

1521: Letters to and from the author and the editor, and one from Federico Gonzaga		1521: Letters to and from the author and the editor, and one from Federico Gonzaga
Version 2M		Version 2M ¹
EPISTOLA VOLGARE DIL Autore di Merlino Cocaio, al Impressore di esso Alessandro Paganino		Letter in the Vernacular by the Author of Merlin Cocaio to the the publisher of this [work], Alessandro Paganini
{p. MM}		{p. MM}
ODO Alessandro mio, che soperchiamente ramaricandovi disleale, e mancator di fede ovunque giti me chiamati, quando che io vhabbia promisso quel nostro volume de sogni appellato Merlino, che meglio, si per lo Auttore, si pei lettori, puotevamo dimandare iattura di tempo, il quale dopo niegarvi presommo, la raggione a voi parte, a me totalmente, appoggiasi, stolto fu promettervi quello che mio non e, ma di miei soperiori, attendere piu stolto saria copiosamente produr a luce quello che gia mi doglio havermi lassiato da le man uscire, stoltissimo, se lo accumulato volume anteposto al cimento de cotanti dotti e consumati Poeti, mi accumulasse il gia scoperto vituperio.		I hear, my [dear] Alessandro, that going on and on about it wherever you go, you call me dishonest and oath-breaker, since I promised you that volume of dreams of ours called Merlin, that we could have better labeled a waste of time both for the author and for the readers, which I later presume to deny you, the reason depends partly on you and wholly on me; it was foolish to promise you what is not mine, but belongs to my superiors, it would be more foolish to keep [the promise] to liberally bring to light that which I already regret having allowed to leave my hands, and most foolish, if the loaded volume put to the test by so many learned and consummate Poets might load me down with the vituperation previously displayed. ²
Il geminato colpo solo e chi danna lhomo, Voi nulla sapendo qual fosse lo Auttore, io men lo Impressore promulgasti (non so come) la ignorantia mia,		It is only double guilt which harms a man: you, knowing nothing about who the author could have been, and I, less about the publisher, you made known my inexperience/ lack of judgment (I don't know how),
E ritrovandomi totalmente alhora che per il Mundo tal opra se diffuse, cosi di vita come di habito alieno da quel		and finding myself then while such a work was being circulated all over the world, completely altered both as to life and

<p>tempo in che per mio destino la composi, non puoti far che sin a la profusione di lagrime non mi atristassi, dil che per obviar un quanco a la dubiosa mia confusione, mi sovense (quando che gia era stampita) in manco danno reformarla, sperando chel coperocchio di Merlino mi dovesse perpetuamente occultare, che colpa secreta meglio e perdonata, ma non rimembrandomi la sententia di essa veritate, che niente gli e occulto che finalmente non sia revelato, di subito quinci e quindi scoperto mho veduto, donde giustissimamente negarvi la promissa debbo, e voglio, Dio vi consola.</p>		<p>habit from that time in which I fatefully composed it, you can't help but become sad enough for a profusion of tears, from this it came to me that in order to alleviate a bit my wavering uneasiness (after it had already been printed) to reform it into [something] less detrimental, hoping that the cover of Merlin would hide me forever, because a secret shame is more easily pardoned, however, not bearing in mind the adage of this truth: that nothing is ever hidden which is not eventually revealed, I suddenly saw myself exposed this way and that, thus, quite justifiably, I must and I will withdraw my promise, [may] God comfort you.</p>
<p>{p. MM i v}</p>		<p>{p. MM i v}</p>
<p>Version 2M</p>		<p>Version 2M</p>
<p>RISPOSTA DI ALESSANDRO Paganino al Auttore di Merlino</p>		<p>Response from Alessandro Paganini to the Author of Merlin</p>
<p>Il Biasmare, o vilificare se medemo sovente fia lodato, sovente riprovato, quinci la humilitade, quindi la viltà de animo si comprende, non so lepidissimo mio Poeta, se dunque dovemo biasmar o pur lodar quella vostra cotanto piena di restio e pertinace opinione, che per niuna guisa non mi volete concedere che io satisfaccia a tanti Signori, Cardinali, Vescovi, Dottori, Oratori, Relligiosi, Laici, li quali mai non cessano vessarmi, stimularmi che homai produca tal opera, e non permetta che tanto stia sepolta.</p>		<p>To criticize or malign oneself may often be praised, often blamed: on one hand humility is involved, on the other baseness of character; I don't know, my very clever Poet, whether we should therefore criticize or instead praise that notion of yours so obstinate and full of reluctance, so that you are by no means willing to allow me to satisfy so many Lords, Cardinals, Bishops, Professors, Orators, Clergy and Lay people, who never cease to pester me, to goad me, so that I would at last produce such a work, and not permit it to stay buried for long.</p>
<p>per il che non accetto luna de le escusatione che me haveti fatto, cio e che tal opra vi debbia cumulare scorno, peroche voi (si come nella Citate vostra</p>		<p>for this reason, I do not accept one of the excuses that you have made to me, and that is that such a work would bring scorn upon you, given that you (as I understand</p>

<p>da molte persone intendo) la componesti a complacencia de diversi vostri compagni, in stato che liberamente farlo puotevati, che al presente non vi fuora concesso forse, poi tal opra meritamente sento lodare di honestate, cosa incredibile a chi la legge, che tal soggetto e materia qual, e, cosi sobriamente dal inhonestate se ne passi.</p>	<p>from many people in your city) wrote it for the entertainment of several of your companions, when you were in a position to be able to do so freely, which would not be possible for you at present perhaps; then [too], I hear the work justly praised for decency, an incredible thing for those who read it, that the subject matter and content such as it is, so soberly avoids indecency.</p>
<p>Et indi molti sospicoro che nel stato in che mo ve trovati la componesti, ma non sanno, che chi me la diede secretamente da stampire molte cose vi sotrasse, le quale penso che alquanto fossero tinte over macchiate, per tanto circa il vostro particolare non vi escuso, ma pongo la mano ne la piaga, per che caggione non mi la puoteti concedere,</p>	<p>And subsequently, many people suspected that you wrote it in the position in which you now find yourself, but they don't know that the person who gave it to me to print clandestinely, took out many things, things which I think were tainted or stained; therefore, regarding this particular [concern] of yours, I don't excuse you, on the contrary I put my hand in the wound, for what pretext you are unable to bestow it on me,</p>
<p>voi sempre vi occultasti sotto altre mille cause, ne mai quello che mo da un vostro amico intendo me dicesti, per tanto cognosco certissimo che non son per haverla piu da voi, a danno e iattura dil honore vostro, e fama e guadagno mio, peroche dal Signor Illustrissimo Mantuano una copia nho ricevuto, la quale gia sin a lultima carta se stampisse, non cosi corretta ne cosi grande come quella che intendo essere gita cibo di Volcano,</p>	<p>you have always kept hidden under a thousand other motives, nor will I ever understand what you have told me just now about a friend of yours, consequently, I am most certainly aware that I am no longer going to get it from you, to the detriment and loss of your honor, but rather I received a copy of it from the most illustrious Mantuan Lord, which has already been printed right up to the last page, not as correct, nor as great as the one I understand was thrown away as food for Vulcan,</p>
<p>se lho fatto senza vostra saputa, incolpate (se incolpar si de) la ragione, e tutto il Mundo che mi astringe a tal impresa,</p>	<p>if I did this without your knowledge, blame reason (if one must blame), and the whole world that coerces me to such an undertaking.</p>
<p>Questa si e la copia de la littera di sua Illustrissima Signoria la quala vi mando, la vostra e mia si per escusarmi se molti errori sono incorsi nel stampare (quando che la copia non era di vostra mano salvo che meggia), si per escusar</p>	<p>This is the actual copy of the letter concerning his most illustrious Excellency which I am sending to you, your [letter] and mine, in order to apologize on my own account that so many errors occurred in the printing (since the copy was not from</p>

voi, che non mi haveti potuto concedere la emendata e limata in spacio de un anno.		your hand, but the best available), and also to excuse you, for not being able to turn over to me the amended and polished copy in the span of a year.
[Added in versions 2MDa and 2MDb:]		[Added in versions 2MDa and 2MDb:]
Ultra queste, un Dialogo fatto in vostra defensione contra li maledici, pregato volsi far imprimere.		In addition to this, please be so kind as to have published a Dialog made in your defense against slanderers.
1521 Letter from the editor to the reader		1521 Letter from the editor to the reader
ALEXANDER PAGANINUS.		Alexander Paganini
Non potuit mi lector quin ob temporibus penuriam, et plurimorum instantiam primatum, maxime Illustrissimi Federici Marchionis Mantuae, quamplures incurrerent inter imprimendum errores, partim culpa Impressorum, partim copiae in elimatae, nam veram et castigatam secum invidus abstulit Vulcanus, quos tamen errores infra notare volui Philomuso corrigente.		It could not be helped, my [dear] reader, on account of the unavailability in those times, even at the insistence of many nobles, especially the Illustrious Marchese Federico of Mantua, that so many errors occurred during printing, partly the fault of the Printers, partly of the unpolished copy, for jealous Vulcan took away with him the proper and corrected [copy], nonetheless, I wanted to note those errors below, corrected by Philomuso. ³
Letter from then Marchese Federico Gonzaga, not printed in the 1521 <i>Opus Merlini Cocai</i> , but found in the archives in Mantua.		Letter from then Marchese Federico Gonzaga, not printed in the 1521 <i>Opus Merlini Cocai</i> , but found in archives in Mantua. ⁴

<p>Paganino de Paganinis. Egredie amice noster carissime.</p> <p>Perché intendemo che, stampando voi Merlino Cocaio, seti stato interotto da l'auctore di esso, perhò, havendoni voi recercato che vi vogliamo accomodare di una copia che havevamo presso di noi, voluntieri semo stati contenti, et mandamovila, così vi piacerà con diligentia di proseguire l'opera,</p>		<p>To Paganino Paganini:</p> <p>Dearest and most illustrious friend, because we understand that while you were printing Merlin Cocaio, you were interrupted by the author of this, however, having requested that we be willing to accommodate you with a copy we had in our possession, certainly, we were pleased to and are sending it to you, so that you will agree to continue your work with diligence,</p>
<p>che ni fareti singulare piacere, et instamovine molto facendola coretta et più presto sia possibile. Alli commodi nostri ni offerimo, Marmirolì XVI Novembris 1520</p>		<p>which will provide us singular satisfaction, we insist in this that you make it quite correct and as soon as possible. We offer ourselves to our pleasures,⁵ Marmirolò, November 16, 1520.</p>
<p>Additional letter found in the 2MDa and 2MDb versions of the 1521 edition.</p>		<p>Additional letter found in the 2MDa and 2MDb versions of the 1521 edition.</p>
<p>EPISTOLA VOLGARE DIL Auttore di Merlino.</p>		<p>Epistle in the Vernacular by the author of Merlin.</p>
<p>Ho visto e trascorso Alessandro mio, la ignorantia che gia per il mondo stampita se diffunde, vituperevole circa tre cose, la prima non era ben scritta per non essere la copia mia, la seconda molti errori di gramatica e sillabe, cosa in vero a me di molta noglia, la terza molti carmi e sententiae alquante mordace che sarebbero stati meglio secreti vi sono in luce, a me di qualche infamia, pur a tutto il mondo ne dimando humilmente perdono, certificando che se fora possibile revocarla, di subito la revocarei, Nulla di manco mi persuado che li egregi e saggi spirti pensarano, che se fra dodeci Apostoli dil nostro Salvatore un sacrilego proditore pessimo reuscite,</p>		<p>Dear Alessandro, I have seen and looked through the foolish thing that already printed is being distributed all over/ throughout the world, reprehensible regarding three things, the first, that it was not well written, since is was not my copy, the second, many errors of grammar and metrics – something actually very distressing to me, the third, many verses and phrases somewhat biting that would have been better kept secret are now in the public domain, to me of some dishonor, so I humbly beg the pardon of everyone/ the whole world, certifying that if it were possible to revoke it, I would immediately revoke it; nonetheless I am convinced that noble and wise souls will consider, that if among twelve Apostles of</p>

<p>che maraviglia se drento una tanta moltitudine un sciagurato peccatore, qual son io vi se ritrova? perdonato dunque mi sia da gli homini, che appresso idio piu verro sicuro.</p>	<p>our Saviour there ended up being one dreadful blasphemous traitor, what wonder is it if within such a multitude one finds a sinner such as I myself am.⁶ Therefore, let me be forgiven by men, since before God/ god I will go more assured.</p>
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¹ The Associazione Amici di Merlin Cocai has produced a photocopy edition of the 1521 *Opus Merlini Cocaii* which includes the three known variations of the letters concerning the printing of the volume, *Opus Merlini Cocaii Edizione Toscolanense (1521) delle opere macaroniche di Teofilo Folengo* (Bassano del Grappa and Mantua, Chiribella, 1994, edited by Angela Nuovo, Giorgio Bernardi-Perini and Rodolfo Signorini). This letter is from a copy known as 2M, the few variants in 2MDb include *Mondo* for *Mundo*, and *coperchio* for *coperchio*. Scholars have expertly organized the editions of Folengo's 1521 opus, most notably Massimo Zaggia, *Macaronee minori* (Torino, Einaudi, 1987), pp. 560-88) and Angela Nuovo *Alessandro Paganino e Teofilo Folengo* (work cited above, (Appendix) pp. 1-30; now systematic numbering for these letters would be useful -- could any of you sort this out? (It is tricky to determine what counts as a sentence, I tried and failed.)

² *cimento*, Latin *caementum* (cf. cement), initially a mixture of salts to test precious metals.

³ Philomuso is the name the author uses for himself in the *Dialogus Philomusi* a Latin dialogue found among these letters in some exempla.

⁴ This letter was apparently sent by twenty year old Federico Gonzaga (1500-1540) together with his copy of the *Baldus* to Paganino Paganini, father of Alessandro Paganini and owner of the publishing house at Toscolana on Lake Garda, the letter was published by Attilio Portioli in *Merlin Cocai, Le opere maccheroniche* (Mantova, 1882-1889, vol. 1, p. LXXXVI, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 2926, libro 263, c. 71 v); here I have copied the version quoted in the article by Nina Calzolaio in *Il Dialogus Philomusi: edizione, attribuzione, commento,* *Quaderni folenghiani*, 3 (2000–2001), p. 62.

⁵ A valediction seen frequently in letters of the era, "alli comodi vostri ni offerimo," akin to "we remain at your service," here with *nostris* (our) instead of *vostri* (your) Gonzaga seems to offer himself to his own pleasures: could be a humorous variation or an error.

⁶ This idea that no one should be surprised if in such a multitude [of clergy], diversity is found is expressed also in the *Dialogus Philomusi*, "I, for my part, believe that those intelligent people are about to figure out that with such a large number of clergy, it will stand to reason that some are disturbed by phlegm, many flare up with bile, and many more give off the scent of salt: for the childishness of one, it is not at all right for an honest or fair judge to bring cause against the union of so great a council," sect. 39.