



# newsletter Boccaccio

"studium fuit alma poesis"



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## Officers:

Marilyn Migiel, Cornell University, President  
Michael Papio, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Vice President  
Eugenio Giusti, Vassar College, Treasurer  
Elsa Filosa, Vanderbilt University, Secretary-Newsletter Editor



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## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING, 2010

(Professor Michael Papio)

The annual meeting of the American Boccaccio Association was called to order at 8:30am on May 1, 2010, in room 804 of the UMass Conference Center during the *2010 International Boccaccio Conference*, held in Amherst, MA, with Vice President Michael Papio presiding.

After the room had filled with an unprecedented number of the ABA's members, there was a review and demonstration of the new ABA web site (<http://www.ABAonline.us>). There then followed a general discussion of the possibility of the Association being officially registered as a non-profit organization, which would allow for dues and donations to be tax exempt. Prof. Eugenio Giusti agreed to speak with a tax specialist and to report back to the Association on his progress. The group additionally debated the proposal to re-establish a regional representational structure as the Association had had in the past, but it was generally agreed that email and an Internet presence obviated the need for this sort of information dissemination among its members. The next order of business had to do with the potential creation of an official graduate student caucus, which was approved in short order. Association members will be updated as this project progresses. At that point, the assembly was informed that the Association's bylaws were in serious need of updating and improvement. The current officers were given the task of revising them and, once the new version has been drafted, presenting these revisions to the membership for discussion and approval.

The meeting's order of the day passed on then to information regarding the Association's presence at MLA conventions. Prof. Marilyn Migiel explained the difficulties recently encountered in the scheduling of two sessions in Los Angeles. While the official meeting of the ABA will continue to be held at the MLA, it seems increasingly difficult to get approval for an additional ABA-sponsored session. It was consequently decided that, when MLA organizers approve only one session, that panel would host the annual meeting together with the open session. Otherwise, the *lectura Boccaccii* will continue at the MLA and at other venues as well. In fact, there will be a *lectura* at the 2011 AAIS convention in the spring.

Rhiannon Daniels and Dino Cervigni then spoke to the assembly about their plans for 2013 (details below) and Prof. Migiel presented a thoughtful token of appreciation in recognition of "outstanding service" to Elsa Filosa and Michael Papio, who would like to take this opportunity to express their thanks once again for the Association's generosity. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30am.



## UPCOMING ABA ELECTIONS

(Professor Marilyn Migiel)

Dear members of the American Boccaccio Association,

As you may know, the current officers' three-year term will come to a close during the spring of 2011. Consequently, the Association must begin its regular task of preparing the slate for the next round of candidates. The ABA's bylaws explain that the election process must begin with the establishment of a Nominating Committee, whose task it will be to identify ABA members who would like to throw their hats in the ring for the upcoming election.

The establishment of the nominating committee will be carried out in the following manner: any current member of the ABA may suggest another (or him/herself) for this task by January 10, 2011 by sending a name via email to ABA Secretary Elsa Filosa (elsa.filosa@vanderbilt.edu). Elsa Filosa, in consultation with the other ABA officers, will then prepare an e-ballot so that ABA members can vote for three members of the Nominating Committee; this e-ballot will be due back to her on January 25, 2011. Those who receive the most votes will serve as the nominating committee and will work together to determine which names will appear on the actual election ballot for ABA President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Please send your suggested names for members of the Nominating Committee to Professor Elsa Filosa (elsa.filosa@vanderbilt.edu) by 5 pm on Monday, January 10, 2011.

Cordially, and with best wishes for the holidays,

Marilyn Migiel  
President, American Boccaccio  
Association



## GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Rather than comment on what you probably already know about the numerous 2010 activities of the American Boccaccio Association, I thought I would close out this year by reflecting briefly on my most recent experience of teaching the *Decameron* to first-year Cornell University students, in my fall 2010 "The Craft of Storytelling: The *Decameron*."

The world we live in requires that we be able to grasp and describe subtle complexities, situations that are not black and white, and evidence that is ambiguous and even inconsistent. That is one of the main reasons that I teach the *Decameron* – and specifically *writing about the Decameron* – to students who

are in their first year at the university. Granted, Boccaccio doesn't have a monopoly on complexity and ambiguity, but the manageable brevity of many of *Decameron's* novellas, combined with their ability to hold the students' interest, gives Boccaccio an edge.

As my students discover the pleasures and the frustrations of reading the *Decameron*, I too get to rediscover these pleasures and frustrations. Sometimes I see students arriving, on their own or with some guidance, at conclusions that have been held by Boccaccio scholars; sometimes I see students setting out in directions I myself wouldn't have foreseen. Engaging students as they respond to the *Decameron* allows me to see in an ever new light what this literary masterpiece offers us.

As I have reflected on the course overall, three persistent lines of questioning from the students struck me as worth sharing. I offer them here below.

First of all, *Is there any way to know what Giovanni Boccaccio thought?* And what is the relationship between the *Decameron's* Author (what some people call the Primary Narrator and what some of us began to call the "Proxy Author") and the man named Giovanni Boccaccio? Maria Stanciu, a first-year architecture student steeped in film and music culture, expressed some frustration with the refusal to take responsibility, comparing Boccaccio with his proxy Author to Beyoncé and Sasha Fierce. (When I wrinkled my brow at the thought of how Boccaccio might respond to being compared to Beyoncé, a couple of young men in the class countered that they thought Boccaccio would say, "Sweet!") Maria, however, continued to grapple with this issue, and made it the focus of her final paper entitled "Boccaccio and the Spinning Top," in which she compared the *mise en abyme* in the *Decameron* to the *mise en abyme* in Christopher Nolan's 2010 film *Inception*. Here is how her paper began:

Boccaccio wrote that the author said that Filomena said that Melchizedek told the story of the three rings. Of course, Boccaccio may very well be "the author," Filomena may or may not reflect Boccaccio's views on Melchizedek's wit, and the story of the three rings could possibly reflect...either Boccaccio, the author, Filomena, or Melchizedek's [views about religion]. Boccaccio scholars have it tough.

I admit that I will now no longer be able to read *Decameron* I.3, the so-called novella of the three rings, without thinking of Maria stating, with her characteristic irreverent wit, that we Boccaccio scholars have it tough.

Second: *Why didn't Boccaccio just tell us what we should think about what is right and what is wrong?* As people in the field of Boccaccio studies may be aware, I have some ideas about this. On principle, however, I allow first-year students to struggle with this question. Kelsey Harrington, a first-year student in the College of Engineering, chose to write a final paper on the stories in which characters act very foolishly and still benefit. Why, she wondered, would Boccaccio have included such stories? What possible benefit could these stories offer to his readers? After reviewing a selection of such stories (including II.3, V.8, V.9, VIII.10 and X.10), Kelsey argued that the purpose of these stories was to show that "people do not always suffer consequences due to their actions.

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Therefore, people do not always learn from their mistakes.” (Upon reading this, I realized that while I know this about life, I had not specifically linked this insight to an understanding of the *Decameron*.) Kelsey concluded that, in her view,

Giovanni Boccaccio put these stories in to expose the uncertainty between what is right and wrong. There is not a clean cut line between the two and he wanted to make this apparent to his readers. I also believe that he wanted to teach them how to deal with this uncertainty and decide for themselves what they should and should not do.

And third: *What view of women does the Decameron offer?* Here, for sure, Boccaccio scholars will know that I have a few ideas about this. Once again, on principle, I allow first-year students to struggle with this question. The struggle was illustrated in the contrast between two students’ responses to the assignment I gave them about a month into the semester: to communicate an insight about the *Decameron* not in a standard academic essay but in a “creative” way. (I offered them James Brundage’s “Figure 4.1: The sexual decision-making process according to the penitentials,” on p. 162 of his *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*, as one possible model for such a response.). Shaniqua Johnson, a first-year student in Arts & Sciences, produced a cover of *Cosmopolitan* (Italian Renaissance *Decameron* edition), with plugs like “Corrupt nunnery: little monks and nuns... are they HIS?” and “Don’t know how to put the devil back in hell? COSMO will help!!” and “Martha Stewart’s aka Lisabetta’s Gardening tips: Decapitated head acts as good fertilizer for basil.” Joseph (“Jay”) Edwards, a first-year student in Agriculture and Life Sciences (Applied Economics and Management), produced the instructions for “The Game of Life – For Women in the *Decameron*,” where “From Ages Birth to Death” the Object is “To protect your honor throughout your life.” Here are a few of my favorite excerpts (unfortunately without the appropriate graphics):

#### HONOR

The people control how much honor each woman has.

The honor that each would has at the start of her life is dependent on her class.

#### HAVE AN AFFAIR

Whenever you land on a “Have an Affair” space, take a Life Challenge Tile. If you do not have wisdom, you will lose your honor as a result of your inability to successfully hide your love. If you choose a jealous husband, your game is over.

#### VERBAL PLEASANTRY

If you are without wisdom, but find yourself with a Life Challenge Tile, you may hope for a clever retort. This verbal pleasantry will allow for you to preserve your honor.

#### HOW TO WIN

For Women in the *Decameron*, there is no winning the Game of Life, there is only holding onto your honor throughout life.

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In combination, Shaniqua and Jay's creative responses capture the tension in the *Decameron* between women "naughty" and "nice." The *Decameron* in genealogical relation to *Cosmo* – who would have thought! (Well, maybe Boccaccio when he wrote to Mainardo Cavalcanti about his *nugae*.) And as for that striving for honor in the *Decameron*, that seems to me true. I do hope the options for women winning the Game of Life have gotten a bit better since 1348, though in my more pessimistic moments I have some doubts. I will have to remember to wish not only for more wisdom but for more clever retorts.

I highlighted only a few students' responses here, but I would add that each and every one of my 17 students made worthy contributions and expanded my sense of what is interesting and important about the *Decameron*. I thank them for that.

As strange as this might sound, I also thank Boccaccio, who wrote such wonderful things that offer us the opportunity to engage in discussions about questions that matter to us, including questions about responsibility, about right and wrong, and about how we live our interpersonal relations. Although it was tremendously hard work, I had a magnificent time thinking and writing and talking about Boccaccio's writing in recent months, and I wish for all of you, my colleagues, similarly engaging and productive experiences.

Marilyn Migiel  
President, American Boccaccio Association



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## TOWARD 2013 – BOCCACCIO’S CENTENARY

Though the seventh centenary of Boccaccio’s birth is still three years off, preparations have already begun in several nations.

In **Brazil**, scholars will pay homage to Boccaccio at the Universidade de São Paulo. For further information, contact Professor Doris Cavallari (doriscavallari@gmail.com).

In the **United Kingdom**, Professor Stephen Milner, Dr. Guyda Armstrong (both of the University of Manchester) and Dr. Rhiannon Daniels (University of Leeds) are organizing an international conference and exhibition at the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. More details offered below.

In **Italy**, The Dipartimento di Italianistica of the Università degli Studi di Bologna organized its own celebration around a conference entitled “Verso il VII centenario. Modelli medievali, riscritture e interpretazioni del Boccaccio volgare.” The program is proposed below.

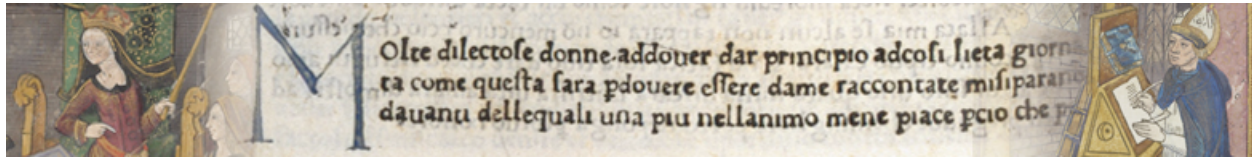
In the **United States of America**, there are already two projects currently under development.

The Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CEMERS) at SUNY Binghamton is planning to dedicate the 2013 CEMERS conference to Boccaccio. For more information, please contact Professor Dana Stewart: [stewart@binghamton.edu](mailto:stewart@binghamton.edu).

Professor Dino Cervigni will dedicate the 2013 volume of *Annali d’Italianistica* to Boccaccio. See the call for papers below.

Additionally, the American Boccaccio Association will organize a conference for 2013, but we are waiting for the Spring 2011 elections to find out which officers will take care of it! In the meantime, The 2010 International Boccaccio Conference broke the ice! (For the program, please, scroll down.)

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## LOCATING BOCCACCIO IN 2013 (A Conference in the UK)

Boccaccio's seven-hundredth birthday will be celebrated in the UK with an international conference and exhibition at the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, organized by Professor Stephen Milner and Dr. Guyda Armstrong (University of Manchester), and Dr. Rhiannon Daniels (University of Leeds).

Through these events we hope to problematize the current field of Boccaccio studies, and the historical figure of Boccaccio himself, by locating — in the sense of both situating and seeking — Boccaccio temporally (in 2013 and in the past), materially (in the forms of his writings and their subsequent incarnations), geographically (within Italy and beyond), and critically. Particular issues we will explore include his status in relation to Dante and Petrarch, the current interest in reception history, the way in which Boccaccio is taught, and his appeal to female scholars and those interested in gender studies.

The exhibition will run from 11 July to 24 November 2013 and will highlight the range of texts written by Boccaccio as well as the peculiarities of his publishing history, by showcasing the extraordinary number of printed books relating to Boccaccio held in the Rylands library. In addition, we will also be stimulating new and dynamic responses to Boccaccio via an artists' books project. These contemporary books will also be displayed in the exhibition alongside printed editions dating from the fifteenth century onwards. We hope that these events will bring new audiences to Boccaccio, drawn from the academic and artistic communities, as well as the general public.

The conference will coincide with the opening of the exhibition and include hands-on workshops and master classes. The organizers are also editing the forthcoming Cambridge Companion to Boccaccio, which will be published to coincide with the anniversary year.

A formal call for papers will be issued in 2012. In the meantime, you can keep up to date with developments in our plans through our blog, or contact us for further information via email:

<http://locatingboccaccio.wordpress.com/>

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**VERSO IL VII CENTENARIO.  
MODELLI MEDIEVALI, RISCITTURE E INTERPRETAZIONE  
DEL BOCCACCIO VOLGARE**

Bologna, 19-20 novembre 2010  
Scuola Superiore di Studi Umanistici – Via Marsala 26  
Biblioteca del Dipartimento di Italianistica – Via Zamboni 32  
**Venerdì 19 novembre**

**Ore 9,30 - Prima sessione**

**Università di Bologna, Scuola Superiore di Studi Umanistici, Via Marsala 26**

Gian Mario Anselmi (Università di Bologna)

*Introduzione ai lavori*

Lucia Battaglia Ricci (Università di Pisa)

*Boccaccio e i modelli narrativi medievali*

Giuseppina Brunetti (Università di Bologna)

*«Franceschi e provenzali» per le mani di Boccaccio*

Jason Houston (University of Oklahoma)

*Boccaccio politico, uomo di vetro*

Giorgio Forni (Università di Messina)

*Dante e la struttura del «Decameron»*



**Ore 15 – Seconda sessione**

**Università di Bologna, Scuola Superiore di Studi Umanistici, Via Marsala 26**

Franco Cardini (Università di Firenze)

*Il «Decameron» nella preistoria dell'orientalismo*

Anna Pegoretti (Università di Pisa)

*«Di che paese se' tu di Ponente?» («Decameron» X, 9). Cartografie boccacciane*

Giuseppe Ledda (Università di Bologna)

*Retoriche dell'ineffabile da Dante a Boccaccio*

Sebastiana Nobili (Università di Bologna – Sede di Ravenna)

*«Forse / tu non pensavi ch'io loico fossi!». Boccaccio e l'eredità della Scolastica*

Nicolò Maldina (Università di Pisa)

*Retoriche e modelli della predicazione medievale nel «Corbaccio»*

**Sabato 20 novembre****Ore 9 - Terza sessione**

**Università di Bologna, Biblioteca del Dipartimento di Italianistica,  
Via Zamboni 32**

Manlio Pastore Stocchi (Università di Padova)  
*La femminilità tra quotidiano e dimensione eroica*

Elisa Curti (Università di Bologna)  
*Memoria boccacciana negli "Innamoramenti" tra Quattro e Cinquecento*

Elisabetta Menetti (Università di Modena-Reggio)  
*Da Boccaccio a Bandello: verità e finzione nel racconto novellistico*

Silvia Contarini (Università di Udine)  
*André Jolles lettore del «Decameron»*

Carlo Delcorno (Università di Bologna)  
*Conclusioni*

**CALL FOR PAPERS****BOCCACCIO THE PARODIST: THE *DECAMERON* AND THE PRACTICE OF IRONY/PARODY**

Time and again Boccaccio scholars mention that the *Decameron's* title is patterned after early Christian and medieval writings on the creation, such as St. Ambrose's *Hexaameron*. For instance, in making this suggestion in a footnote of his *Decameron* edition, Vittore Branca suggests the possible parodic implications of Boccaccio's title, which is obviously patterned after St. Ambrose's *Hexaameron*; he does so, however, somewhat timidly, within parentheses, and followed by a question mark ("forse anche parodisticamente?" 3n1).

More recently several critics (Delcorno 1995; Kircher 2001) have emphasized the role of irony/parody in Boccaccio's tales. In pointing out a crisis not just in the *exemplum* tradition but also in medieval life, Boccaccio subverts exemplary tales, hagiographic stories, and even sacred myths in order to show the decadence of his world (mostly in *Decameron* 1-9) in an attempt to recreate a new society, through the life of the *brigata* and in *Decameron* 10, which he places outside, but not against, the religious medieval view of human life as a pilgrimage toward God (Dante; Petrarch). Boccaccio's *Decameron* may thus be viewed as the first truly secular attempt at recreating human life within secular and humanistic boundaries.

*Annali d'italianistica* plans to devote its 2013 volume to this topic. Prospective contributors are invited to contact Dino Cervigni at: [cervigni@unc.edu](mailto:cervigni@unc.edu).



## THE 2010 INTERNATIONAL BOCCACCIO CONFERENCE

On April 30, the ABA opened one of the largest gatherings of Boccaccio scholars ever to take place in North America. Selected proceedings will be published by Longo Editore in 2011. The keynote papers included:

Pier Massimo Forni, Professor at the Johns Hopkins University  
 “Dante and Boccaccio: Mythographers of Modernity”

Renzo Bragantini, Professor at Università di Roma “La Sapienza,” Italy  
 “L’ordine dei racconti e il libro: variazioni e corrispondenze nel *Decameron*”

Victoria Kirkham, Professor at the University of Pennsylvania  
 “*The Cook’s Decameron*, or, Boccaccio to the Rescue of the Dull British Diet”

Giuseppe Velli, Professor Emeritus at Università degli Studi di Milano  
 “Giovanni Boccaccio centonatore / ricreatore o dell’uso libero della parola scritta”



Prof. Velli delivering the conference’s final paper

The regular session papers:

Session: Boccaccio the Mythographer. Chair: Peter Carravetta, Alfonse M. D’Amato  
 Professor at SUNY Stony Brook

Tobias Foster Gittes, Associate Professor at Concordia University, Canada  
 “*Versa in celum radice*’: Reassessing the Inverted Trees of Boccaccio’s *Genealogie*”

David Lummus, Assistant Professor at Yale University  
 “Boccaccio, Ethnographer? The Example of Mercury in the *Genealogie deorum gentilium*”

Michael Papio, Associate Professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst  
 “Boccaccio: Mythographer, Philosopher, Theologian”

Session: Beneath the *Decameron*’s Surface. Chair: Sara Maddox, Professor Emerita at University of Massachusetts Amherst

Dino Cervigni, Professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
 “The *Decameron*’s Ten Beginnings and Concluding Narratives: Parodying *Genesis* 1, The *Hexameron* and Saint Benedict’s *Regula*”

Filippo Andrei, Ph.D. candidate at University of California Berkeley  
 “Natural Law and Natural Reason in the *Decameron*”

Laurie Shepard, Associate Professor at Boston College  
 “Guido Cavalcanti among the Tombstones”

Session: Boccaccio’s Fortune. Chair: Karina Attar, Assistant Professor at Queens College, CUNY

Roberto Fedi, Professor at the Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Italy  
 “Agnizioni di lettura (*Decameron* VII.5)”

Diana C. Silverman, Adjunct Assistant Professor at Pace University  
 “Bianca de’ Rossi: Giuseppe Betussi’s Cinquecento *Addendum* to Giovanni Boccaccio’s *De mulieribus claris* and the Medieval Veneto”

Silvia Byer, Assistant Professor at Park University  
 “Re-reading Boccaccio’s *Decameron* in María de Zayas’ *Novelas*”

Session: Boccaccio: One or Two?. Chair: Janet Smarr, Professor at the University of California San Diego

Jason Houston, Assistant Professor at University of Oklahoma  
 “Boccaccio’s Dante: A Monument to Vernacular Humanism” (read in Houston’s absence by Janet Smarr)

Cristina Ríos, Ph.D. candidate at University of Leeds, UK  
 “Opposing Symbols of Culture: Maria d’Aquino and Ilario in the *Filocolo*”

Martin Eisner, Assistant Professor at Duke University  
 “A Singular Boccaccio”

Session: The *Decameron* and the Critics. Chair: Kristina Olson, Assistant Professor at George Mason University

Marilyn Migiel, Professor at Cornell University  
 “Some Restrictions Apply: Testing the Reader in *Decameron* III.8”

Rhiannon Daniels, British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow at University of Leeds, UK  
 “Rethinking the Critical History of the *Decameron*: Boccaccio’s Epistle XXII to Mainardo Cavalcanti”

Peter Carravetta, Alfonse M. D’Amato Professor at SUNY Stony Brook  
 “Boccaccio and the Hermeneutics of Language”

Session: Marriage in the *Decameron*. Chair: Marilyn Migiel, Professor at Cornell University

Brandon Essary, Ph.D. candidate at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
 “Religious Parody and the Economy of Significance in *Decameron* Day Five”

Vanessa Paradisi, MA candidate at Boston College  
 “Il matrimonio come simbolo della degradazione sociale: analisi della novella decameroniana”

Session: Goslings in the *Decameron*. Chair: Elizabeth Mazzocco, Five College Professor

at University of Massachusetts Amherst

Regina Psaki, Professor at the University of Oregon

“Giving Them the Bird in the *Novellino*, the *Decameron* and the *Corbaccio*”

Warren Ginsberg, Knight Professor of the Humanities at the University of Oregon

“*Elle si chiamano papere*: Filippo Balducci, Walter Benjamin, *prencipe Galeotto*: Intra-Lingual Translation and the *Decameron*”

Session: Boccaccio and Dante. Chair: Michael Papio, Associate Professor at University of Massachusetts Amherst

Christopher Kleinhenz, Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, Madison

“A Nose for Style: Olfactory Sensitivity in Dante and Boccaccio”

Beatrice Arduini, Assistant Professor at Tulane University

“Il ruolo di Boccaccio nella tradizione del *Convivio*”

Todd Boli, independent scholar

“Boccaccio’s Biography, Dante’s Biography, and How They Intersected”

Session: Artificial Geography in the *Decameron*. Chair: Simone Marchesi, Associate Professor at Princeton University

Troy Tower, Ph.D. candidate at Johns Hopkins University

“Landscapes in Frames: Geography and Boccaccio’s Macrotexts”

Tania Zampini, Ph.D. candidate at Johns Hopkins University

“Urban Landscapes: Simultaneous Symbolism and the Case of the (Sub)urban Pastoral in the *Decameron*”

Chris Geekie, Ph.D. candidate at Johns Hopkins University

“Boccaccio’s *Uomo di Mondo*: The Transformative Power of the City in the *Decameron*”

Session: Boccaccio in the *Questione della lingua*. Chair: Angelo Mazzocco, Professor Emeritus at Mount Holyoke College

James Kriesel, Sorin Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Notre Dame

“Bembo’s Poetic Correction of Boccaccio”

Marco Gargiulo, Associate Professor at the University of Bergen, Norway

“Giovanni Boccaccio e Leonardo Salviati nella *Questione della lingua*”

Session: Boccaccio Editor. Chair: Francesco Ciabattini, Assistant Professor at Dalhousie University, Canada

H. Wayne Storey

“Boccaccio at Work, Copying and Editing Genre”

Jelena Todorovic, Assistant Professor at University of Wisconsin, Madison

“Correcting Dante: the *Vita Nova* in Giovanni Boccaccio’s Hand”

Matteo Benassi, Ph.D. candidate at Rutgers University

“Una misteriosa presenza: *Donna mi priega* di Guido Cavalcanti nel ms. Chigiano L. V. 176 di Boccaccio tra ripensamenti e cambiamenti di progetto”

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Session: Boccaccio and the Revival of Classical Values. Chair: Eugenio Giusti, Associate Professor at Vassar College

Michaela Paasche Grudin, Professor Emerita at Lewis and Clark College  
“Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and the Ciceronian Renaissance”

Michael Sherberg, Associate Professor at Washington University in Saint Louis  
“Where Friendship leads in the *Decameron*”

Chelsea A. Pomponio, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania  
“Exemplary Behavior: Lucretia and Civic Sacrifice in the *De mulieribus claris*”

Session: Music in the *Decameron*. Chair: Roberto Ludovico, Assistant Professor at University of Massachusetts Amherst

Marco Cerocchi, Assistant Professor at La Salle University  
“La ‘colonna sonora’ del *Decameron*”

Francesco Ciabattini, Assistant Professor at Dalhousie University, Canada  
“Musica sacra e secolare nel *Decameron*”

Session: Boccaccio Glossatore. Chair: Elsa Filosa, Senior Lecturer at Vanderbilt University

Susanna Barsella, Assistant Professor at Fordham University  
“Ambrosiano A 204 Inf.: i marginalia di Boccaccio sull’*Etica* di Aristotele”

Igor Candido, Ph.D. candidate at Johns Hopkins University  
“Apuleio nel *Teseida* e nella *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*”

Many thanks to Professor Michael Papio, who found the sponsors to make all this possible: The UMass Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures • the Italian Language Inter-Cultural Alliance • the UMass College of Humanities and Fine Arts • the UMass Graduate School • the UMass French & Italian Studies Unit • the Five College Medieval Studies Seminar • the Five College Italian Studies Seminar • The American Boccaccio Association and *Heliotropia*, its official journal.



## UPDATE ON LECTURAE BOCCACCHII 4 (Professor Michael Sherberg)

Volume four of the *Lecturae Boccacchii* is currently underway and will be edited by Michael Sherberg, Associate Professor at the University of Washington University in Saint Louis.

The volume collects close-readings of each of the ten tales. After an introduction by Tim Kircher, the contributions at the moment are assigned as follow:

Introduction. Timothy Kircher, Guilford College

1. Tobias Gittes, Concordia University
3. Michael Papio, University of Massachusetts at Amherst
5. Kristina Olson, George Mason University
6. Regina Psaki, University of Oregon
7. Suzanne Magnanini, University of Colorado at Boulder
8. Annelise Brody, Washington University
9. Eugenio Giusti, Vassar College
10. Fabian Alfie, University of Arizona

Professor Sherberg is still looking for readers for the second story (Frate Alberto) and the forth (Gerbino). If you are interested in collaborating, please contact him at [sherberg@wustl.edu](mailto:sherberg@wustl.edu).

Tobias Gittes has already delivered his reading of the first story at the American Association of Italian Studies meeting in 2009, and the 2011 AAIS, which will take place in Pittsburgh from April 7 to 10, will feature two *lecturae*: one by Kristina Olson (IV.5) and the other by Fabian Alfie (IV.10). We'll keep you posted as additional readings are scheduled.

The publication of the *Lectura Boccacchii* series began in 2003 with volume one edited by Elissa Weaver for the University of Toronto Press. Volume two is currently in preparation by Professor Victoria Kirkham, and volume three, edited by Francesco Ciabattini and Pier Massimo Forni is under review by the Toronto University Press.



AMERICAN BOCCACCIO ASSOCIATION WEBSITE  
<http://www.abaonline.us>

In our last Newsletter (Spring 2010), it was our pleasure to announce the launch of the new American Boccaccio Association website that can be found at: <http://www.abaonline.us>.

The creation of the website was born from the necessity to create a virtual space for the collection of materials and information regarding the Association

from its origin to the present.

As a result of your feedback, we introduced a search engine to facilitate the consultation of past bibliographies and Newsletters. We also added links to *Casa del Boccaccio*, according to your suggestions. Please, let us know if you have other precious advice for improving this helpful resource! Feel free to

contact Michael Papio at papio@hfa.umass.edu

Unfortunately, we are still struggling to recreate part of the Association's initial history, which is still blurred and some questions about the origins of the ABA are still open: Who, precisely, were the founders of the American Boccaccio Association? Who compiled the first two Newsletters? Who was present at the Cafeteria of the Library of Congress on April 10, 1974?

Anyone who can offer even partial answers to these questions is warmly invited to contact Elsa Filosa in order to help fill these gaps in the Association's history:

elsa.filosa@vanderbilt.edu.

The website offers also a page on the **activities** of the ABA that is always up

to date.

We remind our members that the activities of the ABA are several. The ABA sponsors sessions on Boccaccio at major conferences, including those of the AAIS and the ICMS in Kalamazoo, MI. The ABA also sponsors the open session on Boccaccio and the *Lectura Boccaccii* at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, where the association holds its annual meeting for members. The ABA's official publication is *Heliotropia*, a peer-reviewed open-access journal edited by Prof. Michael Papio, that publishes articles and reviews. The ABA Newsletter is published twice a year and contains a wealth of information that is of interest to Boccaccio scholars.



### NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

**Eleonora Beck**, Professor at Lewis & Clark College, and her colleagues have received a grant from the Mellon Faculty Development Program for their initiative called "New Directions in Medieval Studies." Beck will explore the topic of music and "spiriti" in the *Decameron*.

**Roberta Morosini**, Associate Professor at Wake Forest University, published *Boccaccio Geografo: Un viaggio nel Mediterraneo tra le città, i giardini e il*

*«mondo» di Giovanni Boccaccio*. She was also interviewed by RAI 3, regione Toscana, in conjunction with the volume's debut. The book contains essays by several of our members: Janet Levarie Smarr "Altre razze ed altri spazi nel *Decameron*"; Roberta Morosini "Napoli: spazi rappresentativi della memoria"; Theodore J. Cachey "Petrarca, Boccaccio e le Isole Fortunate. *Lo sguardo antropologico*."





## GRADUATE LIST-SERVE AND CAUCUS

We are pleased to announce a new list-serve, organized by Anna Strowe (PhD candidate at the University of Massachusetts Amherst), which is open to graduate student members of the American Boccaccio Association. The group's membership will be limited to ABA members at large, but the content will be mainly geared towards graduate students. We hope to have announcements of graduate conferences and panels, as well as room and ride-sharing exchanges for professional events. As this list-serve will eventually be the forum for discussions about the structure and goals of the Graduate Caucus, we ask that all graduate students in the ABA sign up for it.

To sign up, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/abagrad/> and click on the button "Join This Group" (mid-upper right side). Your request will be sent to the moderator for approval. Along with the list-serve, we also have a Graduate Caucus Facebook group whose membership is not restricted:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/edit.php?gid=331822771225>



## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

The **Modern Languages Association Convention** will take place January 6-9, 2011, in Los Angeles. The ABA is sponsoring an open session and the *Lectura Boccaccii*. The open session will be chaired by Michael Papio (University of Massachusetts), vice-president of the ABA, and will be held on Thursday, 6 January from 1:45 to 3:00 pm in room 402B of the LA Convention Center; the papers delivered will be the following:

1. Olivia Holmes (Binghamton University), "Boccaccio and (the End of) Exemplarity"
2. Susan Noakes and Rachel Gibson (University of Minnesota) "The Historicity of the *Decameron*?: Trade Routes."
3. Kyle David Anderson (Centre College), "Boccaccio's Chinese Afterlives."

The *Lectura Boccaccii* will be held on

Friday, 7 January, from 5:15 to 6:30 pm in room 306B of the LA Convention Center. Martin Eisner (Duke University) will speak on *Decameron* III.8.

David Lummus (Yale University) will deliver a paper entitled "Boccaccio's Three Venuses" for the session *Transgressive Love in Medieval and Renaissance Italian Literature* organized by the Division on Medieval and Renaissance Italian Literature. The session will be chaired by Maria Galli Stampino (Univ. of Miami) and will be held on Sunday, 9 January, from 8:30 to 9:45 am in room 402B of LA Convention Center.

**The Renaissance Society of America** Conference will be held in Montreal, Quebec Canada on 24-26 March, 2011. Two sessions are of interests of Boccac-

cio's friends. The first is "Boccaccio's Three Rings and Hermeneutic Circles: Theoretical and Practical Approaches to *Decameron* I.3," scheduled for Friday, March 25, from 8:45 to 10:15 am, organized by Marilyn Migiel (Cornell University) and chaired by Tobias Foster Gittes (Concordia University). The papers to be delivered are:

1. Marilyn Migiel (Cornell University), "Running Rings around the Reader"
2. Hannah Wojciehowski (Univ. of Texas, Austin), "Three Little Hermeneutic Circles and How They Grew: Reading Boccaccio's Parable of the Rings through the Religions of the Book"

The other session is *The New Prometheus: Boccaccio's Mythopoietic Humanism* scheduled for Friday, March 25, from 10:30am to 12:00pm, organized by Susanna Barsella (Fordham University) and Angela Capodivacca (Yale University) and chaired by Giuseppe Mazzotta (Yale University). The papers to be delivered are:

1. Elsa Filosa (Vanderbilt University), "From Classical to Pre-Humanistic Myth: Goddesses and Women in Boccaccio's *De mulieribus Claris*"
2. Tobias Foster Gittes (Concordia University), "Go down Moses' (and Joseph too): Boccaccio's Revision of Hebrew Myth"
3. Jason Houston (University of Oklahoma), "Boccaccio's Maecenas: Poetics, Politics, and Patronage in the Italian Trecento"
4. Aileen Feng (University of Arizona),

"Exemplarity and Mythology in Quattrocento Female Epistolary"

The **American Association for Italian Studies** is held at the University of Pittsburgh on April 7-9, 2011. In this occasion, two *Lecturae Boccaccii* will be delivered:

1. Kristina Olson (George Mason University), "*Decameron* IV.5: Dangerous caput-alisms: Honor and the Merchant Class in the Tale of Lisabetta and the Pot of Basil (*Decameron* IV.5)."
2. Fabian Alfie (University of Arizona), "Happy Endings: *Decameron* IV.10."

**The International Congress on medieval Studies at Kalamazoo** will take place on May 12-15, 2011. The ABA is sponsoring an open session (date and time TBA). The papers delivered will be the follow:

1. Jon Solomon (University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign), "Agamemnon, Phystenes, Harpagiges, and the Theodontian Tradition in Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium*."
2. Meredith Ringel (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), "'Tutto Enfiato': Pushing the Boundaries of Tragedy in the *Decameron's* Day Four, Story Seven."
3. Caitlin Watt (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), "Sex, Love, and Pirates: The Debate about Marriage in *Decameron* 2.10."



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*Center for Renaissance Studies*

## Mellon Summer Institute in Italian Paleography

**July 22 – August 12, 2011**

Director: Maddalena Signorini, Università degli Studi di Roma

This three-week course offers intensive training in the accurate reading and transcription of handwritten Italian vernacular texts from the late medieval through the early modern periods. The instruction is intended to enable scholars in various fields of specialization to acquire the skills to work with primary sources. While the major emphasis is on paleographical skills, the course offers an introduction to materials and techniques, and considers the history of scripts within the larger historical, literary, intellectual, and social contexts of Italy. Participants receive an introduction to a wide range of types of writing and documents from literary to legal, notarial, official, ecclesiastical, business, and family documents. The course offers an overview of the system of Italian archives— public, ecclesiastical, and private. Participants also have the opportunity to work with original texts, using inventories, letters, diaries, and other types of manuscripts and documents in the collections of the Newberry Library.

The institute enrolls fifteen participants. First consideration will be given to advanced graduate students and junior faculty at U.S. colleges and universities, but applications will also be accepted from advanced graduate students and junior faculty at Canadian institutions, from professional staff of U.S. and Canadian libraries and museums, and from qualified independent scholars.

Directing the institute is Maddalena Signorini, associate professor of Latin paleography at the Università degli Studi di Roma “Tor Vergata” and an experienced teacher of Latin and vernacular paleography. She directed similar institutes at the Getty Research Institute in 2007 and 2009. A widely published and distinguished scholar whose own research interests are in Italian vernacular texts and the context of transcription in the late medieval and early Renaissance periods, she has written extensively on Petrarch, the culture of literacy, copyists, and the early moment of the printed book.

**Prerequisite:** The class is taught entirely in Italian; advanced language skills are required.

**Award:** All successful applicants will receive a stipend of \$800; those coming from outside the Chicago region receive additional reimbursement of up to \$2,360 for travel, lodging, and food expenses.

Deadline: **Applications are due March 1, 2011. For application materials, see [www.newberry.org/renaissance/summerprograms.html](http://www.newberry.org/renaissance/summerprograms.html).**

“Il Decamerone” has been made into Opera by the International Opera Theater of Philadelphia. During the Fall of 2010, several events were dedicated to the celebration of Boccaccio’s masterpiece.



September 15-17: First International Opera Competition in Città di Saluzzo, Italy, dedicated to soprano Magda Olivero, born in Città di Saluzzo, now celebrating her 100th birthday <http://www.concorsoliricosaluzzo.org/> Singers for *Decameron* chosen with 52-piece orchestra playing at concert on final day of competition, directed by Maestro Gianmaria Griglio, Artistic Director and Musical Director of the Competition.

September 26: Thin Slicing the *Decameron*. Creating New Italian Operas, a lecture by Karen Saillant at DaVinci Art Alliance, 704 Catherine Street, Philadelphia. Preparing members for exhibition inspired by IOT/ACF *Decameron*. 2-5PM.

September 29: The Art of Creating New Italian Operas Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel 1-3PM, Philadelphia.

September 30: Banned Books-Rosenbach Museum, Karen Saillant reads from *Decameron*. 2008-2010 Delancey Street, Philadelphia.

October 19: Concert at Consulate General of Italy in Philadelphia celebrates Settimana della lingua italiana. Four performers from *Decameron*: present beloved Italian arias from operas such as *La Boheme*, *L'elisir d'amore* and *Tosca*, excerpts from *Decameron* and the world premiere of 3 new operatic pieces composed by Maestro Gianmaria Griglio, set to poems of Italian-American poet Antonio Pisano who lived in Philadelphia during the first half of the 20th century.

October 21: *Decameron* Heroes: Ciappelletto, Maso del Saggio, Prince Tancredi, Nastagio degli Onesti and Marquis di Saluzzo, Ignazio De Simone, baritone, Maestro Gianmaria Griglio - Musical Director of

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IOT, Karen Saillant - Artistic Director of IOT. America-Italy Society 1420 Walnut Street, Suite 310 6-8PM, Philadelphia.

October 29: Italian Words, American Music Center for Italian Studies, University of Pennsylvania. Colloquium with Italian Conductor, Maestro Gianmaria Griglio, Librettist and Stage Director, Karen Saillant and composers Professor Adam Silverman, West Chest University and Professor Thomas Whitman, Swarthmore College.

November 2: International Visitors Council; presentation- Courtyard Marriott 6PM.

November 4: Pasolini film *The Decameron* at Center for Italian Studies UPenn.

November 6 (10:00 – 4:00PM) & November 11: (7:00 - 9:00PM): *The Decameron* In Text, Art and Opera. The Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Rosenbach Library and Museum and International Opera Theater are teaming up to explore Boccaccio's *Decameron* and its time in text, art and song! On Saturday, the workshop will begin at the Rosenbach where professor, Vicki Kirkham will give an overview of the *Decameron*, and Karen Saillant will discuss the creation of the world premiere opera *Decameron*, which will bring an international cast and an Italian conductor to Philadelphia, with music by 7 Philadelphia area composers, then participants will be able to see a first English translation of the *Decameron*, published in 1620 and other related material in the Rosenbach's collection. In the afternoon we will travel to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to explore the Italian Renaissance collections including an exhibition on marriage chests that includes two painted panels based on a tale from the *Decameron* that will be featured in the Opera! The following Thursday evening the group will attend a rehearsal of the Opera.

November 12: Picturing *The Decameron*. Smile Gallery, Philadelphia: DaVinci Art Alliance exhibition of art inspired by IOT/ACF *Decameron*.

In addition, ACF/IOT are collaborating with Drexel University, The University of the Arts, Pinetina Cultural Center and Terranova Wine importers to make *Decameron* opera possible.



### FRIENDLY REMINDERS

The **ABA newsletter** is an invaluable tool for disseminating important information among our members. Please consider sending items of significance, such as notes on work in progress, announcements of general interest and other similar tidbits to Elsa Filosa at [elsa.filosa@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:elsa.filosa@vanderbilt.edu).



Christopher Kleinhenz would similarly appreciate your assistance in his yearly compilation of the **North American Boccaccio Bibliography**. Please send him Boccaccio-related citations so that he may integrate them with his own findings. Email: [ckleinhe@wisc.edu](mailto:ckleinhe@wisc.edu)



**Dues News!!!** If you have not yet paid your annual dues (\$15 regular member / and possibly an eventual donation for the *Lecturae Boccaccii*), please send your check payable to American Boccaccio Association to:

Eugenio Giusti

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Box 314, Vassar College  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604

For your convenience the form is also available on the ABA website: [www.abaonline.us](http://www.abaonline.us)  
If you are unsure about your status, please do not hesitate to contact the treasurer, Professor Eugenio Giusti, by email: [egiusti@vassar.edu](mailto:egiusti@vassar.edu)



*Heliotropia* is seeking reviewers for the following books. Please contact Michael Papio ([papio@hfa.umass.edu](mailto:papio@hfa.umass.edu)) if you are interested in one or more book to review.

- Allegri, Francesca. *Medioevo e Francigena nel Decameron di Giovanni Boccaccio: aneddoti, ricette e curiosità*. Firenze: Federighi, 2008.
- AA.VV. *Ut philosophia poesis: Questions philosophiques dans l'œuvre de Dante, Pétrarque et Boccace*. Joël Biard et Fosca Mariani Zini, eds. Paris: Vrin, 2008.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Boccaccio's Expositions on Dante's Comedy*. Michael Papio, tr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Latin Eclogues*. David R. Slavitt, tr. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *En liten skrift till Dantes lov*. Paul Enoksson, tr. Stockholm: Atlantis, 2009.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Männer und Frauen: Geschichten aus dem Decameron*. Kurt Flasch, tr. München: Fischer, 2005.
- Cerocchi, Marco. *Funzioni semantiche e metatestuali della musica in Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio*. Firenze: Olschki, 2010.
- Falvo Heffernan, Carol. *Comedy in Chaucer and Boccaccio*. Cambridge; Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2009.
- Gambin, Enrica. *Trivia nelle tre corone: i volti di Diana nelle opere di Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio*. Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2009.
- Kocher, Ursula. *Boccaccio und die deutsche Novellistik: Formen der Transposition italienischer 'nouvelle' im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2005.
- Mouchet, Valeria. *Il "bestiario" di un autore trecentesco: repertorio ipertestuale delle occorrenze zoonime nelle opere volgari di Giovanni Boccaccio*. Fregene (Roma): Spolia, 2005.
- Söffner, Jan. *Das Decameron und seine Rahmen des Unlesbaren*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2006.