

The background is a dark blue-grey color. It features several thin, gold-colored lines that form abstract, angular shapes. These lines extend from the edges of the frame towards the center, where they meet a large, gold-outlined rectangle. The lines create a sense of depth and movement, resembling stylized rays or architectural elements.


The Medieval Roots of Celebrity

Prof. Dr. Irina Dumitrescu
University of Bonn

“THE HERO was distinguished by his achievement, the celebrity by his image or trademark. The hero created himself; the celebrity is created by the media. The hero was a big man; the celebrity is a big name.”

Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (1962)



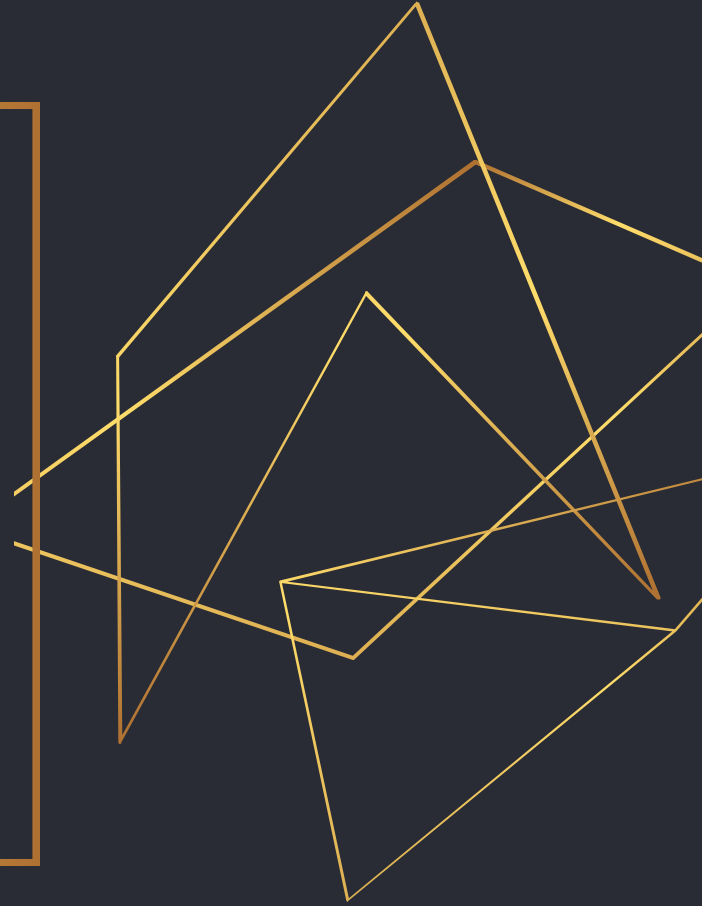
- 
- **Ascribed celebrity** – through lineage
 - **Achieved celebrity** – through accomplishment
 - **Attributed celebrity** – by cultural intermediaries, “agents, publicists, marketing personnel, promoters, photographers, fitness trainers, wardrobe staff, cosmetics experts and personal assistants”

Chris Rojek, *Celebrity*
(2001)



“Famous people have existed for millennia, but the heroes of ancient Greece and Rome sought eternal renown, while medieval saints attained their canonical status only after death. Celebrities are people known during their lifetimes to more people than could possibly know one another.”

Sharon Marcus, *The Drama of Celebrity*
(2019)



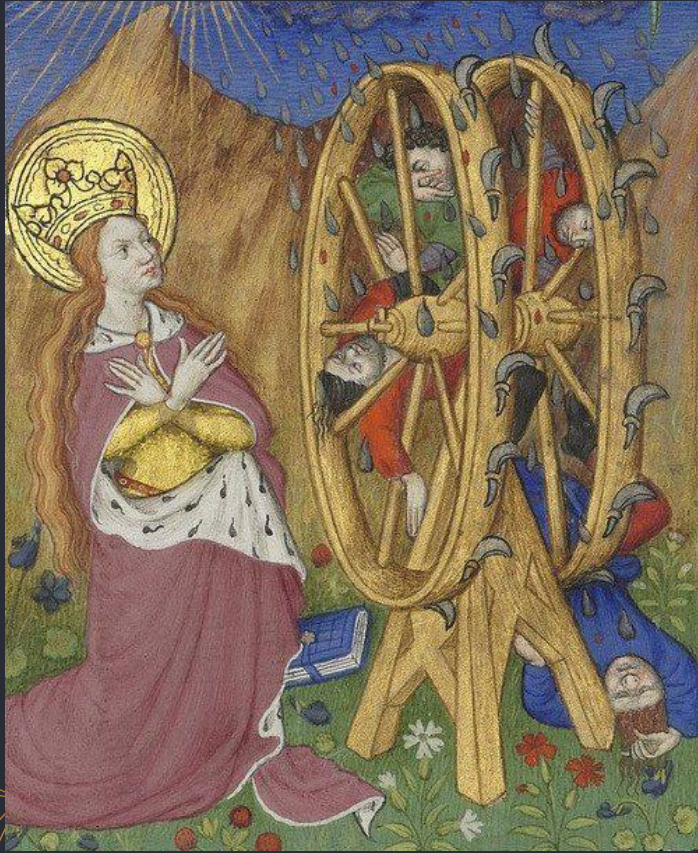


What is celebrity?

- Fame is fast and cheap
- People become brands or icons
- True self vs public self
- Entertainment, magic, illusion
- Imagined intimacy
- Potential for power









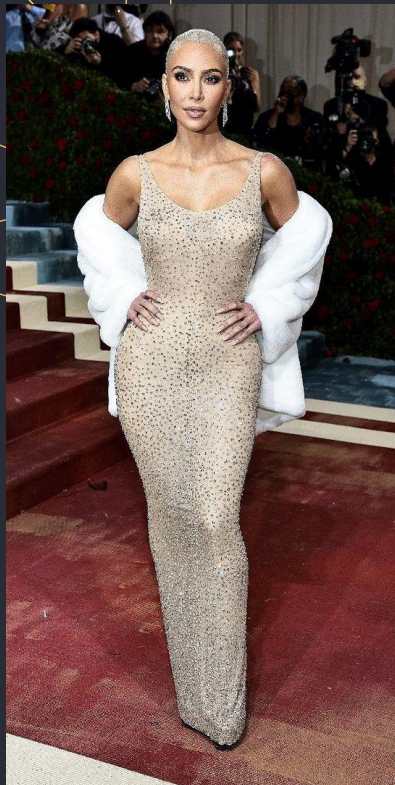


sions ala destre son pere qui uo z regne par
 toz le siecle des siecles unt seules de amen.
Quomence la vie de seint ierome.
 emz
 ierom
 mes
 funez
 dehan
 relig
 nee.
 dan
 thas
 reliqu
 fu ap
 lez ste
 dons
 si esto
 t en la marche dalmasse de pannoume: mes
 il est destruit grant tens a si come sont plu
 sieurs autres niles qui la furent de grant
 noblete. Li peres seinz ierome out ranou
 eusebius qui molt suprendom a l'age l'usulz
 leus fuit molt bien de science si com uos por



The illuminated initial 'D' shows St. Jerome in a brown robe and hood, seated and gesturing with his right hand towards a golden lion standing on its hind legs. Behind them are two palm trees. The entire scene is enclosed within a decorative circular frame with a blue and gold border.







Giovanni Boccaccio, *On Famous Women*

- “Those who have given all their energy, substance, and... their life’s blood in order to surpass other men with their illustrious deeds have deserved that their names be forever remembered by posterity... how much more should women be extolled (almost all of whom are endowed with tenderness, frail bodies, and sluggish minds by Nature), if they have acquired a manly spirit?”

Giovanni Boccaccio, *On Famous Women*

- “Nor do I want the reader to think it out of place if together with Penelope, Lucretia, and Sulpicia, who were very chaste matrons, they find Medea, Flora, and Sempronia, who happened to have very strong but destructive characters. For it is not my intention to give the word “famous” so strict a meaning that it will always seem to signify “virtuous”, but rather to give it a wider sense, if the reader will forgive me, and to consider as famous those women who I know to become renowned to the world through any sort of deed.”

De Penthesilea Regina de le A



De medusa figliola de f



De Ysiphile Regina de

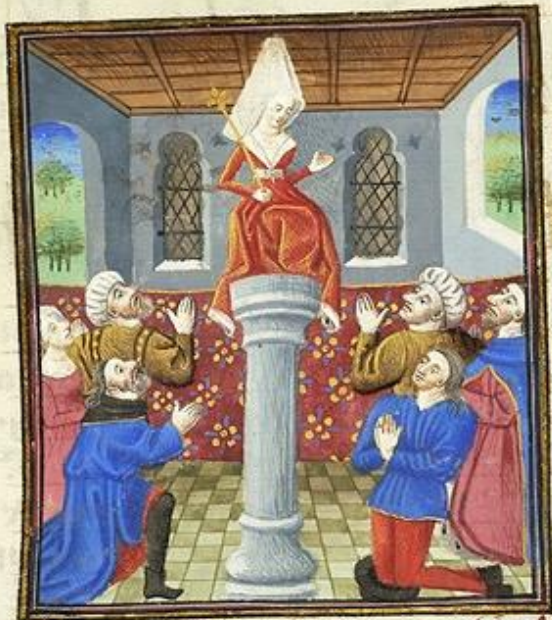


De Sapho fanciulla de le bía



De Niobe Regina de





l'histoire de opis la tierce noble q
 fut seür ensemble & pouse de sar
 pis ou ops oupie.
Othea la deesse
 se nous voulons
 croire esancies
 l'histoire moult noble

Giovanni Boccaccio, *On Famous Women*

- “These were the people who came forth into the fame even of deity through the ignorance—nay, madness—of the men of that age. Opis not only acquired the honor of being queen, but through man’s error was reputed to be a marvelous goddess and the mother of the gods. Temples, priests, and sacrifices were accorded to her through public laws.”

“With the mushroom-fertility of all pseudo-events, celebrities tend to breed more celebrities. They help make and celebrate and publicize one another. Being known primarily for their well-knownness, celebrities intensify their celebrity images simply by becoming widely known for relations among themselves.”

Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (1962)





Giovanni Boccaccio, *On Famous Women*

- “Among other foul things there were naked prostitutes who practiced their art in pantomime with various lewd gestures to show how Flora had acquired her wealth.”

Giovanni Boccaccio, *On Famous Women*

- “The people were misled by this deception, and Flora, who while alive had dwelt in brothels and had prostituted herself for even the smallest fee, was thought to sit with Queen Juno and the other goddesses.... And thus Flora with her shrewdness and the gift of her fortune and ill-gotten money was changed from a prostitute into a nymph. Having married Zephyrus and having received divinity from him, she was honored by men with divine honors in the temples, so that not only was she changed from Chlora to Flora, but, having been a renowned prostitute while alive, after her death she became a goddess famous throughout the world.”



Ses
la
fi
ne. A laquelles
meex l'ontense
richesses luy
venimee de fait
luy accoust
q' p' certain co
fut tre fructe
meex d'agene
se accorde. Car
dient q' ceste q'
Jeunesse & de sa
l'ordeaux houl

les suivreux Jeunes homes b'sa & consuma sa vie par



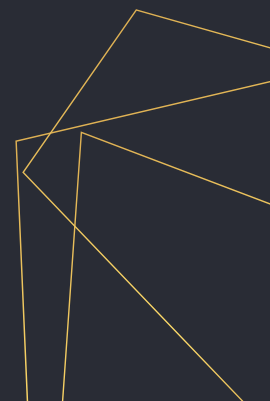




Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame*

[He] gan this trompe for to blowe
As al the world shulde overthrowe,
That thurghout every regioun
Wente this foule trompes soun
As swifte as pelet out of gone
Whan fyr is in the poudre ronne.

[He] began this trump to blow
As if all the world he'd overthrow,
So that through every region
Went this foul trumpet's sound
As swift as pellet from a gun
When fire's through the powder run.

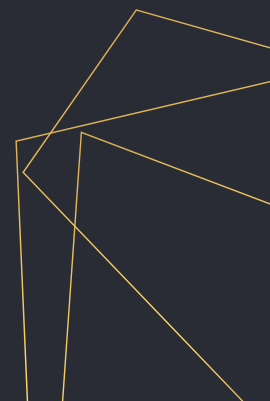




Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame*

...alle maner of minstrales
And gestiour, that tellen tales
Bothe of weping and of game,
Of al that longeth unto Fame.

All manner there of minstrels
And entertainers, telling tales
Both with weeping, and in game,
Of all that belongs to Fame.

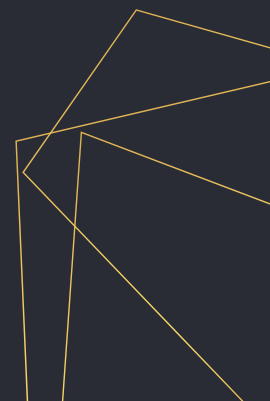





Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame*

Ther saw I famous olde and yonge
Pipers of the Duche tonge,
To lerne love-daunces, springes,
Reyes, and these straunge thinges.

There saw I famous old, and young
Pipers of the German tongue,
Teaching love-dances, springs,
Reels, and such foreign things.



- 
- “Magic is often associated with celebrities, and powers of healing or second sight are frequently attributed to them.”

Chris Rojek, *Celebrity*
(2001)

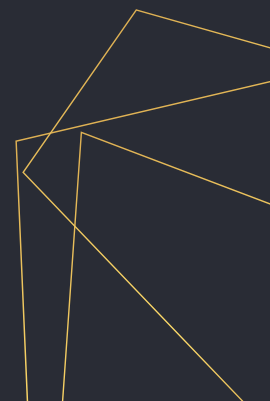




Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame*

I wolde fain han had a fame,
As other folk hadde in the toun,
Although they were of greet renoun
For hir vertu and for hir thewes;
Thoughte I, as greet a fame han shrewes,
Though it be but for shrewednesse,
As good folk han for goodnesse

I would have gladly won a name,
As other folk had in that town,
Although they were of great renown
For virtue and their qualities;
Yet rogues have fame as well as these,
Thought I, for their wickedness,
As good folk have for their goodness



Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame*

Whan any speche y-comen is
Up to the paleys, anonright
It wexeth lyk the same wight,
Which that the word in erthe spake,
Be it clothed red or blake;
And hath so verray his lyknesse
That spake the word, that thou wilt gesse
That it the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she

When any speech incoming is
Up to this palace right anon,
It appears as the selfsame one,
Who that word on earth spoke,
In red or black be it cloaked;
And has so truly their likeness,
That spoke the word, you would guess
That the same body it must be,
Man or woman, he or she





Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame*

“O God,” thoughte I, “that madest kinde,
Shal I noon other weyes dye?
Wher Joves wol me stellifye?”

‘O God,’ thought I, ‘that made all kind
Of creature, is this to be my fate?
Where Jove shall me constellate?’

