



The MEDIEVAL STUDIES INSTITUTE and RENAISSANCE STUDIES

are pleased to present a lecture by

**Michelangelo Zaccarello**  
University of Verona

# “The World Upside Down”

## Carnival and the Carnavalesque in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Literature

Tuesday, January 17  
4.30-5.30

Hoagy Carmichael  
Room, Morrison Hall

Reception to follow

*Jan Miel, Carnival in Rome. Courtesy SCALA, Florence/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.*

Anthropological readings of Carnival, especially after Bakhtin’s study on Rabelais, have stressed the importance of the inversion, or subversion, of social patterns during Carnival. Late Medieval and Renaissance Italian courts, on the other hand, often encouraged such celebrations, turning public performances and mass gatherings into a powerful instrument of political propaganda (as was the case in Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Florence). However, some social space and a broader audience were thus regained for popular or popularizing forms of literature that were previously relegated to a context of orality and folklore. This talk assesses developments in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italian literature, especially in texts associated with performance (the use of dialects in stage literature, the surfacing of folkloric texts in print, the linguistic and cultural opposition between the city and the countryside), and how such changes were affected by the contexts and rituals of Carnival celebrations.

*Professor Michelangelo Zaccarello is Associate Professor of Italian Philology at the University of Verona and is currently a Fulbright Fellow in residence at Indiana University. In addition to his 2000 edition and 2004 commentary of Burchiello’s lyric poetry and his forthcoming edition of Pulci’s sonnets, he has published widely on early Italian authors, such as Dante, Boccaccio, Alberti, and Della Casa, and on theories and practice of textual editing. While in Bloomington, Prof. Zaccarello is completing his edition of Franco Sacchetti’s Trecentonovelle.*