition, as other humanists and Platonists were to do after him, in deciding the question in favor of the will. Petrarch, the great poet, writer, and scholar, is clearly an ambiguous and transitional figure when judged by his role in the history of philosophical thought. His thought consists in aspirations rather than developed ideas, but these aspirations were developed by later thinkers and were eventually transformed into more elaborate ideas. His intellectual program may be summed up in the formula that he uses once in the treatise on his ignorance: Platonic wisdom, Christian dogma, Ciceronian eloquence. His classical culture, his Christian faith, and his attack against Scholasticism all have a personal, and in a way modern, quality. At the same time everything he says is pervaded by his classical sources and often by residual traces of medieval thought. In this respect, as in many others, Petrarch is a typical representative of his age and of the humanist movement. He did not merely anticipate later Renaissance developments because he was unusually talented or perceptive; he also had an active share in bringing them about, because of the enormous prestige he enjoyed among his contemporaries and immediate successors. Of the *Edizione nazionale* of his collected works only six volumes have appeared, containing his poem *Africa*, a part of his letters "Le familiari," edited by V. Niemeyer, ; and *Petrarcas Briefwechsel mit deutschen Zeitgenossen*, edited by P. The collection of *Prose*, edited by G. Milan and Naples, , contains the *Secretum*, *De Vita Solitaria*, and selections from the invectives and other treatises. Capelli Paris, , is the only complete modern edition of this important treatise. For many other Latin works of Petrarch the old edition of his works, *Opera* Basel, , must still be used. See also *Scritti inediti*, edited by A. English translations are available for the *Secretum*, translated by William H. University of Chicago Press, , pp. University of Chicago Press, Sapegno, *Il trecento* Milan, Tatham, Francesco Petrarca, 2 vols. London, ; U. Indiana University Press, ; and, above all, numerous books and articles by Ernest H.

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Chapter 5 : Francis Petrarch (general note)

Petrarch's Influence on Shakespeare From Petrarch and his influence on English literature by Pietro Borghesi. Bologna: N. Zanichelli. Shakespeare, even the great Shakespeare, could not escape the influence of the Petrarchists and therefore of Petrarch himself, but, as we do not want to be misunderstood, we say at once just what we said about Spenser: Shakespeare is not a Petrarchist and.

The nineteenth-century Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt noted that Jean Buridan had climbed the same mountain a few years before, and ascents accomplished during the Middle Ages have been recorded, including that of Anno II, Archbishop of Cologne. In Petrarch, this attitude is coupled with an aspiration for a virtuous Christian life, and on reaching the summit, he took from his pocket a volume by his beloved mentor, Saint Augustine, that he always carried with him. It was no great feat, of course; but he was the first recorded Alpinist of modern times, the first to climb a mountain merely for the delight of looking from its top. Or almost the first; for in a high pasture he met an old shepherd, who said that fifty years before he had attained the summit, and had got nothing from it save toil and repentance and torn clothing. Petrarch was dazed and stirred by the view of the Alps, the mountains around Lyons, the Rhone, the Bay of Marseilles. And men go about to wonder at the heights of the mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide sweep of rivers, and the circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars, but themselves they consider not. I closed the book, angry with myself that I should still be admiring earthly things who might long ago have learned from even the pagan philosophers that nothing is wonderful but the soul, which, when great itself, finds nothing great outside itself. Then, in truth, I was satisfied that I had seen enough of the mountain; I turned my inward eye upon myself, and from that time not a syllable fell from my lips until we reached the bottom again. Arguing against such a singular and hyperbolic periodization, Paul James suggests a different reading: His career in the Church did not allow him to marry, but he is believed to have fathered two children by a woman or women unknown to posterity. A son, Giovanni, was born in , and a daughter, Francesca, was born in . Both he later legitimized. In the same year Petrarch was named canon in Monselice near Padua. A second grandchild, Francesco, was born in , but died before his second birthday. Francesca and her family lived with Petrarch in Venice for five years from to at Palazzo Molina; although Petrarch continued to travel in those years. Between and the younger Boccaccio paid the older Petrarch two visits. The first was in Venice, the second was in Padua. On the marble slab there is a Latin inscription written by Antonio Quarenghi: *Etruscus gemino vates ardebat amore: Maximus ignis ego; Laura secundus erat. Arcebam sacro vivens a limine mures, Ne domini exitio scripta diserta forent; Incutio trepidis eadem defuncta pavorem, Et vigeo exanimi in corpore prisca fides.* This arrangement was probably cancelled when he moved to Padua, the enemy of Venice, in . The library was seized by the lords of Padua, and his books and manuscripts are now widely scattered over Europe. The *Triumph of Death*, or *The 3 Fates*. Flemish tapestry probably Brussels, ca. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The three Fates, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, who spin, draw out and cut the thread of life, represent Death in this tapestry, as they triumph over the fallen body of Chastity. However, Petrarch was an enthusiastic Latin scholar and did most of his writing in this language. His Latin writings include scholarly works, introspective essays, letters, and more poetry. He translated seven psalms, a collection known as the *Penitential Psalms*. Cicero, Virgil, and Seneca were his literary models. Most of his Latin writings are difficult to find today, but several of his works are available in English translations. Petrarch collected his letters into two major sets of books called *Epistolae familiares* "Letters on Familiar Matters" and *Seniles* "Letters of Old Age", both of which are available in English translation. These were published "without names" to protect the recipients, all of whom had close relationships to Petrarch. His "Letter to Posterity" the last letter in *Seniles* [33] gives an autobiography and a synopsis of his philosophy in life. It was originally written in Latin and was completed in or - the first such autobiography in a thousand years since Saint Augustine. This is *Non al suo amante* by Jacopo da Bologna, written around Laura and poetry[edit] This section needs additional

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citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. Laura and Petrarch had little or no personal contact. According to his "Secretum", she refused him because she was already married. He channeled his feelings into love poems that were exclamatory rather than persuasive, and wrote prose that showed his contempt for men who pursue women. Upon her death in 1348, the poet found that his grief was as difficult to live with as was his former despair. Later in his "Letter to Posterity", Petrarch wrote: I certainly wish I could say that I have always been entirely free from desires of the flesh, but I would be lying if I did". Laura de Noves While it is possible she was an idealized or pseudonymous character – particularly since the name "Laura" has a linguistic connection to the poetic "laurels" Petrarch coveted – Petrarch himself always denied it. There is psychological realism in the description of Laura, although Petrarch draws heavily on conventionalised descriptions of love and lovers from troubadour songs and other literature of courtly love. Her presence causes him unspeakable joy, but his unrequited love creates unendurable desires, inner conflicts between the ardent lover and the mystic Christian, making it impossible to reconcile the two. Francesco De Sanctis remarks much the same thing in his Storia della letteratura italiana, and contemporary critics agree on the powerful music of his verse. Perhaps the poet was inspired by a famous singer he met in Veneto around the 1330s. Laura is too holy to be painted; she is an awe-inspiring goddess. Sensuality and passion are suggested rather by the rhythm and music that shape the vague contours of the lady. In addition, some today consider Laura to be a representation of an "ideal Renaissance woman", based on her nature and definitive characteristics.

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Chapter 6 : How did Petrarch influence the Renaissance

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Boccaccio was the son of a Tuscan merchant, Boccaccio di Chellino called Boccaccino, and a mother who was probably French. He passed his early childhood rather unhappily in Florence. In this milieu Boccaccio experienced the aristocracy of the commercial world as well as all that survived of the splendours of courtly chivalry and feudalism. He also studied canon law and mixed with the learned men of the court and the friends and admirers of Petrarch, through whom he came to know the work of Petrarch himself. It was probably in that Boccaccio was recalled to Florence by his father, involved in the bankruptcy of the Bardi. The sheltered period of his life thus came to an end, and thenceforward there were to be only difficulties and occasional periods of poverty. From Naples, however, the young Boccaccio brought with him a store of literary work already completed. Much more important are two works with themes derived from medieval romances: The Teseida probably begun in Naples and finished in Florence, 1374 is an ambitious epic of 12 cantos in ottava rima in which the wars of Theseus serve as a background for the love of two friends, Arcita and Palemone, for the same woman, Emilia; Arcita finally wins her in a tournament but dies immediately. While the themes of chivalry and love in these works had long been familiar in courtly circles, Boccaccio enriched them with the fruits of his own acute observation of real life and sought to present them nobly and illustriously by a display of learning and rhetorical ornament, so as to make his Italian worthy of comparison with the monuments of Latin literature. It was Boccaccio, too, who raised to literary dignity ottava rima, the verse metre of the popular minstrels, which was eventually to become the characteristic vehicle for Italian verse. Boccaccio, meanwhile, was trying continually to put his financial affairs in order, though he never succeeded in doing so. Little is known, however, of the detail of his life in the period following his return to Florence. It was probably in the years 1373 that Boccaccio composed the Decameron in the form in which it is read today. In the broad sweep of its range and its alternately tragic and comic views of life, it is rightly regarded as his masterpiece. Stylistically, it is the most perfect example of Italian classical prose, and its influence on Renaissance literature throughout Europe was enormous. The Decameron begins with the flight of 10 young people 7 women and 3 men from plague-stricken Florence in They retire to a rich, well-watered countryside, where, in the course of a fortnight, each member of the party has a turn as king or queen over the others, deciding in detail how their day shall be spent and directing their leisurely walks, their outdoor conversations, their dances and songs, and, above all, their alternate storytelling. In addition to the stories, Boccaccio has a master theme, namely, the way of life of the refined bourgeoisie, who combined respect for conventions with an open-minded attitude to personal behaviour. The sombre tones of the opening passages of the book, in which the plague and the moral and social chaos that accompanies it are described in the grand manner, are in sharp contrast to the scintillating liveliness of Day I, which is spent almost entirely in witty disputation, and to the playful atmosphere of intrigue that characterizes the tales of adventure or deception related on Days II and III. With Day IV and its stories of unhappy love, the gloomy note returns; but Day V brings some relief, though it does not entirely dissipate the echo of solemnity, by giving happy endings to stories of love that does not at first run smoothly. Finally, in Day X, all the themes of the preceding days are brought to a high pitch, the impure made pure and the common made heroic. The prefaces to the days and to the individual stories and certain passages of especial magnificence based on classical models, with their select vocabulary and elaborate periods, have long held the attention of critics. But there is also another Boccaccio: These two aspects of the Decameron made it the fountainhead of Italian literary prose for the following centuries. This view is no longer tenable, however, since the Middle Ages can no longer be presented as having been wholly ascetic or wholly concerned with God and heavenly salvation in contrast with a Renaissance concerned only with the

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human. It is the spirit in which Boccaccio treats his subjects and his forms that is new. For the first time in the Middle Ages, Boccaccio in the Decameron deliberately shows man striving with fortune and learning to overcome it. To be truly noble, according to the Decameron, man must accept life as it is, without bitterness, must accept, above all, the consequences of his own action, however contrary to his expectation or even tragic they may be. To realize his own earthly happiness, he must confine his desire to what is humanly possible and renounce the absolute without regret. During the years in which Boccaccio is believed to have written the Decameron, the Florentines appointed him ambassador to the lords of Romagna in ; municipal councillor and also ambassador to Louis, duke of Bavaria, in the Tirol in ; and ambassador to Pope Innocent VI in . Boccaccio revered the older man as his master, and Petrarch proved himself a serene and ready counselor and a reliable helper. Together, through the exchange of books, news, and ideas, the two men laid the foundations for the humanist reconquest of classical antiquity. After the Decameron, of which Petrarch remained in ignorance until the very last years of his life, Boccaccio wrote nothing in Italian except *Il Corbaccio* 1355; a satire on a widow who had jilted him , his late writings on Dante, and perhaps an occasional lyric. Turning instead to Latin, he devoted himself to humanist scholarship rather than to imaginative or poetic creation. His *Bucolicum carmen* 1366 , a series of allegorical eclogues short pastoral poems on contemporary events, follows classical models on lines already indicated by Dante and Petrarch. A premature weakening of his physical powers and disappointments in love may also have contributed to it. Some such occurrence would explain how Boccaccio, having previously written always in praise of women and love, came suddenly to write the bitterly misogynistic *Corbaccio* and then turn his genius elsewhere. Furthermore, there are signs that he may have begun to feel religious scruples. Petrarch describes how the Carthusian monk Pietro Petrone, on his deathbed in , sent another Carthusian, Gioacchino Ciani, to exhort Boccaccio to renounce his worldly studies; and it was Petrarch who then dissuaded Boccaccio from burning his own works and selling his library. He had taken minor orders many years earlier, perhaps at first only in the hope of being given benefices. Even so, he did not neglect Italian poetry , his enthusiasm for his immediate predecessors, especially Dante, being one of the characteristics that distinguish him from Petrarch. All these studies were pursued in poverty, sometimes almost in destitution, and Boccaccio had to earn most of his income by transcribing his own works or those of others. In poverty compelled him to retire to the village of Certaldo. A revised text of the commentary that he gave with these readings is still extant but breaks off at the point that he had reached when, early in , ill health made him lose heart. There Boccaccio died the following year and was buried in the Church of SS. Boccaccio and the Renaissance. Boccaccio was a man of the Renaissance in almost every sense. His humanism comprised not only classical studies and the attempt to rediscover and reinterpret ancient texts but also the attempt to raise literature in the modern languages to the level of the classical by setting standards for it and then conforming to those standards. Boccaccio advanced further than Petrarch in this direction not only because he sought to dignify prose as well as poetry but also because, in his *Ninfale fiesolano*, in his *Elegia de Madonna Fiammetta*, and in the Decameron, he ennobled everyday experience, tragic and comic alike. The same attention to popular and medieval themes characterized Italian culture in the second half of the 15th century; without Boccaccio, the literary culmination of the Italian Renaissance would be historically incomprehensible.

Chapter 7 : Influence of Italian humanism on Chaucer - Wikipedia

PETRARCH AND HIS INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH LITERATURE BY PETER BORGHESI OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA NICHOLAS ZANICHELLI PREFACE It was our wish to know something about the influence which Petrarch had on English literature.

Chapter 8 : Petrarch and His Influence on English Literature

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Known for his work reviving interest in classical literature, Petrarch is considered the "father of Humanism," an attitude associated with the flourishing of the Renaissance. Petrarch's considerable influence in England, and therefore in English, began with Chaucer, who incorporated elements and translations of Petrarch's work into his own.

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Classics and Humanism. Petrarch became a cleric, making him eligible for ecclesiastical postings, which supported him as he pursued his interest in ancient literature.