Parable or Threat?
Decameron I.7 and Hugh Primas' Reputation

In Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Filostrato narrates the seventh story during the First Day of storytelling, a Day that has no explicit theme. Filostrato relates how the lord of Verona, Cangrande della Scala, invited the poet Bergamino to entertain at a feast, but when Cangrande cancelled the feast, he mistreated Bergamino. Unlike the other entertainers, Bergamino was not paid nor given license to leave, so he needed to pawn two of three lavish robes to cover his expenses while he remained at Cangrande's court (I.7.7).[1] One evening at supper, Cangrande noted Bergamino's melancholic state and, almost out of malice, asked to be entertained with a story (I.7.10). Bergamino responded by talking about the goliardic poet Hugh Primas.

While in Paris, Bergamino says, Primas had heard of a wealthy bishop's sumptuous feasts. As the journey was long and the road unknown to him, he set out for the bishop's hall with three loaves of bread (I.7.14). After he arrived, the bishop, who never turned anyone away, was taken aback when he unexpectedly saw Primas seated at one of his tables; the bishop ordered his servants not to bring out the food (I.7.18). Primas, famished from his journey, ate one, then another, then the third loaf of bread (I.7.22–23). After hiding for some time in a back chamber, the bishop came to his senses and repented of his avaricious behavior, recognizing that normally he never refused hospitality to anyone (I.7.23). Instead, he ordered the servants to bring out the feast, and he honored Primas with costly gifts (I.7.25). When Bergamino completed the tale, Cangrande recognized his own parsimony represented in the bishop's reaction, and he compensated Bergamino for his troubles (I.7.27–28). The seventh story of the First Day has no direct literary sources, so it may have been of Boccaccio's invention, or it may have been transcribed from oral folklore.[2] In either instance, it

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[1] The *Decameron* is cited from Boccaccio 1992.

[2] Cf. Lee 1972, 22–23.

appears based upon beliefs and knowledge that circulated during Boccaccio's lifetime, as we shall see.

The *novella* has been commented upon by several scholars. Michelangelo Picone analyzes the story according to its structural characteristics, describing it as a meta-narrative, or rather a tale-within-a-tale.[3] Pamela D. Stewart concurs with Picone, seeing similarities with the third story about Melchisedech who also tells a story to remedy his risky situation with Saladin.[4] Like Melchisedech, Bergamino is in the difficult position of confronting someone of superior rank, and he subtly employs a story to do so. More scholarship has discussed the tale in relationship to the other stories of the first day. As with other tales, Marga Cottino-Jones mentions how this one presents a character, Cangrande della Scala, whose actions represent a threat to the order of society.[5] Thomas M. Greene notes that the stories of the first day, despite their lack of an explicit theme, explore the ways that society conforms to external and internal threats like Cangrande's sudden parsimony.[6] And in a second study, Picone explains how much of Day One is taken up with similar meta-narratives.[7] Other scholars still, like Mario Marti,[8] Vittore Branca,[9] and Karl-Ludwig Selig discuss the biography of Hugh Primas,[10] the real-world protagonist of Bergamino's narrative, in relationship to Boccaccio's fiction.

Picone's identification of the tale's meta-narrativity is helpful because it highlights a fundamental dynamism within it: the story depends upon the similarities between Bergamino's dilemma and Primas' situation. Both Bergamino and Primas deal with individuals who are behaving in ways that violate their espoused values, whether largesse (Cangrande) or Christian charity (the bishop). The narrator Filostrato spells out the connection between the two protagonists in his introductory remarks:

> La viziosa e lorda vita de' cherici, in molte cose quasi di cattività fermo segno, senza troppa difficultà dà di sé da parlare, da mordere, e da riprendere a ciascuno che ciò disidera di fare. E per ciò, come che ben facesse il valente uomo che lo inquisitore della ipocrita carità de' frati, che quello danno a' poveri che converrebbe loro dare al porco o gittar via,

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[3] Picone 2004, 160.

[4] Stewart 2004, 96.

[5] Cottino-Jones 1982, 191.

[6] Greene 1968, 299.

[7] Picone 1997, 111.

[8] In Boccaccio 1979, 234.

[9] In Boccaccio 1992, 104.

[10] Selig 1987, 111.

> trafisse, assai estimo più da lodare colui del quale, tirandomi a ciò la pre-cedente novella, parlare debbo: il quale messer Cane della Scala, magni-fico signore, d'una subita e disusata avarizia in lui apparisse morse con una leggiadra novella, in altrui figurando quello che di sé e di lui inten-deva di dire: la quale è questa. (I.7.4)

In the passage above, Filostrato does more than argue that Primas is a mirror for Bergamino. Rather, by tying in the story of Bergamino with the previous tale (I.6), Filostrato makes explicit the satiric nature of both. He describes the preceding *novella* with terminology typical of medieval sat-ires, which were defined ethically as the reprehension of vice (*vitium re-prehendere*)[11]; not for nothing does Filostrato use the cognate *riprendere* in the passage above. The genre of comedy, the definition of which over-lapped with that of satire,[12] was said to chastise the sinful (*vituperatio*), while its diametrical opposite, tragedy, functioned to praise the praise-worthy (*laus*).[13] Vocabulary from medieval literary theory appears in the passage above when Filostrato finds the victim of the inquisitor more worthy of praise ("estimo più da lodare") than the cleric himself. Similarly, he speaks of biting ("mordere") or piercing ("trafisse") someone for his failings, both of which were metaphorical depictions of satirical lan-guage.[14] Thus, through his references to literary criticism, Filostrato de-fines both the story about Bergamino and the tale about Hugh Primas as satires.

In his introductory comments to the seventh tale cited above, further-more, Filostrato explicitly associates the narrative about Hugh Primas with the extensive medieval tradition of anticlerical satire.[15] Other ele-ments within the tale only underscore its anticlerical ideology. At the bishop's feast Hugh consumes three loaves of bread (I.7.14), the same number as the robes that Bergamino had brought with him, two of which he had already pawned (I.7.9); yet the number three also calls to mind the Holy Trinity. Further, at the outset of the tale, Filostrato describes the ac-tions of the inquisitor from the previous tale who had castigated the ava-rice of the friars. Filostrato states: "che quello danno a' poveri converrebbe loro dare al porco o gittar via [...]" (I.7.4). In his characterization, Filostrato recollects Christ's teaching in Matthew 7:6: "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw pearls before swine." Of course, Filostrato

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[11] Miller 1983, 81.
[12] Reynolds 1995, 132.
[13] Allen 1982, 19–20.
[14] Suitner 1983, 17.
[15] Seidel Menchi 1993, 272.

cites the bible satirically because refusing to help the poor is anything but Christian.

Across many different genres and styles, the common denominator of medieval anticlerical literature is the set of hostile ideas about the lives of the monks[16]; the authors' intention is to highlight the clergy's hypocrisy by juxtaposing their actions to Christian doctrine.[17] Certainly this is the case in the *Decameron*. The bishop stands in for Christian ideals as indicated by his rank, of course, but the orders he gives his servants undercuts his representation of those ideals. Bergamino explains that the servants should not to bring out anything, neither bread nor wine ("vino né pane"), until the bishop has taken his seat (I.7.17). With a succinct turn of phrase the narrator evokes the Eucharist when describing the custom of the serving hall. Taken together, all these elements imply that the bishop favors himself over Christian ritual and beliefs. Luigi Russo notes that the anticlerical impulse found throughout day one also appears in this tale.[18] While Russo's observation is true, Filostrato states that the purpose of his story is far more ambitious than merely decrying corrupt friars, because through his story about Bergamino he will address a more difficult topic, the cheapness that resided one time in Cangrande della Scala's heart.

Given the function of satire to castigate vice, a statement by Cangrande at the end of the story takes on weight. After Bergamino has spoken about Primas, Cangrande praises his acuity. He states: "Bergamino, assai acconciamente hai mostrati i danni tuoi, la tua virtù e la mia avarizia e quel che da me disideri: e veramente mai più che ora per te da avarizia assalito non fui, ma io la caccerò con quel bastone che tu medesimo hai divisato" (I.7.27). Cangrande's description of Bergamino's storytelling as insightful ("acconciamente") is an allusion to the socially awkward situation he placed him in; in the society of the day, insulting a superior was considered a grave infraction,[19] sometimes criminal.[20] By characterizing the story of Hugh Primas as a club ("bastone"), Cangrande recognizes Bergamino's story as the castigation of vice. In Cangrande's case, it was effective, for he now turns away from his avarice, endeavors to drive it from his soul and plans to compensate Bergamino for his pains. But a question arises from Cangrande's description: what was it about Bergamino's tale that can be

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[16] Szittya 1986, ix.

[17] Bayless 1997, 212.

[18] Russo 1956, 112.

[19] Burke 1987, 99.

[20] Dean 2007, 117.

called a club? In the embedded story, the bishop simply retires for a time before he repents of his actions, so nothing can be explicitly identified as incisive. Clearly, Boccaccio intended something about the story to be implicitly satirical, indicating some aspect of medieval culture that has been lost across the centuries.

The key probably lies with the figure of Hugh Primas. In spite of all the studies of *Decameron* I.7 mentioned above, scholarship has not taken Primas' reputation fully into account. The question is not exclusively about the historical facts of the poet Hugh Primas, although they should not be discounted in the least. But along with them we also need to examine what Boccaccio and his readers might have believed about Hugh; therefore, the legends about Primas during Boccaccio's age are also of importance here. When brought into the picture, Boccaccio's at times unscientific understanding of Hugh Primas alters the very nature of the story. By taking the legends of Primas into account, we shall see that Bergomino's story of three loaves is not so much a parable about Cangrande's avarice; instead, by calling to mind the poet Hugh Primas, Bergamino communicates the threat of exposing the lord's flaws.

Historically speaking, Hugh Primas was from Orléans (ca. 1095—ca. 1160) and he left a corpus of 23 extant poems in Latin.[21] He developed many of the goliardic tropes of the time — the love of wine, prostitutes, dicing and the tavern — but he also excelled at social satire. As satires, therefore, his poems reflect the social conditions of the day and decry unethical behavior.[22] A commonplace in his verse is the derision of former patrons whose recompense was lacking. He writes: "Hospes erat michi se plerumque professus amicum / voce michi prebens plurima, re modicum. ("My host was my good friend, or so he would profess: / lavish with words, he gave me in actual fact much less," poem 1, vv. 1–2). In some instances the stingy patron is a cleric: "Pontificum spuma — fex cleri, sordida struma, / qui dedit in bruma — michi mantellum sine pluma" ("The scum of the priesthood, clerical dregs, a disgusting sore, / the man who in winter gave me an unlined cloak to wear!," poem 2, vv. 1–2). Conversely, he praises those clerics who behave generously: "Me ditavit ita — vester bonus archilevita, / ditavit Boso — me munere tam precioso" ("Your excellent archdeacon — enriched me thus by a donation: / he who enriched me

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[21] Information about Hugh's poetic corpus comes from Fleur Adcock's edition (Hugo Primas 1994). His poems and translations are cited from this edition as well.

[22] Witke 1970, 202–03.

with so — valuable a gift was Boso," poem 13, vv. 1–2). Indeed, he dedicates one entire poem to noting a defect in the service at the bishop's table:

Primas pontifici:	Bene quod sapis audio dici,
et fama teste	probitas est magna penes te.
Conspicuus veste	bene cenas, vivis honeste.
Et bene si vivis	et das bene de genitivis,
ut non egrotes	bene convenit, ut bene potes. (poem 11)
Primas to bishop: Sir,	you are a wise man, I hear;
and likewise, says the rumour,	you're known for honourable behavior.
Your conduct's always noble,	you dress well, keep an excellent table.
Your life-style is correct,	and your parts are used to good effect;
then you should not omit	good drinking, if you're to stay fit.

The lack of generosity among clerical patrons takes on a deeper meaning in Primas' verse since it flies in the face of Christian teachings. Typically in the Middle Ages, anticlerical literature attacked churchmen when they did not live up to the ideals of the Christian church.[23] That is certainly true of Primas' poetry as well. In another poem Hugh contrasts a rich man's avarice to Christ's exhortation to feed to poor: "Ulceribus plenus — victum petit eger, egenus: / dives non audit — victum negat, hostia claudit; [...] vina bibens quondam—sitit et videt et petit undam / iudioque dei — datur ignibus: hic requiei" ("A sick man, full of sores — begged food because he was so poor; / the rich man wouldn't hear — denied him food and shut the door [....] He who drank wine in the past — now sees and begs water for his thirst: / for under God's decrees — he burns; the beggar lies at ease" poem 5, vv. 1–2, 13–14). Throughout his works, Primas creates the persona of a prelate as a means to pronounce on ecclesiastical and moral matters.[24] It is not difficult to see how Bergamino's tale depends upon Hugh's literature: he excels at the castigation of avaricious hosts, in particular when those hosts are clerics.

While Boccaccio had clearly read some of Hugh's poetry, the goliardic poet's reputation also informs the tale. It is important to note that Bergamino launches into the tale about Hugh Primas without pausing to think first,[25] suggesting that such narratives were commonplace. By the thirteenth century, the name "Hugh Primas" had become virtually synonymous with the word "goliard,"[26] thereby conflating the poet with his liter-

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[23] Graus 1993, 70. See also Corsaro 2007.

[24] McDonough 1983, 122.

[25] Kircher 2013, 119.

[26] Rigg 1977, 70.

ary movement. Several false etymologies for the term "goliard" circulated, including the derivation from the Old Testament giant Goliath[27]; Goliath was treated as a *figura diaboli* counterpoised to David as a *figura Christi*, and thus readers of the Middle Ages explained away the goliardic trope of deriding churchmen.[28] Another false etymology was based on *gula* (throat), which explained the poets' emphasis on food and taverns.[29] With the latter etymology in mind, it makes sense that in Boccaccio's tale Primas shows up uninvited to a feast. But what is surprising is that in Bergamino's story Hugh needed to eat loaves of bread that he himself had brought, thus underscoring the bishop's failings as a host.

One important source of information about Primas' reputation in Italy is the *Cronica* of the Franciscan friar Salimbene de Adam (1221–ca. 1290). In his history of Italy he includes several citations of Hugh's poetry, as well as a description of the poet: "Fuit his temporibus Primas canonicus Coloniensis [*sic*], magnus trutannus et magnus trufator et maximus versificator et velox" ("There was in those times Primas, canon from Cologne [*sic*], a great trickster and great fool, and a most great and quick rhymester").[30] Luigi Russo observes that Boccaccio's description of Hugh appears related to Salimbene's[31]: "Primasso fu un gran valente uomo in grammatica e fu oltre a ogni altro *grande e presto versificatore*" (I.7.11, emphasis added). Like Salimbene, Boccaccio calls him a "quick rhymester." However, Boccaccio alters Salimbene's description of Hugh in important ways. Gone are the characterizations of Hugh as a fool ("trutannus") or a trickster ("trufator"), thus focusing the statement exclusively on his poetic achievements. Conversely, unlike most of the anecdotes about Hugh in the *Cronica*, Bergamino does not represent him composing or citing his verse. Instead, the readers of the *Decameron* — and by extension, the character of Cangrande himself — are expected to possess knowledge about Hugh Primas and apply it to the *novella*.

As with his verse, the legendary figure of Hugh Primas should give Cangrande pause. In one anecdote, Salimbene cites verses from seven of Hugh's poems (although it should be noted that one of them is falsely attributed to Hugh, as it was actually composed by another goliard, the Archpoet of Cologne, reflecting further the cultural confusion about the

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[27] Walsh 1983, 3.

[28] Hanford 1926, 41.

[29] Fichtner 1967, 236.

[30] Salimbene de Adam 2002, 174. Trans. in Salimbene de Adam 1986, 61.

[31] Russo 1956, 130.

goliardic poets[32]); in another passage, Salimbene cites a poem in full. Several of the citations are from poems about wine or drinking, and therefore not relevant to the discussion at hand. However, three of them deal with clergymen's patronage of Hugh. In the first, he accompanies a bishop as they watch a pair of oxen; the bishop places a bet that if the Primas can compose verses about the oxen before they return, he will donate them to the poet. Primas answers with a poem: "Indigeo bobus — ad rura colenda duobus / Pontificus munus — veniat bos unus et unus" ("Two oxen I need — my land for to plow / May that gift slowly indeed — come down the field now").[33] At another time, he intended to make a gift of a dozen loaves of bread to a cardinal, but he only sent him eleven because the baker woman stole one.[34] Lastly, he composed verses deriding an archbishop who had sent him a present of fish, but without wine: "Mittitur in disco — michi piscis ab archiepiscopo / Non incline — quia missio fit sine vino" ("He has doubtless sent this fish up — that goodly man, the archbishop / But on fish I care not to dine — No! Not without wine").[35] Hugh Primas was not simply a person who wrote anticlerical works; according to Salimbene, his life experiences actually exemplified the degeneracy of the clerics.

By situating the citations of Hugh's poems in biographical anecdotes, Salimbene clearly shares the mindset of the troubadouric tradition of the *razos*. *Razos* were prose statements that explicated poetry with a biographical episode of the author.[36] Often, the prose writers extracted language and statements from the original poem and reconfigured them into the prose.[37] The *razos* cannot be treated as biographical fact, therefore, and the statements by Salimbene similarly should be treated with skepticism from a historical point of view. Nevertheless, it is probable that people at the time thought of them as historically accurate. Therefore, Salimbene communicates beliefs about Primas prevalent in the Duecento, specifically that he was a satirist who openly vituperated parsimonious patrons, particularly when those patrons were high members of the Church who had mistreated him. From this perspective, the simple selection of Hugh Primas as protagonist constitutes a challenge to Cangrande. For people in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Hugh transformed his

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[32] Dronke 71.

[33] Salimbene de Adam 2002, 174. Trans. in Salimbene de Adam 1986, 61.

[34] Salimbene de Adam 2002, 175. Trans. in Salimbene de Adam 1986, 61.

[35] Salimbene de Adam 2002, 175. Trans. in Salimbene de Adam 1986, 61.

[36] Houston 2010, 56.

[37] Wilson Poe 1984, 36.

unpleasant life experiences into the public exposure and castigation of his patrons' failings.

This brings us to the second level of the tale, the narrative about Bergamino. The two levels of the narrative are not disjointed. Michelangelo Picone points out that Bergamino's Hugh comes from a Paris that epitomized the courtliness now threatened by Cangrande's behaviors.[38] Like Hugh, Bergamino finds himself treated poorly at the hands of a host and, again like Hugh, he must consume his own goods. While Hugh literally eats his own bread, Bergamino must pawn two of his three fine robes to cover his expenses while stuck at Cangrande's court. The two levels differ in that Cangrande is a member of the high aristocracy, not of the hierarchy of the Church. Bergamino must confront the loss of aristocratic ideals among the nobility, and not the un-Christian actions of the clergy, like Hugh. What anticlericalism is for the story about Hugh Primas and the bishop, in short, anti-avarice is for the frame tale of Bergamino and Cangrande.

The idea that Bergamino needed to pawn his clothing for unwanted service was not unusual in the society of the early fourteenth century. As William Caferro notes, monetary pay in the Italian communes was one of several forms of compensation for services, which also included food, clothes and gratuities.[39] That he needs to consume his clothing also has a precedent in the literature of the age. In a sonnet attributable to Cecco Angiolieri (ca. 1260–1312), the poet complains about the discomforts and expenses of military life: "I' son venuto di schiatta di struzzo, / ne l'oste stando, per la fame grande, / ché d'un corsetto ho fatto mie vivande, / mangiandol tutto a magli' ed a ferruzzo."[40] In these lines, the poet describes himself as an ostrich, an animal believed to be able to digest anything; as a soldier, he must transform a breastplate into food to sustain himself during the campaign (v. 2). Boccaccio was quite familiar with the Sienese poet who notably appears as a character in the Ninth Day's fourth tale, in which Boccaccio repeatedly demonstrates knowledge of Angiolieri's verse.[41] Although he wrote in Italian and not Latin, Cecco Angiolieri can be seen as a continuator of goliardic topoi,[42] thus adding a goliardic dimension to the narrative about Bergamino. It is not unreasonable to suppose,

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[38] Picone 2004, 170.

[39] Caferro 2013, 164.

[40] Angiolieri 1990, 240.

[41] Alfie 2014, 124–25.

[42] Marti 1953, 18–19.

therefore, that Boccaccio remembered Angiolieri's sonnet when he composed the tale about Bergamino.

Bergamino's plight is different from Hugh's in one respect: his patron is a powerful lord, and not a bishop. The frame tale is quintessentially aristocratic[43] because magnanimity was a central virtue in medieval society.[44] The whole reason that Bergamino recited the tale about Hugh Primas was to highlight Cangrande's failure to maintain his generosity. Here, too, there is a relevant literary precedent that influences the interpretation of the story. Erich Köhler studied the literary complaint against avarice, noting that it began with the Provençal poet Marcabru but later became a staple of vernacular poetry.[45] At the same time, it was not an empty topos devoid of social resonance. Rather, the complaint of avarice overlaid a class friction between the lower nobility and the high barons; the lower nobility needed to assert its rights by positioning themselves as the defenders of the traditional values of the aristocracy.[46] Köhler's findings are wholly applicable to Bergamino's situation in Cangrande's court. Bergamino suffers at the whims of an avaricious lord who does not fulfill his responsibilities to a member of the lower nobility. Therefore, from a literary perspective, the tale itself is part of a larger tradition of low aristocrats decrying the greediness and abuses of the high nobility.

At the same time, Mario Baratto offers insights about the tale that add yet another dimension to it as a social satire. Baratto reads the story as dealing with the friction between an intellectual and a lord.[47] Baratto's view fits perfectly with Köhler's, as the intellectual would be a member of the lower nobility, as represented by the poets who decried the barons' avarice. The distinction between intellectuals and people of the highest nobility, therefore, was itself part and parcel with the literary tradition. As but one example, the Florentine poet Rustico Filippi (ca. 1230 – ca. 1299) engaged in a *tenzone* with Bondie Dietaiuti, in which he posited the following question: two men love the same woman; one them is learned, but the other commands many vassals; which of the two should she love?

> Due cavalier cortesi d'un paraggio
> aman di core una donna valente;
> ciascun l'ama tanto in suo coraggio,
> che d'avanzar d'amar saria neiente.

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[43] Russo 1956, 125.

[44] Petronio 1966, 479–80.

[45] Köhler 1976, 4.

[46] Köhler 1976, 5–6.

[47] Baratto 1984, 214–18.

> L'un è cortese ed insegnato e saggio,
> largo in donare ed in tutto avvenente;
> l'altro è prode e di grande vassallaggio,
> fiero e ardito e dottato di gente.
> Qual d'esti due è più degno d'avere
> da la sua donna ciò che ne desia… (vv. 1–10)[48]

Love, in this instance, probably stands in for acknowledgement of the men's virtue and worth. In his sonnet Bondie answers that if he were the woman he would probably love the intellectual (v. 14). The citation of this *tenzone* is not meant to suggest a direct connection between Boccaccio's tale and the two poets, although that is not impossible. (There are reasons to believe that Boccaccio knew Rustico Filippi's poetry.[49]) Rather, the citation of it is to demonstrate the common cultural foundation between Rustico and Bondie, and the *Decameron*. Like them, Boccaccio presents a conflict between a high and powerful lord, Cangrande, and a lowly poet, Bergamino.

In a recent article, Jonathan Usher discussed how Boccaccio believed that great literature required astute readers, and that over time the readers could become independent of them.[50] Usher's observation is particularly insightful regarding Bergamino's intended audience, Cangrande, as well as the readers of the *Decameron*. Since the *novella* rests upon the parallel between Hugh's situation and Bergamino's, it requires an astute listener/reader to decipher Bergamino's true intent. Boccaccio certainly knew of the intellectual weight of the name Cangrande della Scala, the protector of Dante and the recipient of Dante's thirteenth epistle.[51] Indeed, Boccaccio cites Dante's letter to Cangrande in the introduction to day four. There, he describes the *Decameron* as having a low and humble style: "istilo umilissimo e rimesso" (IV.Intro.3). In so doing, Boccaccio directly translates the stylistic description of "comedy" from the epistle: "remissus est modus et humilis."[52] While it would be difficult to try to draw connections between the tale of Bergamino and Dante's epistle, Boccaccio capitalizes on the notion of Cangrande as an astute reader. Cangrande deduces the connection between Hugh Primas and Bergamino, understanding that the three loaves of bread connote Bergamino's three fine robes. Further-

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[48] In Marti 1956, 90.

[49] Alfie 2010, 377–78.

[50] Usher 2003.

[51] Jenaro-MacLennan 1974, 105–23.

[52] *Ep.* XIII.10, in Alighieri 2014, 1504.

more, Cangrande infers the *intentio auctoris* of the story about Primas as satiric when he defines it as a "club," mentioned above.

In conclusion, Cangrande's determination of the story as a "club" is the key to understanding *novella* I.7 of the *Decameron*. At the outset, Filostrato explicitly defines the tale as the satirical reprehension of vice. The narrative of Hugh Primas, with its castigation of the bishop's avarice, was Bergamino's means to chastise Cangrande's stinginess. Yet as has been repeatedly shown, Primas had the reputation of a satiric poet who used his verse publicly to expose people's ignominy and cheapness. By the fourteenth century, his name had become synonymous with the reprehension of anti-Christian clergymen, even among people who never read his poetry. Like Hugh, Bergamino was a poet. By hearing the name Hugh Primas, Cangrande intuited the possible consequence to his actions, namely that Bergamino might go on to slander him just as Primas had slandered the bishops, archbishops and cardinals. Simply by talking about the goliard, Bergamino implied a threat to Cangrande's good reputation as a generous lord. As Cangrande states at the end of the story, Bergamino devised a club all right, and Cangrande certainly did not want to be hit with it.

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