

“Dante Politico at the Crossroad of Arts and Sciences”
A Virtual International Symposium
Friday, April 16, Saturday, April 17, and Sunday, April 18, 2021
9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

SPEAKERS

MARIA LUISA ARDIZZONE (New York University, New York, NY, USA)

“Economy and Logic in Dante’s *Monarchia*: An Archetype”

“*Et finis habet rationem optimi.*” *Monarchia* 1.14.3

One of the goals of Dante’s *Monarchia* is the temporalization of a patrimony of metaphysical ideas. Dante’s effort geared toward considering, within the laws of time, things that find their value in their transcendent origin is one of the aspects of the political treatise worthy of reflection. My paper addresses an apparently marginal issue that Dante discusses in a chapter of the first book of the *Monarchia*. Usually neglected by scholars, such a chapter introduces an economic theory which I will show to be organic to Dante’s aim of temporalization. The paper will discuss what I indicate as an archetype in order to demonstrate the continuity that Dante establishes between a logical principle and a more properly economic principle.

Maria Luisa Ardizzone is professor of Italian literature at New York University, NY. She studied medieval palaeography, literature, and history at the University of Palermo, and twentieth-century literature at the Sorbonne in Paris. Her principal areas of interest are the Middle Ages, poetry and poetics, rhetoric, intellectual history, medieval philosophy, politics, science, and twentieth-century poetry. As a scholar of medieval intellectual history, Ardizzone rereads vernacular texts from the thirteenth and fourteenth century in light of the ancient and Medieval Latin traditions and their multicultural background, attempting to evaluate lines of thought and meanings lost or not yet adequately confronted. Ardizzone’s publications include: *Reading as the Angels Read: Speculation and Politics in Dante’s Banquet* (2016); *Dante: il paradigma intellettuale. Un’invenzione degli anni fiorentini* (2011); *Guido Cavalcanti: The Other Middle Ages* (2002; also published in Italian translation in 2006); Ezra Pound, *Machine Art and Other Writings: The Lost Thought of the Italian Years* (1996; also published in German translation in 2005 and in Polish translation in 2003); *Ezra Pound e la scienza. Scritti inediti o rari* (1987). In addition to her book on Dante’s *Convivio*, her most recent studies in medieval politics include *Dante as Political Theorist: Reading Monarchia*, edited and with an Introduction (2018); “Dante and the Natural Logic of Politics: Instinct, Intellect, Economy,” in *Da Dante a Vico. Ripensare la tradizione italiana*, edited by Enrica Lisciani Petrini. *Il Pensiero. Rivista di filosofia* 2, 57 (2019): 61-80; “The *Vicinia* and its Role in Dante’s Political Thought,” *Dante Studies* CXXX (2012-2013): 163-182. Ardizzone’s work in progress includes a book on Dante’s *Commedia*.

ALESSANDRO BARBERO (University of Eastern Piedmont, Vercelli, Italy)

“Dante’s Political Activity and Party Allegiance in Florence”

For at least seven years, from 1295 to 1301, Dante was immersed in the political life of the Florentine commune. The government of Florence was a “large” government, as thousands of citizens would rotate in office. However, in those years, Dante was part of that governmental elite who would sit almost

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permanently in the various councils and would often rise to speak. So far this political activity has been considered almost exclusively as a background against which the poet conceived the opinions he would later express in the *Comedy*. But a more detailed analysis enables us to reconstruct a new aspect in Dante’s profile: one of a man with an allegiance to a party and even to a faction, fully involved and possibly compromised in the management of power, and whose career came to an end—not by chance—with a lawsuit for corruption brought against him by his political enemies.

Alessandro Barbero, writer and historian from Turin, teaches medieval history at the Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale in Vercelli, Italy. He published novels and numerous historical essays on the Middle Ages and beyond. His first novel, *Bella vita e guerre altrui di Mr. Pyle gentiluomo*, earned him the Premio Strega in 1996. He collaborates with the daily newspaper *La Stampa* and *Tuttolibri*, with the journal *Medioevo*, and with television (Piero Angela’s *Superquark*) and radio programs (Rai Storia, *A.C.D.C.*, *Passato e Presente*, and *Alle otto della sera*) of the *RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana*. Among his various responsibilities, he directs the book series *Storia d’Europa e del Mediterraneo* published by Salerno Press. His most recent titles include *Lepanto. La battaglia dei tre imperi* (2010), *Il divano di Istanbul* (2011), *I prigionieri dei Savoia* (2012), *Le ateniesi* (2015), *Costantino il vincitore* (2016), and *Dante* (2020).

DANIELA BOCCASSINI (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada)

“Within the Universe / the Universe Within: Re-visioning Dante’s Cosmo-Politics”

We live in mythical times — and so did Dante. The difference is: he knew it, we don’t. Neither did most of his contemporaries, for that matter. Awakening humans to the mythical experience of what they unknowingly call reality is a timeless, sacred task — one that Dante took upon himself as his myth, his own cross. If we can awaken a genuine interest for the kind of cosmos that Dante saw and meant to disclose to his readers, his *Comedia* will appear as provocative today as it intended to be 700 years ago. A complex cosmology underpins Dante’s journey through the beyond, and forms the poem’s very bedrock. Yet his unconventional views are all too often disregarded as a dispensable ideological scaffolding that faithfully mirrors outdated beliefs in a Ptolemaic configuration of the universe and a retributive representation of the Christian afterlife. Had Dante intended to dismantle from within the cosmology of his times so as to reveal the mythical dimension that animates it, we would find ourselves ill-equipped to see how, why, wherefore he might have wished to do so. Through select examples, I will attempt to show how Dante’s cosmology was aimed at healing the disease of partisan politics by returning the human polis into the fold of a universe that transcends anthropocentrism. This reintegration of humanity from its self-inflicted, exile-prone mentality into the unity of an emergent, interconnected self-aware whole is at the root of what we might wish to call, in today’s parlance, Dante’s eco-politics. For all its apparent novelty (a trait that Dante kept advocating for all of his endeavors), this “novel” journey of conversion and return plunges its roots into the rich soil of our most ancient, and most self-aware, cosmological mythos: the inseparability of our life, each individual life, and the life of the cosmos. Just as it did in Dante’s case, this alternate vision requires of us that we humbly accept the need to “run a different course (*tenere altro viaggio*)” and, in so doing, we learn how to regenerate our relationship to the mystery of mind, and of the living world.

Daniela Boccassini is professor of Italian Studies at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests focus on the quest for transformative understanding or gnosis — as different from argumentative

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logic. She has studied ancient transformative practices such as falconry and alchemy; Medieval and Renaissance authors such as Dante Alighieri and Montaigne, and modern depth-psychologist C. G. Jung, whose works center on the journey of inner transformation. Among her publications are *Il volo della mente: Falconeria e sofia nel mondo mediterraneo. Islam, Federico II, Dante* (2003); *Sogni e visioni nel mondo indo-mediterraneo* (2009); *Transmutatio: la via ermetica alla felicità* (2012), and a number of articles on Dante, C. G. Jung, and the dialogue between Dante’s and C.G. Jung’s thought. In her most recent research, the question of our engagement with the more-than-human living world has become increasingly prominent, especially in the face of the impending environmental destruction; on this, she is the editor of the collection of essays titled *Oikosophia: From the Intelligence of the Heart to Ecophilosophy* (2018).

CLAUDIA DI FONZO (University of Trent, Italy)

“Dante Poet of Discretion and Judgment”

Dante is that poet and that pilgrim (*agens*) who, proceeding on his journey, knows, judges, and improves himself. Endowed with an intellect of love and therefore an intelligent heart, he learns in the course of his exemplary journey, human and poetic, to use “discretion” in judging, to direct the intellect to Wisdom, the will to Justice (*recta dilectio*) until reaching, step by step and in poetry, the mystical contemplation of the highest good. The *Comedy*, therefore, is not only a journey into the Afterlife, it is not simply a medieval vision but it is also the greatest legal fiction of Italian literature. The Magna Curia, the supreme court of justice, is located “out of the world” and the judge, in poetic fiction interwoven with the arts of rhetoric and music (*fictio rhetorica musicaque poita*), is not Dante. Dante is “made scribe” (*Pd X 27*) of what he lives and sees, he is the *agens* (he who perfects himself by going) who, imbued with public doctrines (*publicis documentis imbutus* of *Mn I i 2*) and philosophical- learned “in the schools of religious and in the disputations of philosophers” (*Cv II xii 7*), contemplates the afterlife and scrutinizes God’s judgment on human beings and on the things of the world through a path of knowledge and transformation at the end of which his will, together with that of his readers, will be rectified. From abroad (in exile), Dante observed the ferocity of the internal struggles that undermine the civil coexistence and the fulfillment of the “companionable” nature of man (*Cv IV iv 1*) and shared with his friend Cino da Pistoia the hope that hostilities would cease with the descent of Arrigo VII in Italy. For this reason, he planned and then wrote the *Monarchy*. His public law treaty arises from a concrete political need and from a judgment on contemporary events. It is also inserted in the contemporary juridical debate on the nature and legitimacy of power, on the need for peace (*pax augustea*), on the ordering role of the “command unit” (*Monarchy*), on the idea of the relationship between people and sovereignty. He also roots his reasoning on the historical evaluation of the history of the Roman Empire and its exemplarity. It is not surprising that the importance of Dante’s reflection on politics and right attracted the interest of jurists and that, in the fourteenth century, a real “juridical Dantism” was born (Pietro Alighieri, Alberico da Rosciate, Bartolo da Sassoferrato).

Claudia Di Fonzo is a Dante philologist and scholar of the Middle Ages. She teaches and has taught courses in law and literature at the University of Trento since 2011. She has also taught at New York University (NY), at the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon, and at the University of L’Aquila. Her main interests focus on medieval Italian and Latin literature, medieval legal literature, and the ancient exegesis of the *Comedy* of Dante Alighieri (*The last form of the Optimal Comment*, 2000). Her early research produced an important edition of an unpublished work of Pio Rajna (*The Matter and Form of the “Divine*

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Comedy,” 1998) and an unpublished correspondence also between Pio Rajna and his teacher Alessandro D’Ancona. She published the critical edition *L’ultima forma dell’«Ottimo commento»*. *Chiose sopra la Comedia di Dante Alighieri fiorentino tracte da diversi ghiosatori: Inferno* (2008), also available at https://dante.dartmouth.edu/biblio.php?comm_id=13337. Her current research projects focus on the relationship between law and literature (*Dante and the legal tradition*, 2016).

GIUSEPPE MAZZOTTA (Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA)

“Roman Culture and the Future as Freedom”

A central theme in the *Divine Comedy*, indeed a turning a point in Dante’s narrative, occurs at the beginning of *Purgatory* with Canto I. This paper addresses Dante’s valorization of liberty as the core virtue that can guarantee a possible new history for the world, the reconstruction of Italian history, and the private and public experiences of politics. In the last two cantos of *Inferno*, Dante had retrieved the tragic world of eternal Rome through the encounter with the fate of Ugolino and his children dying of hunger in Pisa’s tower and through the vision of Satan holding Brutus and Cassius, the killers of Caesar, in his mouth. In these images, private and public history are caught in the instinct of lawlessness. As soon as Dante touches the shore of *Purgatory*, he starts thinking about how to renew history and he begins this project by returning to the Roman conception of liberty. *Purgatory* is, for Dante, the foundation of a new world order and what emerges in *Purgatorio* is the question of liberty as the virtue that can provide human beings with options, decisions, and ways to be involved in the political life around them. Dante leaves all hell behind him and asks about the way that may lead to moral reconstruction in the history of the human community. Every scene about predestination, love, laws, etc., is at the core of a new history of the world and must be seen as the gift of liberty available to us. This turn to radical liberty in reality dismisses the Aristotelian emphasis on philosophizing in favor of the concrete experiences of daily life whereby each human being has to make decisions and take responsibility for one’s own actions. This is a radical rethinking of history.

Giuseppe Mazzotta is the Sterling Professor of Humanities for Italian at Yale University. He has written a number of essays about every century of Italian literary history. He served as president of the Dante Society of America (2003-2009). His books include: *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the Divine Comedy* (1979); *The World at Play in Boccaccio’s Decameron* (1986); *Dante’s Vision and the Circle of Knowledge* (1993); *The Worlds of Petrarch* (1993); *The New Map of the World: the Poetic Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (1998; also published in Italian translation in 2001); *Cosmopoiesis: The Renaissance Experiment* (2001; also published in Italian translation in 2008). He has edited or co-edited several books, such as *Critical Essays on Dante* (1991) and *Magister Regis: Studies in Honor of Robert Earl Kaske* (1986). In 2008, he published the Norton edition of *Dante’s Inferno* (translated by M. Palma). This year a new translation of Vico’s *New Science* has been published by Yale University Press with an introduction by Giuseppe Mazzotta called “magisterial” by all readers of the manuscript.

FRANZISKA MEIER (Georg-August University of Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany)

“China Looking for Political Guidance: Dante in Liang Qichao’s *Xin Luoma* (*La Nuova Roma*)”

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If Hans Robert Jauss is correct that the sense of a text can only be deduced from the history of its reception, the Chinese melodrama *Xin Luoma*, published in 1902, should turn out to be another eye-opener for understanding the political Dante. The paper studies the way and the reasons why Dante, in particular the political aspects of the *Divine Comedy*, had so much appeal on Chinese authors at the end of the nineteenth century. In this paper, I show the two lines of mediation along which Dante has been received in the Far East. On the one hand, he has been read through the lenses of Thomas Carlyle’s book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and The Heroic in History*, which had become a point of reference in Japan; on the other hand, Dante has been taken to Asia on the wings of Garibaldi’s fame and the history of the Italian national unification which had stirred so much attention among Japanese and Chinese authors. Then, I focus on Liang Qichao’s play *Xin Luoma*, in which Dante is staged as an admonisher and visionary of China’s political future, in order to consider the extent to which the peculiar modifications triggered by the twofold mediation of Dante may give a new insight into the *Comedy*’s political thinking.

Franziska Meier is professor of French and Italian literature at the Georgia-Augusta-University in Göttingen, Germany, after studying Romance Philology and Comparative Literature at the university of Munich. Following the German concept of “*Romanistik*,” her research is manifold. In French literature, she is interested in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. In 2016, she published a book on the boom of autobiographical writing during the French Revolution. In regard to Italian literature, she focuses on novels written in the fascist period and during the *Resistenza*. Ten years ago, she shifted her interest to Dante and early Italian poetry. In 2013, she founded the Göttinger Dante-Forum, a platform that organizes international and interdisciplinary conferences once a year. With regard to her own research, she is particularly interested in Dante’s *Convivio*. In 2018, she published the proceedings of three conferences dedicated to this first treatise written by Dante in exile under the title *Dante’s Convivio or How to Restart Writing in Exile* (2018). In the same year, she published an introduction to the *Divine Comedy* (*Dantes Göttliche Komödie. Eine Einführung*, 2018). For some time now, her research on Dante embraces the reception of the poem. Currently, she is writing a book on why the *Divine Comedy* has become a best and long seller and why it appeals to so many different epochs and cultures.

KRISTINA M. OLSON (George Mason University, VA)

“Separated by the State: Parental Love and Corporality in Dante”

Aristotle’s conception of *philia*, the love of parents for their children, equates the love for one’s offspring to the attachment one feels to one’s body. Dante’s considerations of parental love as an embodied and integral experience appear in several of his works, including the *Commedia*, his letter to Cangrande and the *Monarchia*. In the letter to Cangrande, for example, Dante states that the relationship between father and son is like the relationship between the whole and its parts (Epistle XIII, 13). If parental love is an embodied experience, then the parting of those bound by love is, by extension, a figurative rending of the body. Family separation is thus akin to dismemberment, the division of a physical whole. Dante visually renders this separation in the punishment of Bertran de Born, a soul found amongst the schismatics, for having caused division between the sons of King Henry II and their father. The separation of family members or friends was considered a capital offense, as Guido da Pisa writes in his commentary on this canto, a sin deserving of the harshest punishment. My presentation explores Dante’s contrasting portraits of familial separation in the *Commedia* to give historical depth to the inhumane practice of separating

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parents and children at the U.S. border with Mexico. Separation from one’s children is the experience of physical and spiritual dismemberment for those parents suffering in hell, the minds of those in the “blind prison” (*Inf.* 10.59), as one anguished father, Cavalcante de’ Cavalcanti, describes it. Cavalcante’s paternal love and anguish clashes with the case of another sinner and father, Ugolino della Gherardesca. Children should not be subjected to their parents’ political fate; as Dante writes, even if Ugolino betrayed his city, this was no reason to have his children suffer (*Inf.* 33.86-7). Ugolino’s story is not the story of the migrant: that of a parent who would sacrifice his own life for his children’s wellbeing. Instead, it serves as an allegory of division and destruction in the family and the state by the narcissism of its leaders. It is the consumption and erasure of future generations born into a conflict which was bred by those in power.

Kristina M. Olson is associate professor of Italian in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at George Mason University. She is the author of *Courtesy Lost: Dante, Boccaccio and the Literature of History* (2014) and several articles on Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch. She is the co-editor of three volumes: *Open City: Seven Writers in Postwar Rome* (1997); *Boccaccio 1313-2013* (2015); and *Approaches to Teaching Dante’s Divine Comedy* (second edition) with the Modern Language Association (2020). She is the current President of the American Boccaccio Association (2020-2023).

MARIANO PÉREZ CARRASCO (Conicet – University of Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina)

“Dante as a Modern Utopian Thinker: Origins and Metamorphosis of an Idea”

When, in a famous note about the origins of the modern state, Antonio Gramsci studied Dante’s political theory, his judgment was lapidary. A “victim of class war,” Dante produced not a real political theory, but a personal, more autobiographical than philosophical dream anchored in the distant Roman times and deprived of “any historical-cultural impact.” Gramsci’s conclusion was that “this was not a political theory but a political utopia colored by reflections of the past.” These ideas were by no means new in the 1930s. In fact, they seem to have already become commonplace in 1858, when Francesco de Sanctis published his famous essay on *The Character of Dante and his Utopia*, given that not just Cesare Balbo, in his bestselling biography of the poet (*Life of Dante*, 1839), but also Vincenzo Gioberti, in an essay of no less success (*On the Moral and Civil Primacy of the Italian Race*, 1843), had considered Dante’s political views in a quite negative way as the expression of a modern utopian thinker. Yet, whereas those nineteenth-century intellectuals, along with impracticality (the “utopian” features), stressed the modernity of Dante’s political ideas, Gramsci—and, with him, many others—considered Dante as a purely anachronistic dreamer. They all agree that Dante’s political theories were impractical, but while some of them think that Dante’s universal monarchy was impractical because it was a *modern utopia*, others consider the reason for such impracticality to be the fact that Dante’s theoretical empire was the *gothic dream* of a defeated man, incapable of understanding his own present. Focusing on the links between the intertwined ideas of modernity and utopia, this paper will explore the different forms acquired by the idea of Dante as either a modern or an anachronistic utopian thinker.

Mariano Pérez Carrasco is research associate at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (Conicet) in the area of Italian literature and Dante studies, and associate professor of Medieval and Renaissance philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. His research interests focus on the links between philosophy, literature and politics, especially in Dante’s works; the methodological problems of historiography in the fields of both literature and philosophy; and the history, theory, and

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practice of translation. He has been Mellon Fellow at I Tatti - The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, visiting scholar at the University of Turin, and visiting fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of Bologna. He has given lectures at the Universities of Bologna, Barcelona, Madrid, Turin, San Andrés, Cuyo, Mackenzie, and the Società Dantesca Italiana. He has published *The Paradoxes of Novelty* (*Las paradojas de la novedad*, 2018) and *The Desired Word: The Divine Comedy in the Contemporary Hell* (*La palabra deseada: La Divina Comedia en el infierno contemporáneo*, forthcoming). He has translated into Spanish Dante's *Convivio* (2008) and an anthology of Virgilio Giotti's poems (*Colores: Antología 1909-1955*, with Ricardo H. Herrera, 2010). He has recently edited, with Francesco Furlan, the Spanish translation of Leon Battista Alberti's *Descriptio urbis Romae* in a special issue of *Hvmanistica: An International Journal of Early Renaissance Studies*, Fabrizio Serra, Pisa – Roma, XIII (N.S. VII), 1, 2018, MMXIX. He integrates the Executive Editorial Committee of *Hvmanistica* and *Albertiana*, and is a member of the Société Internationale Leon Battista Alberti and the Association Artes Renascentes. He has collaborated, through the translation of a historical document into Italian, to the latest edition of Riccardo Bacchelli, *Il Diavolo al Pontelungo*, edited by Marco Veglia (2018).

DIEGO QUAGLIONI (University of Trent, Italy)

“*Ut virtuosius operetur per lucem gratie:*” Notes on *Monarchia* III iv 20

Among the places of controversial interpretation of Dante's *Monarchia*, paragraph 20 of Chapter IV in Book III is noteworthy for its particular difficulty. Its text closes the discussion on the metaphor of the *duo luminaria* excluding that temporal power receives its being, its virtue (that is, his authority) and his operation. In that same place, however, it is stated that temporal power receives from the spiritual "what is needed to operate more virtuously, through the light of grace which in heaven and on earth gives it the blessing of the supreme Pontiff". The attribution of an earthly and celestial efficacy to the papal blessing appeared sometimes inconsistent on the doctrinal level, to the point of suggesting corrective interventions that tradition has variously regarded. A re-examination of the text and its problems of a philological and doctrinal nature can offer new insights into interpretation.

Diego Quaglioni is professor of the history of medieval and modern law at the School of Law of the University of Trento (Italy). He has taught as a visiting professor in France (Paris I – Panthéon-Sorbonne; Lyon, École Normale Supérieure – Lettres et Sciences Humaines), Germany (Frankfurt a.M., Goethe Universität–International Max Planck Research School for Comparative Legal History), Austria (Salzburg, Paris Lodron Universität, Rechtswissenschaftliche Fakultät) and he has given seminars and lectures elsewhere in Europe, the United States, Canada, and China. He has also been a visiting researcher at the Robbins Collection at Berkeley Law. He has published many books and articles on Medieval and Renaissance legal and political thought and on law and literature between the Middle Ages and the modern period. Recently, he has provided a new edition of Dante's *Monarchia* (2014, 2015²).

STEFANO SELENU (Independent Scholar)

“The Politics of the Vulgar in Dante's Exilic Writings”

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Dominated by vulgar, nationalist, and imperialist anti-political forces, the transitional moment in which we live calls for more attention on the politics of the vulgar. How does the vulgar relate to both the vernacular and the imperial? With this question in mind, in my paper, I will propose to return to Dante’s exilic writing to emphasize how, in the immediate aftermath of his exile, his political thought permeates his discourses on poetry and the vernacular. I will show this by refocusing on Dante’s strategic recentering on the concept of vulgar people (*gente volgare*) as a counterpoint to leverage his views on the imperial authority, ethical nobility, and poetic illustriousness in *Convivio* and *De vulgari eloquentia*. Rather than being a generic term, *gente volgare* proves to be an insightful concept for understanding the ramifications between his linguistic and political thoughts post exile.

Stefano Selenu taught Italian studies in different universities and colleges such as Brown University, Wellesley College, Cornell University, and Syracuse University. His research focuses on the role of language and political thought in literature and critical theory with a particular focus on Dante, Vico, and Antonio Gramsci. He is the author of the book, *Ideas: Dante, Gramsci e il sardo comune* (2017). Selenu, who was awarded the Antonio Gramsci Prize in 2005, is currently completing a second manuscript, tentatively titled *The Vernacular in Counterpoint: Language, Exile, and Poetry of Praxis in Dante*.

FLAVIO SILVESTRINI (University Roma Tre, Rome, Italy)

“The Yoke of Liberty: Dante’s Politics from Philosophy to Theology”

Dante’s political reflection is rooted, at an epistemological level, on finding a “political science” useful to set a connection between the recovery of (Aristotelian) philosophy and the restoration of the sacredness of power in the age of the defeat of political universalism. This ambitious project allows Dante to combine many different sources – as it is exemplarily shown in the Sphere of Wisdom (*Pd. X*) – into a fully original theoretical synthesis. From an institutional perspective, the restoration of the Roman Empire, through an updating of its prerogatives, leads Dante to suppose a universal Monarchy that is not only the execution of the greatest earthly *potestas*, but also serves to unfold the philosophical potential of a humankind united in peace, as a perfect *voluntas* to pursue the good and to order everyone toward the principles of theology as an exercise of *charitas*. As the ruler of the whole world, the Emperor finally becomes the temporal *auctoritas* that God sets up as *remedium contra infirmitatem peccati*, cooperating with the spiritual authority of the Pope. The earthly capacity of the *Monarcha* to carry out a juridical-political task – which, as said above, also includes a philosophical-moral and theological-political mission – is assessed by his constitutive immunity to cupidity. According to Dante, cupidity is the true threat to the search for justice and political peace at his time, leading also the Church and its guide into a crisis. By following the earthly order given by the imperial rule, the good citizen reconciles him- or herself with the good individual and, in a certain sense, walks more firmly towards the afterlife that belongs to the good person of faith: political freedom is not the right to resist just power but, on the contrary, to choose (freely) to submit to it, since it is God’s will.

Flavio Silvestrini teaches the history of political thought at the Department of Political Sciences of the University Roma Tre. He has mainly dealt with the history of the idea of political peace with studies ranging from the late Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. In particular, he published a monograph on political Dante titled *Iugum libertatis: Dante e la dottrina politica del libero arbitrio* (2012) and a forthcoming volume dedicated to *The Art of Peace: Kant and the “Political Decade” (1790-1799)*. On

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the twentieth-century Italian readings of Dante’s politics, he published the monograph on *Attualità della tradizione: Dante politico in Augusto Del Noce* (2010). He also carried out studies straddling institutional history and investigating, in particular, the crisis of parliamentarianism in the early twentieth century and the historical paths of representative assemblies in the late Middle Ages. His essay dedicated to the Sicilian parliament under Frederick III of Aragon was awarded the Emile Lousse international prize (2014). He is currently member of the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Philosophy*, of the Italian Association of Historians of Political Doctrines (AISDP) and of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions (ICHRPI).

PAUL STERN (Ursinus College, Philadelphia, PA, USA)

“Dante’s Critique of Aquinas: The Vindication of Prudence in *Paradiso*’s Heaven of the Sun”

The Heaven of the Sun is the home of the intellect and its aspirations. Appropriately, Dante here assesses the most profound intellectual undertaking of his world, namely, Aquinas’s synthesis of faith and reason. Dante’s negative judgment on this project, suggested by his irreverent treatment of “Thomas of Aquino,” rests on a challenge to the claim that faith perfects reason. Underlying this claim is the premise that both aim at the same goal—namely, that state of completeness where there is no desire because there is no lack. Dante questions whether this notion of good can be good for the being that can “wander.” He shows Thomas to be unable to account by deduction from a general principle or law for this distinctly human possibility. Dante thus vindicates Solomon’s prudence and its central insight regarding the elusive unity of the irreducible amalgam of desire and intellect that somehow constitutes the human whole. On this understanding, reason’s limits point not to faith but to the need for the rational inquiry regarding human ends. For this reason, political life, where the tensions of our nature are most manifest, becomes the crucial focus of Dante’s thought, occupying the heart of *Paradiso* and the *Comedy* as a whole.

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DONATELLA STOCCHI-PERUCCHIO (University of Rochester, Rochester NY, USA) Between

“Between Prophecy and Utopia: Dante as a Communitarian Thinker”

I think of Dante’s utopia with Tomas More’s composite paradigm in mind: the critical moment, or *pars destruens*, and the creative one, or *pars construens*. The former is Dante’s prophetic denunciation of the “state of misery” in which the living find themselves, and the latter is his plan “to bring them to a state of happiness” (*Ep* XIII 39). Dante’s utopia of peace—the greatest among all goods—founded on the rule of law is for me a workable political project inspired not by Platonic idealism but rather by Aristotelian realism. The community Dante envisions is based on his logocentric conception of the human being in which Christian-Evangelical senses enrich the Aristotelian anthropology of the *zoon politikon*. What I consider the most pertinent source of such a notion is a passage from Bonaventure’s *Breviloquium* that speaks of similitude as the divine “vestige” in the human being and in creation (see *Mn* I viii 2; *Pd* I 103-117). Prophecy and utopia—quite often fused together in the language of poetry—manifest alongside an

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ideological battle against determinism (most prominently Cavalcanti’s) and against the acquiescence inherent to political neutrality. Determinism stifles utopia because, in preaching necessity as truth, it denies human freedom and responsibility, and thus the possibility of transforming the world. Neutrality amounts to moral complicity (*If* III). In Dante’s prophetic stance we can detect a combination of two matrices, the biblical one and the Greek one of *parrhesía*, the right-duty of the citizens of the polis to make their voices heard (P. Prodi 2016). These elements of proto-democracy, along with certain aspects of the *Monarchy*, encourage a non-autocratic interpretation of the political system Dante advocates: one that valorizes human cooperation—e. g. the possible intellect as “social brain”—and the concord of the wills as solidarity; one that defends the citizens’ liberty as the right to exist solely for their own sake (*Mn* I xii 11).

Donatella Stocchi-Perucchio is Associate Professor of Italian in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Rochester, NY, and Honorary Professor in the Department of the Humanities at the University of the Pacific in Lima, Peru. Her major research areas are Dante Studies, modern Italian literature and culture, and the *Ventennio*, with attention to the dialogue between literature, philosophy, history, and the arts. She has published on Dante, Cavalcanti, Pirandello, and Leopardi. Her current research branches in three main directions: Dante’s political philosophy in the context of the juridical literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the political reception of Dante in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—the case of Giovanni Gentile in particular—and the phenomenon of the creative reception of Dante across time, space, media, and cultures. She is currently working on a digital database devoted to the various manifestations of this phenomenon worldwide. She co-edited, introduced, and contributed to the collection of essays titled *Dante Politico: Ideological Reception Across Boundaries* (*Mediaevalia* 38, 2017).

MIRKO TAVONI (University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy)

“*Dante Linguista* at the Crossroad of Philosophy, Politics, and Biography”

What has changed in our understanding of the *De vulgari eloquentia* in the half century that separates us from the fundamental critical edition (1968) and commentary (1979) by Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo? Mengaldo’s interpretation, in agreement with Gianfranco Contini’s “idea of Dante” (*Un’idea di Dante* is the title of Contini’s famous collection of essays), is that Dante always accompanies his poetry, while producing it in its subsequent experimental phases, with meta-poetic reflection, and with self-exegesis on the authentic meaning of his past poetry. The *De vulgari eloquentia* represents the leading theoretical moment of this distinctive constant of Dante’s personality, the moment dedicated to the technical, linguistic and rhetorical aspects of his own and others’ poetry. This idea is still valid to explain the second book of the treatise, but it is inadequate to account for the entire first book: the philosophical definition of the essence of language (chapters i-iii); the linguistic history of humanity, from Adam’s *primiloquium* to the Tower of Babel (chapters iv-vii), and from the colonization of Europe (chapters viii-ix), through the discovery of the intrinsic mutability of every human language in time and space (chap. ix), up to the map of the Italian dialects (chapters x-xv) and to the utopian idea of the “illustrious vernacular” (chapters xvi-xix), with its political implications closely connected with the imperial idea. All these contents, their disparate sources, and the whole universe of discourse thus created by Dante, fall completely outside the poetic dimension; they originate in other dimensions of Dante’s personality, in other philosophical interests, they reveal different cultural projects and look at a wider and more composite audience, tied to the biographical contingencies of Dante exiled over the years 1304-1306 in which he composed his linguistic treatise.

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JORGE WIESSE REBAGLIATI (University of the Pacific, Lima, Peru)

“Dante Politico: Three Testimonies in Modern Peruvian Plastic Arts”

As it has been frequently observed, the *Divine Comedy* is the source for other texts, musical pieces, sculptures, and paintings. Since the second half of the twentieth century and, particularly, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, various Peruvian and non-Peruvian artists based in Peru have taken Dante’s work as an inspiration to reflect on the human condition and, not infrequently, on the political-civic dimension of it. From the examination of three works of art, namely, an oil painting by Carlos Enrique Polanco (Lima, 1953-), a sculpture by Luis Alfredo Agusti (Barcelona, 1969-), and the set consisting of several vitreux and a huge mosaic by Adolfo Winternitz (Vienna, 1906-Lima, 1993), I will explore various links with the *Divine Comedy*. One of the works is a direct commentary on Dante’s text, while the others focus on the figure of Dante himself either as a civic hero, as a witness to the horror of the contemporary city, or as an eschatological prophet, an announcer of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Jorge Wiese-Rebagliati is professor of Spanish and comparative literature at the Universidad del Pacífico (Lima, Peru). He is also professor at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, where he has taught Medieval Spanish literature, contemporary Spanish literature, and rhythmic and metrics. On a weekly basis and since the mid-1980s, he has participated in the *Lectura Dantis Limense*, a study group on Dante Alighieri’s work directed by Carlos Gatti. His work *Dante contempla la Trinidad. Dante contempla la Trinità* was awarded the Flaiano Prize for Italian Studies in 2018. In 2005, his book of poetry *Vigilia de los sentidos* was published. In 2008, he edited the collected volume *La Divina Comedia. Voces y ecos*. He also edited *La plegaria como texto* (2014) and *Purgatorios. Purgatori* (2015) and co-edited, with Jerónimo Pizarro, *Los futuros de Fernando Pessoa* (2013). He translated contemporary Italian poetry into Spanish. His Spanish translation of Fernando Pessoa’s 35 *Sonnets* was published in 2014.