

SPERONE SPERONI

Canace

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY ELIO BRANCAFORTE



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Sperone Speroni was among the leading literary figures in Renaissance Italy, renowned as a theorist, essayist and author of dialogues (on love, discord, the dignity of women, and language), some of which led to problems with the Inquisition. His drama *Canace* (1542) gave rise to a polemic that resonated beyond his native country due to its controversial topic: incest. The ill-fated lovers (and siblings) Canace and Macareus are discovered by their father, Aeolus, king of the winds, who wreaks terrible vengeance on them—not realizing that Venus is the instigator of their love for each other. With a plot derived from Ovid and dramatic elements taken from Seneca, the tragedy of *Canace* raises questions about the problem of incest and its role in the debate regarding nature versus culture, a controversial topic that is still current.

Elio Brancaforte is Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, Tulane University. A comparatist, his interests include translation, cultural exchange, early modern travel literature and drama, and the history of cartography. Currently he is working on a project that examines how Safavid Iran was represented in word and image in six different European travel accounts.

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