



Life in Medieval Italy

Siena



Florence – Wealth and art, ruled by powerful families like the Medici.

Venice – A major trading power, ruled by a group of wealthy merchants.

Milan – A strong military city-state, ruled by the Sforza family.

Papal States – Controlled by the Pope, covering central Italy.



**How was to live
with a plague?**

**Engraving
depicting the
burning of Jews,
accused of
poisoning
Christian wells.**

How did all begin? – Sicilian chronicler Michele da Piazza

It so happened in the month of October in the year of our Lord 1347, around the first of that month, twelve Genoese galleys, fleeing our Lord's wrath which came down upon them for the misdeeds, put in at the port of the city of Messina. They brought with them a plague that they carried down to the very marrow of their bones, so that if anyone so much as spoke to them, he was infected with a mortal sickness which brought on an immediate death that he could in no way avoid.

“Above all, students of medieval history must learn to read and view **records** and artifacts through medieval eyes. Only in this way can we begin to comprehend what it was like to experience the **Black Death**”

“The noble city of Florence was visited by the deadly pestilence. The plague began in a terrifying and extraordinary manner, to make its disastrous effects apparent”

“...Was the appearance of certain swellings in the groin or armpit”

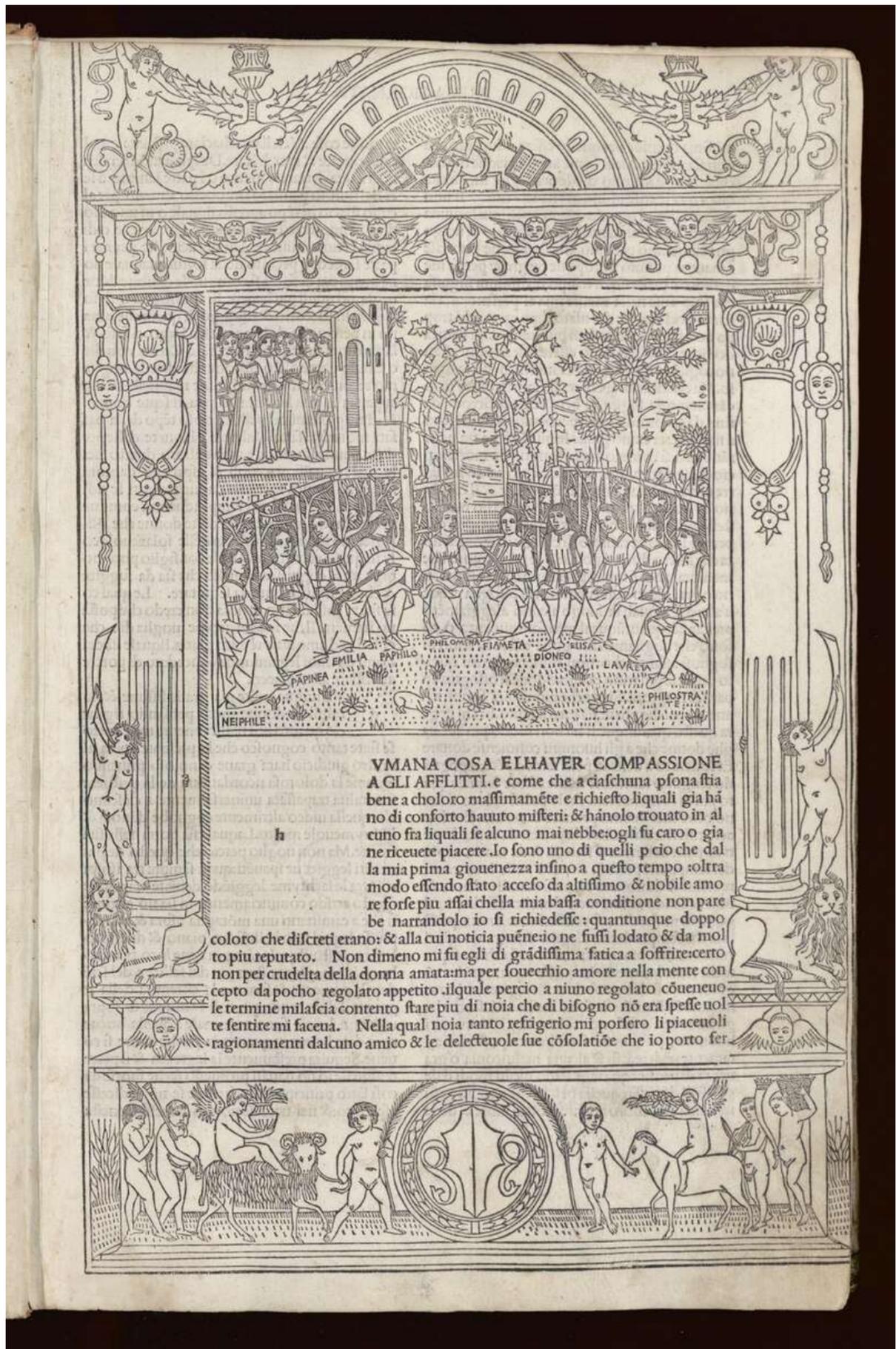
“Against these maladies, it seemed that all the advice of physicians and all the power of medicine was such that it allowed no remedy. Few of those who caught it ever recovered and the death occurred within three days”

“I was a witness. One day the rags of a pauper who had died from the disease were thrown into the street and pigs were attracted to the extent of being poisoned”

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THE
DECAMERON



Fear or not?

Leave your home!!

What can historical pandemics teach us about COVID-19?



1348 – 1350

Most devastating outbreak
50% mortality rate in Europe

Eurasian foothills / Mongol empire

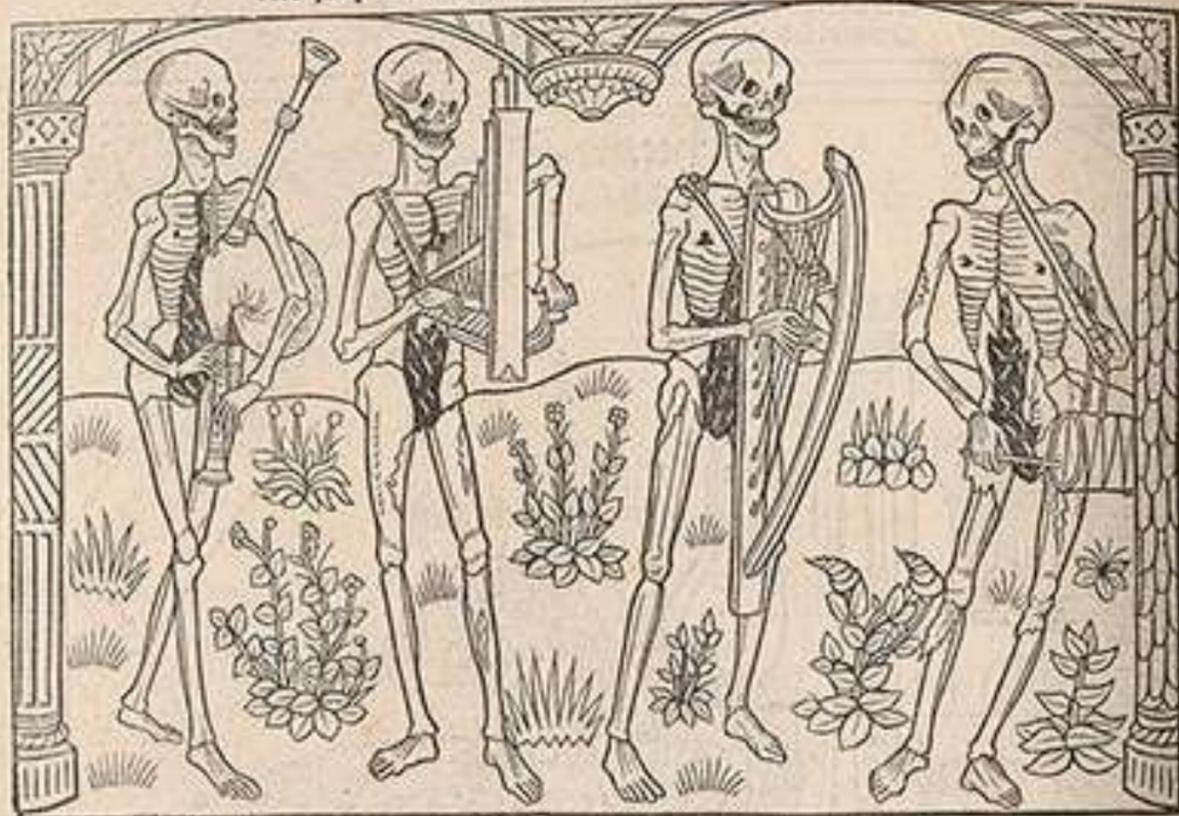
Effects and reactions?

- Shortage of labor
- Women as saviors
- Technological innovations

“As far as possible one must refuse to be on the side of the pestilence.”

- Albert Camus, *The Plague*

Ludite formose tenere cantate puelle.
 Nam desunt anni more fluentis aque
 Nec que preterit iterum reuocabitur vnda.
 Nec que preterit hora redire potest.



Le premier menestrel

Venez dames et damoiselles
 Du siecle et de religion,
 Veuues, maries, et pucelles,
 Et autres sans exception
 De quelconque condition
 Toutes: danser a ceste danse
 Vous y venrez, veuillez ou non,
 Qui sage est souuent y pense.

Le second

Quoy s'ot voz corps: ie vo' demāde
 Femmes iolies tant bien paree:
 Ilz sont pour certain la viande
 Qui un iour sera aux vers donnee,
 Des vers sera doncques deuoree
 Votre char: qui est fresche et tendre
 Fa il nen demourra goulee,
 Vos vers apres deuiendront cendre

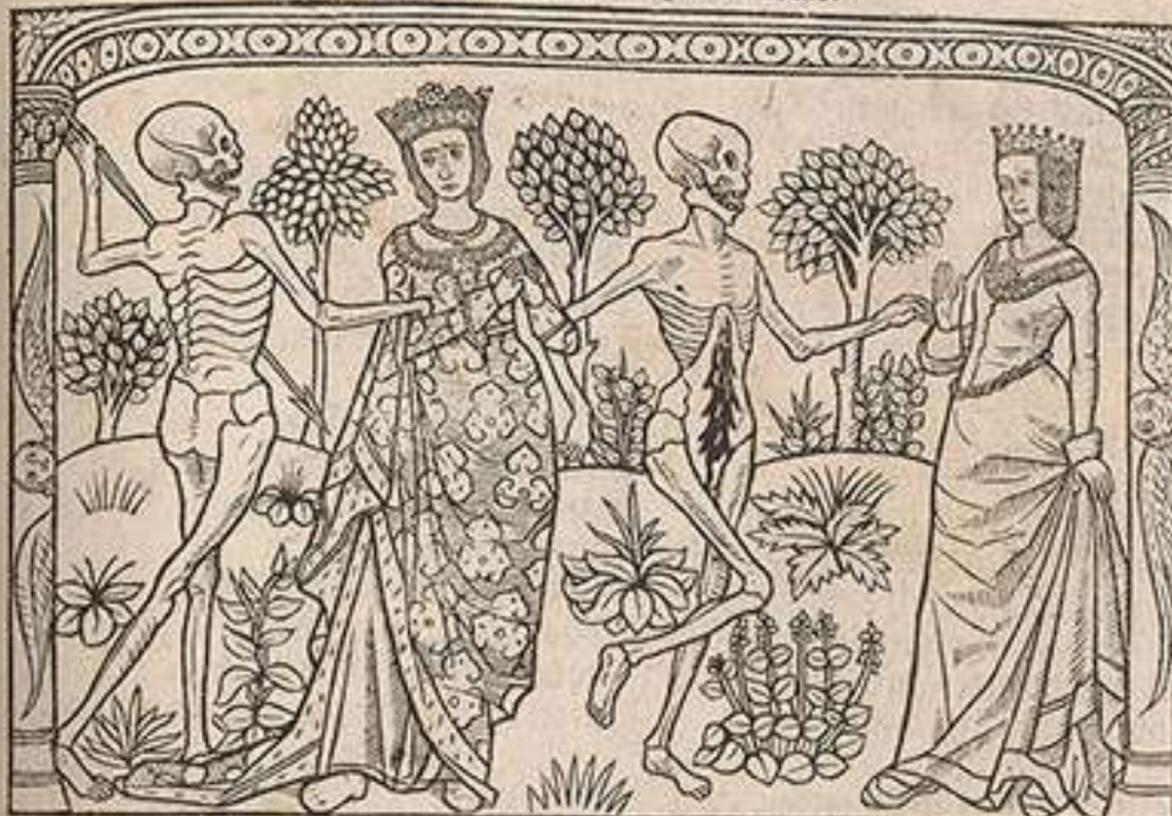
Le tier

Compaignon bonne est ta raison
 De les femmes oultreuidee:
 Que leurs corps sera venaison
 De vers puans vng iour mengee,
 En porroient elles estre gardee
 Pour or, argent, ne rien qui soit:
 Penny, bien sont doncques abusee,
 Qui ne samende il se decoit.

Le quart

O femes mixez vous en vng tas
 D'ossements de gens trespassez:
 Lesquelz ont en diuers estaz
 Au monde estes leurs temps passez
 Et maintenant sont entassez
 Lun sur lautre: gros, et menus,
 Ainsi serez: or y pensez,
 La char pourrie les os tous nus.

Ex vtero natio posita est lex ire: sed esse
 Certos: sub sole perpetuare nichil.
 Ex vtero natio pedetentim calle sub ipso
 Subdola moro comica est: nos laqueare studens.



La morte

Noble royne de beau couraige
 Sente et ioyeuse a laduenant:
 Jay de par le grāt maistre charge
 De vous en mener maintenant
 Et comme bien chose aduenant
 Ceste dance commencerez,
 Faites deuoir au remenant
 Vous qui viuez ainsi ferez.

La royne

Ceste dance mest bien nouvelle
 Et en ay le cuer bien surprins
 Vee dieu: quelle dure nouvelle
 A gens qui ne lont pas apprins
 Las en la mort est tout comprins
 Royne, dame, grant ou petite
 Les plus grās s'ot les premiers prins
 Contre la mort na point de fuyte

La morte

Après ma dame la duchesse
 Vous bien querir et pourchasser
 Ne pensez plus a la richesse:
 A biens ne ioyaulx amasser,
 Auiourd'uy vous fault trespasser,
 Pour quoy de vostre vie est fait
 Folie est de tant embrasser,
 On n'emporte que le bienfait.

La duchesse

Je nay pas encore trente ans
 Helas: a leure que commence
 A sauoir que cest de bon temps
 Mort me vient tolly ma plaissance
 Jay des amis, et grant cheuance,
 Soulas, el bas, gens a deuio
 Pour quoy moigz me plaist cest dāce
 Gens'ailes si meurent enuys.

La danse
 macabre
 nouvelle

Paris: Guy
 Marchant

1486

Morgan
 Library &
 Museum



The Dance of Death (1493) by Michael Wolgenut, from Nuremberg Chronicle.



The Abbess from Holbein's Simolachri, Historie, e Figure de la Morte, 1549

The Pedlar from Holbein's *Simolachri, Historie, e Figure de la Morte*, 1549



The Plowman from Holbein's *Simolachri, Historie, e Figure de la Morte*, 1549





“Not One But Many
Separate Cities”

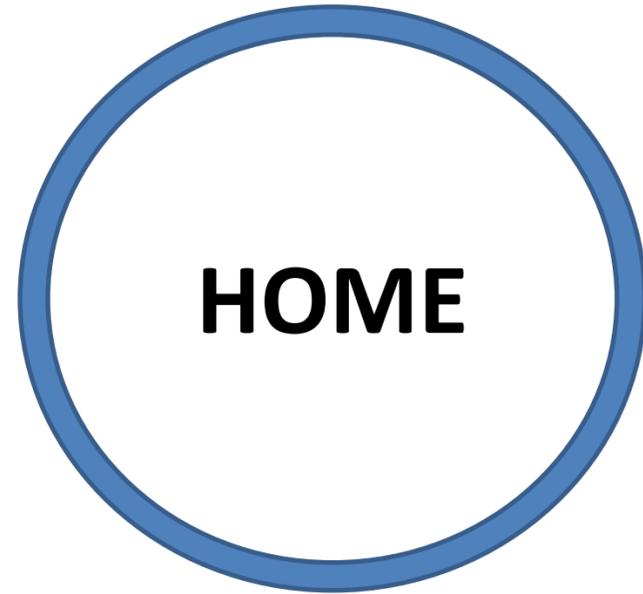
Housing Diversity in 16-
century Venice

Patricia Fortini Brown

FIGURE 13. Hans Heinrich Schweitzer (1618–1673), *Visiting the Sick in a Venetian Hospital*, engraving (after Titian?). Rome, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica. Fondo Pio, Inv. 35171, E. H. 1457. By the kind permission of the Ministero per i Beni Culturali.



A place of habitation + sou



“Most of their people are foreigners”

PATRICIANS
CITTADINI
POPOLANI



Ca Bembo at Santa Maria Nova



View of Corte dei Preti



Hospice of Crociferi



“The rich are necessary to the Republic;
and the poor are necessary to the rich”





Dentilis medicus



Casebook

“Men should appropriately consume fine food and drink in measured quantities”

“Should take at least 3 times a week the **antidote**”

“Poor men should consume leeks or holy water and scabiosa (plant) or scallions whether by boiling or liquefying in wine, or eating them finely chopped”

FLORENCE

