

Giovanni Boccaccio Encyclopedia Article

Giovanni Boccaccio

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Contents

Giovanni Boccaccio Encyclopedia Article.....	1
Contents.....	2
Giovanni Boccaccio.....	3

Giovanni Boccaccio

1313-1375

Italian writer, best known for the *Decameron* (1353), who discussed geology in his *Filocolo* (c. 1340). In the latter text, he wrote on the origin of fossils and maintained that the sea had once covered the Earth. The willingness of Boccaccio, an educated man for his time, to accept ancient myths is instructive regarding the medieval mind: at one time he reported that the remains of Polyphemus, the Cyclops described in Homer's *Odyssey*, had been located in a cave in Sicily. According to Boccaccio, the giant was 300 ft (91.5 m) tall.