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## PREFACE: THE BOOKS OF VENICE

This volume takes its title from the name, in English, of an international conference that took place in Venice on 9-10 March 2007 at the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. *The Books of Venice* is a play on *The Stones of Venice*, for Venice's books, like the art and buildings described by John Ruskin, have long been considered one of her greatest glories. Venice and the Veneto were hosts to some of the earliest book printers in Italy; the workplace of master publishers from Aldus Manutius in the sixteenth century to Ferdinando Ongania in the nineteenth; and a major source of books for Italy and far beyond. In fall 2006, Venice was host to American master printer Peter Koch, who set to work on a deluxe edition of Joseph Brodsky's poetic ruminations on that city, *Watermark*; in spring 2007, at the conclusion of the conference, Koch's book was presented to the Ateneo Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, where Brodsky's book, under its Italian title of *Fondamenta degli Incurabili*, had first been presented eighteen years before.

Though this volume cannot offer its readers all the pleasures of the conference (which included, for instance, a round table organized by Mario Infelise and a hands-on workshop at the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica Venezia led by Koch and his wife, the paper conservator Susan Filter), most of the papers given at *The Books of Venice* are published in expanded form here. Talks related to the events at the Scuola Grafica, and the Ateneo Veneto on the occasion of the *Watermark* presentation, by Vittoria Bonani, Koch, Marina Gasparini Lagrange, and Alessandro Corubolo, are also included. Thus this volume offers a series of scholarly essays exploring Venetian book history from the Quattrocento through current production, as Koch evocatively puts it, «in the shadow of Aldus Manutius». Case

studies of outstanding individuals such as Aldus, Erhard Ratdolt, Peter Ugelheimer, Antonio Moretto, Francesco Sansovino, Claudio Merulo and Apostolo Zeno are put together with studies engaged with anonymous buyers, readers, and performers; analyses of documents from archives and marks in the books themselves are complemented by examinations of book collections now in Southern Germany and England. An essay on Venetian libraries by Marino Zorzi serves as an introduction to the volume, and a consideration of the shadowy lacunae in Venetian publishing by Neil Harris concludes its main section; both were first offered at the conference as keynote lectures. The variety of subject matter and methodologies presented in this volume is as rich as the world of the Venetian book itself.

As co-organizers of the conference and co-editors (with Marino Zorzi) of this volume, we would like to thank the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti; Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana; Ateneo Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti; the Bibliographical Society (U.K.); the Bibliographical Society of America; and the Society for the History of Authorship, Readership and Publishing (SHARP) for their support of our efforts, and the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation for a generous grant that made both the conference and this volume possible. We are glad to have this opportunity to welcome Maria Letizia Sebastiani as director of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, and to thank her wholeheartedly for her support of this volume in the series, *Miscellanea Marciana*. We two co-organizers are grateful also to Marino Zorzi for all he did to make our efforts a success; we dedicate this volume to him in celebration of his wise tenure as director of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.