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LIKE MAE WEST, SHE WROTE HER OWN WAY TO CELEBRITY

1. Andreini, Isabella. **Lettere della Signora Isabella Andreini Padovana, comica gelosa, et academica intenta, nominata l'accessa. Aggiuntovi di nuovo li Ragionamenti piacevoli del'istessa...** Venice: Giovanni Battista Combi, 1620.



Octavo (163 x 105 mm).
Two parts in one volume,
each with separate title page
(second title reads: *Frammenti
di alcune scritture...*). [24],
268, [4 blank]; 180, [4 blank]
pages. Printer's device on title
pages. Large woodcut initials.
Bound in 18th-century plain
leather over pasteboard,
spine in six compartments
decorated with gilt tools and
stamps, raised bands, red
leather title label. Upper
joint cracked but holding,
with small chip lacking at
base of spine and old repair
at headcap. Occasional

light foxing, with small ink drops in a couple of places. Old ownership inscription in upper margin of title page; modern ex-libris of Mario Bagliani (1926-1990), noted collector of books related to theater arts.

Ferri, p. 14 (not this edition); Vinciana 3319; Michel I, 142, #7; Graesse I, 121 (noting this as the sixth edition of the epistolary).

The star female player of the well-known Gelosi troupe, Isabella Andreini enjoyed fame as “the most celebrated commedia dell’arte actress of her century,” says Prof. Meredith

K. Ray. She wrote prolifically for the stage, including a series of plays in which she acted the title role under her own name (Lucky Isabella, Jealous Isabella, Isabella's Madness). The volume of *Lettere* offered here was first printed in 1607, three years after the author's death (in childbirth), and saw many subsequent editions. It is joined, with a separate title page and pagination, by a series of serio-comic dialogues, the *Ragionamenti piacevoli*.

I think it is a mistake to call Andreini's *Lettere* strictly an epistolary. There are no salutations or addressees, rarely dialogue with an imagined recipient. In fact, it is a series of short essays, very like Montaigne's, on a broad variety of subjects, most of them "approved" for women (love, marriage, desire, jealousy, etc) and others profoundly outside conventional women's roles.

The *Ragionamenti piacevoli* consists of 31 sketches, whether meant for stage or merely for thought, posed as dialogues or arguments on contrasting themes, such as epic versus tragedy, lawyers versus medical doctors, and even a free-for-all pitting falling in love, falling out of love, marriage, vows of fidelity, and honesty all against each other. \$2,500.00

THE CANON OF OUTSIDERS

2. Berni, Francesco (1497-1535), Giovanni Mauro, and others; Anton Francesco Grazzini (“il Lasca”), ed. **Il primo Libro dell’opere burlesche. Di M. Francesco Berni, di M. Gio. della Casa, del Varchi, del Mauro, di M. Bino, del Molza, del Dolce, & del Firenzuola...** Florence: Bernardo Giunta, 1548.

First edition. Octavo (17 cm); [16], 132, [128], 129-293, [2 blank] pages. In this copy, leaves D3, F7, F8, and G1 appear to have been inserted from a later edition, without interrupting the text. Publisher’s “novus exorior” device on title page. In 18th-century vellum over boards, with red leather title label stamped in gilt. Old paper repair on title page. Contemporary underlining and marginalia in text. Occasional stains. Even accounting for the inserted leaves, a very good copy of a very hard-to-find book.

Gamba, #158 (“Rarissimo”); Pettas, Florence, #280; Edit 16 CNCE 5545; Govi, *Classici*, #94.

The *Opere burlesche* (1548) is the foundational printed monument of the Bernesque tradition. The raucous satirist Francesco Berni published little during his lifetime. His verses circulated in manuscript and enlivened Florence’s early café culture and literary salons. He became the gravitational center of a group of writers who counterpoised the somber sobriety of the Bembo and Sarpis of the age with acid satire, mock-heroic inversions, and libertine play. An 18th century historian observed that “by consensus, Berni was the most praiseworthy writer in the genre. His delightful imagination, and the easy and natural elegance of his writing, place him over all of his contemporaries” (Tiraboschi, VII, 1615).

After Berni’s death - likely by poison in a Medici intrigue - his friend A.F. Grazzini (“il Lasca”) undertook the task of publishing his scattered compositions. But Grazzini went further: he assembled this anthology as a collective portrait

of the entire burlesque movement. Alongside Berni appear works by Giovanni della Casa, Benedetto Varchi, Francesco Mauro, Bino, Molza, Dolce, and Firenzuola, authors later consistently grouped under the rubric “La Bernia.” Their poems share a cultivated irreverence and a delight in parody, blending humanist learning with exuberant comic invention. Predictably, the collection was banned. Surviving 16th century printings are scarce, and this 1548 first edition is the rarest of all, recorded in only a handful of institutional libraries. Knowing this, we offer our copy even though it has been sophisticated with the insertion of three leaves from a later edition. \$1,500

3. Berni, Francesco (1497-1535). **Rime e lettere ...** Florence: G. Barbera, 1863.

“Collezione Diamante”. in-48 (11cm); xvii, [1], 461, [3] pages, and steel engraved portrait frontispiece with tissue guard. Bound in original publisher’s wraps. Bookplate. Shelf wear, corners bumped, but no frays, tears or stains.

Annali bibliografici delle edizioni di Barbèra, #135; Parenti, *Rarità bibliografiche*, vol 1, p. 52.

The comic poet Francesco Berni is still underappreciated and largely unknown to anglophone readers. According to the Britannica, “Berni stands at the head of Italian comic or burlesque poets. For lightness, sparkling wit, variety of form and fluent diction, his verses are unsurpassed.” This edition was published in Gaspero Barbera’s brilliant “Collezione Diamante” series of vest-pocket books printed in 7-point diamond type in a font based on Bodoni. \$100

SOPHISTICATED EXAMPLE OF A SOPHISTICATED TEXT

4. Boiardo, Matteo Maria; Francesco Berni. **Orlando innamorato nuovamente composto da M. Francesco Berni fiorentino**. Venice: Gli eredi di Lucantonio Giunta, 1541.



Quarto (25 cm); 262 leaves. Title page in red and black. Text in italic type in two columns. In 19th-century polished white vellum, border in gilt with small “chain-link” tool. Spine elaborately gold-tooled in scallop

pattern, with blue-dyed title compartment. Blue pastepaper endleaves. Lengthy bibliographical note in manuscript on front blank. This copy sophisticated, possibly at the time of rebinding, with paper extensions attached to all margins, double-ruled in red ink, effectively adding 5 centimeters to the length of the page, and 2 centimeters to the fore-edge, and an attractive border to the text. Odd.

Edit 16 CNCE 5539; Fontanini, I, 258 f. (noting as “*scandalose*” and “*detestibili*” the poem’s libidinous passages); Camerini, 452 (“di singolare rarità”); Gamba, 161 (“Rarissimo”); Renouard, *Notice sur la famille des Juntas*, xxx (“Elle est très rare”); Tiraboschi, VI, 1165; Harris, *Bibliografia dell’ “Orlando innamorato”*, 1, 31. (Harris gives priority to a 1542 counterfeit edition published in Milan, a notion contradicted in the strongest possible terms by Camerini.)

The bookseller’s jargon term “first edition thus” doesn’t usually mean much, but this case is different. Matteo Maria Boiardo’s chivalric romance first saw print in stages between 1483 and 1506 (some editions are lost or exist in unique copies). The poem was complex, imaginative, energetic, and inspirational (to Ariosto, among others), but was also

considered flat-footed, steeped in dialect, uncaredful with syntax, rhythmically flawed, and unfinished. Beginning around 1530, the Florentine satirist Francesco Berni began his adoring “rifacimento,” polishing nearly every line of the massive text, eliminating the perceived rough edges, bringing it into line with the sophisticated tastes of his generation. Berni effectively became the poem’s co-author. Whether Berni truly “improved” Boiardo’s text is not our concern (the answer was yes until very recently). The book, here presented in its very rare first edition, remains a milestone in the development of the Italian language during the sixteenth century. Among Berni’s embellishments is an eyewitness description in verse of the 1527 sack of Rome. \$7,500.

IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY

5. Dolce, Lodovico (1508-1568). **Dialogo nel quale si ragiona del modo di accrescere, et conservare la memoria.** Venice: Giovanni Battista e Marchio Sessa, 1562.



First edition. Printer's Pegasus device framed by breasty lions, grotesques, fruits, etc. on title page. Woodcut initials, and 23 woodcuts throughout text of mnemonic diagrams and charts, musical notation, and illustrations, which include one of the earliest examples of phrenological illustration, and the buildings of a town labelled with the businesses located there, including "bibliopola" (bookstore displaying books in shop window). Bound in early full stiff vellum, label with title on spine.

Adams D-732; Mortimer, Italian, 157; Brunet II, 789; BM Italian p.220.

The mechanics of memory was an abiding concern of the polymath humanist Lodovico Dolce. He first approached it systematically in 1547 with a "Dialogue on Women's Education," and then with greater focus in 1556 with the text offered here. Dolce explores the concept of the "memory palace," where one associates specific items or specific texts with an imaginary chamber in an imaginary building: an exercise still taught today. He provides other techniques for using vivid mental images and repetition to memorize complex texts. The concept is convincingly illustrated with 16 wood-engraved plates and 7 pages of an alphabet populated with mnemonic figures. \$3,000

IS IT PLAGIARISM IF HE DIDN'T KNOW IT?

6. Domenichi, Lodovico (1515-1564); Gregorio Correr.
Progne, Tragedia. Florence: Giunti, 1561.

First edition. Octavo (15 cm); 66 pages (misnumbered 68). This copy LACKS final blank leaf E2. Printer's lily device on title page, woodcut initials in text. In later (c18 or early c19) vellum over boards. Bookseller's notes in pencil on front pastedown. Traces of old tickets removed on front pastedown and front blank. First and last leaves bear some stains, while interior pages are relatively free of foxing. Extensive contemporary underlining in ink, along with occasional notes and jottings in contemporary hand in margins. A serviceable copy of a rare text.

Edit 16 CNCE 13530; Adams, D-782; Pettas, Florence, #352; Fontanini/Zeno (1753) I, p.473; Renouard, p. 273, #14;.

Domenichi thrived as a textual editor and translator, producing texts of classical and contemporary authors for the powerful Giunti firm. The volume offered here is a vernacular adaptation of a Latin text by Gregorio Correr (d. 1464), written in the 1420s but not performed or published until 1558. Domenichi has been blamed for failing to attribute his *Progne* to Correr (see Renouard, p. 273, #14, and Zeno's note to Fontanini, I, 473), but to be fair, Correr's Latin original was published (by Paolo Manuzio) without attribution, as if it were an anonymous classical text. The style is Senecan, the matter taken from the episode in Ovid of Tereus, Procne, and Philomena, the mythic prototype of abusive relationships, and later a central element in *Titus Andronicus*, and in Eliot's *The Wasteland*. \$1,200.

A BOOK COLLECTOR ACCOUNTS FOR HIS LIBRARY

7. Doni, Anton Francesco. **La libreria del Doni Fiorentino** [with] **La seconda libreria del Doni nella quale sono scritti tutti gl'autori vulgari con cento discorsi sopra quelli. Tutte le tradutioni fatte dall'altre lingue, nella nostra & una tavola generalmente come si costuma fra librari.** Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari; Francesco Marcolini, 1550-1551.

First editions. Two volumes bound in one. 12mo (14 cm); 70, [2] leaves, last blank; 112, [7] leaves, (lacking blank K/12?). Giolito devices on first title page and on verso of F/12; Marcolini devices on title page of second title and on verso of K/11. Woodcut initials in first title. Italic and Roman type. In vellum over boards, titled in manuscript on spine, "Doni Libreria T. I. II." If anyone is interested, the first section has all the first-issue points noted by Bonghi (there was a second issue in the same year, with minor changes). 19th-century pictorial bookplate of Thomas Gaisford.

ALLA SIGNORA LAVRA TERRACINA.



ODE grandissima meritano hoggi gl'huomini che fanno opere; ma molto piu mi pare che si debba lodare una Donna maggiormente, auanzando infinite compositioni scritte da gl'huomini. Ecco Signora che con l'elevato uostro ingegno date parte di luce alla realissima città di Napoli. Ecco il fumo che s'ode per tutto delle bellissime uostre Rime, lequali mostrano al mondo la nobiltà del uostro spirito, unite con l'animo suo uirtuoso, Onde io mi u'inclino & fo riuerenza. di Vinegia. Il Doni.

Bongi I, 287 (“these two little works by Doni... hold a very important place in Italian literary history”); Casali, #83 (“The *Libraries* are the most singular and the most useful writings to come from Doni’s fertile and bizarre pen”); Marsili-Libelli, 22; Mortimer, Italian, 163 (second ed.); Adams D-817 and D-822; BM Italian, 225-226.

Doni’s idea was to catalogue all the Italian-language authors published to date and record his impressions of them. These efforts broke fresh ground in several camps: book collecting, bibliography, and reader criticism. Bongi wrote, “Everyone knows these two books are the first Italian studies in bibliography, and, as always, the author displays his ingenuity and his bizarre sense of humor, recording there unusual comments and singular judgments.” Volume 1 is a catalogue of printed books, while volume 2 concentrates on manuscripts. \$3,000

HE SENDS PEDANTS AND ACADEMICS TO HELL

8. Doni, Anton Francesco (1513-1574). **La moral' filosofia del Doni tratta da gli antichi scrittori** [*with*] **Trattati diversi di Sendebar Indiano** [*and with*] **Inferni del Doni: libro secondo de Mondi**. Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1552 and 1553.



First editions. Three titles in one volume. Small quarto (21 cm); [8], 152; 103, [9]; 224, [8] pages. Three title pages each with large woodcut vignette. Woodcut initials and ornaments. *La moral' filosofia*: 24 woodcut allegorical vignettes, two full-page portraits (one of Marcolini, one of Aretino), and two internal title pages figured with printer's devices. *Trattati diversi*: 11 additional allegorical vignettes and full-page printer's device on final

page. *Inferni*: full-page portrait of Doni, another of Aretino, and 22 large woodcut illustrations drawn from Marcolini's 1544 edition of the *Commedia*; six section title pages with vignettes, full-page woodcut device ("Veritas filia temporis") on last page. In full vellum titled in manuscript on spine. Few scattered blemishes, but generally clean and fresh. Old ownership inscription of Antonio Orfetti.

Ricottini, 36 (*La Moral' Filosofia*) and 41 (*Inferni*); Casali #91 (*La moral' filosofia*) and #92 (*Inferni*); Gamba 1370 ("Doni's *Moral Philosophy* is his richest work for fable, narrative, allegory, and curious tales"); Mortimer, Italian, 65; Edit 16 CNCE 17694 (*La moral' filosofia*); CNCE 17693 (*Inferni*).

A very rich example of Renaissance invention and of the migration of texts across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Based ultimately on the Sanskrit Panchatantra (a collection of didactic animal fables), Doni derived his text from a Spanish version taken from the Latin, which had been translated from Hebrew, in turn translated from Arabic through the Persian version translated from a Sanskrit original! Needless to say, Doni's version is highly idiosyncratic, drawing from a wide variety of sources (including Aesop), and adding personal commentary that frequently refers to people and events in the present. Doni's wit, bitter and dry, permeates. *La moral' filosofia* was translated by Thomas North in 1568

Doni's *Inferni* was published in 1553 as the sequel to *I Mondi*, which had come out the previous year. Later printings by other publishers united the two texts into a single narrative, but in fact they each stand alone. *Inferni* borrows Dante's hell and repurposes it to punish academics, bad husbands, greedy rich people, ignorant doctors (including lawyers), prostitutes, poets, and armchair generals. (The illustrations are taken from Marcolini's 1544 edition of the *Commedia*.) Eccentric, funny, and interesting as it is, *La moral' filosofia* has drawn little scholarship and is woefully under-represented in institutional libraries. OCLC locates no copies of this 1552 first edition by Marcolini in North America, and not many of the 1567 reprint off the Sessa press. \$2,500

ROMAN COMEDY IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

9. Firenzuola, Agnolo (1493-1543). **I Lucidi. Comedia.**
Florence: Giunti, 1552.



Second edition. Octavo (15 cm); 44 leaves. Woodcut printer's device on title-page with variant at the end; woodcut initials. Bound in later (c19?) plain sky-blue boards, titled in manuscript on spine. Upper joint starting at crown.

References: Gamba, 458 ("We esteem this second edition over the first as much for the beauty of the type

as we do for the diligently corrected text"); Adams, F-496; Pettas, Florence, #318; Decia & Camerini, *I Giunti di Firenze*, 287; Seroni, *Firenzuola*, #4; Edit 16 CNCE 19203.

Second edition of this five-act comedy which Gamba notes is held in greater esteem than the first printing. The action is an updated version of Plautus's *Menaechmi*, replete with twins, disguises, lovers, mistaken identities, and a quack doctor.
\$950

10. Firenzuola, Agnolo (1493-1543). **Opere.** Pisa: Niccolò Capurro, 1816.

15cm; 6 volumes. Engraved frontispiece portrait and one folding plate. Mixed set: volumes 1-5 untrimmed, unsophisticated copy in publisher's wraps, with paper labels on spines. Volume 6 (Rime) matched from a different set, in blue marbled boards with gilded leather spine. Spine ends of volumes 1-5 shelf worn with some loss.

Gamba 463, note; Seroni, *Firenzuola*, # 15.

The works of the proto-libertine who praised women and human sexuality in the Tuscan vernacular (sex talk had been reserved to Latin, a language rarely taught to women), and who incidentally helped forge Italian literary conventions. The text includes the author's imitations of Aesop ("Discorsi degli animali"), his "Ragionamenti amorose" (Discourses on love, styled after Boccaccio's Decameron), the dialogue On the Beauty of Women ("Delle bellezze delle donne," with illustrations), the epistle in praise of women, the two comedies "La Trinzia" (the Triple Marriage) and "I Lucidi," the Macchiavellian "Novelle," and his Italian translation of the Golden Ass of Apuleius. \$150

EROTIC TALES IN AN ELABORATE FRAME

11. Firenzuola, Agnolo (1493-1543). **Ragionamenti di M. Agnolo Firenzuola Fiorentino.** Florence: Bernardino Giunta, 1548.

First edition. Octavo (16cm); 96 leaves, signed AA-MM. 14 woodcut historiated initials (8 different letters) not included in later printings. Giunti device with motto on title page and last page. In recent (c20?) full leather with gold tooling. Spine with 4 raised bands. Gilt edges. Marbled endpapers. Slight browning.

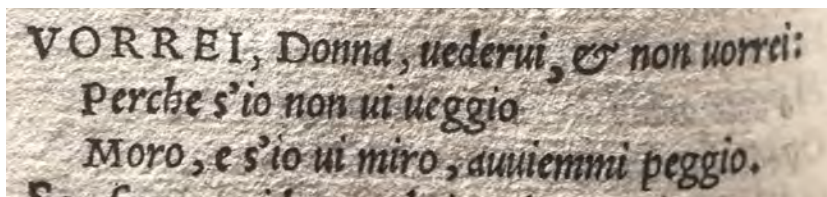
References: Adams, F-502; Pettas, Florence, #283; Edit 16 CNCE 19196.

Pettas points out that the collation of signatures beginning with AA indicates that the *Ragionamenti* may have been intended to be bound together with Firenzuola's *Prose*, published that same year. The two texts separated early on, however, and each exists on its own. Assembled and curated by Lodovico Domenichi, this collection consists primarily of the author's set of erotic tales framed (in clear imitation of Boccaccio) as the entertainment of a group of youths at a rural retreat. The imitation of Boccaccio is not slavish: here the "frame" has much more prominence, with extended discussions among the storytellers on how the narratives reverberate, and what they reveal about desire, social obligation, reciprocity in love, and even gender patterning. Firenzuola was a great exponent of sexual independence. The volume also reprints the only text that Firenzuola published during his lifetime, the "Discacciamento delle nuove lettere" (Exile of new letters), the argument that effectively killed Gian Giorgio Trissino's campaign to add unique letters to the Italian alphabet. \$1,600

SECULAR AND SNAPPY

12. Firenzuola, Agnolo (1493-1543). **Le rime**. Florence: Bernardo Giunti, 1549.

Octavo (15 cm); 135, [2] leaves, last one blank. Printer's "Novus exorior" device on title page and on last printed page. Woodcut initials. In full polished calf (c18), tooled decorations in gilt on spine, marbled endleaves, gilt edges and dentelles. Boards with moisture stains, splitting along joints but holding. Old repair to title page. Moisture stains on first and last leaves.



Adams F-503; Pettas, Florence, #292; Gamba, # 456 ("Raro"); Renouard, page LVII, no. 160; Camerini, Firenze, I:263; Fontanini (1753) II, 61; Edit 16 CNCE 19198

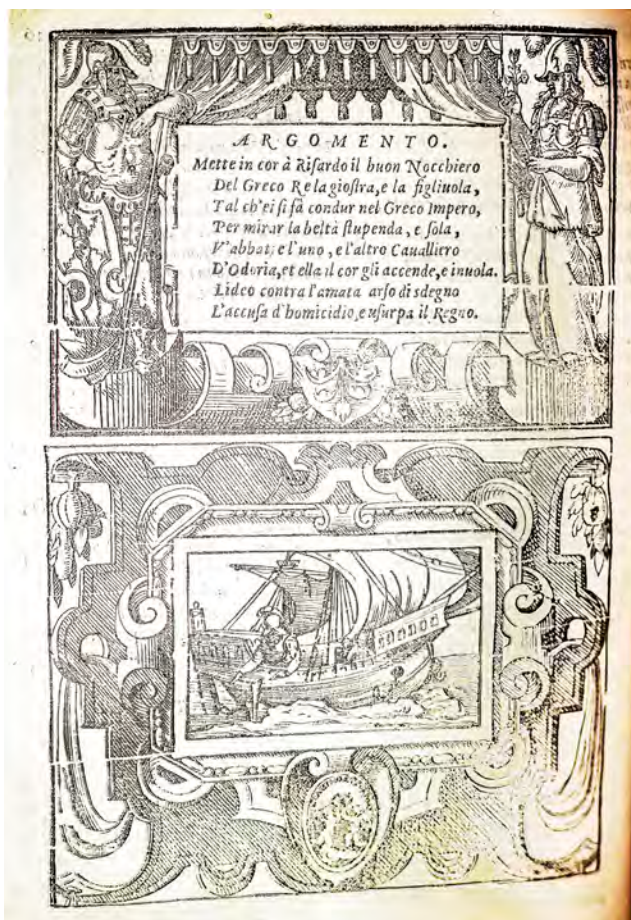
Provenance: Ex libris of Sergio Colombi; Giuseppe Martini (his penciled annotation on front blank and on ll. 134 and 135).

In general, Firenzuola's poetry is secular, sexy, and snappy, yet capable of deeply personal sympathy. His friend Lorenzo Scala produced this collection from available manuscripts, lamenting (in the preface) the many poems "no less beautiful than the ones published here" lost since the author's death. In addition to the three canzoni that had appeared the previous year in the anthology of *Opere burlesche* (item #3 above), this rich collection includes lively sonnets, elegies, translations (from Horace), and satires, along with a canzone in praise of a sausage, another in praise of thirst, and one on the death of an owl. \$1,000

WOMEN WARRIORS

13. Fonte, Moderata, i.e., Modesta Pozzo De' Zorzi, (1555-1592); Lodovico Ariosto. **Tredici canti del Floridoro** [with] **Cinque canti...** Venice: [eredi di Francesco Rampazetto] alla stamperia de' Rampazetti, 1581.

First edition of Tredici Canti. Quarto (21 cm). Two titles in one. (Fonte): [4], 62 leaves. Title page within woodcut border, including printer's "body and soul" device. Elaborate woodcut initials, and 13 full-page woodcut frames enclosing the text of the "argomento" of each canto, along with a vignette. Errata at end.



BM Italian p. 272; Edit 16 CNCE 15890. See also Meredith K. Ray, *Twenty-five Women who Shaped the Italian Renaissance* (2024), pp. 266-69.

(Ariosto): Pesaro: Heredi di Bartolomeo Cesano et Guid'ubaldo Bicille da Urbino, 1561. 32 leaves. Head piece and printer's device on title page. Populated woodcut initials, and elaborate woodcut scenes framed within borders at the start of each of the five cantos.

Agnelli-Ravegnani, 300-301; Brunet, II, 1331; Edit 16 CNCE 2724.

In mid-twentieth century half vellum over marbled boards. Leather title labels on spine. Recent color-printed armorial bookplate on front pastedown. Bibliographical notes in pencil on blanks. Occasional discoloration.

Lauded as a “visionary of women’s equality” (Ray), Moderata Fonte grafted a feminist chivalric romance of her own onto Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*. The heroes in her tale of enchanted swords and valiant horses are Risamante, a woman warrior whose armor conceals her identity, and Circetta, who uses powers of enchantment on weak strongmen. The opening of the fourth canto could be an anthem: “If men and women share the same bodily form, if they are composed of the same substance, if they eat and speak in the same way, who could think they differ in courage and intelligence?”

\$5,500

RACY AND ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN

14. Grazzini, Anton Francesco (“Il Lasca”). **La prima e la seconda cena, ... alle quali si aggiunge una novella della terza cena...** London [but Paris]: G. Nourse [i.e. Jean-Claude Molini], 1756.

8vo (18 cm); xxxii, 412, [10] pages. Typographic ornaments. Bound in full contemporary vellum with leather label on spine. Edges dyed red. Mildly soiled, with scattered light foxing. Sound and entire. Gamba, 538.

First printing of most of the contents of this 16th-century Florentine frame tale (part II appeared separately some 12 years earlier). Anton Francesco Grazzini (1503-84), known as “Il Lasca,” was a founder of the Accademia della Crusca and the guiding spirit of “serious” comedy and satire in 16th-century Florence. He edited the fundamental collection of Italian comic verse, *Opere burlesche* (item #3 above) as well as *Canti carnascialeschi*, and acquired fame in his lifetime for his own contributions to the genre. Meanwhile, he composed an extended set of prose “novelle,” set in a Boccaccio-esque framework of ten youths telling stories on three dinner occasions during Carnevale in the 1540s. Publication was suppressed, less for the racy contents as for the populist, anti-authoritarian strain evident throughout. A counterfeit edition appeared almost immediately after this one, but our copy bears all the points of the original edition. D.H. Lawrence translated part of the contents in 1929. \$400

Q AND A ON EVERYTHING (BUT LOVE)

15. [Lando, Ortensio, 1505?-1555?]. **Quattro libri de dubbi: con le solutioni a ciascun dubbio accommodate....** Venice: Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1552.

First edition. Octavo (16 cm); 318 [2] pages. Woodcut device on title page and on last page. Woodcut initials. Bound in recent vellum in period style, yapp edges, titled in ink on spine. Early 20th-century bibliographical note in manuscript bound in. Marginal annotations in contemporary hand. Leaf a ii, the dedicatory letter, present in two states (one bound in from an alternative copy, as explained in the manuscript note). Occasional light stains, darker on last leaf.

Bongi I, 368; Melzi II, 391; BM Italian, 377 (1556 ed.); Fontanini, II, 117; Grendler, 29

Ortensio Lando was an eccentric, peripatetic, uncomfortable humanist who seemed to gravitate toward the far edge of every society he entered. While many humanists traveled, Lando traveled more. A native of Milan, he can be found at various times in Rome, Venice, Naples, Lyon (where he worked for Sebastian Gryphius and alongside Etienne Dolet), Basel, Geneva, Lucca, Trento, Paris, Strasbourg, Tubingen and Augsburg, remaining in Venice after 1545 but probably in Naples when he died, sometime in the later 1550s. He changed his name more than once, and he preferred to publish pseudonymously, cryptically, or anonymously, creating a burden for his biographers. (Ironically for such an unquiet soul, he often referred to himself in print as “il Tranquillo.”) He stopped short of the priesthood, flirted seriously with reformers, wrote several protestant-leaning works, yet he was present at the opening of the Council of Trent. He translated More’s *Utopia* into Italian, and wrote a fantastical funeral oration on Erasmus, both praising and condemning him, that still puzzles Erasmus scholars. Starting with *I Paradossi* (Lyon, 1534), he published a series

of learned dialogues, travelogues, and arguments, all of them characterized by an odd sense of humor, and all of them landing on the local indices in Milan and Venice, and on Pope Paul IV's first "universal index of prohibited books" in Rome.

The title of this book promises four sets of "questions and their answers," and indeed that was the plan. Lando wrote Q&A on four topics: medical questions (including dietary and aging functions), ethical questions, questions about religion, and questions about love and sex. It was the love and sex part that raised the eyebrows of the censors, and neither Lando or his publisher Giolito could get permissions to print it as the book was going to press. As Giolito himself declares in a postscript to the reader: "I promised you four books, but since I haven't yet been granted a license for the questions about love, I'm forced to give you only three.... Be well and enjoy as much of the book as I could give you." (The license came later, and the text appeared in later editions.) This unfinished text with its publisher's apology represents a fascinating birthmark on the 16th-century book trade.

The Q&A ranges over hundreds of topics, calling upon the author's medical training (much involved with the humors and temperaments associated with various organs, objects, and creatures), his classical erudition, and his training in the Augustinian order. The three sections together provide comprehensive insight into 16th century medicine and popular religious and moral thought.

Quattro libri de dubbi was quickly translated into French (Lyon, 1558) and by William Painter into English, entitled, *Delectable demaundes and pleasaunt questions, with their severall aunswers...* (1566, and again 1640). \$2,200

EULOGIES FOR DONKEYS, CATS, AND CRICKETS

16. Lando, Ortensio. **Sermoni funebri de vari auctori nella morte de diversi animali.** Venice: Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1548 (colophon: 1549).

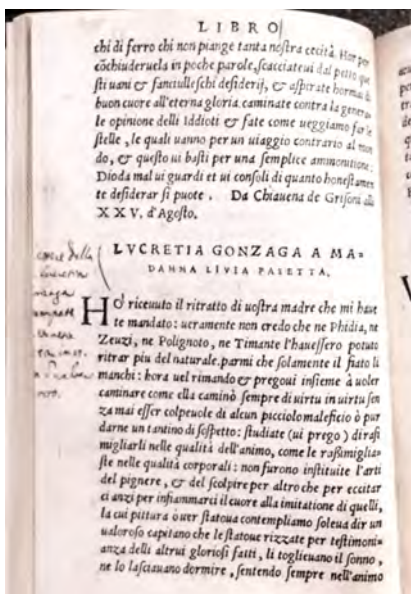
First edition, variant with dedication to John Jakob Fugger. Octavo (15cm); 36 leaves. Giolito phoenix device and fleuron on title page, and smaller phoenix device on verso of last leaf. Woodcut historiated initials. 20th-century cloth binding. Occasional minor blemishes.

Bongi, I, 231 f.; Adams L-122; BM Italian, 623; Melfi, III, 58; Grendler, 15.

Although the title of this collection indicates funeral orations for animals by “various authors,” all eleven pieces are by Lando. They are supposed “funeral orations” informed by examples from Lucian and from Lando’s contemporary Cornelius Agrippa. Indeed, the text confirms how brightly Lucian’s peculiar star shone among thinking humanists. Each eulogy (for a cat, a flea, a cricket, an ass) is attributed to a fictional speaker. Lando only appears under his own name in a postscript, an apology where he admits that the “orations” are meant in fun but that they are erudite and have serious matter to them as well, intending to “reveal secrets of nature.” While the Index suppressed Lando’s works in Italy, he was very popular in the rest of Europe. The *Sermoni* were translated into French and Latin, and were reprinted into the eighteenth century. Copies of the first edition are extremely difficult to obtain, and are held in very few collections worldwide, no copies in North American institutions (according to OCLC). \$1,500

WOMEN WRITING TO WOMEN

17. Lando, Ortensio; Lucrezia Gonzaga; eds. **Lettere di molte valorose donne, nelle quali chiaramente appare non esser ne di eloquentia ne di dottrina alli huomini inferiori.** Venice: Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1548-49.



First edition. Octavo (17cm); 161 [3] leaves (including final blank). Printer's device on title page and on verso of last leaf. Woodcut initial H on f.2 populated with racquetball players, and woodcut initial D on f.3 by the figure of a woman petting a boar. Italic and Roman type. Margins trimmed, light water stain to some lower outer corners. A very good copy in ca.1750 polished vellum, gilt-stamped title on spine. Few annotations, 16th-century pen trails.

Adams, L-562; Bonghi I, 213-214; BM Italian, 376; Melzi II, 115; Grendler, 14. See also, Meredith K. Ray, *Writing Gender in Women's Letter Collections of the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto, 2009); Serena Pezzini, "Dissimulazione e paradosso in Ortensio Lando," in *Italianistica* 31:1 (2002) pp. 67-83; Natalina Bellucci, "Lettere di molte valorose donne...e di alcune pettegolette, ovvero: di un libro di lettere di Ortensio Lando," in Quondam, ed., *Le carte messaggere: retorica e modelli di comunicazione epistolare...* (Rome, 1981) pp. 255-76.

Lettere di molte valorose donne is a collection of model letters written by women to other women, demonstrating (in the context of the "querelle des femmes") that women are in no way inferior to men in eloquence and education. Topics

range widely, embracing the commonplaces but with the addition of issues such as marriage, childbirth, the struggle for education, and the attractiveness of men, or lack thereof. The text seems to provide an intimate glimpse into a female network in which advice and comfort are shared.

Authorship of *Lettere di molte valorose donne* puzzles scholars to this day. Published by the powerful Venetian house of Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, there is no attribution on the title page or in the front matter. Lando is only mentioned in the gratulatory verses at the end of the book, where his famous peers, Dolce, Aretino, Sansovino, and Pestalossa, celebrate him for the "copious sweat and considerable personal expenses" that he put into compiling the book. Succumbing to historical bias, nineteenth-century scholarship denied the authorship of the letters from the women who wrote them, insisting that Lando wrote the entire text. Recent research restores the texts to their female writers, and takes the view that Lando, in collaboration with his great friend and sometime patron, Lucrezia Gonzaga, may have done some heavy editing. \$3,200

ON DEATH

18. Lando, Ortensio [?]; **Oratione consolatoria in morte della molto magnifica S. la S. Helisabetta Dotta, Capodelista...** Padova: Gratosio Perchacino , 1555.

Original edition. Quarto (20 cm); [12] leaves, signed a-c, last leaf blank. Printer's device (a crowned salamander ensconced in flames) on title page. Woodcut initial at start of text. Bound in recent half morocco over marbled boards. Trimmed close to top edge. Gutters guarded. Some spotting on title page, but generally clean

Edit 16 CNCE 57958. For attribution to Lando, see Silvana Seidel Menchi, "Chi fu Ortensio Lando?," *Rivista storica italiana*, #106 (1994), 501-564. Not in Grendler.

This is an essay about death. In particular, it is a eulogy on the death of young Elizabetta Dotta, who (it is stated in the text) died, recently married, at the age of 16 years, 8 months, 24 days and 12 hours. (The cause of her death is not given.) It does not indulge in a moment's sorrow over the young woman's early demise. Instead, it is an extended encomium of death itself, praising death as liberation from the essential misery of life in this corrupt and depraved world. As such, it is an eloquent statement of philosophical pessimism, the tradition which views life as the soul's exile, as suffering, and sees death as a preferable alternative. While the text is not signed, the author is presumed to be Ortensio Lando, the uncomfortable, peripatetic humanist who never stayed in one place for very long, either physically or philosophically. "What is life?" Lando asks. "Smoke, a dream, a running shadow, a ship that leaves no trace, an arrow shot to its destination." \$600

A DIM VIEW OF MEN

19. Passi, Giuseppe, 1569-1620. **La monstruosa fucina delle sordidezze de gl'huomini nuovamente formata, e posta in luce.** [*with*] **Continuazione della Monstruosa fucina delle sordidezze de gl'huomini.** Venice: Giacomo Antonio Somasco (1603); Deuchino & Pulciani (1609).



First editions. 2 volumes, quarto (20 cm); I: [20], 119, [1 blank] leaves; II: [24], 136 pages. Printer's device on title page. Woodcut initials and ornaments. Italic and roman type; shoulder notes. 1603 volume bound in flexible vellum, titled in ink on top edge; 1609 volume in vellum over boards, titled in ink on spine. Both volumes with early ownership inscriptions.

References: *Vinciana* 3486-87; Michel VI, 86 (1603); BM Italian c17, p. 662 (1603)

In 1599, Giuseppe Passi published a viciously misogynistic tract, *Dei donneschi difetti*, in the context of the ongoing series of back-and-forth polemics in the so-called “querelle des femmes” that straddled the 16th- and 17th centuries. That book, often reprinted, inspired several important responses from writers such as Lucrezia Marinelli and Moderata Fonte, staking out some of the earliest terms of feminist literature and powerfully putting Passi to shame. Scholarship tends to view the two works offered here as Passi’s attempt to make up for the excesses of that earlier book by producing an equally vicious catalogue on “the sordidness of men.” It catalogues all the ways in which men are greedy, arrogant, mean, ambitious, ungrateful, cruel, vain, and dissolute. Of course, it was a commercial success, so much so that a second volume of masculine faults followed. In true humanist fashion, the

see Pietro Manzi, *La tipografia napoletana nel '500. Annali di Mattia Cancer...* (1972), and *Dizionario dei tipografi e degli editori italiani: Il Cinquecento*, vol. 1 (A-F), pp. 242 ff. See also Matteo Bosisio, “Notes on satire in Giovan Battista Pino’s ‘Ragionamento sovra de l’asino’” in *Diacritica*, X, 53, August 2024.

The “Essay on Asses” strikes the tones of learned discourse while expounding all there is to know about donkeys--in history, in fable, in metaphor, and in fact. Much of the satire bites at Naples, the author’s home. It falls so distinctly into the school of Berni that a 17th- or 18th-century owner had Berni’s “Capitolo in lode dell’asino” and Gabriel Simeoni’s “La natura de l’asino” copied out by hand and bound in. \$6,500.00

RENAISSANCE SELF-DISCOVERY

21. Sforza, Isabella. **Della vera tranquillità dell’animo. Opera utilissima...** Venice: In casa de’ figliuoli di Aldo, 1544.



First edition. Quarto (22 cm); 53, [1] leaves. Aldine anchor-and-dolphin device on title page and on verso of final blank leaf. In early 20th-century quarter vellum over patterned block-printed boards. Old bookseller’s ticket of Libreria Antiquaria Mediolanum. Old ownership inscription in ink canceled on title page. Old closed tears in title page repaired and reinforced on verso. Contemporary annotations on A2r. A very good, clean, wide-margined copy.

References: Adams, S-1044; Renouard, p. 129, #1; Gamba, 1646; Edit 16 CNCE 26949 (attributing text to Lando).

Is this a Renaissance self-help book? I would say rather it is a Renaissance woman's diary of self discovery in a world of limited possibilities. Isabella Sforza achieved a high degree of erudition, but struggled with legal and family issues. When her husband was murdered by his lawyer in her presence, she was blamed (the lawyer escaped) and imprisoned in a convent until the case against her was dropped. Her family tried (with only partial success) to dispossess her of her estate. A second marriage was annulled on technical grounds. In this context, Isabella Sforza sought a less institutional, more personal basis to understand what it means to be alive in the world. Together with her friend and sometime ward Ortensio Lando, she composed this treatise on developing a detachment from events in favor of a contemplative spirituality. We must remark on the handsome Aldine roman font that Paolo Manuzio employed for this book. It is a similar or the same font Francesco Griffo cut for the 1499 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. \$2,500

A WEIRD TAKE ON ARIOSTO

22. Terracina, Laura Bacio (1519-1577); Anton Francesco Doni.
Discorso sopra il principio di tutti i canti d'Orlando Furioso ... Venice: Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1559.



Fifth Giolito edition. Octavo (15 cm); 88 leaves. Printer's device and cartouche on title page. Author's portrait within elaborate cornice on verso of title page; two historiated initials, and 46 woodcut vignettes taken from the 1542 Giolito edition of Ariosto's poem. Handsomely bound in 19th-century (?) crushed morocco with gold double fillets and delicate cornerpieces. Spine in six compartments decorated in gilt with title and date

stamped in gilt. Gilt dentelles; marbled endleaves. Trimmed close at top edge. A few stains to early leaves, else negligible spotting.

Bongi, II, 77-78; BM Italian 665; Edit 16 CNCE 54883

We know merely from the multiple printings--not only of the *Discorso* offered here, but of Laura Terracina's several books of poems--that she was one of the most popular poets of her lifetime, and certainly (as Nancy Dersoff has written) "the most prolific woman poet of her century." The *Discorso* is a highly original take on the "cento" (a poem composed by selecting and rearranging lines from some other well-known poem). In this case, Terracina presents 46 cantos (corresponding to the 46 cantos of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*) of eight stanzas each, and each stanza ends with a line --in sequence-- from the from the opening stanza of

the corresponding canto in Ariosto's poem. While there is glancing reference in the *Discorso* to the characters and action of Orlando Furioso, each of Terracina's cantos skewers fraudsters, flatterers, usurers, lechers, betrayers of friendship, and so on. Each canto is dedicated either to an individual (many of them women) or to categories of people, such as "enemies of women" or (loosely translated) "insatiable sex addicts." The text of the *Discorso* is followed by a collection of sonnets addressed to various friends, enemies, and correspondents (Vittoria Colonna, Giovanna d'Aragona, Giulia Gonzaga among them). The volume closes with three "love letters" by the eccentric poligrafo Anton Francesco Doni. A strong statement of Renaissance feminism, Terracina's *Discorso* is "a forceful call to intellectual arms," writes Meredith K. Ray, in which the author asserts that "women must give voice to their own experience, and to each other's" so that "male writers would not have silenced their accomplishments." \$2,400