

Le sorti intitolate giardino d'i pensieri. Francesco Marcolini. Ludica: Collana di storia del gioco 7. Treviso: Edizioni Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche; Rome: Viella Libreria Editrice, 2007. 234 pp. € 50.00. ISBN 978-88-8334-265-3.

Studi per le "Sorti": Gioco, immagini, poesia oracolare a Venezia nel Cinquecento. Ed. Paolo Procaccioli. Ludica: Collana di storia del gioco 8. Treviso: Edizioni Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche; Rome: Viella Libreria Editrice, 2007. viii + 268 pp. € 40.00. ISBN 978-88-8334-276-9.

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The printing press came to Italy in 1465, reaching Venice four years later. By the turn of the century, La Serenissima had become the dominant printing center in Italy, a dominance she only increased, producing more than half the Italian editions before 1600 and, during the second quarter of the *cinquecento*, almost three-fourths of the books printed in Italy. In the heady days of that second quarter, vernacular printing came to the fore, and, although for sheer volume of titles Gabriele Giolito swept the field, an interesting rival was Francesco Marcolini from Forlì. His particular genius was for illustrated books, among them Sebastiano Serlio's *Five Books of Architecture* and Pietro Aretino's books with a sequence of woodcut author portraits that made his face the most famous in Europe. As I write this review, the chiaroscuro frontispiece to *Le stanze* with the design, attributed to Titian, portraying Aretino as a Petrarchan shepherd, is displayed in an exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Also in the exhibit is the book bearing Marcolini's own name, *Le sorti intitolate giardino d'i pensieri* ("The fortunes, entitled the garden of thoughts").

In the rapidly expanding market of vernacular texts, books of games occupied a popular niche. Following the after-dinner game of Castiglione's *Cortegiano* came such texts as Innocenzo Ringhieri's *One Hundred Clever Games* (1551) and Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogue on Games That Sieneze Play in Evenings* (1572). Fortune-telling books, *libri delle sorti*, constituted a distinctive subset, among them Marcolini's *Le sorti* in which participants chose questions and, through playing cards, advanced to allegories, philosophers, and finally answers. In concept and procedure – choice of set questions, progression by chance to didactic answers – as well as the verbal-visual format with illustrations and poems, *Le sorti* seems clearly indebted to an earlier Venetian book, Sigismondo Fantis *Triumpho di fortuna* (1527). The distance between them, however, can be seen by comparing the illustrated title pages; the rather heavy-handed allegory of the *Triumph* is worlds away from Giuseppe Porta Salviati's evocative title page scene of philosophers, scholars, astronomers, and a quartet of young people, who are intently absorbed in playing the game. Equally impressive in its own way is Giuseppe Porta's fine author portrait within the same architectural frame that ornamented Serlio's and Aretino's books in 1537.

The excellent and handsome facsimile reprint of the first edition (1540) retains the small folio size of

the original and begins with a brief introductory note by Paolo Procaccioli that helpfully concludes with thirteen illustrations from the revised 1550 edition (including a different author portrait), making selective comparison easy. The preceding volume in this series devoted to the history of games was Procaccioli's careful edition of the tercets that Lodovico Dolce contributed to the game (reviewed in *SCJ* 39 [2008]: 315-16). There Procaccioli argued that poet and printer should be acknowledged as collaborators; and certainly *Le sorti* raises interesting questions about collaborative or collective authorship. Along with Marcolini and Dolce, the several artists and woodblock cutters who contributed to the project deserve similar recognition. Giorgio Vasari, "marvelling" at Marcolini's work, praised the title page and author portrait, but further acknowledged the "various fanciful figures, such as Fate, Envy, Calamity, Timidity, Praise, and many others of the same kind, which were held to be most beautiful" (*Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Gaston duc de Vere, Everyman's Library [New York: Knopf, 1996], 2:96). The questions of identifying the artists involved and attributing the hundred woodcuts representing concepts and philosophers are complicated enough that one wishes an appendix had been devoted to them. A number of the woodblocks were reused in books that Marcolini printed for Anton Francesco Doni during the 1550s; nineteen figures reappear in Sir Thomas North's 1570 translation of Doni's *La filosofia morale* (1552); still others were copied or adapted in unrelated publications.

Presumably it was decided that the accompanying volume of studies would give the illustrations sufficient attention; two of the dozen essays, those by Giorgio Masi and particularly Enrico Parlato, do consider them at some length. The others address a variety of topics, with the editor providing an authoritative survey of Marcolini's career. It was a remarkable one, notable for the partnership that inspired Aretino's best work; a brief foray into music printing notable for the volume of five masses by Adrian Willaert; and the succession of illustrated books that includes Dante's *Commedia* with commentary by Alessandro Vellutello (1544) and Vincenzo Cartari's *Le immagini, con la spositione de i dei de gl'antichji* (1556). The facsimile of *Le sorti*, the Dolce edition, and the volume of Marcolini studies provide a foundation for future work, and all students of print culture should be grateful to Paolo Procaccioli and to the Fondazione Benetton for this coordinated project.