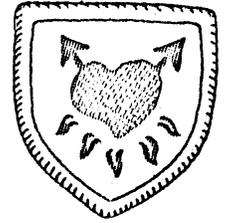


# Newsletter BOCCACCIO



"studium fuit alma poesis"

Vol. 2, No. 1

AMERICAN BOCCACCIO ASSOCIATION

Spring, 1975

## EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

The AMERICAN BOCCACCIO ASSOCIATION held their first general membership meeting on Sunday, December 29, 1974 during the recent Modern Language Association Convention in New York.

The highlight of the meeting was a paper entitled "A Key to Meaning in the *Decameron*," presented by newly elected ABA president Aldo S. Bernardo. Reminding his listeners that to understand Boccaccio it is vital to know Petrarch, Professor Bernardo offered the thesis that the *Decameron* can be seen as a continuation of Dante's *Commedia*, a representation of the wise man's view of evil, and that the first story of the cunning Ciappelletto's perversion of wit is a key to the whole work. Professor Bernardo's paper was followed by discussion.

The Business Meeting dealt primarily with the disposition of the Provisional Constitutions and Bylaws published in the last issue of the newsletter. Amendments adopted by the membership made provision for three vice presidents instead of two, with the third vice president taking on the editorship of the newsletter. The amount of dues was changed from two dollars to five. The Provisional Constitutions as amended were ratified by unanimous vote until such time as the Committee on Constitutions and Bylaws can present a permanent form to the membership.

The following slate of officers was elected to a one year term:

*President* . . . . . Aldo S. Bernardo  
*First Vice President* . . . . . Joseph Reino  
*Second Vice President* . . . . . Marga Cottino-Jones  
*Third Vice President* . . . . . Thomas Vesce  
 Appointed members of the Executive Committee are:  
*Executive Secretary* . . . . . Bernadette Marie Mc Coy  
*Executive Treasurer* . . . . . Adrienne Schwartz Riley

The various committees were constituted as follows:

*Nominating Committee:* Eduardo Lebano, Anthony K. Cassell, Albert N. Mancini, Eugene J. Crook, David Lampe, Victoria Kirkham, Pauline Fusaro;

*Membership Committee:* Richard T. Jordan, Laura Hager, Carlo Chiarenza, Penny Marcus;

*Committee on Constitutions and Bylaws:* William Leparulo, Rinaldina Russel, Susan J. Noakes;

*Program Committee:* James Wheelock, William Leparulo, Elizabeth Wells, Benjamin G. Kohl, Susan J. Noakes, Penny Marcus, Anthony K. Cassells.

The nomination of Charles S. Singleton as first honorary president of the American Boccaccio Association was confirmed by unanimous vote.

The desirability of English translations of all Boccaccio's works was emphasized. Anthony K. Cassell announced the forthcoming publication of his translation of *Corbaccio* by the University of Illinois Press. The first English translation of Boccaccio's *Teseida*, under the title, *The Book of Theseus*, was published under the aegis of the Medieval Text Association in the Fall of 1974 and is available from Teesdale Publishing Associates, Sea Cliff, New York. Members who expect to publish Boccaccio translations or other *Boccacciana* are invited to send their announcements to the newsletter.

Information concerning Sixth Centennial observances in honor of Boccaccio should be sent to the editor for publication in the newsletter. David Lampe reported that he is organizing a SUNY *Conversation in the Disciplines* on the theme of Boccaccio and the Fourteenth Century for the Fall of 1975. Requests for information concerning the commemorations at Certaldo should be addressed to the *Segretaria Organizzativa del Congresso Internazionale su G. Boccaccio c/o Amministrazione Provinciale di Firenze, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Firenze.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Bernadette Marie Mc Coy  
Executive Secretary

Founded in April, 1974 during the World Petrarch Congress in Washington, D.C., the AMERICAN BOCCACCIO ASSOCIATION held its first general membership meeting on December 29, 1974. The Association is open to all interested persons. Inquiries concerning membership and dues (\$5.00) should be directed to the Executive Secretary, 7 Sound Beach Drive, Glen Cove, New York 11542.

BOCCACCIO, the official newsletter of the Association is published quarterly and is sent free to members. Subscription for non-members is \$2.00. Correspondence and items for the newsletter should be sent to the Editor, Professor Thomas E. Vesce, Mercy College Department of Modern Languages, 556 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522.

## CAVANDER'S "BOCCACCIO"

by Penny Marcus

As scholars of the *Decameron*, we frequently overlook one of the imperatives of the genre—stories should be told as well as read. The art of reading aloud, the immediacy and vivacity of the oral tradition, has faded with the proliferation of print. But Kenneth Cavander does justice to this tradition in his delightful dramatization of the *Decameron*. His play is called "Boccaccio" and it consists of six tales, including Masetto (III, i), Madonna Isabetta (VII, vi), Giletta di Narbona (III, ix), Rustico and Alibech (III, x), Il Testa di Basilico (IV, v), and Ferondo in Purgatorio (III, viii).

Unlike Pasolini's film which removed the stories from their historical frame, and pressed them into the service of a Marxist interpretation, Cavander leaves his source intact, and gives loving attention to the cornice, as well as to the letter of the tales. By giving us the background of the plague, and enacting the flight of the brigata from history into literature, and back to history again, Cavander provides the poignant and ideologically significant reasons for telling stories.

Another way in which Cavander does delightful justice to his source is by the addition of music and dance. Though stylistically far from the measured forms of the medieval tradition, the lively tunes and steps of Cavander's troupe complete the aesthetic experience of the frame-story, as Boccaccio did with his *ballate*.

There are, however, several lapses in fidelity to the *Decameron* which may jar the purist. Cavander insists on individualizing the members of the *brigata*, adding biographical facts which ironically undercut the gaiety of the tales. He thus tends to conflate Chaucer and Boccaccio, at the expense of the latter. He also adds a master-storyteller, dressed in black, and resembling Bergmann's Death figure in the "Seventh Seal." The suggestion is that Boccaccio himself speaks as Death—a confusing and inaccurate association.

Despite these gratuitous touches, the play succeeds admirably in reconstructing the spirit of the Master, in rendering immediate and real the experience of the *brigata*, and of resurrecting the life of the imagination in these hardest of times.

### BOCCACCIO MEETINGS AND SEMINARS— PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

On November 9th last, at Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., a small group of medievalists (among whom Professor Aldo Bernardo, president of the ABA) gathered to exchange views and opinions about Boccaccio and his times.

Entitled "The World of Boccaccio," the Colloquium was made possible by a gift of Judge Basil Filardi, a trustee of the College, to the Department of Modern Foreign Languages.

Since support for a Second Annual Colloquium has been assured, the Chairman of the Department, Professor Thomas E. Vesce, announces that the conference will take place on Saturday, November 8, 1975. Those who would like to be considered for a place on the panel, devoted primarily but not exclusively to comparative views of Boccaccio, should write Professor Vesce before September 15th.

Professor Peter E. Bondanella of Indiana University Center for Italian Studies announces that there will be two meetings dealing with Boccaccio during the Midwest Modern Language Association meeting in Chicago this coming fall. From 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon, November 7, there will be a Boccaccio Seminar with three papers with discussants under the chairmanship of Professor Christopher Kleinhenz, University of Wisconsin, Madison. This will be followed by an introduction and presentation of the film on Boccaccio's *Decameron* by Pier Paolo Pasolini. This session will be from 3:00 to 5:00. Speakers are Professor Ben Lawton, Purdue University and Peter E. Bondanella, Indiana University. The film is being made available through the courtesy of United Artists 16.

The Department of Modern Languages, Italian Division of Fordham University and the *Istituto Italiano di Cultura* are presenting a Synposium on Giovanni Boccaccio on Sunday, April 20, 1975 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the Campus Center Ballroom on the Bronx Campus.

Panelists Ricardo Arias, Craig B. Brush, Florinda Iannace, and Carlos Stoctzer of Fordham University and William Coleman of John Jay College will discuss Boccaccio in Spain, French Adaptations of Boccaccio's Novella, Boccaccio in 14th Century England, Religious Aspects of Boccaccio's Political World, and the historical background. The main address on "Boccaccio, Poet of Realism," will be given by Joseph Tusiani of Lehman College. This will be followed by a program entitled "Music and Literature in Italian Renaissance" with Paoli Possiedi of Montclair State College and Anne Conrad, soprano.

"The program will conclude with a reception.

*Boccaccio comes home to the Middle Ages at last in the forthcoming Tenth Annual Conference on Medieval Studies sponsored by the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, May 5, 6, 7, 1975. Session 71, "Boccaccio," will meet in Room 110 under the chairmanship of Christopher Kleinhenz of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Papers to be given are: "Boccaccio and Medieval Italian Art," by Paul F. Watson, University of Pennsylvania; "Foolish Love in Boccaccio's Filostrato", by Michael Harry Blechner of the University of Tulsa; "Philology and Misogyny in the Female Portraits of Boccaccio's Filocolo," by Rose T. Antosiewicz of the University of New Hampshire; and "Boccaccio's Wise Innocents," by Bernadette Marie Mc Coy of Adelphi University, Garden City, New York.*