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## Essays

"Mirabili visioni": from movable  
books to movable text

*Gianfranco Crupi*

## Abstract

This contribution reconstructs the history of  
movable books, books created for a wide range of  
different purposes (teaching, mnemonics, play,  
divining, etc.) including mechanical or  
paratextual devices demanding or soliciting the  
interaction of the reader. The investigation runs  
from hand-written books to the most courageous

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paper-engineering experiments of the 20th century Avant-Garde, considering some specific editorial genres, including calendars, "libri di sorti", anatomical books, navigation handbooks etc., and animated children's books. In particular, it demonstrates how the happy season for animated paper production and publishing of the 19th century would not have been possible without the scientific inheritance of optical studies and vision sciences, precursors a short time before the invention of the Lumière brothers (1895). The study also examines some literary works using combinatorial mechanisms, experimenting the semiotic potential of expressive codes and very different techniques and materials: the reference is to books of Futurism and Dadaism, the "artists' book", and other avant-garde texts from the second half of the 20th century.

AUTHOR  
Gianfranco Crupi  
La Sapienza Università di Roma  
Italy  
  
ADDRESSING INFORMATION  
Sapienza Università di Roma  
Dipartimento di Studi greco-latini, italiani, scenico-musicali  
gianfranco.crupi@uniroma1.it

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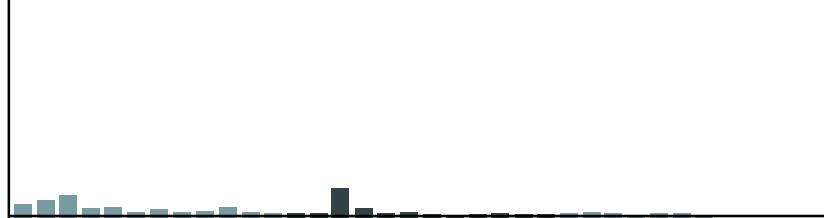


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