

# Stanley Marcus:

## A Preliminary Inventory of His Sicilian Marionettes Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Marcus, Stanley, 1905-2002
<b>Title:</b>	Stanley Marcus Sicilian Marionettes Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	circa 1850-circa 1960
<b>Extent:</b>	60 marionettes, 1 rolled item
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Stanley Marcus Sicilian Marionettes, circa 1850-circa 1960, consists of sixty marionettes and a backdrop curtain. The marionettes form a troupe of characters from the <i>Orlando Furioso</i> story cycle.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Performing Arts Collection PA-00056
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research. An advance appointment is required to view the puppets in the Reading Room.

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Gift and purchase, 1965, 1992
<b>Processed by:</b>	Carolyn Roark and Helen Adair, 2001, 2005, 2010
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Sources:

Wells, Maria Xenia Zevelechi. "The Stanley Marcus Sicilian Marionettes and Related Books." *The Library Chronicle of the University of Texas at Austin* 23, nos. 2/3 (1993), 35-42.

Wells, Maria Xenia Zevelechi. "Paladins of Sicily: The Pupi of Stanley Marcus' Collection." *FMR* 15, no. 77 (1995), 61-80.

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## Scope and Contents

The entrepreneur Stanley Marcus (1905-2002) was president of the Neiman Marcus retail department store chain from 1950 to 1975. He was also an avid art collector and patron of the arts in the Dallas area. The Stanley Marcus Sicilian Marionettes, circa 1850-circa 1960, consists of sixty marionettes and a backdrop curtain. The marionettes, which were purchased by Marcus in 1960, form a troupe of characters from the *Orlando Furioso* story cycle. They are arranged into three groups of characters, largest group to smallest: Christian, Non-Christian, and Animal. Among the characters represented are Charlemagne, Orlando, various Frankish knights, Moors, princesses and other female characters, horses, demons, dogs, and mythical creatures. Completing the collection is a mid-nineteenth century backdrop curtain for a Sicilian marionette theater, purchased separately.

The marionette tradition in Sicily began in the 1850s when Sicilian wood carvers were inspired by Italian versions of Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, a legend that emerged (with vast embellishment) from the eighth century life of Roland, one of Charlemagne's knights. These plays emphasized chivalry and swashbuckling adventure, and dramatized the conflict between Christianity and Islam. In the marionette theaters of Sicily, the stories became standardized and were a highly popular entertainment until displaced by television, film, and other mass media. In the latter part of the twentieth century, the tradition of these marionettes was revived with performances in Sicily, and even television was used as a means of continuing this popular tradition.

The marionettes are operated with a wooden-handled metal rod extending from the crown of the head on human figures, and from the center of the back on animal figures, a technique that dates to the Roman Empire. A second rod moves the primary arm (the sword hand for warriors), and a string moves the secondary arm. The jointed legs move freely, and are controlled by manipulating the body through the main rod. The size of the marionette denotes rank: primary characters stand four to five feet in height, secondary characters, about three feet. The armor on warriors can weigh up to forty pounds. Each marionette is stored hanging vertically from its rod.

## **Related Material**

Related material is also present in the Ransom Center's Puppetry Collection, Joel Sherzer Collection, and University of Texas Extension Library Collection.

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## List of Marionettes circa 1850-circa 1960

### Christian Characters

Carlo Magno (Charlemagne)	<b>Container 22</b>
Galerana	<b>Container 23</b>
Orlando	<b>Container 24</b>
Clarice	<b>Container 25</b>
Ricciardetto	<b>Container 26</b>
Bradamante di Chiarmonte	<b>Container 27</b>
Ruggiero	<b>Container 28</b>
Oliviero	<b>Container 29</b>
Aquilante nero	<b>Container 30</b>
Grifone bianco	<b>Container 31</b>
Uggiero	<b>Container 32</b>
Astolfo	<b>Container 33</b>
Turpino	<b>Container 34</b>
Salamone	<b>Container 35</b>
Brandimarte	<b>Container 36</b>
Viviano	<b>Container 37</b>
Malagigi	<b>Container 38</b>
Terigi	<b>Container 39</b>
Dontrico	<b>Container 40</b>
Gano di Magonza	<b>Container 41</b>
Pinabello d'altaripa	<b>Container 1</b>

Pages

Primo pagetto	<b>Container 2</b>
Secondo pagetto	<b>Container 3</b>
Eremito (hermit)	<b>Container 4</b>
Orlando furioso	<b>Container 5</b>
Belafugar	<b>Container 6</b>
Nucalone	<b>Container 7</b>
Gambacorta	<b>Container 8</b>

Non-Christian Characters

Spanish

Marsilio	<b>Container 42</b>
Balugante	<b>Container 43</b>
Falserone	<b>Container 44</b>

Asian

Gradasso	<b>Container 45</b>
Mandricardo	<b>Container 46</b>
Sacripante	<b>Container 47</b>
Sansonetto	<b>Container 48</b>
Marfisa	<b>Container 49</b>
Angelica	<b>Container 50</b>
Medoro	<b>Container 51</b>

African

Agramante	<b>Container 52</b>
Agolante	<b>Container 53</b>
Trojano	<b>Container 54</b>

Dardinello	<b>Container 55</b>
Sobrino of Algocco	<b>Container 56</b>
Rodomonte	<b>Container 57</b>
Grandonio	<b>Container 11</b>
Saladiello of Siria	<b>Container 58</b>
Balastro	<b>Container 59</b>
Gattamugliera	<b>Container 60</b>
Moorish soldiers	
Primo soldato africano	<b>Container 9</b>
Secondo soldato africano	<b>Container 10</b>
<b>Animal Characters</b>	
Cane (dog)	<b>Container 19</b>
Cane (dog)	<b>Container 20</b>
Cagnolino (small dog)	<b>Container 21</b>
<b>Horses</b>	
Bajardo	<b>Container 12</b>
Frontino	<b>Container 13</b>
Brigliadoro, or "Golden Reins"	<b>Container 14</b>
Leone (lion)	<b>Container 18</b>
<b>Mythological creatures</b>	
Drago (dragon)	<b>Container 15</b>
Ippogrifo (hippogriff)	<b>Container 17</b>
Sea serpent	<b>Container 16</b>
Backdrop curtain showing battle scene at the walls of Paris (duel between Bradamante and Dama Rovenza, a Saracen warrior). Oil on canvas, circa 1850	<b>Container 61</b>

