

Tempo libero, gioco e sport nei secoli: una questione di genere?
Leisure pursuits, games and sports over the centuries: a question of gender?

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**Tempo libero, gioco e sport nei secoli:
una questione di genere?/
Leisure pursuits, games and sports
over the centuries: a question of gender?**

a cura di / edited by
Alessandro Arcangeli e / and Alessandra Rizzi

con saggi di / with studies by
Francesca Rohr Vio, Nicolangelo D'Acunto,
Guido Ruggiero, Maria Adank, Tiziana Plebani

As part of a broader investigation into the presence and role of women behind the scenes of republican power in early modern Venice and Genoa, this contribution offers some initial reflections on their participation in festivals. Over the past decades, numerous studies have examined court festivals across early modern Europe, emphasising their political significance, iconographic programmes, ephemeral architecture, spatial organisation, logistical aspects, etiquette, and the types of performances they featured. However, less attention has been paid to the ways in which these events involved – or excluded – women, whether in the realm of “ceremony” or of “spectacle,” as defined by Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, particularly within republican contexts.¹

In early modern monarchies, duchies, and principalities, during ceremonies or festivals held for visiting princes and other distinguished guests, rulers typically appeared alongside their consorts – their wives and the mothers of their heirs – presenting a dynastic couple at the heart of ceremonial life. In Venice, as is well known, in the absence of a sovereign couple, patrician men collectively took centre stage. Where, then, were Venetian noblewomen during festivals and public entertainments? What forms of recreation were considered acceptable and appropriate for elite women, and which were deemed unsuitable? In what circumstances was their presence explicitly required, and what can sources reveal about their participation in banquets, dances, and celebrations? Finally, is it possible to grasp how patrician women perceived their participation in festivities, games, and performances, particularly when these took place in spaces of power generally reserved for men in government?

To explore these questions, this article will first examine prescriptive literature, focusing on how it framed the relationship between space – both domestic and public – and female virtue. It will then briefly turn to the kinds of recreational activities in which patrician women engaged, and finally to their participation in festivals organised by the Republic on exceptional occasions, such as the reception of foreign rulers or the rare ceremonies dedicated to the doge’s consort, in 16th-century Venice. To better understand the presence and influence of elite women, festive and ceremonial occasions offer a valuable lens through which to explore the intersection of gender and spaces of power, as well as the limitations and distinctions that emerge both within the same social class and among the Venetian patrician women themselves.

Female virtues and participation in public festivities and spectacles

In his treatise on the roles and virtues of men and women in the management of the household, published in Venice in 1560, the Brescian author Giacomo Lanteri addresses one of the recurring themes in female conduct literature and early modern treatises on *Oeconomica*: the upbringing and governance of sons and daughters. In a particularly effective stylistic choice, Lanteri entrusts one of the protagonists of the dialogue, Deianira, with the task of recalling to the other noblewomen the advice her mother gave her shortly before marriage:

“Dearest daughter [...] you know that ever since you reached a certain age, I have never allowed you any freedom – not only to attend dances, jousts, comedies, and other such amusements that corrupt the soul, but not even to leave the house, except rarely; and when you were allowed to do so, it was only to visit relatives from time to time or occasionally to go to monasteries, where, in my company, you could learn nothing but good and holy conduct from the noble

1. This contribution is part of my current Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellowship OSpaMa, *Objects, Spaces, and Material Culture. Gender and Politics in Early Modern European Republics (Venice, Genoa, 15th-18th Centuries)*, based at the University of Verona, Italy, and the University of Chicago. WATANABE-O’KELLY 2002, pp. 15-16. For a recent overview of early modern festival culture, see the six-volume *European Festival Studies Series*, edited primarily by J.R. Mulryne. On court culture, see also GRIFFEY 2022 and VAN LEUVEREN 2022. For political dimensions of leisure, see ARCANGELI-CLAIRE 2019 and the other essays in the monographic section of *Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco*, 25.

and devout nuns who live in many of them. Now, in this respect, the marital yoke brings with it a certain added liberty: you will be more free to attend dances, jousts, tournaments held in the city, and even comedies (so long as they are decent). Yet you shall allow yourself to be guided only insofar as you see other noblewomen of unblemished and good reputation also in attendance. And just as, now that you are a wife, you shall enjoy greater liberty than before, so too a stricter subjection follows: for neither in these nor in any other matters shall it be permitted for you to do, hear, or see anything except by the express and sincere will of your husband”²

This admonition, striking in its clarity, is embedded in a broader discourse in which Deianira (or rather, Lanteri himself) recalls the most important feminine virtues: modesty (*onestà*) and diligence (*sollecitudine*), to which is added good repute – that is, honour. Accordingly, the young noblewoman’s attendance at public festivities, balls, tournaments, jousts, and theatrical performances – understood strictly in the role of spectator – is to be interpreted within a clearly defined moral and social framework. Already present in 16th-century treatises, this rhetoric intensifies in the decades following the Counter-Reformation, recurring in numerous texts from the late 16th century onward. According to such literature, noble girls, closely guarded from external gaze and any potential source of moral corruption during childhood, had very few opportunities to witness civic celebrations. They were typically in the company of female relatives and servants, confined to the domestic sphere, and permitted only access to churches and convents. Marriage thus represented a turning point: usually contracted in adolescence, it afforded these young women the opportunity to leave the domestic space more frequently.³ However, the principles that were to govern this new freedom are spelled out with clarity by Lanteri. If the wife is first and foremost to be dedicated to the care of her family and household, never idle, and always engaged in virtuous and decorous activities, the decision as to which public festivities are appropriate and acceptable must be assessed case by case, taking into account both the will of the husband and the example set by other noblewomen of unimpeachable reputation, as Lanteri explains later in the text.⁴

In his treatise on household governance, published in Venice in 1589, also the Ragusan (Dalmatia) author Niccolò di Gozze addressed the issue, this time establishing a clear threshold at the age of seven. After this age, he argued, fathers would do well not to allow their daughters to go out any longer, “and this to avoid the many dangers into which they might fall”. Moreover, addressing the young virgins first and their fathers next, the author exhorted them:

“Learn, you virgins, not to run into other people’s houses, nor to linger in the square, nor to mix your words in public; this is advised for the integrity of your lives. Furthermore, once they are enclosed in the house, it is very necessary to warn them not to be curious about looking out of the window to be seen, [just] as it is necessary not to let them go out at all”⁵

Thus, beyond severely limiting any exit from the domestic space, even the window could prove to be a dangerous, porous element – a detail to which we shall return shortly.

In his well-known costume book, Cesare Vecellio tells us that the practice of closely guarding young patrician girls was not only widespread in Venice, but

2. LANTERI 1560, pp. 134-135 (all translations from the original Italian are mine, except for PORCACCHI 1574, for which see MULRYNE et al. 2004, pp. 140–183). Little is known about Giacomo Lanteri, an eclectic author from Brescia. As Marco Biffi notes, Lanteri was a prominent figure in 16th-century military architectural circles, but his position as a treatise writer places him in a disciplinary limbo – neither fully of interest to historians of architecture nor to literary scholars (see BIFFI 2017, pp. 145-152).

3. On the role of women in Italian Counter-Reformation conduct literature, see SBERLATI 2007, pp. 9-17, 95-189; for discussions specifically focused on the education of young women and their confinement to the domestic sphere, see pp. 149-168. More generally, see ZARRI 1996, 2000. For a long-term overview of conduct literature, see SANSON-LUCIOLI 2016.

4. Through the character of Deianira, the author suggests: “Let your friends and companions be noblewomen of your own rank, adorned with honest lives and virtuous manners; and in joining them in these pastimes (which are ordained for the recreation of the spirit, and for no other purpose), you shall have less reason to fear that you might hear or speak of anything unbecoming to your honour or unworthy of one of your condition”, LANTERI 1560, p. 130.

5. DI GOZZE 1589, pp. 99-100.

particularly enforced among the city's leading families. It was especially these 'principal families' that ensured girls were protected from any potential source of moral corruption prior to marriage. These restrictions, however, were gradually loosened in the context of the elaborate marriage rituals, which opened a phase during which noblewomen were allowed – and even expected – to display their beauty and wealth. Within this framework, the public exhibition of the bride's body and luxurious garments, including through dance, was not merely tolerated but represented a meaningful and codified moment in the life of the Venetian patriciate, even though sumptuary laws attempted to set limits on luxury expenditures. Then, in the years that followed, as Vecellio reports, public festivals and the reception of foreign princes offered married patrician women the opportunity to attend banquets and spectacles – events that, as he emphasises, “frequently happen in Venice”. In the woodcut Vecellio dedicates to the Venetian gentlewoman attending such festivities, she appears in an elaborate, richly decorated gown, adorned with fine jewellery, holding a fan with a gold handle, and her hair styled in the latest fashion – an image of opulence not merely tolerated but actively encouraged on these occasions, when magistrates temporarily suspended the sumptuary laws (fig. 1).⁶

However, if the noblewoman became a widow – a not uncommon condition at the time, and one that often occurred among the Venetian elite – she was, according to Giulio Cesare Cabeï's treatise, no longer to attend banquets or enter “houses of immoderate pleasures,” both for reasons of decorum and to avoid bringing her sorrow into spaces meant for festivity. Moreover, he adds, if the widow had daughters, she was to ensure “in every way not to bring her daughter into places crowded with throngs of people, such as public spectacles; indeed, she herself [the widow] must also remain far from such places”.⁷

While these principles appear widely across early modern Italian and European conduct literature – albeit with regional and chronological variations – they are, on more than one occasion, articulated with particular emphasis in relation to the Venetian context. At least in theory and on a prescriptive level, the higher one moved up the social ladder, the more strictly a girl or young woman was to be kept in seclusion before marriage, in order to preserve her bodily and spiritual integrity – something that, from a Venetian political and social standpoint, helped ensure the purity of the patrician bloodline. Over the course of her social life, that same noblewoman would then pass through a phase of greater freedom, granted by her married status and youthful age, followed by a stage in which, due either to advancing years or widowhood, participation in public festivities and banquets was no longer deemed appropriate or desirable.⁸

This, of course, is the theoretical model. The gap between prescription and practice in everyday life is, as always, much more difficult to define.

Leisure and entertainment for women in the domestic sphere

If we move from prescriptive literature to another type of source – sumptuary laws – the impression we gain at first glance is that the principal pastime of noblewomen and *cittadine* in Venice was desiring, commissioning, purchasing, and displaying luxurious clothing, accessories, and furnishings to adorn their own bodies, those of their children, and to embellish their homes, hosting lavish banquets for friends and family and securing admiration and wonder in every social occasion. This impression, of course, is shaped by the nature of the source itself and must be viewed with caution.⁹



1

1. *Nobile ornata*. From Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo*, Venice 1590, p. 131. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

6. On costume books, see CALVI 2022. On clothing, bodies, and gender in Vecellio, see CALVI 2007; on adornment and theology, BOLDRINI 2016.

7. CABEI 1574, pp. 57, 120. See especially chap. VII, «Che la vedova non vada a convitti» (That the widow should not attend banquets).

8. On Cabeï's treatise, see SANSON 2016. On widowhood in Venice, see BELLAVITIS 2008, pp. 55-72. More generally, on widowhood in the early modern period, refer to CAVALLO-WARNER 1999.

9. On Venetian sumptuary laws refer to AMBROSINI 1996, FORTINI BROWN 2000, MOLÀ 2003, MOLÀ-RIELLO 2019.

That said, it remains the case that throughout the early modern period, Venetian magistrates persistently attempted to limit women's presence at feasts and celebrations, concerned that such events would fuel the pursuit of luxury and lead to widespread violations of sumptuary laws. In a law passed in 1509, the Senate, noting that "the presence of women at any festivity is an incitement to luxury," decreed that no more than twenty women could attend wedding banquets. The following year, magistrates imposed a ceiling on the number of women allowed at weddings, baptisms, and feasts held in honour of elections of procurators or rectors. The presence of women at banquets organised by the Company of the Hose was also regulated by law.¹⁰

As for the specific types of activities in which women took part not only as spectators, in 1512 the magistrates referred to the immorality of certain dances, including the well-known *ballo del cappello* ('hat dance'), which Marin Sanudo describes in scandalised tones in a remarkably detailed account. Although many scholars have since returned to this dance, it is worth emphasising here that this law also highlights the moral threat it posed to virgins who, though secluded behind *gelosie* (latticed windows), were nonetheless able to observe the performance. Although they could neither participate in the dance nor interact with others, their very act of watching was considered threatening. This suggests that, at least in general terms and especially within the elite, the seclusion of adolescent girls, as prescribed by conduct literature and described by Vecellio, was indeed a reality. In this case, the urgency of protecting young virgins led legislators to threaten not only dancers and musicians with fines, but also the parents of curious girls who watched from their windows. On that same occasion, at the proposal of the head of the *Quarantia*, Giacomo Pizzamano, it was decreed that "taking women out of the house to dance, as they have begun to do," be strictly forbidden. An exception was made for public festivities, where men and women in masks would still be allowed to dance. Yet again in 1529, magistrates returned to the issue, once again banning the "dishonest" and "shameless" dances regularly performed at weddings and other celebrations. It was not only the authorities who condemned these dances. In the short treatise *La pazzia del ballo* (The madness of dance), for example, Simeone Zuccolo warns of the dangers faced by men and women who give in to the lascivious movements of dance – especially the 'hat dance,' which he describes as "the dance of adultery," since it mimics the act of seeking out a new partner in place of one's own spouse.¹¹

Without delving too deeply into the specific characteristics of these dances – on which far more knowledgeable scholars have written in detail – it is worth highlighting the ambivalence that marked the actions of Venetian legislators.¹² On the one hand, they sought to contain luxury spending and uphold moral standards; on the other, they continually renegotiated restrictions and granted exceptions. This dynamic emerges clearly also in relation to comedies and *momarie* – masked performances, often suggestive or bawdy, staged especially during wedding celebrations or events hosted by the Companions of the Hose. Women are recorded as spectators of such performances in the early 16th century, as confirmed by the legislators' repeated – though largely unsuccessful – attempts to impose limits on what they perceived as morally hazardous but irresistibly attractive events. While wedding festivities were the most common setting, explicit decrees occasionally authorised the presence of a limited number of women in the audience at the plays organised by the Company of the Hose. The performance of a *momaria* sometimes generated such great interest in the city that it

10. BISTORT 1912, pp. 207-208.

11. BISTORT 1912, pp. 222-223; ZUCCOLO 1549, pp. 29-30. On the symbolic and material role of windows, see ADANK 2025, pp. 27-35. On the ethics of the audience, see ARCANGELI 2003, pp. 61-65.

12. On dance venues, forms, and meanings in early modern Europe, see ARCANGELI 2000 (especially regarding the moralising actions during the Counter-Reformation, pp. 107-123). For an exploration of dance transformations in the 16th century, refer to ARCANGELI 2013-2014. On the 'hat dance,' see GALA 2007, pp. 124-126. AMBROSINI 1996 discusses the venues for dance in Venice, noting that it was common for the celebration to extend into the adjacent *campo*.

would draw all the major magistrates, temporarily suspending the political life of Venice. In 1526, for a banquet in honour of the Patriarch of Aquileia, sixteen of the most “lovely ladies of Venice” received an invitation; occasionally, this group of the audience also included a few prostitutes. For a comedy organised in 1555 by some Venetian gentlemen, “all the beautiful ladies of Venice” were invited, while on other occasions, temporary structures served, among other things, to provide wooden seats for the noblewomen in the audience.¹³

As is well known, conduct literature reflects the moralising voice of patriarchal authority. In contrast, sumptuary laws offer a glimpse into the tension between normative ideals and lived practices, shedding light on women’s participation in festivals and celebrations – and on the anxieties surrounding the display of women’s dress once they moved beyond the domestic sphere. Yet when it comes to the everyday lives of elite Venetian women, reconstructing what truly took place within and around the household remains challenging, especially in terms of the activities and pastimes that shaped the daily experiences of girls, wives, mothers, as well as unmarried women, widows, and the elderly. Recent studies on Renaissance domestic material culture offer valuable clues, revealing interiors in which musical instruments, games, embroidery and sewing tools, and a wide range of other objects abound. These material traces help illuminate the gendered dynamics of the household and provide insight into women’s cultural practices and forms of education, including literacy and artistic pursuits, as well as pleasant pastimes and opportunities for leisure.¹⁴

The rich and varied sources available for the Venetian context allow us to sketch a general outline of what noblewomen’s social lives may have looked like in the 16th century, including their participation in the social and cultural events of the time. Following the pivotal moment of marriage – which in theory granted greater freedom after years of seclusion – a young bride would attend wedding celebrations for siblings, cousins, and kin on both her family of origin and marital sides; theatrical performances of various kinds were a regular feature of such occasions. Generally within a year of her own wedding, and on many occasions thereafter, she would host friends and relatives at home to present her newborn. With the help of family and servants, the *camera della puerpera* (lying-in room) would be adorned with luxurious furnishings, textiles, and paintings. She would also regularly attend churches and convents, and, though more rarely, and under circumstances that remain difficult to pin down, she may have attended theatrical performances and public festivities held outside the domestic sphere.¹⁵ In painting this necessarily impressionistic picture, we must consider variables such as the woman’s age, marital status, personal wealth and that of her husband’s family, her physical health and beauty (to which we will return shortly), her personality, but also the degree of oversight exercised by her father, husband, or brothers, as well as broader external conditions that shaped her world.¹⁶

Distinguished noblewomen invited to republican festivities

As is well known, women were excluded from active participation in Venice’s civic and religious ceremonies. Processions and rituals – highly codified events that marked the rhythm of the Venetian year – were strictly male domains. Women, as visual sources suggest, were most often confined to the margins as spectators – frequently shown watching from windows, as in Matteo Pagan’s doge’s procession (fig. 2, p. 142), or entirely absent from the scene, as in this illustration depicting the newly elected doge Marino Grimani being triumphantly carried *in*

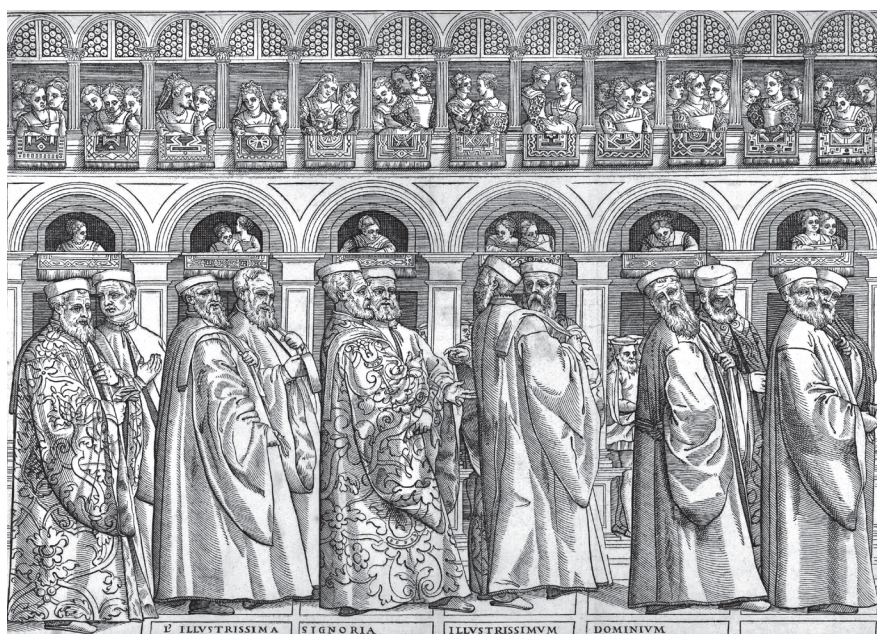
13. MOLMENTI 1907, pp. 1-23; see also BISTORT 1912, pp. 225-231; BORTOLETTI et al. 2018.

14. See FORTINI BROWN 2004; on domestic interiors and material culture, AJMAR-WOLLHEIM et al. 2010; CAMPBELL et al. 2013. On domestic spaces and education, ZARRI 1996, pp. 148-156; on embroidery and its cultural meanings for women, PLEBANI 2016; the relationship between women’s occupations and literacy is discussed in PLEBANI 2022.

15. Jonathan Glixon has explored the permeability of Venetian monasteries and the performances staged by and for nuns, GLIXON 2017, pp. 250-281; see also WEAVER 2002. On plays performed in Venetian orphanages and their audiences, see REFINI 2023, especially pp. 135-147. These studies offer valuable insights into specific contexts, revealing the porosity of these spaces. Broader archival research could further illuminate the gendered dimensions of the phenomenon, including who escorted women to these events, as well as their age, social status, and whether they were married or not. I am grateful to Eugenio Refini for our exchange on this topic.

16. On early modern marriage in Venice, see HACKE 2004, especially pp. 119-143 on marital discord and the husband’s authority over his wife.

2. *Procession of the doge in Venice*, detail, publisher Matteo Pagan, woodcut on eight sheets, 1556-1561. New York, MET Museum.



2

pozzetto in a 17th-century manuscript (fig. 3).¹⁷ If, however, we shift our focus from ceremonies to spectacles, we find some interesting clues. One of the many engravings by Giacomo Franco depicts a row of couples – always a man and a woman – lined up in a spacious hall, ready to begin dancing. The caption explains that the scene shows “the festivities or dances that the Most Serene Republic customarily holds, with noblewomen adorned in the richest jewels, to honour the princes who occasionally visit Venice”. Dated to the early 17th century, this is one of the few visual representations from the period that shows the interior spaces where the Republic hosted dances and celebrations for distinguished visitors. In the image, both men and women are fashionably dressed; the women, in particular, are wearing luxurious garments with embroidered collars, pearl necklaces, ornate belts, elegant fans and handkerchiefs, and the distinctive ‘horned’ hairstyle fashionable around the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries (fig. 4, p. 144). These were exceptional occasions organised to welcome and impress eminent guests and princes visiting Venice and recurred throughout the early modern period. While each of the ceremonial entries mentioned here – especially the triumphal entry of Henry III – has inspired extensive scholarship on early modern festival culture, this discussion will briefly focus on the presence of noblewomen.¹⁸

To cite just a few similar, 16th-century events: in March 1556, for the entry into Venice of Bona Sforza, queen of Poland and grand duchess of Lithuania, one hundred and twenty Paduan noblewomen – according to the source – greeted the queen in Padua. Later, at San Biagio on the Giudecca, Bona Sforza was welcomed by the signoria aboard the *bucintoro*, accompanied by Venetian noblewomen who paraded “three by three, all dressed in white satin, with countless jewels of the highest value and pearls, their hair elaborately styled and adorned with much gold, holding each other by the hand”. During the journey aboard the state barge, they entertained the queen by dancing with “courteous young men, full of grace, elegance, and modesty”. At the dinner that followed, alongside many

17. See, among others, MUIR 1981, pp. 303-305; HURLBURT 2006, pp. 96-99.

18. Venetian ceremonies and rituals are primarily discussed in MUIR 1981, CASINI 1996; for the entry of Henry III into various European cities, see the specific section in MULRYNE et al. 2004, and FENLON 2007, pp. 193-215.



3. Doge Marino Grimani in a drawing, from a 17th-century manuscript. In the image it is not possible to distinguish a single female face. Venice, Museo Correr, Library, ms. Morosini-Grimani 270, c. 63r.

prominent guests mentioned by name, “several beautiful and highly esteemed Venetian noblewomen” were also present, in a celebration that lasted until evening. As the queen travelled along the Grand Canal, a great number of noblemen and noblewomen of all kinds were seen at the windows, which were adorned with tapestries and carpets.¹⁹

Francesco Sansovino, in his well-known description of Venice, also recalls such occasions and mentions the participation of noblewomen. For the festivities organised by the companies of the *Sempiterni* and *Accesi* in 1541 and 1562 he recounts the presence of “two hundred most distinguished noblewomen who danced [on the Theatre of the World] to the sound of a hundred musical instruments,” while “all the houses, windows, rooftops, and quays were crowded with people, and with women”. For the ceremonial entry of dogaressa Zilia Dandolo Priuli in 1557, “women of all conditions – too many to name” participated, and during the procession through Piazza San Marco, chroniclers counted “two hundred and thirty-five noblewomen, walking two by two, dressed in white satin, damask, and fine silk”.²⁰ For the reception of King Henry III of France in 1574 – celebrated over several days with complex and innovative rituals and banquets – on Sunday, after the visit to the Arsenal, two hundred noblewomen of exceptional beauty were present at the banquet held in the Hall of the Great Council, “all dressed in white and adorned with pearls and countless jewels of incredible value”. At one point, they rose and “with noble and graceful manners paid homage to the king, and were then led out, two by two, by noblemen and began to dance, passing hand to hand before the king”.²¹

Other sources on the same event add further detail: the chronicler Rocco Benedetti notes that the noblewomen were so beautiful they resembled two choirs of nymphs and goddesses – a metaphor echoed by Gregorio Manzini.²² A

19. SAVORGNANO 1556, n.p.

20. SANSOVINO-STRINGA 1604, p. 290.

21. SANSOVINO-STRINGA 1604, p. 300; FENLON 2007, pp. 210-211.

22. BENEDETTI 1574, n.p.; MANZINI 1574, n.p.

4. Giacomo Franco, *Le feste o balli*, from *Habiti d'huomeni et donne Venetiane*, engraving, circa 1610. New York, MET Museum.



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23. DE NOLHAC-SOLERTI 1890, p. 316; VECCELLIO 1590, p. 131; PORCACCHI 1574, n.p.; MULRYNE et al. 2004, p. 177. See G. Grevembroch, «donne imbellettate», in BMCVE, Gradenigo-Dolfìn 49, c. 114.

16th-century manuscript published in the late 19th century describes them as among the most beautiful noblewomen Venice could boast. Vecellio likewise describes them as “among the most beautiful and distinguished women of the city,” while the humanist and bibliophile Tommaso Porcacchi, who had been living in Venice for years, adds in his account the curious note that these young patrician women, distinguished for their grace and good manners, also embodied

the ideal of Venetian female beauty: with soft, rounded forms, and blonde, as only Venetian women knew how to dye their hair. We get a sense of this practice from several illustrations in costume books, including an 18th-century manuscript that draws on Vecellio's late 16th-century woodcut. There, the author explains that Venetian women dyed their hair by repeatedly applying a special solution and sitting in the sun on *altane* – rooftop terraces – wearing distinctive hats to shield their faces (fig. 5).²³

Who were these women? One common feature across all descriptions is that their names are generally not recorded. We know they belonged to the patriciate, to the 'principal' houses of Venice, and that they were young, beautiful, and graceful. Their number – around two hundred in the most important festivities of the 16th century – was enough to produce a striking visual impact. The choice to dress in dazzling white to impress Henry III, combined with gold, silver, and the girls' beauty and grace, must have been particularly successful, and Vecellio recounts that the king, along with his entire entourage, was astonished and amazed.²⁴ Contemporary chronicles often recorded the monetary value of the noblewomen's dresses and jewels – revealing how their bodies functioned as instruments for staging the wealth, prosperity, beauty, and abundance of the ruling class and of the city as a whole. How women themselves perceived this role, and the emotional dimension attached to it, remains a subject that still calls for deeper investigation. Yet these women did not merely display themselves: they dined, conversed, laughed, moved about the hall, bowed, and danced. When it came time for the 'hat dance,' which typically marked the end of the evening, one source recounts that one of the ladies, "bolder than the others," dared to invite the king to dance – an invitation the sovereign courteously declined.²⁵

Given that by the late 16th century the Venetian patriciate counted roughly two thousand-two thousand five hundred adult males who formed the electorate of the Great Council, it is worth pausing to consider the criteria for selecting the noblewomen chosen for these special occasions.²⁶ If we assume a roughly equivalent number of adult patrician women, it becomes clear that the term *gentildonne elette* (select/distinguished gentlewomen), frequently used in the sources, is particularly apt. Who selected the fortunate few granted the privilege of meeting Bona Sforza or Henry III? We do not know. But once we exclude all virgin daughters, who – as we have seen – were expected to remain at home, it becomes easy to imagine that criteria such as youth and beauty would have ruled out older women, widows, those with physical imperfections, or those visibly pregnant. Furthermore, the luxury of the garments and jewels required would have automatically excluded the poorer patrician families. In fact, as some sources suggest, a young patrician woman could not appear in public without clothing appropriate to her status, all the more so if her presence was required to impress passing foreign guests.²⁷

While Venetian patrician men gained the right to sit in the Great Council at the age of twenty-five and could not lose this right due to individual qualities such as physical appearance, health, age, or wealth, only a small percentage of patrician women could, on very rare occasions, gain access to the Hall of the Great Council – exceptionally transformed into a banquet hall or ballroom – and interact in a festive, playful setting with a foreign sovereign or illustrious guest. And of these invited noblewomen, only one had the audacity to seize the playful moment and invite the king to dance. As for the excluded patrician women, we might imagine them among the many – men and women, *popolani* and nobles alike – who, as often mentioned in the chronicles, watched the passage



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5. A Venetian noblewoman dyeing her hair. Venice, Museo Correr, Library, ms. Gradenigo-Dolfin 49, vol. III, c. 114.

24. VECCELLIO 1590, p. 131. Since the focus here is on patrician women, this discussion leaves aside the women who took part in the regatta on the first day of the celebrations for Henry III, the members of the female choir, and the exceptional encounter between the king and Veronica Franco.

25. DE NOLHAC-SOLERTI 1890, pp. 137-138. The gestures and actions of the women are mentioned with few variations in the sources cited above. On the monetary value of the jewels – «around the bust and hems of the ladies' dresses» – Tommaso Porcacchi ventures an estimate of 80 to 100,000 ducats. See PORCACCHI 1574, n.p.; MULRYNE et al. 2004, p. 177.

26. DAVIES 1962, pp. 133-137. The presence and selection of noblewomen at banquets and receptions held in Venetian private palaces will be explored in greater detail in an upcoming contribution.

27. See ADANK 2025, pp. 44-55.

of a foreign king or queen from a distance or from their windows. And once again, the window appears as a threshold of exclusion, reinforcing the boundary between active participation in the event and its passive consumption.

As scholars have noted, dance in the Renaissance court was not only a form of entertainment but also a powerful tool of social distinction, a symbol of belonging to the elite, reinforcing hierarchies through rituals of inclusion and exclusion. It functioned both as a mirror and an instrument of separation between social groups, making visible the boundaries of status, gender, and privilege. The republican context was no exception: while these festivities were an exclusive experience reserved for the patriciate, distinctions remained sharply drawn even within the elite class. As for women, given that the reputation of the ruling class and the image of Venice were at stake, selection for participation in these exceptional receptions was based on criteria such as age, beauty, and family wealth.²⁸

To conclude, the focus will shift to the entrance ceremonies of two 16th-century dogaresse – extraordinary events not only for their lavishness and grandeur, but also because they mark a rare moment in the Venetian Republic when the wife of the doge became the centre of public attention. In both cases, these ceremonies were strongly promoted by the doge, not only to honour his consort but also because, being less codified than the rituals surrounding the doge's election, they lent themselves more readily to self-celebration, lavish display, and pomp.²⁹ While these ceremonies have been extensively studied, this analysis focuses on women's participation in the banquets and dances held within the spaces of the Palazzo Ducale, the heart of republican power.

Two 16th-century dogaresse and the women in their entourages

When the ceremonial entry for Zilia Dandolo, the wife of doge Lorenzo Priuli, was organised in 1557, seventy years had passed since the last time such festivities had taken place. After swearing to uphold the *promissione ducale*, the dogaresse was escorted – without her husband – by the highest authorities of the Republic and by a procession of women and close relatives aboard the *bucintoro*, from her private residence to the doge's palace. The ceremony included a mass at San Marco, displays by the Guilds in the halls of the public palace, exchanges of gifts and compliments, and three days of banquets, games, and dances.³⁰

Among the two hundred and thirty-five young noblewomen and *cittadine* accompanying Zilia were six brides, distinguishable from the other married women by their loose hair adorned with golden threads. Following this parade of youth and beauty came twenty-one matrons dressed in black, their heads covered with veils – the last of whom, as the wife of a procurator of San Marco, was entitled to wear the wide ducal sleeves. The dogaresse's daughters also received special recognition: they wore white cut velvet gowns to stand out from the other women in the procession. Zilia herself – dressed entirely in gold for the first time, from the ducal *cornio* atop her head to the gilded wooden clogs on her feet – visually embodied both the opulence of the Republic and the ducal authority. Gold, after all, was a colour reserved for the doge and, by extension, granted to his wife, daughters, or granddaughters residing in the doge's apartment.³¹

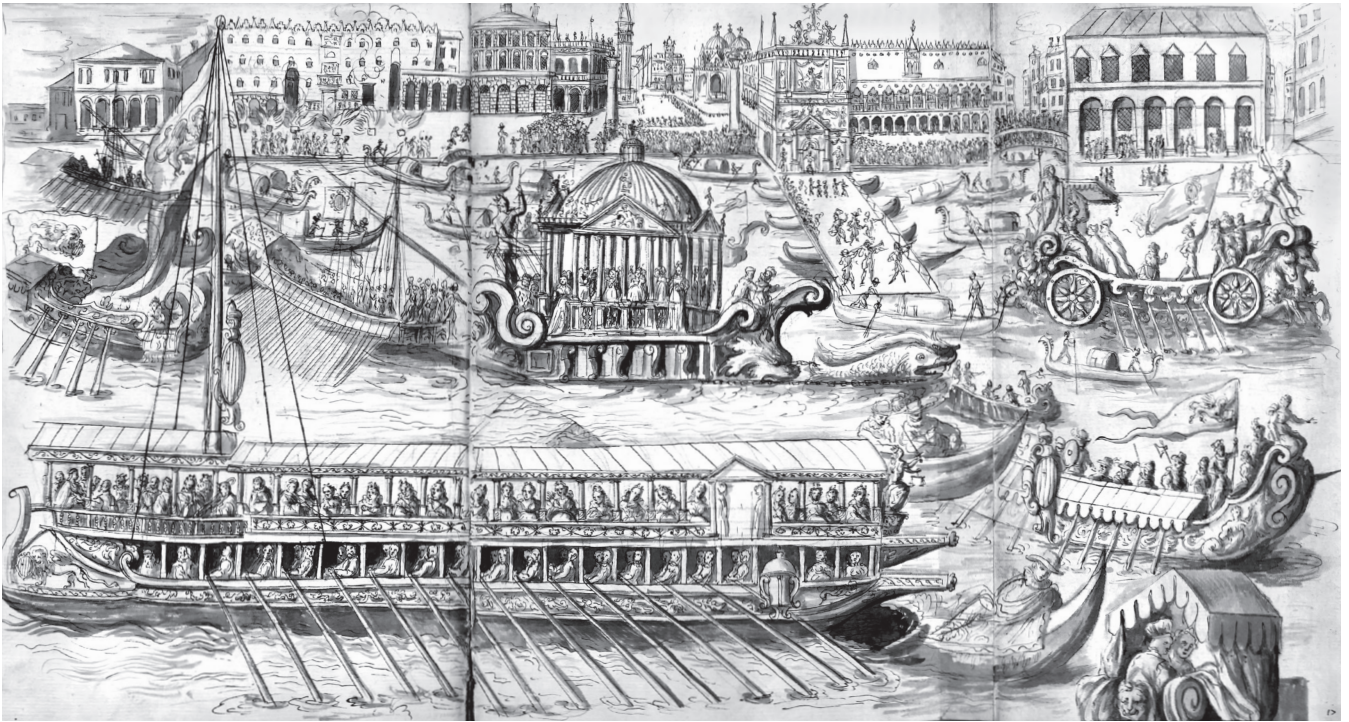
Setting aside the various ceremonial elements, a few episodes reveal just how uncommon female presence was within spaces typically reserved for male patricians. For this unique event, the dogaresse was allowed to occupy the seat in the *bucintoro* usually reserved for the doge. But the number of noblewomen boarding the boat was so great that they occupied all four benches: "There was no space

28. ARCANGELI 2000, pp. 40-43; ARCANGELI 2003, pp. 89-115; KOLSKY 2003, pp. 2-3, 17-19; PADOVAN 2011, pp. 26-27, 56-58.

29. CASINI 1996, pp. 40-46, 306-310.

30. MUIR 1981, pp. 289-296; CASINI 1996, pp. 40-46. On dogaresse Morosina Morosini Grimani in particular, see WILSON 1999, VAN GELDER 2019, ADANK 2025, pp. 187-210. On earlier ceremonies (13th to 15th centuries), see HURLBURT 2006, pp. 44-80.

31. On the codification of the dogaresse's attire and other distinctive aspects of the event, see ADANK 2021.



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left to suitably seat the remaining company, [so that] magistrates and senators descended [the Grand Canal] in the *piatte ducali*,” large, flat ceremonial barges less ornate than the *bucintoro*.³² While no visual sources are currently known for the 1557 ceremony, a later illustration of the 1597 event shows the State barge unusually crowded with women (fig. 6).

Upon arrival at the Basilica, dogaressa Zilia Dandolo Priuli again took the doge’s seat: to her right sat the councillors and heads of the *Quarantia*; to her left, the procurators of San Marco and her closest relatives. The other women in the procession “who were the first to enter the choir, occupied all the remaining benches, and the rest of the noblemen had to sit in the middle of the church, outside the choir”³³ This unusually prominent female presence – so dominant that it required new logistical solutions to accommodate the rest of the male nobility – was again on full display during the ball on the first evening. At one point, the dogaressa escorted the councillors and heads of the *Quarantia* to the staircase; then, “she returned to her seat [in the Hall of the Great Chamber], where she remained with many invited women and relatives, and the dancing continued until dinnertime”. The banquet and ball were, for once, an experience reserved primarily for the dogaressa, for women, her relatives, and the young people. For that brief moment during her time as the Republic’s ‘first lady,’ Zilia could be at the centre – along with other women and her closest kin – of this space in the doge’s palace. When, at last, at six in the morning, the dogaressa left the hall to return to the doge’s apartment, her female companions also withdrew to their homes.³⁴

For the ceremony of the dogaressa Morosina Morosini Grimani in May 1597, no fewer than four hundred gentlewomen and female citizens accompanied the doge’s wife, “competing with one another to appear splendidly adorned,” while still adhering to the constraints set by sumptuary laws. The dogaressa’s daugh-

6. Morosina Morosini, wife of doge Marino Grimani, accompanied by distinguished gentlewomen aboard the *bucintoro* (the boat in the foreground). Venice, Museo Correr, Library, ms. Morosini-Grimani 270, c. 66.

32. ASVE, Cerimoniali, c. 42v.

33. ASVE, Cerimoniali, c. 43r.

34. ASVE, Cerimoniali, c. 43v.

ters and nieces, on the other hand, were exempt from these restrictions, which further distinguished them from the rest. Among the notable differences compared to Zilia's ceremony was the presence of the imperial ambassador's wife, Ludovica Hofer, along with her sister Chiara – a choice that lent the event an unprecedented international and political dimension. Another novelty concerned the procession itself: in addition to the large number of young women dressed in white, adorned with abundant jewels and fans, there followed “others of more advanced age, wearing silk dresses in green, faded pink, and [...] peacock purple [*pavonazzo*] – each one dressed in the colour most suited to her age”.³⁵ As in 1557, the wives of the highest-ranking magistrates wore black, distinguished by the ducal sleeve, but the other gentlewomen in the procession were recognisable by age. Everyone, in short, had their place: as the wife of a principal magistrate, or according to social status and age, all the women in the dogaressa's cortège could be identified by the colour and type of their attire.³⁶

On the first evening of the celebrations, it was the dogaressa herself who brought the dancing to an end, and the gathering dispersed when she rose to take her leave. On the second evening, however, when the dogaressa retired to her chambers, “The festivities did not end. The forty companions, each taking his own wife – or, if unmarried, a female relative – came down to the lower corridor [...] and here and there, but especially in the Sala del Piovego, they began to dance. Others, following their example, did the same, filling every corner with merriment that was all the more delightful for being freer and less respectful, and they continued in such revelry until two in the morning”.³⁷

This final sentence reveals the chronicler's awareness that the space where this freer and less formal dancing took place was far from neutral – its political and symbolic weight perhaps even evident to those taking part in the ball themselves, as their pleasure was likely heightened by the stark contrast with the solemnity of the location. Indeed, the Sala del Piovego, traditionally a setting for high ceremonial functions, reached the peak of its symbolic role upon the doge's death, when his embalmed body, wrapped in a golden cloak, was displayed there for three days before the official funeral. It was precisely here, on the occasion of this rare and extraordinary celebration made possible by the dogaressa's ceremonial entrance, that the group of younger men and women abandoned themselves to joy and exuberant festivity – especially once the dogaressa, still the doge's wife after all, had withdrawn to her rooms.

Conclusion

Dynastic succession, as has recently been highlighted, is the cornerstone of early modern monarchy. It requires that the king be succeeded by his oldest legitimate son, which in turn presupposes that the child's mother be the monarch's lawfully wedded wife. The presence of a queen consort thus both necessitates and legitimates the establishment of her own court and household, comprising noblewomen tasked with attending to her, offering companionship, and serving as confidantes.³⁸ In the early modern republican context, no such model existed. While the presence and role of republican leaders' wives still demand more scholarly attention, their participation in public festivities offers a valuable lens through which to examine women's proximity to spaces of power, their interactions with sovereigns and foreign dignitaries, as well as the distinctions embedded in entertainment, play, and dance – when understood as political acts. Within the

35. ROTA 1597, n.p.

36. ROTA 1597, n.p. Bronwen Wilson was the first to analyse the relationship between gender, public space, and social order during the 1597 ceremony (see WILSON 1999).

37. ROTA 1597, n.p.

38. WATANABE-O'KELLY 2022.

rooms of the doge's palace, where the daily business of government took place, the festivities organised to dazzle and entertain visiting dignitaries became rare occasions to include elite women – though never in uniform or indiscriminate ways. If the exceptional ceremonies organised for dogaressa Zilia Dandolo and Morosina Morosini also included older women and female relatives – granting the doge's consorts a central role, albeit for only three days – during the receptions of foreign princes, when the eyes of the world were on Venice, the participation of elite women was governed by clear criteria of inclusion and exclusion, revealing the complex hierarchies that even festive occasions could reinforce. Through their luxurious attire, jewelry, dancing ability, grace, and the distinctive beauty associated with the city, the selected patrician women became living symbols of Venice's wealth and prosperity, embodying both the city's flourishing state and the prominence of its elite.

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MARIA ADANK

*Festivals, Spaces, and Gender Roles.
Women behind the scenes of power
in Early Modern Venice*

Festive events are a prime source of evidence of the behind-the-scenes roles played by the wives of councillors, senators, procurators and doges in republican Venice. What can examination of festivities, entertainments and banquets around the city or in the Palazzo Ducale tell us about the participation of patricians' wives? At which banquets and balls were they present and how were they included in (or excluded from) such events? Case studies from the 16th and 17th centuries offer interesting clues, both confirming traditional gender roles and revealing variants and departures from convention that evince the protagonism of some consorts. Ludic occasions offer valuable insights into the sphere of female influence and agency, showing how, in the context of republican power, women set out to negotiate their role and to promote private and public interests.

Feste, spazi e ruoli di genere: donne dietro le quinte del potere nella Venezia della prima moderna

La festa costituisce un punto di osservazione privilegiato per esaminare il ruolo delle mogli di consiglieri, senatori e procuratori, nonché delle dogaresse, dietro le quinte del potere repubblicano. Prendendo in esame feste, spettacoli e banchetti che si svolgono in città o a Palazzo Ducale, quali elementi si colgono circa la partecipazione delle mogli dei patrizi? Quali banchetti e balli vedono la loro presenza e in che modo sono incluse (o escluse) dall'intrattenimento? Alcuni casi tra il secolo XVI e XVII suggeriscono indizi interessanti, confermando i tradizionali ruoli di genere, ma anche varianti e novità che mostrano il protagonismo di

alcune consorti. I momenti ludici rivelano un prezioso quadro sulla sfera d'influenza e di *agency* femminile, mettendo in luce come le donne nel contesto del potere repubblicano abbiano cercato di negoziare il proprio ruolo e di promuovere interessi sia privati che pubblici.

Feste, Räume und Geschlechterrollen: Frauen in den Hinterzimmern der Macht im frühneuzeitlichen Venedig

Feste sind eigenen sich in besonderer Weise für die Untersuchung der Rolle der Frauen von Ratsherren, Senatoren und Prokuratoren sowie der Dogaressas in den Hinterzimmern der republikanischen Macht. Welche Erkenntnisse lassen sich aus der Untersuchung von Festen, Spektakeln und Banketten in der Stadt oder im Dogenpalast hinsichtlich der Beteiligung der Patrizierfrauen ableiten? Bei welchen Banketten und Bällen sind sie mit dabei und wie werden sie in die Amüsements einbezogen (bzw. davon ausgeschlossen)? Einige Fallbeispiele aus dem 16. und 17. Jahrhundert liefern interessante Indizien, die sowohl traditionelle Geschlechterrollen bestätigen als auch Abweichungen und noch unbekannte Aspekte belegen, die die herausragende Stellung einiger Ehefrauen aufzeigen. Ludische Momente bieten wertvolle Einblicke in die weibliche Einfluss- und Handlungsfähigkeitssphäre und beleuchten, wie Frauen im Kontext der republikanischen Macht danach strebten, ihre Rolle auszuhandeln und sowohl private als auch öffentliche Interessen voranzutreiben.

SETTIMIO ADRIANI

*Cosa resta della passatella?
Rapporti e relazioni interpersonali
nel Cicolano (Rieti)*

Pur affondando le proprie radici in ambienti aristocratici e nobiliari, la *passatella* si è progressivamente trasformata

in un gioco popolare, tramandato oralmente e praticato soprattutto nelle regioni dell'Italia centrale e meridionale. Il gioco è incentrato su complesse dinamiche di potere ed esclusione. I partecipanti si cimentavano in trattative articolate e alleanze vincolanti al fine di stabilire chi aveva diritto a bere il vino messo in palio e chi, invece, veniva escluso. Coloro che non venivano ammessi al consumo della bevanda, detti "olmo", erano oggetto di scherno, umiliazioni pubbliche e atteggiamenti sprezzanti, situazioni che spesso generavano rancori profondi e che, in più di un'occasione, hanno provocato vere e proprie risse, talvolta anche cruente. A causa di queste degenerazioni, la *passatella* è stata vietata dalle autorità, ma la sua pratica è sopravvissuta in forma clandestina in molte comunità. Le modalità del gioco, le gerarchie decisionali e le regole sono mutate nel tempo, differenziandosi da un territorio all'altro. Questo saggio, oltre a raccogliere e riorganizzare le scarse e frammentarie fonti bibliografiche e orali sul tema, contribuisce ad approfondire la cultura immateriale del Cicolano, subregione della provincia di Rieti. Il cuore del lavoro è rappresentato dall'analisi di sette strofe inedite, frutto della tradizione orale, che restituiscono con immediatezza e autenticità il senso collettivo e simbolico attribuito al gioco dalla comunità locale.

*What remains of the passatella?
Interpersonal relationships and
interactions in the Cicolano (Rieti)*

Although it has aristocratic and noble origins, the *passatella* has gradually evolved into a popular game, orally transmitted and mainly practised in central and southern regions of Italy. The game develops around complex dynamics of power and exclusion. Participants engaged in negotiations and binding alliances to determine who was entitled to drink the wine at stake and who

was excluded. Those denied the wine – they were referred to as *olmo* – were subjected to mockery, public humiliation, and scornful behaviour, situations that often bred deep resentment and fights. For this reason, the *passatella* was banned by the authorities, yet its practice survived in many communities. Over time, rules, power hierarchies, and the structure of the game have changed, taking on different shapes depending on local context. In addition to gathering and reorganising the scant and fragmented bibliographic and oral sources on the subject, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of the Cicolano, Rieti, a subregion in the province of Rieti by analysing seven unpublished stanzas from the oral tradition, which vividly and authentically convey the collective and symbolic meaning attributed to the game by the local community.

*Was bleibt von der Passatella?
Zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen
im Cicolano (Provinz Rieti)*

Zwar hat die *Passatella* ihren Ursprung in Adelskreisen, doch wurde sie immer mehr zu einem allgemein verbreiteten populären Spiel, das mündlich überliefert und vor allem in den Regionen Mittel- und Südtaliens gespielt wurde. Dreh- und Angelpunkt des Spiels ist eine komplexe Dynamik von Macht und Exklusion. Die Teilnehmer maßen sich dabei in ausgefeilten Verhandlungen und gingen Bündnisse ein, bei denen es darum ging, wer das Recht haben sollte, den Wein, um den gespielt wurde, zu trinken, und wer hingegen von diesem Recht ausgeschlossen wurde. Derjenige, dem das Recht, Wein zu trinken, verweigert wurde, wurde als „*olmo*“ bezeichnet, war dem allgemeinen Gespött preisgegeben und wurde öffentlich gedemütigt, was oft zu Missmut und tiefem Groll führte und nicht nur einmal in Schlägereien mit

teils blutigem Ausgang mündete. Aus diesem Grund wurde die Passatella behördlich verboten, aber dennoch vielerorts heimlich weiter praktiziert. Die Spielweise, die Entscheidungshierarchien und die Regeln haben sich im Laufe der Zeit verändert und regional ausdifferenziert. Im Artikel werden die spärlichen und fragmentarischen schriftlichen und mündlichen Quellen zu diesem Thema neu zusammengestellt und damit ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der immateriellen Kultur des Cicolano, eines Teilgebiets der Provinz Rieti, geleistet. Im Mittelpunkt steht dabei die Analyse von sieben bislang unveröffentlichten Strophen aus der mündlichen Überlieferung, welche die dem Spiel von der lokalen Bevölkerung beigegebene kollektive und symbolische Bedeutung ganz unmittelbar und auf authentische Weise aufzeigen.

ADRIEN BELGRANO

Remarques sur le "Jeu du Chapelet" dans Le Tournoi de Chauvency (1285) et le devenir de la danse à la fin du Moyen Âge

Le "Jeu du Chapelet", dansé par la comtesse de Luxembourg à l'occasion d'un tournoi s'étant tenu à Chauvency en 1285 et décrit par le trouvère Jacques Bretel, est un document exceptionnel par sa longueur et sa précision, détaillant à la fois les gestes, les déplacements et les chansons du jeu. Il nous donne un aperçu des transformations de la danse dans les sociétés aristocratiques de la fin du XIII^e siècle. Analysant de manière précise le jeu, son vocabulaire et les pas décrits par Bretel, je montre que le regard des spectateurs se focalise de plus en plus sur les mouvements de pied. Sans aller jusqu'à dire que Bretel analyse la chorégraphie, j'explique que cette focalisation traduit un intérêt nouveau pour les pas, leur nombre et la façon dont ils sont réalisés. Cette technicité croissante

implique un apprentissage et l'élaboration d'un vocabulaire spécifique. La danse, enfin, tout en continuant de contribuer à la réussite de la fête en suscitant la joie de l'assistance, permet également la mise en avant d'individus : André d'Amance, choisi pour être couronné par la comtesse, mais également Madame de Luxembourg elle-même, qui fait la démonstration de sa valeur devant tous les convives réunis. Ce jeu, à l'instar des joutes et de la mêlée, révèle ainsi les tensions d'une société prise en tenaille entre un *ethos* courtois, valorisant les émotions et la communauté, et un *ethos* chevaleresque, valorisant la mise en scène de l'individu et de ses prouesses techniques.

Osservazioni sul "Gioco della ghirlanda di fiori" in Le Tournoi de Chauvency (1285) e lo sviluppo della danza alla fine del medioevo

Il "Gioco della ghirlanda di fiori" (*Jeu du Chapelet*), danzato dalla contessa di Lussemburgo in occasione di un torneo tenutosi a Chauvency nel 1285 e descritto dal trovatore Jacques Bretel, è un documento eccezionale per la sua lunghezza e precisione, e che descrive in dettaglio i gesti, i movimenti, le canzoni del gioco. Ci offre uno sguardo sulle trasformazioni della danza nelle società aristocratiche della fine del secolo XIII. Analizzando in modo preciso il gioco, il suo vocabolario e i passi descritti da Bretel, noto che lo sguardo degli spettatori si concentra sempre più sui movimenti dei piedi. Senza arrivare ad affermare che Bretel analizza la coreografia, mostro come questa focalizzazione traduca un nuovo interesse per i passi, il loro numero e il modo in cui vengono eseguiti. Questa crescente tecnicità implica l'apprendimento e l'elaborazione di un vocabolario specifico. La danza, infine, pur continuando a contribuire al successo della festa suscitando la gioia del

pubblico, permette anche di mettere in risalto alcuni individui: André d'Amance, scelto per essere incoronato dalla contessa, ma anche Madame de Luxembourg stessa, che dimostra il suo valore davanti a tutti gli ospiti riuniti. Questo gioco, come le giostre e la mischia, rivela così le tensioni di una società stretta tra un *ethos* cortese, che valorizza le emozioni e la comunità, e un *ethos* cavalleresco, che valorizza la messa in scena dell'individuo e delle sue prodezze tecniche.

Remarks on the 'Game of the garland of flowers' in Le Tournoi de Chauvency (1285) and the development of dance at the end of the Middle Ages

The troubadour Jacques Bretel's account of the 'Game of the garland of flowers' (*Jeu du Chapelet*), danced by the Countess of Luxembourg on the occasion of a tournament held at Chauvency in 1285, is a document of exceptional length and precision, which gives a detailed description of the gestures and movements of the game and also of its accompanying *chansons*. It offers an overview of the changes undergone by dance in aristocratic society at the end of the 13th century. Attentive analysis of the game, its vocabulary and the steps described by Bretel shows that spectators' gaze was increasingly directed towards the movements of the dancers' feet. Without going so far as to claim that Bretel analyses the choreography, the study shows that this focus reveals a new interest in the steps involved, how and how many were performed. This heightened emphasis on technical detail implied the development and use of a specific vocabulary. The dance continued to contribute to the success of the festivity and the enjoyment of those present and also to turn the spotlight on certain individuals: André d'Amance, for example, chosen to be crowned by the Countess, but also

Madame de Luxembourg herself, who demonstrates her bravura before all the guests. This game, like the tournament contests of jousting and mêlée, reveals the tensions of a society caught between a courtly *ethos*, with its emphasis on emotions and community, and a chivalric *ethos*, which sets greater store on individual performance and technical skill.

JESSICA BUTORI

Una stanza tutta per sé: a proposito di una scena dei Kinderspiele di Bruegel

Il dipinto tradizionalmente chiamato *Giocchi di bambini* (*Kinderspiele*), firmato da Pieter Bruegel il Vecchio nel 1560, presenta sul lato sinistro di un'affollata composizione una stanza dove due fanciulle sono intente a giocare con delle bambole. Dietro di loro si vede un mobiletto su cui sono disposti dei fantocchini e varie suppellettili, che lo configurano come un finto altare. A partire dall'osservazione di questa scena e degli oggetti presenti nella stanza, questo contributo, dopo una breve riflessione sul ruolo pedagogico e modellante delle bambole, tenta di allargare lo sguardo su opere che mescolano aspetti ludici e pii, i cosiddetti *repos de Jésus*, manufatti devozionali largamente diffusi a partire dalla metà del secolo XIV tra Fiandre, Paesi Bassi meridionali e Renania, che permettevano ai loro fruitori un rapporto intimo e diretto col Gesù Bambino grazie alle loro qualità interattive. Analizzando alcuni testamenti di Tournai (Belgio) che li menzionano, e che li vedono tramandare prevalentemente da donna a donna, si formula qui un'ipotesi sull'oggettistica che spesso li accompagnava, sul loro utilizzo e sulle loro implicazioni, con delle considerazioni su un particolare tipo di gioco d'imitazione, quello del sacerdote, esplicitamente prescritto per i maschi e visto come segno della fede del bambino, ma che,

s'ipotizza, poteva essere anche gioco – e pratica devozionale – per bambine.

A room of one's own: concerning a detail of Kinderspiele by Bruegel

The picture traditionally called *Children's Games (Kinderspiele)*, was painted by Pieter Bruegel the Elder in 1560. On the left of the crowded composition is a room where two little girls are playing with dolls. Behind them is a small piece of furniture with an arrangement of puppets and ornaments that give it the appearance of a pretend altar. Starting from a description of the scene and the objects in the room, followed by brief comments on the pedagogical and role-moulding function of dolls, the study sets out to broaden the perspective to include works that fuse ludic and religious aspects, the so-called *repos de Jésus*, devotional artefacts that were very common from the mid-14th century in Flanders, the southern Netherlands and Rheinland, their interactive nature offering an intimate, direct relationship with the Baby Jesus. Analysis of a number of wills in Tournai (Belgium), that mention them and testify to their being mainly handed down from woman to woman, leads to the formulation of a hypothesis regarding objects that often accompanied them, their use and their implications, with discussion of a particular type of priest-imitation game that was explicitly prescribed for male children and seen as a mark of their faith, a game that the study suggests may also have been a game – and a devotional exercise – for girls.

Une pièce toute pour soi : à propos d'une scène des Kinderspiele de Bruegel

Le tableau traditionnellement appelé *Jeux d'enfants (Kinderspiele)*, signé Pieter Bruegel l'Ancien en 1560, présente sur le côté gauche d'une composition

bondée une pièce où deux petites filles sont absorbées par leur jeu avec des poupées. Derrière elles, on voit un petit meuble sur lequel sont posés des fantassins et différents bibelots qui le font sembler un faux autel. À partir de l'observation de cette scène et des objets présents dans la pièce, cette contribution, après une brève réflexion sur le rôle pédagogique et modelant des poupées, tente d'élargir le regard sur des œuvres qui mélangent les aspects ludiques et pieux, les dits "repos de Jésus", des objets faits à la main dévotionnels amplement diffusés à partir de la moitié du XIV^e siècle entre les Flandres, le sud des Pays-Bas et la Rhénanie, qui permettaient à leurs utilisateurs un rapport intime et direct avec l'Enfant Jésus grâce à leurs qualités interactives. Analysant différents testaments de Tournai (Belgique) qui les mentionnent, et qui les voient se transmettre principalement de femme à femme, se formule ici une hypothèse sur les articles qui souvent les accompagnaient, sur leur utilisation et sur leurs implications, avec des considérations sur un type particulier de jeu d'imitation, celui du prêtre, explicitement prescrit pour les garçons et vu comme un signe de la foi de l'enfant. mais qui, on suppose, pouvait être aussi un jeu – et une pratique dévotionnelle – pour les petites filles.

NICOLANGELO D'ACUNTO

Gaming and Women's Religious Life: examples from the Middle Ages and hypotheses for research that is still (or almost) to be done

The difficulty of observing ludicity in the specific context of female monasticism derives from the general paucity of sources; nuns left us far less written material than their male counterparts. As regards the Early Middle Ages, however, there is one document that offers significant insights concerning the issue. This is

the protest of an abbess in the Kingdom of the Franks who defends herself against the accusation of having played *tabula* on the grounds that the practice had never been explicitly forbidden, neither by monastic rule nor by canon law. Part of this contribution is devoted to checking whether this gap in the regulations really existed. The rules governing the life of nuns aimed to construct a daily routine that involved an uninterrupted succession of prayer, manual activity and reading. Therefore, at least in theory, there was no time for ludic pursuits in a nun's day. Nevertheless, it could include paraliturgical episodes involving elementary forms of dramatic presentation of Christ's Passion. Except for games of chance, which were always firmly prohibited because of their unacceptable proximity to the practice of ordeals, there was a gradual move in the Middle Ages towards acceptance of games and playing of them by monks, a trend that led from more or less explicit banning of ludic activities to regulating the practice in the Late Middle Ages. For women, this progressive legitimization of ludicity is not so obvious, though the practice became part of the image of nuns in the Late Middle Ages.

Il gioco e la vita religiosa delle donne: esempi dal medioevo e ipotesi per una ricerca ancora (o quasi) da fare

La difficoltà di osservare la ludicità nel contesto specifico del monachesimo femminile deriva dalla generale scarsità di fonti; le monache ci hanno lasciato molto meno materiale scritto rispetto ai loro omologhi maschili. Per quanto riguarda l'alto medioevo, tuttavia, esiste un documento che offre spunti significativi sulla questione. Si tratta della protesta di una badessa del Regno dei Franchi che si difende dall'accusa di aver giocato a *tabula* sostenendo

che tale pratica non era mai stata esplicitamente vietata, né dalla regola monastica né dal diritto canonico. Parte di questo contributo è dedicata alla verifica dell'effettiva esistenza di questa lacuna normativa. Le regole che disciplinavano la vita delle monache miravano a costruire una routine quotidiana che prevedeva un susseguirsi ininterrotto di preghiere, attività manuali e lettura. Pertanto, almeno in teoria, non c'era tempo per attività ludiche nella giornata di una monaca. Tuttavia, essa poteva includere episodi paraliturgici che includevano forme elementari di rappresentazione drammatica della Passione di Cristo. Ad eccezione dei giochi d'azzardo, che sono sempre stati severamente proibiti a causa della loro inaccettabile vicinanza alla pratica delle ordalie, nel medioevo si è assistito a un graduale cambiamento verso l'accettazione dei giochi e della loro pratica da parte dei monaci, una tendenza che ha portato dal divieto più o meno esplicito delle attività ludiche alla regolamentazione della pratica nel tardo medioevo. Per le donne, questa progressiva legittimazione della ludicità non è così evidente, anche se la pratica è entrata a far parte dell'immagine delle suore nel tardo medioevo.

Spiel und religiöses Leben von Frauen: Beispiele aus dem Mittelalter und Hypothesen für noch (bzw. fast noch) ausstehende Forschung

Die Schwierigkeiten bei der Erforschung von Ludizität im spezifischen Kontext des weiblichen klösterlichen Lebens sind durch die allgemeine Quellenlage bedingt: Nonnen haben uns weit weniger Schriftquellen als Mönche hinterlassen. Für das Frühmittelalter liegt allerdings ein Dokument vor, das wichtige Einblicke in das Thema bietet. Es handelt sich um den Protest einer Äbtissin im Fränkischen Reich, die sich gegen den Vorwurf,

Tabula gespielt zu haben, unter Berufung darauf zur Wehr setzt, dass dies weder nach den Ordensregeln noch nach kanonischem Recht je ausdrücklich verboten gewesen sei. Ein Teil des Beitrages widmet sich der Frage, ob eine solche Rechtslücke tatsächlich bestand. Die für das Leben der Nonnen geltenden Regeln waren auf die Schaffung einer täglichen Routine mit einer ununterbrochenen Abfolge von Gebet, Arbeit und Lektüre gerichtet. Dementsprechend gab es zumindest theoretisch im Tagesablauf einer Nonne keinerlei Zeit für ludische Betätigungen. Allerdings konnten durchaus paraliturgische Beschäftigungen mit elementaren Formen von Passionsaufführungen vorgesehen sein. Mit Ausnahme von Glücksspielen, die aufgrund ihrer nicht hinnehmbaren Nähe zu Gottesurteilen stets streng untersagt waren, gab es im Mittelalter eine allmähliche Entwicklung hin zur Akzeptanz von Spielen und der ludischen Betätigung von Mönchen. Diese Tendenz führte von einem – mehr oder minder expliziten – absoluten Verbot von Spielen hin zu ihrer Regulierung im Spätmittelalter. Für Frauen ist diese zunehmende Legalisierung des Spiels weniger offenkundig, obschon ludische Praxis im Spätmittelalter Teil des Bilds von Nonnen wurde.

THIERRY DEPAULIS

Qui a écrit (compilé) La maison academique contenant un recueil general de tous les jeux divertissans (1654) ?

En 1654, deux modestes libraires parisiens, Robert De Nain et Marin Leché, faisaient paraître un ouvrage intitulé *La maison academique contenant un recueil general de tous les jeux divertissans pour se rejouyr agreablement dans les bonnes compagnies* (Paris 1654), dû à un certain La Marinière. C'est le plus ancien recueil imprimé connu en Europe réunissant

différentes règles de jeux. Seule l'avait précédé, plusieurs siècles auparavant, l'imposante encyclopédie des jeux du roi Alphonse X le Sage de Castille et Léon achevée en 1283, le *Libro del axedrez, dados e tablas*. Mais ce livre, entièrement manuscrit et enluminé, est unique. *La maison academique* de 1654 s'avère être un livre de pure compilation : la quasi-totalité des jeux présentés avait déjà fait l'objet d'une édition antérieure, sous forme de livre, de placard ou d'estampe. Les éditions suivantes de *La Maison academique* (1659, 1665, 1668, et cetera) ont été nettement remaniées et ne portent plus le nom de La Marinière. On note qu'un important chapitre, les « Jeux académiques qui se jouent en Italie », copié sans changement de *La Maison des jeux* de Charles Sorel (1642), a disparu des éditions postérieures. On s'interroge alors sur l'auteur La Marinière, mystérieux et fuyant, dont l'activité paraît limitée au livre de 1654 et à quelques annuaires de la cour contemporains. Et si c'était Charles Sorel lui-même ?

Chi ha scritto (compilato) La maison academique contenant un recueil general de tous les jeux divertissans (1654) ?

Nel 1654, due modesti librai parigini, Robert De Nain e Marin Leché, pubblicarono un'opera intitolata *La maison academique contenant un recueil general de tous les jeux divertissans pour se rejouyr agreablement dans les bonnes compagnies* (Parigi 1654), attribuita a un certo La Marinière. Si tratta della più antica raccolta stampata conosciuta in Europa, che riunisce diverse regole di gioco. Solo l'imponente enciclopedia dei giochi del re Alfonso X il Saggio di Castiglia e León, completata nel 1283, il *Libro del axedrez, dados e tablas*, l'aveva preceduta, diversi secoli prima. Ma questo libro, interamente manoscritto e miniato, è unico nel

suo genere. *La maison academique* del 1654 si rivela essere un libro di pura compilazione: quasi tutti i giochi presentati erano già stati oggetto di una precedente edizione, sotto forma di libro, manifesto o stampa. Le successive edizioni de *La Maison academique* (1659, 1665, 1668, eccetera) sono state notevolmente rielaborate e non recano più il nome di La Marinière. Si nota che un capitolo importante, *Jeux académiques qui se jouent en Italie*, copiato senza modifiche da *La Maison des jeux* di Charles Sorel (1642), è scomparso dalle edizioni successive. Ci si interroga quindi sull'autore La Marinière, misterioso e sfuggente, la cui attività sembra limitata al libro del 1654 e ad alcuni annuari di corte contemporanei. E se fosse stato lo stesso Charles Sorel?

Who wrote (compiled) La maison academique contenant un recueil general de tous les jeux divertissans (1654) ?

In 1654, two small Parisian booksellers, Robert De Nain and Marin Leché, published a work entitled *La maison academique contenant un recueil general de tous les jeux divertissans pour se rejouyr agreablement dans les bonnes compagnies* (Paris 1654), by a certain La Marinière. It is the oldest known printed collection in Europe, bringing together different game rules. It was only preceded, several centuries earlier, by the imposing encyclopaedia of games, the *Libro del axedrez, dados e tablas* that King Alfonso X the Wise of Castile and Leon completed in 1283. But that book, entirely hand-written and illuminated, is unique. The 1654 *La maison academique* turns out to be a book of pure compilation: almost all of the games presented had already been the subject of a previous edition, in the form of a book, a placard, or a print. The subsequent editions of *La Maison academique* (1659, 1665, 1668, and so on) were heavily revised and no longer

bear the name La Marinière. It should be noted that an important chapter, the *Jeux académiques qui se jouent en Italie*, copied verbatim from Charles Sorel's *La Maison des jeux* (1642), has disappeared from these later editions. We wonder here about this mysterious and elusive author, La Marinière, whose activity seems limited to the 1654 book and a few contemporary court directories. What if it was Charles Sorel himself?

GIULIA LOVISON

Quando la Morte dà scacco matto: genesi e sviluppi di un motivo ludico-tanatologico

Il motivo della Morte che gioca a scacchi si impone come potente metafora della condizione umana, attraversando epoche e contesti culturali. Immortalata nel secolo XX dal cinema di Ingmar Bergman, in particolare dal suo film *Il settimo sigillo*, l'immagine affonda le sue radici nel medioevo, quando il gioco degli scacchi non era solo un passatempo, ma anche una rappresentazione simbolica della società e del destino umano. Eppure la storiografia ha spesso relegato il tema a semplice curiosità iconografica, trascurandone la portata concettuale nel pensiero medievale. Il contributo si propone di colmare tale lacuna, indagando la genesi e l'evoluzione della partita a scacchi con la Morte tra XII e XVI secolo. Attraverso un'analisi comparativa di fonti letterarie, iconografiche e materiali, si evidenzia come tale motivo non sia un'invenzione isolata, ma il frutto di un più ampio mutamento nella percezione della morte nel medioevo. La ricerca mappa la diffusione del paradigma, seguendone la circolazione tra Alsazia, Germania e area scandinava, lungo un asse culturale europeo che ne testimonia la coerenza simbolica. In conclusione, il motivo si rivela una chiave di lettura della sensibilità medievale verso

morte, precarietà e condizione umana incarnata nell'*homo ludens*: un giocatore costretto a sfidare un avversario imbattibile, in una partita dall'esito noto, ma non priva dell'illusione di poter vincere.

When Death delivers checkmate: the origin and development of a ludic-thanatological motif

The motif of Death playing chess stands as a powerful metaphor for the human condition, transcending historical periods and cultural boundaries. Immortalised in the 20th century by Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, its origins can be traced back to the Middle Ages, when the game of chess functioned not merely as entertainment, but as a symbolic representation of social order and human destiny. Yet historiography has often relegated this theme to a mere iconographic curiosity, overlooking its conceptual depth within mediaeval thought. This study seeks to address that gap by investigating the origins and development of the chess game with Death between the 12th and 16th centuries. Through a comparative analysis of literary, iconographic, and material sources, the research demonstrates that the motif was not an isolated invention, but rather the product of a broader transformation in mediaeval attitudes toward death. By mapping its diffusion from Alsace and central Germany to Scandinavia, the study reveals a coherent symbolic pattern spreading along a European cultural axis. Ultimately, the motif emerges as a key to understanding late mediaeval sensibilities surrounding mortality, existential uncertainty, and the human condition – embodied in the figure of the *homo ludens*, a player compelled to face an unbeatable opponent in a game whose outcome is already known, yet never entirely without the illusion of victory.

Quand la Mort fait échec et mat : genèse et développements d'un motif ludico-thanatologique

Le motif de la Mort qui joue aux échecs s'impose comme une puissante métaphore de la condition humaine, traversant les époques et les contextes culturels. Immortalisée au XX^e siècle par le cinéma de Ingmar Bergman, en particulier par son film *Le septième sceau*, l'image plonge ses racines dans le Moyen Âge quand le jeu des échecs n'est pas seulement un passe-temps mais aussi une représentation symbolique de la société et du destin humain. Et pourtant l'historiographie a souvent relégué le thème à une simple curiosité iconographique, négligeant la portée conceptuelle dans la pensée du Moyen Âge. La contribution se propose de combler cette lacune, enquêtant sur la genèse et l'évolution de la partie d'échecs avec la Mort entre les XII^e et XVI^e siècles. Au moyen d'une analyse comparative des sources littéraires, iconographiques et matérielles, on met en évidence comment ce motif n'est pas une invention isolée mais le fruit d'une mutation plus ample dans la perception de la mort au Moyen Âge. La recherche cartographie la diffusion du paradigme, en en suivant la circulation entre l'Alsace, l'Allemagne et l'aire Scandinave, le long d'un axe culturel européen qui en témoigne la cohérence symbolique. En conclusion, le motif se révèle être une clé de lecture de la sensibilité du Moyen Âge envers la mort, précarité et condition humaine incarnée dans l'*homo ludens* : un joueur contraint de défier un adversaire imbattable, dans une partie au résultat connu mais non sans l'illusion de pouvoir gagner.

TIZIANA PLEBANI

*«Difficilissimo è lo scriver lepido, se non se ne possègga lo stile»:
Casanova, lane caprine, peri funesti e la retorica amusante*

Casanova all'inizio del 1772 rispondeva a due libelli anonimi scritti a Bologna da due medici, in tono scherzoso e ironico, riguardanti l'intelligenza delle donne. Un genere che proprio per lo stile divertito, pur trattando temi dibattuti dalla scienza, sollecitava il pubblico di lettori e lettrici che apprezzavano lo scherzo, la parodia, il gioco letterario, che caratterizzano molta letteratura settecentesca alla ricerca dell'unione dell'utile con il piacevole. Il primo opuscolo, di Petronio Zecchini, voleva dimostrare che la ragione delle donne è sottomessa all'utero; il secondo libello, di Gaetano Azzoguidi, ribatteva in difesa delle donne ma in maniera poco consistente. Giacomo Casanova demoliva in punta di penna: se la donna pensava con l'utero, l'uomo pensava con lo sperma. La differenza tra i sessi dipendeva dalla diversa educazione e dai pregiudizi. Per «divertimenti», sarebbe bene non perdere tempo a redigere confutazioni, piuttosto era il caso di rispondere «con replicato, e doppio scherzo». Ma Casanova soprattutto faceva osservare che seppure alla Repubblica delle Lettere piaccia leggere scritture scherzose su argomenti elevati, per farlo bisognava avere grazia. «Difficilissimo è lo scriver lepido, se non se ne possègga lo stile», il rischio era attirarsi, come i due autori, il ridicolo.

*“Witty writing is very difficult to achieve. It needs to be done with style”:
Casanova, pointless speculations,
pernicious pears and amusing rhetoric*

At the beginning of 1772, Casanova responded to two anonymous pamphlets concerning the intelligence of women, written in a playful and ironic tone by two doctors in Bologna. This genre, characterised by its amused style, while addressing topics debated by science, appealed to a public of readers who appreciated the jokes,

the parody and the literary games. These features were common in much 18th-century literature that sought to combine usefulness with pleasure. The first pamphlet, by Petronio Zecchini, set out to demonstrate that women's reason is subordinate to the uterus; the second, by Gaetano Azzoguidi, retorted in defence of women but in a half-hearted and weak manner. Giacomo Casanova tore apart these arguments with sharp wit: if the woman thought with her uterus, the man thought with his sperm. The difference between the sexes, he argued, depended on their different education and prejudices. For 'amusement', it was better not to waste time writing refutations; instead, one should respond "with repeated, double jokes". But Casanova especially pointed out that while the Republic of Letters enjoyed reading playful writings on high-minded topics, one needed grace to do so. "Witty writing is very difficult to achieve. It needs to be done with style," he said, cautioning that, like the two authors, one could easily attract ridicule.

« Il est très difficile d'écrire drôle, si l'on ne possède pas le style ». Casanova, poser des questions oiseuses, des poires funestes et la rhétorique amusante

Au début de l'année 1772, Casanova répondit à deux pamphlets anonymes écrits à Bologne par deux médecins, dans un ton à la fois plaisant et ironique, sur le thème de l'intelligence des femmes. Un genre qui, précisément en raison de son style amusé, tout en abordant des sujets débattus par la science, attirait un public de lectrices et lecteurs appréciant la plaisanterie, la parodie, le jeu littéraire, traits caractéristiques d'une grande partie de la littérature du XVIII^e siècle, à la recherche de l'union entre l'utile et l'agréable. Le premier pamphlet, de Petronio Zecchini, veut démontrer

que la raison des femmes est asservie à l'utérus; le second pamphlet, de Gaetano Azzoguidi, prend la défense des femmes, mais d'une manière peu convaincante. Giacomo Casanova démolissait ces arguments d'un trait d'esprit, du bout de sa plume : si la femme pense avec l'utérus ; l'homme pense avec le sperme. La différence entre les sexes dépendait de l'éducation différente qu'on avait reçue et des préjugés. Pour des "divertissements", mieux valait ne pas perdre de temps à rédiger des réfutations, mais plutôt répondre « avec une réplique en double trait d'esprit ». Mais Casanova soulignait surtout que si la République des Lettres aimait lire des écrits ludiques sur des sujets élevés, il fallait pour cela avoir de la grâce. « Il est très difficile d'écrire drôle, si l'on ne possède pas le style », le risque étant d'attirer le ridicule, à l'instar des deux auteurs.

CHLOÉ PLUCHON-RIERA

« Une vessie remplie d'air ».

Influenza et appropriation d'un jouet éphémère dans quelques compositions des Bassano et de Vincenzo Campi

Les jeux et les jouets qui l'accompagnent sont des activités emblématiques de l'enfance, au point d'être caractéristiques de cet âge dans les représentations artistiques de la Renaissance italienne. Parmi ces jouets, nombreux sont zoomorphes ou fabriqués à partir de matières animales, comme les ballons constitués de vessies de porc, de veau ou de bœuf, que les enfants gonflent d'air. Si ces objets sont bien connus dans l'art néerlandais du XVII^e siècle, leur représentation apparaît dès les années 1570-1580 dans le nord de l'Italie, notamment chez Jacopo Bassano et ses fils ainsi que chez Vincenzo Campi. Ces derniers reprennent un motif déjà présent dans les œuvres d'artistes anversois comme Pieter Bruegel, Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer ou Martin van Cleve, diffusées en Italie

par les collections de familles comme les Affaitati ou les Farnèse. Intégrés à des scènes d'abattage hivernal, ces ballons évoquent la transformation d'un déchet animal en jouet. Chez les Bassano, ce jouet devient un archétype de l'enfance rurale ; chez Vincenzo Campi, il prend un tour grotesque en évoquant l'incontinence infantile. Objets fragiles et éphémères, ces vessies gonflées, proches des bulles de savons, rappellent la brièveté de l'enfance et de la vie. Placées dans les mains des plus jeunes, elles renvoient également à la figure du bouffon ou du fou, eux-mêmes associés à ces objets vides et légers, symboles d'instabilité et de dérision.

«Una vescica riempita d'aria».

Influenza e appropriazione di un giocattolo effimero in alcune composizioni dei Bassano e di Vincenzo Campi

I giochi e i giocattoli che l'accompagnano sono attività emblematiche dell'infanzia, al punto da essere caratteristici di questa età nelle rappresentazioni artistiche del Rinascimento italiano. Tra questi giocattoli, molti sono zoomorfi o realizzati con materiali di origine animale, come i palloncini costituiti da vesciche di maiale, vitello o bue, che i bambini gonfiano con l'aria. Se questi oggetti sono ben noti nell'arte olandese del secolo XVII, la loro rappresentazione appare già negli anni 1570-1580 nel nord Italia, in particolare presso Jacopo Bassano e i suoi figli, nonché presso Vincenzo Campi. Questi ultimi riprendono un motivo già presente nelle opere di artisti di Anversa come Pieter Bruegel, Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer e Marten van Cleve, diffuse in Italia dalle collezioni di famiglie come gli Affaitati o i Farnese. Inseriti in scene di macellazione invernale, questi palloncini evocano la trasformazione di uno scarto animale in un giocattolo. Nelle opere dei Bassano,

questo giocattolo diventa un archetipo dell'infanzia rurale; in Vincenzo Campi, assume un carattere grottesco evocando l'incontinenza infantile. Oggetti fragili ed effimeri, queste vesciche gonfiate, simili a bolle di sapone, ricordano la brevità dell'infanzia e della vita. Messe nelle mani dei più giovani, rimandano anche alla figura del buffone o del pazzo, anch'essi associati a questi oggetti vuoti e leggeri, simboli di instabilità e derisione.

«A bladder filled with air».

The influence and use of a makeshift plaything in works by the Bassano family and by Vincenzo Campi

Games and the playthings associated with them are emblematic of childhood and they are duly characteristic of depictions of children by Italian Renaissance painters. Many of the playthings in question are zoomorphic or are made from animal parts, like the balloons made from pig, calf or ox bladders, which children blew into to inflate them. Though these objects often feature in 17th-century Dutch art, they also appear in paintings produced in Northern Italy in the 1570s, especially in works painted by Jacopo Bassano and his sons and by Vincenzo Campi. These latter echo a motif that was already present in the work of artists painting in Antwerp, such as Pieter Bruegel, Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer and Marten van Cleve, which featured in the collections of the Affaitati and Farnese families in Italy. The balloons occur in scenes depicting butchering for winter and evoke the transformation of animal discards into playthings. In the paintings by the Bassano family, the bladder/balloon figures as an archetype of rural childhood, whereas Vincenzo Campi uses the motif as a grotesque image of childish incontinence. Like soap bubbles, fragile and short-lived, these blown-up bladders connote the brief span of childhood and

life itself. And put into the hands of youngsters, they also recall the figures of the clown or the madman, whose association with these empty, flimsy objects symbolises unpredictability and derision.

FRANCESCA ROHR VIO

Matronae tra otium e politica in Roma antica

Come testimonia la tradizione, era prassi per gli esponenti dell'aristocrazia romana trascorrere periodi di svago nelle proprie ville extraurbane. Le fonti, tuttavia, sono avaro di dettagli sulle attività di costoro nei luoghi dell'*otium*. Una preziosa eccezione è rappresentata da Cicerone che nell'*Epistolario* conserva memoria dei soggiorni in villa propri, dei propri familiari e amici. L'Arpinate restituisce istantanee delle giornate di festa e delle relazioni familiari che si esprimevano in tali occasioni; ma dà conto anche della funzione politica degli incontri nelle residenze extraurbane. Anche Plutarco, per le specificità del genere biografico, ricorda momenti della vita privata, oltre che pubblica, dei protagonisti delle sue narrazioni e si sofferma su episodi avvenuti in villa. Il focus di questo contributo sono le azioni di alcune donne in tali contesti, manifestazione delle dinamiche familiari e dei ruoli politici e sociali delle matrone nella Roma tardorepubblicana. Sono tre le figure su cui si concentra l'indagine. Di Cornelia si ricorda l'azione nella villa di Capo Miseno, dove con intellettuali e politici condivideva la memoria del padre, Scipione l'Africano, e dei figli, Tiberio e Gaio Sempronio Gracco. Attraverso Pomponia, moglie di Quinto Tullio Cicerone, si ricostruisce il ruolo delle matrone nelle feste celebrate in campagna. Mediante Servilia, madre di Marco Giunio Bruto, si dimostra la nuova funzione delle ville quali luoghi deputati anche alla politica.

Matronae *between otium and politics in Ancient Rome*

Traditional testimony has it that members of the Roman aristocracy often spent periods of leisure in their countryside estates. The sources, however, offer very little detail about what they actually did in these places of *otium*. An important exception is Cicero's *Letters*, in which he writes of stays in villas belonging to him, his family and friends. He gives snapshots of feast days and how family members interacted on such occasions; but he also gives accounts of the political function of meetings in these out-of-town residences. In his biographical works, Plutarch too records moments in the private, as well as the public, lives of his subjects, often narrating episodes that took place *in villa*. This contribution focuses on the actions of three women against this backdrop, what they can tell us about family dynamics and about the political and social role of these matrons in late-Republican Rome. We see Cornelia in action in the villa at Cape Miseno where, with intellectuals and politicians, she shared memories of her father, Scipio Africanus, and her sons Tiberius and Gaius Sempronius Gracchus. Pomponia, the wife of Quintus Tullius Cicero, provides material for a reconstruction of the role of the matron in festivities celebrated in the countryside. And through Servilia, the mother of Marcus Junius Brutus, we learn of the new political function of villas.

Matronae *entre otium et politique dans la Rome antique*

Comme le témoigne la tradition, il était habituel pour les représentants de l'aristocratie romaine de passer des périodes de détente dans leurs propres villas en dehors des villes. Les sources, toutefois, sont avares de détails sur leurs activités dans les lieux de l'*otium*. Une exception précieuse

est représentée par Cicéron qui dans sa *Correspondance* conserve la mémoire de ses séjours *in villa*, de ceux de sa famille et de ses amis. L'Arpinate restitue en instantané des journées de fête et des relations familiales qui s'exprimaient en de telles occasions ; mais il rend compte aussi de la fonction politique des rencontres dans les résidences extra-urbaines. Plutarque aussi, par la spécificité du genre biographique, rappelle des moments de la vie privée, outre que publique, des protagonistes de ses narrations et il s'attarde sur les épisodes qui ont eu lieu *in villa*. Le focus de cette contribution sont les actions de différentes femmes dans ces contextes, manifestation des dynamiques familiales et des rôles politiques et sociaux des matrones dans la Rome de la fin de la République. Sur trois personnages se concentre l'enquête. De Cornelia est rappelée l'action dans la villa de Capo Miseno, où avec les intellectuels et les hommes politiques elle partageait la mémoire de son père, Scipion l'Africain, et de ses enfants, Tiberio et Gaio Sempronio Gracco. Grâce à Pomponia, épouse de Quinto Tullio Cicerone, est reconstitué le rôle des matrones dans les fêtes célébrées dans la campagne. Au moyen de Servilia, mère de Marco Giunio Bruto, est démontrée la nouvelle fonction des villas comme lieux consacrés aussi à la politique.

GUIDO RUGGIERO

The Queen's Gambit. Playing the game of courting successfully during the Italian Wars

This essay begins with a brief excursus on gender in the classic chess opening, the Queen's Gambit, using it as an example of gender-bending in games and a point of reference for a close analysis of a tale of courting by the Cinquecento *novelliere* Matteo Bandello. After a brief discussion

of why and how courting can be considered a game (more suggestive than exhaustive, given the time limits for these remarks) the essay follows the development of the courtship between Filippo di Nicuola, an exiled gentleman at the court of the Emperor Maximilian I in 1519, and the fifteen-year-old Anna Queen of Hungary focusing on the way their gender status (a powerful female ruler, and a powerless male exile) and the yawning gap between a queen and a fallen Italian aristocrat, colour their relationship; and in turn, reveal much about traditional expectations for both in the world beyond the game, as well as the gender parameters of the game itself. Following that relationship as it leads on to a surprisingly happy ending, thanks to an impressive move by Anna in her game of courtship, a perfect Queen's Gambit, their play as it develops is littered with gender and status hurdles and dangers overcome; hurdles that are not at all self-evident from a modern standpoint and that suggest much about the gendered nature of the game of courting. And thus, hopefully it will help serve as a base for a rich discussion of the issues involved in looking at gender and *gioco* from a historical perspective.

Il Gambetto della Regina. Giocare con successo il gioco del corteggiamento durante le guerre d'Italia

Questo saggio inizia con una breve digressione sulle questioni di genere sul classico avvio del gioco degli scacchi, il Gambetto della Regina, utilizzandola come esempio di inversione di genere nei giochi e come punto di riferimento per un'analisi approfondita di un racconto di corteggiamento del novelliere cinquecentesco Matteo Bandello. Dopo una breve discussione sul perché e sul come il corteggiamento possa essere considerato un gioco (più suggestiva che esaustiva, dati i limiti di tempo per queste

osservazioni), il saggio segue lo sviluppo del corteggiamento tra Filippo di Nicuola, un gentiluomo esiliato alla corte dell'imperatore Massimiliano I nel 1519, e la quindicenne Anna, regina d'Ungheria, concentrandosi sul modo in cui il loro status di genere (una potente sovrana e un esiliato senza potere) e l'enorme divario tra una regina e un aristocratico italiano caduto in disgrazia, influenzano la loro relazione. E quindi su come questi aspetti rivelino molto sulle tradizionali aspettative di entrambi nei confronti del mondo, al di là del gioco, così come sui parametri di genere del gioco stesso. Seguendo quella relazione che porta a un finale sorprendentemente felice, grazie a una mossa impressionante di Anna nel suo gioco di corteggiamento, un perfetto Gambetto della Regina, il loro gioco, man mano che si sviluppa, è costellato di ostacoli e pericoli legati al genere e allo status sociale; ostacoli che non sono affatto evidenti da un punto di vista moderno e che suggeriscono molto sulla natura di genere del gioco del corteggiamento. L'auspicio è che il contributo possa servire come base per una ricca discussione sulle questioni relative alla visione del genere e del gioco da una prospettiva storica.

Damengambit. Das Spiel erfolgreicher Brautwerbung in der Zeit der Italienischen Kriege

Der Beitrag beginnt mit einem kurzen Exkurs zur Genderproblematik in der als Damengambit bezeichneten klassischen Schacheröffnung, welche als Beispiel für eine Geschlechterrollenumkehr in Spielen und als Bezugspunkt für eine eingehende Analyse einer Novelle über Brautwerbung aus der Feder des Cinquecento-Autoren Matteo Bandello genutzt wird. Nach einer kurzen Diskussion, warum und wie Brautwerbung als Spiel betrachtet werden

kann (aufgrund der gegebenen zeitlichen Beschränkungen eher suggestiv denn exhaustiv), verfolgt der Beitrag die Entwicklung der Brautwerbung Filippo di Nicuolas, eines 1519 an den Hof von Kaiser Maximilian I. geflüchteten Adligen, um die fünfzehnjährige Anna, Königin von Ungarn. Dabei geht es hauptsächlich darum, wie sich beider Geschlechterstatus (eine mächtige Herrscherin und ein entmachteter Exilant) und die tiefe Kluft, die sich zwischen einer Königin und einem gefallenem italienischen Adligen auftrug, auf ihre Beziehung auswirken und im Gegenzug viel über die traditionellen Erwartungen an beide in der Welt jenseits des Spiels wie auch über die Genderparameter des Spiels selbst verraten. Der Blick darauf, wie sich beider Beziehung dank eines beeindruckend starken Zugs von Anna in ihrem Spiel, einem perfekten Damengambit, hin zu einem unerwartet glücklichen Ende entwickelt, offenbart die zahllosen geschlechts- und statusspezifischen Hürden und Fährnisse, die zu überwinden waren. Diese Hürden sind vom heutigen Standpunkt aus keineswegs offenkundig und verraten viel über die genderbeeinflusste Natur des Spiels der Brautwerbung. Dies möge mit als Grundlage für eine fruchtbare Diskussion von Aspekten, die mit einer historischen Perspektive auf Gender und *Gioco* verbunden sind, dienen.

Maria Adank

Having earned her PhD in History at the University of Pisa in 2021, Maria Adank's doctoral dissertation on the important Grimani family of San Luca in Venice was published in the series 'Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie' (Viella) in 2025. As a research fellow at the University of Udine, she pursued a project on everyday female writing in the Modern Age, and she is now a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow at the University of Verona and the University of Chicago, with a project entitled *Objects, Spaces and Material Culture. Gender and politics in Early Modern European Republics (Venice, Genoa, XV-XVIII centuries)*. Her interests and her publications focus mainly on the history of gender and the history of Venice, with particular attention to links between gender, politics and material culture.

Settimio Adriani

After graduating in Natural Sciences and Forestry Sciences, Settimio Adriani went on to specialise in Ecology and earn a research doctorate in the Management of Wildlife Resources, a subject he subsequently taught at the Universities of Tuscany, La Sapienza and L'Aquila. His keen personal interest in the culture of the Cicolano plateaus has resulted in the publication of several monographs and articles. *Evolution and retroevolution of the agro-forestry-pastoral landscape in the Cicolano highlands, Rieti (Scienze del Territorio, 12, 2024)*; *Origini e diffusione della passatella, uno svago "severo" esportato (Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco, 30, 2024)*; *Dalla Brexit alla finale di Wembley (with Alina di Mattia, La ricerca folklorica, 77, 2022)*; *Poesie fuori dal coro, rime del dissenso contadino al regime fascista (La ricerca folklorica, 76, 2021)*; *La transumanza in dodici "strofe" di tradizione orale (La ricerca folklorica, 75, 2020)*; *Usi civici di pascolo e legnatico nell'altopiano di Rascino (with Antonio Di Pasquale, Scienze del Territorio, 8, 2020)*.

Alessandro Arcangeli

As well as having lectured in Early Modern History at the University of Verona, Alessandro Arcangeli is a cultural historian active in research networking (Chair of the International Society for Cultural History, 2013-2017; President of the Italian Association for Research in Dance, 2024-2026) and in the methodological reflection on the field (see his *Cultural History. A concise introduction*, London 2012). His research interests include the cultural history of dance, leisure, gesture, dreams and the affective life in the European Renaissance. He has edited Renaissance volumes of cultural histories of sport (London 2021) and leisure (London 2024) and co-edited *The Routledge Companion to Cultural History in the Western World* (London 2020), and *Sensibilità moderne. Storie di affetti, passioni e sensi, secoli XV-XVIII* (Rome 2023). His most recent books are *L'altro che danza. Il villano, il selvaggio, la strega nell'immaginario della prima età moderna* (Milan 2018) and *Renaissance Dream Cultures* (London 2025).

Claudio Azzara

As full professor of Mediaeval History at the University of Salerno, Claudio Azzara also teaches Ancient History. His research interests primarily concern the political and institutional history of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. He is, among other things, President of the scientific committee of the Centre for Longobard Studies and a member of the scientific committees of the journals *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo*, *Medieval Sophia*, *Veguetta. Anuario de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia-Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria* and of the publishing houses Studium, Rubbettino and Palermo University Press. His latest publications include *Potestà imperiale e regalità di stirpe in Gregorio Magno* (in "Simul conversari ad amicium". Studi in memoria di

Alba Maria Orselli, edited by Luigi Canetti and Raffaele Savigni, Spoleto 2024, pp. 43-55); *Teoderico l'Amalo nelle leggende medievali* (in *Germania et Italia. Liber amocorum Hubert Houben*, edited by Francesco Filorico, Lioba Geis, Francesco Somaini, Lecce 2024, pp. 43-55); *Il cavallo di Dauferio e l'onore dei Longobardi (Schola Salernitana. Annali, 29, 2024, pp. 7-21)*.

Claudio Bargelli

As well as lecturing in the History of Economic Thought and the History of Famines in the Faculty of Economics of the University of Parma, Claudio Bargelli pursues research interests ranging from mediaeval to contemporary times, with particular reference to food supply policies and the regulated cereals market, to the ways huge ecclesiastical financial assets were managed, to social marginalisation and welfare policy and, more in general, to economic thought in the 1700s, and the changes in society, town-planning and customs in 18th-century cities. As well as articles in national and international journals, his more recent publications include *Dall'empirismo alla scienza. L'agricoltura parmense dall'età dei Lumi al primo conflitto mondiale* (Edizioni Goliardiche, 2004), *Dal necessario al superfluo. Le arti alimentari parmensi tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Franco Angeli, 2013), and *La città dei Lumi. La petite capitale del Du Tillot fra utopie e riforme* (MUP, 2020).

Adrien Belgrano

Now a secondary school teacher, Adrien Belgrano earned a PhD in History and Civilisations at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris in November 2023, with a dissertation under the supervision of Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu, titled *Dance Narratives of the «Age of the Carole» (1170s-1390s). An essay in the historical sociology of knowledge*.

He is affiliated with the Centre de Recherches Historiques of the EHESS. He is also a postdoctoral researcher affiliated with the MUDANZA research program at the University of Tarragona, directed by Licia Buttà. His work focuses on the history of Mediaeval dance – its vocabulary, practices, and the emotions associated with it. He has published several scholarly articles and book chapters, including the section on the Middle Ages in the *Nouvelle Histoire de la danse en Occident*, edited by Laura Cappelletti. He is also actively involved in disseminating his research on the history of Mediaeval dance through various media appearances.

Jessica Butori

With a master's degree in Art History from the University of Pisa, Jessica Butori submitted part of her master's thesis, *Le culle in miniatura del Bambin Gesù. Devozione, gioco, operatività*, for the 2025 Gaetano Cozzi Prize, promoted by the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche, and was awarded a Special Mention. Another part of this research can be read in *Culle e lettini in miniatura per il Bambin Gesù: un'interpretazione (Arte Cristiana, CXIII, 946, 2025)*. She is currently pursuing postgraduate studies at the University of Florence (Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni storico-artistici) and for the academic year 2025-2026 she is also a scholarship holder at Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi. Her research focuses on iconological themes, the interactive and performative nature of devotional objects, as well as 15th century Central Italian painting, especially work produced in Lucca.

Giuseppe Crimi

A full professor of Italian Literature at Roma Tre University, Giuseppe Crimi has carried out research on Dante and humanists and other Renaissance

authors (Burchiello, Folengo, Michelangelo). He has also focused on literary treatments of ludic subjects and published critical editions of *Bosadrello* (2010) and of the *Dialogo del giuoco* by Pietro Aretino (2013). He has recently edited *Il teatro a Roma prima della Cortigiana di Pietro Aretino* (2020), and *L'eroicomico* (with Massimiliano Malavasi, 2020). With Maurizio Campanelli, Maurizio Fiorilla, Emilio Russo and Massimiliano Tortora he is co-editor of *L'Ellisse. Studi storici di letteratura italiana*.

Nicolangelo D'Acunto

A full professor of Mediaeval History at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan and Brescia, Nicolangelo D'Acunto also directs the Department of Mediaeval, Humanistic and Renaissance Studies and the Centre for the Study of the History of European Monastic Settlements (CESIME) and chairs the scientific committee of the La Mendola International Mediaeval Studies Week. He is a member of the Board of Directors and scientific consultancy of the Italian Historical Institute for the Middle Ages and of the Board of Directors of SISMED (the Italian Society for Mediaeval History). His main research focus is on the history of institutions between the 10th and 13th centuries. His recent publications include: *Cum anulo et baculo. Vescovi dell'Italia medievale dal protagonismo politico alla complementarietà istituzionale* (Spoleto 2019); *La lotta per le investiture. Una rivoluzione medievale (998-1122)* (Rome 2020); *Sillabario medievale* (Milan 2023). He edited the bilingual edition of the letters of Pier Damiani in eight volumes (Rome 2001-2023).

Thierry Depaulis

An independent historian of games and especially of playing cards, card and board games,

Thierry Depaulis (born 1949), is a member of the scientific committee of *Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco*, of the editorial board of *Board Game Studies Journal*, and a former member of the board of directors of the Foundation of the Swiss Museum of Games. He was Chairman, then President, of the International Playing-Card Society from 2017 to 2022 and he has close ties with the French Playing-Card Museum. He is also the President of the French ephemera society 'Le Vieux Papier'. Depaulis has published many articles and books in the field of mind games and playing cards. His latest publications include *Tarots enluminés. Chefs-d'œuvre de la Renaissance italienne* (Paris 2021; exhibition catalogue, Issy-les-Moulineaux, Musée Français de la Carte à Jouer), and *The Cardmakers of Alsace 1441-1870* (The International Playing-Card Society, 2023, IPCS Library, 9).

Juan Antonio Jiménez Sánchez

A professor at the University of Barcelona and a member of the GRATAEM (Grup de Recerques en Antiquitat Tardana i Alta Edat Mitjana), Juan Antonio Jiménez Sánchez concentrates his research work on the study of public entertainments during the Late Imperial Age, in particular on an analysis of the imperial monopoly of all ludic-type events and on the complex relationship between Christianity and the entertainments of the pagan Roman tradition. Other lines of research involve study of the dialogue between paganism and Christianity, the persistence of pagan practices in the Christian world in Late Antiquity and the civil and canonical legislation designed to put an end to residual superstitious practices; and analysis of the *Pseudo Chronica Caesaraugustana*. This research activity has led to the publication of three monograph studies, numerous articles in specialist

journals, chapters in books and contributions to conference proceedings.

Giulia Lovison

Having earned her PhD in History (2024) from the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, Giulia Lovison currently holds the Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust Fellowship at the Medici Archive Project. At the University of Florence she is a teaching assistant in the History of Christianity and works as journal manager of *Storia delle Donne*. She is involved in the international research project *Il Tribunale dell'Inquisizione di Santa Croce a Firenze* and has collaborated with the EU-funded ENBELREL. She is the author of *La legge e il rogo: Fra' Modesto Scrofeo e la caccia alle streghe di Sondrio (1523)* (Carocci, 2025), and has published in Italian and international journals, including *Riforma e movimenti religiosi*, *Religions*, and *Giornale di Storia*. Her recent conference participations include *Conspiracy-Authority-Resistance, 40 years AKIH* (Trier 2025), *Scrutinizing the Devil's Plot* (Triora 2024) and *Beyond the Sabbath* (Florence 2022), as well as the co-organisation of *Dancing in the Dark* (Seville 2023).

Gherardo Ortalli

Professor Emeritus of Mediaeval History at the University of Ca' Foscari, Venice and a member of numerous academies and societies in Italy and elsewhere, Gherardo Ortalli is especially interested in the mentality, culture and history of ludicity. He has been the director of the journal *Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco* since its first issue, and he is the Chairman of the Gaetano Cozzi Prize for studies on the history of games. His awards include the 2017 Federico Chabod Prize of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei for the best Italian work of Mediaeval, Modern or Contemporary history published in the previous five years, and

the 2018 Osella d'Oro Prize for studies on Venice. He is President Emeritus of the Veneto Institute of Sciences Letters and Arts, Venice. Among his numerous books, the most important include: *La pittura infamante nei secoli XII-XVI* (1979, reprinted 2015), *Gioco e giustizia nell'Italia di Comune* (1993), *Dall'Europa a scoprire l'Oriente: da Gengis Khan a Marco Polo* (2021).

Tiziana Plebani

With a PhD in European Social History and a qualification to lecture in Modern History at university, Tiziana Plebani has also taught Conservation of Library and Documentary Materials at the University of Ca' Foscari, Venice, and has served as head of the History and Teaching Department of the Marciana Library, Venice. She is currently a teaching fellow in Modern History in the Department of Humanistic Studies at the University of Ca' Foscari. Her research focuses on the history of books, practices of reading and writing, social behaviour and the history of the sentiments, and the history of Venice. As well as many articles and other contributions to scholarly volumes and journals, she has written a number of monographic studies, including: *Alle donne che niente sanno* (Venice 2022); *Le scritture delle donne in Europa. Pratiche quotidiane e ambizioni letterarie (secoli XIII-XX)* (Rome 2019); *Un secolo di sentimenti. Amori e conflitti generazionali nella Venezia del Settecento* (Venice 2012); *Storia di Venezia Città delle donne. Guida ai tempi, luoghi e presenze femminili* (Venice 2008); *Venezia 1469. La legge e la stampa* (Venice 2004); *Il «genere» dei libri. Storie e rappresentazioni della lettura al femminile e al maschile tra Medioevo ed età moderna* (Milan 2001); *L'Almanacco delle donne* (Venice 1991). With Alessandro Arcangeli she edited *Sensibilità moderne. Storie di affetti, passioni e sensi (secoli XV-XVIII)* (Rome 2023).

Chloé Pluchon-Riera

Having earned her PhD in the History of Modern Art at the University of Grenoble Alpes, Chloé Pluchon-Riera works there as a temporary teaching and research assistant (ATER) and also as an associate researcher at the Rhône-Alpes Historical Research Laboratory (LARHA). Her research focuses on depictions of the “enfance animale” in 15th- and 16th-century Italian painting, a concept she explored in her doctoral thesis and which demonstrates the sometimes disturbing proximity of children and non-human animals in the visual arts. She has published several studies on the subject: *Un jeu tout bête. Quand le jeu brouille la frontière entre l'enfant et l'animal dans la peinture italienne (XV^e-XVI^e siècles)*, *Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco*, 30, 2024; *Aux marges de la scène, aux marges de l'humanité. L'enfance animale chez Paolo Veronese*, *ArtItalia*, 28, 2025; *L'enfance à la marge dans les décors italiens du XV^e siècle*, *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 102, 2024.

Alessandra Rizzi

A Mediaeval History researcher and lecturer in the Humanities Department of University of Ca' Foscari, Venice, Alessandra Rizzi's special interest lies in the history of Venice, especially its institutional systems, publications and social history, with special focus on the history of ludicity and the mendicant orders. She coordinates several scientific projects, contributes to national and international conferences and has published widely. She is also a member of the international scientific committee of *Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco*, as well as co-director, along with Gherardo Ortalli, of “Ludica: collana di storia del gioco,” published by the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche.

Francesca Rohr Vio

A lecturer in Roman History and Women's history in the Roman world at the University of Ca' Foscari, Venice, Francesca Rohr Vio studies the construction of historiographic memory and the political history of the Late Roman Republic and Early Roman Empire with particular emphasis on communicative dynamics and on the new leading figures on the political scene, that is the *virii militares*, the *homines novi* and the *matronae* who, in the emergencies of the period, tended to take the reins of political action from family members. Her publications include *Le voci del dissenso. Ottaviano Augusto e i suoi oppositori* (Padua 2000); *Publio Ventidio Basso* (Rome 2009); *Contro il principe* (Bologna 2011); *Fulvia. Una matrona tra i “signori della guerra”* (Naples 2013); *Le custodi del potere. Donne e politica alla fine della Repubblica romana* (Rome 2019); *Powerful Matrons. New political actors in the Late Roman Republic* (Saragozza-Seville 2022); and with Tomaso Maria Lucchelli and Aglaia McClintock, *Tarpeia. Tradimento e fides: una storia esemplare di violenza* (Bologna 2025).

Guido Ruggiero

Having taught History in the USA and Italy most notably as Weiss Chair in the Humanities at Pennsylvania State University and as Chair at the University of Miami, Guido Ruggiero is now Professor Emeritus of the latter institution. As well as his prize-winning *The Renaissance in Italy. A social and cultural history of the Rinascimento* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), he has authored *Love and Sex in the Time of Plague. A Decameron Renaissance* (Harvard University Press, 2021), *Machiavelli in Love. Sex, Self and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Johns Hopkins, 2007), *Binding Passions. Tales of magic, marriage and power from the end of the Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 1993), *The Boundaries of Eros. Sex crime*

and sexuality in Renaissance Venice (Oxford University Press, 1985), and *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (Rutgers University Press, 1980), as well as the series “Studies in the History of Sexuality” (13 volumes, Oxford University Press, 1985-2002). His numerous awards include fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, Harvard's Villa I Tatti in Florence, and a Visiting Professorship at the American Academy in Rome.

Piermario Vescovo

A lecturer in the History of the Theatre at University of Ca' Foscari, Venice, Piermario Vescovo's research interests range from Italian dramaturgy (with editions of Calmo, Goldoni, Gozzi, Nievo and Gallina), to the theory and the history of the theory of dramatic and performance texts, and the relationship between literature and the visual arts (with the occasional diversion into the field of art history). His recent publications include: *L'incerto fine. La peste, la legge, il teatro* (Venice 2020); “*Nei decreti di Venezia*”. *Legge tragica e giurisprudenza comica in Shakespeare* (Venice 2023); *Il teatro della Commedia. Dante e il genere drammatico* (Rome 2023). He is the scientific secretary of the national editions of the works of Goldoni, Carlo Gozzi and Ippolito Nievo. Since the late 1970s he has combined his research work with theatrical activity and since the beginning of 2021 he has been the artistic director of the Teatro Stabile in Verona.

Referenze sulle illustrazioni

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