

# Call for Papers

International Conference, University of Turin

January 21-22, 2025



Los Angeles, Paul Getty Museum, ms. 68 f. 30v *Historia de duobus amantibus*

(Public domain via Paul Getty Museum website)

*Letters, Communities of Ideas and Cultural Exchanges*  
*from the late Middle Ages to the Renaissance*

The conference aims to explore the letter as a mechanism of cultural and intellectual exchange between the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Letters are a privileged way to transmit and/or discuss literary, philological, philosophical, artistic, religious, political, and other ideas; to share discoveries; and to express appreciation for or dissent from all forms of power or culture.

From this point of view, letters are also a particularly significant source for understanding networks of real or possible relationships between people of different spheres of influence. They are evidence of the inner workings of not only important personalities, including popes and emperors, but also other major figures such as ambassadors from many European countries, cardinals, and bishops, as well as minor personalities such as notaries, teachers, artists, and copyists.

In addition, different situations and evolution can be observed as the Middle Ages became the Renaissance. There are letters from authors wishing to display their network of contacts, who organize their books of letters as literary works according to precisely codified genres and rhetorical norms. There are other instances in which letters, although not collected by one author, are put together by a publisher. In these cases, there can be letters with practical value, with epistles addressed solely to the recipient and transmitted by correspondents in their corpus of letters, or elsewhere in the *mare magnum* of humanistic miscellanies, letters within other texts, functioning as the dedication of another work or even as a treaty. In all these situations the rediscovery of ancient models re-adopted in Latin or vernacular translations necessitated negotiating with ancient ideas.

The research themes above could also take into account the following questions:

- who requested a collection be put together; what material is a collection based upon; what were the selection criteria, the omissions, and the rewritings?
- which rhetorical strategies appear? How do ancient, medieval, and contemporary models work?
- which letters circulated as letters and in which contexts (perhaps religious centres, universities, and courts)?

- which ideas (literary, religious or otherwise) and characteristics determine the circulation of letter collections or individual epistles? How were they received and understood?
- which languages were employed for letters sent locally and across Europe (with particular regard to Latin and the vernacular)?

Proposals (in Italian or English) on all aspects of these topics will be considered. Please submit your proposal paper (250-300 words, with an overview of the intended contribution) as one Word file, containing your name, affiliation and a short biography to Simona Iaria ([simona.iaria@unito.it](mailto:simona.iaria@unito.it)) and Erminia Ardissino ([erminia.ardissino@unito.it](mailto:erminia.ardissino@unito.it)) by March 1, 2024.

The conference will take place at the University of Turin on January 21-22, 2025. There are no inscription fees. Accommodation and meals on site will be provided for speakers whose proposed papers are accepted. Travel costs will not be covered by the conference organisers but must be met individually by participants.

The publication of the conference proceedings is planned.

The conference, organized by Simona Iaria, is part of the research project *Cultural exchanges, network and community in early humanist Europe. The case of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (EuroCult)*, funded by European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellowship (grant agreement n° 101028944).

<https://sites.google.com/view/eurocult-mariecurieproject/home-page>



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