Notizie e novità

From the Chair

The below sections of this newsletter will highlight the activities and accomplishments of our Department during this past academic year. I would like to begin by welcoming our incoming Ph.D. students, Laura Di Nardo (B.A., Yale ’15), Louis Moffa (B.A., Vassar ’18), and Giulia Ricca (M.A. University of Torino, ’14), and by congratulating those graduate students who have attained their Ph.D. this semester: in April, Grace Delmolino successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Boccaccio’s Legal Mind: Consent, Obligation, and Medieval Canon Law" (sponsor, Prof. Teodolinda Barolini), and in May, Irene Bulla successfully defended her dissertation entitled ‘Impossible Tales': Language and Monstrosity in the Literary Fantastic (sponsor, Prof. Elizabeth Leake).

Congratulations as well to Felice Beneduce, Federica Franze, and Patrizia Palumbo who were all promoted to Senior Lecturer.

As this academic year comes to an end, I would also like to thank my colleagues for their service to the Department. Prof. Tommasino served as Director of Graduate Studies, Prof. Zanou as Director of Undergraduate Studies, Patrizia Palumbo as Elementary Coordinator, and Federica Franze as Intermediate Coordinator. While I am on leave next year and Prof. Tommasino will be at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, Prof. Barolini will be Acting Chair, Prof. Leake will be Director of Graduate Studies, and Prof. Zanou will continue as Director of Undergraduate Studies, while Alessandra Saggin and Felice Beneduce will serve as Elementary and Intermediate Language Coordinators, respectively.

Finally, I would like to welcome Prof. Monica Calabritto (Hunter) who will teach a graduate course, Dalla commedia erudita alla commedia dell’arte: Tradizione ed innovazione, in the fall.

Jo Ann Cavallo
Columbia Summer in Venice

The Department of Italian, in conjunction with the Department of Art History and Archaeology, offers a six-week summer program based at Ca’ Foscari University in Venice. The program uses an interdisciplinary approach to understanding Italian culture and society through study of its language, literature, film, and history. Special emphasis is given to Venetian culture, traditions and history. This summer, in addition to intensive elementary and intermediate Italian Language courses and courses in art history and conservation, three Italian Department faculty members will be teaching in the program: Elizabeth Leake will offer *Venice and Modernity: Screening La Serenissima*; Konstantina Zanou will offer *Mediterranean Venice: Living and Losing a Maritime Empire*, and Patrizia Palumbo will offer *Italiana: Introduction to Italian Culture, the Low, the High and the In-Between* (in Italian). Ca’Foscari University students also enroll in some of the courses, allowing for varied perspectives and richer discussions both inside and outside of the classroom. To learn more about this program, please visit the [Office of Global Programs Venice](#) website.

Global *Convivio* Conference

On April 6, 2018, Professors Maria Luisa Ardizzone (NYU) and Teodolinda Barolini (Columbia) directed an International Symposium entitled *Convivio: Dante’s Philosophical Treatise* as part of the Global Dante Project of New York. The conference was presented by the NYU Department of Italian Studies Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimbo and the Medieval and Renaissance Center in collaboration with the Columbia University Department of Italian and Italian Academy for Advanced Study in America. The four panels brought together nine scholars investigating various aspects of the Convivio, from rhetoric, ethics, and philosophy, to science and economics. Conference details can be found on the [Italian Academy website](#).

The Italian and Mediterranean Colloquium

In fall 2014, Pier Mattia Tommasino, a recently hired Assistant Professor of Italian in our Department, founded the Italian and Mediterranean Colloquium (IMC), a seminar on the historical and cultural relations between Italy and the Mediterranean world. In fall 2016, Konstantina Zanou joined the Department of Italian as Assistant Professor and became the co-chair of the IMC. The seminar meets several times during the academic year and, in its four years of activities, has become a landmark of Mediterranean studies in the New York area and beyond.

During the nine events held during the 2017-2108 academic year, guest speakers presented their research on a wide variety of topics, including Somali Italian literature; criminals, migrants, and spies in the mid-twentieth century Italian Mediterranean; the discovery of ancient Carthage and the reception of antiquity in 19th century Tunisia; an Eastern Mediterranean genealogy of intervention; the Qur’an in the Enlightenment; trade and Christian-Muslim interactions between Italy and the Ottoman world; law in Europe and the Maghreb; nineteenth-century Italian colonization in South America; and bibliography between Spain and Italy.

All of this year’s IMC events were co-sponsored by Columbia’s Department of Italian and the European Institute; some events were also co-sponsored and/or co-presented by the Middle East Institute, the Columbia Global Centers in New York, the Heyman Center, the Burke Library, and the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America. For more information on the IMC and a list of past and upcoming events, please visit the [Italian Department website](#).
Medieval Seminar

The medievalists in the Department of Italian met on Friday mornings in Spring 2018 in a seminar that combined both an overall theme of study -- the historical and biographical turn in Dante and medieval studies -- with a workshop featuring dissertation chapters for discussion. They started with a discussion of recent biographies of Dante and then moved into discussions of chapters by five doctoral candidates, whose work exemplifies the turn toward historicizing in medieval studies: Grace Delmolino (Boccaccio and canon law), Matteo Pace (history of science and medicine and the early lyric), Julianna Visco (the history of textiles and clothing and the work of Dante and Boccaccio), Allison DeWitt (Dante and geography), Nassime Chida (clans and kinship in late Duecento Italy and the case of Ugolino). The capstone event of the semester was the lecture by Professor Paolo Pellegrini, whose biographical investigations exemplified the theme of the seminar.

Guest Lecturers and Additional Co-Sponsored Events

This year our special guest was Dacia Maraini, who discussed her most recent writings with us on March 1. The event, entitled Writing Like Breathing, was moderated by Prof. Elizabeth Leake and took place at the Italian Academy with the co-sponsorship of the Department of Italian, the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America, and the Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

Other guest speakers over the past academic year included Prof. Paolo Pellegrini of the Università di Verona, a Fellow at the Italian Academy, who presented some of the issues he is confronting as he writes his new life of Dante.

In addition, the Italian Department co-sponsored a range of events with other Departments and Institutes, including From Rome to Beijing: Sacred Spaces in Dialogue (a multidisciplinary symposium that explores the relationship between Jesuit enterprise and China in the sixteenth and seventeenth century); After the Elections: The Rise of Italy’s Third Republic? (a panel discussion on the recent elections in Italy), and Monteverdi at 450: Experiments in Sound, Image and Movement (a concert, two discussions, and an exhibition of materials).

Fuller details for both past and upcoming guest lectures and co-sponsored events are listed on the Italian Department website.
Undergraduate Prizes and Honors

Dina Manasherova (CC ’18) received Departmental Honors with a thesis entitled “‘Novo cento italiano’: Margherita Sarfatti and the Problems of Totalitarian Art Formation in Italy during the 1920s-1930s” written under the direction of Prof. Elizabeth Leake.

Katya Schumacher Bookchin (CC ’18) was this year’s recipient of the Dino Bigongiari Prize for her high academic distinction and promise in the study of Italian history. This prize was established by the former students and friends of Professor Bigongiari, and may be awarded annually to the Columbia College senior who has written an outstanding essay on Italian Civilization, or whose work in the regular Italian courses is judged most worthy of distinction.

David Jeter (GS ’18), who the Medaglio d’Oro Prize last year, graduated in February and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

In addition, four undergraduates were inducted into the Gamma Kappa Alpha National Italian Honor Society: Sandra Goldstein Lehner (CC ’19), Ayana Renoldi-Bracco (BC ’19), Monique Jazzmine Ward Pierce (CC ’19), and Dina Manasherova (CC ’18). The Gamma Kappa Alpha National Italian Honor Society is a society formed to acknowledge superior scholastic performance in the field of Italian language, literature and culture, and is open to membership at institutions of higher learning in

Faculty News

Steven Baker, Adjunct Professor, will be teaching Introduction to Italian Literature I and II next year. His most recent translation just came out: Giuliano Bonfante and Historical Linguistics, 1930-2000 (Universitätsverslag WINTER Heidelberg). Steve and his wife are expecting a baby boy this July.

Teodolinda Barolini, Lorenzo Da Ponte Professor of Italian, is Editor of Digital Dante and continues to work on her on-line commentary to the Divine Comedy, the Commento Baroliniano. She also continues to co-direct the Global Dante Project of New York, with Professor Maria Luisa Ardizzzone of NYU. She is working on the second volume of her commentary to Dante’s lyric poetry and has been commissioned to write the essay “Errancy” for the new Oxford Handbook to Dante. Recent writing includes essays on the Monarchia, the De vulgari eloquentia, the Convivio, the Vita nuova and Decameron 8.7. In September 2017 Professor Barolini was invited to lecture in the Sala di Dante in Ravenna and spoke on “Paradiso, realism o realtà?”. In May 2018 she gave a lectio magistralis at the University of Verona, where she has been appointed to the collegio dottorale; her topic was “Ricchezza e società: dalle canzoni morali Le dolci rime e Poscia ch’Amor a Inferno VI e VII”. With her sister Susanna Barolini she has edited the manuscript of the diary written by her father, the poet Antonio Barolini, while in hiding in Venice during World War II. Antonio Barolini, poeta nonviolento: Diario di clandestinità ed editoriali vicentini (1943-1945) will be published by Neri Pozza Editori.

Felice Italo Beneduce, Senior Lecturer, has re-written the Advanced Italian Through Cinema syllabus redirected towards the teaching of Italian through the student creation of short films and humorous redubbing of famous scenes from classics of American cinema, and has also introduced the Voices Project for Advanced courses in which students interview children of Italian emigrants and immigrants to Italy. Together with Patrizia Palumbo, he has created a new course to be offered in Fall 2018 entitled “Senza frontiere” on Italian emigration and immigration experiences. Felice published the book Il fantastico italiano. Bilancio critico e bibliografia commentata (dal 1980 a oggi), (Firenze, Le Monnier). In this period, he has also presented papers at numerous national conferences on a range of topics, including food in film, the graphic novel and sequential art in Italian language courses, dubbing in advanced Italian courses, transmediality in Italian culture and in particular in Giovannino Guareschi’s Don Camillo narratives, America’s Little Italys, and Italian-American (film, poetry, prose and music) into advanced Italian courses.

Jo Ann Cavallo, Professor and Chair: Her most recent book was published in Italian translation as Il mondo oltre l’Europa nei poemi di Boiardo e Ariosto (Bruno Mondadori, 2017). She also worked with the book’s translator, Corrado Confalonieri, on the co-edited anthology Boiardo (Unicopli, 2018) and published the essay “The Ideological Battle of Roncevaux: The Critique of Political Power from Pulci’s Morgante to Sicilian Puppet Theatre Today,” in Luigi Pulci in Renaissance Florence and Beyond, edited by James K. Coleman.
and Andrea Moudarres (Brepols, 2017), 209-32. She was invited to give a talk “Imagining the Enemy in Sicilian Puppet Theater and the Epic Maggio of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines” at the Chivalric Imageries conference at Princeton University (2017). She continues to serve as area editor for Italian Literature at The Literary Encyclopedia (http://www.LitEncyc.com) and has recently joined the editorial board of the new journal Letteratura Cavalleresca Italiana and expanded her website eBOIARDO (Epics of Boiardo and Other Italian Authors: a Research Database Online) at http://edblogs.columbia.edu/eboiardo.

Barbara Faedda, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Associate Director of the Italian Academy: It was an exciting and hectic academic year for Barbara Faedda. In November 2017, Columbia University Press published her book From Da Ponte to the Casa Italiana: A Brief History of Italian Studies at Columbia University. The book was linked to an exhibition – for which Dr. Faedda was the Chief Curator - that opened in February and will close on June 12, 2018. Both the book and the exhibition were reviewed by The Record in April (“New Exhibit and Book Detail Columbia’s Italian Connection”, by G. Shapiro, April 2018). Dr. Faedda is also a winner of the Columbia-Paris Sciences & Lettres (PSL) Collaboration Projects Grants, for the project “Heritage Practices and Critical Fashion Theories” (2018-2019).

Federica Franze, Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of the Intermediate sections, has continued to work on her Skype Project, which she has designed in collaboration with a colleague from the University of Urbino, in Italy. The project involves American students and Italian pre-service teachers in a language and culture teaching-learning online exchange. In the context of this project, she is creating a website (tentatively entitled “Piazza Digitale: idee per la classe di italiano” and scheduled to go live in the fall) that will contain some of the works of pre-service teachers in Italy as well as the works of the graduate students from our department who collaborated with her. This project was also awarded grants from the CTL and LRC. Since 2016 she has been creating pedagogical material for Italian teachers, published by Mondadori Education on the website Campus Italiano per Stranieri (in the section "Per insegnare").

Maria Luisa Gozzi, Senior Lecturer, has been engaged in revamping her courses, including Grand Tour of Italy: Il gusto della diversità and Rapid Reading and Translation, which is by now an hybrid course, with a strong online component, and she continues to work on how to integrate music (songs, arias, operas) in the language class and how to introduce films (and, more recently, poetry) and use them to illustrate various aspects of the grammar and deepen the students’ knowledge of Italian culture. She has recently given talks on how technology can facilitate the interpretation of texts in a foreign language and on the representation of food in Italian movies. She also gives presentations at the yearly orientation for TFs at Columbia.
Elizabeth Leake, Professor, published a book with Il Mulino (Tex Willer: Un cowboy nell’Italia del dopoguerra). Interviews in which she discusses the book have been published in La repubblica; Il Resto del Carlino, Il Corriere del Ticino, the book on Tex has also been reviewed in the Gazzetta di Mantova, Tuttolibri, and was featured in a program on Rai Radio3. In March, she was appointed Visiting Professor at University of Perugia, where she delivered two public lectures on the subject of narrative medicine and feminist activism, respectively. She was also invited to participate in a roundtable at the Associazione degli Italianisti in Florence, Italy, where she spoke on the subject of “La letteratura nel Sistema universitario internazionale”. She has submitted a co-authored manuscript on confino politico to Manchester University Press, where the project is under contract, and she was solicited to submit an article entitled, “Nor do I want your interpretation: Amelia Rosselli’s War Variations” for Disability Studies: An Anthology to be published by Routledge. Prof. Leake I have been awarded a fellowship at the Istituto di Studi Avanzati in Bologna for a period in the Spring of 2019.

Patrizia Palumbo, Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of the Elementary sections, has participated in conferences and workshops as well as created a new course on emigration and immigration together with Felice Beneduce. In addition, she has been working on an opera project entitled All’opera in collaboration with former graduate student Steve Baker (who worked on the design and implementation). The website aims to develop and test the four basic language skills while familiarizing students with the history of Italian opera and culture from the sixteenth century to the present.

Alessandra Saggin, Lecturer, is designing a new syllabus centered on Italian art history in a global perspective. She recently presented papers on a project carried out with her Intermediate students and illustrating some aspects of Italian culture in NYC, using Voicethread, from the theoretical framework and the main characteristics of the project to its technical aspects and its outcomes. In addition, she presented a paper about activities aimed at engaging students during and after the vision of a movie in class.

Barbara Spinelli, Senior Lecturer, published the articles “Localizing the Global: exploring responsive forms of inclusive pedagogy to preserve linguistic biodiversity,” in the volume Plurilingual Education: Research, teaching and language policies (Studi Germanici, Roma Tre University), and “Multilingual Turn in FL Education: Investigating L3/Ln learners’ reading-writing relationship”, in the journal Translation and Translanguaging in Multilingual Contexts (John Benjamins, Amsterdam). She was invited to be a member of the Scientific Committee of the Dante Alighieri Society and was also involved in the International project titled “Évaluation des compétence en Intercompréhension (Eval-IC)” coordinated by the “Université de la Réunion” and funded by the European Commission. Additionally, she presented a paper on the adopting an interdisciplinary approach for language
Konstantina Zanou, Director of Undergraduate Studies, received a Columbia-PSL Collaboration Grant for the project she proposed with Blaise Wilfert-Portal (École Normale Superieure, Paris), entitled ‘Transnational Intellectual History in Europe and the Mediterranean (18th-20th Centuries). Through a series of lectures, graduate classes, and a final workshop involving graduate students, this project will forge links between scholars in these two environments and set up the conditions for a long-term relationship of exchange in matters of research and educational practice in the field of transnational and global history. Her publications include: “Mediterranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century: A Roundtable,” with Jussi Kurunmäki, Bernard Heyberger, Ada Dialla, and Maurizio Isabella, in Global Intellectual History (February 2018). In addition, she participated in several conferences this past year, and will be keynote speaker of “Mediterranean Europe(s). Images and Ideas of Europe from the Mediterranean,” Istituto di Studi Filosofici in Napoli (June 2018). She was also the recipient of a Columbia University Lenfest Junior Faculty Development Grant.
Gràduàte Student Initiatives

This year’s Lead Teaching Fellow Massimiliano Delfino created the Italian Department’s Teaching Fellow Handbook under the supervision of the Department’s Lecturers and the Director of Graduate Studies, and organized two departmental teaching workshops. The first, held in October 2017 and entitled “A Great Lesson Plan in 20 minutes: Strategies and Technologies,” included an analysis of “Backward Design” and presentations on pedagogical strategies and technologies by Federica Franze and Matteo Pace. The second workshop, held in March 2018 and titled “Teaching Beyond Stereotypes: Language and Culture,” featured talks by Julianna Van Visco (“Use Your Words: Representation, Image, and Gender in the Language and Culture Classroom”), Jennifer Rhodes (“The Art of Surprise: Subverting Expectations in the Language and Literature Classroom”), and with a keynote address by Barbara Spinelli (“Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Learning Environment: Implications for Language Classrooms”). This workshop focused on the question of how we can best teach culture while avoiding stereotypes and generalizations. The event was co-sponsored by the Department of Italian and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Massimiliano also organized and facilitated for the Italian Department a Microteaching workshop offered by the CTL, with the Caro Arrigoni, will teach a course titled “On drugs: a history of psychoactive substances through their literary and cultural representations (1800-2018)” through the Teaching Scholars Program.

Irene Bulla, successfully defended her dissertation, titled “Impossible Tales: Language and Monstrosity in the Literary Fantastic,” on May 8. She will be a coordinator for the Columbia Program in Venice once again this summer.

Massimiliano Luca Delfino, Teaching Assistant, Massimiliano Delfino was a finalist for the 2018 Presidential Awards for Outstanding Teaching by Graduate Students. He was also a Lead Teaching Fellow and Teagle Fellow for the Center for Teaching and Learning for the 2018-2019 academic year. This semester he completed his prospectus defense.


Allison Marie DeWitt, Teaching Fellow, has been appointed as preceptor in the Core Curriculum to teach Literature Humanities starting next semester.

Nicole Ann Kiviat, Teaching Fellow, was awarded the Oldrini Fellowship for Fall of 2018.

Isabella Maria Livorni, Teaching Fellow, was recently profiled on the GSAS blog. You can read her interview here.

Umberto Mazzei, Teaching Assistant, was appointed as a TA at the History Department for the course Latin American Civilization I (with professor Pizzigoni) in the fall 2017 semester and confirmed in the Spring 2018 for Latin American Civilization II (with professor Piccato). In December 2017 he completed his M.Phil. exams and in April 2018 passed his prospectus defense. Over the Summer he will be a language instructor at Columbia and has been appointed as preceptor in the Core Curriculum to teach Literature Humanities starting next semester. He has also been awarded the Rosengarten named fellowship.

Beatrice Mazzi, Teaching Fellow, was selected as a Lead Teaching Fellow at the Center for Teaching and Learning for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Christina McGrath, Teaching Fellow, successfully defended her M.Phil. and was selected as a GSAS administrative fellow who will be working for the Heyman Center.

(Continued on page 9)
Matteo Pace, Kluge Graduate Student Mentor, has been appointed as preceptor in the Core Curriculum to teach Literature Humanities starting next semester.

J. Alessia Palanti, University Writing instructor, is currently on a two-year contract to teach her own section of University Writing: Readings in Gender and Sexuality. Her article “We Want Lesbians Too: New Feminisms Old Schisms in Alina Marazzi’s We Want Roses Too” is forthcoming in the volume Queer Italian Media (2019) and she has also presented her work at several conferences.

Claudia Maria Sbuttoni, Teaching Fellow, was recently awarded the Harri-man-Council for European Studies Pre-Dissertation Research Fellowship (2 months of funded research in Europe) for 2017-2018.

Julianna Visco, Teaching Fellow, has been appointed as preceptor in the Core Curriculum to teach Literature Humanities starting next semester.

Alumni News

We plan to expand this section in our future newsletters, but in the meantime we are happy to share the following notes:

Humberto Ballesteros Capasso (Ph.D. ‘15) will be Assistant Professor of Italian and Spanish at Hostos Community College, C.U.N.Y, starting August 2018.

Akash Kumar (Ph.D., ‘13) will be Visiting Assistant Professor at Indiana University for the upcoming academic year.

Manuele Gragnolati (Ph.D. ‘99), Martin Eisner (Ph.D. ‘03), and Kristina Olson (Ph.D., ‘06) are on the Board of Editors of the new electronic journal Bibliotheca Dantesca, an annual international peer-reviewed journal dedicated to all tendencies in Dante studies.
We hope you enjoyed this newsletter, and we welcome your submissions and updates.

Please send your information to us at Italian@columbia.edu, with the subject: “Newsletter Submission” for consideration in our next volume.