

**Annual Conference of the RSA – Renaissance Society of America
(Philadelphia, Marriott Downtown, March 11-13, 2027)**

**Panel 1:
Fifteenth-Century Italian Literature (I):
Features, Style, and Forms of the “Secolo senza poesia”**

Organizers: Maria Sole Costanzo (Boston College)
Luca Zipoli (Bryn Mawr College)

Chair: TBD

Deadline for proposal submissions: July 20, 2026

This panel seeks contributions which investigate the forms and styles of poetry and prose in the Italian Quattrocento. The enthusiastic participation of a diverse range of scholars to similar panels at RSA 2024, 2025, and 2026 proved that the era that Benedetto Croce famously described as the “secolo senza poesia” (a century devoid of poetry) on the contrary did enjoy the flourishing of various poetic forms. In recent years, these poetic expressions have been rightfully brought back to the fore of Italian studies. In continuation with the previous panels, for this session we welcome papers examining 15th-century experimentations with both traditional and new poetic forms, which innovated previous poetic models and laid the foundations for the production of the following centuries.

Examples of possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Use and reuse of traditional poetic forms: sonnets, canzoni, ballate...
- Invention of new poetic forms: vernacular eclogues and elegies...
- Interaction of Latin and vernacular poetry
- Treatises on poetry, metapoetic, and meta-literary writings...
- Translation of poetry from and into Latin, and from and into Romance languages
- Code-switching and other phenomena of language contact in poetry
- Poetry and humanism
- Pedantic, macaronic and other comic poetry
- Poetic production as exilic production: geographically or morally displaced poets
- Poetry and visual arts: ekphrasis, inscriptions, and other manifestations of intermediality
- *Prosimetra* and other instances of interaction and juxtaposition of poetry and prose
- Oral and written transmission of poetry
- Poetry and political power: relationships with the signorie, comuni, corti...
- Poetry and rhetoric
- Poetry and philosophy
- Religious poetry: confraternities, sacred dramas...
- Women writers of the Quattrocento
- Issues of attribution
- Influence of Stilnovo, Dante, and Petrarch in 15th-century poetry

Please send a proposal in English to Maria Sole Costanzo (**costanmh@bc.edu**) and Luca Zipoli (**lzipoli@brynmawr.edu**) by **Monday, July 20, 2026** including:

- full name, current affiliation, and email address
- paper title (15-word maximum)
- paper abstract (200-word maximum)
- short bio-bibliographical paragraph (150-word maximum)
- resume (.pdf or .doc)
- PhD or other terminal degree completion year (past or expected)

All paper presentations at the conference are required to be delivered in English and in person (no remote participation). Notifications regarding acceptance in the panel will be communicated to applicants by **Friday, July 31, 2026**.

**Panel 2:
Fifteenth-Century Italian Literature (II):
Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Encounters**

Organizers: Maria Sole Costanzo (Boston College)
Luca Zipoli (Bryn Mawr College)

Chair: TBD

Deadline for proposal submissions: July 20, 2026

While the influences that Petrarch and vernacular texts exerted on Quattrocento poetry are undeniable, this panel delves into the fascinating ways Italian-writing authors of the “secolo senza poesia” engaged with texts belonging to other literary traditions and/or with fields beyond the literary realms. What new perspectives emerge when we consider the context of fifteenth-century Italian literature through these intercultural and interdisciplinary connections? And what challenges do those texts pose to the literary critic? This session offers papers exploring the intersections of poetry with cultural areas beyond Italy and/or with other areas of knowledge. The panel follows up on fruitful discussions on these same themes that were inaugurated at RSA 2026.

Example of possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Reuse of classical tropes and *topoi* in humanistic texts
- Influence of or reaction to the Tre Corone in 15th- and 16th-century literature
- Gendered perspectives on Quattrocento literature: texts by women writers
- Invention of new stylistic forms
- Interaction of Latin and vernacular in literary texts
- Translations from and into Latin, and from and into Romance languages
- Code-switching and other phenomena of language contact in literary texts
- Autobiography and humanism
- Confessional styles and autobiographies in religious practices
- Questioning the canon: investigating the constitutive texts of genres
- Diasporic and exilic production: geographically or morally displaced authors of texts
- Literature and visual arts: ekphrasis, inscriptions, and other manifestations of intermediality
- *Prosimetra* and other instances of interaction and juxtaposition of poetry and prose
- Oral and written transmission of texts
- Literature and political power: relationships with the signorie, comuni, corti...
- Autobiography and rhetoric
- Autobiography and philosophy

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**Panel 3:
Fifteenth-Century Italian Literature (III):
Rhetoric across the Arts**

Organizers: Maria Sole Costanzo (Boston College)
Luca Zipoli (Bryn Mawr College)

Chair: TBD

Deadline for proposal submissions: July 20, 2026

The Quattrocento experienced significant shifts in the ties binding rhetoric, erudition, and cultural prestige. While in the Middle Ages rhetoric was central to the *studia humanitatis*, in the 15th century rhetorical practices moved at first toward the center of literary and civic boundaries and later beyond them, to influence fields such as visual representation, cartographic science, mathematics, and architectural engineering. Concurrently, the longstanding divide between *artes liberales* and *artes mechanicae* was reconsidered as practitioners and scholars sought to reevaluate the intellectual standing of their varied crafts. This session welcomes contributions investigating how rhetoric functioned in the development and validation of knowledge within 15th-century Italy. We are particularly interested in how rhetorical modes enabled dialogue across diverse intellectual branches, including the intersection of theory and practice, Latinity and the vernacular, and the crossover between scholarly and technical expertise.

Example of possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Connections between rhetorical theory and the figurative arts
- Rhetoric in architectural treatises, cartography, and technical discourse
- Humanists' and rhetoricians' perspectives on the *artes mechanicae*
- Overlap of literary, visual, and material culture in relation to rhetoric
- Concepts of persuasion and representation throughout different media
- Construction of artistic and professional status through rhetoric
- Social standing of Quattrocento architects, craftsmen, and engineers
- Exchanges between practical workshops and scholarly circles
- Redefinition of medieval knowledge categories by humanists
- Diffusion of rhetorical paradigms outside of literary spheres
- Leon Battista Alberti and the evolution of the concept of authority and persuasion
- Self-fashioning and rhetoric in the Italian Renaissance
- Interplay of descriptive language, measurement, and visual display as persuasive tools

By treating rhetoric as an epistemological system rather than a mere literary device, this panel aims to clarify how 15th-century thinkers navigated disciplinary boundaries and fostered novel understandings of authority and persuasion. We enthusiastically invite proposals from specialists in literature, art and architectural history, intellectual history, and the history of science and the book.

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