Recent Books

years as prefect of the Marciana library in Venice entailed a vast correspondence (of which a considerable part has probably been lost). Morelli’s outgoing letters are documented in collections elsewhere; those received, however, and still in the Marciana, provide numerous insights into literary activity in the eighteenth century, as well as his efforts, in the years following the French conquest of the Serenissima in 1797 and the dissolution of the religious orders, to protect the books and documents of the same. The present work usefully furnishes a listing of 1,212 letters and brief biographical portraits of 226 correspondents.


The illustrious nobleman named in the title (1782–1838) left his considerable personal library to the recently created Turin Academy, which has duly produced the present catalogue, describing two incunabula, 345 sixteenth-century, and forty-six seventeenth-century books, plus some items of uncertain date. It follows the arrangement of the books in the original inventory compiled on receipt of the bequest, which might have one convenience in grouping the 21 Hebrew and 19 Greek editions at the beginning, all the rest being in Latin (the marquis seemingly chose not to include books in Italian or in other modern languages in his legacy). To be honest, however, although remedied by extensive indexes, this solution is not convenient for a modern reader.


Florentine by birth, son of a scissor-maker, Anton Francesco Doni (1513–74) was one of the most extravagant, eccentric, and brilliant figures to circulate among the mid-sixteenth-century printing shops. To some extent, the texts he created therein, assembled with types and woodcuts found on the spot, such as the Zucca, the Marmi, and Mondi, anticipate the modern blog. The present volume, containing the acts of a conference held in Pisa in January 2011, relates the Marmi, which take their title from conversations overheard on the steps of Florence’s Duomo, to the literature and arts of Doni’s own time.


This study, with a Lina-Wertmuller-style title alluding to a supposed lost Nazi treasure, describes the history of the Franciscan library at Santa Maria del Fiume, near Dongó, a small town perched precariously on the mountains overlooking Lake Como. Unlike many other such collections, local families protected the library during the period of the suppression of the religious orders at the beginning of the nineteenth century, so that losses were contained. This one example therefore shows what Italy’s religious libraries might have been today, if Napoleon had never happened on the scene. It includes a detailed description of the thirty-two incunabula in the collection, a couple of them rare.


The present author published in English with Oxford University Press in 2007 a successful and highly praised monograph Information and Communication in