

The World of Ariosto



ibliographic exhibition to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*



*Curated by Maria Pavlova
in collaboration with Anna Wawrzonkowska*



Oxford 2016

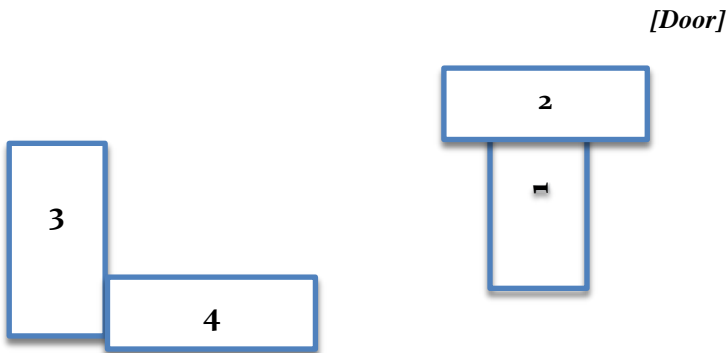


His small exhibition, split between two Oxford libraries, marks the 500th anniversary of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, one of the literary masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance. Set against the backdrop of a war between Charlemagne and the Saracen King Agramante, the poem recounts the heroic exploits and amorous adventures of Christian and Saracen knights and damsels, including the story of Orlando's unreciprocated love for the Saracen princess Angelica. Drawing inspiration from medieval and early Renaissance chivalric romances, it represents the pinnacle of the chivalric genre in Italy. The exhibition is hosted by the Weston Library and the Taylor Institution Library. The Weston Library display brings together a selection of manuscripts of works by Ariosto's predecessors as well as a copy of the third – and definitive – edition of *Orlando furioso* (1532). The display in the Taylor Institution Library presents a selection of sixteenth-century editions of *Orlando furioso* and works inspired by or connected to Ariosto's poem.

The curators are very grateful to Jennifer Varallo and Sallyanne Gilchrist at the Weston Library and Clare Hills-Nova at the Taylor Institution Library for their expert advice and generous help.

Part I
Taylor Institution Library, Voltaire Room

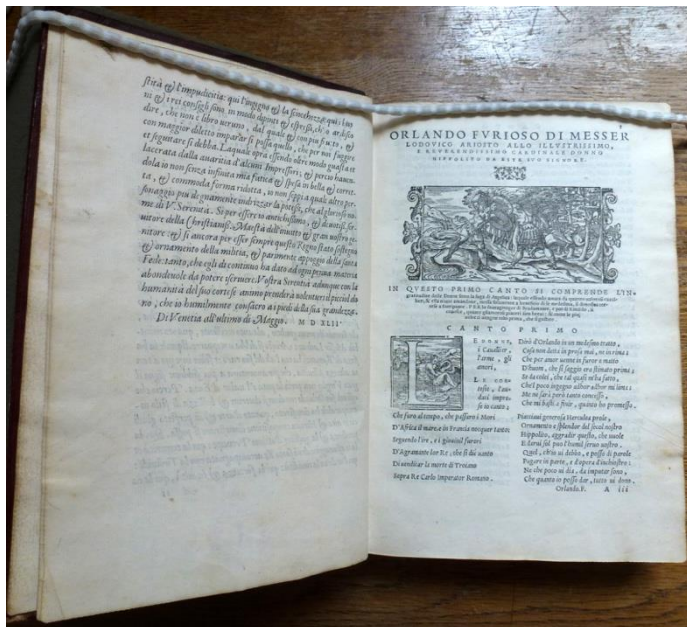
Display Case Plan



1. Sixteenth-century editions of *Orlando furioso*
2. Translations of *Orlando furioso*
3. Works by Boiardo, Ariosto and other chivalric poets
4. Sixteenth-century readers and scholars of *Orlando furioso*

Case 1: Sixteenth-century editions of *Orlando furioso*

ORLANDO FVRIOSO / DI M. LODOVICO / ARIOSTO / CON LA
GIVNTA DI CINQUE CANTI / D'VN NVOVO LIBRO DEL
MEDESIMO, ORNATO DI VARIE FIGVRE [...], Venice, Gabriel
Giolito de' Ferrari, 1555



A 4^o reprint of the 8^o edition published by Gabriel Giolito in 1554. The first Giolito edition appeared in 1542. It was decorated with beautiful woodcuts, which were considerably more elaborate than those in the Zoppino editions (Niccolò d'Aristotile, known as Zoppino, inaugurated the tradition of placing an illustration at the top of each canto of Ariosto's poem). Their quality is praised by Giorgio Vasari in his *Lives of the Artists* (1568): 'Not otherwise than praiseworthy were the figures which Gabriel Giolito, a printer of books, put in his editions of *Orlando Furioso*, for they were executed in a beautiful manner of engraving'. These illustrations were reproduced in the subsequent Giolito editions, including the 1555 *Furioso*.

ARCH.8o.IT.1555(1)

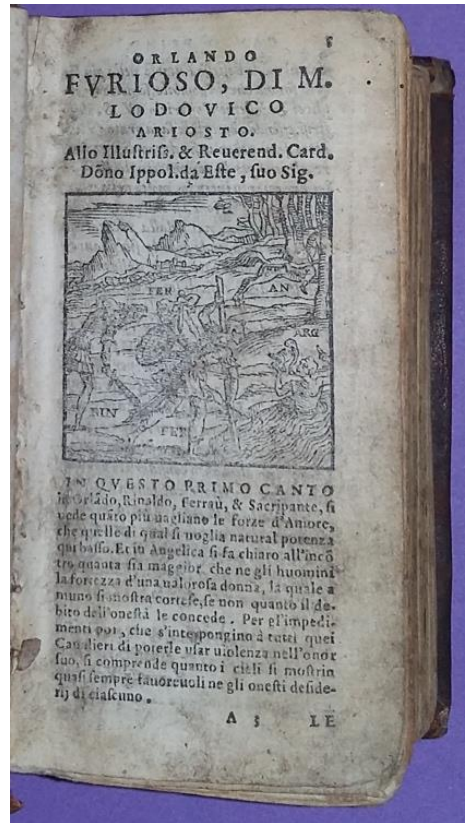
ORLANDO FVRIOSO / DI M. LODOVICO ARIOSTO / TVTTO
 RICORRETTO, / ET DI NVOVE FIGVRE / ADORNATO. / CON le
 Annotationi, gli Auuertimenti, & le Dichiarationi di Giro-/lamo Ruscelli,
 / La Vita dell'Autore, descritta dal Signor Giouan Battista Pigna [...],
 Venice, Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1562



An exact reprint of the 4° edition published by Vincenzo Valgrisi in 1560. This edition is accompanied by extensive paratextual material, including Girolamo Ruscelli's detailed commentary, a biography of Ariosto by Giovan Battista Pigna, a list of textual changes introduced between the first (1516) and third (1532) versions of the poem, a list of allusions to classical myths compiled by Nicolò Eugenio, and a glossary of obscure terms, etc. The engravings (attributed to Dosso Dossi, they appeared for the first time in the 1556 Valgrisi edition) are full-page canto summaris and more complex than those in the Giolito editions. They represent various events occurring within each canto with the figures diminishing in size to mark spatial and temporal boundaries.

ARCH.FOL.IT.1562

ORLANDO / FVRIOSO / DI M. LODOVICO / A R I O S T O / Tutto
 ricoretto, & di nuove figure adornato , / Con li Difcorfi di Girolamo
 Rufcel/li nel principio de' Canti; / *Et di nuovo aggiunti i cinque Canti, /*
del medesimo Autore [...], Venice, Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1570



A relatively rare 24° pocket edition of Ariosto's poem. Its engravings feature fragments from the full-page engravings in the other Valgrisi editions.

FINCH.L.12

ORLANDO / FVRIOSO / DI M. / LODOVICO ARIOSTO / Nuouamente / adornato di Figure di Rame / da Girolamo Porro [...], Venice, Francesco de Franceschi Senese, 1584



Decorated with copper engravings executed by Girolamo Porro (a famous Italian engraver on wood and copper), this is perhaps the most lavish sixteenth-century edition of *Orlando furioso*. It is furnished with an impressive paratextual apparatus, which includes Alberto Lavezuola's *Osservazioni sopra il Furioso*, a commentary on Ariosto's imitative procedures. Lavezuola identifies a large number of Ariosto's classical and vernacular sources, showing that his models were multiple and that they were not limited to classical texts.

ARCH.FOL.IT.1584

Case 2: Translations of *Orlando furioso*

ROLAND / LE FVRIEVX / Nouuellement composee en François, / Par Fr. DE ROSSET, Paris, Robert Foüet, 1625



The first French translation of *Orlando furioso*, a rather crude prose version, was published in 1543 in Lyons. Two more prose translation had appeared by 1615: by Jacques Vincent (1549-1550) and by François de Rosset (1615). Rosset's translation was reprinted several times, including one reprint in 1625. It is decorated with handsome engravings by Leonardo Gaultier.

VET.ITAL.II.B.42(1)

ORLANDO FVRIOSO DE M. / LVDOVICO ARIOSTO, DIRIGIDO / AL PRINCIPE DON PHILIPPE N. S. / TRADVZIDO EN ROMANCE CASTELLANO, / por el. S. Don Hieronimo de Vrrea [...], Venice, Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1553



Orlando furioso occupies a place of honour in Don Quixote's library, although he was not the first Spaniard to enjoy Ariosto's poem. The first Spanish translation of *Orlando furioso*, by Jerónimo de Urrea (a Spanish soldier and chivalric romancer), was printed in Antwerp as early as 1549. In 1553 Gabriel Giolito reprinted Urrea's translation in Venice, having obtained the translator's permission. Urrea took some liberties with the poem, suppressing, for example, the octaves celebrating the Este dynasty in canto 3. The great popularity of his translation is attested by the fact that it had been published in 18 editions by 1588.

269.F.8(MARTIN)

Orlando Furioso. Translated into English heroic verse by Sir John Harington, 1591, edited and with an introduction by Robert McNulty, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972

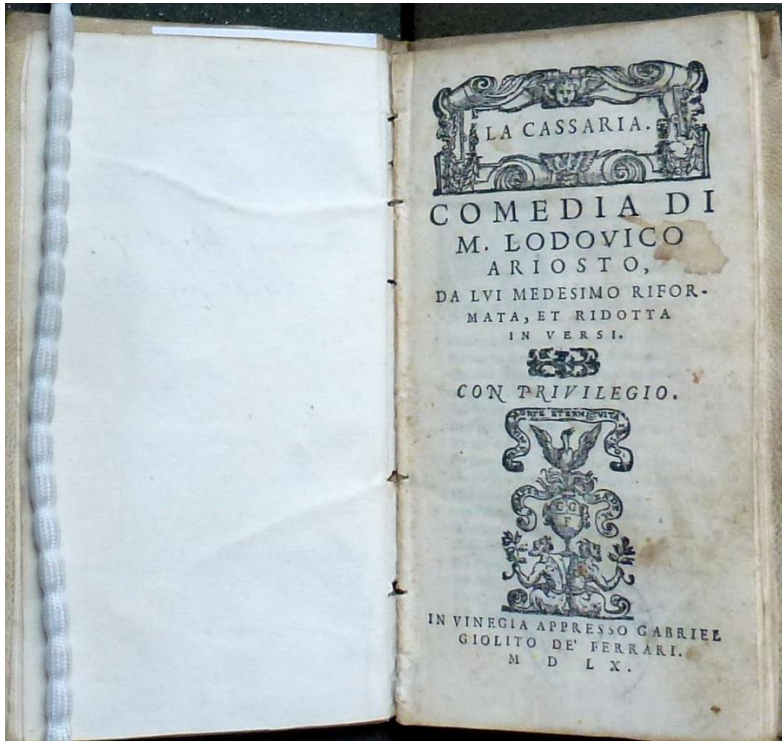


Sir John Harington was the first English translator of *Orlando furioso*. The legend has it that Queen Elizabeth discovered that he had translated the racy and misogynistic canto 28 (in which one of the characters hears a story ‘proving’ the sexual promiscuity of all women) and in order to punish him she made him translate the entire poem. Harington’s verse translation was printed in London in 1591. He took significant liberties with the text, omitting hundreds of octaves. He added moral allegories and commentaries, going to great lengths to show that the poem had an edifying purpose. Harington’s Ariosto is a heir to Virgil and the poets of antiquity. As we can see from Robert McNulty’s reprint, the 1591 edition of the translation contained plates which were mostly modelled on Girolamo Porro’s engravings.

AIX.3807.B.2.

Case 3: Works by Boiardo, Ariosto and other chivalric poets

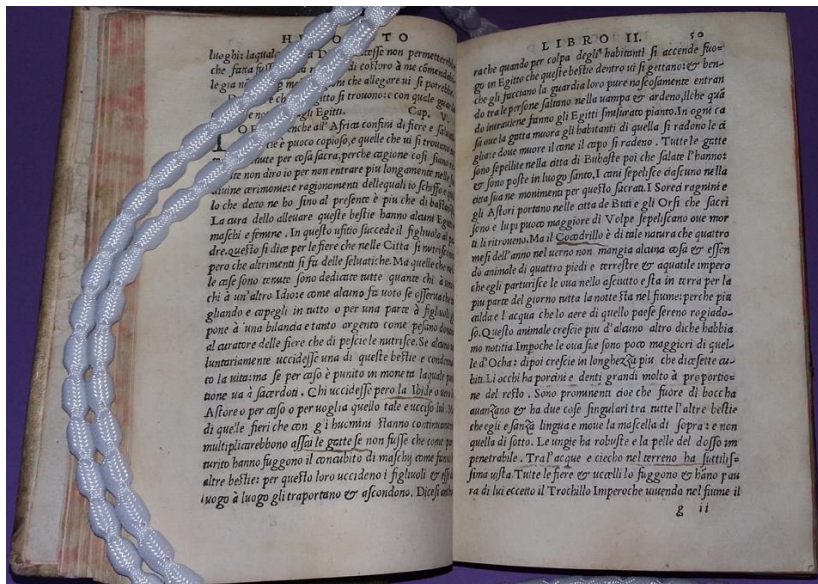
LA CASSARIA. / COMEDIA DI / M. LODOVICO / ARIOSTO, / DA LVI MEDESIMO RIFOR- / MATA, ET RIDOTTA / IN VERSI [...], Venice, Giolito de' Ferrari, 1560



Today Ludovico Ariosto is best known as a chivalric poet, but he was also a prolific playwright and one of the pioneers of Italian Renaissance theatre. *La cassaria* (*The coffer*) is his first comedy. It was originally written in prose and first performed on 5 March 1508, at the court of Ferrara. Later Ariosto produced a verse version which is printed in this 1560 Giolito edition. This comedy was printed at least 13 times in the sixteenth century.

VET.ITAL.IA.141

HERODO/TO ALICARNASEO HISTORI-/co delle guerre de Grea et de Perfi, Tradotto di / Greco in lingua Italiana per il Conte Mat/theo Maria Boiardo, non piu stampato, / Ma nuovamente uenuto in luce [...], Venice, Giouan Antonio di Nicolini di Sabbio, 1533



Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441-1491), Ariosto's illustrious predecessor, was a versatile intellectual who worked in a variety of genres. He produced a number of vernacular translations of classical works, such as Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, Cornelius Nepos' *Lives of Eminent Commanders*, Xenophon's *Life of Cyrus*, and Herodotus' *Histories*. The latter translation (or *volarizzamento*) proved to be a considerable success. Completed by 1491, it was 'rediscovered' in the 1530s (as the title page of the 1533 edition suggests) and printed five times between 1533 and 1565. Boiardo must have particularly enjoyed Herodotus' descriptions of exotic animals and so did his anonymous (sixteenth-century?) reader who underlined the key words in the passage about crocodiles in this 1533 copy. Horilo, one of the Saracen characters of *Inamoramento de Orlando*, keeps a crocodile as a pet, whom Boiardo describes in great detail in canto 3 of Book III.

101.B.17

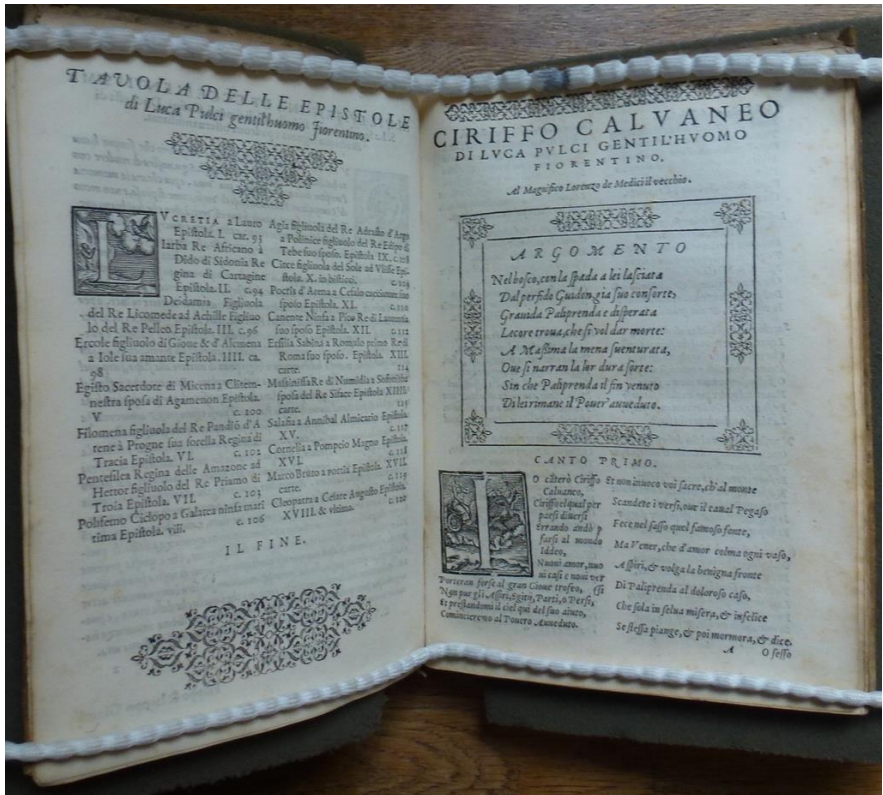
ORLANDO / INNAMORATO / DEL / S. MATTEO MARIA / BOIARDO,
 CONTE / DI SCANDIANO. / INSIEME COI TRE LIBRI DI M. NICOLÒ /
 de gli Agostini, già riformati per M. / Lodouico Domenichi [...], Venice,
 Domenico Imberti, 1602.



This volume contains Boiardo's *Inamoramento de Orlando* together with Nicolò degli Agostini's three-book *gionta* (sequel). Though by the 1530s Boiardo's fame had been eclipsed by Ariosto's, *Inamoramento de Orlando* continued to be read and enjoyed by those who wanted to know the story Ariosto had spent his life completing. Apart from its extremely digressive plot (unacceptable for sixteenth-century neo-Aristotelian literary critics), it was criticised for its language (which is rich in dialectal forms) and style (less polished than Ariosto's). By the mid-sixteenth century, two *rifacimenti* (rewritings) of Boiardo's poem had appeared: Francesco Berni's version was published in 1541-42 and Lodovico Domenichi's in 1545. Initially Domenichi's version proved to be more successful than Berni's: it was reprinted numerous times in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The 1602 Imberti edition reproduces Domenichi's *rifacimento* with 'corrections' by Michel Bonelli, who made significant changes to Domenichi's text, 'borrowing' passages from Berni. After centuries of oblivion, the original version of *Inamoramento de Orlando* was rediscovered by Antonio Panizzi in the nineteenth century.

102.E.23

CIRIFFO CALVANEO / DI LVCA PVLCI / *Gentilhuomo Fiorentino.* / Con la Giostra del Magnifico Lorenzo / DE MEDICI [...], Florence, Stamperia de' Giunti, 1572

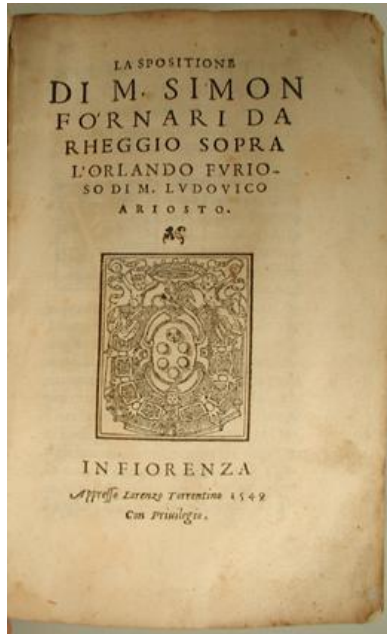


Ciriffo calvaneo is a fifteenth-century chivalric poem about the feats of arms of the eponymous hero and his friend Povero Avveduto. Its paternity is still debated. It was started by Luca Pulci and most probably continued by his more famous brother Luigi, the author of *Morgante* (a poem about a giant converted to Christianity by Orlando). *Ciriffo calvaneo* appeared in print for the first time before 1490 and many more editions were published in the sixteenth century. It was probably known to Ariosto.

104. C.21

Case 4: Sixteenth-century readers and scholars of *Orlando furioso*

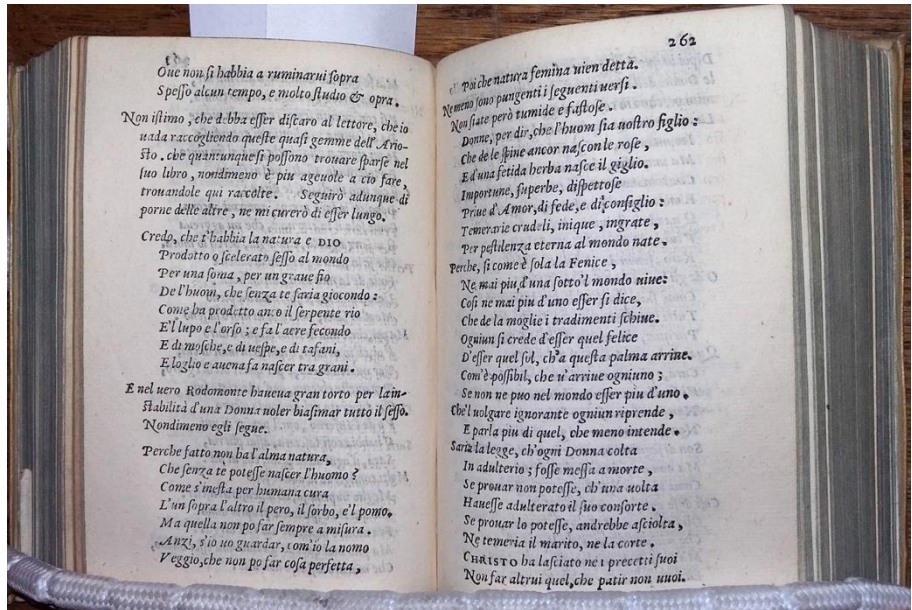
LA SPOSTIONE / DI M. SIMON / FORNARI DA / RHEGGIO SOPRA / L'ORLANDO FVRIO-/SO DI M. LVDOVICO / ARIOSTO, Florence, Lorenzo Torrentino, 1549



The fact that *Orlando furioso* became a bestseller soon after the publication of the definitive 1532 edition did not prevent it from being attacked by a large number of neo-Aristotelian intellectuals, who accused Ariosto of failing to observe the unity of action, of having an obtrusive narrator, and of departing too much from the principle of verisimilitude. Simon Fónari's *Spositione* is the first extensive commentary on Ariosto's poem. In it, or rather in the *Apologia brieve sopra tutto l'Orlando Furioso* which precedes it, Fónari refutes the criticisms levelled at the poem by neo-Aristotelian scholars.

VET.ITAL.I.A.149

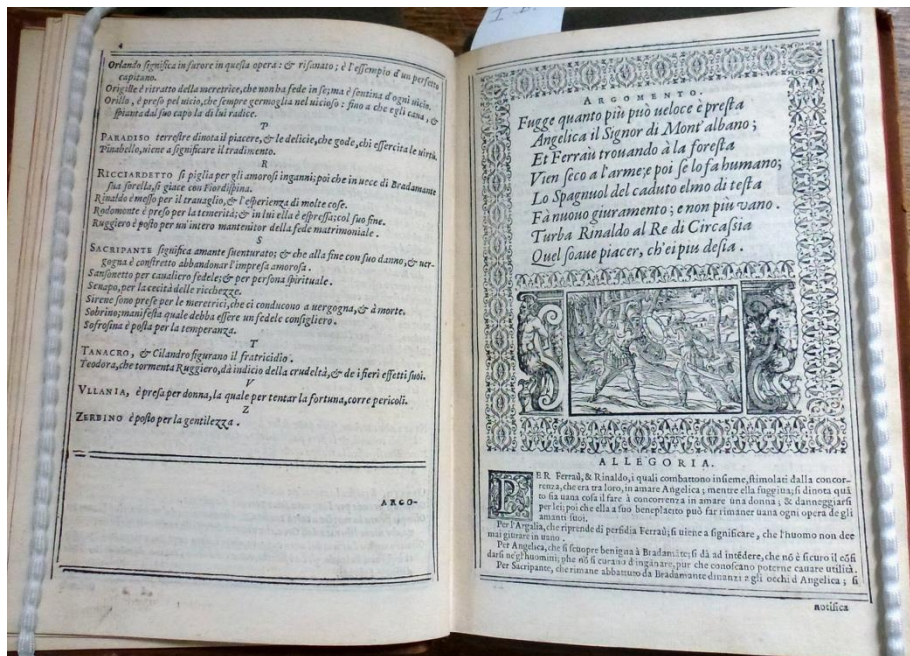
MODI AFFIGVRATI / E VOCI SCELTE ET / ELEGANTI DELLA /
VOLGAR LINGVA , / CON VN DISCORSO SOPRA / a mutamenti e
diuerſi orna-menti dell'Ariosto . / DI M. LODOVICO DOLCE [...],
Venice, Giovan Battista & Marchio Sessa Fratelli, 1564



A prominent intellectual and a prolific author and critic, Lodovico Dolce (1508-1568) admired Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and was one of its first defenders. In his *Modi affigurati* Dolce presents a selection of what he deemed to be the most beautiful passages from the poem. 'I do not think that the reader will mind – he remarks on fol. 261v – that I am collecting these gems of Ariosto. For although they can be found scattered throughout his book, it is nevertheless easier to find them collected here. And so I will cite some more of them, and brevity will not be my aim'.

VET.ITAL.I.A.69

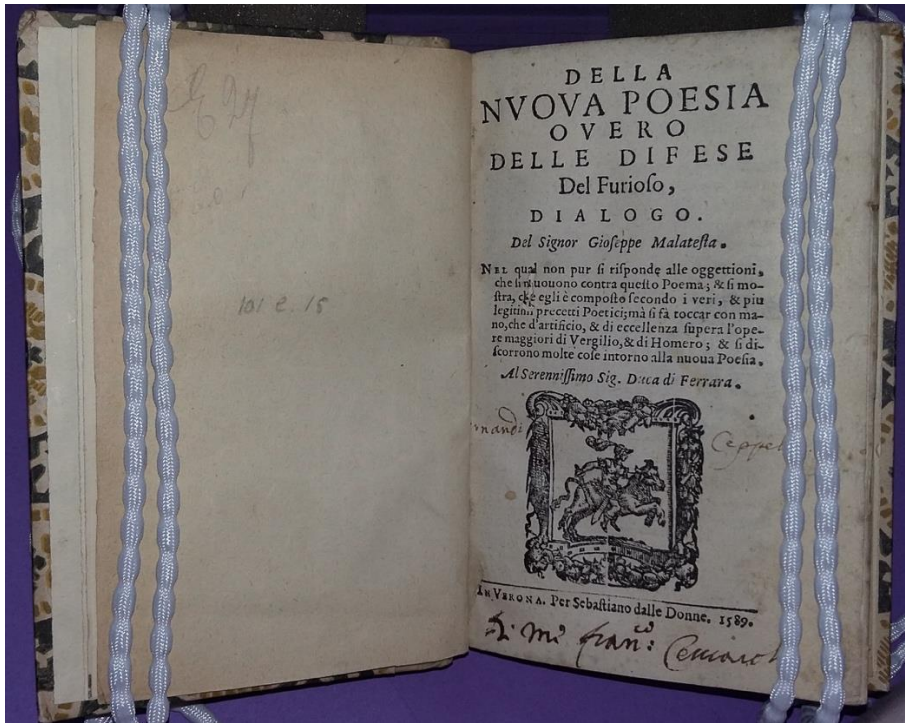
BELLEZZE / DEL FVRIOSO / DI M. LODOVICO ARIOSTO; / *Scielte da Oratio Toscanella*: / CON GLI ARGOMENTI, / ET ALLEGORIE DE I CANTI: / Con l'Allegorie de i nomi proprii principali dell'opera: / ET CO I LVOCHI COMMVNI DELL'AVTORE [...], Venice, Pietro dei Franceschi, 1574.



Orazio Toscanella's *Bellezze del Furioso*, published in 1574, is an extensive commentary on what he considered to be the stylistic gems of Ariosto's masterpiece. As Daniel Javitch points out in his *Proclaiming a Classic: the Canonization of Orlando Furioso* (1991), Toscanella 'assumed that the poem's canonical status was sufficiently established to systematize its function as a guide and storehouse of rhetorical examples for all would-be writers and orators'.

VET.ITAL.I.B.9.

DELLA / NVOVA POESIA / OVERO / DELLE DIFESE / Del Furioso, / D I
A L O G O . / *Del Signor Gioseppe Malatesta [...]*, Verona, Sebastiano dalle
Donne, 1589



Giuseppe Malatesta's *Della nuova poesia, o vero delle difese del Furioso*, is one of the most important defenses of Ariosto's poem published in the late sixteenth century. Rather than trying to present Ariosto as an imitator of ancient epics (as many sixteenth-century literary critics did), Malatesta emphasises his modernity, arguing that his poem is a romance, a new genre, and that therefore it is absurd to judge it according to the Aristotelian principles.

101.E.15.

DISCORSO / SOPRA IL PRINCIPIO / DI TVTTI I CANTI / D'ORLANDO
 FVRIOSO. / DELLA S. LAVRA TERRACINA, / detta nell'Academia de
 gl'incogniti, Febea [...], Venice, Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1565



Laura Terracina (1519-1577) was a prolific Neapolitan poet who produced nine volumes of poetry during her lifetime. Ariosto exercised an enduring fascination over her. Already in her first volume of poetry we find four *lamenti* in the voices of Sacripante, Rodomonte, Isabella, and Bradamante. One of her most interesting Ariosto-inspired works is her *Discorso sopra il principio di tutti i canti di Orlando Furioso* (1559), which contains the same number cantos as Ariosto's poem. Each canto is dedicated to some powerful individual (the dedicatee of canto I, for example, is Emperor Charles V), and the final line of the first six octaves of each canto is a line from the opening octave of the corresponding canto in *Orlando furioso*.

VET.ITAL.I.A.63