



# Yale Italian



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## The Department Has Never Been More Vibrant

Dear Alumni,

The academic year 2011-12 has just started and we welcome this new season with more than the usual excitement we feel in getting ready to begin anew what we have been accomplishing over many years. We are excited because we are once again working together with old and returning dedicated scholars on campus and are bent on providing intellectual nourishment to the new talents that have come our way. Over the short span of barely a week we have survived an earthquake and are slowly pulling out of the annoying consequences of the hurricane Irene, and we are thankful for the extraordinary cooperation shown by the members of our department.

It is not, of course, for this past upheaval that I take this occasion to give special thanks to all my colleagues and to the students in the department. I am enormously grateful to my colleagues for their extraordinary intellectual commitment, for the way they take to heart what we daily try to accomplish with our graduate and undergraduate students, and their engagement in the administrative activities of the department. It has been a privilege for me to serve once again as its chairman and work closely with all of them, from the distinguished professors to the lecturers.

I have been teaching at Yale for over thirty years (my career here started in 1970) and I just cannot recall a time when the life of this department has been more vibrant and cohesive than it is now. The record speaks for itself, and the pages that follow chart through the arc of departmental activities the energy and vitality of the whole faculty and they show how they inevitably resonate with the students.



I will highlight some of these activities: the work of our graduate students and their successes are recognized by prizes given with an almost annual monotony; the Siena Program is experiencing unprecedented growth; the academic year is marked by a lively constellation of cultural events ranging from lectures to other initiatives (the Annual Dante Lecture, made possible by the Suzy and Bob Pence gift, annual Symposia, and the Film Festival).

You and I know that in reality this excitement we all feel stems from the conviction that higher education, in which we are involved, matters more than ever. Our resolve is clear: What we have done in the past we continue doing now, and this amounts to promoting intellectual explorations, encouraging critical thinking and autonomy, subjecting every discourse to scrutiny. This is, after all, what LUX ET VERITAS can only mean.

Giuseppe Mazzotta  
Chairman

FROM  
THE DGS:

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

"An annual tradition that has put us on the map..."

...has been the Spring graduate student symposium."

-Millicent Marcus



It is a wonderfully auspicious sign that our first departmental newsletter coincides with the arrival of the largest cohort of new graduate students in years: Luca Peretti (Laurea, Università di Roma, La Sapienza, M.A. University College London), Karen Raizen (B.A. Rice University), Kyle Skinner (B.A. Yale), and Aisha Woodward (B.A. Bowdoin). Their number and excellence is a testament to our current graduate students' warmth in welcoming them into our community and conveying the strengths of our program.

There is much to tell about our activities in recent years, but I will limit myself to those of last Fall and Spring, as these exemplify the more general pattern of activity and achievement that have characterized our program over time.

An annual tradition that has put us "on the map" at a national and international, as well as campus-wide level, has been the Spring graduate student symposium, this year entitled "The Baroque Page: Image and Text," which took place at the Beinecke from April 29-30, organized with expertise, energy, and good cheer by Giulia Cardillo and Eleonora Buonocore. Among the students from our department who presented papers were Alexia Ferracuti, Giulia Cardillo and Eleonora Buonocore, while Christopher Nixon and Stanley Levers participated in a Round Table at the conclusion of the proceedings.

Another regular event in which our graduate students are heavily involved is the annual Festival of New Italian Cinema. This past film festival was planned in conjunction with a graduate seminar dedicat-

ed to Italian films of the new millennium, and it culminated the visit of Giorgio Diritti, who presented his film *L'uomo che verrà* and interacted extensively with the our graduate students during his 3 day in New Haven.

Our departmental course offerings were wide-ranging and varied, including "Curiosity & Trials of the Early Modern Imagination," and "Renaissance Drama" (Angela Capodivacca), "Romantic Quarrels" and "Theory of the New from Petrarch to Vico" (Giuseppe Mazzotta), and "New Italian Cinema" (Millicent Marcus).

I wish to extend heart-felt congratulations to the students who completed their doctorates last year. Their names and the titles of their dissertations are as follows: Diego Bertelli, "Al fondo della scrittura: L'inizio e la fine nella letteratura del Novecento," James Coleman, "Orphic Poetics and the Intellectual Life of Lorenzo de Medici's Circle," Daniel Leisawitz, "Rebirth on the Screen: Representations of the Renaissance in Italian Cinema," and Andrea Moudarres, "The Mirror of the Enemy: Boundaries of Power in the Italian Renaissance." Despite the dismal job market, all four have landed teaching positions for this year: James as Visiting Assistant Professor at John Hopkins University, Andrea as Visiting Assistant Professor at Holy Cross, Dan as Visiting Assistant Professor at Wesleyan, and Diego as Visiting Assistant Professor at Wesleyan.

Among the honors awarded to our students is the Whiting Fellowship for 2011-2012 won by Maria Clara Iglesias and

the appointment to the Associate in Teaching program for Mattia Acetosso, who taught a course entitled "Portrait of Italian Romanticism" under the supervision of Giuseppe Mazzotta. Michael Meadows has been awarded the opportunity to teach in the program in Spring, 2012. His course is entitled, "Fellini, Antonioni, Pasolini: Auteurs of Italy's Economic Miracle," with Millicent Marcus as his faculty mentor.

Our graduate students have been extremely active in presenting papers at scholarly conferences as well as venues on the Yale campus. Griffin Oleynick, Mattia Acetosso, Carol Chiodo, and Christopher Nixon gave presentations the AAIS annual conference held at the University of Pittsburgh in Spring 2011. Chris also presented a paper at the Annual Conference of the Renaissance Society of America, held in Montreal. His travel was supported by the Robert and Suzy Pence Family Fund. Eleonora Buonocore spoke at the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900, and at a conference in Rome entitled "Echi Oltremare: Italy, the Mediterranean and Beyond." Michael Meadows also traveled to Italy, where he gave a paper at the American University of Rome, and was supported by the Graduate School Assembly Conference Fund.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest thanks to Ann DeLauro (whose middle name is *sine qua non*). Without her assistance, none of the above would have proceeded with the smoothness, expertise, and grace that we have grown accustomed to under her care.

— Millicent Marcus



## THE UNDERGRADUATE ITALIAN PROGRAM

### MAJORS AND LANGUAGE

With award winning majors,  
“the undergraduate Italian  
language program does not  
stop at teaching.”

—Risa Sodi

### The Italian Program

#### From the DUS

Our major is growing steadily both in quantity and quality. Three students of the class of 2010 graduated with a major in Italian: Raymond Carlson, who wrote a thesis on *Michelangelo's Poems* directed by Angela Capodivacca; Kyle Skinner, who wrote a thesis on *Job and Boccaccio* directed by Giuseppe Mazzotta; and Maureen Lecaro who wrote on the *Impatto della natura sulla poesia e filosofia di Giacomo Leopardi* also directed by Giuseppe Mazzotta. Congratulations to all three of our majors, and special congratulations to Raymond and Kyle for earning Distinction in the Major! After completing their work at Yale University, Raymond was awarded a prestigious fellowship to study in Cambridge England for three years, Kyle was accepted in our graduate program, and Maureen is pursuing veterinary school. We would like to extend our best wishes in all of their future endeavors!

—Angela Matilde Capodivacca

### The Italian Language Program

#### From the LPD

The structure of the Italian language program and the university's language requirements may have changed since the days when you were on campus, but our enthusiastic commitment to language teaching has remained unwavering.

The language requirement in place at Yale since the 1980s changed in 2003, from four semesters of a foreign language to three (and, in some cases, to just one or two). Even with that change and with close to 50 foreign languages now taught here each year, enrollments in Italian stay strong. In fact, Italian remains a stalwart of Yale's foreign language “top five.”

The Italian language program proudly offers three levels of language courses, now designated by their “L” —or “level”—numbers: elementary Italian (L1, L2); intermediate Italian (L3, L4); and advanced Italian (L5). The elementary and intermediate courses also reappear as intensive courses combining two semesters of learning into one (L1+L2, and L3+L4).

Italian L5 offerings have shown remarkable growth over the past five years. We boast a range of advanced language

courses taught exclusively in Italian to inspire our learners to perfect their skills while exploring exciting content. Today students can sign up for “Italian through Opera and Film,” “Italian History since 1945,” “Contemporary Italian Culture,” “Advanced Grammar: Grammatica antica,” “Theater Practicum: Pirandello,” and other “bridge courses” that prepare our students for upper-level offerings in literature, culture or film.

The Italian language program does not stop at language teaching, however. A key programmatic goal is to use fun and educational extracurricular activities to build a vibrant community of active language learners. A performance contest (*la Gara di filodrammatica*), where students play instrumental music, sing, dance, screen videos, recite poetry and more; Italian Scrabble Night (Scarabeo!); and a pizza party (*una pizzata*) that features sustainable ingredients and the wood-burning oven of the Yale Farm, are three of our not-to-be-missed annual appointments, each drawing 50-90 students.

Will you be back visiting campus in the future? If so, please contact me and I will arrange for you to visit our lively and popular language classes. In the next issue of this newsletter: the Italian LP's “visiting speaker program.”

—Risa Sodi

# Conferences

## The Moving Image

### Italian Cinema for the New Millennium

The Italian Language and Literature department held its 6<sup>th</sup> annual Italian film festival, at the Whitney Humanities Center, March 24 – 27, 2011. The event, designed to showcase the best in Italian cinema from the previous year, serves as an opportunity to promote interest in contemporary Italian culture not only within the Yale community, but also throughout the greater New Haven area. Among this year's selection of five films was Giorgio Diritti's *L'uomo che verrà* (*The Man Who Will Come*), the winner of the prestigious David di Donatello award for Best Film. The director accepted the film committee's invitation to participate in the festival, taking a break from the shooting of his next project to introduce *L'uomo che verrà*, as well as participating in a question and answer session with the audience after the screening. This session will be included among the features for the U.S. DVD release. Diritti also met with a group of undergraduate language students in order to discuss Italian cinema, politics, and culture.

Diritti's understated yet powerful vision of the intersection of politics and culture, so subtly articulated in *L'uomo che verrà*, was an important point of reference for the selection committee during the fall semester. This film, a haunting and quiet portrayal of World War II-era peasant life outside of the Italian city of Bologna before, during, and after the events of the Nazi-led Marzabotto massacre is seen through the eyes of a young peasant girl and represents an attempt to come to grips with the pressing contemporary social issues of collective memory and regional identity. It quickly became apparent to the selection committee that the thread unifying these films was the issue of "impegno" or "social engagement." In this spirit, *Generazione Mille Euro* deals with the problem of unemployment and underemployment; *La prima cosa bella* details the joys and suffering of a Livornese family from the 1960s to the present day in the midst of a mother's battle with cancer; *La giusta distanza* through the genre of mystery confronts the issues of immigration and racism; and *Lo spazio bianco* is a tale of a single mother whose life changes when her daughter is born several months premature.

Professor Millicent Marcus, the director of the film committee, integrated the theme of "impegno" into her spring-semester graduate seminar entitled, "New Italian Cinema." The students in the seminar were responsible for preparing and delivering introductions to the films as well as engaging with audience members in the post-film discussion. This course also served to lay the groundwork for next year's film festival, which will focus on new regional cinema and become the second half of a two-part collaboration between Yale and the University of Messina, known as "*Il cinema dei territori: Messina/Sicilia - Yale/Connecticut.*"

— Christopher Kaiser



### Cinema Of the Territories

A seaside villa provided the delightfully apt backdrop for a conference that frequently dealt with the visual allure of island settings. The first annual conference on "Cinema of the Territories," a joint effort supported by both the Italian Department at Yale and the University of Messina, was held on June 24 and 25 at Messina's Villa Pace. Professor Millicent Marcus joined Marco Olivieri, Fabio Rossi, Dario Tomasello, and Nino Genovese as speakers on the first day of the conference and then as participants in a round table on the second day. Their topic of discussion was the role of Sicily in recent Italian cinema and theatre, and these distinguished scholars enthusiastically shared their ideas about Sicilian anti-mafia martyr films; memory in the films of Roberto Andò, a Sicilian filmmaker; cinematic conceptions of islands; new Sicilian dramaturgy; linguistic interpretations of mafia film stereotypes, and more.

The audience included Yale graduate students Griffin Oleynick, Taylor Papallo, and Luca Peretti, along with students from the University of Messina and the Universidad de Córdoba, which participates in a transatlantic degree program known as Atlantis with the University of Messina and Virginia Commonwealth University. The participants responded with great interest and enthusiasm to the rich array of scholarly endeavors on display during the question-and-answer sessions that concluded each day of the conference.

On Friday night, conference participants were invited to watch a screening of *Divorzio all'italiana* (*Divorce Italian Style*, 1961). The classic Sicilian comedy served to underscore the lasting value of the cinema of the territories and to provide an entertaining interlude in the midst of several more serious-minded debates and discussions provoked by the day's talks.

The conference's themes will be further explored at this year's annual Yale Italian Film Festival, which will feature films that highlight an increasing interest in and emphasis on regionalism in contemporary Italian cinema.

— Taylor Papallo

# Conferences

## The Baroque Page: Image and Text

This year's annual graduate student symposium, coordinated by Giulia Cardillo and Eleonora Buonocore, was a two-day conference held on April 29-30, 2011, in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The conference sought to explore the understudied culture of the Baroque age, a period when, the iconoclastic debates of the Protestant Reformation sparked a rethinking of the role of images - not only within a religious context, but also within the political, philosophical, and literary spheres. True to the interdisciplinary nature of the symposium, the talks covered a vast territory, from literature to art, philosophy to anatomy, yet were united by a common project: "to examine the renewed cultural interest in the relationship between text and image, logos and eikon" which stands at the roots of European modernity.

Though the majority of the conference was dedicated to the sharing and discussion of the work of the graduate students, the attendees also benefitted from the wisdom of several faculty participants. Professor Elisabetta Selmi from the University of Padova delivered the welcoming remarks in which she introduced and explained her involvement in the ongoing collaboration between the Universities of Turin, Padova, and Milan on the sacred image in the Baroque era, a collaboration which has borne fruit both with the volume entitled "*Poesia e retorica del Sacro fra Cinque e Seicento*" (2009) as well as a conference last summer entitled, "*Il libro sacro figurato*". The Yale conference, she explained, was a natural extension of the spirit of collaboration that characterized the efforts of the Italian group of scholars, coordinated by Erminia Ardissino of the University of Turin and herself. Following these welcoming remarks, Millicent Marcus introduced the keynote speaker, Giuseppe Mazzotta, who spoke on "Tasso and the Post-Tridentine Controversies on Images."



The conference also featured two special faculty talks, the first by Carlos Eire, who lectured on "The Art of Ecstasy in Baroque Catholicism" and the second by Sarah Beckwith from Duke University, who discussed "Pictures of Action in Shakespearean Tragedy." The conference concluded with a lively round table moderated by Ardissino which included comments by graduate students Noah Dion, Stanley Levers, Christopher Nixon, and Elena Pellus.

In addition to attending panels, the participants enjoyed a multimedia exploration of the Baroque age, which included a book exhibit, a concert by Robert Mealy of the Yale School of Music, as well as a screening of Rossellini's *The Taking of Power by Louis XIV*.

— Christopher Kaiser

# The Dante Working Group

Drawing on the momentum from last spring's graduate student symposium "Dante's Universe: From Alpha to Omega," the Dante Working Group continued in 2011-2012 to further its aim to enrich Dante scholarship at Yale through a number of engaging and collaborative encounters with visiting scholars, faculty, graduate students, and alumni.

Whitney Humanities Center Fellow and Visiting Fulbright Scholar Unn Falkeid started off our first meeting of the academic year with an exploration of cupidity in *Paradiso VI*. In conjunction with the Italian Department's Annual Dante Lecture, the members of the Working Group had a lively discussion on Dante studies and the digital humanities with Guy Raffa from the University of Texas at

Austin, creator of the extensive multimedia educational website "DanteWorlds." In December, Dante Working Group founder, Carol Chiodo, presented her work on the philosophical anthropology of Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia*.

The new year brought presentations of two award-winning papers given by Stanley Levers, a 5th year graduate student in the Italian department, and Christiana Purdy Moudarres (Ital Ph.D '11), currently at Yale's Divinity School (see AWARDS). Giuseppe Gazzola's (Ital Ph.D '08) presentation on the reception of the Divine Comedy Italian exiles in 19th-century Britain and its use in forging an Italian national identity was particularly timely given the 150th anniversary of Italian unity in March. Our year closed with a discussion with



Virginia Jewiss, a special lecturer in the Directed Studies program, who is currently working on a new translation of Dante's *Vita Nuova*.

We are looking forward to expanding the Working Group's activities in the coming year to include campus readings and an online presence. If you would like to join the Dante Working Group mailing list, signup on our website at <http://dante.commonsonline.org>

— Carol Chiodo  
and Siobhan Quinlan

## Lo Stivale

*Lo Stivale* is a student group that celebrates Italy and its many wonderful cultural offerings. We do this in a variety of ways such as weekly "Italian dinners" that function like a student run language table, a fledgling language partners program in which students are paired up to meet with partners independently, and helping out the Italian department when there's need. In addition, the club holds several movie screenings, culinary events - the most recent of which was *tiramisù* made from scratch, and the occasional game of *bocce* every year.

As we head into our third year, we'd love to expand our activities to include more people and foster even more of a community of italo-philes at Yale. If you would like to get involved, please contact the club's president, Allison Hadley, via email: [allison.hadley@yale.edu](mailto:allison.hadley@yale.edu), and you'll be added to the mailing list. We hope to see you soon!

— Kyle Skinner



## From Campo to Campus

### NOTES FROM THE FIELD

In the summer of 2009, I packed up my bags, left New Haven in the dust and headed off to follow “In the footsteps of Dante.” Rather than getting lost in the wood and going to Hell, however, I began my journey in the more paradisiacal locale of Siena, Italy.

That summer, I was working as a teaching assistant for Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta’s “In the Footsteps of Dante” course, an L5 course being as part of the Yale Summer School’s programs abroad. For five weeks, our dozen or so students read the *Divine Comedy* and visited cities and landmarks significant for their role in Dante’s text or in the shaping of his imaginary. Some of the highlights included Florence, Ravenna, Padua, and Rome.

For the students, the experience of living with host families in a thriving Italian city filled with actual Italians (and not just tourists) greatly helped to enhance their linguistic abilities and their understanding of Italian life. Reading a masterpiece of Italian literature in tandem with traveling to some of the major cultural and historical sites in Italy not only exposed the students to important aspects of Italian culture, but also stoked their imaginations bringing the text and history to life.

Personally, the experience helped my growth both as a teacher and a student. I deepened my own understanding of the *Comedy* by re-reading the text again, attending Professor Mazzotta’s lectures, and researching the locations we later visited. The concentrated nature of the course (one semester condensed into five weeks), as well as the extensive traveling that we

all did together, presented challenges that are not typically part of on-campus teaching. Part TA, part tour guide, part counselor, I had to be prepared for whatever might come my way. Holding section in the Piazza del Campo or in the *cortile* of a municipal building, I prepared my students for our field trips, addressed difficulties with their readings, and helped them to formulate clear ideas for their final papers.

On a professional level, it was wonderful to have the opportunity as a teaching assistant in literature class and to have had experience teaching and guiding students in an international setting. These will be great complements to the language teaching already on my C.V. I hope that in the coming years, more and more graduate students will have this same opportunity.

In addition to all of this, it was fantastic to live in Siena! I woke up to the sound of church bells, passed the days reading under the famed Tuscan sun, and spent evenings in the piazza or strolling the lively streets of the city. New Haven was but a distant memory.

— Siobhan Quinlan

### YALE IN SIENA

Over the past many summers, the Yale Italian Summer Program in Siena has flourished.

All levels of Italian are offered:

- ✓ Elementary
- ✓ Intermediate
- ✓ Advance Literature courses

Students will spend:

- 3 weeks studying in New Haven
- 5 weeks in Siena with host families.

2011 & 2012

Program Director, Monica Georgeo.

Steady lectors (like stars in the sky),  
Michael Farina and Anna Iacovella.

Other recent teaching assistants include:

**Mattia Acetosso**

**Alexia Ferracuti**

**Maria Clara Iglesias**

**Kenise Lyons**

**Andrea Moudarres**

**Griffin Oleynick**

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### Subscription

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# Faculty News

**Giuseppe Mazzotta**, Sterling Professor in the Humanities for Italian, serves as the chairman of the Department. As in the past, he continues to teach an undergraduate course, “Dante in Translation” as well as his graduate courses on the classics of the Trecento, the Renaissance/Baroque, Vico, and other traditional aspects of Italian literary history. Over the past year he has attended philosophical/literary gatherings in various universities at home and abroad and has contributed some pieces of a theoretical nature. Within Yale University, on the other hand, he has been directing 12 doctoral dissertations, co-directing 3 others, (from Classics, Renaissance Studies, Comparative Literature and Slavic), and mentoring post doc fellows. He has also taken an active role in the flourishing Siena Program. His involvement with graduate students took center stage last year: he advised them in the annual academic symposium and addressed the Romance Languages Graduate Students roundtable on the “Future of the Fields”. He is currently finishing two manuscripts, one on Dante titled *Questions at the Frontiers of Thought*, and the other, *Emergence of the Modern World*.

**Millicent Marcus** introduced *Miracolo a Milano* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, gave keynote addresses at the California Interdisciplinary Consortium of Italian Studies held at USC, the symposium on modern and contemporary cinema at Indiana University, and the graduate conference of the University of Toronto. She delivered the Langsam Barsan Simches Lecture at Tufts, and the Maria Ringrose Memorial Lecture at U.C. Berkeley. She also lectured at Ohio State University, Rutgers, the University of Messina, and gave papers at the AAIS and at the “Destination Italy” symposium at the Calandra Institute. Two essays came out: “Return of the Referent: Italian Cinema for the New Millennium,” in *Semiotica*, and “Il cinema specchio della memoria,” in *Storia della Shoah in Italia* (Turin: UTET, 2010). She takes great pride in the publication of *New Reflections on Primo Levi: Before and After Auschwitz*, which she co-edited with Risa Sodi. Thanks to the encouragement of her graduate students in the seminar on Italian Cinematic Neorealism in Spring 2009, she developed a new course on contemporary Italian Cinema, and designed it in coordination with the offerings of our film festival for Spring 2010. The subject matter of the course also tied in with her current research project dedicated to a study of recent Italian cinema within the theoretical framework of “post-realism.”

**Angela Matilde Capodivacca** served as DUS this year. While continuing to teach Directed Studies, she taught an undergraduate seminar on Italian Renaissance comedies, a graduate course on early modern theatre and one on curiosity and wonder in early modern Italy. She completed her book project *Curiosity on Trial*, and published two articles: “The Philology of the Future: Nietzsche’s Leopardi” for a special number of *California Italian Studies* entitled *Italian Futures* and “The Witch as Muse: Fantasy and Skepticism in Folengo’s *Baldus*,” in *Folengo in America*, Ed. Scalabrini. (Longo, forthcoming). Angela has been invited to write a paper on teaching Boiardo for the MLA teaching series, an article on Machiavelli for *Textures of Power: Five Hundred Years of Il Principe*, and one on Ariosto for a special number of *Versants*. She was also invited to speak on Isabella Andreini and Gianlorenzo Bernini at the University of California Berkeley, and on Machiavelli’s *Principe* in Munich, Germany. She co-organized a series of four panels “From Mythographers of the Past to Myth-Makers of Modernity” for the 2011 RSA in Montreal, and presented a paper there on Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola. She was asked to be the Yale representative for the Renaissance Society of America. At Yale, she presented her work on Bernini for Yale Renaissance Lunch Series, one on Isabella Andreini for the Early Modern forum on gender and sexuality, and gave the lecture on Dante’s *Inferno* for Directed Studies. She is thankful to the Griswold Fund for granting support for her research in Rome on Bernini’s theatre.

**David Lummus** spent the past academic year on leave working on a book entitled *The City of Poetry: Political Theology and Poetic Theory in Fourteenth-Century Italy*. He has two articles on Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Genealogy of the Gentile Gods* forthcoming in 2012, in *Speculum* and *Medievalia et Humanistica*, as well as essays in anthologies on Dante’s *Inferno* and Edoardo Sanguineti. This academic year, he will be delivering papers at Yale’s Renaissance Studies Lunch, SUNY-Binghamton’s CEMERS, the MLA, and the RSA. Also, for 2013, the seventh centenary of Boccaccio’s birth, he has been asked to write the chapters on Boccaccio’s poetics for the *Cambridge Companion to Boccaccio* and on the *Buccolicum Carmen* for the *Chicago Critical Guide to Boccaccio’s Works*. He is currently working on finishing his book and is excited to be teaching again.

**Risa Sodi**’s *New Reflections on Primo Levi: Before and After Auschwitz*, co-edited with colleague Millicent Marcus, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in July 2011. Earlier this summer, her essay on “Primo Levi in the Public Interest: Turin, Auschwitz, Israel” appeared in Stanislao Pugliese’s *Answering Auschwitz: Primo Levi’s Science and Humanism After the Fall* (Fordham UP, 2011). Sodi is the Italian Section Head and an Executive Board member of the American Association of University Supervisors and Coordinators (AAUSC), the national association for language program directors; in addition, she is a member of the Faculty Advisory Group for the Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism (YPSA), and an Executive Board member of the Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale. As a consultant to the Commission for Art Recovery, Sodi traveled to Milan in July for the first-ever Italian conference on Holocaust looted art assets.



# Alumni News

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**Leslie Barth** '09 BA writes, "After graduating, I spent two years in Philadelphia teaching private music lessons. I recently moved up to New York and am working as the External Relations Officer at Eni's Representative Office in New York. Though I miss teaching, I really enjoy making use of Italian on a daily level and love getting to know our neighborhood in the Upper East Side. I spend my free time performing original music, writing, and cooking".

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**Daniella Berman** '07 BA writes, "I am working as the National Gallery of Art's publishing coordinator for 3 years but will be moving in the fall to start a PhD in the history of art at the Institute of Fine Arts in New York City".

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**Ken Browne** '78 MA writes, "I have been working in the film/TV industry since 1980 - first as a film editor, and then as an independent producer. After stints in sports cable TV, and corporate communications, I have found something of a niche, in short documentary films - about the arts and educational success, for public television and professional audiences. My work is detailed at: [www.kbprods.com](http://www.kbprods.com). I think often, with growing appreciation, of those early days of Italian at Yale - the superb faculty, Freccero, Valesio, Shapiro, Giamatti, et al. - and my classmates. Especially the brilliant Roberto Pastena whom we lost in his second year in the program. Recently I have been honored to serve on the Graduate School Alumni Association Executive Committee, which hosted a career mentoring workshop for current graduate students. It was aptly called "Where Do I Go from Yale?" and was wonderfully chaired by Italian Department alumna, **Mary Ann Carolan**."

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**Nicola Camerlenghi** '98 BA writes, "After graduating from Yale in 1998, I got a Master's degree at MIT and a PhD at Princeton, both in the history of architecture. I now teach at the University of Oregon and specialize in medieval architectural history. I still focus on Italy, particularly medieval Rome. A few years ago, I got married to a fellow art historian, Jessica Maier, who is also an Italophile".

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**Jo Ann Cavallo** '87 PhD, is currently completing a book on the world beyond Christian Europe in the romance epics of Boiardo and Ariosto. She is still happily teaching Italian Renaissance literature and humanities courses at Columbia University, where her daughter Cristina is currently a sophomore, and she spends summers in Italy researching Sicilian puppet theater and the epic Maggio (folk opera) of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines.

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**Jason Houston** '03 PhD writes, "I published *Building a Monument to Dante: Boccaccio as Dantista*, with the University of Toronto Press in June 2010". Jason and his wife Monica Sharp welcomed the birth of their first child, Victor Leo Houston, on May 23, 2011.

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**Stephanie Jed** '82 PhD writes, I have just published *Wings for Our Courage: Gender, Erudition, and Republican Thought* (University of California Press, 2011). Some of the research in the book goes way back to when I was a graduate student at Yale, and I am indebted to my Yale professors, especially Paolo Valesio, for its worthiness".

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**Hilary Lieberman Link** '00 PhD writes, "I currently serve as Associate Provost and Dean for International Programs at Barnard College in New York City, responsible for a variety of provostial projects as well as overseeing all of Barnard's international initiatives. An exciting and creative position that keeps me busy, as does raising 3 boys (ages 8, 5 and 3 months)"!

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**Jakara Mato** '10 BA writes, "I spent the 2010-2011 academic year on a Fulbright grant in Rome, Italy, researching pedagogy, student motivation, and multiculturalism in Roman public middle schools. It was an incredibly challenging and fulfilling year, and I feel I have adopted certain aspects of the Italian lifestyle and its values that will stay with me forever. My school fieldwork this year has also helped me realize that I want to become a clinical child psychologist. This year I am returning home to finish some psychology credits at the University of Hawaii and hopefully enter a PhD or PsyD program after that."

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**John C. McLucas** '83 PhD, has just been appointed to his second three-year term as Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at Towson University in Baltimore, where he has taught since 1984. In collaboration with Dr. Julia L. Hairston on the University of California in Rome, he is preparing a translation of Tullia d'Aragon's 1560 epic, *Il Meschino, altramente detto il Guerrino*, forthcoming in the Other Voice series, and is working on a translation of Calvino's "*L'Orlando furioso di Ludovico Ariosto*."

# Alumni News

**Rasha Al-Sabah** '77 PhD writes, "I was appointed in the fall of the same year on the faculty of Kuwait University." In September 1993, Rasha was appointed as the first woman under secretary for Higher Education in the history of Kuwait. In September 2009, she was appointed to her current position as advisor to the Prime Minister of Kuwait.

**Peter Paradiso** '79 MPhil writes, "I recently returned to the U.S. from China, where I spent six years practicing how to use chopsticks, improving my spoken and written Mandarin Chinese, and teaching at a university. I am now gathering thoughts on that ancient culture." In May, Peter celebrated the birth of his first grandchild, Rafael, with his daughter-in-law Darragh and his son Dante Paradiso, Yale College '92, who also has fond memories of courses taken in the Italian Department.

**Bernardo Piciché** '04 PhD received early tenure at Virginia Commonwealth University, where he directs the minor of Italian Studies, as well as the minor of Mediterranean Studies.

**Christiana Purdy Moudarres** '10 PhD will be completing her MAR at Yale Divinity School this year (2011-12) while she begins work on a book manuscript based on her dissertation, "A Sacred Banquet: Medicine and Theology in Dante's *Inferno*." This past year, she was awarded the Charles H. Grandgent Award by the Dante Society of America for her essay on *Inferno* 6, "Devouring Selves in the Circle of Gluttony" and published her first edited volume of collected essays, *Table Talk: Perspectives on Food in Medieval Italian Literature* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2011). Together with her colleague Carol Chiodo, she is currently co-editing the proceedings of the Italian Department's recent graduate conference on *Dante, Dante's Volume from Alpha to Omega* (ACMRS, forthcoming).

**Sherry Roush** '99 PhD, is tenured Associate Professor of Italian at Penn State University. This year she completed facing-page English translations, with introduction and critical annotations, of Tommaso Campanella's *Selection of Philosophical Poems* in two volumes (the first published by The University of Chicago Press Poetry Series, and the second published by *Bruniana & Campanelliana Supplementi*, Fabrizio Serra Editore). She is also the author of *Hermes' Lyre: Italian Poetic Self-Commentary from Dante to Tommaso Campanella* (U Toronto Press, 2002) and co-editor of *The Medieval Marriage Scene: Prudence, Passion, Policy* (Arizona State University Press MRTS, 2005). She has received two teaching awards: a 2004 prize from Penn State's College of the Liberal Arts and a 2009 University-level Alumni Teaching Award from Penn State.

**Arielle Saiber** '99 PhD, Associate Professor at Bowdoin College, has completed an essay on Boccaccio's *Caccia di Diana* for a volume on Boccaccio by the University of Chicago, a long essay on Italian science fiction for *California Italian Studies*, and an essay on artist Paul Laffoley's triptych of the *Divina Commedia* (1973-1975) for a catalogue raisonné of his works (Kent Gallery). She completed the editing, with Giuseppe Mazzotta, of a special issue of *Dante Studies* on "Longfellow and Dante," and her essay on "The Middle Ages and Early Renaissance" was published in *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Science*. She is in year three (of three) of Chairing the Romance Languages Department at Bowdoin College. She gave numerous lectures at various colleges, universities, and museums on topics ranging from Renaissance cryptography to Salvador Dalí's watercolor illustrations of Dante's *Commedia*. She is currently completing a book on literature and mathematics in early modern Italy, and will soon start a translation and critical edition of Bruno's *De l'infinito universo e mondi*. She is also beginning to co-curate, with Giuseppe Lippi of Mondadori's "Urania" series, the first-ever anthology of Italian science fiction in English.

**Francesca Seaman** '07 PhD writes, "I received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at DePauw University, where I have been for the past seven years. I am now on a full year sabbatical in Italy, working on contemporary Italian poets. Recently, I presented papers and organized panels at conferences held in San Francisco, Lecce, Ann Arbor, and Venice. My interview with our professor Giuseppe Mazzotta, held this past July in Siena, will be published in the international journal *Symbolon*, on whose editorial board I have been for several years. In March, my husband Michael and I had our sixth baby, Chiara. After our two boys, she is our fourth girl in a row. My current academic interests include the Italian lyrical novel, on which I plan to write my next book. In May 2012, I will again co-lead with Michael a study-abroad program for DePauw students in northeastern Italy. I am still directing my summer language school Scuola Insieme, located in Grado, Italy".

# Alumni News

**Massimo Scalabrini** '98 PhD, is Associate Professor of Italian and Director of Renaissance Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. His research focuses on Renaissance and early modern literature and culture and his most recent essays include "Comicità e vanto nella letteratura rustica e nenciale" (*Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 2010), "Onomastica comica tra Boccaccio e Ariosto" (*Strumenti critici*, 2009), "Pastoral Postures: Some Renaissance Versions of Pastoral" (*Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 2009, with Davide Stimilli), "The Peasant and the Monster in the Macaronic Works of Teofilo Folengo" (*MLN*, 2008). He is currently editing a collection of essays on Teofilo Folengo and the macaronic tradition titled *Folengo in America* to be published by Longo Editore in 2011.

**D. Scott Surrency** '01 PhD writes, "I joined the New York/New England Province of the Capuchin Franciscans in 2010. I received the habit just a week and a half ago, on July 24, and am currently doing my novitiate year in California. I will make his first profession of vows next July and then go to Boston right after that to start theological studies at Boston College".

**Maria Truglio** '01 PhD writes, "I am currently Associate Professor of Italian and Women's Studies at Penn State (University Park), teaching mostly undergraduate courses on 19th and 20th literature and Italian American culture. My book, *Beyond the Family Romance: The Legend of Pascoli* came out in 2007 with University of the Toronto Press. More recently, I wrote the entry on Pascoli for *The Literary Encyclopedia* and my translation of his poem "In ritardo" appeared in *Atlanta Review*. 17(2), pp. 53-54. Currently I am working on a book about Italian children's Literature between unification and fascism. My two most recent article publications are "'African Plots in Italian Children's Literature: Cherubini's *Pinocchio in Africa*," *MLN*. 126(1), 114-136; and forthcoming: "Dino Buzzati's *La famosa invasione degli orsi in Sicilia* and the Possibilities of Children's Literature," *California Italian Studies*. 2,37. In 2010, I received the Outstanding Teaching Award from Penn State's College of Liberal Arts.

**Massimo Verdicchio** '73 PhD writes, "I am professor of Italian and Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, and that last year I published with the University of Toronto Press, *The Poetics of Dante's Paradiso*, an analysis, heaven by heaven, of Dante's *Paradiso*".

**Alessandro Vettori** '95 PhD, spent the 2009-2010 academic year in Paris, France. As of July 1, 2011, I will be Chair of the Italian Department at Rutgers University. I am currently finishing a book on autobiography and psychoanalysis in Giuseppe Bertolucci's novels. I recently moved to the Upper West Side in New York City.

**Elizabeth Welles** '70 PhD, after a career of teaching, stints at NEH and MLA (as Director of Foreign language Programs) I retired to Washington DC in 2004. Since then I have served on the National Academy's Committee to review Title VI of the Higher Education Act which funds area studies centers - mostly in Less Commonly Taught languages and places- and other international programs. I also worked as an evaluator for the State Department's Critical Language Scholarship program, a summer abroad opportunity for college students. Unfortunately, the government does not consider Italian a critical language, but in any case I now represent the AATI on the board of the Joint National Committee on Languages, (JNCL) which is the umbrella group that lobbies congress for moneys for all instructed languages. JNCL helped with the reinstatement of the Italian AP at the College Board.

**Laura Wittman** '01 PhD writes, "My book just came out with University of Toronto Press, *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Modern Mourning, and the Reinvention of the Mystical Body*. This book explores the creation and reception of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier - an Italian, French, and British invention at the end of the First World War - as an emblem for modern mourning, from a cultural, historical, and literary perspective. It draws on literary and filmic evocations of the Unknown Soldier to interpret this memorial's longstanding popularity and politically subversive meanings."

To submit an Alumni Note for a future Newsletter,  
please email Ann DeLauro at [ann.delauro@yale.edu](mailto:ann.delauro@yale.edu)



## SAVE THE DATE

### OCTOBER 27, 2011

Annual Dante Lecture:  
Domenico Pietropaolo,  
"Dante and the Medieval  
Translators"

### MARCH 1-2, 2012

Giambattista Vico:  
Education, Politics, Poetics

### MARCH 29

**THRU APRIL 1, 2012**  
Seventh Annual Italian  
Film Festival at Yale

### APRIL 2 & 4

Annual Spring Mini-Seminar:  
Daniela Bini  
University of Texas, Austin

## Associate in Teaching Prize

In the Fall Semester of the 2010-2011 academic year I found myself in the thrilling position of teaching my first literature seminar – a course entitled "A Portrait of Italian Romanticism," in which students could familiarize themselves with one of the most neglected, yet original periods in Italian intellectual history. The Associate in Teaching Prize awarded to me the previous spring gave me the opportunity to share this conviction. The program allows an advanced graduate student to design his or her own course and co-teach it with a faculty member. Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta, my dissertation advisor, kindly agreed to co-teach the class with me, supervising and guiding me through every step of the program.

The class was an incredible pedagogical experience, and a game changer for my development as a teacher. I learned didactic

strategies that allowed me to present challenging intellectual issues to advanced students of Italian, taking into account their perspectives and their needs throughout the learning process. Teaching under the supervision of Professor Mazzotta was a unique opportunity for both intellectual and personal growth, and I benefited enormously from his guidance and experience. The act of teaching itself became for me a way to better understand the texts that we were discussing in class. This experience has shown me to what extent the practice of teaching is indeed a delightful learning process.

Lastly, I am profoundly grateful to the Graduate Teaching Center that made this program available to us. In this daunting job market, the experience of the Associate in Teaching program will certainly be crucial for my intellectual growth. In addition to the years of language teaching, it will give me more confidence for the challenges that await me after graduate school.

— Mattia Accetosio

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