

Dante Society Newsletter

Volume 10, Number 2

April 2004

Letter from the President

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As I write this first letter as President of the Dante Society of America, I am mindful of the great strides the Society has made in the last few years. I know I speak for all the members in acknowledging the unstinting devotion and unmatched commitment shown by Teodolinda Barolini during her Presidency. The important new projects she promoted or endorsed during these years (chief among them our Capital Campaign under the leadership of Nancy Vickers and "Illuminating Dante" which has been spearheaded by John Ahern) exemplify the health and ongoing growth of our Society and they presage a bright future for it.

One sign of the future of our Society and its deeper purposes came into sharp relief at the Winter Meeting of the Dante Society held on December 28 at the 2003 MLA Convention in San Diego. It was gratifying for me to witness the extraordinary overflowing audience of old and young spectators as Robert P. Harrison (Stanford University) spoke on the topic "The Human Authorship of the *Divine Comedy*."

This year's meeting of the Dante Society of America, which is the 122nd since its establishment, will be held on Sunday, May 9, 2004, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the Longfellow House, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After an initial discussion of the Society's business (financial records, membership, the status of *Dante Studies*, prize-winning essays, changes in the Board of Editors, etc.), we shall listen to three short papers by **Peter S. Hawkins** (Boston University), **Guy P. Raffa** (University of Texas at Austin), and **Brenda Deen Schildgen** (University of California at Davis). These three well-known scholars will discuss their recent books on Dante. Professor Hawkins' *Dante's Testaments: Essays on Scriptural Imagination* was published in 1999. Professor Raffa's *Divine Dialectic: Dante's Incarnational Theology* appeared in 2000. Professor

Schildgen's *Dante and the Orient* came out in 2002. They are works that signal the various directions Dante scholarship is taking nowadays. As is customary with this annual event, our meeting will conclude with a reception.

Enclosed you will find a ballot containing the slate of candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee, as is envisioned by our bylaws. You are asked to please mark your ballot and return it together with the proxy statement, in time for the vote count on May 2.

Leaving the Council after having served three years is Christian Moevs. I would like to express my deep gratitude to him for his dedication and service to the Society. I would also like to commend the members of the Nominating Committee, H. Wayne Storey (chair), Alison Cornish, and Ronald Martinez, for their time and effort in preparing this year's slate of candidates.

In addition, I wish to express my sincere thanks to Secretary-Treasurer Todd Boli, our continuing Council Members, *Dante Studies* editor Steven Botterill and the other members of the Editorial Board, the Prize Committee, the Auditing Committee, Capital Campaign chair Nancy Vickers, and John Ahern and his Committee on Illuminating Dante for the tremendous dedication with which they all so faithfully serve the Society.

With best wishes,

Giuseppe Mazzotta

Annual Meeting on Sunday May 9, 2004

BALLOTS

must be received by our office no later than Sunday, May 2, to be counted prior to the meeting. Results will be announced at the meeting.

Annual Meeting on May 9 at Longfellow Carriage House

It was at Cambridge's Longfellow House that the Dante Society of America first met in its original avatar as the Dante Club, and it was to the Longfellow House that we returned last year for the Visual Archive Committee's debut of the Society's Illuminating Dante Digital Image Project. In view of the Dante Society's satisfaction with last year's experience, Longfellow National Historic Site Manager Jim Shea has graciously invited the Society to come back and hold its Annual Meeting in the Longfellow Carriage House, which served our members and presenters so well last year.

Our meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. The Longfellow Historic Site is at 102 Brattle Street, an easy walk from Harvard Square. Parking at the site is limited, but on-street parking is available. After the meeting, Dante Society members may visit the Longfellow House gardens, which promise to be at their early-May best. The Longfellow House staff also alerts Society members to the *Unlaunch'd Voices* program to take place at 4:00 p.m. at nearby Burnham Hall at 99 Brattle Street. Walt Whitman portrayer Stephen Collins will explore the works of "the poet of democracy" whose *Leaves of Grass* the Longfellow family read with great enthusiasm. The Longfellow House is sponsoring the program jointly with the American Theatre of Living History. Ticket information is available at www.nps.gov/long.

Spring Election

Enclosed you will find a ballot listing the slate of candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee, as required by our bylaws. Please mark your ballot and seal it in the envelope provided for it (marked "Ballot Envelope"). Also enclosed is a proxy statement for the

Annual Meeting. Please complete it and return it together with the ballot envelope in time for the vote count on May 2.

The Nominating Committee has placed on this spring's ballot the following three nominees for Council:

Fabian Alfie is an associate professor of Italian at the University of Arizona. His specialization is on the comic poetry of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. He has published a book on Cecco Angiolieri entitled *Comedy and Culture: Cecco Angiolieri and Late Medieval Society* (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2001). He has also published over twenty articles on the *poeti giocosi*, including studies on Rustico Filippi, Folgore da San Gimignano, Pieraccio Tedaldi, Pietro de' Faitinelli, and Bindo Bonichi. He has published on the *Fiore* (possibly attributable to Dante) as well as two articles on the *tenzone* between Dante and Forese Donati.

Simon Gilson is Senior Lecturer in Italian at the University of Warwick, UK. He received his Ph.D. from Cambridge University and has taught Dante and Renaissance Italian literature at the universities of Birmingham, Leeds, and Oxford in the UK and at Keio University in Japan. His research is principally concerned with Dante's scientific culture and with Dante's reception in the Italian Renaissance. He is the author of *Medieval Optics and Theories of Light in the Works of Dante* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2000) and *Dante in Renaissance Florence: Adaptations and Transformations* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). He is the co-editor of *Science and Literature in Italian Culture: From Dante to Calvino* (Legenda Press, 2004).

Jan Ziolkowski (A.B. Princeton University, Ph.D. University of Cambridge), Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Medieval Latin, has focused his research and teaching on the literature of the Latin Middle Ages. At Harvard he has chaired Medieval Studies and Comparative Literature. He founded the Medieval Studies Seminar and has served on the editorial board of

Comparative Literature, Comparative Literature Studies, Semicerchio: Rivista di poesia comparata, Reinardus, and Itineraria: Letteratura di viaggio. He has been a councillor of the Medieval Academy of America and a book review editor of *Speculum*. His writings include some eighty articles or notes and fifty book reviews. The books encompass critical editions of Medieval Latin texts (such as *The Cambridge Songs*; *Jezebel: A Norman Latin Poem of the Early Eleventh Century*; and two of poetry by Nigel of Canterbury), a book on intellectual history (*Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex: The Meaning of Grammar to a Twelfth-Century Intellectual*), a book on literary history (*Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry*), and collections of essays written by himself and others (*On Philology and Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages*). His most recent books were a collaborative translation project entitled *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, coedited by Mary Carruthers (2002), and a translation of Catholic University of America Press English translation of Dag Norberg's *Introduction to the Study of Medieval Latin Versification* (2004).

Dante in Philadelphia

Professor **Wai Chee Dimock** of Yale University will address the Winter Meeting of the Dante Society at December's Modern Language Association Convention in Philadelphia. The title of her talk is "Planetary Dante." Please see next fall's Newsletter for further information.

Dante Prize, Grandgent Award

Members acquainted with fledgling scholars who show promise as *dantisti* are reminded that since 1887 the Dante Society of America has offered an annual prize for the best student essay on a subject related to the life or works of Dante. The Dante Prize of two hundred and fifty dollars is offered for the best essay submitted by an undergraduate in any American or Canadian college or university, or by anyone not enrolled as a graduate student who has received the degree of A.B. or its equivalent within

the past year. In addition, a prize of five hundred dollars, the Charles Hall Grandgent Award, is offered for the best essay submitted by an American or Canadian student enrolled in any graduate program.

All submissions must be sent as email attachments to the Dante Society at dsa@dantesociety.org. Undergraduate essays should be no longer than 5,000 words and graduate essays no longer than 7,000 words. The deadline for submission is June 30. For further details and complete guidelines, please see the "Prizes" page of the Society's Web site at www.dantesociety.org.

Reminder: Dues for 2004

Members who have not yet sent in their dues for the current year will find a dues form included with this mailing. We value your participation in the Dante Society and look forward to your continued support. Please enclose your dues for 2004 with your ballot envelope and proxy in the return envelope provided.

Centro dantesco di Ravenna

The Dante Society of America periodically receives from one of our sister organizations, the Centro dantesco di Ravenna, email announcements of upcoming Dante-related events of a scholarly nature that take place throughout Italy. Interested members can consult the Centro's Web site, which offers a regularly updated calendar of these events, at www.centrodantesco.it.

Dante Society Newsletter

The Newsletter is published twice each year (November and April) by the Dante Society of America and distributed to members of the Society. Please email material for publication to the Editor at dsa@dantesociety.org.

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