

Andreuccio at the Well: Sanitation Infrastructure and Civic Values in *Decameron* II.5

The point of departure for this discussion is Boccaccio's iconic protagonist Andreuccio of *Decameron* II.5, poised at a Neapolitan well in order to bathe after a fall into a latrine. The second of the three "adventures" or "accidents" in the novella's narrative arc, the episode at the well is often overshadowed by the more repulsive and frightening fall from Madama Fiordaliso's toilet and raid on the archbishop's putrid tomb.¹ Still, the adventure at the well is not without an element of disgust, albeit subtle, that has perhaps seemed to some critics as secondary to the arc of the narrative. Andreuccio's bath accomplishes the purification of his body and perhaps the sharpening of his wit, as Ceretta has suggested, but at the expense of Neapolitan drinking water. The modern science of bacteriology may inform our contemporary concept of contamination; yet I will argue that the understanding of water contamination in medieval Italy was such that we may question Andreuccio's act in terms of public health and sanitation without anachronism. The case of Andreuccio offers a glimpse of the collision of two distinct water cultures of Naples and northern Italy that were both familiar to Boccaccio. Andreuccio's Perugian provenance should have infused him with a culture of water protectionism that facilitated the civic life of industrious Apennine towns, and his bath in the well marks a distinct departure from the values of that culture.

Benedetto Croce first indicated the integral role of the Neapolitan cityscape as an entertaining hook for readers who were Boccaccio's contemporaries and would recognize and take pleasure in the intimacy of local details, speculating that the composition of the tale could date back to young Boccaccio's residence at the court of the Angevin King Robert the Wise.² Others have continued the archaeological work of excavating the contours of the city at the turn of the 14th century, often citing Petrarch's complaint

¹ See Ceretta and Rossi.

² "La novella di Andreuccio da Perugia," in Croce 51-89.

in a letter to Giovanni Colonna depicting its rough streets jostled at night by rowdy young nobles.³ Yet while critics have given due attention to the accuracy of Boccaccio's portrait of Angevin Naples in *Decameron* II.5, the detail of the protagonist's provenance does not seem to have been taken into account other than to signify the provincial gullibility that makes Andreuccio an easy target in bustling Naples. I do not mean to discount naiveté as one of the core traits of Andreuccio, which the narrator Fiammetta clearly emphasizes as she sets the scene for her tale: the young protagonist, "mai più fuor di casa stato," indiscriminately flashes his purse "sì come rozzo e poco cauto" to the swarming market crowd ("in presenza di chi andava e di chi veniva") in order to convince diffident vendors of his intent to buy (II.5.3). But instead of reducing the protagonist's provenance to unsaviness, we might consider Andreuccio's Perugian-ness under the same lens of historicity which has been applied to the novella's gritty realism. Any pleasure that the audience takes in recognizing city details is offset by Andreuccio's literal alienation, his emphasized foreignness, rendered most dramatically visible in his difficulties with the quotidian structures of the toilet and well. Along with the tomb, these structures serve to emblemize the three adventures of the novella's narrative arc; in fact, the earliest illustrated vignettes of the novella suggest that these three structures stood out metonymically for the novella's episodes during the *Decameron's* first decades of circulation as strongly as they do today.⁴

Even before specifying the differing sanitation culture and the correlating civic values to be expected of a fictional representative of historical Perugia, circa 1301, I begin with a brief consideration of the two passages

³ Especially Giovanni Getto, "La composizione della novella di Andreuccio," in Getto 78-94, and Rossi. See also Petrarch's *Fam.* V.6, trans. Aldo Bernardo (New York: Ithaca Press, 2005), 1:249. Fracassetti's edition of the Latin text reads: "Nocturnum iter hic, non secus atque inter densissimas silvas, anceps ac periculis plenum est, obsidentibus vias nobilibus adolescentibus armatis, quorum licentiam nulla unquam vel patrum disciplina, vel magistratum auctoritas, vel regum maiestas atque imperium frenare quivit" (1:271-72).

⁴ Branca, *Boccaccio visualizzato* 2:114. Branca notes that the vignettes often reflected bourgeois tastes of the merchant class, visually depicting the most salient and foundational moments of the novella with a sense of narrative immediacy. He catalogues three early vignettes that illustrated *Decameron* II.5. A Florentine image ca. 1430 depicts Andreuccio jumping from a well and frightening a band of young men, who leave their shields and weapons behind as they flee (2:106, fig. 97). Two other images (a Flemish diptych ca. 1430 and its inspiration from a Parisian diptych ca. 1415) show Andreuccio squatting in filth between houses in one panel and climbing into the tomb in the other (3:219, fig. 309, and 3:206, fig. 284).

of the novella in which Andreuccio finds himself stymied by Neapolitan infrastructure. In both cases, the narrator Fiammetta recounts his two adventures with scenographically close attention to the spatial details, suggesting a personal level of familiarity with the cityscape that is not surprising from the *brigata*'s most philo-Neapolitan narrator.⁵ The first scene begins when Andreuccio hears nature's call while he prepares for bed in the house of Fiordaliso:

Era il caldo grande: per la qual cosa Andreuccio, veggendosi solo rimasto, subitamente si spogliò in farsetto e trassesi i panni di gamba e al capo del letto gli si pose; e richiedendo il naturale uso di dovere diporre il superfluo peso del ventre, dove ciò si facesse domandò quel fanciullo, il quale nell'uno de' canti della camera gli mostrò uno uscio e disse: «Andate là entro». Andreuccio dentro sicuramente passato, gli venne per ventura posto il piè sopra una tavola, la quale dalla contrapposta parte sconfitta era dal travicello sopra il quale era, per la qual cosa capolevando questa tavola con lui insieme se n'andò quindi giuso: e di tanto l'amò Idio, che niuno male si fece nella caduta, quantunque alquanto cadesse da alto, ma tutto della bruttura, della quale il luogo era pieno, s'imbrattò. Il quale luogo, acciò che meglio intendiate e quello che è detto e ciò che segue, come stesse vi mostrerò. Egli era in un chiassetto stretto, come spesso tra due case veggiamo: sopra due travicelli, tra l'una casa e l'altra posti, alcune tavole confitte e il luogo da seder posto, delle quali tavole quella che con lui cadde era l'una. (II.5.37-39)

There is something rather primal in Andreuccio's apprehension in relieving himself in an unfamiliar setting and Fiammetta's description of the latrine that both domesticates and exoticizes Andreuccio's experience of that space for her audience. On one hand, she delivers a functional blueprint of the latrine structure — its boards ("tavole"), beams ("travicelli"), and seat ("il luogo da seder") rigged in a narrow alley ("un chiassetto stretto") between houses — the kind of alley that her listeners have seen in their own city ("come spesso tra due case veggiamo"); on the other hand, Fiammetta sees it necessary to narrate Andreuccio's fall not once but twice, beginning her second and more mechanical explanation with her intent to increase the *brigata*'s understanding of what she has already said and of what will follow in her story ("acciò che meglio intendiate e quello

⁵ See Richardson 22-23. Cfr. Billanovich 143. Richardson (23) calls Fiammetta "the most Guelph of the narrators" and notes her preference for subject matter related to Angevins and the Kingdom of Naples (whose capital is "una città... forse così dilettevole, o più, come ne sia alcuna altra in Italia" [III.6.4] where four of her tales are set). While the Fiammetta of the *Decameron* is Florentine, she of course appears in Boccaccio's earlier works as a noble lady and champion of Naples.

che è detto e ciò che segue”). Her repetition and stated goal of clarity suggest that while she expects her Florentine companions to be familiar with alleys, she assumes that they are not used to seeing latrines constructed over them. Perhaps a similar unfamiliarity with that sort of latrine is what led to Andreuccio’s fall.⁶ At any rate, Fiammetta seems to consider an understanding of that strange latrine structure as essential to an understanding of the rest of her story. The basis for her connection between the form of that toilet and the story’s meaning is not yet clear, but we can already see that she is underlining the alterity of Neapolitan sanitation practices.

Fiammetta’s portrait of Neapolitan sanitation is complemented by her narration of Andreuccio’s adventure at the well. Having given up on gaining re-admittance into Fiordaliso’s house after his fall, Andreuccio has joined forces with two thieves. The first suggests a bath for the pungent Andreuccio, and the second spots the well where the bath and its surprising conclusion then take place:

«Sì, noi siam qui presso a un pozzo al qual suole sempre essere la carrucola e un gran secchione; andianne là e laverenlo spacciatamente».

Giunti a questo pozzo, trovarono che la fune v’era ma il secchione n’era stato levato: per che insieme deliberarono di legarlo alla fune e di collarlo nel pozzo, e egli là giù si lavasse e, come lavato fosse, crollasse la fune e essi il tirerebbero suso; e così fecero.

Avvenne che, avendol costor nel pozzo collato, alcuni della famiglia della signoria, li quali e per lo caldo e perché corsi erano dietro a alcuno avendo sete, a quel pozzo venieno a bere: li quali come quegli due videro, incontante cominciarono a fuggire, li famigliari che quivi venivano a bere non avendogli veduti. Essendo già nel fondo del pozzo Andreuccio lavato, dimenò la fune. Costoro assetati, posti giù lor tavolacci e loro armi e loro gonnelle, cominciarono la fune a tirare, credendo a quella il secchione pien d’acqua essere appicato. Come Andreuccio si vide alla sponda del pozzo vicino, così, lasciata la fune, con le mani si gittò sopra quella. La qual cosa costor vedendo, da subita paura presi, senza altro lasciaron la fune e cominciarono quanto più poterono a fuggire... (II.5.65-69)

The thieves’ original plan to bathe Andreuccio with the aid of a bucket is rendered impossible by the bucket’s theft. Unable to bring the water up to Andreuccio, they decide to lower Andreuccio down to the water. Again,

⁶ Getto notes (86) that despite the detailed account of the fall, we never learn the cause of Andreuccio’s fall — whether it is part of Fiordaliso’s plan to separate Andreuccio from his money or her happy coincidence, whether he was set up for a fatal accident that he luckily survived, whether the toilet broke because of its faultiness or because of his improper use of it.

Fiammetta's narration features a repetition: the thieves first lay out their plan ("dilaterono di legarlo alla fune e di collarlo nel pozzo...") and then we learn what actually happened ("avendol costor nel pozzo collato..."). The plan interrupted, Fiammetta is careful to note each step in the improbable chain of events that culminates in Andreuccio re-emerging from the well and frightening off the young guards. The despoiled well is the catalyst for action: the lacking bucket leads to Andreuccio's bath, while the guards' faith in the bucket's presence allows them to draw Andreuccio up as an unwitting bucket substitute.

Like the latrine episode, the well scene depicts an unexpected use of the quotidian structures of sanitation. Andreuccio appears undomesticated as he moves from the toilet to the well, reversing the established flow of urban sanitary circulation; one draws from a well and deposits into latrines, never vice versa. As intuitive as this one-way path between these architectonic elements might seem, the two episodes I have cited here are rife with moments of ignorance, misunderstanding, doubt and confusion. Not only is Andreuccio a stranger in a strange land, the local nobles also experience a terrifying moment of alienation when their familiar well — a basic, foundational element of the city they purport to govern, as members of the *signoria* — behaves in a wholly unexpected way. Even the listener or reader is at risk of misunderstanding, judging by Fiammetta's hedging against it with her intricate descriptions of the Neapolitan urban landscape. If we wish to understand the final events of Fiammetta's tale ("ciò che segue"), we might tease more sense out of Andreuccio's muddling interventions on the urban landscape by considering what his own expectations of the structures and practices of urban sanitation might have been. As a fictional representative of historical Perugia — part of the municipal cultural context with which Boccaccio was familiar — Andreuccio is accountable for a certain degree of initiation into the complex sanitation culture that reigned not only in Perugia but also in other towns of northern and central Italy. I will sketch that sanitation culture in the following pages and then return to its implications for Andreuccio's actions in Naples.

A common thread in medieval Italian sanitation history is the recognition that dirty water led to foul air and threatened health, and that large-scale hydraulic systems could alleviate the spread of disease. Representative of these ideas is an article from a 1325 Florentine statute, which underlines the connection between filth and contagion while stipulating sanitary regulations that typify those set in place by many communities:

Ad purgandum civitatem Florentie a fetoribus ex quibus aer corrumpitur, propter quod infirmitates insurgunt atque perveniunt, statutum et ordinatum est quod nullus tintor vel aliqua alia persona audeat vel presum-

mat prohicere vel prohici facere vel tenere in viis publicis vel in foveis civitatis vel in aliis foveis in civitate Florentie non copertis aquam putridam vel non claram... vel derivare per vias publicas vel per aliqua loca non coperta, sed ipsam talem aquam...facere derivari sub terram per fongias copertas, ita quod fetor exalare non possit.

To purge the city of Florence from foul odors which contaminate the air, causing disease to be stirred up and come to us, it is established and ordered that no dyer nor any other person dare or presume to throw or cause to be thrown or keep putrid, murky water in public streets, city ditches, other uncovered ditches in Florence; nor run [putrid water] through public streets or other uncovered places; but rather make such water drain underground through the covered sewers, so that the stench cannot waft out.⁷

The statute sketches the city's variety of sanitation technology (underground sewers, uncovered ditches, streets) and variously acceptable practices (the preferred disposal of waste water in sewers vs. in open ditches or in the street). The allusion to cloth dyeing underlines a second problem of medieval waterworks: that the industrial pursuits whose wealth built up cities often produced contaminating byproducts that put a strain on infrastructure. Industry and population growth led to greater demand for water in urban centers, in quantities that were not often accessible *in situ* without technical intervention. Ancient Roman structures served as models, but innovation was just as important for the new projects that were under construction as early as the 12th century. In the late 13th century, towns up and down the Italian peninsula found it more practical to build above-ground and underground aqueducts to supply fountains and wells with potable water rather than relocate to locations with more plentiful sources.⁸ A renaissance of hydraulic technology was in full swing by the year 1300, featuring innovative structures for collecting, storing, transporting, cleaning and distributing water, as well as sewers, drains, and canals for evacuating liquid waste from cities.⁹

⁷ My translation. *Statuto del Podestà dell'anno 1325* III.lii.

⁸ Magnussen 2-19. But see also: Dean 50-54; Kucher; Ciriaco; Mazzi; Tramontana; Feniello; Nicco Fasola; Rubin Blanshei.

⁹ Magnussen explores the balance of ancient Roman influences and contemporary innovation in hydraulic engineering in late medieval Italy. While Frontinus' *De aquis urbis Romae* seems to have existed uninfluentially in a single manuscript at Monte Cassino, Book VIII of Vitruvius' much-circulated *De architectura* is devoted to finding and protecting potable water. Some contemporary master plumbers, such as the Venetian Boninsegna, gained renown for their expertise in designing aqueducts and fountains, and were summoned to oversee construction outside their own communities.

Towns in many regions of Italy saw investment in hydraulic construction, but the expensive hydraulic interventions occurring in the malarial city of Naples were largely abandoned after 1330 due to the crisis of debts incurred by extravagances of court life and festival culture.¹⁰ In contrast, the northern Italian communes were particularly adept at planning and executing large-scale projects. Roberta Magnussen has noted that the “establishment and growing political clout of municipal governments provided administrative organizations that were interested in, and capable of delivering, improved urban infrastructures” (7) — the Florentine sewers that are mentioned in the statute cited above, for one example, or Siena’s ever-expanding network of underground aquiferous tunnels known as the *bottini*, or the three-mile-long aqueduct that supplied water to Perugia’s main piazza.¹¹ Public wells and fountains were meant for utility, inspired in part by an ethos of charity for paupers and travelers,¹² but also by a concept of *civitas* that highly valued infrastructural fountains and wells (and the water provided by them) as part of a reservoir of shared material wealth.¹³ Urban water works represented citizens’ ability to raise capital for an agreed-upon purpose and their mutual investment of individuals in their communities.

Northern communes explicitly forbade and punished well and fountain bathing, since these activities dirtied the water that entire communities relied on for drinking. We may rely on Andreuccio’s provenance to provide him with a concept of contamination and urban pollution, which we may in part extrapolate from the content and the language of the communal statutes. Considering the communal resources devoted to the problem of procuring water for drinking and industry (especially in rugged or elevated terrain), it is not surprising that there are copious regulations protecting water delivery structures.¹⁴ Terrain notwithstanding, each Commune legis-

¹⁰ Tramontana 148; Feniello 133.

¹¹ Kucher 1-20; Middeldorf-Kosegarten 55-56.

¹² *Statuto del capitano del popolo degli anni 1322-1325* VI.viii: “Ad honorem dei, ad subveniendum viatoribus et maxime pauperibus et peregrinis, statuimus et ordinamus [...] fiat vel fieri debeat unus puteus sive fons si commode fieri potest, ita quod quilibet transiens de ipsa aqua commode uti et habere valeat. Qui puteus sive fons fieri debeat in loco communi et decenti...” Cfr. Magnussen 171.

¹³ Schulze 9.

¹⁴ Perugia’s *Statuto del comune e del popolo*, for example, noted the great danger of a disrupted water source: “Conciosiacosaké le fonte guastare grande pericolo sia...” (III.208.1) and stipulated the death penalty for anyone who damaged the aqueduct supplying the city: “E quignunque el dicto aqueducto guasterà sì ke l’acqua venire non

lated sanitation standards that sought to protect their water from contamination and misuse, as well as keep the city streets and public squares clean and uncluttered. In the statutes I have examined, particular attention is paid to the problem of keeping human and animal excrement, as well as animal carcasses, out of public space, sight, and water. Wastewater and excrement collected in the home could not be emptied in the city piazzas or streets,¹⁵ where it dirtied and cluttered the space of public exchange.¹⁶ Public urination, especially in or near public buildings, was prohibited.¹⁷ Industries such as cloth dyeing and leatherworking that used urine as a chemical solvent, as well as butchers and fishmongers, were penalized for disposing of odorous waste in public spaces, too close to wells and other common sources of potable water.¹⁸ Prohibited were the installation of toilets near the city gates and fortified city walls,¹⁹ toilets that failed to drain into nearby underground sewers and the emptying of chamber pots from the *solaria* into city streets and open ditches.²⁰ The

possa, cioè scarcando muro overo alcuna de le citerne enn-alcuna parte, pena capetale sì ke muoia degga sostenere” (IV.1.22).

¹⁵ Florence’s *Statuto del Podestà dell’anno 1325* is exemplary: “...nullus ponat vel poni faciat in aliqua via vel piazza vel loco civitatis Florentie nec extra civitatem... letamen...” (III.l) and “Nullus prohibiat aquam multicii in via publica: facienti contra Potestas tollere teneatur soldos centum pro qualibet vice... et nullus faciat multiccium nisi ad domum in qua habitat cum familia sua. Et quilibet prohibiens aquam multicii vel putridam prohibiat extra civitatem et non in foveis Communis nec in ripis dictarum nec in viis publicis...” (III.li). *Statuti Senesi Scritti in volgare ne’ secoli XIII e XIV e pubblicati secondo i testi del R. Archivio di Stato in Siena* (1:78, 92-94, 110-14, 121, 234, 268-72; 2:321-23); *Statuti inediti della città di Pisa dal XII al XIV secolo* (III.xix, xxii and xlvi; IV.xxxvii); *Lo Statuto del Comune di Bologna dell’anno 1335 X.i*; and *Statuto del comune e del popolo di Perugia del 1342 in volgare*, books III and IV.

¹⁶ Kucher (77-78) points out the cleanliness of the streets and squares in Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s frescoed *Allegoria del buon governo* from the 1340s in Siena’s Palazzo Pubblico. Lorenzetti’s companion mural *Allegoria del cattivo governo* portrays a crumbling city with piles of rubble crowding the streets. Furthermore, the personification of Justice, captive and with broken scales, sits in what appears to be an open sewer.

¹⁷ “... quod nullus mingat in pallatiis comunis vel in scalis eorundem” (*Lo Statuto del Comune di Bologna dell’anno 1335 X.ii*).

¹⁸ See the passage of the Florentine statute in the beginning of this section; Dean 50-54; Kucher 78; *Lo Statuto del Comune di Bologna dell’anno 1335 VIII.175-94*; *Statuto del comune e del popolo di Perugia del 1342 in volgare IV.130*.

¹⁹ “De sedilibus non habendis prope portas civitatis vel super murum” (*Lo Statuto del Comune di Bologna dell’anno 1335 X.xiii*).

²⁰ “Statuimus quod nequis super viis publicis habeat situlam [...] que in se turpitudinem aliquam contineat vel continere possit quorum casus sit periculosus vel dempnosus vel esse possit [...]. Item quod nullus prohiat putredinem aliquem de die vel de nocte in viis

plank-between-houses type of toilet used by Andreuccio in Naples was specifically prohibited in Bologna,²¹ and Fiammetta's careful description of the structure (and her explicit wish to make her audience understand it) suggests that such latrines were not to be found in Florence, either — not surprising, considering the prohibition of disposing of excrement in the city's streets.

Hydraulic and sanitation structures were physical expressions of the core values of the municipal governments that built them. Their inherent symbolic value is especially apparent in large, highly embellished fountains, which, as Ulrich Schulze's compendious work has shown, serve as physical signs of the endurance and sovereignty of the governing power that provided them.²² We might look at Perugia's Fontana Maggiore as an example of a politically symbolic fountain. Commissioned by the elected governing body of the Consiglio and paid for with municipal funds, Fontana Maggiore was constructed in 1278 (at Perugia's most politically charged point) in the main piazza overlooked by the Palazzo dei Priori, the episcopium and the cathedral.²³ The sculptural ornamentation executed under Nicola and Giovanni Pisano included imperial and ecclesiastical imagery which, Kathrin Hoffman-Curtius has demonstrated, was meant to broadcast the Commune's Guelph loyalty to contemporary Perugians and to posterity, and reminded residents on a daily basis of their position inscribed in the Perugian body politic as well as inside the Christian cosmos.²⁴ While the Perugian statute focuses primarily on offenders who contaminate Fontana Maggiore's water supply, it also imposes fines on anyone who dirties the fountain's ornaments.²⁵ Besmirching the fountain is an

publicis [...]. Item quod ubi sedilia vel saiguatoria sunt circa plateas sive stratas in quibus sunt clavige deducantur sub terra in ipsis clavigis" (*Lo Statuto del Comune di Bologna dell'anno 1335 X.vi*).

²¹ "Nullus deinceps pontem aliquam faciat vel andaverios super viis publicis de lapidibus vel lignamine de una domo ad aliam" (*Lo Statuto del Comune di Bologna dell'anno 1335 X.xxxi*)

²² Schulze *passim*.

²³ Nicco Fasola 7.

²⁴ Hoffman-Curtius 92. Schulze underscores (21-36) the sacredness of communal fountains rooted in medieval typological thought. Fountains and wells were associated with: the Old Testament ur-ocean, known in Hebrew as *tehom*, that preceded God's creation of light; Solomon's throne over the *tehom* fountain in the Holy of Holies; the *umbilicus mundi*; holy water; and Christ's throne over the glassy sea of the elect. Ultimately, he claims, the fountain and its flowing water were linked to the deciding acts of justice.

²⁵ "...se buglierà loto overo terra overo alcuna socçura en lo pectorale o *emmagene* d'essa fonte, paghe e pagare sia tenuto per ciascuna fiada diece libre de denare" (*Statuto del*

action that the Commune likely would have interpreted as undermining its authority and denigrating the Church. Inasmuch as the example of the Perugian fountain sketches the water culture of the fictional Andreuccio's *patria*, it is an appealing one.²⁶ Yet Fontana Maggiore is hardly unique; public fountains of a similar scale at Venice, Siena, Orvieto, Rome, Cortona and Viterbo serve just as well to illustrate the practice of providing the town's indispensable water supply through structures that, through position and decorative elements, communicate civic power and sovereignty.²⁷ An urban merchant like Andreuccio would not have had to spend hours sitting in the shadow of Fonte Maggiore in order to know that one feature of any properly run city was access to drinking water in public places.

We may focus in a little closer in an attempt to sketch the significance of Andreuccio's Perugian identity by considering Perugia's proximity to and engagement with the Tuscan towns. Magnussen identifies an epicenter of fountains that are indicative of civic pride and identity and even serve as a point of rivalry between towns.²⁸ With the caveat that Magnussen's conclusion regarding Tuscan fountaineering is made possible by the extensive documentary records left by the communes (annals, statutes, civic account books, contracts, chronicles), whose absence in other areas of Italy obscures but does not preclude large hydraulic projects,²⁹ it is at least

comune e del popolo di Perugia del 1342 in volgare IV.1.14). "E se alcuno [...] romperà alcuna de le pietre overo alcuna de l'emmagine sculpite en essa fonte [...] en centro libre de denare per nome de pena sia punito. E se la dicta pena pagare non podesse e pendere se poderà, a luie la mano dericta se degga mocçare" (IV.1.15).

²⁶ One might only speculate that Boccaccio was familiar with Perugia's monumental fountain and aqueduct, and the considerable investment of time, money and material that made the structures so highly valued in the town. It is possible that of the two main mercantile routes between Florence and Naples, Boccaccio traveled on the one passing through Perugia. He might also have heard of Fontana Maggiore and Perugia's new, Roman-style raised aqueduct at the Neapolitan court of King Robert, where Boccaccio befriended the notary and librarian Paolo da Perugia, who in his youth would have witnessed the constant repairs and adjustments made to the structures. See Vittore Branca, *Boccaccio: The Man* 16.

²⁷ See Schulze for iconographical analyses of the pictorial elements of fountains at Rome (39-167), Viterbo (205-65), Cortona (271-351) and Venice (355-455).

²⁸ Magnussen 30.

²⁹ Naples, for example, also went through a period of extensive sanitation and hydraulic and interventions in the first decades of the 13th century under King Robert, but there is very little extant documentation of an official nature attesting to it. Feniello notes (127-29) that an uptick in Neapolitan documentation after the shift to Aragonese power evidences later public spending projects. Tramontana notes (151) that while cities in Ca-

fair to generalize that northern commune-dwellers were acculturated to associate water works with city government.

If Fontana Maggiore warrants Perugia's entrance into Tuscan competitive political hydraulics, we might also expand the territory of that phenomenon north to the Po Valley where, in the 1325 Battle of Zappolino, Modenese troops humiliated their Bolognese rivals by carrying off a public well's bucket as a trophy.³⁰ Varanini's work on the rituals of siege allows us to understand the destruction of civic structures and infrastructures as a humiliating challenge to municipal identity.³¹ Foreign attackers were most successful when their destructive acts were ostentatiously derisive of the values and behaviors characterizing the besieged society; a good siege ritual left a material scar on the civic landscape.³² An unbucketed well (where the law required that a bucket be permanently affixed) was exactly the kind of scar that revealed the Commune's failure to provide a secure city for its citizens.

These are carefully picked examples, resonating with the symbolic interpretation of contamination as a politically hostile act in Andreuccio's hometown, as well as the bucket theft suffered by the Malpertugio well. But the connection requires a light touch. Andreuccio does not declare any intent of aggression or insult against the civic authority, he merely wishes to rinse off the sewage and stench. And Fiammetta does not tell us when or how the bucket went missing. We only know that the youths who were employed to keep order ("della famiglia della signoria") expected to find a bucket where one must once have been provided; if anything, the incorrect assumption signals their disconnect from the material realities of the city's lower-class neighborhoods. It is easiest to imagine, having already seen the self-serving stratagems of Madama Fiordaliso, that a Neapolitan took advantage of the poorly-secured object and appropriated it for him- or herself. In Malpertugio, the communal values of the north are nowhere to be found, and it as if the city were under siege by its own residents, each concerned with personal gain even at the expense of the community.

Andreuccio's descent into the well has been read as the dawning of his intelligence, by means of which he is finally able to restore the fortune he had lost in his first misadventurous fall into the *chiassetto*, replacing his

labria and Basilicata were agrarian and had wielded little economic, political or cultural power, cities in Abruzzi and Puglia were, in fact, quite urbanized, with industrial economies.

³⁰ Boni 10.

³¹ Varanini 1.

³² Varanini 5-7.

original 500 florins with the newly-deceased archbishop's precious ruby.³³ Yet Andreuccio's seemingly happy conclusion is problematic in a typically Boccaccian way, as Luciano Rossi points out: Andreuccio has only regained his fortune by making the morally poor choice of profaning a tomb, and still makes the strategically unsound move of bragging about his exploits to everyone at his inn.³⁴ He shows no real improvement over the course of the novella in terms of intelligence, and continues to be driven by the desire for wealth that had brought him to Naples in the first place. To this reading, I would add that Andreuccio's bath in the well marks a shift in which Andreuccio, motivated from the outset by the desire to increase his material wealth, begins to act in his own best material interest at the expense of the common good. In his *patria* (or any of a number of northern communes), our protagonist's bath would have constituted a crime against the Commune. But Naples' roughest neighborhood of Malpertugio is a sort of anti-Perugia — a Mal-Perugia, if we may — filthy and crime-ridden, the bucket long stolen from the public well. Andreuccio's trip down the well marks not only his adoption of Neapolitan self-serving unscrupulousness, but also, perhaps, a subconscious act of revenge by contamination against the city whose denizens robbed him and tossed him in a sewer.

The disrepair of sanitation structures contributes to the dystopic portrayal of Andreuccio's Naples, and one is tempted to read the novella in the key of Boccaccio's shifting affections for the two cities that could claim him. The communal life of civic engagement, which I have above cast in a primarily positive light, was not especially appealing to the young Boccaccio residing in Naples with his father, a representative of the Bardi company of bankers. Enchanted by the shimmering aristocratic milieu of King Robert's Neapolitan court, Florence seemed to Boccaccio a dull place of bickering, blowhard politicians and hardly conducive to the traditions and spirit of courtly love in which the young poet inscribed himself.³⁵ In the *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta*, the protagonist argues how badly a move to back to Florence will suit her lover Panfilo (identified with the author): Florence is a boring place, a city "piena di voci pompose e di pusillanimità fatti, serva non a mille leggi, ma a tanti pareri quanti v'ha uomini" (II.6). She argues that Naples, on the other hand, is "lieta, pacifica, abondevole, magnifica" and ruled by one king alone ("un solo re"), who is better at

³³ Cerreta 263.

³⁴ Rossi 397.

³⁵ Padoan 88. See also: Branca, *Boccaccio: The Man* 94; Putignano 22-23.

keeping the peace than the militant factions in Florence. The *Decameron*, a monument to the brand of intelligence that matured in the bourgeois environment of Florence, serves as proof that Boccaccio did eventually come to value the mercantile ethos of his hometown and the economic concept of utility.³⁶ His 1361 *Lettera Consolatoria* to Pino de' Rossi reveals a flicker of hope in the good faith ("la buona speranza" [§154]) at the heart of human motivation to undertake risky enterprises:

Chi farebbe a' mercatanti lasciare i cari amici e' figliuoli e le proprie case e sopra le navi e per l'alte montagne e per le folte selve non sicure dagli agguati de' ladroni andare, se questa [la buona speranza] non fusse?
(§155)

The rhetorical question may evoke Andreuccio's pilgrimage from the safety of well-governed Perugia to thief-infested Naples, yet here Boccaccio sketches an idealized merchant, wholly unlike greedy and corrupted Andreuccio, but rather ennobled in his aspiration to generosity and beneficence toward kith and kin.

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³⁶ Padoan 128-29.

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