

Dissecting *Among Practitioners of Cossike Arte*; a collage by Mark Sanders - after a poem by Sarah Glaz; as part of "Imagined/Invited; a project conceived and edited by David Greenslade.

"Cossikke Arte" (the Art of Things) was the term used for algebra, which was still in its infancy, in Renaissance Europe.

*We greet the old mathematicians at the door:
Good evening! Buna seara! Noswaith dda!*

*I serve a stew made of poetic equations,
while Ludovico — reciting his solution
to the quartic —*

Ludovico de Ferrari (1522-1565), an Italian mathematician, is known for having solved quartic equations. Both third and fourth degree equation calculations are shown on the blackboard wash across the top of the picture.

fills their goblets with red wine.

These are represented by the bottles to the right of the picture; also the red disc.

*"Shall we commence playing Primero
after dinner," asks Cardano,*

Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576) was an Italian polymath and one of the most notable mathematicians of the Renaissance period. Primero is a tactical strategic card game originating in Italy, which Cardano dubbed "the noblest game". He published many books on his studies into the laws of probabilities and chance; his experiments with dice represented here by the red, die-like sphere, left. He worked extensively on 3rd degree equations with Ludovico Ferrari (above), who was his pupil and subsequently collaborator.

*"or shall we play for money . . .
a lively game of chess?"*

Cardano funded much of his life through gambling and chess-playing – the chess game is pictured emerging from the winning Primero hand of cards to the left.

*Put on the spot, Recorde answers,
"noe 2 thynges are moare equalle" —*

Robert Recorde (1510-1558), a Welsh physician and mathematician, born in Tenby (represented in the picture postcard fragment, bottom right) invented the "equals" sign (=)

*although both know that Robert never gambles
and Girolamo would prefer to bet on dice.*

*I glimpse Tartaglia's scarred face – behind a star –
casting an evil spell.*

Niccolo Fontana (1500-1557) was known as Tartaglia (the Stammerer) having suffered a sabre wound to his jaw as a child. The split mouth images, bottom right, relate to this event. He carried out much work relating to topography, ballistics and fortifications. This is represented by the battlement image (an illustration of his making) and the cannon image with its firing trajectory indicated.

There is much cross-fertilisation in the extensive work of Cardano, Ferrari and Fontana which bears further reading; not least of all the feud which arose between Cardano and Fontana which they conducted between each other *in VERSE!*