



# **The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso: From Public Duty to Private Pleasure (Toronto Italian Studies)**

*Jo Ann Cavallo*

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In *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso*, Jo Ann Cavallo attempts a new interpretation of the history of the renaissance romance epic in northern Italy, focusing on the period's three major chivalric poets. Cavallo challenges previous critical assumptions about the trajectory of the romance genre, especially regarding questions of creative imitation, allegory, ideology, and political engagement.

In tracing the development of the romance epic against the historical context of the Ferrarese court and the Italian peninsula, Cavallo moves from a politically engaged Boiardo, whose poem promotes the tenets of humanism, to an individualistic Tasso, who opposed the repressive aspects of the counter-reformation culture he is often thought to represent. Ariosto is read from the vantage of his predecessor Boiardo, and Cavallo describes his cynicism and later mellowing attitude toward the real-world relevance of his and Boiardo's fiction. *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso* is the first critical study to bring together the three poets in a coherent vision that maps changes while uncovering continuities.

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