

## American Boccaccio Association Newsletter Fall 2006

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President: Janet Smarr

Vice President: Roberta Morosini

Secretary: Marilyn Migiel

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### REPORT FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

**Maggio 2006:** The *Ente Nazionale Giovanni Boccaccio* continues the celebration and the studies on "Boccaccio Geografo". After the exhibit and a roundtable last May 2004 in Certaldo at the 'Casa di Boccaccio' and at the Biblioteca Marucelliana in 2005, "Mediterranean Boccaccio" reaches the Florentine public in Fiesole.



Within a series of events organized by "Genio Fiorentino" for the city of Florence, the *Ente Nazionale* presented "Boccaccio Mediterraneo - Spazio ed Eros tra realtà e parodia" at the Villa di Maiano, a beautiful site in Fiesole. "Boccaccio Mediterraneo is a fascinating journey in search of the Mediterranean roots of Boccaccio's work." The events included a conference that I organized, entitled "Il Mediterraneo nella geografia del Boccaccio," and a play "Come Alatiel va in sposa al re di Garbo, directed by Carlo Romiti and staged by L'Oranona - Associazione Polis in the Sala degli Arazzi at Villa di Maiano. The play is based on the seventh story of Second Day of the *Decameron*, which narrates of the young princess Alatiel, daughter of the sultan of

Babylon. She left as a virgin to marry the King of Garbo in Marocco but an unexpected shipwreck throws her through the Mediterranean, where she finds “inevitable” love encounters and nine marriages. Eventually she returns to her father and subsequently, as a virgin, marries the King of Garbo.



**“Dante and the Lunigiana”, September 30-October 1, 2006. The symbol of the Congress, now also a postage stamp, is by the Lunigianese artist Dante Pierini.**

The Chair of *Centro Lunigianese di Studi Danteschi*, Mirco Manuguerra, invited me last September to join scholars from Italy and abroad to celebrate the Seventh Centenary of Dante’s arrival in the land of Lunigiana. Lunigiana is a region in the extreme north of Tuscany, situated between Liguria and Emilia Romagna along the course of the river Magra and its tributaries. I was asked to talk about the two novellas of the *Decameron* that are set in the beautiful lands of Lunigiana: I 4, the story that takes place in the very same Monastero di Santa Croce del Corvo in Ameglia, Bocca di Magra where the Congress was held and II 6, the tragic story of Lady Beritola.

Thanks to Mirco Manuguerra and the organizing Committee, the 2006 Congress continues the illustrious tradition of the Sixth Centenary (1906) where scholars like Alessandro D’Ancona and Isidoro del Lungo celebrated in Sarzana the 1306 peace agreement between the Malaspina family (represented by Dante) and the Bishop of Luni Antonio da Camilla. The celebrations in honor of Dante continued in Mulazzo and a plaque at the site of the Castle still records that event for the modern visitor. This agreement, signed in the city of Castelnuovo di Magra, is the strongest evidence of Dante’s presence in Lunigiana. Dante never forgot the hospitality he received in those lands (as *Purgatory VIII* still testifies). This year, in the beautiful environs of Monastero di Santa Croce del Corvo, Silvia Magnavacca from the University of Buenos Aires, Federico Sanguineti from the Università di Salerno, Giuseppe Ledda from the Università di Bologna, and other scholars talked about *Purgatorio VIII*, exile and prophecy in the *Commedia*, about “Paci Malaspiniane, Pace Dantesca, Pace Lunare” and about the exegetical and historical ‘mystery’ of the so-called “Epistola di Frate Ilaro”, a letter by the monk Ilaro kept in

Boccaccio's Zibaldone Mediceo-Laurenziano Pluteo 29.7 (Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana). On page 67, of the recent numbering of the manuscript, there is a letter according to which Ilaro, an unidentified monk of the Benedictine pulsanese Monastery would have met Dante and upon invitation of the Poet, would write to Ugucione della Faggiuola accompanied with a copy of the first 8 cantos of *Inferno*. This letter, printed for the first time in 1759 by Lorenzo Mehus, was first edited by Pio Rajna and then studied by Giorgio Padoan who believed the letter to be authentic and by Boccaccio. More recently, Saverio Bellomo studied the complex question in "Il sorriso di Ilaro e la prima redazione in latino della *Commedia*," *Studi sul Boccaccio* 32 (2004): 201-35. Bellomo, like Giuseppe Billanovich before him, argues that the Letter that cannot be attributed to Boccaccio since it is obviously a fake ("falsificazione sfacciata" p. 217).

I would like to express my gratitude to Mirco Manuguerra, organizer of the Congress, and also to the American Boccaccio Association (which I represented there), for making the celebrations of the Seventh Centenary possible and under the best of circumstances. I also would like to thank the Committee of "Dante e la Lunigiana" for having re-opened the exegetical and philological debate concerning the authenticity of the "Epistola di Frate Ilaro" and for continuing to explore the presence of Boccaccio in Lunigiana.

The Proceedings of "Dante e la Lunigiana" will be edited by Mirco Manuguerra and will appear in print by the end of 2008.

Roberta Morosini  
Vice Presidente ABA

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#### **NEWS FROM THE ENTE NAZIONALE GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO**

To see the most recent news (November 2006) from the *Ente Nazionale Giovanni Boccaccio*, go to: <http://www.heliotropia.org/aba/cb2006.pdf>

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## **SYMPOSIUM ANNOUNCEMENT**

Chris Kleinhenz organized a Symposium on the general topic of "Giovanni Boccaccio and Fourteenth-Century Italian Culture: Tradition and Innovation," which took place on April 21-22, 2006, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The participants included: Nora Beck (Lewis and Clark C.); C. Jean Campbell (Emory U.); Pier Massimo Forni (Johns Hopkins U.); Suzanne Hagedorn (C. of William and Mary); Christopher Livanos (U. of Wisconsin-Madison); Simone Marchesi (Princeton U.); Marilyn Migiel (Cornell U.); F. Regina Psaki (U. of Oregon); and Piotr Salwa (U. of Warsaw).

For the program, see:

<http://vanhise.lss.wisc.edu/frit/frit/events/boccaccioconf.html>

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## **NEWS ABOUT ABA MEMBERS**

The Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) is pleased to announce that the 2006 Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession will be presented to  
**CHRISTOPHER KLEINHENZ**  
Professor of Italian, University of Wisconsin, Madison  
at the MLA Convention in Philadelphia.

Please join us Thursday, 28 December:

Session #266: *Questione della Lingua*: A Session in Honor of Christopher Kleinhenz

3:30- 4:45 p.m., Convention Center, 202-A

Reception: A Reception in Honor of Christopher Kleinhenz

5:15-6:30 p.m., Loews Hotel, Congress C

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## PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

AA.VV. *Boccaccio e le letterature romanze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento, Atti del Convegno Internazionale Boccaccio e la Francia, Università di Firenze, Certaldo 19-20 Maggio 2003 - 19-20 Maggio 2004*. Ed. Simonetta Mazzoni, Firenze, Alinea Editrice, 2006.

Armstrong, Guyda. "Heavenly Bodies: The Presence of the Divine Female in Boccaccio." *Italian Studies* 55 (2005): 134-46.

Eleonora Beck. *Fiammetta*. Portland, OR: Carlton Street Press, 2002.

This book received Honorable Mention in the Writers Digest International Self-Published Book Competition (2002).

*Boccaccio and Feminist Criticism*, eds. Thomas Stillinger and F. Regina Psaki. *Annali d'Italianistica Studi e Testi Volume 8*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Annali d'Italianistica, 2006.

Includes the following essays:

- Thomas C. Stillinger and F. Regina Psaki, "Introduction" (pp. 1-12)
- Victoria Kirkham, "Maria a.k.a. Fiammetta: The Men Behind the Woman" (pp. 13-27)
- Janet Levarie Smarr, "Speaking Women: Three Decades of Authoritative Females" (pp. 29-38)
- Disa Gambera, "Women and Walls: Boccaccio's *Teseida* and the Edifice of Dante's Poetry" (pp. 39-68)
- Eugenio Giusti, "Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*: First Signs of an Ideological Shift" (pp. 69-82)
- Guyda Armstrong, "Boccaccio and the Infernal Body: The Woman as Wilderness" (pp. 83-104)
- Thomas C. Stillinger "The Language of Gardens: Boccaccio's *Valle delle donne*" (pp. 105-27)
- Millicent Marcus, "Misogyny as Misreading: A Gloss on *Decameron VIII.7*" (pp. 129-43)
- Olivia Holmes, "*In forma della donna: In the Woman's Place (A Reading of Decameron III. 5)*" (pp. 145-56)
- Myra Best, "*La peste e le papere: Textual Repression in Day Four of the Decameron*" (pp. 157-68)

- Diane Duyos Vacca, "Carnal Reading: On Interpretation, Violence, and *Decameron* V, 8" (pp. 169-87)
- Gregory B. Stone, "The Prick of the Rose: Boccaccio's Bisexual Hermeneutics" (pp. 189-99)
- Ronald L. Martinez, "Apuleian Example and Misogynist Allegory in the Tale of Peronella (*Decameron* VII.2)" (pp. 201-16)
- Marilyn Migiel, "The Untidy Business of Gender Studies: Or, Why It's Almost Useless to ask if the *Decameron* Is Feminist" (pp. 217-33)
- Barbara Zaczek, "Creating and Recreating Reality with Words: The *Decameron* and *The Women's Decameron*" (pp. 235-48)

Calabrese, Michael. "Chaucer's Dorigen and the Female Voices of the *Decameron*." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 29 (2007) Forthcoming.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Male Piety and Sexuality in Boccaccio's *Decameron*." *Philological Quarterly* 83.3 (Summer 2003): 257-76.

Cazalé Bérard, Claude. "Florio, Biancifiore e il giardino di Fiammetta. Una *quête* amorosa sulle sponde del Mediterraneo", in *Mediterranoesis. Voci dal Medioevo e Rinascimento Mediterraneo*, a cura di C. Perissinotto & R. Morosini, Roma, Salerno editrice, 2007, pp. 29-41.

Hollander, Robert and Jean Hollander, trans. The *Paradiso* of Dante Alighieri. Forthcoming from Doubleday in August 2007.

Kircher, Timothy. *The Poet's Wisdom: the Humanists, the Church and the Formation of Philosophy in the Early Renaissance*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

This book addresses the relation of Boccaccio and Petrarch to contemporary mendicants. Details can be found at

<http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=75&pid=21936>

Kinoshita, Sharon, and Jason Jacobs. "Ports of Call: Boccaccio's Alatiel in the Medieval Mediterranean." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37 (2007).

Kuhns, Richard. "*Decameron*" and the Philosophy of Storytelling: Author as Midwife and Pimp. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Marafioti, Martin. "Post-*Decameron* Plague Treatises and the Boccaccian Innovation of Narrative Prophylaxis." *Annali d'Italianistica* 23 (Fall 2005): 69-87.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Semantic Distance as Reaction to Pestilence in Medieval Italy: Evidence from the Story Collections of Boccaccio, Sacchetti, and Sercambi." *Forum Italicum* 39 (2005): 326-49.

Morosini, Roberta. "Ancora Boccaccio e i franceschi romanzi: Ki verté respasse et laisse ovvero gli ignoranti, i maghi e i loro fabulosi parlari," in *Boccaccio e le letterature romanze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento, Atti del Convegno Internazionale Boccaccio e la Francia, Università Firenze Certaldo 19-20 Maggio 2003 - 19-20 Maggio 2004*, ed. Simonetta Mazzoni, Firenze, Alinea Editrice, 2006

\_\_\_\_\_. "Boccaccio the poet-philosopher of the *Filocolo*. From narrative adaptation to literary theory", in *Exemplaria* 18.2 (2006): 275-298.

Segre, Cesare. "L'epopea dei mercatanti' e la critica testuale." *Lettere Italiane* 57: 4 (2005): 600-08.

Smarr, Janet. J. Smarr, "Altre razze ed altri spazi nel *Decameron*," *Boccaccio Geografo*, eds. R. Morosini, M. Gennari, A. Cantile Istituto Geografico militare.

Vasvari, Louise O. "*Buon cavallo e mal cavallo vuole sprone, e buona femina e mala femina vuol baston'*: Medieval Cultural Fictions of Wife Battering." In *Love, Marriage, and Transgression in Medieval and Early Modern Literature. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*. Ed. Albrecht Classen. Leiden: Brill, 2005. Pp. 313-16.

Vasvari, Louise O. "The Story of Griselda: A Silenced Incest Narrative." *La Corónica* [Special Cluster] 2006. [in press].

See also *Heliotropia's* Books Received List:  
<http://www.heliotropia.org/books.shtml>

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## WORK IN PROGRESS

Linda Carroll (Tulane University) - uses of Boccaccio in the sixteenth century

Marilyn Migiel (Cornell University) - a book on the moral dimension of the *Decameron*.

Daniel Tonozzi (Cornell University) - a dissertation on the sixteenth-century censored editions of the *Decameron*

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## ABA BIBLIOGRAPHY

A more complete bibliography is forthcoming. For the moment, see "Publication Announcements" above.

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## CONFERENCE PANELS ON BOCCACCIO

### 1) MLA Conference 2006 (27-30 December 2006, Philadelphia, PA)

Friday, 29 December 2006

American Boccaccio Association: *Lectura Boccacci*

10:15-11:30 a.m., Adams, Loews

Presiding: Victoria Kirkham, *University of Pennsylvania*

Presenter: Elsa Filosa, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*, "Decameron III.2,"

"Re-writing the Bestial in the Renaissance" (a panel of MLA division of Medieval and Renaissance It. Lit)

Panel begins at 12:00 noon, Anthony, Loews

Presiding, Dennis Looney, *University of Pittsburgh*

Presenter: Corrado Corradini, *Wake Forest University*, "'The Boar's Heart: A Case of Involuntary Cannibalism in *Decameron* IV, 9'"

Saturday, 30 December 2006

“Boccaccio”

1:45-3:00 p.m. Anthony, Loews

Presiding: Roberta Morosini, *Wake Forest University* Presenter: Jacob Blakesley, *University of Chicago*, “Reevaluating Boccaccio’s *Rime*”

Presenter: Gabrielle Popoff, *Columbia University*, “Between Women: Venus and Diana in Boccaccio”

Presenter: Michael Calabrese, *California State University, Los Angeles*, “Sexual Stamina and Competition in Boccaccio and Chaucer”

“The Boar’s Heart: A Case of Involuntary Cannibalism in *Decameron* IV, 9”

## **2) Renaissance Society of America (22-24 March 2007, Miami, FL)**

Thursday, March 22, 2007

Panel Title: Renaissance and the Ancient World I: New Directions, Other Antiquities: Time

Panel begins at 8:45 a.m. on March 22, 2007.

Co-organizer: Brian A. Curran, *Pennsylvania State University*

Co-organizer and Chair: Leatrice Mendelsohn, *Independent Scholar*

Presenter: Jon Solomon, *University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

Paper Title: Petrarch, Boccaccio, and the Spatial and Temporal Interchange with Antiquity

- Boccaccio, throughout his treatise *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, describes in his most vivid, almost romantic Latin prose a nautical voyage from geographical venue to venue, reflecting a concept of immediacy with the ancient world. He repeatedly tells his patron that these journeys are fraught with peril, as if he is an adventurer traveling through spatial - not temporal - boundaries long neglected. His euhemerized gods and lesser characters of Greco-Roman myth dwell in that same space/time continuum but are not concurrent with Boccaccio; he treats them in episodic stories not unlike the format of his Italian *Decameron*. Separately, he seems to place Homer, Vergil, and other ancient authorities in an unapproachable literary stratum further removed chronologically.

Though treating historical personages in his letter and Africa, Petrarch reveals a similar immediacy between Italian humanist and the ancient world.

Panel Title: Early Modern Writers: More Light from the Archives

Panel begins at 10:30 a.m. on March 22, 2006.

Sponsor: Southeastern Renaissance Conference

Organizer: John Wall, *North Carolina State University*

Chair: Susan Cerasano, *Colgate University*

Respondent: Jessica Wolfe, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

Presenter: Pamela Royston Macfie, *The University of the South*

Paper Title: Illuminated Difference: Arachnean Representation in the Works of Boccaccio and Christine de Pizan

- This paper addresses the allusion to Arachne in Christine de Pizan's 1405 *Livre de la Cité des Dames* as that allusion rewrites the negative allegory advanced by Boccaccio's *De Mulieribus Claris* and Christine's earlier *Epistre d'Othéa*. In the *Livre*, Christine presents Arachne's challenge of Minerva as secondary to the idea that Arachne and Minerva together advance artistic experiment. Two manuscript illuminations exemplify Christine's revolutionary reading of Arachne. A mid-fifteenth-century illumination from the *Ovide Moralisé* confirms the traditional association of Arachne with negated creation; though an artistically engaged Arachne appears in the illumination's foreground, a web-entrapped spider, which looms overhead, draws attention from Arachne's work to her eventual unmaking. By contrast, a mid-fifteenth-century illumination of Christine's *Livre* bathes Arachne in light, presenting her as a mysteriously illuminated figure who simultaneously practices - and inspires - artistic self-reflection.

Panel Title: Dante, His Myth, Metamorphosis, and Memory

Panel begins at 3:45 p.m. on March 22, 2007

Organizer: Pamela Zinn, *University of Pennsylvania*

Chair: Diskin Clay, *Duke University*

Presenter: Pamela Zinn, *University of Pennsylvania*

Paper Title: Bruní's Reply to Boccaccio's *Vita di Dante*

- Dante's fascination with the continual transformation of "autobiography" in the *Vita Nuova* and the *Commedia* perhaps

appropriately foreshadows the reappropriations and reinterpretations of his life by his Renaissance successors. This paper juxtaposes two of the most influential works in that process, the *Trattatello in Laude di Dante* of Giovanni Boccaccio and Leonardo Bruni's parallel *Vite di Dante e del Petrarca*. It examines the manner in which Bruni negotiates Boccaccio's account, recasts the narrative of Dante's life, and legitimates his revision. This is analyzed with particular attention to the authors' respective methodologies, source-bases, and audiences. I argue that the way in which these authors represent Dante reflects contemporary shifts in the values of the early humanists and their scholarly project.

**Friday, March 23, 2007**

Panel Title: Reading and Reshaping the *Decameron* in the Renaissance

Date and time: March 23, 2007, from 8:45-10:15 a.m.

Organizer: Marilyn Migiel, *Cornell University*

Chair: Dolora Chapelle Wojciehowski, *University of Texas, Austin*

Presenter: Daniel Tonozzi, *Cornell University*

Paper Title: Reading the Right Way: Lionardo Salviati and the 1582 *Rassettatura* of the *Decameron*

- Although the text of the *Decameron* focuses on who should be reading the work, subsequent vanguards of social customs and moral standards have instead fretted over who should not be scouring the pages of beautifully rich Boccaccian prose. Those worries came to a head in the later half of the sixteenth century. Between 1559 and 1588, the *Decameron* went through a seemingly incoherent process of prohibition, expurgation, and publication. Lionardo Salviati's 1582 *rassettatura* of the *Decameron* presents a unique opportunity for understanding how a sixteenth-century reader engaged the text as well as how a Vatican censor required the stories to be read. Salviati's censoring techniques operate not as a way to control an unruly text, but rather as an attempt to expand the power of the Church into the private, personal experience of reading a printed text. My paper examines how this sophisticated and subtle maneuver transpires.

Presenter: Marilyn Migiel, *Cornell University*

Paper Title: Reading the *Decameron* with Matteo Bandello

- In his *Novelle*, Matteo Bandello not only turns to Boccaccio's *Decameron* as literary model to be reworked within a culture that thought differently about the requirements of truthfulness and the rational order of things, but he also seeks to shape his sixteenth-century audience's reading of Boccaccio's masterwork. In particular, Bandello is concerned to show the positive educational benefit to be derived from reading the *Decameron*. In my paper I will analyze the rhetorical strategies that Bandello utilizes when he advances this claim in his metacritical observations. I will also consider whether the rhetorical strategies that Bandello adopts in his own storytelling are truly consistent with this claim of literature's didactic benefit.

Presenter: Janet Smarr, *University of California, San Diego*

Paper Title: *Griselda as Wife, Griselda as Husband: Dekker's Two Plays*

- Around 1600 the English playwright Thomas Dekker wrote two plays related to Boccaccio's *Griselda* story. One, *Patient Grissil* dramatizes Boccaccio's tale; Dekker explores the issue of marital relations by adding a reverse couple: a henpecked husband and shrewish wife. His interest in reversing the gender of the *Griselda* relationship appears also in his play *The Honest Whore*, part 1, where a man of endless patience provokes his wife and other character to test him. My paper will compare how the *Griselda* character works as a wife and as a husband, and the different directions in which these alternate relationships lead the plays: in one case to a reassertion of hierarchies both marital and political, in the other to a radical notion of self-possession.

Saturday, March 24, 2007

Panel title: *Women in Spanish Literature*

Organizer:

Chair: Rosa Helena Chinchilla, *University of Connecticut*

Presenter: Angela L. Willis, *Davidson College*

Paper title: "Patient *Griselda* She's Not: Maria de Zayas Rewrites the *Decameron* in *La burlada Aminta y la venganza del honor* (Novelas amorosas y ejemplares)"

Panel begins in a session beginning at 2:00 p.m.

- In her writing, Maria de Zayas y Sotomayor responds to prevailing attitudes toward the "fairer sex" in Golden Age Spain, as echoed in the expression, "La mujer honrada, la pierna quebrada y en casa." For, in Zayas's tales, women do indeed leave the house, speak, and act on their own behalf. Zayas's first collection of frame-tales, *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* (1637) scrutinizes amorous relationships and exhibits numerous parallels with Boccaccio's *Decameron*. This study aims to explicate how Zayas's text conforms to and differs from the Italian masterpiece. To better understand how Maria de Zayas y Sotomayor rewrites the Boccaccian novella cortesana and how she addresses male-dominated discourse's attitudes toward females, I briefly review a number of Boccaccio's representative tales to compare and contrast them with one of Zayas's stories, "La burlada Aminta y venganza del honor," which counters patriarchal preoccupation with honor and vengeance in relation to female subjectivity.

### **(3) AAIS Convention (3-6 May 2007, Colorado College, CO)**

**N.B.: The following panel is currently being proposed for the 2007 AAIS Convention.**

Organizer of proposed panel: Dino S. Cervigni, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

Panel Title: Boccaccio's *Decameron* and the Practice of Irony/Parody

Focus of panel: Several critics (e.g., Delcorno 1995; Kircher 2001) have emphasized the role of irony/parody in Boccaccio's tales. In pointing out a crisis not just in the exemplum tradition but also in medieval life as well, Boccaccio subverts exemplary tales, hagiographic stories, and even sacred myths in order to show the decadence of his world (mostly in *Decameron* 1-9) in an attempt to recreate a new society, primarily in *Decameron* 10.

Chair: TBA

Presenter: Francesco Ciabattini, *Dalhousie University*, "Boccaccio's Miraculous Storytelling: *Decameron* 1.1, 2.1, and 6.10"

Presenter: Dino Cervigni, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, "The *brigata's* Storytelling around a Center and the Center's Undoing"

Presenter: Marilyn Migiel, *Cornell University*, "Giovanni Boccaccio and Stephen Colbert: The *Decameron* from One Master of Irony to Another."

**4) International Congress on Medieval Studies (10-13 May 2007, Kalamazoo, MI)**

The program for this conference will be available in February 2007 at:  
<http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress>