

**MLA'S SCAGLIONE PRIZE FOR COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES AWARDED
TO SEETA CHAGANTI FOR *STRANGE FOOTING: POETIC FORM AND DANCE IN
THE LATE MIDDLE AGES***

New York, NY – 4 December 2019 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its twenty-seventh annual Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literary Studies to Seeta Chaganti, of the University of California, Davis, for her book *Strange Footing: Poetic Form and Dance in the Late Middle Ages*, published by the University of Chicago Press. The prize is awarded annually for an outstanding scholarly work that is written by a member of the association and that involves at least two literatures.

The prize is one of eighteen awards that will be presented on 11 January 2020, during the association's annual convention, to be held in Seattle. The members of the selection committee were Devin A. Fore (Princeton Univ.), chair; Martin Harries (Univ. of California, Irvine); and Natania Meeker (Univ. of Southern California). The committee's citation for Chaganti's book reads:

This meticulously researched and highly original book stages a colloquy between dance and poetry to rethink the actual and the imaginary. Engaging with process-based philosophies that approach virtuality as kinetic force rather than ontology, Seeta Chaganti draws our attention to the energetic relations between bodies that are manifested and formalized in these arts. At once both shape and movement, this “danced virtuality,” as she calls it, gives time and space a form that is material and concrete yet fleeting. For all of its theoretical ambition, *Strange Footing: Poetic Form and Dance in the Late Middle Ages* is hardly an abstract book, but one that is powerfully anchored in specific practices, habits, and experiences. Through her rich and historically grounded readings of medieval and modern works, Chaganti unearths an alternative phenomenology that transcends the confines of specific media and helps us understand varieties of sensory response beyond (and before) modernism's stark regimentation of the senses.

Seeta Chaganti is professor of English at the University of California, Davis. She received her BA from Harvard University, her MA from Georgetown University, and her PhD from Yale University. Chaganti is the author of *The Medieval Poetics of the Reliquary: Enshrinement, Inscription, Performance* and editor of *Medieval Poetics and Social Practice: Responding to the Work of Penn R. Szittyá*. Her articles and reviews have appeared in journals such as *The Journal of British Studies*, *Romance Studies*, and *Public Books*. Her work has appeared as chapters in several books, including most recently in *Emotion and Medieval Textual Media* and *The Medieval Literary: Beyond Form*.

The Modern Language Association of America and its over 25,000 members in 100 countries work to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literature. Founded in 1883, the MLA provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. The MLA sustains one of the finest publication programs in the humanities, producing a variety of publications for language and literature professionals and for the general public. The association publishes the *MLA International Bibliography*, the only comprehensive bibliography in language and literature, available online. The MLA Annual Convention features meetings on a wide variety of subjects; the 2020 convention in Seattle is expected to draw over 5,000 attendees. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

The Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literary Studies, awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards, was presented for the first time in 1992. Recent winners have been Alexa Huang, Donna V. Jones, Frédérique Ait-Touati, David Spurr, Carmen Nocentelli, Silke-Maria Weineck, Steven S. Lee, Ayesha Ramachandran, Haun Saussy, and Siraj Ahmed.

Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the James Russell Lowell Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Scholarly Edition and for Collaborative, Bibliographical, or Archival Scholarship; the Lois Roth Award; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; the MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Languages, and Cultures; the Matei Calinescu Prize; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, and for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies.

The Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Endowment Fund was established and donated by Aldo Scaglione to the Modern Language Association in 1987. The fund honors the memory of Scaglione's late wife, Jeanne Daman Scaglione. A Roman Catholic, Jeanne Daman was headmistress of a Jewish kindergarten in Brussels, Belgium. When arrests and deportations of Jews began in 1942, she worked with Belgian and Jewish resistance units, helping to find hiding places for two thousand children throughout Belgium. She also helped rescue many Jewish men about to be deported as slave laborers by obtaining false papers for them. Jeanne Scaglione's life and contributions to humanity are commemorated in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

Aldo Scaglione, a member of the Modern Language Association from 1957 until his death in 2013, was Erich Maria Remarque Professor of Literature at New York University. A native of Turin, Italy, he received a doctorate in modern letters from the University of Turin. He taught at the University of Toulouse and at the University of Chicago. From 1952 to 1968 he taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and from 1968 to 1987 he was W. R. Kenan Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In 1987 he came to New York University as professor of Italian and then chair of the Department of Italian. Scaglione was a Fulbright Fellow and a Guggenheim Fellow, held senior fellowships from the Newberry Library and the German Academic Exchange Service, and was a visiting professor at Yale University, the City University of New York, and the Humanities Research Institute of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In 1975 he was named Cavaliere dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana. Scaglione was president of the American Boccaccio Association and was a member of the MLA Executive Council from 1981 to 1984. His published books include *Nature*

and Love in the Late Middle Ages (1963), *Ars Grammatica* (1970), *The Classical Theory of Composition* (1972), *The Theory of German Word Order* (1981), *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System* (1986), *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry, and Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (1991), and *Essays on the Arts of Discourse: Linguistics, Rhetoric, Poetics* (1998).