

## Science and Intellectual Emancipation in Italian Literary and Cultural History

**Panel Sponsor:** Forum on 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-Century Italian

**Proposal Abstract:**

Scientific thought has long played a central role in narratives of intellectual emancipation in Italian literary and cultural history. From Galileo and his interlocutors to Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment engagements with empiricism, medicine, psychology, and emerging technologies, scientific paradigms have offered both tools for liberation and sources of anxiety, contestation, or resistance. Literature and cultural production in early modern and modern Italy frequently negotiate the promises and limits of scientific knowledge, staging encounters between reason and authority, observation and belief, innovation and tradition. Scientific paradigms in this period could function both as tools of intellectual emancipation and as mechanisms of exclusion or hierarchy, particularly in relation to racialized, colonized, or non-European subjects.

This panel invites papers that explore the relationship between science and intellectual emancipation across the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. How did scientific discourses shape new forms of intellectual autonomy, ethical inquiry, or social critique? How did writers and thinkers engage with, translate, adapt, or resist scientific models of knowledge? In what ways did scientific paradigms intersect with broader cultural, religious, political, or aesthetic frameworks? By foregrounding science as both a historical practice and a cultural problem, this panel seeks to foster interdisciplinary conversations that cut across periods and methodologies.

We invite papers that explore, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Literary engagements with scientific thought, empiricism, or experimental knowledge
- Galileo and the cultural afterlives of scientific authority
- Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment science in Italian intellectual history
- Enlightenment universalism and its limits: science as both emancipatory and restrictive, including its implications for race, empire, and non-European knowledge systems
- Medicine, psychology, and the sciences of the mind
- Technology, material culture, and changing conceptions of knowledge
- Narratives of progress, crisis, or resistance to scientific paradigms
- Science, religion, and competing models of truth
- Translation, mediation, and the circulation of scientific ideas

This panel welcomes contributions from scholars working in literature, history, philosophy, history of science, and cultural studies, and encourages approaches that place scientific discourse in dialogue with broader narratives of intellectual emancipation.

**Submission Deadline:** March 9, 2026

Please send an abstract of no more than 300 words together with a short bio to Bradford Masoni ([bradford.a.masoni@gmail.com](mailto:bradford.a.masoni@gmail.com)) or Viola Ardeni ([mrsviolin2011@gmail.com](mailto:mrsviolin2011@gmail.com)).

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## Translation as an Emancipatory Practice in Italian Literary and Cultural History

**Roundtable Sponsor:** Forum on 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-Century Italian

**Proposal Abstract:**

Translation can be understood as an emancipatory practice in its own right: a means of liberating texts from linguistic, national, or disciplinary boundaries, and of opening them to new publics, epistemologies, and cultural or political uses. Across the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, translation in the Italian context has served as a site of intellectual exchange, transformation, and contestation, enabling acts of rewriting, adaptation, and recontextualization across time and space.

This roundtable invites participants to reflect on translation as both a historical practice and a living, theoretical problem in Italian literary and cultural history. How did translation function as a vehicle for intellectual emancipation, cultural mediation, or ideological transformation in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries? How did translators historically negotiate authority, fidelity, creativity, and power? And how do contemporary translators working with texts from this period continue to confront these same questions today? What forms of knowledge, liberation, or ethical engagement can emerge through the act of translating early modern and modern Italian texts in the present?

By bringing together scholars and practicing translators, this roundtable seeks to foster an open conversation about translation as an intellectual, cultural, and ethical practice—one that operates both within the historical contexts of our period and in contemporary engagements with its texts.

Topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to:

- Translation as cultural, political, or intellectual mediation
- Rewriting, adaptation, and creative transformation
- Translation and the circulation of texts across periods, regions, and publics
- Early modern and modern theories of translation
- Translation and questions of authority, authorship, and fidelity
- Translation across genres, disciplines, and media
- Translation as resistance, appropriation, or reinterpretation
- Contemporary translation projects engaging texts from the period

This roundtable welcomes contributions from scholars and translators working in literature, history, philosophy, and cultural studies, and encourages dialogue between historical inquiry and present-day translation practice.

**Submission Deadline:** March 9, 2026

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## Boccaccio Beyond Boccaccio: Reception, Adaptation, and Afterlives from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century

Panel Co-Sponsored by the Forum on 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-Century Italian Studies and the American Boccaccio Association

### **Proposal Abstract:**

The works of Giovanni Boccaccio have exercised a persistent and transformative influence well beyond the Trecento, shaping literary, cultural, and artistic production across early modern and modern Europe. From the Counter-Reformation through Romanticism and the rise of philological scholarship, Boccaccio's texts—most notably the *Decameron*—were translated, adapted, censored, moralized, illustrated, and reimagined in ways that reveal shifting attitudes toward narrative freedom, authorship, morality, and genre.

This panel invites papers that examine Boccaccio's reception and reinterpretation from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, with particular attention to processes of continuity, transformation, and mediation. How were Boccaccio's works read, reshaped, or contested in early modern and modern contexts? How did translators, editors, moral reformers, artists, and scholars negotiate the tension between Boccaccio's narrative openness and evolving cultural, religious, and political norms? By focusing on Boccaccio's afterlives rather than his Trecento context alone, this panel seeks to foster dialogue between Boccaccio studies and scholars of later Italian literary and cultural history.

We invite papers that explore, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Boccaccio's continuity and reception in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries
- Adaptability of Boccaccio's themes, narrative strategies, and representational freedom
- Translations, adaptations, abridgements, and rewritings of Boccaccio's works
- Counter-Reformation censorship, moral expurgation, and editorial intervention

- Romantic, nationalist, and philological rediscoveries of Boccaccio
- Boccaccio from text to image: illustration, visual culture, and artistic reception
- Boccaccio in transnational contexts and comparative literary traditions

This panel welcomes interdisciplinary contributions from scholars working in literature, history, art history, translation studies, and cultural studies, and aims to bring together members of both sponsoring organizations in a shared conversation about Boccaccio's enduring and evolving presence in Italian and European culture.

**Submission Deadline:** March 9, 2026

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