

**MLA'S ALDO AND JEANNE SCAGLIONE PRIZE FOR A TRANSLATION OF A LITERARY WORK AWARDED TO LINDA COVERDALE FOR PATRICK CHAMOISEAU'S *SLAVE OLD MAN*; ELLEN ELIAS-BURSAĆ, DAVID WILLIAMS, AND MICHAEL HOFMANN RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION**

New York, NY – 4 December 2019 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it will award its fifteenth Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work to Linda Coverdale, of Brooklyn, New York, for her translation of *Slave Old Man*, by Patrick Chamoiseau, published by New Press. Ellen Elias-Bursac, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and David Williams, of Raglan, New Zealand, will receive an honorable mention for their translation of Dubravka Ugresic's *Fox*, published by Open Letter Press, and Michael Hofmann, of the University of Florida, Gainesville, will receive an honorable mention for his translation of Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, published by New York Review Books.

The Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work is one of eighteen prizes that will be presented on 11 January 2020, during the association's annual convention, to be held in Seattle. The prize is awarded annually for a translation into English of a book-length literary work. From 1999 until 2016, the prize was offered biennially, alternating years with the Lois Roth Award for a translation of a literary work. The two prizes are now both offered annually. The members of this year's selection committee were Esther Allen (Graduate Center and Baruch Coll., City Univ. of New York); Jeffrey Angles (Western Michigan Univ.); Kathleen P. Long (Cornell Univ.); Janet Poole (Univ. of Toronto); and Marjorie Attignol Salvodon (Suffolk Univ.), chair.

The committee's citation for Coverdale's translation reads:

Linda Coverdale is an internationally acclaimed translator whose distinguished career continues to bring important works in the French and francophone literary canon to English readers. *Slave Old Man* is an impressive example of this body of work. Coverdale's exceptional translation conveys the complexity of Patrick Chamoiseau's use of both French and Martinican Creole in a profoundly moving story of an enslaved elderly man's heroic escape from a plantation in early-nineteenth-century Martinique. In rich and fluid prose, the novel skillfully paints haunting moments with precision and verve. Through the prism of one individual's story, *Slave Old Man* captures a harrowing collective experience in language that overwhelms the senses with its lyricism.

Linda Coverdale has a PhD in French studies from Johns Hopkins University, a BFA from Parsons School of Design, and has translated over eighty books, including works by Marguerite Duras, Jean Echenoz, Emmanuel Carrère, Patrick Chamoiseau, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Georges Simenon, and Roland Barthes. A Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, she has won the Scott Moncrieff Prize, several French Voices and French-American Foundation Translation

Prizes, and the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. She has lived in Fort Worth, Manhattan, Grenoble, Paris, Baltimore, Providence, Niagara Falls, various places on Long Island, and currently lives in Brooklyn, surrounded by books and artwork in a decor littered with shells, stones, and animal bones, for which she enjoys hunting in off-trail locales. Coverdale's translation of *Slave Old Man* is also the recipient of Three Percent's Best Translated Book Award in the fiction category and the French-American Foundation Translation Prize.

The committee's citation for Elias-Bursać and Williams's translation reads:

Ellen Elias-Bursać is an extolled, prolific literary translator and scholar of South Slavic literature who has translated from Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian. David Williams is an essayist, author, translator, and teacher. Elias-Bursać and Williams have translated several works by Neustadt Prize-winner Dubravka Ugresic, who considers herself a citizen of literature and now lives in exile in Amsterdam. With their translation of *Fox*, Elias-Bursać and Williams have superbly rendered an intriguing text—part essay, part fiction, part autobiography—even more alluring. They brilliantly evoke the figure of the fox—trickster, boundary-crosser, siren—through storytelling, the vehicle through which the malaise of our contemporary world is interrogated.

Ellen Elias-Bursać has translated over twenty novels and books of nonfiction by Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian writers. Her translations have won several awards, including the American Literary Translators Association's National Translation Award for David Albahari's novel *Götz and Meyer* in 2006 and the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Language Award for Best Translation from a Slavic or East European Language in 1998 for David Albahari's *Words Are Something Else*. Elias-Bursać is the author of *Translating Evidence and Interpreting Testimony at a War Crimes Tribunal: Working in a Tug-of-War*, which received the Mary Zirin Prize in 2015. She is currently serving as president of the American Literary Translators Association.

David Williams earned his PhD in comparative literature at the University of Auckland and has held postdoctoral fellowships at the Leipzig Centre for the History and Culture of East-Central Europe and the University of Konstanz, Germany. He is the author of *Writing Postcommunism: Towards a Literature of the East European Ruins* and has translated Dubravka Ugresic's *Europe in Sepia* and *Karaoke Culture* and Miljenko Jergović's *Mama Leone*.

The committee's citation for Hofmann's translation reads:

Michael Hofmann is an accomplished poet, critic, and translator, and his translations are renowned. With his superb translation of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*—Alfred Döblin's masterpiece, considered one of the most significant books of the Weimar Republic and of twentieth-century literature—Hofmann has enriched the canon of German literature in English. Compellingly, Hofmann has mastered the many registers of discourse and unveiled the starkness of language in a way that captures the spirit and inflection of the original. By reimagining Döblin's work, Hofmann is able to bring to life a full, evocative, and powerful translation that does justice to Döblin's important account of modernity.

Michael Hofmann is professor of English at the University of Florida. He holds an MA and BA from Cambridge University. Hofmann is the award-winning author of several books of poetry, including, most recently, *One Lark, One Horse*. He has published reviews and essays in the *London Review of Books*, *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times Book Review*, and *Poetry*, and his pieces have been collected in two books, *Behind the Lines* and *Where Have You Been?* As a translator Hofmann has received, among his many honors, the Thornton Wilder Prize for Literary Translation, the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize, and the PEN / Book of the Month Club Translation Prize.

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](http://www.mla.org).

The Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work was presented for the first time in 1993. Recent winners of the prize include Robert M. Durling, Nathaniel E. Dubin, Fred Bridgham and Edward Timms, Jeffrey Angles, and Alissa Valles.

The prize is awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. 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, Cultures, and Languages; the Matei Calinescu Prize; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, 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).