Pomeran da Cittadella, Troilo

fl. Venice 1534

Triomphi de Troilo Pomeran da Cittadela composti sopra li Terrocchi in Laude delle famose Gentil donne di Vinegia.

Venice, Giovanni Antonio dei Nicolini da Sabbio, 1534

Quarto (194 × 140 mm), (12)ff. signed A–C⁴, not foliated or paginated. Large woodcut impresa (150 × 100 mm) on folio A1 recto (Virtus and Fama standing within a wreath, banderols at and top and bottom lettered Nobis et ecaris [sic] amicis and Con gratia e privilegio), another woodcut by the same hand (180 × 110 mm) on folio B1 recto (a group of five figures, lettered around Carmine formosa[e] precio capiuntur auarae).


Lightly washed; otherwise in fine state of preservation.

Binding nineteenth-century French citron morocco; covers decorated by a gilt centre-piece with red morocco inlay, back decorated in gilt and by red and blue lettering-pieces (in the style of Capé).

Very rare volume of verse in praise of the noblewomen of Venice, loosely organised in four parts, commencing with thirteen stanzas of ottava rima (folios A2 recto–A4 verso) on Venetian women in general, then (after a pictorial sub-title) twenty-two stanzas of ottava rima (folios B1 verso–C1 recto) with headings associating specific women with the tarocchi trumps (Major Arcana), next twenty-one stanzas of ottava rima (folios C1 recto–C4 verso) addressed to the author’s ‘Fenice’, and lastly two quatrains and two stanzas of terza rima (folio C4 verso). No other publication of the author is known.

The second part has attracted the attention of historians of trionphi or tarocchi card games, as an example of ‘tarocchi appropriati’ offering evidence of the sequence (i.e. relative values) of the trumps before the cards were numbered and trick-taking values codified. Pomeran starts with ‘The World’ and runs to ‘The Fool’, with variations to the usual order, and also unusual names: ‘Traditore’ (for The Hanged Man), ‘Tempo’ (for The Hermit), and
‘Foco’ (probably for The Tower). The cards were not given any divinatory meaning, but simply worked into the poem as a playful exercise of verbal agility, humour, and flattery.

The twenty-two trumps are presented by Pomeran in the following order and in praise of the women named:

- Mondo (The World) = Andriana Corner [Cornaro]
- Giustitia (Justice) = ‘La bella’ [Lucrezia?] Barbarigo
- Angelo (The Angel) = Isabella Grimani
- Sole (The Sun) = Laureta Tron
- Luna (The Moon) = Grazimana [Zane, or Giane?]
- Stella (The Star) = Isabetta Sanuto
- Foco (Fire) = Bianca Contarini
- Diauolo (The Devil) = Laura Bollani
- Morte (Death) = Paola Capello
- Traditore (The Traitor) = [Isabetta?] Mocenigo
- Tempo (Time) = Maria Leone
- Rota (The Wheel [of Fortune]) = Paola Moro
- Fortezza (Fortitude) = Paola Querini
- Amore (Love) = Orsina Foscoletta [Foscolo]
- Carro Triomphale (The Chariot) = Maria Loredan
- Temperanza (Temperance) = Bianca Zeno
- Papa (The Pope) = ‘Famos’ [Marina?] Alberti
- Imperatore (The Emperor) = Benedetta Pisani
- Papessa (The Popess) = Marieta Zane (Giane)
- Imperatrice (The Empress) = [–] Pasqualigo
- Bagattella (The Juggler) = Paola Vahier
- Matto (The Fool) = Nicolosa Cornera [Cornaro]

Pomeran’s association of a named person with a trionphi card had few literary precedents. The inspiration for his book most probably was a popular parlour game and carnival entertainment, in which each player is assigned a tarot card or cards by an opponent, and then has to explain the reason for the attribution in an extemporaneous poetic composition.

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Although ‘tarocchi appropriati’ developed into a literary phenomenon, later works – by Giovanni Battista Dragoncino, Girolamo Parabosco, Giovanni Battista Susio, and others – are not obviously indebted to Pomeran. The only clear evidence of the influence of his book is seen in Nicolò Franco’s *Tempio d’amore*, published at Venice by Francesco Marcolini in 1536 (about half the thirty names listed by Pomeran reappear in Franco).³

Our book has long been prized by collectors, for its two fine woodcuts (Figs. 1 & 3, neither recorded in use elsewhere), the elegance of the cursive type, and rarity. We note copies in the distinguished collections of Italian literature assembled by Crofts,⁵ Riva,⁶ Libri,⁷ and Landau,⁸ and trace six copies in public collections

- Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, Typ 525 34.7067
- Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale (located by Carpané)
- Udine, Biblioteca Arcivescovile e Bartoliniana, KK.VII.23(10)
- Venice, Fondazione Cini, FOAN TES 465
- Venice, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, 83.C.197.

A second edition, printed in octavo format and without the two woodcuts, was published under the imprint ‘per Giovanni Antonio, e Pietro fratelli de Nicolini da Sabio’ on 23 November 1541.¹³

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⁴ Nadin Bassani, *op. cit.*, pp.91–98.
⁵ S. Paterson, ‘Bibliotheca Croftsiana. A catalogue of the curious and distinguished library of the late Reverend… Thomas Crofts’, London, 7 April 1783 (and 43 days), lot 3758.
⁶ L. Potier, ‘Catalogue de livres rares et précieux, manuscrits et imprimés composant la bibliothèque de M. Guglielmo Libri’, London, 1 August 1859 (and 13 days), lot 2111.
⁷ S. Leigh Sotheby and John Wilkinson, ‘Catalogue of the choicer portion of the magnificent library, formed by M. Guglielmo Libri’, London, 1 August 1859 (and 13 days), lot 2111.
⁸ [Fr. Roediger], *Catalogue des livres manuscrits et imprimés composant la bibliothèque de M. Horace de Landau* (Florence 1890), ii, p.386.
¹⁰ Local opac reports ‘Esemplare mutilo del fasc. A4’.
REFERENCES