The First Modern Man, Francesco Petrarch

*Father of Humanism*

1302- Born near Florence on July 20
1312- Family moved to Avignon to be near Pope
1320- Attends the Univ. of Bologna in Italy along with his brother- his father sent him there to study Law; he quickly learns to despise the law, but loves to read the classics. He and his brother have a very active social life and are fastidious dressers
1326- Father dies, Francesco’s hair turns white overnight
1327- On April 6 (Good Friday) Francesco first sees Laura during Church services... falls deeply in love. Over his lifetime, he writes 366 poems/sonnets (a form of poetry he creates) about her and his love for her. He moves to a small cottage in the country and begins his nature writings. (First nature poet)
1333- embarks upon his travels spurred out of a “youthful curiosity” to visit other places, as well as a desire to put distance between himself and Laura, whom he can only admire from a distance, since she is married. He becomes the first “Tourist”. During his travels, his poetry becomes very well known and celebrated.
1336- Decides to climb a mountain in the region just to see the view from the top- asks his brother to join him- they have to forge a path since none, except the mountain goats, have gone that way before. He becomes the first “Alpinist”.
1341- Crowned Poet Laureate of Rome, The “first” in over a thousand years. He receives invitations to visit from every head of state and many of the powerful families of Europe. His poetry is quoted throughout the land.
1348- Laura dies on April 6 (Good Friday) 21 years after he first saw her.
1360- Writes first autobiography of the modern era- writes about his life/thoughts to “St. Augustine”, who “writes” him back. He becomes the first person to psycho-analyze himself/autobiographer.
1362- Moves to Venice; he donates his vast private library (the largest private collection of classics and church writings in Europe) to the City in exchange for a place to live.
1374- July 19, one day before his 72nd birthday, Petrarch is found by his daughter, Francesca, slumped over his desk, pen still in hand...he died writing.

Note: Francesco had a son and a daughter, but never married.