



newsletter
Boccaccio

"studium fuit alma poesis"



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Message from the President

I hope you have started the year in good form. It is very good to see all the energy and interest in Boccaccio studies. At the recent Renaissance Society of America meeting in Boston, the ABA sponsored five sessions with over fifteen papers by an array of colleagues from around the world. There were additional papers on Boccaccio studies, too, in other sessions. We hope to carry this energy forward, with even greater intensity, to the upcoming triennial ABA conference this fall at Duke University. With the indispensable collaboration from Martin Eisner, we aim in the coming weeks to establish the panels and schedule for the conference. More soon!

We are also grateful for your continued financial support of the Association, as these funds are needed for the expenses of the conference. With the introduction of on-line membership payments to the Association through PayPal, we are weighing a referendum among the membership on whether we can now ask our international (non-U.S.) colleagues to contribute dues as well. We will keep you apprised of this discussion as it moves forward.

Finally, I would like to thank Renzo Bragantini for allowing his published interview to be reprinted here. As you know, we must speak not only to one another, but – ever more pressingly – to new audiences, both inside and outside the academy.

Timothy Kircher,
ABA President



Boccaccio, il Rinascimento “irregolare” e tanto altro.” Intervista con Renzo Bragantini di Johnny Bertolio

Toronto – Emilio Goggio Visiting professor presso il Dipartimento di Italianistica dell’Università di Toronto è stato quest’anno Renzo Bragantini, docente all’Università “La Sapienza” di Roma. Una carriera lunga e articolata, la sua, attraverso varie sedi accademiche in Italia e in Nord America e quasi ogni secolo della letteratura italiana.

Studente e ora ordinario alla “Sapienza”: professor Bragantini, quali sono state le tappe della sua lunga carriera accademica?

«Pur essendo nato a Venezia, a quattro anni mi sono trasferito a Roma con la mia famiglia. Mi sono laureato in Lettere Classiche con una tesi sul latino di Giovanni Pascoli con Ettore Paratore, un personaggio difficile ma che con me è stato gentile, anche in occasione dell’esame biennale, che comprendeva tutto Seneca, tutto Virgilio, inclusa l’*Appendix*, tutto Catullo, tutto il Pascoli latino e tutti i poeti latini del Quattrocento nell’edizione Monti Sabia della Ricciardi; un programma impensabile oggi, per cui ci voleva almeno un anno di studio. Ma il mio latino l’ho imparato lì. Poi ho insegnato 14 anni a Macerata, altri 14 anni a Venezia, poi 5 a Potenza, altri 5 a Udine e gli ultimi 10 (dal 2005 a oggi) alla Sapienza; nel frattempo, la Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia è tornata unica e i dipartimenti sono stati di conseguenza ridotti.»

I suoi interessi di studioso spaziano dal Medioevo al primo Novecento: ce li descrive?

«Qui a Toronto ho tenuto un corso (“Folly, Utopia, World Turned Upside Down in the Early Modern Era”) dedicato al Rinascimento anticlassicistico all’insegna della dismisura e della messa in discussione dei canoni del classicismo cinquecentesco. In Italia, il canone classicistico è tuttora imperante (in un modo che a me pare decisamente fuori tempo massimo) e per questo autori di primissimo piano come Alberti, umanista “irregolare”, o Pietro Aretino sono visti come “scapestrati” piuttosto che provvisti di un’idea diversa di letteratura. Pensi che, per fare un altro nome, Giordano Bruno è molto più studiato nel resto d’Europa, in America, Cina e Giappone che in Italia.»

Quali sono le sue attuali ricerche in corso?

«Negli ultimi tempi, oltre che dei consueti studi medievali e rinascimentali, mi occupo anche dei rapporti tra letteratura e musica, e tra letteratura e arti figurative. Sto inoltre scrivendo (su gentile segnalazione di Giorgio Inglese, che ha fatto il mio nome all’editore Carocci) un libro sul *Decameron*, che non vorrebbe essere un’introduzione generale al capolavoro di Boccaccio, quanto una nuova interpretazione (sollecitata dalla conoscenza delle fonti del testo, e del modo in cui esse vengono nel testo stesso discusse) della morale, sempre rigorosamente implicita, della raccolta. In altre parole, sto tentando un avvicinamento meno caldo, più razionale, per capire i punti di forza e i principi compositivi del libro.»

In una sua recente conferenza a Toronto ha detto che l’Italia dovrebbe avere, rispetto alla morale, un approccio meno boccacesco e più boccacciano: cosa intendeva?

«Affrontare il problema della sessualità all’interno di una valutazione morale dell’eros è un principio a cui il pubblico italiano è mediamente refrattario. Il *Decameron* viene spesso visto come una sorta di manualetto erotico, e questo lo ha impoverito nei secoli e tuttora lo banalizza. Nella decima giornata prevalgono le novelle dedicate all’amicizia, che vince sia sull’amore (alcune delle novelle dell’ultima giornata sono di rinuncia all’amore) sia sugli affetti familiari. Il libro nel suo complesso nasce come dialogo tra sodali assenti o lontani e come restituzione del beneficio a suo tempo ricevuto dagli amici; l’eros è dunque una delle componenti ineliminabili della natura umana accanto ad altre pulsioni, alcune delle quali (è il caso appunto dell’amicizia) sentite come superiori.»

Non è la sua prima volta in città: cosa l’ha conquistata di Toronto?

«Sono in genere molto parco ad esprimere emozioni personali, ma devo proprio dire di essere stato accolto con estrema amichevolezza e generosità. Toronto è una città molto vivibile, bella anche architettonicamente; il fatto che prediliga il freddo e i climi rigidi (sono da sempre amante della montagna) me l’hanno resa piacevole anche in questa stagione. Ho trovato studenti appassionati e assai interessati alla letteratura italiana e non solo, e colleghi con cui c’è profonda stima reciproca. Il sistema bibliotecario è semplicemente sbalorditivo (uno studente di Roma che visitasse queste biblioteche rischierebbe una sindrome di Stendhal in direzione inversa) e permette di lavorare in condizioni invidiabili. Ho potuto mettere a frutto la mia passione musicale alla COC con il “Siegfried” di Wagner – diretto con uno stile per fortuna poco stentoreo, con grande spazio concesso ai cantanti, tutti davvero bravi. In più, ho incontrato un mio ex allievo: l’attuale direttore dell’Istituto italiano di cultura, Alessandro Ruggera. Anni fa ha

sostenuto un esame con me a Venezia, e ritrovarlo mi ha commosso. Insomma, farò di tutto per tornare.»

(reprinted with permission from the *Corriere Canadese*, 1 Marzo 2016)



**The Giuseppe Velli Prize
for the Best Graduate Student Essay on Boccaccio**

**THE AMERICAN BOCCACCIO ASSOCIATION
ANNOUNCES:**

**THE GIUSEPPE VELLI PRIZE
FOR THE BEST GRADUATE STUDENT ESSAY ON BOCCACCIO**

Thanks to the support of an anonymous donor, this year (2016) the *American Boccaccio Association* can continue the annual prize competition for the best graduate student essay on a subject related to the life or works of Giovanni Boccaccio. The Giuseppe Velli Prize of two hundred and fifty dollars will be awarded to the best essay submitted by a graduate student in any American or Canadian University or by anyone not currently enrolled as a graduate student, provided that he or she has received the degree of M.A. or Ph.D. within one year of submission. The winning essay will also be automatically considered for publication in *Heliotropia*. The 2015 winner of the Velli Prize was Grace Delmolino from Columbia University for her essay “Francesca and Filippa: Boccaccio’s Canon-Legal Theory of Consent in *Esposizioni* 5 and *Decameron* 6.7.”

All submissions must be made by email attachment in Word and sent to the secretary of the American Boccaccio Association (jason.houston@ou.edu). No hardcopy submissions will be accepted. The essays should be no longer than 7500 words, including bibliography and other related material. The deadline for submission is 1 July.

The author should provide a cover page (as the first page of the file) containing the author’s name, email, mailing and email addresses, the title of the essay and institutional affiliation. The author’s name should not appear on the essay title page (to follow the cover page) or on any other page of the essay, since the essays are submitted anonymously to the readers. Quotations from Boccaccio’s works should be cited in the original language, and the format of the essay should conform to MLA Style Sheet guidelines.

Submissions will be judged by a committee appointed by the President of the ABA. The committee will consist of a Chair, one member of the ABA executive, and one other member of the ABA. The results will be announced in early autumn and published in the fall issue of the *ABA Newsletter*. While the essays remain the intellectual property of

their authors, the submitted texts will not be returned to them.

The American Boccaccio Association established this annual award in commemoration of the scholarship of Giuseppe Velli. Professor Velli (1928-2013), was a remarkable Boccaccio scholar whose work remains fundamental in Italy and North America to this day. As a young man, he studied at the Scuola Normale di Pisa and elsewhere with the likes of Giorgio Pasquali, Luigi Russo, Alessandro Perosa, Paul Oskar Kristeller, Augusto Campana and Reto Bezzola. Upon the completion of his studies, he spent several years teaching abroad, first holding appointments in Paris and New York before taking an assistant professorship at the University of California Los Angeles and later a post as full professor at Smith College. Afterwards, he returned to Italy where he taught *Letteratura umanistica* at the Università di Macerata, *Letteratura italiana e filologia dantesca* at the Università di Venezia and lastly as professor of Italian literature at the Università degli Studi di Milano. Beginning in the 1980s, he maintained an important presence in the United States as a visiting scholar at UCLA, Johns Hopkins University, the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and Indiana University. Professor Velli's studies ranged widely, but the ABA is particularly appreciative of his work on Boccaccio. His work, including the edition of the *Carmina* for Mondadori's "Tutte le opere" series and his famous volume entitled *Petrarca e Boccaccio. Tradizione · memoria · scrittura* (1995), helped enhance our understanding: the patterns of intertextuality between Boccaccio's works and classical literature; the relationship between Boccaccio and Petrarch; and the *modus operandi* of Boccaccio at his *scriptorium*. Essays on these topics are particularly welcome.



Report From the ABA Treasurer

If you wish to renew your regular, student, or sustaining membership, please visit <http://abaonline.us/membership.html> to submit your 2016 dues, as well as to make a donation to the *Lectura Boccaccii* series, via PayPal. You may also send dues and contributions by mail using the printable form available on the website.

Membership in the American Boccaccio Association costs \$25 per year (\$15 for students). Sustaining memberships of \$40 provide additional resources for the association's activities. Scholars who reside most of the year outside the United States are currently exempt from association dues. Your membership dues enable the Association to support initiatives based upon the ABA's core mission to promote the work of *il nostro* and more generally Trecento studies. To this end, the ABA is a society of collaborative international scholarship through its web presence, scholarly journal, bibliographic efforts, conference panels, and not least its own triennial conference, which will take place again in 2016. These funds enable the Association to maintain and enhance these activities, and contribute to future endeavors to support research and outreach in Boccaccio studies.

Please contact Kristina Olson (kolson4@gmu.edu) with any questions about your membership or to suggest potential members of ABA.



ABA Website Update

The ABA website continues to undergo updates and changes to make it a more useful resource for the membership and others interested in Boccaccio. The website will now be hosted by *ITER* a not-for-profit partnership dedicated to the advancement of learning in the study and teaching of the Middle Ages and Renaissance (400-1700) through the development and distribution of online resources. You will still access our website though the current web address, but the website will now benefit from membership in a shared community of resources for scholars of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. We are grateful to the scholars and staff and *ITER* who have offered us this opportunity.

The newest feature is an entirely online membership form process. Now ABA members can not only pay their annual dues and donate to the *Lectura Boccaccii* series through the Paypal button, but they can also submit a new or renewal membership form online. This saves processing time for ABA members.

Please know that you can always opt to pay your dues and renew your membership through the mail. The online methods are only for convenience and need not be utilized. Other features will be added to the website as the staff at the University of Oklahoma Language Learning Center has time to enhance our website. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome to ABA Secretary Jason Houston (jason.houston@ou.edu).



Sessions Sponsored by the American Boccaccio Association

MLA, Austin, Texas, January, 2016

LECTURA BOCCACCII, Chair and Respondent, Jason Houston

Emilia: What Remains of the Days (IX.9)," Albert Russell Ascoli, Univ. of California, Berkeley



Other Sessions and Conferences on Boccaccio

University of Siena on Dec. 16, 2015:

"La natura dell'arte: Giotto e Cavalcanti tra Dante e Boccaccio, Albert Russell Ascoli, Univ. of California, Berkeley









American Boccaccio Association
 Third Triennial Conference
 Duke University,
 September 30-October 2, 2016

Two travel grants of \$250 each, sponsored by the American Boccaccio Association, are available for graduate students who are currently preparing a thesis or dissertation on Boccaccio and would like to attend the conference. Interested parties should send a letter of application, updated CV, and abstract of thesis or dissertation to ABA secretary Jason Houston by March 31, 2016.

For more information visit:
<http://www.abaonline.us/>

This conference is sponsored by the ABA along with Duke's Department of Romance Studies and Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies.

We invite proposals for papers or panels (in English or Italian) on Boccaccio's life, thought, and works

Please send abstracts of 300 words along with a brief biographical note (100 words max) to Prof. Jason Houston (jason.houston@ou.edu) by March 31, 2016. Selected papers will be published in the conference proceedings. All participants in the conference need to be members of good standing with the Association.

Keynote Speakers

- Corrado Bologna, Professor of Romance Philology, Università di Roma Tre
- Janet Smarr, Professor of Theatre and Dance, University of California, San Diego
- David Wallace, Judith Rodin Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania





Reminders and Announcements



Warren Ginsburg announces the publication of his new book *Tellers, Tales, and Translation in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). More information about the book can be following this link:

<http://www.oupjapan.co.jp/en/node/4053>



Christopher Kleinhenz and Elsa Filosa would similarly appreciate your assistance in their yearly compilation of the **North American Boccaccio Bibliography**. Please send them Boccaccio-related citations so that he may integrate them with his own findings. Email: ckleinhe@wisc.edu; elsa.filosa@vanderbilt.edu.



Reminders and Announcements for the Spring/Summer 2016 newsletter are welcome at any time through September of 2016. Besides publication announcements and conference announcements, we welcome news on fellowships one, innovative teaching initiatives, and successful examples of public outreach related to Boccaccio. Additionally, we will happily consider for publication in the newsletter proposals for short articles on anything related to Boccaccio. Please send all items or proposals for the newsletter to ABA Secretary Jason Houston (houston@gonzaga.edu).

The Pre-Modern Book in a Global Context: Materiality and Visuality

October 21 and 22, 2016

Call for Papers: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Binghamton University

The year 2016 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CEMERS) at Binghamton University; in celebration of fifty years of research in Medieval and Early Modern Studies, CEMERS will host a conference on the materiality and visuality of the pre-modern book (from late antiquity until 1600).



Madrid, Palacio Real, MSS T.I.6. Libro de los juegos, fol. 17v. @Patrimonio Nacional. Used by permission.

The twenty-first century has witnessed the transformation of the study of the history of the book. Technology has given us new methods for the study of papyri, manuscripts, and early printed books: everything from x-rays to DNA analysis now provides data regarding the production and use of the book in the pre-modern era. In addition, digital humanities now allows for the precise capture and reproduction of texts in all their visual specificity as well as the compilation of vast databases for "distant reading." Yet, as any scholar of the book recognizes, these artifacts retain an aura that technology cannot duplicate or fully explain: an encounter with a pre-modern book is an encounter with a textual presence in all its ineffable alterity. The materiality of books is central to a consummate experience of a text, and this quality of ancient, medieval, or early modern textual artifacts is not reproduced even in the most spectacular digital simulacra.

Papers are invited on the materiality and visuality of the book as artifact in a global context. This conference aims to bring together the sub-disciplines currently involved in the history of the book in order to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue. Papers and sessions that synthetically address the current state of the field are especially welcome.

Topics may include:

- The study of the production and circulation of books in the Mediterranean basin and across the Eurasian landmass
- Codicology and the making of books
- Paleography and textual transmission
- The transitions from papyrus to parchment and the scroll to the codex
- The current state of technological analysis
- Visual culture and book illumination
- The book as commodity
- Network theory and the itineraries of textual artifacts
- Geographical locations for the use of paper
- The origins of moveable type and the itinerary of the printing press
- The transition from script to print
- The uses of paper in specific book cultures
- The use of wax tablets
- The history of libraries
- The history of scriptoria
- The transmission of non-textual information (music, maps, etc.) in books

Proposals for sessions are also invited. All papers should be twenty minutes in length. Send abstracts (with a brief cv) to: cemers@binghamton.edu (with subject line "History of the Book").

Deadline: April 15, 2016

For information, contact Marilynn Desmond, Director, CEMERS, mdesmon@binghamton.edu.

