



## ***Games in the 1500s: the century of Veronese***

Verona, Castelvecchio Museum, Boggian Room, Corso Castelvecchio 2

Saturday 20th September 2014, 10 am-5.30 pm

public conference organized by the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche, Ludica,  
in collaboration with the Associazione Giochi Antichi,

in the framework of Tocati, the International Festival of Street Games

**Abstracts of papers to be given and bio-bibliographical notes on the speakers**

### **GHERARDO ORTALLI, *Verbal games in courts and salons: la Veglia***

One of the characteristic expressions of ludicity in the 16th century is that known in Italian as *giochi di veglia*, the word games played by men and women who gathered at court or in aristocratic salons to spend afternoons or evenings together, engaged in organized pastimes that had a specific theme and concluded with prizes and forfeits. The subjects around which each game revolved were as contrived and refined as they were varied and their treatment was governed by strict rules, with frequent recourse to literary references, charming innuendo, puns and elegant procedures. They are to be found first in Baldassar Castiglione's *Cortigiano* and their most mature expression occurs in the *veglie senesi*. These *giochi di veglia* prompted the publication of a number of books, which explain how they were played and give an abundance of examples, and which also had an impact outside Italy. The paper sets out to trace the history of this form of ludic practice, describing its rapid development in the cultivated circles of the time and paying special attention to the role assigned to women, who were able to play a part in games that was denied them in other activities.

*Gherardo Ortalli*. A graduate of Bologna University, he taught at the University of Ferrara (where he directed the History Institute) and in Bologna, before moving to the University of Venice, Ca' Foscari, to teach Mediaeval History since 1973. He was appointed to a full professorship in 1980 and at various times directed the Department of History, coordinated the post-graduate degrees school in European Social History, acted as Deputy Principal of the University and sat on its Board. He is a Member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences, of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and of the Société Européenne de Culture; he is a member of the Presidential Council of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti and is President of the Deputazione di Storia per le Venezie. He is member of the Board of Directors of the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche and of Venezia Iniziative Culturali srl. His activities outside Italy have included a period as Directeur d'Études Associé at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. His first book was *La pittura infamante nei secoli XIII-XVI* (Rome 1979), and the most recent *Barattieri. Il gioco d'azzardo fra economia ed etica. Secoli XIII-XV* (Bologna 2012). He is the director of the journals «Ludica» and «Archivio Veneto», and much of his work on the institutional, cultural and intellectual history of the Middle Ages, on the history of ludicity and of the environment, has also appeared in Albanian, Chinese, Croatian, French, Japanese, Greek, English, Spanish and German.

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**PAOLO PROCACCIOLI, *Pietro Aretino's "Talking Cards"***

The paper offers a reading of the *Dialogo del giuoco* (Dialogue concerning games) – better known as *Le carte parlanti* (The Talking Cards), a 1543 work by Pietro Aretino in which the author sets out his highly personal and unconventional vision of the ludic sphere through a parody of technical treatises in which the cards themselves speak – with close focus on the work's lexical and thematic complexity. It reveals how the Dialogue's layered construction gives rise to a constant allusiveness whose uniqueness is not confined to Renaissance or to Italian tradition. The adoption of that particular point of view, which placed at the centre of the dialogue not the game but the players, their idiosyncrasies and their manias, allowed the author to follow the dynamics that proceeded from their various expectations. The paper shows how the work can be seen as an early treatise on the sociology and psychology of games. It also demonstrates how the piece was crucial to the development of an image of the world and of society that was entirely different from the rigid and intransigent concept endorsed by the leading figures of the Counter-Reformation at around the same time. As he had done in 1534 with the *Sei giornate* (Six Days) and sexual matters, Aretino turned in 1543 to another officially "immoral" subject in order to launch a "moral" broadside. His apparent affirmation of negative values, when seen through the eyes of the cards, is paradoxically transformed into a new and only seeming provocative vision of things.

*Paolo Procaccioli* teaches Italian Literature at the University of Tuscia (Department of the Sciences of Cultural Heritage). His fields of study range from early exegeses of Dante to the *novelle* of the 1400s and 1500s, "awkward" aspects of the Renaissance, epistolography, art criticism and iconography, literary autographs, and naturally the literature of ludicity. He has published editions of (amongst others) Cristoforo Landino, Pietro Aretino, Lodovico Dolce, Anton Francesco Doni, Ortensio Lando, Francesco Marcolini, Girolamo Ruscelli and Cesare Ripa. Together with the research group "Cinquecento plurale" he has promoted a series of conferences focusing on prominent moments, themes and figures in the literary, political, religious and artistic debate of the Italian Cinquecento. He is editor of the series "Cinquecento" (Vecchiarelli Editore) and, with Antonio Ciaralli, of the series "La scrittura nel Cinquecento" (Salerno Editrice).

**MANFRED ZOLLINGER, *Gambling and finance: betting and lotteries***

During the 1500s, gambling came to be perceived in a new way. In many parts of Europe, in response to the proliferation and spread of betting and lotteries, such activities were regulated (if not summarily banned); bringing them under public control made them an instrument of finance and revenue for private bodies, governments and sovereigns. The shared logic was the growing and urgent need for money. While betting was once again prohibited, even where it was legal (in Rome and Florence), a new form emerged in Genoa from 1576. The placing of bets on numbers drawn by the Genoese authorities became a new lottery, the so-called *lotto di Genova*. With some variations, the game spread first all over Italy and then to almost every country in Europe. The new lottery was also responsible for the gradual disappearance of other traditional forms of betting.

*Manfred Zollinger* lectures in History at the University of Economics and Management in Vienna. He is a member of the Scientific Committee of «Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco». He is the author of numerous publications on the history of games and gaming, including a history of gambling in Europe from the 17th to the 20th century (*Geschichte des Glücksspiels*, Vienna 1997) and a critical bibliography of books on games from 1473 to 1700. He organized the international conference *Random Riches. Gambling and Speculation in Perspective*, the Proceedings of which are about to be published.

**JOSEF PAUSER, *Educational card games in the Renaissance*  
(with special reference to Thomas Murner)**

Today, the use of games and, in particular, playing cards as a didactic tool is generally accepted as a valuable teaching aid; it is widespread and nothing extraordinary. Not so five hundred years ago, when the use of playing cards for purposes other than playing games was something special that attracted attention and gave rise to heated controversy. The invention of educational playing cards is usually ascribed to Thomas Murner (1475-1537), a controversial German Franciscan monk with a doctorate in theology and in canon and civil law. As a university teacher he invented educational playing cards as a teaching aid for students of Justinian's *Institutiones*, one part of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, around 1502, which were published later as a book in 1518 ("Chartiludium Institute": 121 cards, organized in 12 suits). He also devised a card game for the study of logic ("Chartiludium logicae" – 1507 – and "Logica memorativa" – 1508 –, 51 cards, organized in 16 suits). Soon after Murner's invention came another didactic card book, the *Grammatica figurata* (1509) by Matthias Ringmann. It was not before 1644 that educational cards experienced a renaissance. Cardinal Mazarin (1602-1661) had ordered four card games ("Le Roys de France", "Les Reines renommées", "La Géographie", "Les Métamorphoses") to be produced for the education of the dauphin, later to become King Louis XIV (1638-1715). From the middle of the 17th century onwards, numerous didactic card games have come down to us. Card games were used to teach a great variety of subjects, such as genealogy and heraldry, astronomy, geography, mythology, history, military studies etc.

*Josef Pauser* was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1968. He studied Law and Library and Information Studies at the University of Vienna and was awarded a doctorate in law (Dr. iur.) with a thesis about *Gambling and the Law in the Early Modern Age* (2001). He was a research fellow and lecturer at the Institute for Austrian and European Legal History, Faculty of Law, University of Vienna, until 2001, and in 2001 he was DAAD-scholar (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst/German Academic Exchange Service) at the Max-Planck-Institute for European Legal History. From 2001-2003 he was Deputy Head of the Law Library of the Faculty of Law, University of Vienna, and since 2004 he has been Head of the Library of the Austrian Constitutional Court in Vienna. Research and teaching fields: Legal History, History of Austria, library law, information law. Publications (selection): *Glückshäfen und Gute Policey. Zur Rechtsgeschichte der Warenausspielungen in Niederösterreich gegen Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, in *Lotto und andere Glücksspiele*, edited by GERHARD STREJCEK (Vienna 2003); *Quellenkunde der Habsburgermonarchie (16.-18. Jahrhundert). Ein exemplarisches Handbuch*, edited by JOSEF PAUSER, MARTIN

SCHEUTZ, THOMAS WINKELBAUER (Vienna-Munich 2004); «Weil nun der Reichthum so Zuckersüß...». *Glückshäfen in der frühneuzeitlichen Jahrmarkts- und Festkultur Österreichs*, in *Wien und seine WienerInnen*, edited by MARTIN SCHEUTZ and VLASTA VALES (Vienna-Cologne-Weimar 2008); *Advokatenordnung 1648. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der österreichischen Rechtsanwaltschaft*, edited by CHRISTIAN NESCHWARA and JOSEF PAUSER (Vienna 2013).

### **PAOLO CARPEGGIANI, “Games” in the gardens of the Gonzagas: Marmiolo**

Bearing in mind that the Renaissance garden is, by its very nature, destined for games, understood in a wide range of expressions, this paper sets out to analyse three famous gardens belonging to the Gonzagas, the Lords of Mantua. No trace now remains of the actual gardens but documentary and iconographic sources make it possible to reconstruct their nature and their history. The first case concerns the garden adjoining the castle at Goito, a place that was much loved by Guglielmo Gonzaga who died in 1587; the great fountain there (1584) was set up to play a joke on visitors: it contained an islet that would sink under the weight of the unsuspecting visitors. The second is the garden of the Favorita, an ambitious suburban residence of the Gonzagas which was built in the first years of the 17th century. The plans provided for the installation of a number of automaton figures (cats, monkeys, hunters spraying water, song birds, a hydraulic organ, pipers, etc.). The last example is that of Marmiolo, which was famous not only for the Gonzaga castle but also for its gardens, which Leandro Alberti (1550) reported as containing wonderful fountains, fruit trees clipped by topiary artists and vines, all features that are found in drawings by Giulio Romano and contemporary tapestries at the Court of Mantua. Another interesting aspect of the Marmiolo garden concerns Bernardino Facciotto’s plans (circa 1585) for a highly unusual building that included rooms and spaces expressly reserved for various kinds of game (ball-games, games with racquets, billiard tables).

*Paolo Carpeggiani* graduated in Humanities at the University of Padua and has been full professor of the History of Architecture at the Milan Polytechnic since 1982. He teaches the course of Renaissance Architectural History at the Mantuan branch of the Milan Polytechnic. His research interests range from architecture to town planning, from military and hydraulic engineering to historic gardens in the period between the 15th and 19th centuries, but with particular reference to the period of the Renaissance in Lombardy, Tuscany and the Veneto. He has delivered papers at many important conferences in Italy and elsewhere and is the author of many studies, including: *Sabbioneta* (1972), *Michelangelo e il Veneto* (1975), *Alvise Cornaro. Scritti sull’architettura* (1980), *Palazzo Thiene Bonin Longare a Vicenza* (1982), *Giardini cremonesi tra ’700 e ’800* (1990), *Giovan Battista Bertani* (1992), *Bernardino Facciotto* (1994), *Pompeo Pedemonte* (2002), *Album dei disegni raccolti da Carlo d’Arco* (2007). With Chiara Tellini Perina he has written books on *Sant’Andrea in Mantova* (1987) and *Giulio Romano* (1987); with Anna Maria Lorenzoni he edited the *Carteggio di Luca Fancelli* (1998); and with various other authors he published works on the *Palazzo Ducale di Mantova* (2003), which received a special mention for the Salimbeni Prize for art books, and on *Leon Battista Alberti architetto* (2005). In 2011, with Laura Giacomini, he published *Luigi Trezza architetto veronese. Il viaggio in Italia (1795)*.

**SANDRA SCHMIDT, *Play or art? A 16th century dialogue***

The 1500s are full of street artists, of jugglers and players, tightrope walkers and acrobats. At the same time, festive occasions were becoming increasingly important in court life both in Italy and in France and such events often included entertainments and displays of physical agility. With the *Trois dialogues de l'exercice de sauter et voltiger en l'air* published in Paris in 1599, we have a detailed description of one of these practices, what today would be called artistic gymnastics. The author of the text, who describes himself as a tumbler *par excellence*, was also an instructor to the King of France. The fact that the work was written in the literary genre of the dialogue is one aspect that merits attention; another is that unlike other practices involving movement such as fencing, hunting or dancing, this activity was not already an established part of court life; on the contrary, it came from a tradition that was anything but noble. One of the questions to be explored is therefore whether this practice, in its historical context, should be considered as play or art.

*Sandra Schmidt* studied Italian Philology and History at the University of Cologne and Physical Education at the University of Sport in Cologne; she was awarded her doctoral degree at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Publications: *Kopfübern und Luftspringen. Bewegung als Wissenschaft und Kunst in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich 2008); «*Sauter et voltiger en l'air*». *The Art of Movement in Late Renaissance Italy and France*, in JULIA L. HAIRSTON and WALTER STEPHENS, *The Body in Early Modern Italy* (Baltimore 2010); *Der Fuß auf dem Hochseil*, «Paragrana. Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie», 21, 1, 2012.

**ALESSANDRO ARCANGELI, *Dance in the 1500s***

For dance practices in Italy and the rest of Europe, the 1500s were the century of change. Perhaps more appropriate would be to adopt the Italian term used in treatises of the time – *mutanze* – to refer to the variations of what in many ways was the most popular and representative of dances, the *gagliarda*. But the same word could be used as a metaphor for the far-reaching transformations that were affecting key dichotomies such as pastime/profession, performance/audience, high/low in the social hierarchy, centre/periphery in the dynamics of cultural production and exchange. In the interpretation proposed by some of the more convincing and stimulating historical studies, the situations at the beginning and end of the century appear to have been quite different from each other and mutually recognisable. The paper sets out to reconstruct these scenarios and to suggest a few intermediate “photograms” to illustrate how dance might have changed through the century.

*Alessandro Arcangeli* teaches Modern History at the University of Verona. He is the author of monographs and studies of the European debate concerning dance in the early Modern Age (*Davide o Salomè?*, Treviso-Rome 2000, published in the “Ludica” series of the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche), on ludicity and leisure time (*Recreation in the Renaissance, 2003/Passatempi rinascimentali*, 2004), on the theory and history of cultural history as a distinct historiographical practice (*Che cos'è la storia culturale*, 2007/*Cultural History. A Concise Introduction*, 2012). He is Committee Chairman of the International Society for Cultural History ([www.culthist.org](http://www.culthist.org)), Vice-President of the Associazione italiana per la ricerca sulla danza ([www.airdanza.it](http://www.airdanza.it)) and a member of the Scientific Committee of the journal «Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco» published by the Fondazione Benetton.

**JOHN MCCLELLAND, *Science and sport in the 16th century: ruling out play***

The 16th-century was a period of intellectual evolution that retrospectively looks absolutely revolutionary. This is especially true in the field of the sciences, where the discoveries of Galileo profoundly modified the way that his contemporaries and successors understood the physical universe. But Galileo was in a sense the culmination of a process that started perhaps sixty years earlier, not only in the astronomical calculations of Copernicus but also in Vesalius' anatomical theatre and in the mathematical reflections of Cardano. What these early scientists imposed was a rigorous, systematic way of thinking about the object of their research that eliminated both unfounded speculation and superficial considerations and made their subject rational and teachable. It will be the argument of this paper that this mode of thinking was applied to and transformed playing. Scientifically-minded thinkers like Camillo Agrippa and Antonio Scaino analysed heretofore unstructured recreational activities and established new paradigms that limited the participants' options and differentiated between acceptable and unacceptable modes of performance.

*John McClelland* was born in 1934 and is professor emeritus of French Literature at the University of Toronto (Canada), where he also lectured on the History of Sports. His published works include: *Erreurs amoureuses de Pontus de Tyard* and *Body and Mind: Sport in Europe from the Roman Empire to the Renaissance*; he is also the co-author of *Anfänge des modernen Sports in der Renaissance and of Sport and Culture in Early Modern Europe/Le sport dans la civilisation de l'Europe pré-moderne*. He has published numerous studies on Renaissance and Modern French literature, on Greek and Latin rhetoric, on Renaissance and Baroque music, on the operas of Mozart and on sports in Antiquity and in the 12th to 17th centuries. He has been Visiting Professor at the Universities of Tours, Aix-en-Provence, Rennes, Göttingen, Québec at Montréal and California at Santa Barbara. His current research interests focus on the relationships between Renaissance sport and contemporary intellectual and artistic culture.

**ALESSANDRA RIZZI, *Target shooting as competition, game and training***

Taking a long-term and wide-ranging view, target shooting has various connotations as a ludic activity – depending on the weapon used. A similar pattern emerges from the context of the Venetian state, which is the principal, though not exclusive focus of this paper. The state of the sources (as regards the Italian milieu, those investigated are mainly competition announcements and regulations and settlements of disputes) has probably helped to distract attention away from this variety and towards shooting with bows and crossbows, inviting concentration on the mediaeval practice of target shooting, especially its paramilitary function as a training activity. A similar model can be seen in other ludic activities of the period and it continued to be fostered even when the old mediaeval weapons fell into disuse in favour of the more modern firearms, which began to appear not only on the battlefield but also in target shooting competitions in the 1500s. This was a period of change in which new forms of competition were introduced, sometimes replacing the traditional genres. Target shooting was not only for military training purposes but could also have a more specifically ludic or entertainment function and was less rule-bound than in the past. It is interesting (also in the more restricted Venetian sphere) to follow specific aspects such as how the activities were performed, who took part and how the competitions themselves developed, etc. Broadening the perspective to include the wider European context, recent studies have confirmed that the practice of target shooting acquired more complex and structured social functions, which it would certainly be worth investigating further.

*Alessandra Rizzi* is a research fellow and lecturer at the University of Venice, Ca' Foscari, where her work focuses on Venetian History and the History of Games and Gaming, with special reference to regulatory and legal aspects, to the social repercussions of ludic practices in the Middle and Modern Ages, to their changing and permanent features, to their purposes and connotations. In this latter area of study she has collaborated since 1992 with the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche of Treviso, where she is also a member of the Scientific Committee of the journal «Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco», directed by Gherardo Ortalli. Her latest publication in this field is *Predicatori, confessori mendicanti e gioco alla fine del medioevo*, in *Religiosus ludens. Das Spiel als kulturelles Phänomen in mittelalterlichen Klöstern und Orden*, edited by J. SONNTAG (Berlin-Boston 2013), and “*Volentes pro meliori... providere... super ludo*”: *provvedimenti sul gioco per i territori veneziani (secoli XIII-XVI). Ricognizioni preliminari*, in *Historiae. Scritti per Gherardo Ortalli*, by CLAUDIO AZZARA, ERMANNO ORLANDO, MARCO POZZA and ALESSANDRA RIZZI (Venice 2013). Other publications are forthcoming. Her work for the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche includes *Ludus/ludere. Giocare in Italia alla fine del medio evo* (1995) and, more recently, *Statuta de ludo. Le leggi sul gioco nell'Italia di comune*, with an introduction by Gherardo Ortalli (2012).

**MATTEO CASINI, *The banquet. Companies of young people at table***

The paper focuses on the banquets organized by the companies of adolescent scions of wealthy families of the Venetian aristocracy, the “Compagnie della Calza”. Between the mid-1400s and the mid-1500s, the Companies were great organizers both of public banquets – especially those held to honour high-ranking foreign visitors to Venice – and of private, often nocturnal, banquets. While public occasions can be expected to contribute to the political training of these young men and to show off the celebratory rituals of the Republic, the private events organized by the Companies became opportunities for ostentatious displays of family wealth and for the formation of networks and “factions”; so much is clear from the numerous sumptuary laws that were introduced from 1460 in an attempt to moderate such gatherings. Both the public and the private banquets were also used as pretexts to introduce into Venice customs and practices typical of the courtly culture of Italian and European aristocratic circles, practices that included the wearing of luxurious embroidered hose, the extravagant use of sugar and the advent of Renaissance theatrical pieces. Observation of the rituals of the Companies in this sphere can therefore open windows onto many phenomena typical of Venetian patrician culture during the Renaissance, from the linguistic conventions governing the welcome of distinguished foreign visitors to the system of hierarchical ranking within the Venetian patriciate, from the male chauvinist mentality of the noble classes to the relationship between the younger generation and the power-wielding gerontocracy, from the development of “other” social cultures in Venice to the introduction of forms of entertainment that had already become fashionable in centres such as Ferrara and Florence.

*Matteo Casini* is an authority on Venetian and Florentine history of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. He has conducted research at the Warburg Institute in London, Villa I Tatti in Florence, the Folger Shakespeare Library and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Universities of Florence and Padua, UCLA-University of California, Los Angeles, and the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. He has published numerous articles about aspects of Venetian and Florentine history and the full-length study *I gesti del principe. La festa politica a Firenze e Venezia in età rinascimentale* (Venice 1996). He has taught in Venice, Padua and Boston and since 2006 has lectured in European and World History at Suffolk University in Boston.