

# The Renaissance Society of America's 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference

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*Portrait of Teofilo Folengo* by Girolamo di Romanino (1484/87-1566), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

**“Believe me when I swear, for I cannot tell a single lie”:  
Teofilo Folengo’s Calculated Publishing Strategies.**

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## **Document 1**

**Title of the 1517 edition:** *MERLINI COCAI POETAE MANTUANI LIBER MACARONICES LIBRI XVII NON ANTE IMPRESI*<sup>1</sup>.

**Title of the 1520 edition:** *MACARONEA. MERLINI COCAI, POETE MANTUANI, MACARONICES LIBRI XVII, POST OMNES IMPRESSIONES UBIQUE LOCORUM EXCUSAS, NOVISSIME RECOGNITI OMNIBUSQUE MENDIS EXPURGATI. Adiectis insupe quid pluribus pene vivis imaginibus materie librorum aptissimis, & congruis locis insertis, & alia multa, quae in aliis hactenus impressionibus non reperis,...*Cesarem Arrivabenum Venetam. Anno nativitatis domini nostri Iesu Christi. Millesimi quintquentesimo supra vigesimus die decimo menis Ianuarii. Registrum omnes sunt quaterni. A....P.

**Title of the 1521 edition:** *OPUS MERLINI COCAII, Poetae Mantuani Macaronicorum totum in pristinam formam per me Magistrum Lodolam optime redactum, in his infra notatis titulis divisum: ZANITONELLA, quae de amore Tonelli erga Zaninam tractat, quae constat extredecim sonologiis, septem ecclolis, et una strambottologia: PHANTASIAE MACARONICON, divisum in viginti quinque macaronicis, tractans de gestis magnanimi et prudentissimi Baldi; MOSCHAE FACETUS LIBER in tribus partibus divisus, et tractans de crueto certamine muscarum et formicarum; LIBELLUS EPISTULARUM ET EPIGRAMMATUM, ad varias personas directarum: Tusculani Apud Lacum Benacasem. Alexander Paganinus. M.D.XXI DIE V. IANUARIII.*

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<sup>1</sup> The colophon gives the following information “Venetiis in aedibus Alexandri Paganini. Inclito Lauredano Principe. Kale. Ianua.M.D.XVII.”.The edition I used is the one held at the National Library of Sweden and digitised by Kungliga Biblioteket.

#### **Quotation 1**

“Among the other volumes there was also one book larger than the others, dealing with all natural phenomena, which was perhaps not inferior in subtlety to Aristotle and Plato”.

Merlin Cocai, *Edizione “Toscolanense” (1521) delle opera macaroniche di Teofilo Folengo*, Ristampa anastica a cura di Angelo Nuovo, Giorgio Bernardini Perini, Rodolfo Signorini, Associazione Amici Di Merlin Cocai, Mantua, 1994, p. 6v°.

#### **Quotation 2**

“That rumour is that doctors who travel from one land to another, and who are on view to the public from raised platforms just like this one, are of little worth, and that they are peddlers of idle chatter rather than practioners of any useful work [...]”.

Ariosto’s text was published posthumously in 1545 although it had probably been composed “after 1530” *‘My Muse Will Have a Story to Paint’: Selected Prose of Ludovico Ariosto*, Translated with an Introduction by Dennis Looney, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2010, p. 282.

#### **Quotation 3**

“You have known for a while now how keen I am to explore the world, and the various characteristics of things, and this is fitting for herbalists, teeth-pullers and tanners of britches above all. It happened that some of us herbalists were navigating towards Armenia in order to find roots, herbs, stones, worms and these sorts of things utterly essential for concocting treacle”.

Merlin Cocaie, *Edizione “Toscolanense” (1521) op. cit.*, p. 4 r°.

#### **Quotation 4**

“Among others was found this great volume *On Baldo’s Deeds and Doings*, which we kept in the box together with a small humorous book entitled *Moschaea and Zanitonella* [...]”.

*Ibid.*, p. 7 r°.

#### **Quotation 5**

“But a greater proof can be discerned in the various passages: how well he depicts the habits and customs of these same citizens and principally in the first seven books.”

The 1517 edition. Carlo Cordiè states that Folengo's work is based on "l'osservazione comica della vita quotidiana" which contrasts with the extraordinary events depicted in the narrative. Carlo Cordiè, *Le Quattro redazioni del « Baldus » di Teofilo Folengo*, Torino, R. Accademia delle Scienze, 1936, p. 11.

#### **Quotation 6**

Paola: [...] tell me the story without further delay.

Corona: I am crying about the bad luck of my brother Teofilo, your son.

Paola: What, is he dead?

Corona: Yes, as to honor and reputation.

Paola: Cursed be the man who tarnishes his good name!

Corona: If only God had willed that the shame be his alone.

Paola: I don't know what to say to you, since I still don't understand: Tell me, has he committed some kind of adultery?

Corona: The ultimate.

Paola: Well he's made of flesh, but how so?

Corona: What greater adultery could be found than to use **his unusual mind** and his many God-given graces badly?

Paola: Certainly a great ingratitude. But now I am beginning to understand the cause of your complaint: is **that poem written by him under the name Merlino cocaglio** still on your mind?"

Teofilo Folengo, *Chaos del Triperuno*, 1527, translated by Ann E. Mullaney on her website <http://www.folengo.com> . Accessed 30 January 2015. The page given here corresponds to the pdf document, p. 2 and to pages 2 and 3 of the original edition.

#### **Quotation 7**

"The right hand of Merlin the bard sculpted these tombs, under which he placed magnanimous leaders. These [leaders], having slaughtered those above, illuminated Phlegethonic shadows and the matters about which I (whoever I am) sing. I wrote this Baldine poem in the heroic hexameter, yet destiny did not allow me to advance to its end".

Merlin Cocaie, *Edizione "Toscolanense" (1521)*, *op. cit.*, p. 5 r°.

#### **Quotation 8**

[T]here was (as I said) eleven stones elegantly fashioned and constructed by sculpture, of which one tomb, more beautiful, stood out among the others upon four bronze lions, and the following verses were noted in porphyry on the white monument. Read: “To be sure, I am a frail urn for the internment of weighty Baldus whom nothing terrified in the Stygian waters of hell”.

*Ibid.*, *Laudes Merlini*, 1521, p.5 r<sup>o</sup>

#### **Quotation 9**

“In another area in an urn or rather in a huge bottle, we saw **this writing inscribed with wine**, as could be deemed from the smell”.

*Ibid.*, *Laudes Merlini*, 1521, p.5 v<sup>o</sup>

#### **Quotation 10**

“After a long search and investigation, we unearthed a sort of vast chest or we could say coffer, in which, after breaking it open with an ax or a hatchet, we found a treasure trove of our poet laureate, Merlin, that is to say extremely learned volumes in the macaronic art: **books, small books, little books, big old books and a thousand other scribblings.**”

*Ibid.*, p. 6 v<sup>o</sup>.

#### **Quotation 11**

“Salvanellus Bocatorca could be Little Satyr Twisted-mouth: Gabriele Codifava derives Salvanel from L. selva, and writes, “In Roman mythology the “Silvani” are the equivalent of satyrs in Greek myths... In some Italian legends, of the Dolomites for example, the Salvalel is an odd character who lives wildly in the forest, often associated with pagan rituals and witches.” Dimeldeus Zucconus, Honey/God of honey Pumpkin; Johannes Baricocola, John Balls: *baricocola* are apricots, used figuratively; Buttadeus Gratarogna, Toss-god Scratmange [...]”

Ann E. Mullaney, *Works of Teofilo Folengo (1491-1544) and Giovanni Battista Folengo (1490-1559), very clever writers of poetry and prose in Latin, Italian and Macaronic Latin*, <http://www.folengo.com>. Accessed 28 January 2015. note 2.

### Quotation 12

“I did open it and **found only this book of Baldo’s deeds, not even well-polished**, since as could be believed, **this was Merlin’s first draft. The books of hell**, however, **I did not find** - - either they vanished miraculously or, as I strongly suspect, someone stole them and perhaps they will be brought to light in due time.”

The 1517 edition. See Ann E. Mullaney, <http://www.folego.com>. Accessed 28 January 2015.

### Quotations 13 & 14

“I have made a real effort to **sift through the non-fantastical meaning** of our poet in this book for nearly seven months now”

The 1517 edition. See Ann E. Mullaney, <http://www.folego.com>. Accessed 28 January 2015.

“I have made an effort for nearly seven months **to untangle the meaning** of our poet, or rather sift it, so that it my mind has nearly toppled (as they say) like a [spinning] top.”

Merlin Cocaie, *Edizione “Toscolanense” (1521)*, *op. cit.*, p. 7 v°.

### Quotations 14 & 15

“I was so astounded at the breadth and the doctrine, that [in comparison] Pythagoras and Plato, Ptolemy, Boethius, Zoroaster, Avicenna, and Geber should be considered as nothing.” [...] “If you want morality, and praiseworthy authors, why do you need to rifle through Horace, Juvenal or Terence?”

*Ibid.*, p. 8 r°.

### Quotation 16

“Why do you try to understand Euclid? See the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Macaronic book of Baldo because there you will be able to fully understand. Look what is said about the moon: [...]”

Merlin Cocaie, *Edizione “Toscolanense” (1521) delle opera macaroniche di Teofilo Folengo*, Ristampa anastica a cura di Angelo Nuovo, Giorgio Bernardini Perini, Rodolfo Signorini, Associazione Amici Di Merlin Cocai, Mantua, 1994, p. 9 v°.

### **Paratext of the 1521 edition**

- Woodcut I
- Epistola Acquarii EPISTOLUM COLERICVM Magistri Acquarii ad Scardaffum Zaratanum Merlini poematis corruptorem. (Sig. A ii-sig. A iii v°).
- Laudes Merlini EIVSDEM MAGISTRI Aquarii Lodole ad illustrem dominum Paserinum Scarduarum comitem, de vita & moribus Merlini Cocaii, & de inventione voluminis. (Sig. A iiii-sig. B v°).
- MERLINI Cocaii Apologetica in sui excusationem. (Sig. B v°-Sig. Biii r°).
- Woodcut II
- *Zanitonella*: MERLINI COCAII PROHEMIVNCVLVM, IN SVAM ZANITONELLAM. (p. 12 r°-32 v°).
- PROEMIVM MERlini Cocaii super phantasiam suam. (p. 32 r°-33).
- Woodcut III (same as woodcut I).
- *Baldus*, Books I to XXV.
- *Moschee* (p. 251 v°-268 r°)
- *Epistola*.
- *Epigrama*.
- EPISTOLA VOLGARE DIL Auttore di Merlino Cocaio, al Impressore di esso Alessandro Paganino.
- RIPOSTA DI ALESSANDRO Paganino al Auttore Merlino.
- TABVLA VEL REPERTORIVM. Facetiarum.
- DIALOGVS PHILOMVSI.
- EXPROSA MAGISTRI ACquarii, et Merlini Cocaii.
- SONETTO.