

THE ONLY AVAILABLE COPY OF THE EARLIEST COMPLETE SEQUENCE IN SIX BOOKS OF THE *ORLANDO INNAMORATO* BY MATTEO MARIA BOIARDO AND NICOLÒ DEGLI AGOSTINI

**BOIARDO, Matteo Maria** (c. 1441-1494). **Libri tre de Orlando innamorato del Conte de Scandiano Mattheo Maria Boiardo tratti fidelmente dal suo eme[n]datissimo exe[m]plare. Con li apostille historiato. Novamente stampato.** *Colophon*: Venice, Nicolò Zoppino and Vincenzo di Paolo, 21 March 1521.

(bound with:)

**DEGLI AGOSTINI, Nicolò** (fl. 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent.). **Incomincia il quarto libro de lo innamorame[n]to de Orlando nel quale se co[n]tiene diverse bataglie come in quel legendo intenderete composto per Nicolo di Augustini.** *Colophon*: Venice, Nicolò Zoppino and Vincenzo di Paolo, 8 May 1521.

(bound with:)

**ID. Il Quinto libro dello innamoramento di Orlando novamente stampato et diligentemente corretto.** *Colophon*: Venice, Nicolò Zoppino and Vincenzo di Paolo, 27 March 1526.

(bound with:)

**ID. Ultimo et fine de tutti li libri de orlando innamorato cosa nova et mai piu non stampata: con gratia et privilegio.** *Colophon*: Venice, Nicolò Zoppino and Vincenzo di Paolo, 10 December 1524.

Four works in one volume, 4to (205×148 mm).

**I:** Collation: A-Z<sup>8</sup>, &<sup>8</sup>, [cum]<sup>8</sup>, [rum]<sup>8</sup>, AA<sup>8</sup>, BB<sup>10</sup>. [226] ll. Title-page printed in red and in black. Woodcut printer's device and *colophon* on l. BB10r. Four full-page woodcuts. The one on the title-page shows the paladin Orlando on horseback who has overthrown an opponent. On a hill a rather plain Angelica looks on, while, in a clear reference to the work's title, Cupid with an arrow on his bow flutters above. In a chivalric Renaissance iconography dominated by the *Morgante* and later by the *Orlando Furioso*, this is one of the few images specifically executed for the *Orlando Innamorato*. The block is signed 'IO.B.P.', the initials of a artist and woodcutter who worked occasionally for Zoppino and whose identity has been the object of many suggestions, such as Giovanni Battista da Porto or Giovanni Battista Palumba; but the debate has remained unresolved. In the construction of the scene a debt is apparent to an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi showing Horatius Cocles on horseback trampling a fallen soldier (Delaborde, no. 183). The other three woodcuts are anticipated from the Zoppino edition of the *Successi bellici* compiled by Nicolò degli Agostini, which appeared on 1 August 1521. The first woodcut at A2v, signed 'I.B.P.' (but obviously the same artist), here illustrates the first book of the *Orlando Innamorato*, with a caption printed in red, while in the *Successi bellici* it depicts "la rotta de Maragniano", including cannon, anachronistic in the age of Charlemagne. The other two woodcuts are signed 'z.a.', for Zuan Andrea, whose initials appear in numerous woodcuts employed in Zoppino editions, making him an important collaborator of this interesting and remarkable Renaissance Venetian publisher. Again various proposals have been made about the identity of this artist, but none have proved convincing. The woodcut at N3v, marking the beginning of the second book of the *Orlando Innamorato*, also illustrates the "fatto darmi de Ravenna" in the *Successi bellici*, while that at [cum]8r, marking the beginning of the third book, in the other works shows the "fatto darmi de Vicenza". All these woodcuts are reused in the 1528 and 1532 reprints of Boiardo's poem.

**II:** Collation: AAA<sup>8</sup>, AA-DD<sup>8</sup>, EE<sup>6</sup>. [46] ll. The final blank leaf is present. Woodcut printer's device and *colophon* on l. EE5v. Woodcut decorated capital letter on black ground on l. AAA1r.

**III:** Collation: A-K<sup>8</sup>, L<sup>6</sup>. [86] ll. The final blank leaf is present. Woodcut printer's device and *colophon* on l. L5r. The title-page is illustrated by a large woodcut depicting the Roman hero, Marcus Curtius, fully equipped with armour and sword, in the act of leaping into the abyss. The woodcut is again signed by

Zoan Andrea and was previously used in the 1521 Zoppino edition of the same fifth book. The image, again inspired by an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi (Delaborde, no. 184; Essling, III, p. 129), presents something of a puzzle, since it is not known to be used elsewhere in Zoppino's catalogue, and it is possible therefore that the publisher was planning an edition of Livy, source of the Marcus Curtius legend, which did not go ahead and so the woodcut was re-employed to illustrate a chivalric text with which it has nothing in common.

**IV:** Collation: A-K<sup>4</sup>. [40] ll. The final blank leaf is present. The title-page is illustrated with another full-page woodcut signed by Zoan Andrea, this time showing a mounted rider accompanied by his standard bearer on foot. Once more the attention by the artist to the Roman style of dress suggests that the image was planned for an edition of Livy that did not go ahead. This probability is reinforced by the fact that Zoan Andrea again is inspired by a famous engraving of "Scipio Africa" by Marcantonio Raimondi (Delaborde, no. 185; Essling, III, p. 127). The five small woodcut illustrations in text are part of the standard chivalric iconography, depicting a banquet (D2v), a different banquet (E4r, repeated at l. H2r), a ship landing (G1r), and a group of warriors (I2v). A contemporary hand has added annotations to all the vignettes but the first: 'cons mii' (E4r), 'vita della nina mia' (G1r), 'speranza méa' (H2r), 'ai me son morto' (I2v).

Eighteenth-century Italian parchment over boards, smooth spine with gilt title on hazel morocco lettering-piece, speckled edges. Manuscripts shelf marks on spine ('G n° 26') and back pastedown ('F. IX. 13.'). Ancient repairs in the outer margin of the first gathering, covering some letters of the marginalia, light stains on few leaves, small hole on the last two leaves with loss of a few letters on l. K3. An exceptionally well preserved and fresh copy considering the heavy wear and tear that chivalric texts were subjected to through intense reading. **Provenance:** Dorotheum Auction, Vienna, 22 November 1983; René Clemencic, Vienna, music composer and conductor.

**THE ONLY AVAILABLE COPY** of the complete *Orlando Innamorato* published by Nicolò Zoppino, in which the three books by Boiardo are continued and completed by books four, five and six by Nicolò Degli Agostini. Although the most famous completion of Boiardo's story is the *Orlando Furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto, the unfinished tale was continued by other writers, who ended it in a different way and whose versions were published together with the three books by Boiardo up to the end of the Seventeenth century.

The first three books by Boiardo are in the first edition published in Venice by Nicolò Zoppino. Although there had been several previous Sixteenth-century editions - in Venice by Rusconi in 1506, 1511, and 1513; in Milan by Vegio in 1513, by Scinzenzeler in 1517 (the first issue is lost, but it is known from a reissue in 1539), and by Gorgonzola in 1518 -, as well as the probability that there were other lost editions, Zoppino took the text from the 1495 edition, the first in three books, published at Scandiano by Pellegrino de' Pasquali on behalf of Boiardo's widow, Taddea Gonzaga. Although the print-run of the Scandiano edition was 1,250 copies, none survived beyond the end of the Eighteenth century. In 1521 Zoppino reprinted the dedication by local schoolmaster, Antonio Caraffa to Boiardo's son, Camillo Boiardo, dated 18 May 1495, and included a Latin *carmen* by Caraffa, together with a sonnet by Antonio Cammelli omitted from the Rusconi editions of the poem.

The Zoppino edition is therefore an important source for the text of Boiardo's poem, since it derives directly from the lost Scandiano edition, together with the first 1506 Rusconi edition and the so-called Trivulziana manuscript. Boiardo scholars, in particular for the 1998 edition of the poem by Cristina Montagnani and Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti, have been hampered in this respect by the unavailability of the two known copies of the 1521 editions (see below) and have had to make do with the 1528 reprint. Comparison with this last shows the Po valley *koinè* of Boiardo being modified in an

ongoing process of linguistic correction, so the recovery of the earlier edition is a matter of some importance, as well as an intriguing example of how an enterprising publisher such as Zoppino operated on the language of chivalric texts. Fascinatingly, the 1521 edition also includes marginal “apostille” in italic type (as they are described on the title-page), identifying episodes and characters, in a scheme that will become commonplace in future editions of the *Orlando Furioso*. For some reason these seem to have not been judged a success and they were omitted from the Zoppino reprints of 1528 and 1532, but they are of importance for our understanding of Renaissance reading strategies.

**Bibliography:** Essling, Prince d’, *Les livres à figures vénitiens*, Florence-Paris, 1908, III, p. 126, no. 1524; M. Sander, *Le livre à figures italien*, Milan, 1942, no. 1112; Index Aureliensis, 121.244; H. Delaborde, *Marc Antoine Raimondi*, Paris, 1887, no. 183; Neil Harris, *Bibliografia dell’ “Orlando Innamorato”*, Modena, 1988-91, vol. I, pp. 68-72, no. 16a, II, pp. 87-92; Lorenzo Baldacchini, *Alle origini dell’editoria volgare: Nicolò Zoppino da Ferrara a Venezia. Annali (1503-1544)*, Manziana, 2011, pp. 129-130, no. 104; Edit 16, CNCE75480.

Zoppino followed earlier Venetian publisher, Giorgio de’ Rusconi, in issuing the three books by Nicolò Degli Agostini as separate units, which were subsequently bound up together with Boiardo in miscellanies such as the present one. This publishing strategy ensures that almost every copy has a different mix and the one presented here is quite unique.

The fourth book was first published in Venice in 1505 in a lost edition. The present is the earliest edition by Zoppino and is known in only one other copy. **Bibliography:** Harris, I, p. 73, no. 16b; Baldacchini, p. 130, no. 105; Edit 16, CNCE75483.

The fifth book was first published in Venice by Rusconi in 1514 and was reprinted by Zoppino in 1521, both known in single copies, so others may have been lost. The present is his second edition, known today in three other copies. **Bibliography:** Essling, III, p. 129, no. 1529; Sander, no. 1117; Index Aureliensis, 121.248; Delaborde, no. 184; Harris, I, p. 79, no. 16g; Baldacchini, pp. 195-196, no. 203; Edit 16, CNCE454.

There is reasonable evidence that Agostini’s sixth book was first published by Zoppino in 1521. On 15 May 1520 the publisher obtained from the Venetian Senate a privilege for several titles, including “il sexto et ultimo libro de lo Inamoramento di orlando”, while the edition of the fifth book published on 22 June 1521 has an advertisement underneath the colophon stating: “Lettori se hauete piacere di vedere lultimo, e fine de tutti li libri de Orlando composto per il medesimo Autore nouamente lhabiamo stampato”. All the copies have however been lost, so the present, which survives in one other copy, is the first extant edition. **Bibliography:** Essling, III, p. 127, no. 1526; Sander, no. 1114; Index Aureliensis, 121.245; Delaborde, no. 185; Harris, I, pp. 76-77, no. 16e; Baldacchini, pp. 166-167, no. 160; Edit 16, CNCE451.

The history of the bibliography of the first Boiardo and Agostini editions published by Nicolò Zoppino has long been dominated by what for a long time was believed to be the only surviving copy of the 1521 edition, found by Milan bookseller, Paolo Antonio Tosi, in the Archinto Library in Milan in the middle of the Nineteenth century. It was subsequently purchased in Paris by Girolamo Duca d’Adda, who issued posthumously the *Note bibliografiche* of the great bibliographer of the Italian chivalric romance, Marquis Gaetano Melzi (1783-1851), of which a substantial portion was dedicated to this one item (Milan, 1863, pp. 47-54). Following the sale of D’Adda’s library, it found its way to England and the collection of Charles Fairfax Murray and was described in the sale that broke up the same (cf. H.W. Davis, *Catalogo dei libri posseduti da Charles Fairfax Murray proveniente dalla biblioteca del Marchese d’Adda, parte terza*, London, 1902, n. 692). After this date it dropped out of sight and, despite extensive searches, it was not seen by Neil Harris for his bibliography of the *Orlando Innamorato* published in 1988-91; it is clear, however, that for a long time it was in the Ferrara collection of Renzo Bonfiglioli (1904-63) and

later was acquired, together with numerous other Zoppino editions, by the Beinecke Library at Yale University, where it was catalogued online only comparatively recently. This copy contains the first five books in the Zoppino 1521 editions, but lacks the sixth book.

The earliest bibliographical record of the present copy was when it was sold for 5,000 schellings at the Dorotheum Auction House in Vienna, on 22 November 1983. Its existence was noted by Harris (I, p. 72), but the auction house record was unclear about the composition of the books by Nicolò Degli Agostini and the identity of the purchaser was not known. It is now known to have been the music composer and conductor, René Clemencic. Its reappearance on the market is therefore an event of exceptional importance.

\$ 32,000.-

The present description was revised and corrected by Prof. Neil Harris and Anna Carocci of Udine University. A special thank to them for their precious clarifications and additions.