

# Dante Society Newsletter

Volume 15, Number 1

November 2008

## Annual Meeting, May 2008

The Dante Society of America's 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting took place on May 17, 2008, at the Longfellow House in Cambridge, Massachusetts. As has often been the case in recent years, the gathering was favored with sunny, temperate weather.



Members heard a stimulating presentation by Joseph Luzzi, Assistant Professor of Italian at Bard College and the 1997 winner of the Society's Charles Hall Grandgent Award for best essay by a graduate student. His lecture, titled "*Come fronda in ramo: Dante's Neologisms*," was followed by a lively question-and-answer period. After adjournment, the discussion continued informally over refreshments served in the Carriage House of the Longfellow National Historic Site.

## A Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

It is unusual to have a letter from the President printed in the Fall issue of the *Dante Society Newsletter*. I write, however, in order to share with the membership the news of the reconfiguration that has taken place, with the Council's approval, of the Editorial Board of *Dante Studies*. You have all received, I hope, the 2005 issue, which was published under the editorship of our colleague Richard Lansing. He replaces Steven Botterill, whom I heartily thank for his service.

As he has done in other capacities within the DSA, Richard brings to this demanding task the exceptional distinction of his scholarship, an extraordinary organizational skill, and a commitment to the Society and to the journal that can only be explained as stemming from a "spirit of love," to quote from his "Editor's Foreword" – a text, by the way, that I recommend that you all read to get an idea of the plans for the next three

volumes. These will be devoted to special topics – "Dante in the Lunigiana," "Dante and Islam," and "Dante and Longfellow" – and their guest editors are, respectively, H. Wayne Storey, Jan Ziolkowski, and Arielle Saiber. I hope that it will be possible eventually for the Dante Society to reissue, if the market demand allows such a move, some of these special topic volumes as monographs.

In order to restore *Dante Studies* to the vigorous and flourishing condition of the early period, the Council has agreed to update the organizational structure of the Board of Associate Editors by instituting term limits for each member's service. I express my warmest gratitude to Rachel Jacoff, Susan Noakes, Regina Psaki, and H. Wayne Storey for the dedication shown in their past service to the journal, and I welcome Theodore Cachey, Alison Cornish, Joseph Luzzi, Olivia Holmes, and Heather Webb as new members of the Board. Winthrop Wetherbee will continue to serve until 2010.

Let me announce in closing that the institutional crisis that for some time had paralyzed our younger sister, the Società Dantesca Italiana, has finally been resolved. I wish much success to its new President, Professor Enrico Ghidetti of the University of Florence.

A number of us were distressed by the recent controversy within the SDI, and we are truly delighted that a settlement has been reached. Let us never lose sight of the nature of our respective institutions and of the reasons why we deeply care for the well-being of both. As Dante says of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic: "...ad un fine fuor l'opere sue" (*Paradiso* XI, 42).

Sincerely,

Giuseppe Mazzotta

## Spring Election Results

Last Spring the membership of the Dante Society elected Todd Boli and Nancy Vickers to the Council for 2008-11. Vincent Pollina was elected to the office of Secretary-Treasurer for a one-year term. In May, Todd Boli was elected Vice President of the Society by the Council for a term of one year.

## Winter Meeting

The Dante Society will meet at the 2008 MLA Annual Convention in San Francisco on Sunday, December 28, 2008, from 12:00

noon to 1:15 p.m., in Pacific Suite B in the San Francisco Marriott Hotel. Theodore Cachey of Notre Dame University will speak on "Cartographic Dante." Giuseppe Mazzotta will preside. All MLA attendees are invited to join us.

## Essay Prize Winners for 2008

The Dante Prize for the best undergraduate essay was awarded to Aisha Woodward of Bowdoin College for "*A piè del ponticello: Schism and Suspension in Inferno XXIX*." The Charles Hall Grandgent Award for the best essay by a graduate student went to Stanley Levers of Yale University for "*The Ethics of Solomonic Verse in Dante's Paradiso*."

Prize Committee members Olivia Holmes and Susanna Barsella judged the essays submitted for the Dante Prize; Committee members Olivia Holmes and Arielle Saiber judged the submissions for the Grandgent Award.

The amounts, as announced in the Fall 2007 Newsletter, are \$500. for the Dante Prize and \$750. for the Grandgent Award.

The deadline for submissions for the 2009 competitions is June 30th.

## Next Annual Meeting Set for May 16

The Dante Society of America will hold its Annual Meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Saturday, May 16, 2009. Please mark your calendar. Further information will follow in the Spring Newsletter.

## Dante Sessions at Kalamazoo

The Forty-Fourth International Congress on Medieval Studies will be held at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, May 7-10, 2009. The Dante Society is sponsoring the following sessions. To learn more, please go to the Kalamazoo Web site at [www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress](http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress).

### Dante I: Problems in the *Inferno*

Chair: Fabian Alfie, University of Arizona

**John Wager**, Triton College: "Why Mud? – Vegetal Images in Dante's *Inferno*"

**Teresa Gualtieri-Clark**, Independent Scholar, Bellevue, NE: "Mind the Gap: Dante, Virgil, and the *cammin riciso*"

**Gabriella Baika**, Auburn University: "Coins and Words: The Interplay of Two

(Forged) Semiotic Systems in the *Bolgia* of the Falsifiers"

**Alessandro Vettori**, Rutgers University: "Lucifer on the Stage: A Reading of *Inferno* XXXIV"

### **Dante II: Perspectives on Dante's Paradise**

Chair: Ann Meyer, National Endowment for the Humanities and Claremont McKenna College

**Pina Palma**, Southern Connecticut State University: "Of Serpents and Doves: *Inferno* XXV and *Paradiso* XXV"

**Vincent Pollina**, Tufts University: "Dante's Eagle: Time, Syntax, Eternity"

**Tamara Pollack**, DePauw University: "Come a raggio di sol': The Vision of Theophanies in Dante's *Cielo Stellato*"

**Francesco Aimerito**, Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale "Amedeo Avogadro": "Medieval Law in Dante's *Paradise*"

### **Dante III: New Perspectives on the Divine Comedy**

Chair: Pina Palma, Southern Connecticut State University

**Francesco Ciabattoni**, Dalhousie University: "Musical Liturgy as Pharmakon in Dante's *Purgatorio*"

**Marsha Daigle-Williamson**, Spring Arbor University: "The Apocryphal Book of Wisdom and the *Commedia*"

**V. Stanley Benfell**, Brigham Young University: "Pride and Aristotle in the *Commedia*"

**Filippo Naitana**, Fairfield University: "Archaeology of the Impossible: Dante and the Question of Happiness"

### **Dante IV: Questions of Genre, Transmission, and Reception of Dante's Works**

Chair: Christopher Kleinhenz, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Fabian Alfie**, University of Arizona: "The Conundrum of Genre: Dante's *Doglia mi reca*"

**Jelena Todorovic**, Indiana University: "Dante's *Vita Nova* – A Crossroads of Personal and Public, of Past and Future"

**Karl Fugelso**, Towson University: "Articulating Authority: Manuscript Layout as *Commedia* Response"

**Nicholas Havely**, University of York: "Dante in the Henrician Reformation"

### **NEH Summer Seminar on Dante**

The Medieval Academy of America will sponsor an NEH Summer Seminar for

College Teachers on "Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the Medieval World: Literature, History, Art" at the Monash University Prato Centre in Prato, Italy, from June 15 to July 10, 2009. Directed by the Editor Emeritus of *Dante Studies*, Christopher Kleinhenz (University of Wisconsin-Madison), the seminar will offer an interdisciplinary perspective that seeks to contextualize the poem within various traditions of medieval culture and civilization. Participants will receive a stipend of \$3200.

Further information may be secured by visiting [www.medievalacademy.org](http://www.medievalacademy.org), by contacting Professor Kleinhenz at [ckleinhe@wisc.edu](mailto:ckleinhe@wisc.edu), or by writing to Paul E. Szarmach, Project Coordinator, 2009 NEH Summer Seminar, The Medieval Academy of America, 104 Mount Auburn St., 5th floor, Cambridge, MA 02138.

### **The DSA Thanks Todd Boli**

Todd Boli completed his final term as Secretary-Treasurer in May 2008, having served as the Society's chief administrative and fiduciary officer for five years. At the Annual Meeting in Cambridge, President Mazzotta thanked Dr. Boli for the exemplary qualities that he brought to this position.



Todd's service as Secretary-Treasurer was marked by notable improvement in the DSA's investment portfolio, by the clarification and strengthening of the Society's policies and procedures, and by the upgrading of the *Newsletter* with feature articles and illustrations. During his tenure, our valued relationship with the Longfellow National Historic Site was further deepened through the transfer to the Site of the DSA's library of historic books.

As is noted elsewhere in this issue, Todd Boli is the newly-elected Vice President of the Society. Here above, our sixteenth President is pictured with his closest DSA collaborator of the past five years.

### **Discounted Memberships for Students**

Because the future of the field lies with the young scholars of today, the Society offers student memberships at a 50% discount (\$15.00 per year). One of the chief benefits is a subscription to *Dante Studies*, which since its inception in 1882 (as the *Annual Report of the Dante Society*) has published signal contributions to the field.

By encouraging their students to join, our members will serve both the Dante Society and the broader cause of literary scholarship.

Memberships may also be given as gifts. The kindness of the donor will be noted in the Society's announcement to the recipient. Membership categories and rates are posted at [www.dantesociety.org](http://www.dantesociety.org).

#### **Council Members, 2008-09**

Teodolinda Barolini, *ex officio*

Susanna Barsella

Daniela Boccassini

Todd Boli, Vice President

William Franke

Giuseppe Mazzotta, President

Vincent Pollina, Secretary-Treasurer

Arielle Saiber

Nancy Vickers

#### **Board of Editors**

Teodolinda Barolini, *ex officio*

Theodore Cachey

Alison Cornish

Olivia Holmes

Joseph Luzzi

Richard Lansing, Editor

Giuseppe Mazzotta, *ex officio*

Heather Webb

Winthrop Wetherbee

#### **Nominating Committee, 2008-09**

Daniela Boccassini

Arielle Saiber, Chair

Jan Ziolkowski

#### **Prize Committee, 2008-09**

Susanna Barsella, Chair

William Franke

#### **Auditing Committee, 2008-09**

Todd Boli

Laurie Shepard, Chair

#### **DANTE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

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