



# Speaking Spirits: Ventriloquizing the Dead in Renaissance Italy (Toronto Italian Studies)

*Sherry Roush*

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**Speaking Spirits: Ventriloquizing the Dead in Renaissance Italy (Toronto Italian Studies)** Sherry Roush

In classical and early modern rhetoric, to write or speak using the voice of a dead individual is known as *eidolopoeia*. Whether through ghost stories, journeys to another world, or dream visions, Renaissance writers frequently used this rhetorical device not only to co-opt the authority of their predecessors but in order to express partisan or politically dangerous arguments.

In *Speaking Spirits*, Sherry Roush presents the first systematic study of early modern Italian *eidolopoeia*. Expanding the study of Renaissance *eidolopoeia* beyond the well-known cases of the shades in Dante's *Commedia* and the spirits of Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*, Roush examines many other appearances of famous ghosts – invocations of Boccaccio by Vincenzo Bagli and Jacopo Caviceo, Girolamo Malipiero's representation of Petrarch in Limbo, and Girolamo Benivieni's ghostly voice of Pico della Mirandola. Through close readings of these eidolopoetic texts, she illuminates the important role that this rhetoric played in the literary, legal, and political history of Renaissance Italy.

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