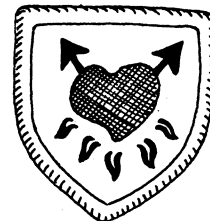


# Newsletter Occaccio



"studium fuit alma poesis"

Vol. 1, No. 1

American Boccaccio Association

Spring, 1974

## Boccaccio Comes to Washington

Long a formless and persistent desire of isolated *Boccaccisti* throughout the country, an American Boccaccio Association came into being during the World Petrarch Congress in Washington on April 10, 1974. The scene and setting was the cafeteria of the Library of Congress, within jubilant shouting distance of the Folger Library, where Vittore Branca would shortly speak on Petrarch and Boccaccio, stressing the power of the disciple to enkindle and rekindle the poetic flames of his laurel-crowned master.

The purpose of the Association was tentatively formulated as "the encouragement of Boccaccio studies among American scholars, regardless of their particular disciplines, through the establishment of a permanent Boccaccio Studies Center, the hosting of an annual Boccaccio Studies Forum, the publication of a semi-annual or quarterly newsletter as a clearing house of information and communication for *Boccaccisti*, and, when funding permits, the sponsoring of a Review of Boccaccio Schol-

arship, containing studies, abstracts, and reviews of pertinent matters."

It was further decided to make arrangements to hold the first general membership meeting of the Association during or immediately following the MLA Convention in New York in December, 1974. At that time the charter of the Association and the constitutions and by-laws will be presented for ratification. The text of the proposed charter and constitutions will be published in the Fall issue of the newsletter to allow for perusal by prospective and enrolled members who will not be able to attend the meeting but who wish to offer comments and suggestions.

Applications for membership should be addressed to:

Professor Joseph C. Reino  
Department of English  
Villanova University  
Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085

## Verrazzano College Will Bridge the Gap

As the World Petrarch Congress gained momentum, the stereotypes in which Petrarch and his Laura are generally cast fell away. A new enthusiasm stirred; new discoveries were made; new questions formed — if not in the minds of the illustrious *Petrarchisti* who crowded to the Congress, at least in the souls of those of us who came eager to listen to them and learn. The flow of interest from Petrarch to his most famous friend and disciple came easily.

Professor Aldo Bernardo, co-ordinator of the Congress, whose inspiring analysis of the meaning of Petrarch's Laura was one of the highlights of the day dedicated to the theme of Petrarch and Literature, not only expressed enthusiasm for the nascent American Boccaccio Association, but also offered the facilities of Verrazzano College for the location of the Boccaccio Studies Center. And so on the day after its birth, the Association had a godfather.

## Boccaccio In Chicago

The Boccaccio Seminar was held on the afternoon of December 27, 1973 at the Conrad Hilton during the Modern Language Convention in Chicago. Joseph C. Reino of Villanova University, who chaired the session, had suggested, as theme, the pervasive but slightly credited influence of Boccaccio on English literature.

The eight papers submitted for discussion were mailed to participants prior to the Seminar. Salient points from each paper are given briefly below.

Howard Cole, Department of English, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois:

"Tradition and Innovation in the *All's Well* Story:

And Let's Begin with Boccaccio's Fairy Tale." The "burlesque intention" and "profound irony" of Neifile's tale of Gillette of Narbonne was appreciated and re-echoed by Shakespeare in the character and success of Helena, the "sanctimonious" and clever heroine of *All's Well that Ends Well*.

Alan Hager, Department of English, University of California at Berkeley:

"Chaucer's Admiration for 'Lollius': Another Look at Chaucer's Adaptation of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*." Although Chaucer demonstrates his high regard for Boccaccio by extensive borrowing, imitation, and "willful mistranslation," the English poet, out of "fondness for

*ironia*" (or "self-irony") "denies openly a well-known debt" as a sort of "in-joke between Chaucer and his audience."

Maureen Fries, Department of English, State University College, Fredonia, New York:

"Boccaccio, Chaucer, and the Concept of Criseyde." Boccaccio's Criseida, "stereotypically female" is presented as a wanton, "sex-linked and not subject to change, the evil temptress," while Chaucer's Criseyde is "stereotypically feminine," "more passive, more tactful, more submissive to the men in her life" and ultimately an instrument for good for Troilus.

Bernadette Marie Mc Coy, 7 Sound Beach Drive, Glen Cove, New York:

"The Three Faces of Venus in Boccaccio's Early Works." Boccaccio presents his threefold concept of love under the changing figure of Venus in his early vernacular works: as poetic principle and *deus ex machina* (literary Venus) in *Caccia di Diana* and *Filocolo*; as destructive concupiscence (moral Venus) in *Filostrato* and *Teseida*; as divine grace or Charity (anagogic Venus) in *Comedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine*.

David Lampe, Department of English, State University College at Buffalo:

"The *Decameron* Used and Abused." A survey of the

"kinds and qualities of adaptation and transformation that the *Decameron* received during the 16th and 17th centuries" shows that Boccaccio's "bawdy comedy" was either shunned and deplored or "clearly abused by a whole series of timid translators," while "the pathetic tales struck sympathetic, if didactic cords."

Marga Cottino-Jones, Department of Italian, UCLA, Los Angeles:

"Boccaccio's 'beffa' novelle in XVI century England." In the course of "gradual change from total exclusion of novelle with a 'beffa' theme" to "limited acceptance" and, finally to collections composed totally of such stories, Tarlton's *Newes out of Purgatorie* "occupies a crucial key position in the history of Boccaccio's influence in England," and "represents the first whole-hearted English acceptance of the 'beffa.'"

Steven J. Lautermilch, 302 North Elam Avenue, Greensboro, N. C.:

"From Babylon to Newgate: the Strange Case of Boccaccio's Alatiel and Defoe's Moll Flanders." The sexual adventures and misadventures of Moll Flanders parallel those of the much-mated Sultan's daughter. Neither is "ever finally responsible for her own life" but "finally responsible only to love." "In the end Moll and James will be just the same as Alatiel and all her lovers have been: in love and fortune because of crime and misfortune."

At the conclusion of the seminar, which proved much too short for the scope of the material presented for discussion, it was voted to apply for a Boccaccio seminar at the 1974 convention. The subject under study will be Boccaccio's *Teseida*.

## Invitations and Explanations

Readers are invited to contribute information concerning events, meetings, conventions, papers read or published, studies in progress, notes and queries of interest to Boccaccians. Subsequent issues of the newsletter will carry bibliographical information concerning recent Boccaccio publications, work in progress and *desiderata* as this is received from correspondents. The newsletter should serve as an exchange post among interested scholars, drawing English, foreign language, and comparative literature disciplines together for their mutual enrichment in an area where all have benefited so much.

Details of upcoming centenary programs to commemorate the six-hundredth anniversary of Boccaccio's death will be passed along to our readers as they are received.

The design of the nameplate of the newsletter includes the two emblems engraved on the commemorative marble over Boccaccio's remains in the little church in Certaldo, where he died. The script is based on Boccaccio's own in the autograph manuscript of the *Teseida*. The motto comes from his epitaph:

*Hac sub mole iacent cineres ac ossa Iohannis:  
Mens sedet ante Deum meritis ornata laborum  
Mortalis vite. Genitor Bocchaccius illi,  
Patria Certaldum, studium fuit alma poesis.*

It is the hope of the founding editor of this newsletter that the realization that Boccaccio aspired above all to be a poet will encourage the dissolution of stereotypes and the beginning of new inquiries and advances in Boccaccio studies.

## Boccaccio on the Death of Petrarch

(126)

To that fair kingdom, o my gentle lord,  
Whither all souls aspire in God's grace,  
Leaving behind this sinful world and base  
You have ascended and have your reward  
(Which here you oft and ardently implored)  
And may look now upon your Laura's face,  
There my Fiammetta also has her place  
In His sight Whom the angels have adored.  
Sennuccio, Cino, Dante — these for aye  
Are of your company, and in peace untold  
You penetrate to depths we may not chart.  
If in this erring world you love me, pray  
Raise me up with you where I may behold  
Her who first kindled love within my heart.

(Translated by T. G. Bergin. Copyright 1954  
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