



HOWARD R. MARRARO PRIZE AWARDED TO MARILYN MIGIEL FOR *A RHETORIC OF THE DECAMERON*; ROBERT HENKE TO RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION FOR *PERFORMANCE AND LITERATURE IN THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE*

New York, NY—22 November 2004—The Modern Language Association of America today announced that its eighteenth Howard R. Marraro Prize will be presented this year to Marilyn Migiel, of Cornell University, for her book *A Rhetoric of the Decameron*, published by the University of Toronto Press. Honorable mention will go to Robert Henke, of Washington University, for *Performance and Literature in the Commedia dell'Arte*, published by Cambridge University Press. Established in 1973, the biennial prize was awarded jointly with the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Italian Studies from 1996 until 2000.

The Howard R. Marraro Prize is awarded biennially and alternately with the Scaglione Prize, for an outstanding book in the field of Italian literature or comparative literature involving Italian. Migiel will receive a check in the amount of \$1,000 and a certificate. Henke will receive a certificate.

In addition to the Marraro Prize, the MLA will present fifteen other awards on 28 December 2004 during the association's annual convention, held this year in Philadelphia. The members of the selection committee for this year's Marraro Prize competition were Cristina Della Coletta (Univ. of Virginia); Michael Hardt (Duke Univ.); and Glenn Pierce (Univ. of Missouri, Columbia), chair.

The selection committee's citation for Migiel's book reads:

Marilyn Migiel brings years of research and of teaching Boccaccio's masterpiece to this stimulating and intellectually satisfying work. Eschewing traditional prefeminist and profeminist interpretations of the *Decameron*, Migiel's reading makes us focus on Boccaccio's lexicon and helps us understand that, as women become more empowered in Boccaccio's society, societal threats on that autonomy become more insistent. The work is thus at once feminist and convincing in its disciplined adherence to historical realism. Migiel often gives credit for her conclusions to observations made throughout the years by her students, a strategy that gives the work a sense of community sleuthing and a synthesis of multiple perspectives. With lively prose, Migiel offers Boccaccio scholars an original and fascinating study.

Marilyn Migiel received her BA from Cornell University in 1975 and her PhD in Italian language and literature from Yale University in 1981. After teaching at Yale for five years, she came to Cornell where she has been on the faculty since 1987. She is

currently professor of Italian in the Department of Romance Studies and a member of the graduate fields of romance studies, medieval studies, and Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Migiel is known primarily for her feminist readings of medieval and Renaissance Italian literature. Her publications include a book on Tasso, *Gender and Genealogy in Tasso's "Gerusalemme Liberata"*; *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, coedited with Juliana Schiesari; and numerous articles. Migiel's commitment to teaching, in particular at the undergraduate level, was recognized in 1995 when she received the Stephen and Margery Russell Award for Distinguished Teaching at Cornell. She is a member of the American Association of Teachers of Italian, the American Association of Italian Studies, the American Boccaccio Association, the Renaissance Society of America, and the Telluride Association.

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The Modern Language Association of America, the largest and one of the oldest of American learned societies in the humanities (est. 1883), promotes the advancement of literary and linguistic studies. The 30,000 members of the association come from each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia, as well as from Canada, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. *PMLA*, the flagship journal of the association, has published distinguished scholarly articles for over one hundred years. The association's annual convention, held each December, is attended by approximately 9,500 members of the MLA and allied groups. The MLA is a constituent of the American Council of Learned Societies and the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures.

The Marraro Prize is awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. Previous winners of the Marraro Prize were Bernard Weinberg, Thomas G. Bergin, Beatrice Corrigan, Joseph G. Fucilla, Franco Fido, Nicolas J. Perella, Rebecca J. West, William J. Kennedy, Glauco Cambon, Teodolinda Barolini, Millicent Marcus, Wayne A. Rebhorn, Lucia Re, Margaret Rosenthal, and Ellen V. Nerenberg. In 1996 and 1998, the Marraro Prize was awarded jointly with the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Italian Literary Studies. The winners in those years were Barbara Spackman, Robert S. Dombroski, and Karen Pinkus.

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The Howard R. Marraro Prize is supported by a fund established by Marraro during his lifetime and maintained by his bequest to the Modern Language Association. Howard Marraro was born in Sicily in 1897. He immigrated to the United States in 1905 and received most of his schooling here before returning to Sicily in 1912. In 1915 he entered Columbia College as a freshman, thus beginning an association with the university that lasted all his life. He was appointed to the Columbia faculty in 1925, received his PhD in 1932, and rose from lecturer to professor. Howard R. Marraro died in 1972.