

The Book Trade in
the Italian Renaissance

Library of the Written Word

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The Handpress World

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The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance

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The present work is dedicated to my father, a distinguished jurist who taught me the importance of the juridical aspects of the book trade.

INTRODUCTION

Italy, together with Germany and France, was where the world of the printed book was constructed. With no fewer than 12,500 works printed during the fifteenth century and 65,000 during the sixteenth century, Italy played a leading role during the first part of the age of print.¹ Moreover, the development of early printing coincided fully with the most influential moment in Italian cultural history.

Merchants in the book sector were soon called *librai* because their most visible activity was precisely that of trading in books, retail and wholesale. They established networks of agents, commissioners, and booksellers in many different places to assure the sale of books, preferably on a regular basis. They had an even more strategic role as publishers, whereby they supported financially the printing of books and chose which texts to produce and the size of print runs. They were real bookmen, experts in the book world in all its aspects. Book merchants established links with other agents in the worlds in which culture was both produced and consumed – the world of authors, humanists, artists, and musical composers; the world of the school and the university; the world of churchmen; the world of power, both symbolic and effective, which made use of printing for purposes of representation and communication. The continual availability of new works thanks to these agents enabled a marked growth of printing and the book trade, and these developments were elaborated, transformed, and spread from the printing and publishing houses.

Book trade in Italy during the Renaissance must be interpreted in the context of Italian mercantile practices that had developed over centuries. In order to prosper, bookmen had to have the mentality and the skills of a successful merchant. They had often been traders and entrepreneurs in other sectors before becoming bookmen and specializing in a field that allowed the bravest and most capable of them to make considerable amounts of money. Without a guild that governed production and trade in books, space was open to all. Bookmen immediately began to compete

¹ Estimates extracted from the two main databases: *ISTC* has 12,419 records for incunabula printed in Italy and *Edit 16* contains 64,215 records for editions printed in Italy in the sixteenth century. According to Andrew Pettegree (*The Book in the Renaissance* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010], 357) the printed output of Italy in the period 1450–1600 consists of 88,000 works (data provided by the *USTC*).

with their colleagues rather than cooperate with them. Many were unsuccessful and left the field, even after publishing editions that we admire today for the beauty of their type and their illustrations.

Printing in the Renaissance remained concentrated in central and Northern Italy, reaching a genuinely industrial scale only in the city of Venice. Venice was extraordinarily swift in establishing itself as the pre-eminent location for both the production of printed books and their trade. Other cities in Italy led the field in the production of manuscripts, in particular Bologna, Florence, and Padua.² Venice, however, proved to be

² The production of university textbooks with the *pecia* system in medieval Bologna has been studied extensively; see Giovanna Murano, *Opere diffuse per "exemplar" e pecia* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005); Frank Soetermeer, *"Utrumque Ius in Peciis": Aspetti della produzione libraria a Bologna fra Due e Trecento* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1997), also available in German: *Exemplar und pecia: Zur Herstellung juristischer Bücher in Bologna im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 2002); Frank Soetermeer, "Between Codicology and Legal History: Pecia Manuscripts of Legal Texts," *Manuscripta* 49, no. 2 (2005): 247–67; Louis J. Bataillon, Bertrand G. Guyot and Richard H. Rouse, eds., *La production du livre universitaire au Moyen Age: Exemplar et pecia: Actes du symposium tenu au Collegio San Bonaventura de Grottaferrata en mai 1983* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1988). For the diffusion of humanistic script from Florence to many other centers of Italy, see Berthold L. Ullman, *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1960) and James Wardrop, *The Script of Humanism: Some Aspects of Humanistic Script 1460–1560* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963). In Florence, the workshop of Vespasiano da Bisticci produced a remarkable number of manuscripts, some of which were only partially executed for they were not the result of a commission but had been prepared in order to be ready to respond to demand. See Giuseppe Maria Cagni, *Vespasiano da Bisticci e il suo epistolario* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1969); Albinia C. de la Mare, "Vespasiano da Bisticci as Producer of Classical Manuscripts in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in *Medieval Manuscripts of Latin Classics: Production and Use; Proceedings of the Seminar in the History of the Book to 1500, Leiden 1993*, ed. Claudine A. Chavannes-Mazel and Margaret M. Smith (Los Altos Hills, Calif.: Anderson-Lovelace, 1996), 167–207; Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, *Cartolai, Illuminators and Printers in Fifteenth-Century Italy: The Evidence of the Ripoli Press* (Los Angeles: Department of Special Collections – University of California at Los Angeles, 1988), especially p. 32. Traditionally Florence and Bologna have been understood as the leading sites for the production of, respectively, humanistic and university books, furnishing successful models for print production in these two fields, which were the staple of the Venetian book industry for decades. Nevertheless, from the graphic point of view, typefaces in Venice were much more influenced by later developments in humanistic script in Padua and Veneto than by the first examples in Florence. See Stefano Zamponi, "La scrittura umanistica," *Archiv für Diplomatik: Schriftgeschichte, Siegel- und Wappenkunde* 50 (2004): 467–505; Albinia C. de la Mare and Laura Nuvoloni, *Bartolomeo Sarvito: The Life and Work of a Renaissance Scribe*, ed. Anthony Hobson and Christopher de Hamel; with contributions by Scott Dickerson, Ellen Cooper Erdreich, and Anthony Hobson (Paris: Association internationale de bibliophilie, 2009); Agostino Contò and Leonardo Quaquarelli, eds., *L'antiquario Felice Feliciano Veronese tra epigrafia antica, letteratura e arti del libro. Atti del convegno di studi, Verona, 3–4 giugno 1993* (Padua: Antenore, 1995). Very valuable recent studies on the relationship between manuscripts and printed books are Anna Melograni, "The Illuminated Manuscript as a Commodity: Production, Consumption and the *cartolaio*'s role in

highly attractive to entrepreneurs in the field of printing. Almost no bookmen active in Venice had been born in that city. Some came from the Venetian *Terraferma*. Family groupings, both large and small and of varied geographical origins, worked as units and established links with each other; some families were from Emilia or Romagna, from Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, Bologna, or Forlì; some from Piedmont or Lombardy, from Mantua with many from the small city of Asola; above all, some called themselves Brescian – like the Paganini family – but came from the area of Lake Garda, a district that specialized in the production of paper.³ Agencies might be managed within a single family for several generations, like those of the Giunti family from Florence,⁴ the Scoto family from Monza (near Milan),⁵ and the Giolito family from Trino in the Monferrato.⁶ The Italians had been preceded in Venice, however, by a large group of Germans who were skilled entrepreneurs and merchants, as well as by some Frenchmen. While the Germans tended to disappear from book

Fifteenth-Century Italy,” in *The Material Renaissance*, ed. Michelle O’Malleu and Evelyn Welch (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 197–221 and Francesca Cenni, “La penna e il torchio: Una questione di soldi,” in *Dal libro manoscritto al libro stampato. Atti del convegno internazionale di studio Roma, 10–12 dicembre 2009*, ed. Outi Merisalo and Caterina Tristano (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 2010), 199–223.

³ Angela Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino (1509–1538)* (Padua: Antenore, 1990).

⁴ On the Giunti (Giunta) family, see Paolo Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*, vol. 1: *Venezia, parte prima*; vol. 2: *Venezia, parte seconda* (Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1962–63); Leandro Perini, “Editoria e società,” in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell’Europa del Cinquecento* (Florence: Electa Editrice; Edizioni Alinari-Scala, 1980), 2:245–308; William Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence, Merchant Publishers of the Sixteenth Century* (San Francisco: Bernard M. Rosenthal, 1980); William Pettas, *A Sixteenth-Century Spanish Bookstore: The Inventory of Jean de Junta* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1995); William Pettas, “The Giunti and the Book Trade in Lyon,” in *Libri tipografi biblioteche: Ricerche storiche dedicate a Luigi Balsamo*, ed. Istituto di Biblioteconomia e Paleografia. Università degli Studi, Parma. 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1997), 1:169–92; William Pettas, *History & Bibliography of the Giunti (Junta) Printing Family in Spain: 1514–1628* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll, 2005). For a quick reference, see the following entries in the *D. B. I.*, s.v.: “Giunti, Luc’Antonio il vecchio,” “Giunti, Luc’Antonio il giovane,” “Giunti, Filippo il vecchio,” “Giunti, Filippo il giovane,” “Giunti, Bernardo,” “Giunti, Tommaso.”

⁵ On the Scoto family see Carlo Volpati, “Gli Scotti di Monza tipografi-editori in Venezia,” *Archivio storico lombardo* 59 (1932): 365–82; Claudio Sartori, “La famiglia degli editori Scoto,” *Acta Musicologica* 36 (1964): 19–30; Jane A. Bernstein, *Music Printing in Renaissance Venice: The Scotto Press (1539–1572)* (New York: Oxford University Press; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁶ Salvatore Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito de’ Ferrari da Trino di Monferrato, stampatore in Venezia*. 2 vols. (Rome: presso i principali librai, 1890–97); Angela Nuovo and Christian Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa nell’Italia del XVI secolo* (Geneva: Droz, 2005). See also the entries in *D.B.I.*, s.v.: “Giolito de’ Ferrari, Gabriele,” “Giolito de’ Ferrari, Giovanni senior,” and “Giolito de’ Ferrari, Bernardino (detto Stagnino).”

production in Venice in the sixteenth century, there were a number of prominent Frenchmen in the city in the Cinquecento, among them Giovanni Griffio, Vincenzo Valgrisi, and Antonio Gardano.⁷ The influx of entrepreneurs and technicians is the best demonstration of the excellent conditions that Venice offered the book trade. Indeed, the emigration of printers toward the end of the sixteenth century sounded an early alarm bell, to which the Venetian authorities reacted with new laws and prohibitions.⁸

The success of printing in Venice was determined by the existence of a mercantile culture that for centuries had dominated transnational trade and had shaped urban and social life. That widespread entrepreneurial culture made it easy to gather the capital required for the publication of a new edition. What was special about the book market in Venice was the city's large number of book-related businesses, which ranged from those owned by major figures to small and even very small operations. This situation was in part due to the anti-monopolistic legislation of the governing authorities in the Serenissima, who strove to maintain the largest possible number of active operators. The privilege system was designed to make it possible for even the smallest businesses to survive, while every obstacle to free initiative was avoided, and prepublication censorship was introduced as late as possible. The Republic of Venice had no interest in obstructing with punitive laws and heavy-handed controls a sector known for its high exportation figures and consequently high tax revenues.⁹

It is not easy to get a closer look at book merchants in the Renaissance. Like all merchants, they were not inclined to self-representation in a society that drew fine moral distinctions between members of the economic world. Moreover, their production of books might make them seem to resemble too closely professions that were considered "mechanical" (that is, involving manual labor) in the Renaissance. It is not by chance that

⁷ See the entry in *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Griffio (Grifi, Griffi, Gryphe), Giovanni"; Ilaria Andreoli, "Ex officina erasmiana: Vincenzo Valgrisi e l'illustrazione del libro tra Venezia e Lione alla metà del Cinquecento" (Ph.D. thesis; Università Ca' Foscari, Venice, and Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2006); Richard J. Agee, *The Gardano Music Printing Firms, 1569–1611* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1998).

⁸ Corrado Marciani, "I Gabiano, librai italo-francesi del XVI secolo," *La Bibliofilia* 74 (1972): 195–96; Paolo Preto, "Lo spionaggio economico," in *Commercio e cultura mercantile*, vol. 4 of *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa*, ed. Franco Franceschi, Richard A. Goldthwaite, and Reinhold C. Mueller (Treviso: Fondazione Cassamarca, 2007), 538–41.

⁹ The reluctance of the Republic of Venice to endorse the Index of Prohibited Books, for instance, is well depicted in Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press 1540–1605* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). On the privilege system in Venice, see below, chapter 6.

most of the still extant documentary evidence about bookmen comes down to us from the Manuzio family, whose members stressed their participation in the Republic of Letters more than in the world of production and merchandising. From Aldo Manuzio we have evidence of the dedication of editions, an aspect of the book that established a new and highly successful manner of communication between the publisher and the reader. From the three Manuzio bookmen (Aldo, Paolo, and Aldo the Younger) we also have hundreds of letters and other papers, printed and manuscript, that show the extent to which they were integrated into the world of humanistic philology.¹⁰ The humanistic culture of these Manuzio family members was, however, exceptional in the realm of printing, and the greater part of the major figures in the book world, who often had had no formal education, participated in what we could call merchant culture.¹¹

Bookmen were among the most creative and innovative of merchants. The very idea of novelty, which involved, for example, an emphasis on bringing new works onto the market, soon became part of their productive strategy. Their working tools included the gathering of information on production and cultural consumption in various locations, evaluation of the salability of a text (a process that might lead to the commissioning of a new work), and various accounting practices.

In light of its complex organization, the book trade needed refined accounting systems, such as double-entry bookkeeping, which by this period had become a well-established practice. Although no comprehensive record of the accounting techniques used by the Italian bookmen

¹⁰ Bibliography about the Manuzio is now vast. The starting point is still Antoine Augustin Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Alde ou histoire des trois Manuce et de leurs éditions* (Paris: Renouard, 1834). On Aldo senior, see Carlo Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio umanista e editore* (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1995) and H. George Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies: Documentary Essays on the Life and Work of Aldus Manutius* (San Francisco: B. M. Rosenthal, 1988) and *In Praise of Aldus Manutius: A Quincentenary Exhibition* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library; Los Angeles: University Research Library, Department of Special Collections, University of California, 1995). See also Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Blackwell; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979). On Paolo Manuzio: Francesco Barberi, *Paolo Manuzio e la Stamperia del Popolo Romano (1561–1570): Con documenti inediti* (Rome: Gela reprints, 1986). For quick reference, see the *D.B.I.* entries, s.v.: “Manuzio, Aldo, il Vecchio,” “Manuzio, Paolo,” and “Manuzio, Aldo, il Giovane.”

¹¹ Armando Saporì, “La cultura del mercante medievale,” in Saporì, *Studi di storia economica* (Florence: Sansoni, 1946), 285–325; Federigo Melis, “Il mercante,” in Melis, *L'economia fiorentina del Rinascimento* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1984), 187–202; Franceschi, Goldthwaite, and Mueller, eds., *Commercio e cultura mercantile*, especially Ugo Tucci, “La formazione dell'uomo d'affari,” 481–98.

survives, their contribution to the spread of double-entry bookkeeping seems of particular importance, also because they printed the first manuals of practical mathematics, called *libri di abbaco*.¹² The diffusion in print of double-entry bookkeeping and other basic commercial and banking techniques can be dated to 1494 and the publication in the vernacular of Luca Pacioli's *Summa de Arithmetica*, a work that summarizes all mathematical knowledge gathered up to that time and includes in the chapter entitled "De computis et scripturis" a description of the Venetian double-entry system.¹³ That Italian bookmen were the masters of this technique can be seen from account books in double-entry form (including a ledger and a journal) kept by Christophe Plantin for his Antwerp printing business between 1563 and 1567, during which period he had Italian partners. The books, which were in Italian, were kept according to the Venetian system and followed the rules laid down by Pacioli.¹⁴

But running an agency that was both industrial and commercial did not require only tidy account books. Documentary evidence that would have been preserved in the archives of significant bookmen has unfortunately all been lost, leaving us only with lists in postmortem inventories of what once existed. The business dealings of Giovanni Giolito de Ferrari, in Trino, were registered in some ten different sorts of accounting and management records that included accounting day-books, inventories, and a variety of notebooks. Listed in his inventory are no fewer than three account books in double-entry for printing accounts; two registers for the acquisition of real estate; a notebook for book transactions with Lyon, Venice, and other places; various notebooks for household expenses; a series of letters; and a special register for the two bookshops that Giolito opened in the last years of his life, one in Turin and the other in Pavia. Account

¹² Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 306–32; Warren Van Egmond, *Practical Mathematics in the Italian Renaissance: A Catalog of Italian Abbacus Manuscripts and Printed Books to 1600* (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1981).

¹³ Luca Pacioli, *Summa de arithmetica, geometria, proportioni e proportionalità* (Venice: Paganinus de Paganinis, 1494) (ISTC il00315000). See Enrico Giusti and Carlo Maccagni, eds., *Luca Pacioli e la matematica del Rinascimento* (Florence: Giunti, 1994); Enrico Giusti and Matteo Martelli, eds., *Pacioli 500 anni dopo: Atti Convegno di studi, Sansepolcro, 22–23 maggio 2009* (Sansepolcro: Centro studi Mario Pancrazi, 2009); *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, s.v. "Pacioli, Luca," http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Luca_Pacioli.aspx.

¹⁴ Florence Edler, "Cost Accounting in the Sixteenth Century: The Books of Account of Christopher Plantin, Antwerp, Printer and Publisher," *The Accounting Review* 12 (1937): 226–37; Leon Voet, *The Golden Compasses: A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp in Two Volumes* (Amsterdam: Van Gendt, 1969–72), 2:3–7 and ill. 3.

Distinctio nona. Tractatus .xi°. De scripturis

Commo se debiano saldare tutte le partite del quaderno vecchio; e i ch'è per che e de la sua summarum del pare e de la uero ultimo scontro del bilancio. ca°. 14

Del modo e ordie a saper tenere le scripture menute como sono scripti de manolise familia ri polise; pcessi; sentene e altri istrumeti e del registro de le lettere ipotatani. ca°. 15

Epilogo o uero sumaria recolta de tutto el presente tractato: acio con breue substantia se habia mandare a memoria le cose dette. ca°. 16

Distinctio nona. Tractatus .xi°. particularis de computis et scripturis.

De quelle cose che sono necessarie al uero mercatante; e de l'ordine a sapere bene tenere un quaderno co' suo giornale i vinegia e anche p'ognaltro luogo. Capitolo primo.



Y reuerenti subditi de. U. D. S. Magnanimo. D. acio a pieno de tutto l'ordine mercantile habino el bisogno: delictat. (ole. le cose dinanze i qsta nra opa dite) ancoza particular tractato grandemete necessario copillare. E in qsto solo lo iletto: p' che a ogniloro occurrerà el plente libro li possa scriuere. Si del modo a conti e scripture: como de ragioni. E per esso intendo darli norma sufficiente e bastante in tenere ordinatamente tutti lor conti e libri. Pero che. (como si fa) tre cose maxime sono oportune: a chi uole con debita diligetia mercantare. De le qli la prima e la pecunia numerata e ogni altra facultas substantiale. Juxta illud phy vñs aliquid necessarium e substantia. De qca el cui suffragio mal si po el manegio traficante exercitare. Auenga che molti gia nudi co bona fede començando: de gra facede habio fatto. E mediante lo credito fedelmete seruato i magne richesce sieno peruenuti. E be asai p' ytalta discurredo nabiano cognosciuti. E piu gia nele gra republiche non si poteua dire: che la fede del bon mercatante. E a quella si fermaua lor giuramento: dicedo. A la fe de real mercatante. E cio no ouel fere admiracione: co' cosa che i la fede catholicamete ognuno si saluti: senza la sia i possibile piacere a dio. La secoda cosa che si recerca al debito trafico: se che sia buon ragioneri: e pmpio copuista. E p questo consequere. Cossopra como se ueduto dal principio alafine: b' uemo iudicio regole e canoni a ciascuna opatione requisiti. In modo che da se: ogni diligetia leccore: tutta potra ipendere. E chi de questa pte non fosse bene armato: la sequete in un no li ferebbe. La 3. e vltima cosa oportuna sic: che co bello ordie tutte sue facede debitamete disponga: acio con breuita: possa de ciascuna hauer notitia: quanto aloz debito e ande credito: che circa altro non sarède el trafico. E qsta pte fra laltre e aloz utilissim: che i lor facede altramete regere: seria ipossibile: sega debito ordine de scripture. E sega alciu riposo la lor mète sempre stia in gran traugli. E po acio con laltre qsta possino b' auere: el plente tractato ordial. Del qle se da el mo a tutte sorti de scripture: ca°. p. ca°. pcededo. E be che no si possi cusi aporo tutto el bisogno scriuere. No dimeno p. q. che se dira. El pegrino igge: a qlicaltro laplicara. E seruaremo i esso el mo de vinegia: qle certamete fra qli altri e moito da comèdare. E mediante qsto i ogni altro se potra guidare. E qsto di uidremo i. 2. pti principali. Luna chiamaremo iuctario. E laltre dispone. E p. de luna: e poi de laltre successina mète se dira scdo l'ordie i la pposta tauola contenuto. Per la q. facilmente el leccore potra le occurre iudicio: trouare secondo el numero de suoi capitoli e carti.



Ibi co lo debito ordie che sapetea uol sap bene tenere un quaderno co' suo giornale a q. che qui se dira con diligetia stia a retro. E acio be finitèda el pcesso idurre: mo i capo vno che mo vlnouo comèti a traficare como p ordie deba procedere neltrentre soi conti e scripture: acio che succitamete ogni cosa possi ritrouare posta al suo luogo p. che no asertando le cose debitamete a li suoi luoghi uerebbe i grandissimi traugli e cossuloi de tutte sue facede. Juxta coe vltiu vbi no e ordo ibi est cossulio. E pero a pfecto documeto dogni mercatante de tutto nro. pcesso faremo como di sopra e ditto. 2. pti principali. Le qli aparmete q sequete chiariremo: acio fructo saluifero sabia ipendere. E pta dimostrando che cosa sia iuctario e como sabia far e De la p. pte principale de qsto tractato de iuctario. E che cosa sia iuctario: e come fra mercatanti sabia fare. ca°. 2 Couiente adonca p. mète. p. supponere e imaginare che ogni opante e moito dalfine. E p poter qlo debitamete consequere fa o. m. i suoi sforzo nel suo pcesso. vnde el fine de qlicche traficante e de consequere licito e copenete guadagno p sua substantiacione. E po sempre con lo nome de mifer domenedio: debiano començare loro facende. E i nel p. dogni lor scripture: el suo sancto

Fig. 0.1. Beginning of the text of "De computis et scripturis" in Luca Pacioli, *Summa de arithmetica, geometria, proportioni et proportionalità*. Venice: Paganino de Paganini, 1494; f°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

books kept by his heirs, in particular by his eldest son, Gabriele, are more complicated, and include no fewer than thirty-five registers. For the most part, these registers concern books: books sold, books sent from Venice, books that arrived in Trino. Next in number are those that cover trade in other merchandise: canvas, Cordova leather (*cordovani*), or various spices and wax, always in small-scale transactions. Finally, there were household financial records: provisions, both incoming and outgoing, wine and wheat, and inventories of furniture and objects given to his sisters. Notebooks for debtors and creditors complete the picture.¹⁵ The private archive of Lucimburgo da Gabiano, an Italian bookman active in Lyon, was of a quite different scale. At his death Gabiano left some three hundred registers and groups of documents regarding all his activities as a major merchant-entrepreneur; they told of matters ranging from the production and sale of books in a variety of publishing partnerships to the acquisition, rental, and sale of movable goods and landholdings, with separate notebooks recording debts and credits, household expenses, and documents relating to lawsuits.¹⁶ In a system this vast, an alphabetical and numerical notation of each register aided in the retrieval of information: each register could be located rapidly thanks to its alphanumerical shelf mark. As this was the most efficient system available for the organization of bundles of documents or registers, it was also used in contemporary private libraries to organize shorter handwritten texts.

Lack of information was a major obstacle for operators who produced for a transnational market and led to uncertainty in their decision making. In order to overcome this difficulty, Italian merchants, beginning in the later Middle Ages, made use of correspondence to an extent hitherto unknown. The most famous example is that of the Prato merchant Francesco Datini (1335–1410), the head of a medium-to-large agency, whose correspondence comprised at least 125,000 letters.¹⁷ Unfortunately, once again, most of the commercial letters of bookmen have been lost;

¹⁵ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 81–85.

¹⁶ Henri Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise: Recherches sur les imprimeurs, libraires, relieurs et fondeurs de lettres de Lyon au XVI^e siècle: Publiée et continuée par Julien Baudrier*. 12 vols. (Lyon: Brun, 1895–1921), 7:44–83.

¹⁷ For the letters, see Domenico Iorio-Fili, *Archivio Datini: corpus lemmatizzato del carteggio Datini*, with the collaboration of Andrea Boccelli, ed. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (<http://aspweb.ovi.cnr.it/>). About Francesco Datini, see at least Federico Melis, *Aspetti della vita economica medievale (Studi nell'Archivio Datini di Prato)* (Siena: Monte dei Paschi, 1962) and Giampiero Nigro, ed., *Francesco di Marco Datini: The Man the Merchant* (Florence: Firenze University Press; Prato: Fondazione Istituto internazionale di storia economica F. Datini, 2010). For quick reference, see *D.B.I.*, s.v. “Datini, Francesco.”

36a. in. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

Fig. 0.2. Autograph letter of Gabriele Giolito to Lelio Montalerio, Venice, 23 April 1569. Mantua, State Archives, Archivio Gonzaga, 1501, f. 477.

what remains can be found in judicial or institutional archives. Book merchants' correspondence that has survived reveals both commercial and intellectual networks. Authors and readers, who might frequent shops not only to buy books but also simply to come together and converse easily, became participants in the production, distribution, and sale of books. A major publishing enterprise involved many people. In addition to the pressmen and the persons who sold books on commission or managed a branch store, a major bookman needed editorial collaborators who readied texts for the printing presses, jurists who defended his interests, secretaries and courtiers in courts located far from Venice who protected his investments, for example, by seeing through the granting of privileges. The leading bookmen of Venice often filled these roles with men who were

already connected to them through kinship, acquired kinship (by acting as godfathers), or at least common interests. A determining role was played by powerful protectors. Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle (1517–86), minister plenipotentiary of Emperor Charles V and, later, of Philip II of Spain, a man of culture and a great collector, was a true *éminence grise* for book projects initiated in Rome, Venice, and other European cities. Cardinal Granvelle acted as patron of publishers of the caliber of Lorenzo Torrentino, Gabriele Giolito, and Christophe Plantin.¹⁸

In their turn, book people attempted to attain positions that would guarantee them a degree of protection from the risks of merchandising and from the crisis of insolvency. In Rome many printers and publishers became clerics or at least members of the papal court or of a cardinal's *familia*, starting with the first Italian (not German) printer in Rome, Giovanni Filippo de Lignamine from Messina, who was Scudiero (equerry) and member of Pope Sixtus IV's *familia*. In Venice we find Johannes de Colonia in the eminent position of Scudiero del Doge (equerry to the Doge).¹⁹ Later, as Aldo Manuzio's career shows, Venetian patricians participated in publishing ventures by investing in them or by at least offering their protection. In Lyon the Gabiano family, Italian bookmen, were sufficiently successful to be able to make loans even to the king of France.²⁰ Bookmen might even rise so far in society that they achieved nobility: Nicolaus Jenson became a count palatine; Maximilian II conferred an imperial knighthood on Paolo Manuzio; Lucimborgo da Gabiano acquired the seigneuries of Vourles and Côte-sur-Brignais in France; and Gabriele Giolito, who already belonged to the minor nobility of Montferrat, succeeded in having that status confirmed by Charles V. The search for a position linked to centers of power can be seen in the phenomenon of the privileged printer, a single operator favored by the leading families or religious authorities, who put himself at the service of a particular publishing policy.

Even today, the cities of Italy testify that the construction of a luxurious dwelling, even a palace, was the principal indicator that a Renaissance

¹⁸ Antoine Perrenot (1517–86), who became bishop of Arras in 1540 and cardinal de Granvelle in 1561, studied in Padua, Pavia, and Leuven. He was Charles V's and Philip II's counselor and a notable art and book collector. He lived in Italy from 1565 to 1579 and was viceroy of Naples from 1571 to 1575. For his relations with Giolito and other publishers, see Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 256–61, 279–305.

¹⁹ See *D.B.I.*, s.v. "De Lignamine (Del Legname, La Legname, o Legname), Giovanni Filippo."

²⁰ The loan of 2,200 scudi was given by Giovanni Francesco da Gabiano between 1553 and 1555: Marciani, "I Gabiano," 204–6.

Questo e' el libro che tracta di Mercatantie & usanze depaesi



Fig. 0.3. Woodcut from the title page of Giorgio Chiarini, *Libro che tracta di mercatantie et usanze de paesi*. Florence: [Bartolommeo di Libri], for Piero Pacini, c. 1497; 8°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Statale, Cremona.

merchant had achieved a certain level of wealth. Book merchants participated in this performance. The motivation for such an act, with all the associated expenses of personal representation, lies primarily in the search for honor, a value that reflected on an individual, his household, and his city. Luc'Antonio Giunti bought a palace on the Grand Canal for the sum of fifteen thousand ducats, although no further details are known. Lucimborgo da Gabiano, when he achieved great wealth in Lyon, became a landowner and had the castle of Vourles reconstructed, adapting it as his own sumptuous dwelling. The inventory of its contents is long: aside from furniture, household linens, and clothing, the castle contained a large amount of jewelry with precious stones, a collection of pictures with both sacred and profane subject matter, and a large number of arms, among which there were arquebuses, iron-clad staffs, and halberds.²¹ More

²¹ Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 7:83–104.

modest but far from poor were the furnishings of the Gardano family house in Venice.²² The only complete description that we have is of the Giolito palace in Trino in 1550. This structure was not only a dwelling but also a business center. On the ground floor a loggia with thirty-six columns complete with capitals, an architrave, and a long staircase provided ample room for a *fondaco*, or storage space. On market days Giovanni Giolito, who also traded in grains, cloth, and spices, did business with his clients inside the palace in a room twelve meters long and seven meters wide, where several notaries offered their services. The print shop was also contained inside the palace, on the ground floor. A rich assortment of household linens was described in the inventory – forty pairs of sheets, blankets and quilts, table linens, silk and other sorts of cloth – as well as tapestries and mirrors, and a vast supply of women's clothing, including many separate sleeves, as fashion dictated at the time. The furniture included ten beds and all that went with them; credenzas and chairs; benches and tables; chests and kitchen equipment; plus two *catreche da cacar dentro* (chairs with a hole in the seat, arms, and an incorporated chamber pot), a piece of furniture found only in the most refined households in the sixteenth century. Also to be found in the palace were arquebuses and other firearms, silver platters, and jewels. The cultural context of the Giolito family can be read from their acquisition of the durable or semi-durable goods that decorated their domestic space, material possessions that culminated in a painting collection that included works with religious subject matter (four depicted the Madonna and Child; one showed Saint Jerome; two large old paintings in the ground-floor reception room portrayed the Three Kings and the dead Christ), along with four large tapestries depicting personages and landscapes on the walls of the salon on the upper floor. The works of art also included a round picture of the Three Graces and two portraits, one of Giovanni Giolito and the other of his son Gabriele, that bear witness to their owner's deliberate self-celebration. The inventory of rare objects that embody the value placed on beauty and art closes with a small lute with its case. The consumption of art represented by these objects is indicative of an aesthetic taste more than an exhibition of wealth. And it was taste and the acquisition of refinement that guaranteed the social credentials of merchants on the rise.²³

²² Richard J. Agee, *The Gardano Music Printing Firms, 1569–1611* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1998), 57–58.

²³ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 36–40. On Renaissance housing, see Peter Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior, 1400–1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991) and

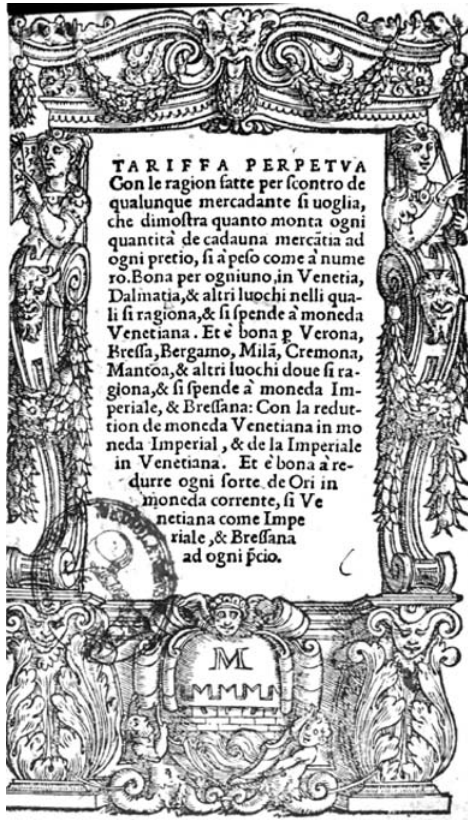


Fig. 0.4. Title page of Giovanni Mariani, *Tariffa perpetua*. Venice: Francesco Rampazetto for Giovanni Mariani, 1553; 12°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

Even on a more modest level, however, the bookmen were in almost daily contact with the social elite and with authors and readers of books. For that reason, and also on account of the nature of their merchandise, society did not deem bookmen to be of the same status as other merchants. In Italian, that difference became codified in a formula that describes bookmen as dedicated to *mercanzia d'onore* (honorable

Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, eds., *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2006). Specifically on the use of sleeves, see Evelyn Welch, "New, Old and Second-Hand Culture: The Case of the Renaissance Sleeve," in *Revaluing Renaissance Art*, ed. Gabriele Neher and Rupert Shepherd (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 101–19.

merchandise) rather than simply *mercanzia d'utile* (profitable merchandise). That formula existed even earlier than its most famous use, in a letter of Pietro Aretino to Gabriele Giolito of 1542, in which Aretino praises Giolito, saying, "One might say that you deal in *mercanzia più d'onore che d'utile*."²⁴ Honor was far superior to riches and was acquired and maintained through social recognition.

The business of books requires examination from two perspectives: internal and external. The former is built on a close study of documentary evidence such as shop and warehouse inventories, account books, contracts, and correspondence. The latter considers mainly of laws, legislation, and rules, for which notarial documents are the main source. This material records a wide range of private acts, from testaments to sales



Fig. 0.5. Illustration of measuring tools for different goods and the privilege of Giovanni Mariani, from *Tariffa perpetua*. Venice: Francesco Rampazetto for Giovanni Mariani, 1553; 12°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

²⁴ Letter to Gabriele Giolito, 1 June 1542, in Pietro Aretino, *Lettere. Libro secondo*, ed. Francesco Erspamer (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo – Guanda, 1998), 74.

receipts, from proxies to partnership agreements, and from divisions of inheritance to inventories of all nature of possessions. Institutional archives also hold much information. For the present study my main sources have been the registers of the Venetian Senate, which include documentation about privileges and the files of the Inquisition in Venice, which often had to deal with bookmen. Legislation on printing can be traced in the acts of other government bodies, especially in Venice and in Rome.

Bookshop and warehouse inventories play a particularly important role in this research. They are normally to be found in notarial documents but sometimes also appear in the acts of magistracies; occasionally they were even used as pasteboard for book covers. Bookshop inventories were the starting point for my research when I began it some fifteen years ago, but the study of the formation of the market for printed books cannot be restricted to the terminal points of sale – the urban bookshops – even if in Italy these formed the basic structure of commerce in books. The market for an innovative commodity such as the printed book must also be studied in terms of the emergence of new professions. Social relations played a vital role in the construction and functioning of the market. With the advent of print, an edition in many copies might be financed, but only if sufficient public interest appeared to exist. Potential clients had to be informed of the existence of the published book. The role of the publisher was thus from the start orientated toward the search for a public and toward sales, which is why the press run of a particular edition was such an important decision. The publisher fulfilled his function through a search for ties (even indirect ties) with potential clients, identifying places, agents, and circumstances that might bring together production and purchase. His primary function was not so much to produce books as to induce readers to buy books and use them. The creation of a market was the result of a process of interaction between a system of production and a system of communication that hinged on ties that particular figures – *cartolai*, booksellers, stationers, teachers, exponents of the intellectual life in a broader sense, and last but not least, authors – succeeded in establishing between types of books and potential buyers.

Several approaches are adopted here in order to analyze the formation and development of the book trade. The first considers the formation of commercial networks, from the first network, that constructed by the Company of Venice in the fifteenth century, to the great networks organized by powerful bookmen like Giunti, Giolito, Gabiano, and Manuzio in the sixteenth century (chapters 1 and 2). We then look at the challenges of

selling books through the eyes of the producers, who focused on realizing press runs commensurate with demand, and of the wholesalers, who concentrated on organizing ever-larger book warehouses, on perfecting the technical aspects of exchange and commerce, and on entrusting the increasingly systematic distribution of book goods to the nascent figure of the middleman (chapters 3 and 4). As the market for books grew, commercial networks became increasingly complex and in a culmination of this process, the great firms opened branches in those cities with the highest book sales. The organization of commerce through branch offices was the brilliant response of the dominant Venetian publishing business to cultural polycentrism in Italy and to the limited success of book fairs on the Italian Peninsula. Branches were not only part of a sales network, for with time they evolved into outlying centers for the realization of printing projects, thus contributing to the redistribution of publishing initiative. As it acquired greater complexity, the book trade created special tools for protecting its product, both in the print shop, where the publisher's mark or device played a strategic role, and by means of the privilege, which

1564. A. di 1. Marzo.		1664. A. di 15. Marzo.	
17	Molin da mesurar. A. Candel detto, mi trouo in Verrgo, fu il Trasfuso, di mite 8 2, monnato il molin piccolo, pofo fu il moue detto il Molin, finato na ler 1000, del qual si trage di fite 1000 100 et di anuano, un poto di 100 l'anno, nal 100 100 100 100	16	Zuccheri Beledi, moui. A. Caffe contati a Paolo Cornaro, per l'annato di 1200, a 100 18 il cento, monta 100 100 100 100
18	Deputa ma nouata la mano Valerissa. A. Candel detto, Jaqual mi trouo al moggio di Cipro, garruone te p. Antonio Dilechi, finato na ler di tutti fu for mimiti, come p. fu l'istario appare, 100 2500 100 2500	17	Zuccheri Beledi, bilicchi. A. Caffe contati a Valentin de Capio, per l'annato di fite 8 6, pofo 2 140 l'ora di fite 8 11, nella netto 2 145, a 100 10 il cento monta 100 485. Albitato per la sua parte di miffetaria, a una per cento, 100 48 10 15, nella netto pagamento 100 400 10 10. nal 100 400 10 10
19	Dipici in moue. A. Candel detto, per facchi 8, mi trouo anner in moggio, pofo in tutto 8 100, a 100 10 il cento, 100 855. nal 100 855	18	Zuccheri Beledi, detti. A. Officio della miffetaria, per l'annato di 100 485, a ragion di 100 2 per cento, 100 9 10 10 10. nal 100 9 10 10 10
20	Fornici l'istario. A. Candel detto, fite 400, mi trouo in moggio, netto naler 4 5 15 lo fite, come e il corso, 100 100. nal 100 100	19	Zuccheri di miffetaria. A. Caffe contati a Paolo Cornaro, per l'annato di fite 8 10, pofo 2 140 l'ora di fite 8 11, nella netto 2 145, a 100 10 il cento monta 100 485. Albitato per la sua parte di miffetaria, a una per cento, 100 48 10 15, nella netto pagamento 100 400 10 10. nal 100 400 10 10
21	Crisofora da Sebenico. A. Candel detto, per un conto fatto tra noi, di robbe anate, come appare per uno scritto di sua mano, 100 300. nal 100 300	20	Zuccheri detti. A. Officio della miffetaria, per l'annato di 100 485, a ragion di 100 2 per cento, 100 9 10 10 10. nal 100 9 10 10 10
22	Gaspero di Liberti da Pdergo. A. Candel detto, conati a lui per impediti, come appare per uno scritto di sua mano, 100 100. nal 100 100	21	Gottoli Cipriotti. A. Basse Plasto, di Cipro, per l'annato di fite 8 11, pofo 2 140 l'ora di fite 8 11, nella netto 2 145, a 100 10 il cento monta 100 485. Albitato per la sua parte di miffetaria, a una per cento, 100 48 10 15, nella netto pagamento 100 400 10 10. nal 100 400 10 10
23	Fattuali in mite. A. Candel detto, per più di diuini mi trouo in mite, p. l'istario di fite 8 11, pofo 2 140 l'ora di fite 8 11, nella netto 2 145, a 100 10 il cento monta 100 485. Albitato per la sua parte di miffetaria, a una per cento, 100 48 10 15, nella netto pagamento 100 400 10 10. nal 100 400 10 10	22	Gottoli detti. A. Officio della miffetaria, per l'annato di 100 485, a ragion di 100 2 per cento, 100 9 10 10 10. nal 100 9 10 10 10
24	Candel detto. A. F. Michel Quirin, p. tanti che lui del anre, per più robbe anate da lui, come p. scritto di mia mano appare, o di lui appare, 100 100. nal 100 100	23	Gottoli detti. A. Officio della miffetaria, per l'annato di 100 485, a ragion di 100 2 per cento, 100 9 10 10 10. nal 100 9 10 10 10
25	Candel detto. A. F. Michel Quirin, p. tanti che lui del anre, per più robbe anate da lui, come p. scritto di mia mano appare, o di lui appare, 100 100. nal 100 100	24	Gottoli detti. A. Officio della miffetaria, per l'annato di 100 485, a ragion di 100 2 per cento, 100 9 10 10 10. nal 100 9 10 10 10

Fig. o.6. Example of double-entry bookkeeping, from Domenico Manzoni, *Libro mercantile, ordinato col suo giornale & alfabeto, per tener conti doppi al modo di Venetia*. Venice: Comin da Trino, 1573; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

temporarily guaranteed a protected market within a specific geographical area (chapters 5 and 6).

We finally pass on to the bookshops, to their scale and their stock and their day-to-day management, and to the booksellers' relations with wholesalers. Other modes of distribution and sale of books also functioned for the entire period under consideration here, and far beyond it. Distribution through religious orders, on well-defined circuits for itinerant sales, and through ambulant sellers were the most frequent forms of book sale outside the bookshops and helped define the public for this new product. Still, bookshop sales remained of primary importance to the printing production that involved the greatest financial investment, as demonstrated by the contractual connections between major Venetian wholesalers and various bookseller-stationers in smaller cities (chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10).

The bookseller, a protagonist in cultural commerce and the inventor of innovative ways to arrange large quantities of books in his shop, was a visible presence within the urban landscape. By making hundreds of books available to all comers, a bookshop might spontaneously become a lively and informal meeting place and a center for the exchange of information, for reading, and for discussion (chapter 11).

COMMERCIAL NETWORKS

CHAPTER ONE

THE COMMERCIAL NETWORK OF THE COMPANY OF VENICE

The German contribution to the printing world in Venice determined its development. Not only had Johannes de Spira, who introduced printing in Venice in 1469, been born in the German city of Speyer, but additionally, Johannes de Colonia, the first major printing entrepreneur in Venice, was a native of Cologne.¹

Johannes de Colonia and Nicolaus Jenson

Johannes de Colonia promoted Venetian printing and shaped its relationship with the transnational market. He entered the world of printing through marriage: in 1471 he wed Paola, the widow of Johannes de Spira, and he was the financier of Vindelinus, Johannes de Spira's brother. His own book production, spread over a decade, reveals his great initiative and his access to substantial financial backing. He must have been well established in the Venice of his time, as he had been named Scudiero del Doge (equerry to the Doge), a post assigned to sixteen men of mature age held in highest repute in the city. The Scudieri del Doge played a prominent role in ducal processions, which have been identified as a representation of the hierarchic conception of the Republic.² Position was all-important in the procession, and the Doge's equeries led the first segment. The Scudieri del Doge wore characteristic black-velvet short cloaks, as depicted by Cesare Vecellio in his *Habiti antichi*, a collection of illustrations of contemporary dress.³ In addition to taking part in solemn

¹ Carolin Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig: Wirtschaftliche und Kulturelle Beziehungen im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006), 166–73. Recently Johannes de Colonia has been identified as Johannes Hellman, a major merchant in Cologne who, in 1470, imported 35 percent of the paper used in that city: see Franz Irsigler, "Dibattito," in *Produzione e commercio della carta e del libro secc. XIII–XVIII: atti della "Ventitreesima Settimana di Studi," 15–20 aprile 1991*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1992), 432. Wirtz (*Köln und Venedig*, 172–73) disagrees with that identification.

² Edwin Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 193–205.

³ See Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo* (Venice: D. Zenaro, 1590) and Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones, eds. and trans.,

Abraā usq; ad Dauid una. Altera inde usq; ad transmigratiōē in babiloniā. Tertia inde usq; ad christi carnalem natiuitatem. Fiunt itaq; omnes quinque Sexta nunc agitur nullo generationum numero metienda: propter id quod dictum est. Non est uestrum scire tempora quę pater posuit in sua potestate. Post hanc tanq̃ in die septimo requiesce& deus: cum eundem diem septimū quod nos erimus i seipso deo faci& regescere. De istis porro etatibus singulis nunc diligenter longum est disputare. Hęc tamen septima erit sabbatū cuius finis non erit uestpera: sed dominicus dies uelut octauus aeternus qui christi resurrectione sacratus est: eternam non solum spiritus uerum etiam corporis requiem p̃figurans. Ibi uacabimus & uidebimus. uidebimus & amabimus amabimus & laudabimus. Ecce quod erit in fine fine fine. Nam quis alius ē noster finis: nisi puenire ad regnū cuius nullus ē finis?

Videor mihi debitū ingentis huius operis adiuuante domino reddidisse Quibus parum uel quibus nimium est: mihi ignoscant. Quibus autē satis ē: non mihi sed deo mecū gratias congratulantes agant. Gloria & honor patri & filio & spiritui sancto: om̃ipotēti deo i excelsis i sēcula sēculorū Amē.

Qui docuit Venetos exscribi posse Ioannes
 Mense fere trino Centena uolumina plini
 Et totidem Magni Ciceronis Spira libellos:
 Ceperat Aureli: subita sed morte perentus
 Non potuit Ceptum Venetis finire uolumen
 Vindelinus adest eiufdem frater: & arte
 Non minor: hadriacaq; morabitur urbe

ℳ.CCCC.LXX.

Fig. 1.1. Colophon of Augustinus, *De ciuitate Dei*. Venice: Johannes and Vindelinus de Spira, 1470; P. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

processions, the equerries escorted the Doge on an almost daily basis as he moved through the city. Normally, the post of equerry was conferred only on native-born citizens, so we can deduce that Johannes de Colonia enjoyed unusual prestige and trust. His bookshop was located by the church of San Salvador, near the Rialto, an area that, together with the Mercerie, soon contained the greatest concentration of bookshops in Venice. He lived in the upper part of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi.⁴

Clothing of the Renaissance World: Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas: Cesare Vecellio's Habiti Antichi et Moderni (London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 115.

⁴ We know these details from the address on a letter sent by one of his agents, Sigismund Rechlinger, in 1471: "Spectabili ac circumspecto viro Iohanni de Colonia scutifero ducis Venetiarum vel mercatori in Fontego Teutonicorum partis superioris aut in apoteca librorum per medium S. Salvatoris etc. in Venetiis." This was followed in Italian by "A la botega



Fig. 1.2. Costume of the equerries to the Doge, from Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri due*. Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1590; 8°.

In 1474 Johannes de Colonia went into partnership with another German merchant, Johannes Manthen, born in Gerresheim, near Dusseldorf.⁵ A galaxy of other, and for the most part German, businessmen began to form around these two men, but their roles are difficult to define because

de i libri per mezo San Salvatore su el canton." See Mariarosa Cortesi, "Incunaboli veneziani in Germania nel 1471," in *Vestigia: Studi in onore di Giuseppe Billanovich*, ed. Rino Avesani et al. 2 vols. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 1:212.

⁵ Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig*, 174–75. There are documents that attest to commercial ties between Johannes de Colonia and Manthen as early as 1471: Cortesi, "Incunaboli veneziani," 201.

of the lack of documentation.⁶ The Fondaco dei Tedeschi was quite clearly the first place in Venice where the new industry found investors and merchants. The Fondaco formed an ideal commercial meeting place, providing easy access to mercantile information and facilitating business deals.

In 1470, only one year before the appearance of Johannes de Colonia, Nicolaus Jenson, an exceptionally skillful French typesetter and printer, had come to Venice.⁷ Jenson achieved the most remarkable advance in social and economic status known in the world of print: he started as a punch cutter at the Paris Mint but would become a count palatine, a title conferred on him by Pope Sixtus IV in 1475. We know from his testament that he became wealthy enough to provide his three daughters with dowries of six hundred ducats apiece.⁸ Jenson was not himself a merchant, however, which meant that he needed to find financial backers. He relied in part on patronage and occasional investors such as Girolamo Strozzi, but he also entered into a number of professional partnerships. Two Frankfurt businessmen became his partners: Johannes Rauchfass, the

⁶ Almost all that is known on the question is based on Gustavo Ludwig, "Contratti tra lo stampador Zuan di Colonia ed i suoi soci e inventario di una parte del loro magazzino," *Miscellanea di storia veneta, R. Deputazione veneta di storia patria*, ser. 2, vol. 8 (1902): 45–88. Most of the extant documents are the testaments of some of these men. The commissioners who are named in them and the executors of the wills, who were charged with continuing to sell the testator's books, help us to intuit the structure of the business: see Bartolomeo Cecchetti, "Stampatori, libri stampati nel secolo XV: Testamento di Nicolò Jenson e di altri tipografi in Venezia: Note," *Archivio Veneto* 33 (1887): 457–67. The studies of Martin Lowry (*The World of Aldus Manutius*; "The Social World of Nicholas Jenson and John of Cologne," *La Bibliofilia* 83 [1981]: 193–218; "Venetian Capital, German Technology and Renaissance Culture in the Late Fifteenth Century," *Renaissance Studies* 2 [1988]: 1–13; *Nicholas Jenson and the Rise of Venetian Publishing in Renaissance Europe* [Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991]) have furnished important information on context, but no new factual data. The probable loss of all the documentary material relating to the German bookmen in Venice is clear from Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig*, an investigation of commercial relations between Venice and Cologne that fails to provide new material. Wirtz devotes 133 pages to natives of Cologne who were active in Venice and only seven pages to Venetians active in Cologne, an imbalance largely due to the bombing of the Cologne archives. The best synthesis in Italian on the first German printers in Venice is Marino Zorzi, "Stampatori tedeschi a Venezia," in *Venezia e la Germania: Arte, politica, commercio, due civiltà a confronto* (Milan: Electa, 1986), 115–40. The best in English is Leonardas V. Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago: American Library Association; London: Mansell Information, 1976), 20–30.

⁷ Terms such as "Egregius ac ingeniosus vir magister Nicolaus Jenson francigena" or "Egregius ac industriosus vir magister Nicolaus Jenson francigena" appear in several notarized contracts: Antonio Sartori, "Documenti padovani sull'arte della stampa nel secolo XV," in *Libri e stampatori in Padova: Miscellanea di studi storici in onore di Mons. G. Bellini: Tipografo, editore, libraio* (Padua: Tipographia Antoniana, 1952), 161–62, 164–65. On Jenson, see Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, and the *D.B.I.* entry, s.v. "Jenson, Nicolas."

⁸ Jenson's last will and testament, dated 7 September 1480, is published in Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 228–34.

Venice agent for the Frankfurt firm of Chrafft-Stalberg, and Peter Ugelheimer, manager of the Deutsches Haus, an inn in Venice at the sign of the Flute or the Trinity.⁹

In the two-year period 1471–72 the two firms headed by Johannes de Colonia and Nicolaus Jenson controlled roughly one half of the entire printing production of Venice, which was in the midst of a period of exceptional expansion. Production likely dipped in 1473 because of structural weakness in the publishing organism: distribution and sales could not yet keep pace with manufacture. While production levels dropped, financial and human participation in the commercial organization probably grew. Evidence of these developments can be detected in the appearance of the first lists of books for sale, distributed in the 1470s by booksellers connected with the two firms.¹⁰ Both firms emerged from the production downturn reinforced, able to consolidate their enterprises and bring in new partners.

Very little is known of the activities of these two firms, but early traces can be seen in the leading university towns in Italy. Both firms had a presence in nearby Padua, a market of fundamental importance. Johannes de Colonia already figures in 1476 as a *compater* of the bedel Johannes de Tremonia (Dortmund), who is mentioned as Johannes de Colonia's creditor, along with Johannes Manthen, for the sum of 129 ducats.¹¹ The kinship acquired at the baptismal font as the godfather of an associate's child and thus *compare* of the father was one means of consolidating an alliance, for the godfather publically accepted his social duty, as a quasi family member, to help that family.¹² Later, in 1478, Johannes de Colonia and Johannes

⁹ Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig*, 162–63.

¹⁰ These lists are Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen, *Bücheranzeige* (bookseller's advertisement) (Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen, ca. 1486, *ISTC* ij00311300) and Nicolaus Jenson, *Bücheranzeige* (advertisement) (Venice: Nicolaus Jenson, between 1 January 1478 and 8 June 1479, *ISTC* ij00218700). I am grateful to Christian Coppens for allowing me to read and cite his article "Marketing Early Printed Books: Publishers' and Booksellers' Advertisements and Catalogues" before its publication.

¹¹ Sartori, "Documenti padovani," 137–38. In the original Latin text Johannes de Tremonia is defined as *bidellus legistarum*, that is, bedel of the faculty of jurisprudence. In Latin the *compater*, literally "co-father," refers to the godfather viewed in relation to the father of a baptized child.

¹² John Bossy, "Godparenthood: The Fortunes of a Social Institution in Early Modern Christianity," in *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800*, ed. Kaspar von Greyerz (London: German Historical Institute; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 194–201; Guido Alfani, *Padri, padrini, patroni. La parentela spirituale nella storia* (Venice: Marsilio, 2007); Guido Alfani and Vincent Gourdon, *Entrepreneurs, Formalisation of Social Ties and Trustbuilding in Europe (14th–20th Centuries)* (Milan: Università Bocconi, 2010), www.dondena.unibocconi.it/wp25.

Manthen made Simone Verde their agent in Padua, giving him responsibility for looking out for sales and the firm's business in general. The three-year duration of the contract was long enough to consolidate the ties between the firm and its representative.¹³

Nicolaus Jenson was also very much a presence in Padua. In 1477 his proxy holder (*procurator*) Antonio Stanchi of Valenza, later a printer in Venice, had a list of some hundred titles drawn up before a notary, probably volumes deposited for sale with the German bookseller Giovanni Stai (de Staer), who kept a bookshop in Borgo Piove in Padua.¹⁴ The following year Jenson named an Englishman, William Tose, as his representative and proxy holder for the collection of money owed to him in France and Great Britain.¹⁵ In the same year a similar charge was given to a Frenchman, Guy de Charmentray, although the territory he was to cover is not specified in the document.¹⁶ France was evidently of particular interest to Jenson, who in his testament entrusted that market to his brother Alberto and two other persons.¹⁷

Traces of the commercial expansion of these two firms can also be found in the university town of Pavia. In 1474 agents of Johannes de Colonia paid a salary of twenty-two gold ducats to Olivier Blexhinc of Liège and Leonardo da Verona to supervise the firm's business and sell books in all the cities and towns of Lombardy and in other regions, replenishing their stock in the warehouse in Pavia.¹⁸ Nicolaus Jenson also supplied books for another bookshop in Pavia. In 1477, the sudden death of the manager of that bookstore, with whom Jenson had left merchandise on consignment with a value of five hundred ducats, put Jenson's investment at risk, for the manager's heirs denied that there were still any books or any money in the shop. Jenson had to turn to the ambassador of Milan,

¹³ Sartori, "Documenti padovani," 163–64. According to Daniela Fattori ("Nuovi documenti sull'introduzione della stampa a Verona e sulla Compagnia di Giovanni da Colonia," *La Bibliofilia* 106 [2004]: 129–30) Simone Verde and Simone di Bartolomeo (a worker of Francesco della Fontana's, on whom see chapter 7) were one and the same.

¹⁴ Daniela Fattori, "La bottega di un libraio padovano del 1477," *La Bibliofilia* 112 (2010): 229–43. On this occasion Stai, the bookseller, was erroneously thought to have died, which was evidently why Stanchi, as Jenson's *procuratore*, had been charged to recover the merchandise consigned to him. The inventory was authorized by the Giudice dell'Aquila of Padua, a public magistrate who ruled on the payment of fines and goods sold at auction.

¹⁵ Specifically, "in Francia, in Brictania, in Avinione at alibi ubicumque locorum extra Italiam"; see Sartori, "Documenti padovani," 159.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 164–65, in the document, "Guido Carmentranus."

¹⁷ Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 232.

¹⁸ Arnaldo Ganda, "Due agenti librari di Giovanni da Colonia a Pavia nel 1474," *Bollettino della società pavese di storia patria* 102 (2002): 303–14.

Liber.

De statu mundi post iudicium.

XCVII.

Eracto igitur fina

li iudicio natura humana totaliter i suo termino constituetur. Quia vero oia corporalia facta sunt quodammodo ppter hoies ut i tertio li. e. oñsū: tūc ē toti⁹ creature corporee puenies ē ut status imutet et pgruat statui hoiez qui tūc erūt: et q: tūc hoies icorruptibiles erūt: a tota creatura corporali tolletur generatiois et corruptiois status: et hoc ē qd dicit apls Ro. viij. qd ipa creatura liberabitur a seruitute corruptionis i libertatē glie filioz dei: generatio atz et corruptio q est in inferioribus corporib⁹ ex motu celi causat: ad hoc igitur q i inferioribus cesset generatio et corruptio: o3 q etiā motus celi cesset: et ppter hoc dē Apoc. x. q ipa aplius nō erit. Tō o3 at impossibile uideri q motus celi cesset: nō. n. mor⁹ celi sic ē nā lis sicut motus grauius et leuius ut ab aliquo interi ori actiōe pnciplo iclinetur ad motū: s3 dī nālis i qtu3 bz in sua natura aptitudinē ad talē motū. pncipiū at illius motus est aliquis intellectus ut in tertio oñsum est: mouetur igitur celū sicut ea q a uolūtate mouetur: uolūtās autē mouet ppter finē finis autē motus celi nō pōt ēē ipm moueri: mor⁹ n. cū semp in aliud redat non habet rationē ulti mi finis. Nec pōt dici q finis celestis motus sit ut corpus celeste reducatur fm ubi de potentia in actū: q: hoc potētia nūq potest tota in actū reduci q oū corpus celeste est actū i vno ubi est i potētia ad aliud sicut est de potētia materie pme re spectu formarū: sicut igitur finis nature in gēnēa tione nō est reducere mām de potētia i actum sed aliquid qd ad hoc cōsequitur. f. pperuitas rez per quā ad diuinā silitudinē accēdit: ita finis motus celestis nō est reduci de potētia i actū s3 aliqd consequens ad hāc reductionē. f. assimilari deo i cādo: oia at generabilia et corruptibilia q cānf p motū celi: ad hoiem ordināf quodamō sicut in finē ut in tertio est oñsū: mor⁹ igit celi precipue ē ppter generationē hoiez. i hoc. n. maxiam dinaz silitudinē consequitur in cādo. q: forma hois. f. aia rōalis imediate creat a deo ut i etio oñsū est. Tō at pōt ēē finis multiplicatio aiaz i infinitū: qz infinitū priatur rōi finis. Nihil igitur incōueniens sedē si certo nūero hoiez ppleto ponam⁹ motum celi desistere: cessatē tñ motu celi et generatione et corruptione ab elemētis eoz subā remanebit ex imobilitate oīne bonitatis: creauit. n. res ut cēt vii ēē rez q aptitudinē hnt ad pperuitatē: i pepetuū remanebit: hnt at nām ut sint ppetua f3 totū et ptem corpa celestia: elemēta vō fm totū s3 nō f3 pte: qz fm partem corruptibilia sūt. hoies vō fm ptem s3 non fm totū: nam aia rationalis incōitru

ptibilis est: cōpositū aut corruptibile: hec igit fm subām remanebūt in ultimo illo statu mūdi que quoquo mō ad pperuitatē aptitudinem hnt deo supplente sua uirtute quod eis ex propria infimi tate deest. Alia vō aialia et plāte et corpora mix ta que totaliter sunt corruptibilia et secundum eorum et partem nullo modo in illo incorruptio nis statu remanebunt. Sic igitur intelligendum est quod apostolus dicit. i. Cor. viij. Preterit fi gura huius mundi. quia hec species mūdi q nunc est cessabit. substantia uero remanebit. sic etiā in telligitur quod dicitur Job. xiiij. Tō cum dormi erit non resurget donec ateratur celum. i. donec ista dispositio celi cesset q mouetur et in alijs mo tum causat. Quia uero inter alia elemēta maxie actiuum est ignis et corruptibilium consumptiuū consumptio eorum que in futuro statu remaneē non debent. conuenientissime fiet per ignem: et iō secūdū fidem ponitur q finaliter mūdu3 p ignē purgabitur non solum a corruptibilibus corpoi bus sed etiam ab infectione quam locus iste incur rit ex habitatione peccatorū: et hoc est quod dī citur. ij. p. iij. Celi qui nunc sunt et terra eodez v bo repositi: sunt igni reseruari in diem iudici ut per celos non ipsum firmamentum intelligamus in quo sunt sidera siue fixa siue errantia sed istos celos aereos terre vicinos. Quia igitur creatu ra corporalis finaliter disponetur per congruen tiam ad hominis statum: homines autem non so lum a corruptione liberabuntur sed etiam glo ria induentur ut ex dictis patet: oportebit q etiā creatura corporalis quandam claritatis gloriāz suo modo consequatur. Et hīc est quod dicitur Apoc. xxi. Uidi celū nouū et terrā nouā et nō erūt in memoria priora et nō ascendent super eoz sed gaudebitis et exultabitis usqz i sempiternū. Amē

Diuinum opus erroies in omnes gentilium atqz hereticorum: christianam fidem suis argu mentis impugnantium: Dñi Thome acquina tis ordinis predicatorum. Petrus Lantianus ve netus: theologus patavinus: eiusdem professio nis religiosus emendauit: castigauitqz. Impres sum uero dedit. vir prestantissimus Nicolaus Jenson gallicus: florentie. Re. prin. Venetorum. Joanne Motenigo duce. Anno salutis. Mccc lxxx. ydibus Junij. Venetijs feliciter.

Fig. 1.3. Colophon of Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*. Venice: Nicolaus Jenson, 13 June 1480; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Statale, Cremona.

using influential friends to interest him in the case.¹⁹ The mechanism of the consignment sale, which was the most common system for carrying on commercial operations in distant markets, stipulated that the producer remained the owner of the merchandise until it was sold. If the bookseller should die, it fell to the producer to prove that he had title to books that had been entrusted to the bookseller to be sold, and it was in the producer's interests to send an emissary to take possession of them again as quickly as possible.²⁰

Inevitably, the two firms competed not only in Venice but in all the cities in which they both sold books. Even though they avoided printing the same works, they were forced to duplicate their efforts, setting up parallel avenues of distribution and sale in the principal centers of the book trade. Eventually the two firms merged, a move facilitated, Martin Lowry argues, by the fact that both Johannes de Colonia and Nicolaus Jenson belonged to the Scuola Piccola di San Girolamo, a confraternity with a substantial number of foreign members who were active as merchants in Venice.²¹ In 1479 this first major publishing partnership took the name "Johannes de Colonia, Nicolaus Jenson e Socii," but it became known simply as "the Company." It combined two preexisting partnerships: on the one hand, that of Nicolaus Jenson and his associates, Peter Ugelheimer and the heirs of Johannes Rauchfass (Jenson's former partner, who had died in 1478);²² on the other hand, that of Johannes de Colonia, flanked by Johannes Manthen and some more minor figures.²³ The Company, which lasted

¹⁹ Emilio Motta, "Pamfilo Castaldi, Antonio Planella, Pietro Ugleimer ed il vescovo d'Aleria: Nuovi documenti per la storia della tipografia in Italia tratti dagli archivi milanesi," *Rivista storica italiana* 1 (1884): 259; Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 161.

²⁰ As happened, for example, in Ferrara in 1496, when the *cartolaio* Bartolomeo da Pavia was killed and the Venetian publisher Bernardino Stagnino had to send his factor Innocente Ziletti with a power of attorney to regain possession of the books that had been entrusted to the *cartolaio* for sale; see Angela Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara tra XV e XVI secolo: La bottega di Domenico Sivieri* (Florence: Olschki, 1998), 87–91.

²¹ Lowry, "The Social World of Nicholas Jenson," 193–218. "The main purpose of joining a confraternity was to attain a spiritual benefit, by showing devotion to a certain saint, by attending masses, processions, and funeral vigils, and to gain mutual support" (Cristina Dondi, "Printers and Guilds in Fifteenth-Century Venice," *La Bibliofilia* 106 [2004]: 243). Later, in the late 1480s, the Scuola Grande di San Rocco was the most important confraternity for Italian printers and booksellers; see Dondi, "Printers and Guilds," 257–65.

²² Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig*, 162–63.

²³ Ludwig, "Contratti tra lo stampador Zuan di Colonia"; Konrad Häbler, "Das Testament des Johann Manthen von Gerresheim," *La Bibliofilia* 26 (1924): 1–9; Motta, "Pamfilo Castaldi." The entire event is related in Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius*, 18–19. The formal agreement reached on 29 May 1480 was subscribed by the following: on one side, Johannes de Colonia, represented by Johannes Manthen, who also signed in his own name, by Alvise Dardani and Alvise Donà, and by the widow of Johannes da Spira, Paola

only a year because of the disappearance of both of the principal partners, was impressive. Making use of the presses of Johannes Herbort and others, it produced twenty folio editions.²⁴ Although the Company no longer printed under that name after 1480, it continued to exist as a business, using the vernacular “Zuan da Colonia, Nicolò Jenson e Compagni” or the Latin “Johannes de Colonia et Nicolaus Jenson et socii” to sell both its own books and those produced by others. If we consider that when the Company was founded, Johannes de Colonia’s contribution was five thousand ducats worth of books, we can well imagine the massive quantity of merchandise that the partners had warehoused to back their new commercial enterprise. The disappearance of both men prevented the Company from becoming truly established. No publishing dynasty on the model of those that saw the light of day in Venice several years later (the names Manuzio and Giunti spring to mind) emerged from their collaboration. Moreover, the Company lacked the intellectual elaboration beyond the actual publication of books that would later lead other publishers to nurture circles of philologists and men of letters. Lacking both permanence and a sense of its intellectual purpose, the great publishing enterprise that was the Company remains a somewhat shadowy historical presence.

In 1482 the Company ceded at least a portion of its types to Andrea Torresani, the future partner (and father-in-law) of Aldo Manuzio.²⁵ We can hypothesize that production continued after that date, perhaps spread among several firms, but we cannot prove this theory. The firm’s continued existence was based on the longevity of the women of the families – Paola, the wife of Johannes de Colonia, and Girolama de Spira, the daughter of Johannes de Spira, in particular – whose dowries in book

(Johannes de Colonia’s wife), along with her daughter Girolama and her son Pietro Paolo (the two women were represented by Gaspar von Dinslaken, Girolama’s husband); on the other side, Nicolaus Jenson, Peter Ugelheimer, and the commissioners of the heirs of Rauchfass, former partner. On Paola, one of the first well-documented women in the book trade, see Deborah Parker, “Women in the Book Trade in Italy, 1475–1620,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (1996): 509–41.

²⁴ Zorzi, “Stampatori tedeschi,” 131.

²⁵ An introductory text to Gregorius IX, *Decretales cum glossa*. Comm: Bernardus Parmensis (Venice: Andreas Torresanus, de Asula, Bartholomaeus de Blavis, de Alexandria, and Mapheus de Peterbonis, 22 June 1482, *ISTC* ig00456000) declares that the book is a realization of a project of the “best company” of Johannes de Colonia and Nicolaus Jenson to print the Decretals of Gregory IX, with commentary, in-quarto for the first time, and with smaller types. In the later edition of Nicolaus Panormitanus de Tudeschis, *Lectura super V libris Decretalium*. 6 vols. (Venice: Andreas Torresanus, de Asula, 1482–83, *ISTC* ip00049000), Torresani refers to the reuse of Jenson’s types, “quo nihil prestantius, nihil melius” (of which nothing is superior, nothing is better).

stock perpetuated the shared interests of the book merchants involved as the women remarried.²⁶ It is clear that distribution and sales continued uninterrupted, but we do not know how long this group of mostly German merchants continued to make use of the distribution network of factors, commission agents, and booksellers first set up by Johannes de Colonia and Nicolaus Jenson separately and then employed by the Company. The latter had led the way in establishing a commercial *modus operandi* that included the creation and control of a stable network of sales outlets, providing a laboratory for the most advanced techniques of long-range distribution in place in Italy at the time. The influence of Germans on the Venetian book trade reached beyond the years when they were producing books, and their book-trade know-how continued until printing in Venice passed completely into the hands of Italian publishers.

Two examples of this process of transferal should suffice, evidence that some of the major figures in the next generation of printers and booksellers in Venice had previously been agents of the Company, one after the other. Andrea Torresani represented the Company (known at that time as “Zan da Cologna et Compagni”) in Mantua in 1486.²⁷ On acquiring types from the Company, Torresani evidently also adopted some of its connections and its commercial culture, providing as a result a link between the Company and the business ventures of Aldo Manuzio, whose principal partner Torresani would become ten years later. Another prominent figure, Bernardino Stagnino, began his career within the organization of the Company. The son-in-law of Johannes Herbort, one of the Company's printers, and heir to his printing equipment, Stagnino sent books to the Frankfurt Fair from 1489 on.²⁸ He remained connected with the Company at least until 1511, when he was chosen to be fideicommissary for Girolama de Spira, the last heir to the Company's capital holdings.²⁹ Given that

²⁶ Paola married, in order, Johannes de Spira, Johannes de Colonia, and finally Reynaldus de Novimagio (Nijmegen). Girolama, the daughter of Johannes de Spira, married the book merchant Gaspar Dinslaken with a dowry of three thousand ducats furnished by her stepfather, Johannes de Colonia.

²⁷ Andrea Canova, “Paul Butzbach organista, Andrea Torresani mercante e le letture del marchese Federico Gonzaga,” in *Mantova e il Rinascimento italiano: Studi in onore di David S. Chambers*, ed. Philippa Jackson and Guido Rebecchini (Mantua: Sometti, 2011), 33–34.

²⁸ Stefano Pillinini, *Bernardino Stagnino: Un editore a Venezia tra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Rome: Jouvence, 1989), 15–23.

²⁹ Ludwig, “Contratti tra lo stampador Zuan di Colonia,” 86. In fact, among the assorted warehoused books listed in *Girolama 1511* there are books printed by Stagnino. Bernardo Stagnino was Girolama de Spira's *compare*. His son-in-law Giovanni Poesio was also named fideicommissary.

Stagnino was a cousin of Giovanni Giolito's and the great-uncle of Gabriele Giolito,³⁰ it can legitimately be inferred that there was some continuity in expertise between the Company and the Giolito dynasty.

Peter Ugelheimer, Creator of the Commercial Network

Originally from Frankfurt, Peter Ugelheimer, a businessman who took an intense interest in his compatriots' visits to Venice,³¹ began his career as a book merchant as Jenson's business associate. He later became Jenson's *compare* and, eventually, the executor of Jenson's will. A merchant of great ability, Ugelheimer dedicated his life to developing transnational and interregional commerce in Venetian books and to diversifying functions within that business.³² He must also have been a cultivated man with exquisite taste and a passion for books, for he possessed an extraordinary book collection, of which sixteen printed books and a manuscript remain, all marvelously bound and illuminated.³³

Initially a partner of his compatriot Johannes Rauchfass, who was Jenson's financier after 1473, Ugelheimer must have gone regularly to the

³⁰ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 70–80.

³¹ He was the manager of the Deutsches Haus, the inn at the sign of the Flute or the Trinity, which was a favorite stopping place for pilgrims from Germany on their way to the Holy Land: Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 113–14; Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig*, 162–63.

³² Contemporary documentation clearly distinguishes between the various roles and responsibilities of the persons cited. In the testament of Johannes Herbolt (1484), for example, the executors of the will were given as Pietro Benzoni *mercator librorum*, Nicolaus de Frankfordia *impressor librorum*, Alessandro Calcedonio *mercator librorum*, Gaspar Dislachen *mercator librorum*, and Johannes Manthen *mercator librorum*; present at the drawing up of the document were Peter Ugelheimer *mercator librorum* and Battista da Pavia, a simple *venditor librorum*: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Cancellaria Inferiore*, miscellanea, b. 27, n. 2677, Not. Bernardo Morosini, published in part in Bartolomeo Cecchetti, "Altri stampatori e altri librai," *Archivio Veneto* 29 (1885): 411–13 and discussed in Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig*, 178.

³³ The bindings of Ugelheimer's books have been called "the most spectacular of all Italian fifteenth-century bindings": Anthony Hobson, "Booksellers and Bookbinders," in *A Genius for Letters: Booksellers and Bookselling from the 16th to the 20th Century*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 1995), 3. See also Gerard Van Thienen, "Incunabula from the Abbey at Tongerlo: The Provenance of Part of the Collection of the Incunables in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague," in *Hellinga Festschrift / Feestbundel / Mélanges: Forty-Three Studies in Bibliography Presented to Prof. Dr. Wytze Hellinga on the Occasion of his Retirement from the Chair of Neophilology in the University of Amsterdam at the End of the Year 1978* (Amsterdam: Nico Israël, 1980), 481–92. For a more recent account, see Elisabeth Ross, "The Reception of Islamic Culture in the Book Collection of Peter Ugelheimer," in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana: La Musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 127–51.

Frankfurt Fair.³⁴ After establishing a partnership with Jenson, he continued his activities within the Company. Given that his widow, Margarita, initiated a series of suits and other legal proceedings to recover moneys owed to her husband by both firms or by their heirs, it appears that both firms still existed, at least in legal terms, even after Ugelheimer's death in 1488.³⁵ Indeed, this evidence tells us to be wary of judging the existence and vitality of a book enterprise on the basis of its output alone. It is a warning to be heeded particularly in the case of the Company, a society of merchants with its principal seat in Venice but capable of participation in trade in books on a vast scale – in particular between Northern Italy and Germanic lands – with both its own publications and those of others. Indeed, the Company was present at the Frankfurt fairs in 1483, 1487, and 1492. It had agents and representatives north of the Alps, such as Hans Eisenhut, who directed sales in Austria and Hungary from Vienna in 1489,³⁶ and Wolfgang Kraus from Neunburg, Upper Bavaria, who was still collecting money owed to the firm in Vienna and Frankfurt in 1492.³⁷

Later traces of Ugelheimer's activities in the Italian market are more marked, in particular in Milan, where he was living in 1485 and where he dictated his testament on 16 December 1487.³⁸ In Milan and Lombardy sale of the Company's books was initially entrusted to an association formed by Pietro Antonio da Castiglione and Ambrogio Caimi, who had agreed to sell books with the very high annual value of ten thousand ducats.³⁹ The two Milanese associates became thoroughly discontent

³⁴ When Rauchfass died, Ugelheimer picked up his business. According to an agreement drawn up in 1476, he was to pay the sizeable sum of 1,400 gold florins in annual installments of two hundred florins payable at the Frankfurt Fair. In exchange, he had the right to collect and keep all moneys owed to the deceased in various unnamed places. Ugelheimer paid off his debt in 1483: Motta, "Pamfilo Castaldi," 260 and n. 5.

³⁵ Archivio di Stato di Milano, *Governatore degli Statuti, Registri degli atti sovrani*, better known as *Panigarola Statuti*, Reg. n. 10 (H), ff. 254v–256v.

³⁶ Alexander Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*. 5 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Knauer, 1910–25), 1:266.

³⁷ Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig*, 163.

³⁸ Motta, "Pamfilo Castaldi," 269–71.

³⁹ Emilio Motta, "Di Filippo da Lavagna e di alcuni altri tipografi editori milanesi del Quattrocento," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, ser. 3, vol. 9, no. 25 (1898): 43–45, 65–66. Castiglione and Caimi are recorded among Ugelheimer's debtors in his testament, but his widow had little difficulty obtaining, in 1488, repayment of a debt of 1,500 gold ducats, thanks to the consignment of an equivalent quantity of books: *Caimi 1488*. For Caimi's and Castiglione's publishing activities and book commerce in general, see also Ganda, *I primordi della tipografia milanese: Antonio Zarotto da Parma, 1471–1507* (Florence: Olschki, 1984), 34–44.

with this agreement, which lasted from 20 July 1480 to 2 March 1482. After they had signed on to it, counting on enjoying exclusive rights to the sale of the Company's books over the entire territory of the Duchy of Milan, they discovered, to their vast disappointment, that the Venetian company had also given its books to some of its own factors, their directly dependent representatives, undercutting the two men's exclusive rights.⁴⁰

In the 1480s Peter Ugelheimer traveled throughout Lombardy to settle his business there. In Bergamo in 1483 he engaged an illuminator, Jacopo da Balsemo, as his correspondent for local business.⁴¹ On 27 February 1487 he was in Mantua, where the bookseller Stefan Aigner, who was in prison, owed him 620 ducats.⁴²

Peter Ugelheimer's activities were by no means limited to sales in Lombardy. Together with Johannes Manthen, he established relations in Tuscany with booksellers, producing what might even be called a network of bookshops. These enterprises functioned as centers for the distribution and sale of the Company's books in the bigger cities. We know of the existence of this network run by the Company thanks to an agreement registered in Venice on 29 April 1484. In this document, the books present in the entire network of shops ("in civitatibus Florentiae, Pisarum et Senarum et Perusii et per totum territorium tuschanum") that were directly and fully the property of "Johannes de Colonia et Nicolaus Jenson et socii," along with all outstanding debts and moneys owed to the business, were ceded by Johannes Manthen, representing the Company, to a merchant association composed of two people, Ugolino da Fabriano and Giovan Pietro Bonomini of Cremona.⁴³

⁴⁰ This is attested in a ducal letter in the vernacular supporting Pietro Antonio da Castiglione and Ambrogio Caimi against the partnership "Zoanne de Colonia, Nicolò Iasono et compagni" dated 27 March 1481 and published in Motta, "Di Filippo da Lavagna," 63–64.

⁴¹ Rodolfo Vittori, "Entre Milan et Venise: Culture écrite, bibliothèques et circulation du savoir à Bergame (1480–1650)" (Ph.D. thesis, Université de Genève, 2012). On Jacopo da Balsemo, see the entry under his name in Milvia Bollati, ed., *Dizionario biografico dei miniatori italiani, secoli IX–XVII* (Milan: Sylvestre Bonnard, 2004), 346–48.

⁴² Andrea Canova, "Letteratura, tipografia e commercio librario a Mantova nel Quattrocento," in *Studi in memoria di Cesare Mozzarelli*. 2 vols. (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 2008), 1:91.

⁴³ Andrea F. Gasparinetti, "Un documento inedito della società 'Giovanni da Colonia, Nicolò Jenson e compagni,'" in *Studi e ricerche sulla storia della stampa del Quattrocento: Omaggio dell'Italia a Giovanni Gutenberg nel V centenario della sua scoperta*, ed. Ministero della educazione nazionale and Associazione italiana biblioteche (Milan: Hoepli, 1942), 185–90.

The Transfer of the Network to Ugolino da Fabriano and Giovan Pietro Bonomini

Both Ugolino da Fabriano and Giovan Pietro Bonomini were better connected with the world of business and commerce than with the world of printing production. Ugolino was a member of the wealthy Péroli clan and had held various posts in the administration of the city of Fabriano. Giovan Pietro Bonomini had probably already had some financial dealings with the Company.⁴⁴ His name appeared in a notarial act of 1482 in association with Giovanni de Solenis of Verona for the acquisition of 251 copies of a *Digestum vetus* with Accursius' gloss published in Milan on 26 March 1482 by Pietro Antonio da Castiglione and Ambrogio Caimi.⁴⁵ The agreement specifies territorial exclusions, which meant that the 251 copies had to be sold outside the territories of Milan, Lodi, and Piacenza.⁴⁶ Bonomini and Solenis were acting as agents of the Company, mentioned here under the name of Johannes de Colonia.⁴⁷ In short, by 1484 Bonomini evidently had practical experience in selling Milanese and Venetian books and was already collaborating with the Company.

As for the Tuscan bookshops taken over by Ugolino da Fabriano and Giovan Pietro Bonomini, this record of transfer is the first attestation of a network for the distribution of books, fully articulated throughout the territory but also closely linked to the central seat of production. Some of these bookshops had been founded *ex novo*, with a factor sent to manage them; in other cases an agreement was reached with *cartolai* who were already in business. As far as we can tell, the booksellers, whether factors or *cartolai*, were salaried employees. They remained entrepreneurs – and hence independent – in their normal activities, which included the preparation and sale of manuscripts. At the same time, they agreed to

⁴⁴ For the brothers Giovan Pietro and Francesco Bonomini, see Michela Mazzolari, ed., *Liber sive matricula mercatorum civitatis Cremonae* (Cremona: Camera di Commercio, 1989), 81. A certain Bartolomeo Bonomini is listed in 1501 as bookseller with a shop in Brescia: Leonardo Mazzoldi, "I primi librai bresciani," *Commentari dell'Ateneo di Brescia* 172 (1973): 33. In particular, see *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Bonomini, Giovan Pietro," which does not, however, mention his commercial activities in Tuscany. Giovan Pietro Bonomini published a book in Tuscany: Niccolò Perotti, *Rudimenta grammatices* (Florence: ad petitionem Joannis Petri de Bonominis de Cremona, 26 August 1486, 4^o, *ISTC* ip00322500).

⁴⁵ *ISTC* ij00548300.

⁴⁶ Motta, "Di Filippo da Lavagna," 44.

⁴⁷ Johannes de Colonia is cited here as head of the Company. This agreement was one of a series of accords signed with the aim of resolving the situation of reciprocal dependency created by the convention, already mentioned, between the Company and the two Milanese bookmen.

introduce into their shops a new product, printed books that were exclusively furnished to them by the agents of the Company. They were paid a fixed amount monthly, which eliminated all risk for them. Ugelheimer and Manthen used such agreements to enable their merchandise to penetrate new markets, through the shops of the best *cartolai*, and to move into new terrain from established positions.

Transfer of Control in Perugia

We can observe how the distribution and sale of books worked in the agreement that established one of the Company's most important outlets, the bookshop in Perugia.⁴⁸ On 12 March 1482 Francesco Gaffuri of Milan,⁴⁹ procurator of the firm of "Johannes de Colonia, Nicolaus Jenson et socii," drew up a working contract with a bookseller of French origin, Lorenzo Berot, who is identified as the factor and manager of the business.⁵⁰ Berot was paid a good salary of forty-five papal gold ducats per year to sell the books delivered to him at a fixed price. He was expected to keep a register that the Company could check whenever it so desired.⁵¹ His employers

⁴⁸ For the contract, see Adamo Rossi, *L'arte tipografica in Perugia durante il secolo XV e la prima metà del XVI: Nuove ricerche* (Perugia: Boncompagni, 1868), 33–34 and Giocondo Ricciarelli, "Mercanti di incunaboli a Perugia," *Bollettino della deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria* 70, no. 1 (1973): 6–14. For the context, see *Maestri, insegnamenti e libri a Perugia: Contributi per la storia dell'Università (1308–2008)*, ed. Carla Frova, Ferdinando Treggiari, and Maria Alessandra Panzanelli Fratoni (Milan: Skira, 2009).

⁴⁹ Francesco Gaffuri, a nobleman, a citizen of Milan and merchant in that city, and perhaps kin of the famous composer Franchino Gaffurio, was the bookseller-agent and procurator for the Company. He had a bad experience, however. Traveling in September 1485 on a ship from Venice to Naples with forty-three chests of printed books and other merchandise, he was captured by the corsair Giovanni Paresio, a Neapolitan subject. We learn of this misadventure in a missive of the duke of Milan (16.XI.1485) to the orator (ambassador) in Naples, Branda da Castiglione, who paid Gaffuri's ransom: Motta, "Di Filippo da Lavagna," 41–42, n. 5.

⁵⁰ On Lorenzo Berot, see Rossi, *L'arte tipografica in Perugia*, 38–42. According to this contract, Berot, who had previously neither lived in Perugia nor kept a shop, was taken to that city by the Company and charged with selling their books. Berot rented storage space in Piazza Grande on 21 March for an annual rent of twenty-five florins: Ricciarelli, "Mercanti di incunaboli," 8. A factor was an employee of a long-term partnership who was entrusted with managing and conducting business in some specific place and for an indefinite number of transactions.

⁵¹ It is probable that in previous years the Company had drawn up a similar agreement with two brothers in Perugia, Baldo and Bernardo "Tome Vici Baldi," who one week after the contract with Berot was drawn up acknowledged to Gaffuri that they owed a debt to "Johannes de Colonia et Nicolaus Jenson et socii de Venetiis" of one hundred gold ducats: Ricciarelli, "Mercanti di incunaboli," 7. Acting as factor of the Company, on 27 March 1484 Berot received a like sum from the debtors as a final payment: Ricciarelli, "Mercanti di incunaboli," 10.

paid the expenses connected with selling the books, including the rent for the bookshop. Berot could not sell the books at prices lower than those agreed upon, nor could he sell books other than those of the Company. Finally, for expenses he was to go to the bank of Mariotto di Antonio di ser Lorenzo and partners in Perugia, which was also charged with remitting moneys received to the motherhouse in Venice. Monetary matters were therefore backed by a bank. In the months that followed, Berot not only became noticeably wealthier, but in 1483 he also began to call himself *impressore* – stimulated by good business, he was setting himself up as a printer, to which his employers appear not to have objected.⁵² Berot's connection with the Company was thus a very close one – as close as was possible, it would seem. With the obligation to sell only books furnished to him by his employers, Berot ran no risks, it is true, but neither could he get very rich, given that his salary remained the same whether he sold many or few books. If business improved, it was the Company that pocketed the increased earnings.

Two years later, on 14 June 1484, Berot received a visit from his new employers, Ugolino da Fabriano and Giovan Pietro Bonomini.⁵³ They asked him for a complete final report, which revealed rather modest debts and credits that are indicative of competent management of the business. In the light of that report, they declared themselves fully satisfied. In the liquidation Ugolino and Bonomini were obliged to function as procurators for the Company empowered to close accounts. In an act signed barely two weeks later, however, the two men acted fully autonomously in drawing up a new contract with Berot. We can deduce that in Perugia as elsewhere, the change of ownership of the network of bookshops occurred in two phases. First, the Company's accounts with their various dependent bookshops were closed; secondly, new working relations with Ugolino and Bonomini in their own right were initiated. We can presume that this procedure was followed in all the cities that were part of their commercial network.

In Perugia the two new employers decided to rehire Lorenzo Berot, who had given such a good account of himself, for a period of a year. Although overall the new contract respected the wording of the preceding contract, it is clear that Berot had won his employers' confidence and had more

⁵² No printed works with his imprint have survived, and therefore it is probable that he specialized in the sort of low-priced, easily destroyed material that was the exact opposite of the type of product supplied by the Company.

⁵³ This was only a month and a half after the formal stipulation of the sale of the entire chain of bookshops. For the contract, see Rossi, *L'arte tipografica in Perugia*, 35–36.

room in which to maneuver. He was free to sell the books at a price that he held to be most opportune. He could also play a larger role, at his employers' expense, as a representative of the firm in the surrounding territories, since he was allowed to sell books at the nearby fairs at Recanati and Foligno. Although his salary was fixed at forty gold ducats, lower than before, as compensation he was afforded new opportunities for initiative. Unfortunately, we do not know from subsequent documentation what effect the new contractual terms had on business. Still, it is not difficult to imagine that the rigid organization of dependent booksellers was increasingly broken down by formerly salaried employees eager to increase their own earnings. The new product – the printed book – had by now conquered the market. Retail booksellers began to draw up contracts with producers or wholesalers for new, more remunerative systems of sales.

The Network Ceded to Gerhard Lof

The network, now under new management, soon began to encounter obstacles. An act drawn up only three years after the sale shows Giovan Pietro Bonomini – this time in combination with his brother Francesco – in serious financial difficulties.⁵⁴ On 28 January 1487 the two brothers were forced to recognize that they owed three thousand ducats to the book merchant Gerhard Lof (or Luof), a German residing in Venice, a commitment that they were unable to meet.⁵⁵ Both parties agreed that the debt could be paid partly in merchandise. Lof stated that he would take as payment books in Florence, Pisa, Siena, and Perugia that Ugolino da Fabriano and Giovan Pietro Bonomini had bought from the Company, valued at their purchase price as shown by the account books of the Company itself.⁵⁶ When the value of the books proved to be less than the sum owed,

⁵⁴ Both this document and successive documents show that Ugolino da Fabriano had already withdrawn from the partnership. He was replaced by Francesco Bonomini, Giovan Pietro's brother.

⁵⁵ Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Notarile Antecosimignano*, 18581, ff. 120r–126r, cited in Armando F. Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino 1473–1503: Ricerche e documenti*. 6 vols. (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1973–2010), 2:244. The act is a copy of its analogue signed in Venice, which to date has not been found. Lof, who was active in Pisa through a procurator, is defined as “nobilis vir Gerardus Lof de Embriche partium Alamanie, habitans in civitate Venetiarum, mercator.” He was therefore evidently a native of the German city of Emmerich.

⁵⁶ All of the various Tuscan booksellers in the background of this dispute between Bonomini and Lof seem to have been involved in resales, no longer obliged to sell the Company's books exclusively (as can be seen in the fact that Lof wanted some of the books in those bookshops, but not others), and not directly in its employ.

Lof declared himself willing to accept as payment the credits that the brothers from Cremona expected to receive from their clients. Finally, if and when those two sources were insufficient to cover the debt, Lof stated that he would even accept other sorts of books, following a fair evaluation. The first consignment of books after this agreement went into effect occurred on 5 July 1488 in Pisa, in the shop of the *cartolaio* Bartolo di Fruosino, when 730 copies were inventoried and ceded.⁵⁷ The same procedure must also have been followed in the other Tuscan outlets, though no records of these transactions are known to exist.

It is not clear how the Bonominis had accumulated their debt to Lof. Contemporary records conceal under the generic term *mercante* all the various professional roles involved in the distribution and sale of books. On one hand, it seems likely that the Bonominis relied on Lof as a supplier and that he acted as a wholesaler for them. On the other hand, the act mentions that Lof had a right of access to the account books of the Company of Venice, which might entice us into what, in light of the lack of evidence, can remain only speculation about his position. Certainly, an overly optimistic evaluation of a little-known market raised the stark possibility of insolvency, and participants in the book trade must have been wary of overexposure to risk. However, the nearly monopolistic regime that the Company had managed to establish in that part of Italy, thanks to highly talented merchants such as Ugelheimer, could not last for long. The challenge to its position came not so much from the development of a local print industry, which could not compete with Venetian products in the sector that comprised learned books and university textbooks, as from other bookmen, and not only from the Serenissima.⁵⁸

The transfer of merchandise in payment of a debt as large as the Bonominis' made it highly likely that Lof would appear as a book dealer in those same locations when he found himself owner of books previously given to the retail booksellers and *cartolai* for sale on commission. Traces of the Bonominis in these areas become scarcer but do not

⁵⁷ The list of the books inventoried is *Bonomini 1488*.

⁵⁸ This phenomenon can be observed in a variety of contexts. As early as 1487 the Venice company of the brothers Silvestro and Battista Torti had its own *procuratore* in Perugia charged with selling their books: Ricciarelli, "Mercanti di incunaboli," 18. The shop in which sales took place had been rented by the jurist Baldo Perigli: Alberto Maria Sartore, "Il commercio del libro a Perugia nei primi anni del Cinquecento: La società dei Giunta," in *Perugino: Il divin pittore*, ed. Vittoria Garibaldi and Francesco Federico Mancini (Milan: Silvana, 2004), 583. In 1485 Leonhard Pachel, a publisher from Ingolstadt active in Milan, went to Pisa to collect money owed to him for the sale of his books: Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino*, 2:110.

do. q̄ si lex noua p̄tineat oīa moralia q̄
lex vetus. ⁊ addat alia uel saltē addat a-
liqua explicatōem aliquorum ad quā
forte ipsi nō tenebant q̄ quantū ad hoc
est grauior. tñ hoc n̄ tñ grauat sicut ex
alia pte grauat ceteronialiu multitudine
⁊ iudicialiū. Ex pte aut legis noue plus
alleviat multitudine ⁊ efficacia auxilioꝝ
ita q̄ illa modica grauitas si qua sit ma-
ior in moralibus nō p̄ponderat grauita-
ti in alijs. ⁊ hoc pensatis auxilijs hic tñ.

Ad 2^m dico q̄ difficultas in ope virtu-
oso nō est p se ex pte opantis: sed ex pte
opis. difficilius enim ē auaro dare vnū
q̄ liberali decet. ⁊ tñ nō virtuosius. nec
qualiscunq; difficultas ex pte opis argu-
it maiore virtuositate. Sed illa que per
se includit excellentiaz obiecti: q̄d per se
attingit p opatōem. talis autē difficultas
stat cum maiori leuitate. Nam leui^r est
attingere amando obiectū excellentius
q̄ obiectū minus excellens. ⁊ talia ope-
ra excellentia imediate respicientia deū
plura sunt explicita i lege noua. Multi
enim actus dilectōis dei imediate ma-
gis explicantur christianis q̄ iudeis. nec
mirum quia illa dicitur esse lex timoris
hec aut amoris. amor autē ⁊ p̄cipue si-
nis si ille querat in omnibus: facit omnia
onera leuia: ut uerū sit q̄d dixit saluatō
Math. 20. Venite ad me. Et sequitur.
Jugum enim meū suauē est: ⁊ onus me-
um leue. Cui sit laus honor ⁊ gloria per
infinita seculorum secula. Amen.

Explicit scriptus super tertio sententia-
rum editum a fratre iohanne duns: ordi-
nis fratrum miorū doctore subtilissimo
ac omnium theologorum p̄ncipe. Per
excellentissimum sacre theologie docto-
rem magistrum Thomaz penketh an-
glicū ordinis fratrum heremitarū sancti
Augustini: in famosissimo studio Pa-
tauino ordinarie legentem maxima cū
diligentia emendatum.

Impressum venetijs ad exp̄sas ⁊ man-
datus Joannis de Colonia Nicolai ien-
son socioꝝq; eorum. Anno domini
M.cccc. lxxxi.

Laus deo.



Fig. 1.5. Colophon of the third volume of Iohannes Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in quattuor libros Sententiarum*. Venice: [Johannes Herbolt, de Seligenstadt], for Johannes de Colonia, Nicolaus Jenson et Socii, 1481; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

disappear. In the commercial world the arrangement of credit and payment of debts were long processes that stretched on through time.⁵⁹ Giovan Pietro Bonomini was, for example, able to obtain from the Podestà of Pisa the sequestration of a group of some three hundred books that were part of an old storage deposit left by Peter Ugelheimer, who had died.⁶⁰ Here, however, we find not a final – indeed, posthumous – resolution of a debt to the Bonomini brothers that Peter Ugelheimer recognized on his deathbed that he owed,⁶¹ but rather a further step in line with legal proceedings to which reference was made in the agreement with Lof. The Bonomini brothers had taken action against Ugelheimer (and now, his heirs) before the Venetian magistracy aimed at obtaining payment of damages as compensation for the competition that the German merchant was accused of disloyally affording them in Tuscany. Far from abandoning the field, the astute Ugelheimer had remained a commercial presence in territories in which all his business should have changed hands, a state of affairs that surely seriously harmed the Bonominis' interests.⁶² Ugelheimer had thus behaved badly, breaking an agreement that he had signed, which leads us to the conclusion that his great success in business was likely achieved by underhand means.

Transfer of Control in Siena

The Tuscan network had passed into the hands of Gerhard Lof, but Lof's style when it came to the sale of merchandise was quite different from that of the Bonomini brothers. This time a large part of the evidence

⁵⁹ That the Bonomini brothers continued to sell books is shown by the fact that a number of professors at the university in Pisa continued to owe them money. As was the custom in such cases, they were paid when the professors received their salaries, which happened irregularly and in Florence. Thus the professors' major creditors were the same persons who went to Florence, documents in hand, to collect their salaries, as did the Bonomini brothers in 1491: Armando F. Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino 1473–1503: Ricerche e documenti*, vol. 3, pt. 2: *Studenti, "Fanciulli e scuole" nel 1480* (Pistoia: Presso "Memorie Domenicae," 1977), 748, and in 1494: Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino*, 2:386.

⁶⁰ This list of books is *Ugelheimer 1490*.

⁶¹ As presented in Ugelheimer's testament: Motta, "Pamfilo Castaldi," 262–63.

⁶² For the agreement with Lof about a dispute between the Bonominis and Ugelheimer over the competition generated by the latter in Tuscany, see Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Notarile Antecosimignano*, 18581, f. 120v. It is unclear if what is mentioned here is precisely a violation of the right of exclusive sale – that is, if Ugelheimer had promised the Bonominis that he would withdraw from Tuscany – or if he had signed an explicit pact excluding competition, which he then violated.

comes from Siena.⁶³ An act dated 1491 attests to an ongoing relationship begun some years earlier with the *cartolaio* Tommaso Sani. In this document Sani recognizes a debt of fifty *ducati larghi*, the remainder owed for the sale of an unspecified number of books for Lof.⁶⁴ Restitution of the whole amount was to be made in installments and a penalty of one hundred gold ducats was intended to guarantee that the agreement would be respected. It is clear that Lof was seeking to reestablish quite rigid control, and it is also obvious that he did not have great faith in his retailer, whom he treats somewhat summarily. Told by Sani that some books that he had sent were damaged or defective, Lof promises to try to complete them, but insists that the *cartolaio* must pay for the books as if they were complete and in good condition, even if the supplementary shipment proves to be impossible. This rough treatment is justified by the argument that in the past Sani had broken pacts and shown himself to be disloyal. The list of defective books contains some twenty incunabula that were missing a leaf, a bifolium, or even one or more gathering.⁶⁵ Although we might blame the difficulties and risks of transportation, we should remember that malicious harm might have been involved here (something of which Lof seems very well aware). *Cartolai* had long been in the habit of taking away gatherings from single editions in order to complete customers' defective copies, just as they had done in the age of the manuscript. Within the new productive scheme, however, such action was seen as an unacceptable mutilation of the product as conceived in the printing shop.

Prudence and a certain diffidence were always characteristic of Gerhard Lof's behavior. In 1493, as he was about to consign a number of books ("quorum librorum primus est Abbas super primo, et ultimus est Valerius Maximus cum comento," though the list has not come down to us) to the *cartolaio* Agostino di Bastiano of Pisa, he requested and obtained a whole series of guarantees involving students and professors.⁶⁶ The relationship between the German merchant and his Pisan correspondent was clearly a limited partnership: Agostino di Bastiano was responsible for the management of the shop and the business, while Lof's responsibility was the investment of capital. Agostino di Bastiano took care of sales, and he remained an autonomous entrepreneur in the parallel craft of making and

⁶³ For the context, see Peter Denley, *Commune and Studio in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2006).

⁶⁴ Curzio Bastianoni and Giuliano Catoni, *Impressum Senis: Storie di tipografi, incunaboli e librai* (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1988), 42–43.

⁶⁵ This list is *Sani 1492*.

⁶⁶ Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino*, 2:66.

selling notebooks.⁶⁷ His accounts with Lof were settled at the end of the year, with the remaining unsold books returned and the money earned given to Lof.⁶⁸ Lof's books were inventoried at each shipment, but little or nothing of all those lists has come down to us.⁶⁹ In this manner the *cartolaio*, or bookseller, a salaried employee when the Company's network of bookshops was created, became a partner and assumed a portion of the risk involved in a mutual enterprise.

In the course of the 1490s, the network of bookstores in Tuscany that had been in correspondence with the Company ceased to exist. Rapid changes of proprietors, directors, and salaried employees who preferred to act as partners, even the evolution of marketing techniques, all speak of strong and impetuous growth. The challenge of finding enterprising agents for distribution and sales or for setting up a new activity whose risks were still not well known seems to have been confronted in these years primarily by defining geographical boundaries within which each agent would operate. In reality, exclusions from other territories were often violated. The exclusionary system would have been effective only if the number of printer-publishers had remained constant; it could no longer function when city markets were evolving rapidly, stimulated by a growing number of printer-publishers searching for new customers for their books. Such changes had a range of consequences. The circulation of book merchandise began to have an impact in urban commercial zones. Booksellers signed increasing numbers of rental contracts for spaces in which they could sell or store their merchandise, and rental expenses are often mentioned in agreements between wholesalers and retailers.

Records indicate that from the beginning, the distribution of books in Italy was organized one city at a time. Book producers tended to seek means of dissemination, creating a system for distribution and sales and multiplying the number of booksellers who were their correspondents and associates. This was an extremely onerous system, but there is little doubt that it changed the geography of book consumption in Italy even more than the diffusion of printing. Outside Venice, circuits for the distribution of Venetian books overlapped with circuits for the distribution of books produced locally, as we can see in bookshop inventories, which

⁶⁷ Ibid., 2:68.

⁶⁸ This can be clearly deduced from a document published in *ibid.*, 2:67–68.

⁶⁹ We have only a list of 170 books that Lof had stored in Pisa in a space underneath the monastery of San Michele in Borgo: *Lof* 1492.

always demonstrate that the greatest possible assortment of goods was sought from the sources available.

The first and principal problem facing wholesalers and merchants remained that of recovering within an acceptable time the money invested in the form of books for sale. It is not surprising that in 1494 even Gerhard Lof found himself the debtor of Francesco Bonomini. But acting more astutely than the Cremonese merchants would have done some years before, Lof took the trouble to place himself under the protection of the Florentine Comune, which granted him a privilege and an assurance of safe conduct that meant that he could not be brought to trial.⁷⁰ Whatever the means Lof used to reach that enviable status, he was not the first in the book trade to seek the advantage of entry into the circles of local power.

Giovan Pietro Bonomini: From Tuscany to Portugal

Far from being compromised or weakened in their entrepreneurial capacities, the Bonomini brothers from Cremona went on to launch significant new initiatives. One brother, Francesco, remained in Italy, and his presence in the Venetian print world is demonstrated by a request, dated 8 May 1503 and made in the name of the *oratori* (ambassadors) of his city of birth, for a printing privilege for the oration of Sigismondo Borgo of Cremona that Bernardino Vitali had put out in that same year.⁷¹ Francesco Bonomini evidently continued to operate behind the scenes in the book sector; it is by chance that his presence appears center stage only on this occasion.

Demonstrating an extraordinary ability to project his initiatives onto a broader European canvas, the other Bonomini brother, Giovan Pietro, returned to prominence, this time as a printer in Portugal. He was one of the first printers of Lisbon, in which city from 1501 to 1517 he signed his

⁷⁰ Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino*, 2:771.

⁷¹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Capi del Consiglio di X*, Notatorio, reg. 15, f. 88v; Rinaldo Fulin, "Documenti per servire alla storia della tipografia veneziana," *Archivio Veneto* 23 (1882): 151, no. 132. Here Francesco Bonomini presents himself as a mediator between "li Magnifici oratori di Cremona" and the Venetian magistracy. The edition (*Sigismundi Burgi equitis et iureconsulti Cremonensium oratoris Panaegyricus: Leonardo optimo humanissimoque Principi Venetiis dictus* [Venice: B. Vitali, 6 April 1503, *Edit* 16, CNCE 7141], printed with the note "Cum gratia et privilegio" but without Bonomini's name) had already been printed on paper of excellent quality. The request for the privilege was made in Bonomini's name alone, and therefore he had paid the printing expenses either in their entirety or, more probably, in part.

editions “João Pedro Bonhomini de Cremona.”⁷² His production of some ten works (with several grammars among them) is necessarily connected to the commercial presence that both preceded him and coexisted alongside him. The first printers of the Iberian Peninsula were usually transnational book merchants who imported books and for the most part were French and Italian. After opening bookshops and warehouses in the larger cities, these men ended up printing locally the titles and products requested by the local public, which they knew well.⁷³

Giovan Pietro Bonomini's firm was certainly quite important and capable of producing high-quality work. It used a very elegant Gothic typeface, and at least two of its editions enjoyed special support, given that they were put out “per especial mandado do muy alto et muy poderoso senhor Rey don Manuel nosso senhor” (at the special command of the highest and most powerful King Manuel our lord), an excellent illustration of the prominence of the firm in Lisbon.⁷⁴ Its commercial activity continued to have transnational impact: as late as 1521, after the death of João Pedro, there were booksellers in Venice who declared themselves in debt to his heirs.⁷⁵

⁷² Frederick J. Norton, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Printing in Spain and Portugal 1501–1520* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 491–99, 502, 510–15. Neither Norton nor the *D.B.I.* entry, as noted, mentions Bonomini's activities as a book merchant in Tuscany. Some of his editions are described, with many reproductions, in Manuel, King of Portugal, *Early Portuguese Books 1489–1600 in the Library of His Majesty the King of Portugal: Livros antigos Portuguezes 1489–1600 da Bibliotheca de Sua Majestade Fidelissima descriptos por S. M. El-Rei D. Manuel*. 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; London: Maggs Bros., 1929), 1:220–83, nn. 13–15; 2:498–503, n. 276.

⁷³ Frederick J. Norton, *Printing in Spain 1501–1520: With a Note on the Early Editions of the “Celestina”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 130–34; Clive Griffin, “Literary Consequences of the Peripheral Nature of Spanish Printing in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Andre Nash (London: British Library, 2007), 207–14.

⁷⁴ These editions were *Livro e legenda dos santos martires*: 17.VIII.1513; Norton, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, 512–13, n. P-19; and *Os cinco livros das Ordenações*, in 5 vols.: 30.X.1514; Norton, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, 1978, 513–25, n. P-21. For the edition of the *Ordenações* there is also a document dated 23 October 1513 that shows that the acquisition of the parchment on which some copies of this work were printed (one of which is in the National Library of Lisbon) was financed by the king.

⁷⁵ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, Not. Daniele Giordano, b. 505, n. 329; 30.I.1521: testament of the bookseller Girolamo Matteo di Pratta, alias Lamberto del fu Iacobo di Caravaggio, including a bequest to the heirs of the late Joan Pedro de Bonomini de Cremona, printer in Lisbon. This indicates that Bonomini died in 1521, not in 1526 as stated in the entry under his name in the *D.B.I.*

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL NETWORKS

The printing industry in Venice soon became dominant throughout Italy, thanks to the size and quality of its production and its commercial capacities. At the start, printing had taken root in a large number of Italian towns, even small ones, but many soon became mainly importers and consumers of printed books. Such was the case, for example, in Ferrara, as well as in commercially oriented cities like Genoa. Venice, the printing capital, was already a great mercantile center for all types of goods; with its very high concentration of printers and publishers (no fewer than a thousand over the course of the sixteenth century), it also became the center of the book trade and the international emporium for books. Venetian bookmen successfully managed to control the distribution and sale of their books all over Italy, varying their strategy according to the city targeted. We can grasp the full range of their activities in the book trade thanks to notarial contracts, agents' instructions, correspondence, and other records.

In the sixteenth century, the world of the book was increasingly clearly subject to the logic of trade. As production grew and the market expanded, the need to find buyers meant that the laws of commerce came to govern printing. In particular, entrepreneurial hegemony passed from the printer to the publisher-bookseller. ("Bookseller" is understood here as the manager of a sizable bookshop, a wholesaler, or a book merchant.) The need for a large assortment of works, which were not necessarily produced in-house, is characteristic of a long phase in the book trade that took hold decisively throughout Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The production of books in such quantity would have been unimaginable without the existence of networks and organizations for their distribution and sale.

Traditionally, printing in Italy has been divided into periods of expansion and moments of crisis. One growth period, which saw the creation of a genuinely new market sector, came with the emergence of humanistic philology and, above all, printing in Greek, in which Aldo Manuzio stands out as the highest incarnation of the humanist publisher. Expansion also resulted from the demand for print literature in the vernacular, in which the linguistic codification of Bembo's *Prose* played a significant role by

making a common tool available to all writers.¹ Traditional interpretations of the book trade have identified the Counter-Reformation as a moment of crisis, for with the Index of Prohibited Books an instrument had been created that could strike at a largely unfettered sector of the market and now condemned, contemporary production and even ancient texts that had formerly circulated freely.

There was substantial continuity in the actual production of print. Publishers adapted to religious and cultural changes in society, a flexibility that appears to have been characteristic of their craft. In any age, a clear perception of fluctuations in taste is indispensable to a publisher who wants to maintain and possibly enlarge his public. Indeed, during the Counter-Reformation, with a few exceptions, Venetians in the book trade seem to have adapted to changes in the rules quite efficiently. The greatest resistance came not in the form of attempts to publish works that were no longer deemed acceptable, but rather in a quite understandable reluctance to eliminate (destroy) titles that had been prohibited but already filled the wholesalers' warehouses or the shelves of bookshops.

And the Counter-Reformation decisively reinforced the market for religious books, encouraging a new and large-scale production of works that included newly reformed liturgical texts, books of spirituality, devotional books and works in the vernacular intended to aid personal religious meditation, manuals for clergy and members of religious orders, and in particular, confessors' manuals and collections of sermons. This was a market that experienced a veritable boom, prompting a rise in the number of books produced in both Venice and Rome. If Italian book production (particularly in Venice) fell behind in transnational commerce, the loss was for the time being assuaged by the expansion and intensification of the Italian market and by the consolidation of areas of exclusive exchange among Catholic countries situated on a line stretching from Venice to Lyon and Spain.

According to *Edit 16*, the overall output in Italy in the sixteenth century came to 64,500 editions, a number high enough to furnish a reliable picture, even though many other editions are no longer extant.²

¹ Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

² Sixty-four thousand five hundred editions (64,500) can still be found in Italy today (see *Edit 16*), to which an additional non-quantifiable number of editions only to be found outside Italy should be added. Only when this general corpus is reconstructed will we be able

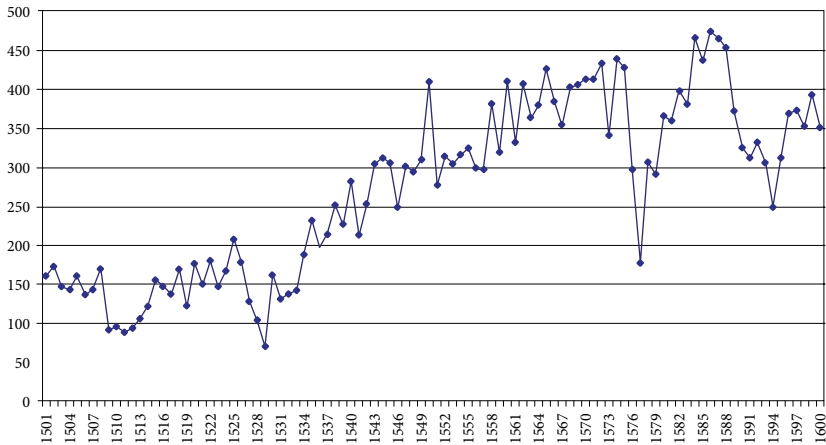


Fig. 2.1. Book production in Venice, 1501–1600: 27,298 editions.

Almost one-half of these surviving works, more than 27,000 editions, were produced in Venice. In counting books, different units are never exactly commensurable. Production figures record only single works, many of which were printed in several large batches of anywhere between 250 and 2,000 copies each, and folio editions of hundreds of pages and even in several volumes are included next to broadsides. Nevertheless, the figures suggest that in the age of the Counter-Reformation and of the Index of Prohibited Books more books were printed than ever before.

The development of print, hence of the market for books, followed the progress of what has been called “the long Cinquecento.” That period is traditionally understood as beginning in 1494, the date of Charles VIII’s descent into Italy, and ending in 1629, on the eve of a devastating wave of the plague. There were two periods of pestilence and famine during the Italian Wars, the first between 1499 and 1506 and the second between 1522 and 1530, but recent work has suggested that their impact on Italy was neither profound nor sustained.³

to advance a hypothesis about the number of editions that have completely disappeared. For an idea of how complicated these calculations can be, see Jonathan Green, Frank McIntyre, and Paul Needham, “The Shape of Incunable Survival and Statistical Estimation of Lost Editions,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 105, no. 2 (2011): 141–75.

³ Guido Alfani, *Il Grand Tour dei Cavalieri dell’Apocalisse: L’Italia del “lungo Cinquecento” (1494–1629)* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010).

In interpreting the development of the market for books, it is useful to look beyond exclusively cultural factors. Demographic growth in Italy, for example, also played a role. Italy as a whole had fewer than nine million inhabitants around 1450, but the population hovered around thirteen million by 1600, an increase of the order of 50 percent. There can be no direct relation between population growth and an increase in cultural consumption, however, given that only a very small section of the population participated in the latter. We need to verify whether during that long growth phase, which was particularly strong in the three decades after 1559,⁴ society evolved precisely in the direction of greater use of the book and increased access to reading. One determining factor in this long period was that plague epidemics took on a new character in and after the fifteenth century, when they acquired social connotations and became “poor people’s plagues” rather than striking all strata of society. If the plague was associated with typhus, it spread more easily when hygienic conditions were poor, a situation typical of military camps and armies in general, which was why the Italian Wars carried the illness just about everywhere on the Italian Peninsula.

After a lull from 1530 to 1575, when Italy was free from the plague, it reappeared in a particularly virulent form, especially in the cities of most of Northern Italy, during the late 1570s. A largely urban epidemic, it struck almost all of the major cities of the Republic of Venice and Lombardy, but did not spread through the countryside. The fact that country areas were spared explains the rapid demographic recovery that occurred in the cities that had been affected. Moreover, the social, economic, and political elites were also largely spared from the disease because the plague struck the poor harder than it did the rich.⁵ Those elites returned to their roles as soon as the epidemic had subsided, without bringing on dramatic losses in professional skills. This type of pestilence thus had only a limited effect on demand for more refined manufactured and luxury goods, which were the staples of middle- and long-range commerce.

Those demographic conditions were reflected in the book market. As graphs of output in Venice demonstrate, printing saw a significant rise that began in the 1540s and reached its peak around the 1580s, soon

⁴ The date of the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, which ended the Italian Wars.

⁵ Not only did the poor have fewer means of self-defense and tended to be passive in the face of the plague, but epidemics often began in the humbler neighborhoods, in houses infested with mice and fleas. Also, the wealthiest city dwellers tended to abandon cities struck by the plague.

recovering from the crisis caused by the plague of the 1570s. Another crisis – famine this time – arrived in the early 1590s. Even here, however, recovery was swift. By contrast, the crisis caused by the destructive and truly universal wave of plague in the 1630s signaled a point of no return. Broader forces experienced by Italian society and the population of the Italian Peninsula thus seem to explain the shape of the book market in a more significant way than other events traditionally held responsible for crises in the sector, such as the introduction of religious censorship and the control over book circulation that arrived with the Counter-Reformation. In fact, a counterweight to these restrictions was provided by book promotion pursued actively by the Church, including various religious orders, and by the reinforcement of systems of instruction, including at the university level.

It is within this general framework that the various stages in the development of the commercial networks of the largest Italian publishing firms should be seen.

The Giunti

The First Generation

Only fragmentary testimony remains of the commercial network of the Giunti family, to the point that the information we do have on their organization must be taken as only indicative.⁶ The brothers Luc'Antonio (1457–1538) and Bernardo Giunti had moved from Florence to Venice by 1477.⁷ They came from a fairly modest family of weavers of woolen cloth and began their careers as apprentices to a bookseller unknown to us. In 1489 Luc'Antonio launched his activities as a publisher, rapidly displaying

⁶ On the Giunti (Giunta) family, see the *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Giunti, Luc'Antonio il vecchio"; "Giunti, Luc'Antonio il giovane"; "Giunti, Filippo il vecchio"; "Giunti, Filippo il giovane"; "Giunti, Bernardo; Giunti, Tommaso." See also Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*; Perini, "Editoria e società"; Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*; Pettas, *A Sixteenth-Century Spanish Bookstore*; Pettas, "The Giunti and the Book Trade in Lyon"; Pettas, *History & Bibliography of the Giunti (Junta) Printing Family*; Andrea Ottone, "L'attività editoriale dei Giunti nella Venezia del Cinquecento," *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 2 (2003): 43–80; Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 398–400.

⁷ Paolo Camerini, "Il testamento di Tommaso Giunti," *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia di scienze e lettere in Padova*, new ser. 43 (1927): 193. In 1475–76 Luc'Antonio was interrogated in Venice about the price of books: Erice Rigoni, "Stampatori del secolo XV a Padova," *Atti e memorie della R. Accademia di scienze lettere ed arti a Padova* 393, new ser. 50 (1934): 298.

Venetijs in Adibus Lucę antonij Iuntę Florentini
 Anno Domini. M.D.XXXI.
 Nonis Septēbris

* A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X Y Z
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Omnesterni pręter * & II. qui sunt quaterni



Fig. 2.2. Mark of Luc'Antonio Giunti, 1531. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

a great entrepreneurial capacity that was visible above all in his ability to garner orders from religious institutions. He soon specialized in liturgical books, inaugurating a predominance in that area that the Giunti family never lost during the entire sixteenth century. In 1489 his brother Filippo began his commercial activities in Florence. It is interesting to note that in Florence Filippo was consistently involved not only in selling books from his shop at the Badia, but also in selling and lending matrices and types.⁸

In 1491 Luc'Antonio and Filippo drew up a contract for an eighteen-year partnership, with a capital of 4,500 florins of which each brother contributed half. The agreement was terminated in 1509 through an arbitration intended to assure an equal division of the profits of the last nine years of activity, which amounted to 19,090 florins. Even though on occasion there

⁸ Piero Scapecchi, "L'inventario di una cassa tipografica di Bartolomeo dei Libri del 1 ottobre 1500," *La Bibliofilia* 113 (2011): 26–27.

must have been differences of opinion between the two branches of the family, relations between the Florence seat and that in Venice remained active. The two locations were not, however, of equal significance: Luc'Antonio was the leader in this enterprise and the center of its business was always Venice. The contract for the *fraterna compagnia* stipulated that three-fourths of the profits should go to Luc'Antonio simply on account of his extraordinary ability.

As the organization grew, Luc'Antonio must have felt the need to set up a better way to distribute books. In 1517 he drew up a contract for a partnership with his nephew Giuntino, the son of his brother Biagio. The initial capital amounted to 32,153 Venetian ducats: 27,153 ducats contributed by Luc'Antonio and 5,000 by Giuntino. The partnership lasted until Giuntino's death in 1521. Giuntino, after some experience in publishing in Venice,⁹ can be considered the man responsible for Luc'Antonio's commercial network during that period. We know little about this phase of the Giunti family's commercial expansion, but the evidence from Perugia, an important market in which Giuntino left his traces, indicates that he worked to open bookshops and points of sale that were managed through various forms of association with local booksellers and merchants and were dedicated to selling his uncle's book merchandise.

In addition to these first family partnerships, other economically attractive situations led to further associations, such as the 1516 partnership for trade in books in Venice, Florence, Rome, Siena, and Naples founded by Luc'Antonio and Giuntino Giunti, Francesco Cartolari, the heirs of Giovanni Domenico del Negro, and Giacomo Antonio Cataneo, a Siennese bookseller.¹⁰

It has rightly been said that the power of the Giunti family can be measured by the geographical distribution of its liturgical productions alone. Luc'Antonio printed missals and breviaries for the dioceses and local rites of Aquileia, Messina, Vallombrosa, Valencia, Augsburg, Würzburg, Majorca, Gran, Passau, Salzburg, Zagreb, and many other cities

⁹ Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*, 2:529–44.

¹⁰ Sartore, "Il commercio del libro," 583, 585, n. 12. Both Cartolari and Del Negro had had business connections with Lazzaro Soardi. Del Negro, a physician who had studied at Padua, a publisher, and among the first to request privileges in Venice (Fulin, "Documenti," n. 5, pp. 102–3), had professional ties with many Venetian publishers, among them Paganino Paganini and Luc'Antonio Giunti in 1508: Myriam Dal Zio Billanovich, "L'attività editoriale di Giovanni Domenico del Negro e i *Consilia* di Angelo da Castro," *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 15 (1982): 108–9. Cataneo published an edition in Siena in 1524: *Edit* 16, CNCE 31497.

of the Catholic world.¹¹ In addition, he sought to extend his business in many areas of Italy, Sicily included. In 1518 he had to send his procurators Giovanni Giacomo de Cumi and Giovanni Agostino da Borgofranco to Palermo to recuperate books, goods, and money after the death of Giovanni de Gosmecio, the manager of the bookshop in the name of Luc'Antonio and Giuntino.¹² In 1522 Luc'Antonio was obliged to arrange for a similar recuperation of books in Messina.¹³

A decision that was fundamental for the fortunes of the Giunti dynasty was the opening of branches outside Italy in the principal Catholic lands. In 1520 Giacomo (later known as Jacques) Giunti, the son of Luc'Antonio's brother Francesco and born in 1486 in Florence, came to an agreement for a limited liability partnership (*accomandita*) in Lyon by which Luc'Antonio bankrolled Giacomo with two thousand florins to be used in the Lyon book trade.¹⁴ By February 1520 Giacomo was listed by the Compagnie des libraires of Lyon, together with Lucimborgo da Gabiano, Aymon de la Porte, and others.¹⁵ The Giunti family had reached Lyon later than a group of Piedmontese publishers and merchants, beginning with Baldassare da Gabiano and Vincenzo Portonari, who had made their fortunes there at the end of the fifteenth century.

The history of the Lyon branch of the Giunti firm is particularly interesting for the family's strategies for developing their interests in Spain, Antwerp, and Geneva. Lyon was a fundamental market for re-supplying the Giunti shops in Italy with books from north of the Alps. From the viewpoint of book production, the Giunti of Lyon participated – like the motherhouse in Venice, but to an even greater extent – in large joint ventures for publishing especially costly books, in particular in the field of law.

¹¹ Marino Zorzi, "Dal manoscritto al libro," in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*. 8 vols. (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1992–98), 912.

¹² Giovanni Agostino was the son of Giacomo da Borgofranco (called Il Pocatela), a Pavia bookman who completed his publishing career in Venice. Giacomo also had another son, Giovanni Battista, who left the presses, while Giovanni Agostino was evidently charged with carrying on the commercial relationship that the father had maintained with Luc'Antonio Giunti since 1505: Giampietro Tinazzo, "Il tipografo-editore Iacopo Pocatela (Pavia 1490–Venezia 1538)," *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di scienze lettere ed arti: Memorie della classe di scienze morali lettere ed arti* 62, no. 3 (1958): 137–42.

¹³ Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 140.

¹⁴ Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Mercanzia*, b. 10831, published in Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 298. As early as 1515 Giacomo was already settled into rue Mercière: Perini, "Editoria e società," 296. The *accomandita* was an agreement between a principal and an agent that involved the investment of capital by the former and obligations on the part of the latter.

¹⁵ On the Giunti's activity in Lyon, see Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 6:77–223; and Pettas, "The Giunti and the Book Trade in Lyon."

Until his death in 1547, Jacques took part in a series of mixed-capital partnerships of limited duration. None of these later agreements have survived, but in both commerce and production, he would have shared the overall logic of the family firm. At the death of Jacques, his two daughters charged Filippo Tinghi, a Florentine merchant who lived in Lyon, with the management of the business, a charge that he fulfilled until 1572, when there was a definitive breakdown of relations.¹⁶

Around 1513 Giovanni Giunti (later known as Juan de Junta), Filippo's son, settled in Spain, a highly important area where he concentrated on the religious market.¹⁷ Juan not only started a printing business, but also opened two bookshops, one in Salamanca and the other in Burgos. He also attended the fairs of Medina del Campo to represent family interests. According to an inventory, in 1557 his shop and warehouse in Burgos contained 15,837 copies of 1,579 editions; only 613 of the copies were bound.¹⁸ These numbers speak to the commercial power of the Giunti family and their ability to circulate their books throughout Europe. For several generations, the Giunti were major protagonists in book production and book commerce in Spain, importing in massive quantity volumes printed by the family in Venice and in Lyon.¹⁹

The Giunti organization made use of two basic forms of partnership to resolve the problems of raising capital and sharing risk. The first was the *fraterna*, or family partnership, the basic unit of business life in Venice, which involved only family members. Such contracts were normally limited in duration and had to be renewed often. The second possibility was the joint venture, a strictly temporary partnership to fulfill a particular purpose or bring about a specific business deal.²⁰ There were probably many such partnerships. In the publishing world, it was fairly common to

¹⁶ Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 6:437–82. See also Ugo Rozzo, "Filippo Tinghi editore e tipografo e libraio a Firenze, Lione e Ginevra," *La Bibliofilia* 109 (2007): 239–70; Ian Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place: Essays in the History of the Early Modern Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 227–50.

¹⁷ Perini, "Editoria e società," 298–300; Pettas, *A Sixteenth-Century Spanish Bookstore*. As early as 1502 there is a record in Salamanca of Giunta di Giunti representing Luc'Antonio: Perini, "Editoria e società," 295, and in 1515 Tommaso Giunti, Luc'Antonio's son, was in Seville and had a business connection with the Italian bookseller Niculoso de Monardis, the father of the great physician and botanist Nicolás Bautista Monardes (1493–1588).

¹⁸ Pettas, *A Sixteenth-Century Spanish Bookstore*. On Juan de Junta's activity in Salamanca, see Marta de la Mano González, *Mercaderes e impresores de libros en la Salamanca del siglo XVI* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1998).

¹⁹ Pettas, *History & Bibliography of the Giunti (Junta) Printing Family*.

²⁰ Frederic C. Lane, "Family Partnerships and Joint Ventures in the Venetian Republic," *Journal of Economic History* 4, no. 2 (1944): 178–96.

set up a partnership even for a single edition, involving other persons (and often the author) in the financing. The surviving records of all this activity remain highly sporadic, however.

In Venice Luc'Antonio Giunti also had a part in a major association of publishers, with no name or special mark, founded in 1507 for the purpose of printing law books.²¹ Partners included, in addition to Luc'Antonio Giunti himself, Battista and Silvestro Torti, Giorgio Arrivabene, Amadio Scoto, and Antonio Moretto, all well-known printers and booksellers. This was a partnership that, according to the contract, was calculated to last five years. It was set up to publish only law books, and the contract stipulated the timing and procedures for the realization of that program. It also prohibited competition and stated what type of paper was to be used and what the press runs (from six hundred to eight hundred copies) and sales prices were to be.²² For the outside world, the partnership was to be in the name of the printer associated with the group, Battista Torti, and would use his mark. To judge from the books that have come down to us, we can say that in order to fulfill its ambitious program, the partnership had to have remained in force longer, certainly more than twenty years, and at least until the early 1530s.²³ There may have been other partnership contracts, but the better part of the original program was realized by books signed by Torti (or by Giorgio Arrivabene, but in second position).²⁴ Little is known, however, about this partnership, which declared its ambitions down to the number of presses (four) that it intended to have working at the same time.

²¹ Fulin, "Documenti," 401–5. For the original agreement, see Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Miscellanea di carte non appartenenti ad alcun archivio*, b. 32 ("Scritto de l'acordio fato cum ser Luc'Antonio e compagni di stampar in compagnia soa de continuo cum torculi 4 plani 5 cum li pacti e compagni come in questo scritto appare"). See also Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 33.

²² At the start the price was fixed at 36 ducats for thirty quinternions, but the contract stated that the price would be reduced when new editions of a given text were published: Fulin, "Documenti," 402.

²³ According to the contract the program included: "Testi de raxon civile, Testi de raxon chanonicha, Abbati, Alexandri omnia opera, Speculum iuris cum repertorio, Aretini omnia opera, Angeli omnia opera, Bartoli omnia opera, Baldi omnia opera, Socini omnia opera, Bertachini, Felini omnia opera, Jasonis omnia opera, Pauli de Castro omnia opera, Saliceti omnia opera": Fulin, "Documenti," 404. To date no one has attempted to reconstruct the production of this partnership, a task made even more difficult by the lack of a distinctive mark.

²⁴ Some of these editions were signed by using a large woodcut border, a method also used by the larger publishers of Lyon: Brian Richardson, "A Series of Woodcut Borders in Early Sixteenth-Century Venetian Title Pages, and the Career of Pietro Aretino," *La Bibliofilia* 103 (2001): 137–64. In contemporary sources, books "of the Tortis" became, by antonomasia, the most frequently requested law books.

The Second Generation

When Luc'Antonio the Elder died in 1538, his sons Tommaso (1494–1566)²⁵ and Giovanni Maria decided to leave their inheritance undivided and to work together in a *fraterna*, using the firm name “the heirs of Luc'Antonio Giunti.” During the 1530s the Florence seat had suffered greatly from the tormented political events in that city and had stopped printing, it seems, at least between 1534 and 1537. Under the management of Luc'Antonio's heirs, the center of the family firm was all the more decidedly Venice. It was thanks to them that the mercantile character of the enterprise was enhanced, broadening to include trade in other merchandise such as jewelry, woven materials, and skins. This tendency can also be seen in many other publishing firms. A diversified portfolio was one of the principal ways to counter the difficulties and uncertainties of the book market. This tendency was so general that in 1554 Vincenzo Valgrisi requested a privilege with the argument that books were his only source of income, leading us to deduce that his situation was somewhat anomalous.²⁶

The second generation of the Giunti clan had to face moments of dramatic crisis, as Tommaso Giunti reports in his testament.²⁷ In 1553 he faced having to close up shop because of an unexpected withdrawal of funds on the part of investors that left the firm insolvent. Owing the high figure of some 100,000 ducats to many creditors, the Venice seat (known as *negocij de Rialto*) was bankrupt, but by 1564 the firm was again prospering, despite a fire in 1557 that had destroyed the print shop, part of the warehouse, and some manuscripts ready to be printed.²⁸ At a time when large sums were immobilized in books, many of which sold slowly, dramatic cash-flow crises have to be considered non-exceptional. It is evident, however, that within a short time the Giunti managed to negotiate new loans that enabled them to honor their debts. A good reputation was the most important asset in the mercantile society of the time. There are several indications that Tommaso Giunti's prestige within the Venetian publishing world was higher than that of any other publisher. In the most difficult moments

²⁵ Camerini, “Il testamento,” 193.

²⁶ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Terra*, “Suppliche,” filza no. 19 (1554), request for a privilege for the edition of Pietro Andrea Mattioli, translation of Dioscorides: *Edit 16*, CNCE 37627. Valgrisi states, “Ho gran numero di figliuoli, et grande famiglia in casa, la quale co'l mezzo di questa mia industria (che altra mercantantia non faccio) sostento” (I have a great number of children and many family members in my household, whom I support by means of this, my industry, as I do not do other merchandising).

²⁷ Camerini “Il testamento”; Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*, 1:295–98.

²⁸ As Tommaso Giunti himself reports in his testament: Camerini, “Il testamento.”

LE DECHE DELLE HISTORIE ROMANE

DI TITO LIVIO PADOVANO,

Tradotte nuouamente nella lingua Toscana, da Iacopo Nardi cittadino Fiorentino, con le postille aggiunte nelle margini del libro, dichiaranti molti uocaboli delle cose uecchie, piu degne di cognitione; & in quelle, molti nomi di paesi, & città, fiumi, mōti, & luoghi, illustrati co nomi moderni: Et appresso la ualuta delle monete Romane, ridotta al pregio di quelle de tempi nostri: insieme con la dichiarazione di tutte le misure, quāto è stato necessario alla piena intelligenza dell'Auttoe.



*Colle. L.
Carthuy. Capiz*

Col priuilegio dell' Illustrissimo Senato Veneto per anni XV, che altri che gli heredi di Luc' Antonio Giunti stampar non possi questa nuoua tradittione nel dominio di essa Illustrissima Signoria, ne altroue stampata in quello portare, ne uendere, sotto le pene in esso contenute.

IN VENETIA M D XL.

Fig. 2.3. Title page of Livy, *Le Deche delle historie romane*, translated by Jacopo Nardi. Venice: heirs of Luc'Antonio Giunti, 1540; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

of the Inquisition's attacks, it was precisely Tommaso, an honored figure of indisputable orthodoxy, who took on the role of the leader of the Venetian bookmen in their attempts to resist the imposition of the Index.²⁹

In the sector of printing law books, the Giunti heirs also continued the tradition of their father. Once more, they turned to collective financing for a printing enterprise that, this time, was given a name, the "Compagnia delli libri della Corona," or Company of the Crown.³⁰ This company seems to have been born soon after the partnership for the printing of law books under the name of the Torti brothers had given its last signs of life. The original stipulation has not been preserved, but we do have the power of attorney that Federico Torresani, one of the partners, left for his son-in-law, to enable him to liquidate Federico's share.³¹ The Company of the Crown was signed into being on 18 April 1539 and renewed on 10 November 1550. On both occasions the contract was simply registered in the company's account books and given out as a copy to all the partners. These included the most powerful names in Venetian publishing of the day: Federico Torresani; Tommaso and Giovanni Maria Giunti, heirs of Luc'Antonio; Ottaviano and Girolamo Scoto (Amadio Scoto's heirs), and Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari.³² All of these men belonged to families that had already been famous for more than a generation in publishing and in the book trade in Venice, for law books in particular, and in the case of the Giunti and Scoto had taken over from deceased members of their families. Federico Torresani was to be considered heir, although not exclusively, to the great name of Aldo Manuzio. The Company of the Crown wanted public recognition and adopted a showy mark composed in great solemnity. At the center of the title page, above the title, there was a large crown studded with gems. All around, an architectural structure (the face of a temple) displayed four shields held up by warrior telamons and

²⁹ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 85, 99–100, 121.

³⁰ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 86–91, 367–76; Angela Nuovo, "I Giolito e l'editoria giuridica del XVI secolo," in *Manoscritti, editoria e biblioteche dal medioevo all'età contemporanea: Studi offerti a Domenico Maffei per il suo ottantesimo compleanno*, ed. Mario Ascheri and Gaetano Colli. 3 vols. (Rome: Roma nel Rinascimento, 2006), 1:1019–51.

³¹ Corrado Marciani, "Il testamento, e altre notizie, di Federico Torresani," *La Bibliofilia* 73 (1971): 177. See also Annaclara Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola e la tipografia aldina: La vita, le edizioni, la biblioteca dell'Asolano* (Genoa: Sagep, 1998), 335–36, 675.

³² Although we are not informed about the exact production of the Company of the Crown, which lasted from 1541 to 1563, we know that it included some ninety folio editions, many of which were in several volumes. Prominent amongst these is an enormous undertaking, the *Tractatus* collection, printed in eighteen volumes in folio and published between 1548 and 1550: *Edit* 16, CNCE 60702.



Fig. 2.4. Title page of Bartolo da Sassoferato, *In secundam Infortiati partem lucidissima commentaria*. Venice: [at the sign of the Crown], 1543; P. Courtesy of Biblioteca Statale, Cremona.

showing the publisher's marks of the four partners: a lily for Giunti, a phoenix for Giolito, an anchor for Girolamo Scoto, and a tower for Federico Torresani.

The Giunti heirs' distribution network stabilized and was made more efficient as years passed. Perhaps the best principle for such efficiency was precisely to conserve a skeletal family structure within a transnational enterprise. The various seats that they operated enabled access to the best information concerning the size and nature of local markets, which meant that shipments then varied in both quantity and assortment. By the mid-sixteenth century the distribution and sales potential of a book could be projected, since it was to some extent predictable. Paolo Manuzio offers a good description of the timing of sales, based on his experience as a publisher: "And if indeed the works should prove salable, you don't touch the money before six or eight months. In the meantime you need to have the strength to keep going, because if two or three booksellers pay in a month, the others don't pay in six."³³

The process became more complicated when the editions distributed were not middling, common products, but those that were harder to sell. One well-documented experience was that of the enterprising publishing initiative undertaken by Cardinal Marcello Cervini during the pontificate of Paul III. Within a vast editorial project, which was realized only in part, around 1542 Cervini managed to publish four editions, two in Greek and two in Latin.³⁴ Six years after publication, he still had in storage 771 of the initial 1,275 copies of one of these works, Eustathius' commentary on Homer, which he decided to sell to Benedetto Giunti at half price as a way of repaying a debt that the Apostolic Chamber had with Giunti. The agreement between Marcello Cervini, on the one hand, and Niccolò

³³ "E se bene le opere fussero vendibili, non si tocca il danaro se non in spatio di sei, et otto mesi. Intanto bisogna aver polso a mantenersi ... perché se due o tre [librari] pagano in un mese, gli altri non pagano in sei": Paolo Manuzio, *Lettere di Paolo Manuzio copiate sugli autografi esistenti nella Biblioteca Ambrosiana* (Paris: Giulio Renouard, 1834), letter 27, pp. 122–23. According to Ian Maclean's calculations, "Plantin did not recoup his outgoings on two-thirds of the books published until three years after publication": Ian Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion: The Learned Book in the Age of Confessions, 1560–1630* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 105.

³⁴ The first was Homerus, *Ilias et Odyssea*, in Greek, with commentary by Eustathius, archbishop of Thessalonica, ed. Niccolò Maiorano. 4 vols. (Rome: A. Blado & partners [who were Maiorano himself and Benedetto Giunti], 1542, *Edit 16*, CNCE 18394); the second, Theophylactus, *Enarrationes in quattuor Evangelia*, in Greek (Rome: A. Blado, 1542, *Edit 16*, CNCE 24534); the third, Nicolaus I, pope, *Epistolae* (Rome: Francesco Priscianese, 1542, *Edit 16*, CNCE 36182); and the fourth, Arnobius, *Disputationum adversus gentes libri VII* (Rome: Francesco Priscianese, 1542, *Edit 16*, CNCE 3083).

Maiorano, Antonio Blado, and Benedetto Giunti, on the other, was long and complex, and I shall analyze here only the portion relative to the distribution of the group of books that the three partners contracted to sell, which comprised five hundred copies of Greek editions of Eustathius and Theophylactus.³⁵

The documents relating to this venture permit us to peer deeper into the Giunti commercial network and recognize its particulars. First of all, a group of homage copies was always reserved for eminent personages connected with Cervini.³⁶ Commercial distribution was made through two basic channels, one professional and one formed by members of religious orders. For these works of Eustathius and Theophylactus, the 1540s Giunti commercial network functioned as follows:

Sent from Rome on commission:

50 to Lyon to Iacopo Giunti;

10 to Bologna to Giovanni Andrea Dossena;

6 to Florence to Bernardo Giunti;

70 to Venice to the heirs of Luc'Antonio Giunti;

105 to Bologna to Giovanni Andrea Dossena to be consigned to the Governor of Bologna on the order of His Most Reverend Highness;

10 to Naples to Agostino de Bottis;

30 to Bologna to Lorenzo Torrentino, bookseller;

23 sold in our shop;

8 to Giordano, bookseller in Rome.

312, the rest are in our house.³⁷

³⁵ The records of these events (Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Carte Cervini*, F. 51) were published in Léon Dorez, "Le Cardinal Marcello Cervini et l'imprimerie à Rome (1539–1550)," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* 12 (1892): 289–313, and again in Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 309–13. See also Deoclecio Redig de Campos, "Francesco Priscianese stampatore e umanista fiorentino del sec. XVI," *La Bibliofilia* 40 (1938): 161–83; Pio Paschini, "Un cardinale editore: Marcello Cervini," in *Miscellanea di scritti di bibliografia ed erudizione in memoria di Luigi Ferrari* (Florence: Olschki, 1952), 383–413; Roberto Ridolfi, "Nuovi contributi sulle stamperie papali di Paolo III," *La Bibliofilia* 50 (1948): 183–97; Stanley Morison, "Marcello Cervini, Pope Marcellus II, Bibliography's Patron Saint," *Italia medievale e umanistica* 5 (1962): 301–19. On the magnificent Greek type used, see Alberto Tinto, "The History of a Sixteenth-Century Greek Type," *The Library* 5th ser., vol. 25, no. 4 (1970): 285–93 and Evro Layton, "The History of a Sixteenth-Century Greek Type Revised," *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 1 (2004): 35–50, www.historicalreview.org.

³⁶ Complimentary copies (in all there were thirty-nine) were set aside, among others, for humanist Basilio Zanchi, man of letters, Francesco Maria Molza, secretary of the Republic of Venice and author of a famous collection of voyages, Giovan Battista Ramusio, Cardinal Guido Ascanio Sforza, and Cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa (later Pope Paul IV).

³⁷ Dorez, "Le Cardinal Marcello Cervini," 303–4. Distribution of the Theophylactus followed the same scheme, except that the heirs of Luc'Antonio Giunti in Venice were

The shipments to markets covered by other family members are easy to measure. Jacopo (Jacques) in Lyon, Luc'Antonio's heirs in Venice, and Bernardo in Florence were charged with selling a total of 126 copies, but in quite different proportions. Lyon, despite the possibility of sales at the fairs, was to sell only half as many as Venice, and Florence, the homeland of the Giunti family, accounted for almost none.³⁸ We can deduce from this that the Giunti's prestigious production in Florence was made possible and supported by distribution and sale in the markets of Lyon and Venice, and that it found little oxygen in its local surroundings.

In Bologna and Naples the Giunti worked through booksellers who were in correspondence with them. In Bologna, the majority of copies were left with the bookseller Lorenzo Torrentino, about whom I shall have more to say in chapter 6. Next came the bookseller Giovanni Andrea Dossena, who was also a printer in Rome from 1544 to 1551, and who is listed as receiving ten copies for his shop in Bologna and 105 copies to be consigned to the governor of that city, who would evidently have been responsible for their eventual distribution. The governor – or, more accurately, the legate – was in this period the well-known Cardinal Giovanni Girolamo Morone.³⁹ In August 1541 Dossena received an admonition from the episcopal vicar because he was suspected of keeping heterodox books in his shop. He had professional relations with Giordano Ziletti and had as a collaborator the bookseller Francesco Linguardo, the husband of his

assigned one hundred copies and twenty copies were sent to Dossena to be consigned to the legate. For the *Epistolae* of Pope Nicholas I, Antonio Pasini, a publisher and bookseller from Verona who was active in Perugia, was also involved: he had fifty copies, to be consigned to the Cardinal Legate.

³⁸ In the 1560s, in a petition to Cosimo de' Medici by means of which they hoped to obtain the title of ducal printers, the Giunti of Florence stated that in that city the majority of their titles sold from twenty-five to forty copies at the most: Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Regio Diritto*, F. 6029, cc. 121ff.; Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 138. The Florentine market therefore appears to have been somewhat depressed in these years. For editions in Greek, ten copies would be an overestimate.

³⁹ A cardinal and a diplomat, Morone was a man of the highest repute. A member of the circle of "spirituals" of Reginald Pole, he sought, without success, mediation with the heterodox, and himself came under suspicion of heresy. He was arrested in 1557, tried in 1557–59, and imprisoned for more than two years in Castel Sant'Angelo before being rehabilitated. On Morone, see Massimo Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma: Studi sul cardinal Giovanni Morone (1509–1580) e il suo processo d'eresia* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2005); Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto, *Il processo inquisitoriale del cardinal Giovanni Morone: Edizione critica*. 6 vols. (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, 1981–95); Massimo Firpo and Ottavia Niccoli, eds., *Il cardinale Giovanni Morone e l'ultima fase del Concilio di Trento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010).

daughter Caterina. Linguardo and Ziletti were later arrested in Bologna for traffic in prohibited books.⁴⁰

The bookseller Agostino de Bottis, who is listed as receiving ten copies in Naples, was the father of Giovan Andrea de Bottis and the de Bottis brothers who are mentioned as owing money to Federico Torresani in 1557.⁴¹ The Bottis family maintained its relations with the Giunti family over time. Niccolò de Bottis, who did some publishing in Venice, turns up in the 1570s and 1580s as a bookseller in correspondence with Luc'Antonio Giunti the Younger in Naples.⁴² To end the list, eight copies were entrusted to the shop in Rome of Giordano Ziletti, a bookseller-publisher who was at the time at the start of his career but would become an important figure in Venetian publishing of the later Cinquecento.⁴³

Next comes a list of copies consigned to religious institutions:⁴⁴

To diverse Religions of Friars:
 50 to the friars of S. Paolo;
 30 to the friars of La Pace;
 15 to the friars of S. Salvatore del Lauro;
 50 to the friars of S. Maria Nova;
 20 to the friars of S. Maria transpontina;
 8 to the friars of S. Croce in Hyerusalem;
 15 to the friars of S. Agostino;
 8 to the friars of S. Grisogono

196.

The books were thus consigned on commission to religious belonging to several orders, Carmelites, Carthusians, Augustinians, and more. This was hardly a minor channel of distribution, given that the Giunti counted on it

⁴⁰ The trial threw light on a heterodox community in that city. See *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Linguardo, Francesco" and Guido Dall'Olio, *Eretici e inquisitori nella Bologna del Cinquecento* (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 1999).

⁴¹ Marciani, "Il testamento," 172.

⁴² Alberto Tenenti, "Luc'Antonio Giunti il giovane stampatore e mercante," in *Studi in onore di Armando Saporiti*. 2 vols. (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1957), 2:1036; Dennis E. Rhodes, "Appunti su alcuni librai-editori italiani del Cinquecento poco conosciuti. II. Niccolò De Bottis," *Bibliologia* 2 (2007): 42–49. Niccolò De Bottis obtained the privilege for the reformed text of the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1572: Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe, "Christopher Plantin's Papal Privileges: Documents in the Vatican Archives," *De Gulden Passer* 69 (1991): 142.

⁴³ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 189–93; Michela Lombardi, "Gli Ziletti a Venezia (1548–1587): Una famiglia di stampatori fra commerci e censura libraria" (M.A. thesis, Università degli Studi di Milano, 1994).

⁴⁴ Dorez, "Le Cardinal Marcello Cervini," 303.

to dispose of two-fifths of the total copies distributed.⁴⁵ Moreover, the number of volumes delivered to members of religious orders was the same for the commentary on the *Iliad* as it was for a religious book such as the Gospels in Greek. This channel was thus exclusively commercial, without being called so. Many records testify to the habitual involvement of religious in the commerce of books. It is probable that they had access to spaces and opportunities propitious for the sale of books that would have been closed to booksellers; they could sell, for example, to pilgrims to whom they offered hospitality. The fact that men of the church took a professional interest in selling books, whatever their contents, can also be read from contemporary iconography.⁴⁶

The Third Generation

From 1569 to 1602 control of the family firm was in the hands of Luc'Antonio the Younger, an extraordinary entrepreneurial figure who put immense energy into developing further a business style that was already well defined. His publishing activities grew, both in his own name and in that of the family and as a result of his participation, in a dominant position, within large partnerships such as the "Societas Aquilae renovantis."⁴⁷ Only the broad outlines of the composition and history of this company are known.⁴⁸ The Societas was created on 1 January 1571, as stated in a

⁴⁵ This distribution route was not new. Filippo Giunti, in Florence, was charged in 1505 with delivering eighteen missals printed on parchment to the sisters of the convent of the Badia Fiorentina, who were to distribute them in Rome, Monte Cassino, and Naples: Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 136, n. 29.

⁴⁶ For example, an engraving by Willem Collaert from Antwerp of ca. 1650 shows St. Philip Neri contemplating the alms received after the sale of ten books in two piles that two servants are wrapping up with cords, while in the background the wealthy customer, elegantly dressed, supervises the operation. A caption explains that Philip sells books and gives the earnings to the poor: Sigfred Taubert, *Bibliopola: Bilder und Texte aus der Welt des Buchhandels*, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1966), 2:51.

⁴⁷ The various names used by this company were "Sub insigne Aquilae renovantis"; "Societas ad signum Aquilae"; "Societas Aquilae renovantis"; "Sub signo Aquilae renovantis"; "Signum Aquilae"; and "Societas Aquilae". It used the mark of an eagle pecking a rock.

⁴⁸ For the history of this company, which produced books from 1574 to the end of the sixteenth century, putting out more than one hundred often multivolume editions, see a first synthesis in Luca Bellingeri, "Editoria e mercato: La produzione giuridica," in *Il libro italiano del Cinquecento: Produzione e commercio*, ed. Paolo Veneziani (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1989), 171–73, although Bellingeri erroneously states that the Societas Aquilae renovantis was in competition with the Giunti. A correct version is given in Tenenti, "Luc'Antonio Giunti il giovane," 1035, which refers to a contract founding the Societas dated 1584. See also Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*, 2:18. Carlo Maria Simonetti, "La Compagnia dell'Aquila che si rinnova: Appunti sui consorzi editoriali a Venezia nel Cinquecento," in *Bibliografia testuale o filologia dei testi a stampa? Definizioni metodologiche*

CAROLI RVINI
 REGIENSIS
 IVRISCONSULTI
 SVA TEMPESTATE
 CELEBERRIMI
 RESPONSORVM,
 SIVE CONSILIORVM
 Tomus Primus,
 CONVENTIONVM IVRA COMPLECTENS,
 SVMMISQVE ILLVSTRATVS.



VENETIIS, M D LXXIX.



Fig. 2.5. Title page of Carlo Ruini, *Responsorum, sive consiliorum tomus primus*. Venice: Societas Aquilae renovantis, 1579; f°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

document dated 31 May 1571.⁴⁹ It brought together a large number of printers and booksellers, who participated with one or more *carati*, or shares. Partnerships using *carati* were a sort of share-holding company *ante litteram*, known particularly in maritime cities such as Venice and Genoa. Dividing up investments into *carati* permitted the collection of capital needed for especially costly ventures. In its first formulation, the partners in this company were fourteen, some of whom represented other companies: Luc'Antonio Giunti (7 *carati*); Bernardo Castagna from Turin (4 *carati*); Francesco de Franceschi (3 *carati*); Girolamo Scoto (2 *carati*); Vincenzo Valgrisi (2 *carati*); Zaccaria Zenaro (2 *carati*); Francesco Ziletti (2 *carati*); Niccolò Bevilacqua (2 *carati*); the heirs of Melchiorre Sessa (1 *carato*); Giovanni Varisco and partners (1 *carato*); Ludovico Avanzi (1 *carato*); Bernardino Manuzio (1 *carato*); Damiano Zenaro (1 *carato*); and Gaspare Bindoni (1 *carato*). In the Societas Aquilae, one *carato* equaled an investment of one thousand ducats, and as the capital was divided into thirty shares the total investment was thirty thousand ducats. Luc'Antonio Giunti's investment was a round seven thousand ducats.⁵⁰ The history of the Societas Aquilae, the biggest company in Italy in these years, is still to be written, both for the various configurations it took on over time as many of its members took turns working together and, in particular, for its vast publishing activities. The Societas Aquilae was probably the largest publishing venture led by Luc'Antonio the Younger, and it demonstrates the level of complexity – including financial complexity – reached by the Venetian publishing sector.

e prospettive future: Convegno di studi in onore di Conor Fahy, Udine, 24–25–26 febbraio 1997, ed. Neil Harris (Udine: Forum, 1999), 265–68 publishes the receipt for the sums with which the treasurer of the firm, Luc'Antonio Giunti the Younger, paid off some partners who wished to withdraw from the company.

⁴⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Cavagnis, b. 3286. This document is an act of cession of one of the two shares (*carati*) held by Francesco Ziletti to Giovan Battista Somasco, a Pavia publisher-bookseller active in Venice from 1562 to 1592. In this document in the vernacular, the Societas is called “Compagnia di stampar libri di leggi” (company to print law books).

⁵⁰ Bernardo Castagna was the company member with the second largest investment, four thousand ducats, but he was far from being a publisher or a bookseller. Destined for a prominent career at the court of Turin, he dealt in grain, was *gran gabelliere* (collector of duties) to the duke, held mining concessions, was promoted to the nobility in 1579, and in 1588 was appointed Consigliere di Stato. Castagna's interests in the book trade were even more marked in later years, when he acted as procurator for Niccolò Bevilacqua in Turin and as treasurer for the “Compagnia della Stampa” of Turin: Andrea Merlotti, “Librai, stampatori e potere a Torino nel secondo Cinquecento,” in *Storia di Torino*, ed. Giuseppe Ricuperati. 9 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1997–2002), 3:572.

The leap in quality typical of Luc'Antonio the Younger is also clear in his commercial activities that had nothing to do with books. Shipments of books were increasingly accompanied by other goods: sugar, pepper, glass, worked iron; woven cloth, oil, and wheat. Luc'Antonio organized banking and financial operations in Antwerp, Rome, Milan, and Piacenza. The frequency of his investments in merchandise other than books grew enormously, and Luc'Antonio seems to have handled them himself. His earnings appear to have been much greater than those of the two preceding generations. It is indicative that under Luc'Antonio the family's landholdings grew to some four hundred properties;⁵¹ in 1537 there had been only fifty-six.⁵² Agricultural properties brought added income in the form of wheat, grapes (and wine), and vegetables. The family continued to be represented in many parts of Europe. In Florence, under Iacopo's guidance, Filippo, Francesco, and Raffaello Giunti were joined under the name of "heirs of Filippo Giunti." In Lyon, Filippo Tinghi held the reins of the branch office, which passed to the heirs of Giacomo after their break with him.⁵³ In Spain, Filippo succeeded Giovanni, and in the 1570s Giulio (Julio) Giunti, an exceptionally skilled merchant capable of organizing the commerce in religious books produced by the motherhouse on an unprecedented scale, was active in Madrid.⁵⁴ In Poland, a market nearly as important as Spain for religious books, the firm continued to have solid relations with Melchior Ruricht and Richard Hübere. The extremely dense network of Luc'Antonio's correspondents in Italy included operators active in Verona, Milan, Parma, Vercelli, Turin, Bologna, Pisa, Perugia, Rome, Naples, Melfi, Bari, Messina, and Palermo (as well as Lanciano and its fair), although we know of these only thanks to notarial records rather than any systematic documentation.⁵⁵ Luc'Antonio crowned his ascent with the acquisition of an imposing house on the Grand Canal in Venice, which cost him fifteen thousand ducats.

At the death of Luc'Antonio in 1602, the firm began to drift into a decline. His two sons found it necessary to reorganize the business. Among the

⁵¹ Tenenti, "Luc'Antonio Giunti il giovane," 1047, n. 154.

⁵² Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 317.

⁵³ Rozzo, "Filippo Tinghi editore."

⁵⁴ In 1574, Julio signed an agreement in Madrid by which he contracted to import, on the order of the king, sixty thousand breviaries, all of them printed in Venice: Pettas, *History & Bibliography of the Giunti (Junta) Printing Family*, 51–77; Ottone, "L'attività editoriale dei Giunti," 60; Gian Ludovico Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma nella seconda metà del Cinquecento: Documenti inediti* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1980), 216, n. 10.

⁵⁵ Tenenti, "Luc'Antonio Giunti il giovane," 1036–39.

IASONIS

MAYNI MEDIOLE.

In Secundam Infortiati partem

Commentaria:

Cum solitis Doctorum insignium Adnotationibus, præsertim
D. Ioannis Francisci Purpurati.

*Novissime ex vetustissimis exemplaribus summa fide, & diligentia castigata,
nataliq; suo splendori tandem restituta.*

Communes porro Iurifconsultorum opiniones ab Authore passim citatas, in studioforum
gratiam, sub varia literarum figura, & nota  indicare volumus.



VENETIIS, APVD LVCAM ANTONIVM
IVNTAM. M D LXVIII.

Fig. 2.6. Title page of Giasone del Mayno, *In secundam Infortiati partem commentaria*. Venice: Luc'Antonio Giunti the Younger, 1568; f^o.

various signs of restructuring is the liquidation of portions of the enormous stock of books that the family held in a number of places. On 18 August 1604 the Giunti sold to the bookseller Francesco Manolesi all the books that they owned and kept at the Lanciano Fair – an entire bookshop, complete with shipping chests, bookshelves, and other furnishings. The sale brought in four thousand ducats.⁵⁶ Even the historic company seat in Florence was involved in a massive sale, as seen by the publication of a catalogue in 1604 listing 13,685 titles for sale.⁵⁷ The assortment of books listed in this catalogue, many copies of which remain, exemplifies the dimensions and vast reach of the Giunti family's business dealings.

The Giunti in Rome

Unfortunately, little is known about the activities of the Giunti family in Rome, the strategic center for the principal publishers of religious and liturgical books in Italy. Iacopo, the son of Luc'Antonio Giunti's brother Biagio, was sent to Rome in 1518, if not before. He opened a bookstore in the Parione district, the area of the book trade in Rome. He evidently put down roots in the city, for as early as 1524 he was granted a papal privilege to print the *Summa Caietana de peccatis* of Thomas de Vio.⁵⁸ Later, Tommaso and Benedetto Giunti, sons of Luc'Antonio, lived in Rome. Benedetto, who was active in Rome as a publisher in 1540 and 1541, also formed a partnership with Antonio Blado and Antonio Salamanca.⁵⁹ It was probably through Blado, who had good connections in the papal court, that the Giunti managed to be assigned a quadrennial privilege for the Roman breviary as "reformed" by Francisco Quiñones, cardinal of Santa Croce, a work of which Blado had published the *editio princeps* in 1535.⁶⁰ The Giunti put out the second, corrected edition (*Edit 16*, CNCE

⁵⁶ See chapter 8.

⁵⁷ *Catalogus librorum qui in Iunctarum bibliotheca Philippi haeredum Florentiae prosant* (Florence: [heirs of Filippo Giunti], 1604), 524 pp. See Alfredo Serrai, "Cataloghi tipografici, editoriali, di librai," in Serrai, *Storia della Bibliografia*. 11 vols. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1993), 4:34–35.

⁵⁸ *Edit 16*, CNCE 16938. See Valentino Romani, "Luoghi editoriali in Roma e nello Stato della Chiesa," in *La stampa in Italia nel Cinquecento: Atti del convegno, Roma, 17–21 ottobre 1989*, ed. Marco Santoro. 2 vols. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1992), 1:515–27.

⁵⁹ On Salamanca, see David Landau and Peter W. Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470–1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 302–8; Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the "Privilegio" in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004).

⁶⁰ *Breviarium Romanum ex Sacra potissimum Scriptura et probatis sanctorum historiis constans* (Rome: A. Blado, 1535, *Edit 16*, CNCE 11163). From that year on, Blado was the official Cameral printer.

1165), which remained the valid text until the pontificate of Pius V, giving rise to a hundred or so editions in various parts of Europe. This made it possible for Luc'Antonio the Elder to print the breviary in Venice, with the papal privilege, on two occasions, in 1536 and 1537, with a press run of two thousand copies.⁶¹

These events already hint at some of the more problematic aspects of the publication of reformed Catholic texts in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Among these challenges was the major publishing firms' need to have a family member in Rome in order to obtain the necessary papal privileges. Tommaso Giunti, a renowned figure in the print trade, liberally lent his printing types to Paolo Manuzio during the first period of Manuzio's activities in Rome (1561–63).⁶² A bookman as experienced as Tommaso Giunti may have had it in mind to take advantage in some manner of privileges that would be given to Manuzio, as indeed happened. We can be sure that the Giunti were continually present in Rome throughout the century in their shop in the via del Pellegrino at the sign of the Unicorn, which is recorded as being rented to Luc'Antonio the Younger between 1595 and 1597 for 170 scudi a year. In 1596 the factor of the shop, Alessandro Prestini, was put to death in Campo dei Fiori for having set fire to a house.⁶³

The Gabiano Family

The village of Gabiano, in Piedmont, gave birth to and lent its name to one of the more powerful families of book publishers and merchants in Italy.⁶⁴

⁶¹ On these events, see J. Wickham Legg, "An Agreement in 1536 between Certain Booksellers of Rome and Venice to Bring out the Second Text of the Reformed Breviary of Cardinal Quignon, with Introduction, List of Editions and Bibliographical Notes," *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 13 (1916): 324–48; Pierina Fontana, "Inizi della proprietà letteraria nello stato pontificio (saggio di documenti dell'Archivio Vaticano)," *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia* 3 (1929): 212–13, 218–21. Neither of these two scholars knew of the two Venetian editions of the breviary (*Edit 16*, CNC 1165 and CNC 1164). The papal privilege was conceded "Dilectis filiis Luca Antonio et filiis ac Iacobo et Benedicto de luntis, necnon Antonio Blado, et Antonio Salamanca librorum impressoris." Out of an overall press run of four thousand copies, *Edit 16* lists fewer than ten that remain in Italy.

⁶² Manuzio, *Lettere*, letter 26, p. 62.

⁶³ As we learn from the diary of the mathematician and orientalist Giovan Battista Raimondi, "On the 2nd day of October 1596, Wednesday, was brought to justice Prestino, *fattore* to the Giunti of Venice in Rome. When he exited from Torre di Nona, they cut off his two hands in front of the house that he set fire to in the [via del] Pellegrino, and they hanged him in Campo dei Fiori and then burned him": Alberto Tinto, "Un diario di Giovanni Battista Raimondi (22 giugno 1592–12 dicembre 1596)," *Archivio storico italiano* 151 (1993): 683–84.

⁶⁴ The fullest treatment of the Gabiano family available looks at the French branch of the family: Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 71–245, 449–50. For their activities in Italy,

Attested in several generations in Asti, Lyon, and Venice, the Gabiano dynasty is among the least-known families of the Renaissance book trade, even though many indications show that they were merchants of the highest order and almost as significant in the sector of the transnational book trade as the Giunti family. The specific difficulty for a study of the Gabiano family is that it is very hard to identify the books they published, because they usually did so anonymously. Although book production does not exhaust the complex of information we need in order to evaluate the role of a book-related enterprise, it does permit us to reconstruct that enterprise's relations, investments, sales prospects, and market expectations. Here we lack all the data that is fundamental to distinguishing one publishing house from another as a socio-cultural entity.

The Gabianos carried on intensive printing activity in their seat in Lyon and produced nothing, or next to nothing, explicitly under their name in Venice.⁶⁵ It is certain, however, that Venice always remained the center of the family business and of the companies they founded.

The first person from the family to make an appearance in the book world was Baldassare da Gabiano, who was active from 1493 at Lyon under the name of Balthazard d'Ast.⁶⁶ He began to print in that city around 1501–2, but his activities had no relation to cultural circles in Lyon and were clearly programmed in Venice. Baldassare, like other Lyon printers after him, printed octavo editions that resembled those of Aldo Manuzio as closely as possible, using italic types very much like Francesco Griffo's.⁶⁷ He showed a notable talent for organization, and only a few years after the publication of the Aldine octavo editions, he brought together equipment and technicians capable of imitating the very latest and most innovative books. When he learned of this initiative, Manuzio acted to defend himself, publishing a protest on 16 March 1503, *Aldi monitum in Lugdunenses typographos*, in which he denounced these editions as incorrect and listed

see Marciani, "I Gabiano"; David J. Shaw, "The Lyons Counterfeit of Aldus's Italic Type: A New Chronology," in *The Italian Book 1465–1800: Studies Presented to Dennis E. Rhodes on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Denis V. Reidy (London: British Library, 1993), 117–33; *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Gabiano, Baldassare da (di)"; Paolo Veneziani, "Il libraio al segno della fontana," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1999): 242–66. Their family name was actually Lanza: Dal Zio Billanovich, "L'attività editoriale," 109. The village of Gabiano is close to Trino and Asti.

⁶⁵ *Edit 16* attributes only fourteen Venice editions to Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano between 1507 and 1531. Other editions can be attributed to the Gabianos in both Venice and Lyon thanks to letters dating from 1522, about which see below, note 83.

⁶⁶ Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 7:1–26.

⁶⁷ See *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Griffo (Grifi, Griffi), Francesco (Francesco da Bologna)."

their errors one by one.⁶⁸ This text probably did not have the desired effect of eliminating from the marketplace imitations that were not even destined for the Italian market and certainly not for the Venetian market, where Manuzio's privilege was robust,⁶⁹ but it proved highly useful to the printers in Lyon, who used it as a guide for correcting their printed texts.

It does not seem accurate to call those editions counterfeits, a judgment first expressed by Antoine Augustin Renouard.⁷⁰ The production of these editions did not violate the privileges obtained by Manuzio, which were not valid outside the Republic of Venice.⁷¹ Moreover, Gabiano did not use Manuzio's printer's mark (the Anchor and the Dolphin) or the name of the Venice firm, as the editions were anonymous. From the commercial point of view, they were a response – an opportunistic one, to be sure – to the difficulties inherent in distribution. Manuzio was evidently unable to reach the French market quickly enough to meet the demand for these editions, so Gabiano stepped in to fill the gap. In this sense, we can call these reproductions pirate editions, even though there was no real need to obtain Manuzio's permission before printing them. Moreover, this was not the first time that something of the sort had taken place in Lyon. In the late fifteenth century some works published by the Torti brothers had been the subject of forgery that even copied their printer's mark. The Tortis complained about these editions in 1499 in a manuscript petition addressed to Louis XII.⁷²

The Gabiano editions were certainly not alone in entering into unfair competition with Aldo Manuzio: there were similar examples in Milan.⁷³ All such operations are indirect proof of the great success of Manuzio's pocket-sized books, and their effect was to accelerate a change in readers' taste by hastening the diffusion of the new italic typeface in Lyon and elsewhere.

⁶⁸ Luciana Bigliazzi et al., *Aldo Manuzio tipografo 1494–1515* (Florence: Octavo-Franco Cantini, 1994), 115–16; William Kemp, "Counterfeit Aldines and Italic-Letter Editions Printed in Lyons 1502–1510: Early Diffusion in Italy and France," *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of Canada* 35, no. 1 (1997): 75–100; Joanna Kostylo, "Commentary on Aldus Manutius's Warning against the Printers of Lyon (1503)," in *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450–1900)*, ed. L. Bentley and M. Kretschmer, www.copyrighthistory.org.

⁶⁹ The import of these editions to Venice was prohibited by the privilege.

⁷⁰ Renouard, *Annales*, 301–16. For a list of the Gabiano editions in Lyon, see Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 7:6–19; Shaw, "The Lyons Counterfeit."

⁷¹ On privileges and their validity, see chapter 6.

⁷² See also Dennis E. Rhodes, "Jacobino Suigo vendicato a Vercelli ed incriminato a Lione," *La Bibliofilia* 59 (1957): 113–18; Dennis E. Rhodes, "A Lyonnese Piracy of 1497," *The Library* 5th ser., 27 (1972): 46–50. The forged imprint was *ISTC* ig00064800.

⁷³ Bigliazzi et al., *Aldo Manuzio*, 187–92.

Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano

Baldassare da Gabiano's business in Lyon thus reflected planning in Venice. Giovanni Bartolomeo Lanza da Gabiano, the son of Giovanni Lorenzo and the uncle of Baldassare, was the real creator of the family fortunes, in this and many other enterprises. It is not known precisely when he arrived in Venice, but it must have been during the last decade of the fifteenth century. He appears for the first time in the records somewhat later, on 2 March 1504, when he obtained a multiple privilege for new glosses and annotations added to law books already printed.⁷⁴ In his request Giovanni Bartolomeo states that he has already operated as a publisher in Venice for many years, but there is no way to know what books he had printed because he never signed anything. Nor do we know whether the editions that received a privilege here were ever realized, because the titles mentioned correspond to various editions, none of them published under the name of Gabiano or bearing a printed privilege. Yet his statement that he had been a printer in Venice for a long time must surely be true, given the context (a supplication to the College) in which it appears.

After 1504, many archival documents connect Giovanni Bartolomeo with Paganino Paganini, the printer and publisher born in Brescia. In his testament dictated in that year, Paganino Paganini named Giovanni Bartolomeo as executor of his will, referring to him as his brother-in-law.⁷⁵ In January 1508 the two men are mentioned as owing the sizeable sum of five hundred ducats to Giovanni Domenico del Negro, a publisher and book merchant.⁷⁶ Mentioned as a witness in other testaments between 1512 and 1516,⁷⁷ Giovanni Bartolomeo seems to have backed Paganino in additional ventures unconnected with books, such as the acquisition of agricultural land.⁷⁸ In 1522 Paganino named him as his legal representative in a suit regarding some plots of land near Salò, on Lake Garda, one of the leading areas of paper production.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Fulin, "Documenti," no. 139, p. 154.

⁷⁵ "Joannem Batholomeum de Aste cognatum meum": Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino*, 251–54. "De" or "da" Aste, that is the city of Ast (close to the village of Gabiano), is another name used by the members of the family.

⁷⁶ Dal Zio Billanovich, "L'attività editoriale," 109.

⁷⁷ On 12 August 1512 he acts as witness to the testament of Cateruzza, the wife of Gregorio de Gregori: Archivio di Stato di Padova, *Notarile*, 3969, fol. 12r: "D. Ioannes Bartholomeus Gabianus mercator librorum q. Ioannis Lancia de confinio S. Luce." In 1515 Gabiano had Gregorio de Gregori print the works of Ioannes Duns Scotus: *Edit 16*, CNCE 17863, 17864.

⁷⁸ Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino*, 242.

⁷⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Provveditori sopra le Camere*, C I 7, f. 148, 21 March 1522.

The kinship that Giovanni Bartolomeo acquired with Paganino is a key to understanding how he gained entry into the world of the book in Venice. The two men had married sisters, the daughters of Francesco della Fontana, the Italianized name of Franz Renner of Heilbrunn, who was active as a printer in Venice between 1471 and 1486.⁸⁰ Paganino's wife was Cristina;⁸¹ Giovanni's wife was named Isabeta. Their marriages meant that the two men were brothers-in-law of Benedetto Fontana, Francesco della Fontana's son, who was active as a publisher from 1496 to 1508. Benedetto Fontana was the first in the family to use the mark of the Fountain,⁸² and he probably founded the famous bookshop at the sign of the Fountain – an image inspired by his own name – that later came into the hands of Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano.

During 1522, Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano received some 110 letters from a variety of correspondents at the bookshop at the sign of the Fountain near the Rialto bridge in the parish of San Bartolomeo.⁸³ Correspondence was the principal means by which the head of a firm managed his business, and these letters are therefore the principal source for understanding the extent of Gabiano's commercial network.

The structure of the company meant that business was carried on in three principal locations, as were its financial transactions: Venice, Lyon, and Florence. In Venice, Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano was already a partner of Lorenzo Aliprandi, an arrangement that he maintained up until his death in 1543.⁸⁴ Aliprandi probably handled other merchandise, whereas Giovanni Bartolomeo certainly traded mainly in books. He carried on his activities from Venice, supplying Italian booksellers in the

⁸⁰ "Brunner" translates into Italian as "Fontana." *ISTC* attributes forty-seven editions to Renner. From documentation going back to 1477 it is clear that he was known as "Francesco della Fontana, printer of books by S. Apostolo, with a bookshop in the Merceria": Roberto Ridolfi, "Francesco della Fontana stampatore e libraio a Venezia in un documento del 1477," in *Studi bibliografici: Atti del convegno dedicato alla storia del libro italiano nel V centenario dell'introduzione dell'arte tipografica in Italia, Bolzano, 7–8 ottobre 1965* (Florence: Olschki, 1967), 55, 59.

⁸¹ Cristina, whose dowry brought the fine sum of 1,800 gold ducats, states in her testament, dated 1547, that she is the daughter of the "q. Francesco della Fontana tedesco": Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino*, 244.

⁸² The mark is *Edit 16*, CNCM 1980, and it had been in use since 1496 (see the colophon of *ISTC* ia00966000).

⁸³ See *Lettere Gabiano* (Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Miscellanea atti diversi manoscritti*, b. 91: "Lettere di vari scritte a Gio. Bartolomio da Gabiano"). This is probably the complete correspondence for 1522. Some of the letters are no longer legible because of the poor condition of the paper. The file presently has no connection with any other remaining records.

⁸⁴ Little is known about Lorenzo Aliprandi aside from the fact that he earned the privilege of Venetian citizenship on 4 September 1546: Marciani, "I Gabiano," 202.

cities of Ferrara, Mantua, Milan, Padua, and Bologna. In Lyon, business was based on participation in the Lyon fairs and on publishing. Giovanni Bartolomeo's nephew Lucimborgo was in charge of the business in Lyon.⁸⁵

Whereas all other Italian cities were served from Venice alone, books arrived in Florence from both Venice and Lyon, and payment could be negotiated with Gabiano family members in both places. This state of affairs was possible only for Florence and was made possible by the close connections that Florentine merchants and bankers had helped to create between the two cities long before. For the other cities of Northern Italy, all business was in the hands of Giovanni Bartolomeo. At times he supplied more than one bookseller in a given city: four in Padua (Alessandro da Pavia, Filippo da Como, Gaspare Trivello, and Santo Corbella); two in Ferrara (Paride della Mella and Giovanni Andrea del Negro);⁸⁶ one in Florence (the *cartolaio* Bartolo di Domenico and, after his death, his sons Domenico and Marc'Antonio di Bartolo); two in Bologna (Giustiniano da Rubiera and Giovan Battista Lapi); one in Mantua (Benedetto Latioso, canon of the Duomo); and one in Milan (the well-known bookseller and publisher Andrea Calvo). Giovanni Bartolomeo supplied all of these booksellers with books, either proposed by him or ordered by them, and negotiated with them about when payment fell due. Rarely did he accept other sorts of merchandise in payment, such as salami, shirts, or napkins; payment was almost always in cash.

Such data help us measure the quantity of book commerce in Venice, at least in 1522. The domination of Venetian printing over that of other Italian cities of this period is clear.⁸⁷ Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano shipped some 1,800 books from Venice to his retail booksellers in one year; in return, 967 books reached Venice, almost all of them from Milan and shipped by Andrea Calvo, who was the only one of his correspondents also to act as an entrepreneur in his own right and furnished Giovanni Bartolomeo with books.⁸⁸ Calvo was quite active as a book wholesaler as

⁸⁵ Relations with the Lyon branch of the firm will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁸⁶ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 133, 134.

⁸⁷ In 1522 no books were printed either in Padua or Mantua; only one was printed in Ferrara, 15 in Florence, 20 in Bologna, and 22 in Milan, while 183 editions were printed in Venice: see *Edit 16*.

⁸⁸ Some of the books sent by Gabiano were printed by Calvo, such as Boccaccio's *Ameto* in 1520 (*Edit 16*, CNCE 62539) 225 copies of which Calvo sent to Venice. Calvo, who also traded in arms with Lyon, was deeply involved in importing books with heterodox contents: Kevin Stevens, "New Light on Andrea Calvo and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century Milan," *La Bibliofilia* 103 (2001): 25–54; *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Calvo, Andrea (Minatianus)." The only other city from which books arrived (but no more than forty or so) was Ferrara.

well as a publisher; he frequented the Lyon Fair, and his assortment of books went far beyond the confines of the city of Milan to include, for example, books printed in Trino by Giovanni Giolito.

It is interesting to note that at least before 1522 the Gabiano firm did no business in Rome or Naples, although it seems to have taken those markets into consideration in its plans for the future. This situation should be interpreted within the context of contemporary commerce, and it shows that Northern Italy had remarkably more commercial relations with France and Germany than with Rome and Southern Italy. Contrary to what geography might suggest, it was easier to cross the Alps than the Apennines.

It is true, however, that in that same year of 1522, Michele Tramezino, a young bookseller who later made his fortune as a publisher in Venice, sent letters to Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano in which he invited Gabiano to open a new bookshop with him in Rome.⁸⁹ In 1522 Tramezino was working in the Scotos' branch in Rome.⁹⁰ When Gabiano asked him to sell some books that he wanted to send him from Venice, Tramezino refused, stating that he could not do so from the Scoto bookshop. He took the opportunity, however, to propose to Gabiano that he open a new shop, to be managed by himself, Tramezino, if Gabiano had sufficient start-up capital to pay the necessary expenses. According to Tramezino, there was ample room in Rome for such an enterprise. The newly elected pope, Hadrian VI, he wrote, was a man of culture and would give new energy to the university. Tramezino went so far as to hypothesize that the new shop could realize an income of one thousand ducats per year. No surviving documents show that the invitation was accepted. Still, this episode illustrates how commercial networks expanded in this period.

A partnership contract from 1535 survives, drawn up in Venice, the location of the Gabiano home office.⁹¹ The 1535 document renewed an earlier

⁸⁹ On Tramezino, see Pier Silverio Leicht, "L'editore veneziano Michele Tramezzino e i suoi privilegi," in *Miscellanea di scritti di bibliografia ed erudizione in memoria di Luigi Ferrari* (Florence: Olschki, 1952), 357–67; Alberto Tinto, *Annali tipografici dei Tramezzino* (Venice and Rome: Istituto per la collaborazione editoriale, 1968); Gennaro Tallini, "Tradizione familiare e politiche editoriali nella produzione a stampa dei Tramezzino editori a Venezia (1536–1592)," *Studi Veneziani* 60 (2010): 53–78. Tramezino sent two letters with the same contents, one dated 22 June, the other 4 August. See Angela Nuovo, "Una lettera di Michele Tramezino a Giovanni Bartolomeo Gabiano (1522)," *La Bibliofilia*, forthcoming.

⁹⁰ The Scotos' presence in Rome is documented from 1536: Volpati, "Gli Scotti," 375, but they must have been established there long before that date.

⁹¹ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Pergamena 5853: Venice, 4 August 1535.

vided capital for the new partnership amounting to 62,618 ducats. From this sum, 22,322 ducats came from Aliprandi, and the rest from the two Gabiano partners. This is the only extant document from all the Italian book firms of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to make explicit mention of accumulated capital. It is clear that this was a large-scale business. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that an organization such as this was asked in Lyon to lend thousands of scudi, in several installments, to the king of France.⁹²

Giovanni Bartolomeo's testament, notarized on 13 October 1536, records that he was a partner in three companies: one in Venice registered under the name of his son-in-law Lorenzo Aliprandi; one in Flanders with Francesco Bonanome; and the Lyon company under the name of his nephew Lucimburgo. Aliprandi and another son-in-law of Giovanni Bartolomeo's, Nicola Della Vecchia (or Vuković), the husband of his daughter Dionora, were named as testamentary executors.⁹³ Della Vecchia was the son of Božidar Vuković (Dionisio della Vecchia), from Podgorica (Montenegro), publisher of liturgical works in Serbian redaction of Church Slavonic. He maintained close relations in the Levant as far as Constantinople and his business dealings extended even farther in the years that followed. It is known, for example, that the sons and heirs of Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano named a procurator of their own in Pera (Beyoğlu) and Constantinople in 1543. In 1547–49, from their London seat the Gabiano heirs traded with Spain, England, and Antwerp in merchandise that ranged from English woolen stuffs to wheat and oil. The Gabianos' commercial network was analogous to that of the Giuntis' in its complexity and its profits, although the Gabianos – at least under their own name – were less of a presence in book production.

The eastern extension of the Gabiano network deserves special mention. The fact that members of the firm were present in the Levant as far as Constantinople makes it possible to advance some suggestive hypotheses concerning the printing of the Qur'an in Arabic. As is known, Paganino Paganini and his son Alessandro printed the Qur'an between 1537 and 1538.⁹⁴ Given the kinship ties between the Paganini and Gabiano families and their ongoing and close business relations, as shown in the 1522 commercial letters, we can perhaps set the production of the Qur'an within the interests of a commercial partnership that had connections in geographical locations in which that work would normally be sold. This hypothesis

⁹² Marciani, "I Gabiano," 204–6.

⁹³ The testament is published in Marciani, "I Gabiano," 197–98.

⁹⁴ Angela Nuovo, "A Lost Arabic Koran Rediscovered," *The Library* 6th ser., vol. 12, no. 4 (1990): 273–92.

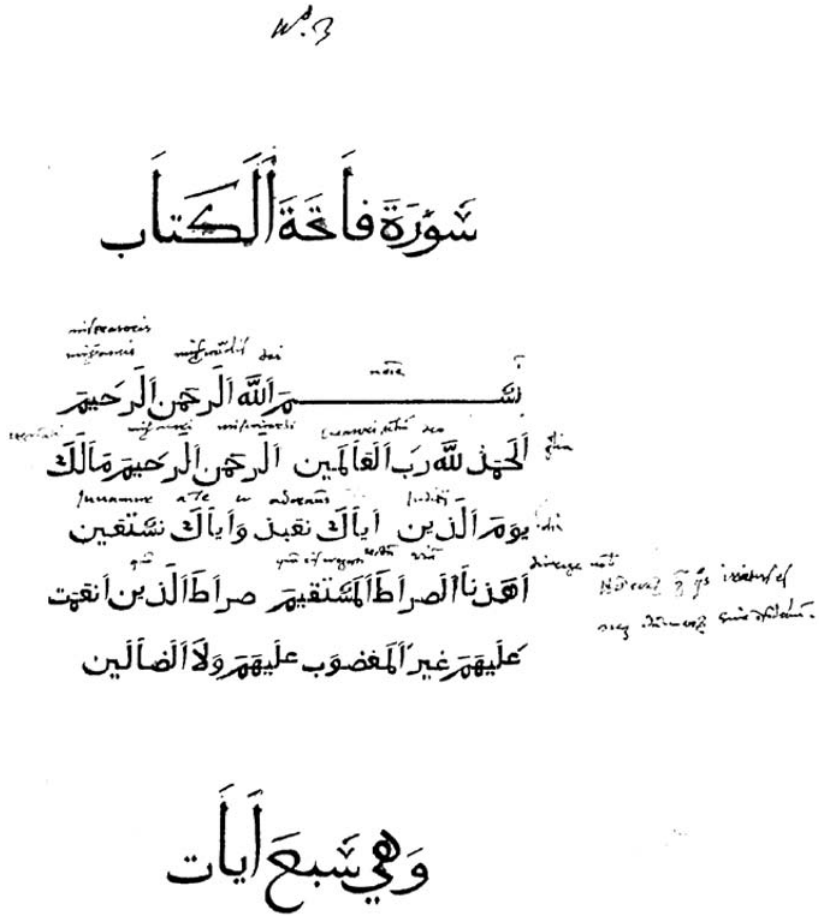


Fig. 2.8. Beginning of the text of the *Qu'ran* printed in Arabic. Venice: Paganino and Alessandro Paganini, c. 1537–38; f^o. Size of the original: 276 x 194 mm. Manuscript notes of Teseo Ambrogio degli Albonesi. Courtesy of Biblioteca di S. Francesco della Vigna, Venice.

would help to explain the printing of the *Qur'an*, an enterprise that was extremely risky (and did, in fact, fail), by seeing it as part of the business of a powerful transnational partnership of merchants specialized in the production of liturgical and religious books for export.

Other Booksellers' Commercial Networks

Many gaps remain in our knowledge of the commercial networks of the leading publishers and wholesalers. Information emerges by chance and

is more likely to be found in the cities of booksellers who were correspondents of the Venice bookmen than in Venice itself, where almost nothing remains of their business archives.

Bernardino Stagnino

Bernardino Stagnino (d. 1540), a bookseller and publisher from Trino, in Piedmont, who was active in Venice beginning in 1480, offers a representative example.⁹⁵ He was a cousin of Giovanni Giolito de Ferrari, with whom he had a number of professional connections, and his business was absorbed at his death by Gabriele Giolito.⁹⁶ His intense activity in book production – he published some two hundred editions – obviously needed outlets in the cities of Italy, though we have information only on his relations with Ferrara and Perugia. In 1496 a representative of Stagnino came to Ferrara from Venice to recuperate bookshop merchandise that had been delivered for sale on commission to the stationer Bartolomeo da Pavia, who had recently been assassinated in his shop.⁹⁷ Fifteen years later, Stagnino's son-in-law, Giovanni Poesio of Vigevano, was in Perugia to set up a contract for a bookshop in that city,⁹⁸ which was later managed by the booksellers Pietro di Michele and Paolo Sante. Poesio promised to supply the books and pay the customs duties and the rent (nine ducats a year). Pietro di Michele and Paolo Sante were to receive 10 percent of the earnings as shown in the obligatory quarterly report. For their part, they agreed to work exclusively for Stagnino for three years, selling the books at set prices, and they could not substitute other books unless they too were supplied by Stagnino. They were expected to return unsold books to Stagnino. According to this contract, the bookshop stock that was supplied was worth 338 ducats.⁹⁹

Giovanni Giolito de Ferrari

Somewhat better known is the commercial network of Giovanni Giolito de Ferrari (d. 1539). Although he did not have a seat in Venice but worked

⁹⁵ Pillinini, *Bernardino Stagnino*; *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Giolito de' Ferrari, Bernardino detto Stagnino."

⁹⁶ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 70–80.

⁹⁷ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 87–91. The contents of the bookshop are unfortunately unknown.

⁹⁸ Poesio, whom Stagnino loved dearly, as can be seen from his testament (Pillinini, *Bernardino Stagnino*, 109–10), had become responsible for sales for the firm.

⁹⁹ Rita Liurni, "Nuovi documenti su Francesco Cartolari e sulla stampa a Perugia nei primi anni del Cinquecento: Con notizie su Bernardino Stagnino, Lucantonio Giunta e altri tipografi veneziani," *Bollettino della Deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria* 102, no. 1 (2005): 320–24.

from the peripheral town of Trino, in Piedmont, we have evidence of Giolito's particularly advanced methods for the distribution of and trade in book merchandise. A wealthy landowner but also a merchant active in the commerce of woolen cloth and paper, Giolito began by printing law books both in Pavia and in Trino. During the first twenty years of his business activities, until 1523, he published some 185 legal editions that have come down to us, representing one of the largest outputs in that specialty in sixteenth-century Italy.¹⁰⁰

The strength of Giolito's firm lay in his skill in handling a number of businesses in a variety of markets, Turin, Bologna, Pavia, Venice, Padua, and Genoa among them, where in partnership with other merchants he traded not only in books but also in cloth and spices.¹⁰¹ He relied on a network of correspondent booksellers: Gerolamo Troiani and Andrea Calvo in Milan;¹⁰² Giovanni Domenico Buranco in Rome; Antonio Bellone in Genoa; Stefano Lunati in Turin; and Francesco de Galiis in Naples. He also controlled two shops, one in Pavia and the other in Turin. In Lyon his representative was Vincenzo Portonari, like himself a native of Trino and a partner in a series of entrepreneurial initiatives.¹⁰³ Giovanni Giolito succeeded in making Trino an important business hub in the Lyon-Venice axis and a port of entry into Italy for books from Lyon. Trino's loss of importance in commercial networks followed the collapse of the Piedmont-Lombardy route in the prolonged fighting in the area. In 1536 Trino and the part of Montferrat immediately surrounding it passed into the dominion of the Gonzagas of Mantua, losing political independence, and the local patriciate was rigidly controlled. When Giovanni Giolito died in 1539, his son Gabriele had already moved the center of the family business to the much safer city of Venice, where he carried forward the history of the glorious publishing house of the Phoenix.

The Sessa Family

The founder of the Sessa dynasty was Giovan Battista the Elder, who may have been born in Sessa, a town near Lugano, and was active in Venice

¹⁰⁰ Giovanni Dondi, "Giovanni Giolito editore e mercante," *La Bibliofilia* 69 (1967): 147–89; Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 19–66.

¹⁰¹ According to Dorotea Tronzano, Giovanni Giolito's widow, in a document dated 1540: Dondi, "Giovanni Giolito," 181–82.

¹⁰² Calvo bought books from Giolito for a total of 376 scudi in 1522 and was able to repay him (in books) only in 1533: Stevens, "New Light on Andrea Calvo," 33.

¹⁰³ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 41–45.



Tractatus. d. Ang. de Gam-
bellionibus de aretio in
materia testamento-
rum nouiter im-
pressus.
†

Fig. 2.9. Title page of Angelo Gambiglioni, *Tractatus in materia testamentorum*. Pavia: B. Garaldi for G. Giolito de Ferrari, 1512; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca del Dipartimento di Diritto Privato e Storia del diritto, University of Milan.

from 1489. His highly distinctive publisher's mark, a cat with a mouse in its mouth, was used by the generations that followed him. What is known of the Sessa commercial organization comes from the time of Melchiorre Sessa in the 1560s, that is, after decades of intensive and successful activity. Theirs was a highly ramified sales system, later efficiently directed by Sessa's widow, Veronica Barone.¹⁰⁴ Sessa too did not sell only books; he also traded in fabrics and wool, which – although it did not reach the commercial range of the Giunti in Venice – is further confirmation that dealing in an uncertain merchandise like books was often coupled with merchandise with a more predictable market.¹⁰⁵ For example, in 1575 Veronica Barone subscribed to a partnership with Giovan Francesco Calegari, a bookseller in Messina, to deal in various merchandise (not just books) for a period of six years.¹⁰⁶ Sessa remained in contact, largely through proxies, with booksellers on commission in Padua, Verona, Vicenza, Desenzano, Cremona, Milan, Lugano, Genoa, Florence, Lucca, Pesaro, Ancona, Campobasso, Rossano Calabro, Messina, Palermo, and, in Spain, Toledo. A large number of notarial acts referring to powers of attorney granted to various persons leaving for those cities testify to these relationships.¹⁰⁷ In Milan he had an obvious contact in his nephew Pietro Antonio.¹⁰⁸ Pietro Antonio had already died by 1556, because in that year Pietro Perna was given a power of attorney to collect money from Pietro Antonio's heirs that was owed to some of the major publishers of Basel

¹⁰⁴ Corrado Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti nel Regno di Napoli nel Cinquecento," *Studi veneziani* 10 (1968): 500–506.

¹⁰⁵ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 501 notes that in his testament of 1 March 1563 (Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, Not. Antonio Marsilio, b. 1210, n. 689), Melchiorre declares himself to be a partner of Michele Magno for trade in fabrics and to have pursued the same trade with Sebastiano Rugieri. There is evidence that a contract for his partnership with Rugieri for trade in French woolen goods was drawn up in 1548: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Cavagnis, b. 3252, f. 343, dated 19 December 1548.

¹⁰⁶ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 541–42. Calegari was also in partnership with Veronica for some editions printed in Venice.

¹⁰⁷ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 501–2. For the earlier period we have powers of attorney of Anselmo Giacarelli, a bookseller in Bologna, conferred on 19 September 1544 (Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Cavagnis, reg. 3248, f. 271), and of Antonio de Galetis, a bookseller in Cremona, conferred on 13 April 1548 (Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Cavagnis, b. 3252, f. 114).

¹⁰⁸ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Cavagnis, b. 3352, f. 71, 2 May 1548, naming as holder of the power of attorney "Petrus Antonium eius nepotem librarium in civitate Mediolani."

(Petri, Episcopius, Herwagen, Oporinus, and Isengrin).¹⁰⁹ Clearly, Milan was an important venue on the Sessa family's natural route between Venice and Lugano, their place of origin, for the importation of books from Basel.

The Sessa firm established a different sort of relationship with Giovanni Micheli, a bookseller from Bergamo active in Rome. He was the manager of a genuine branch office, given that he soon assumed the name of "Giovanni della Gatta," after the image of the cat used by the Sessa firm, as the sign for his shop on the Campo dei Fiori.¹¹⁰ Micheli thus added to his own name an attribution to the publisher's mark that he represented.¹¹¹ Relations between Micheli and the Sessa firm continued for almost thirty years, from 1544¹¹² to just before 1575,¹¹³ and they apparently left the Roman bookseller room for local action, given that he appears on several occasions as financier for editions of Antonio Blado and Valerio Dorico.

Another decade of trusting relations linked Melchiorre Sessa and the manager of his bookshop in Venice, Benedetto Bolli of Treviso.¹¹⁴ Thanks to his experience, Bolli was later chosen by Veronica, Melchiorre's widow, to serve as manager of the firm. He was also sent to act as proxy for the Sessa family in distant markets.¹¹⁵

A power of attorney for the collection of sums owed can give a glimpse of a network of correspondents and associates in the book trade. In 1573, for example, Damiano Zenaro charged a clerk in his shop, Francesco Ravera, to collect moneys owed him in Venice, Milan, Pavia, Cremona, Piacenza, Ferrara, Bologna, Brescia, and elsewhere.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ Leandro Perini, "Note e documenti su Pietro Perna, libraio-tipografo di Basilea," *Nuova Rivista Storica* 50, nos. 1–2 (1966): 169, appendix 8.

¹¹⁰ The colophon of the edition given in *Edit 16*, CNCE 30785, reads, "Si vendono alla bottega del segno della Gatta, in campo di Fiore."

¹¹¹ Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 100. The head of the firm habitually used the name of "Marchiò della Gatta," as seen in his requests for privileges.

¹¹² Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Cavagnis, b. 3248, f. 166: 20.VI.1544; settlement of Melchiorre Sessa and Giovanni Micheli his concessionaire, bookseller in Rome *ad signum Gathe*.

¹¹³ Masetti Zanini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 182.

¹¹⁴ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Cavagnis, b. 3247, f. 59, 12.III.1543, confirmation of the partnership between Melchiorre Sessa and Benedetto Bolli, bookseller, to establish a bookshop. Veronica Sessa later gave a domestic servant in marriage to Bolli: Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 469.

¹¹⁵ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 477–78. In the documentation Bolli assumed the name "Benedetto de Bollis libraro alla Gatta" from the Sessa's sign (*ibid.*, 534).

¹¹⁶ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 511.

The Varisco Family

Giovanni Varisco carried on the Paganini-Rusconi dynasty.¹¹⁷ Born in Brescia, Varisco married Marta, the second daughter of Alessandro Paganini and Daria Rusconi, who in turn was the daughter of the publisher Giorgio Rusconi. Endowed with notable entrepreneurial talent,

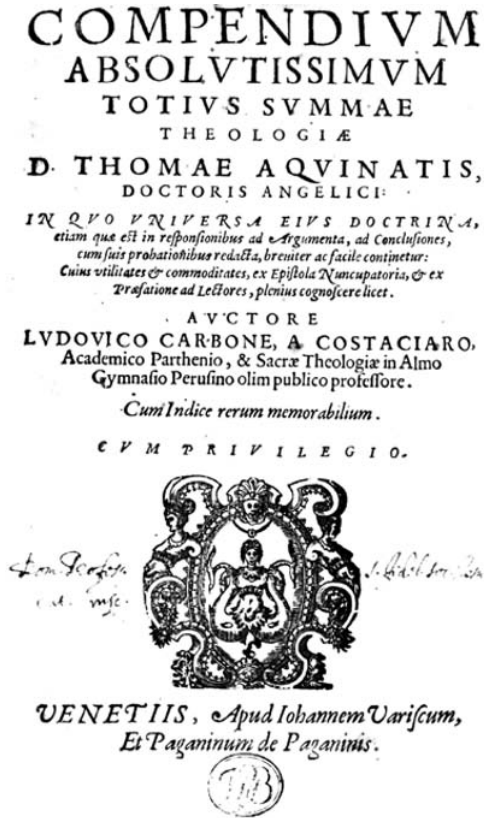


Fig. 2.10. Title page of Ludovico Carboni, *Compendium absolutissimum totius Summae theologiae Thomae Aquinatis*. Venice: G. Varisco & P. Paganini, 1587; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

¹¹⁷ Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino*, 249–51; Angela Nuovo, “Alessandro Paganino e Teofilo Folengo,” in *Edizione “Toscolanense” (1521) delle opere macaroniche di Teofilo Folengo*, ed. Angela Nuovo, G. Bernardi Perini, and R. Signorini (Anastatic reprint; Mantua: Volta Mantovana; Bassano del Grappa: Associazione Amici di Merlin Cocai, 1994), 8–11; Lucia Gasperoni, *Gli annali di Giorgio Rusconi (1500–1522)* (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2009).

Varisco reinforced and enlarged the commercial activities of the family, placing himself at the head of a family group in which his brothers-in-law seem to have played a secondary but always important role.¹¹⁸ The youngest of these, Paganino Paganini jr., managed the shop at the sign of the Mermaid in Venice.¹¹⁹ The next-to-youngest, Camillo, was entrusted with the Naples branch, and he often went from there to the Lanciano Fair.¹²⁰ The third-youngest of the Paganini brothers, Scipione, headed a bookshop in Rome – a strategic city for the Variscos' interests¹²¹ – that bore the sign of the Mermaid, like the motherhouse.¹²² Family unity was repeatedly invoked in the acquisition of property, which they did collectively.¹²³ In judging the family's economic position, it is useful to note that when Cornelia Varisco, Giovanni's daughter, married Giuseppe Millesis, a Venetian mercer, her dowry was three thousand ducats. As for his commercial holdings, when Giuseppe Millesis divided the paternal inheritance between Giovanni's two male children, Giorgio and Marco, in 1597, he declared that the family owned a house and a shop at the sign of the Mermaid in Venice, shops and book warehouses in Naples, Lanciano, and Recanati, and two warehouses near the monastery of Santo Stefano in Venice.¹²⁴

Juridical Relations among Wholesalers and Retailers

In a rapidly evolving context, new, more efficient, and more highly developed relations were established between producers or great merchants and retail sellers. A network of salaried employees like that created by the

¹¹⁸ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 509–10.

¹¹⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Antonio Callegarini, b. 3111, f. 299, published in Tinto, *Annali tipografici*, 113–17. The Venetian shop of the Mermaid was managed throughout almost all the sixteenth century by a series of bookmen from Brescia: Pietro Ravani, the Paganinis, and Giovanni Varisco and his descendants, who were certainly linked by kinship: Nuovo, "Alessandro Paganino e Teofilo Folengo," 8–9.

¹²⁰ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 495–96; Corrado Marciani, "Il commercio librario alle fiere di Lanciano nel '500," *Rivista storica italiana* 70 (1958): 428.

¹²¹ Varisco was linked to the Tramezino family in Rome (Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 168–69) and in Venice (Tinto, *Annali tipografici*, 117–19). In Rome he also was a partner of the heirs of Bartolomeo Faletti in 1570–71: Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 168; Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 173–74.

¹²² Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 182; evidence of Scipione's presence in Rome dates from 1575.

¹²³ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 510. On 16 August 1575 Giovanni Varisco joined with his brothers-in-law Orazio, Scipione, and Camillo Paganini to buy a landholding of 134 fields in the Scodovacca Valley in Friuli for five thousand ducats.

¹²⁴ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 549–52.

Company of Venice was not sustainable, because it passed on all risk to the supplier, while also preventing the retailer from realizing greater profits by making greater efforts. The transformation of relations of dependency into relations of another type indicates that the market for the printed book had an immediate and positive impact, making possible new jobs and new earnings.¹²⁵

An organized and connected distribution network like that of the Company was the exception, however, and was out of the reach of publishers of a small or middling caliber. Such men preferred to entrust their business to booksellers in different cities with whom they could establish relations ratified and subscribed to on a case-by-case basis by the publisher in person or by holders of a power of attorney delegated for that purpose.

Albertino da Lessona (also known as Albertinus Vercellensis), a printer born in Vercelli and active in Venice in the early years of the sixteenth century, provides an instructive story, and one that is paradigmatic even in its limited range. We can deduce the nature of his commercial network from his testament.¹²⁶ Albertino da Lessona had named as commissioners his brothers Giovanni and Bernardino Rosso (with whom he had also produced some editions). They turned over to the deceased Albertino's principal creditor, Gioachino Donadelis of the *contrada* of San Luca, all remaining credits, giving him power of attorney to collect the money. The sum that Donadelis was to recuperate was ninety-two ducats, and the creditors, all of whom are named, make up a list of the booksellers in correspondence with Albertino who had sold (and were still selling) his books.

First came two Venice booksellers, Antonio di San Mosè and Benedetto, called Padovano,¹²⁷ the first of whom owed sixteen ducats and the second, six. There were five correspondents outside Venice. In Ferrara there was Girolamo Carnerio, a member of the Carneri family of stationers, who had a shop in via dei Sabbioni and who died two years later.¹²⁸ In Perugia the

¹²⁵ There are, however, examples of salaried retailers during the sixteenth century: Kevin Stevens, "Purchasing a Jurist's Private Library: Girolamo Bordone, Omobono Redenaschi and the Commercial Book Trade in Early Seventeenth-Century Milan," in *Biblioteche private in età moderna e contemporanea: Atti del convegno internazionale Udine, 18–20 ottobre 2004*, ed. Angela Nuovo (Milan: Bonnard, 2005): 67.

¹²⁶ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Manimorte*, "Miscellanea pergamene," Venice 1500–1509, 16 October 1505.

¹²⁷ Benedetto Veneto, called Il Padovano, was also the publisher of a work in 1505: *Edit* 16, CNCE 150469.

¹²⁸ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 48–51.

document mentions Damiano da Gorgonzola,¹²⁹ formerly a printer in Venice (seven ducats) and the much-better-known Francesco Baldassarri, also known as Francesco Cartolari, a printer and bookseller also active in Venice, who had printed some books for Albertino and owed him four ducats.¹³⁰ In Padua there was the bookseller Simeone (4.5 ducats of debt). Finally, in Bergamo Albertino's correspondent was Simone Bonasolo (three ducats). Donadelis, in partial payment for his credits, was assigned a bale and a half of books that had already been deposited with him, perhaps in pawn.

The printer-publisher Lazzaro Soardi organized his business in similar ways, but on a broader scale. According to his testament, in 1514 he had books to be sold on deposit with Battista Alessi d'Asola in Salamanca, Alvise Martini in Lyon, Bartolomeo and Girolamo Morandi in Pavia,¹³¹ Girolamo de Benedetti in Bologna, Pietro Brouzay in Rimini,¹³² Antonio di Jacopo da Trino at Ancona, Gian Giacomo Malacrea in Naples, Francesco Sanvitale in Ferrara, Giovanni da Villanova, a Spaniard, in Rome, and Girolamo Matteo Pratta in Lisbon. Added to these were two bookshops in Venice, that of Francesco Valenti and of the binder Andrea de Longis, a Milanese. The latter also had books of Lazzaro's in Lanciano and in Recanati in shops evidently open during the fairs.¹³³ The booksellers who worked on commission for Lazzaro Soardi received 10 percent of sales.

Sales on Commission

The majority of the printers of sixteenth-century Italy – and all the great ones – can be defined as merchant-entrepreneurs. They had their own capital, but they did not limit themselves to administering their own money and investing it in a single commercial activity that they

¹²⁹ Damianus de Mediolano of Gorgonzola according to *ISTC*.

¹³⁰ *Edit 16*, CNCE 3847. Damiano da Gorgonzola and Cartolari participated in a series of joint ventures.

¹³¹ With their brother Francesco, the Morandis, who came from Bergamo, were publishers and booksellers in Pavia from 1504 to 1521. Bartolomeo held the post of bedel at the university.

¹³² Girolamo de Benedetti was a bookseller and publisher in Bologna until 1529. Pietro Brouzay, called in the will "Franzoso," French, had been a bookseller in Rimini since 1499. He died in 1514, mentioning in his testament Lazzaro Soardi as one of his creditors, together with Bernardino Stagnino and Giovanni Tacuino: *Dizionario dei tipografi e degli editori italiani: Il Cinquecento*, ed. Marco Menato, Ennio Sandal, and Giuseppina Zappella (Milan: Editrice Bibliografica, 1997), 208–9.

¹³³ Dennis E. Rhodes, *Annali tipografici di Lazzaro de' Soardi* (Florence: Oschki, 1978), 83–86.

supervised personally, but rather also took advantage of financing provided by others and at times themselves financed the activities of third persons, in particular for ventures in distant markets. The economic activity of a merchant-entrepreneur was multiform, and it often was carried on in partnership with other merchants, making use of different types of contracts with the aim of creating diverse forms of collaboration between capital and labor. One person could easily assume at certain times the roles of financier, entrepreneur, employer, or contractor. The range of possibilities was vast, even in the world of print. The most widely diffused and most typical arrangement in the book trade was the commission agreement, habitually used to carry out the same sorts of business among merchant correspondents in different markets. Working on commission was quite usual, and exchanges and reciprocal arrangements were many, even though when they were satisfactory, such relations tended to become permanent.

The commissioner was an autonomous entrepreneur, ready to take on single operations, even for third persons. He sold goods in his own name, and also in his own name took on obligations to the clients with whom he had dealings. The risks of working on commission were different from those of direct dependency as seen in the early phases of the distribution of books by the Company of Venice in Tuscany. Someone working on commission earned money only if the goods were sold and in proportion to sales. If sales lagged, he was the one who suffered, while the producer at worst had his goods returned to him. This reality made sale by commission a more evolved system, and one that permitted producers to extend their volume of business more easily and reach more diversified and more distant markets while involving retailers proportionally in the sales.

Sale on commission was the most widely diffused means for carrying on commercial operations in distant markets or in connection with special categories of merchandise, such as books. It had tricky consequences at the level of ownership of the merchandise. The person who initiated the commission retained ownership of the merchandise consigned or sent to the commissionaire until the goods were sold or otherwise disposed of. The commissionaire sold the goods for the commissioning party, to be sure, but in his own name, and if the sale was for cash, he kept the money. On signing the commission agreement, the commissionaire became the debtor of the person creating the commission for a sum corresponding to the price realized, except for compensation credited to him in anticipation of expenses. The minute and detailed registration of the merchandise

consigned (in this case, books) was a constant in every consignment of goods. Eventual accumulated debts were proven – also in the world of the book trade – either by chirographic documents written or subscribed by the debtor or by notarial records. The agency's account books were also considered probative.¹³⁴

Invoices for books were used as evidence when disagreements were taken to court, as happened to the brothers Giovanni Battista and Paolo Gottardo da Ponte, bookseller-publishers in Milan, in 1563. Because they suspected that their representative in Venice had augmented their debt to suppliers by nine hundred lire, they attached seven packing lists to the notarial document that describes their legal claim.¹³⁵ Marco Amadori, a bookseller, sent accurate lists of books and print matter to the bookseller Paolo Manerba, who kept a stall (not a shop) in Rome in 1566, for sale “ut vulgo dicitur in commissione” (on commission, as is commonly said), noting the relative minimum sales prices.¹³⁶

In the sixteenth century, the usual commission for retail booksellers was 10 percent, as in the case of Lazzaro Soardi. In the fifteenth century, commissions may have been higher. In 1480 Girolamo Strozzi seems to have assigned to the *cartolai* who sold his books an average commission of 16 percent.¹³⁷ Agreements between book suppliers and *cartolai*-booksellers usually follow a fixed formula. For example, on 28 June 1517 the bookseller Bernardino Mazzetti, who was from Piano di Toscolano but rented a shop in Brescia in the fishmongers' district, declared that he had received all the books sent from Venice by the merchant Amadio Scoto. He verified the assortment of books against the inventory compiled two days earlier “cum pretiis annotatis et descriptis super dicto inventario seriatim” (with prices noted and described in series in the mentioned inventory). The shipment had been made by Giovanni Antonio Danza, a compatriot who lived in Venice and acted as Scoto's proxy.¹³⁸ Mazzetti was expected to sell the books at the price listed on the inventory “ad minus,” hence never below that price. Every six months he was to consign to

¹³⁴ Guido Astuti, “Le forme giuridiche della attività mercantile nel libro dei conti di Giacomo Badoer,” *Annali di storia del diritto* 12–13 (1969): 65–130.

¹³⁵ Kevin Stevens, “Venetian Invoices (1563) as a Source for Understanding the Commercial Book Trade,” in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana: La musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 277–300.

¹³⁶ Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 227–31.

¹³⁷ Florence Edler De Roover, “Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia: Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare,” *La Bibliofilia* 55 (1953): 114.

¹³⁸ Mazzoldi, “I primi librai,” 41–42.

Danza, the procurator, the earnings from the sale of the books but had the right to withhold a commission of 10 percent for himself. Any earnings from binding books or providing other forms of ornamentation ordered by the client were also his.¹³⁹ In July 1553 Curzio Troiano Navò, a bookseller in Venice at the sign of the Lion, offered a 10 percent commission to Giacomo Antonio da Odolo, who lived in Brescia and who paid off his own debt in October 1553.¹⁴⁰ Ten percent was thus the usual compensation for the commissionaire, and it was calculated on the minimum price. The *cartolaio* would usually raise that minimum price when he sold the book to his customer, also because he often agreed to bind, finish, and personalize the volume in one way or another. The Da Ponte brothers realized a 10 percent commission on books supplied from Venice,¹⁴¹ and Felice Motti, a bookseller in Alessandria, retained 10 percent from his sale of books supplied in 1597 by Vincenzo Somasco.¹⁴² Lower percentages – around 6 percent – emerge in contracts for the sale of law books, the most expensive type of book.¹⁴³

Sale on commission can be considered the most common contractual formula for relations between wholesalers and retailers. The payment of a salary implies an exclusive relationship that, as time went on, proved to be less remunerative for the retailer, and indeed retail booksellers took to getting supplies from more than one wholesaler: the Da Ponte brothers in Milan received merchandise from seven different Venetian publisher-wholesalers in 1573 alone.¹⁴⁴

The Sale-or-Return Contract

If the wholesaler wanted to encourage a higher volume of sales, especially when the retailer was just opening a new store, the books could be supplied on a sale-or-return (or “deferred”) basis, with payment due only for items sold. This type of contract is referred to as a “contract of sale or return” (in Roman law, *contractus aestimatorius*) and is still in operation

¹³⁹ In the latter half of the sixteenth century a standard price for the most common sort of binding began to appear in contracts between wholesalers and retailers: Kevin Stevens, “Selling Books on Commission: Two Studies from Milan (1594) and Pavia (1598),” *Bibliologia* 3 (2008): 139.

¹⁴⁰ Mazzoldi, “I primi librai,” 42.

¹⁴¹ Stevens, “Venetian Invoices,” 279.

¹⁴² Stevens, “Selling Books,” 133.

¹⁴³ We have examples of commissions of 6 percent in 1519 (Stevens, “New Light on Andrea Calvo,” 43); in 1541 (*ibid.*); and in 1598 (Stevens, “Selling Books,” 139).

¹⁴⁴ Stevens, “Venetian Invoices.”

today.¹⁴⁵ A contract of sale or return provides for the delivery of goods from one party to another. Within a timeframe laid down by the agreement, the seller either purchases the goods for an amount agreed at the time of delivery or returns them in perfect condition. During that period the receiver of the goods holds them on deposit, under obligations that pertain to the deposit holder. As far as is known, the first time this type of contract is attested in the book trade in Italy is with the opening of the Giolito bookshop in Pavia in 1539, although it had probably been well known in the trade for many years by then;¹⁴⁶ in the 1539 contract the time limit for selling or returning the books was three years.

In practice, such a contract began with the consignment of movable goods evaluated accurately so as to be able to identify them later. From an economic viewpoint, the deposit contract imagines an entrepreneur (*tradens*), usually a wholesaler, who wants to sell certain goods and consigns them to another entrepreneur (*accipiens*), at the same time establishing the price for which the goods can be sold. Lacking sufficient capital, the receiving entrepreneur would not otherwise have been able to acquire the goods immediately. Thanks to this sort of contract, however, he can put up an ample assortment of goods for sale and even avoid the risk that the merchandise remain unsold, because should that be the case, he can return the goods. There is also an evident advantage for the *tradens*, who makes use of the organization and labor of others to make his product and his merchandise known to a wider public.

There is a clear distinction between a contract of sale or return and one for sales on commission. On one hand, where there was a commission on sales, the retailer's remuneration was calculated on the basis of the price for which he actually sold the books. The books were delivered to him with a list of minimum prices (*ad minus*) and as we have seen, for corresponding booksellers, the earnings were normally around 10 percent; percentages were lower for special books and for managers of branches. The retailer therefore paid the wholesaler on the basis of the price actually received from his customers and speculated on behalf of his mandator. With the contract of sale or return, on the other hand, the retailer was not obligated to communicate the price he received and thus speculated on

¹⁴⁵ Carlo Giannattasio, *La permuta: Il contratto estimatorio: La somministrazione* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1960). Historically this type of contract was used principally in the book trade: Pietro Galluppi, *Il contratto librario "in conto deposito"* (Bologna: Azzoguidi, 1922). The sale-or-return contract is called *Trödelvertrag* in German.

¹⁴⁶ *Giolito 1539*. See also Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 54–60, 381–84.

variety of goods without any capital investment, succeeded in increasing his own turnover to the greatest possible extent.

From the point of view of the history of books, the right of return is what makes this kind of contract most interesting. Where there is a commission on sales, although the wholesaler still remained owner of the books until they had been sold, the right of return was neither clearly fixed nor, probably, always exercised. This had an influence on the assortment of books available in the bookshops, which inexorably grew older due to sales that were always somewhat slow. It was not unusual to find in shops books published ten, twenty, thirty, or even forty years earlier.¹⁴⁷ With a contract of sale and return unsold books had to be returned (or purchased) and the wholesaler would have considered distributing them through other shops.

Other Relations between Wholesalers and Retailers

A publisher-wholesaler was interested in creating a stable network of retailers to whom he could offer materials for sale on commission. The economic activity of the merchant-entrepreneur often occurred in association with other merchants or financiers, thus creating various relations of an associative or partnership type or even simple bonds of trust. Yet the real dimensions of the phenomenon escape us because contracts of this kind were usually concluded with records that remained private, and the documentation that we can access today is largely concerned with instances that resulted in either disagreement or future development. Bearing this limitation in mind, however, we can draw up a brief survey.

We find partnership contracts in which a major merchant promises to supply a bookseller in an outlying location on a regular basis, accepting specific conditions but establishing a *de facto* exclusive arrangement. Thus, in the 1540s Michele Tramezino drew up an agreement with the *cartolaio*-bookseller Domenico Sivieri of Ferrara according to which Tramezino would supply Sivieri in Ferrara with books of various prices

¹⁴⁷ Shop inventories provide such evidence, but we must also be grateful for the habit of some great book collectors of the era, such as Fernando Colón and Bellisario Bulgarini, of inserting the date of acquisition in the books in their libraries: Pettegree, *The Book*, 87–88; Daniele Danesi, “I prezzi dei libri veneziani nelle note di acquisto di Bellisario Bulgarini, 1570–1620 circa,” in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana; La Musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 301–26.

and qualities, also paying the transportation costs and the customs duties. An inventory dictated minimum sale prices. Sivieri's earnings, which seem to have fluctuated freely, were dependent on the number of books he could sell in his shop at the prices dictated. In this manner, the relationship between a great merchant and a flourishing shop in a city that was strategic for sales shifted from the occasional nature of sale by commission, in which the parties remained independent of each other, to the greater stability of a more disciplined relationship that tended to reduce the weaker party to the position of a satellite.¹⁴⁸

There is no lack of examples of wholesalers who furnished a complete shop assortment to a retailer who was obliged to pay the conspicuous sums owing in installments. That option, which was extremely advantageous for the producer-wholesaler, can be found where new city shops were being established. In 1579 the bookseller Alessandro Savognino bought books in Venice from the publisher Francesco Ziletti for four hundred ducats and from Luc'Antonio Giunti for 120 ducats and then traveled to Palermo with them to set up a new bookshop.¹⁴⁹

Many bookshops were not managed with the continuity that would be expected of a similar commercial enterprise today. Supplies would arrive at some shops, and in particular branch shops, periodically, but at times at quite close intervals.¹⁵⁰ In other instances the bookseller preferred to construct his own assortment of titles in line with his customers' preferences, and then spend the rest of his energy simply selling these works, with less need for new supplies. This seems to have been the choice of the Florentine bookseller Piero Morosi, who constructed his stock of books from 1584 to 1591, realized his highest sales figures from 1591 to 1594, and from 1595 to 1609 slowly let his business decline, both in costs and earnings.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 112–14.

¹⁴⁹ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 541–42; Tenenti, "Luc'Antonio Giunti il giovane," 1037.

¹⁵⁰ Documents show nearly daily shipments from Venice to booksellers in Padua and Mantua.

¹⁵¹ Paul Gehl, "Mancha uno alfabeto intero': Recording Defective Book Shipments in Counter-Reformation Florence," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 93, no. 3 (1999): 329, n. 30.

PRODUCTION

CHAPTER THREE

PRESS RUNS

It has been estimated that generally in the age of the incunabula some four hundred to five hundred copies of each edition were printed, and that the figure rose to reach approximately 1,500 copies per edition around the middle of the sixteenth century.¹ On the basis of surviving documentation and after painstaking calculation, it has also been suggested that the average press run rose from 229 copies in 1461 to 1,032 in 1500.² While press runs of only a few hundred copies can be considered common in the Quattrocento, significant exceptions to that figure were quite quickly achieved, especially in Venice, where the first press run of one thousand copies can be assigned to a publication of 1471 by Vindelinus de Spira (*ISTC* ip00058000). Six hundred copies of the first complete edition of the works of Ovid were printed in 1474 in Venice by Giovanni Rosso, financed by the merchant Johannes Rauchfass and offered for sale at three ducats each.³ In 1476, banker Girolamo Strozzi, in association with professor Giambattista Ridolfi, had Nicolaus Jenson print at least 1,025 copies of a translation of the *Naturalis Historia* of Pliny the Elder.⁴ In 1478 Nicolaus de Frankfordia provided Leonardus Wild with financial backing for an edition of the Bible of 930 copies.⁵ In the two-year period 1490–91, the

¹ Joseph A. Dane, *The Myth of Print Culture: Essays on Evidence, Textuality, and Bibliographical Method* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 32–56 traces the *status quaestionis* regarding the quantitative evaluation of incunabula in Europe and the development of the notion of an average press run.

² Uwe Neddermeyer, "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer quantitativen Bestimmung der Buchproduktion im später Mittelalter," *Gazette du livre médiéval* 28 (Spring 1996): 24. In order to reach that figure, Neddermeyer begins with a corpus of 160 documents (contracts for the most part), largely from Italy. See also Uwe Neddermeyer, *Von der Handschrift zum gedruckten Buch: Schriftlichkeit und Leseinteresse im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit, quantitative und qualitative Aspekte*. 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998).

³ Agostino Contò, *Calami e torchi: Documenti per la storia del libro nel territorio della Repubblica di Venezia (sec. XV)* (Verona: Della Scala, 2003), 43–47, 103–4; *ISTC* i000128000 (which lists over sixty copies).

⁴ De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa," 110–11; *ISTC* ip00801000 (about 130 copies listed).

⁵ For the contract for this publication, see *Venice, A Documentary History, 1450–1630*, ed. David Chambers and Brian Pullan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Renaissance Society of America, 2001), 370–71; Fulin, "Documenti," 20–21; *ISTC* ib00558000 (about 110 copies listed).



Fig. 3.1. First page of the text of Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, translated in Italian by Christophorus Landinus. Venice: Nicolaus Jenson, 1476; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

Codecà-Benali partnership produced editions with press runs that varied from around five hundred copies (for a *Fiore di virtù*, traditionally a good seller) to 1,500 (for an illustrated Dante with commentary by Cristoforo Landino), giving an average press run for the firm of around one thousand copies.⁶ In the 1490s, Battista Torti was even able to produce print runs of law books in-folio with up to 2,300 copies (see ISTC ig00467000). The evidence suggests not only that Venetian press runs often manage to go beyond a thousand copies even in the first decades of printing, but also that at the turn of the sixteenth century they had reached three thousand copies, as for the press runs of the octavo Latin-language editions of Aldo Manuzio. Even the Greek grammar *Erotemata* financed by the physician of Lucrezia Borgia, Ludovico Bonacciolini, was printed by Giovanni Mazzocchi at Ferrara in 1509 in three thousand copies, or at least this was the figure stipulated in the contract for this edition.⁷ During the incunabula period, print runs appear to have grown significantly, just as more efficient systems for the distribution and sale of books were being set in place.

Press Runs Inferred from the Zornale of Francesco de Madiis (1484–1488)

Martin Lowry has advanced a different hypothesis, based on his analysis of the *Zornale* (day-book for the years 1484–88) of the Venetian bookseller Francesco de Madiis.⁸ Lowry states that beginning in the 1480s, the average press run in Venice was closer to two thousand than five hundred. Two paths lead to this conclusion. First, if a bookseller like Francesco de Madiis, with a middling turnover, sold around thirteen thousand books in four years, the total number of copies in circulation in those same years, Lowry calculates, must have been at least ten times that figure, hence around

⁶ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Cancellaria Inferiore*, miscellanea, b. 28, testament n. 2758 (12 August 1491). Matteo Codecà charged his brother Giovanni with overseeing the division of the books that they had printed with Bernardino Benali and were still in the warehouse: Bartolomeo Cecchetti, "Libri stampati nel sec. XV da Matteo Capcasa di Parma, socio di Bernardino di Benalio," *Archivio Veneto* 30 (1885): 172–74. The two editions mentioned are ISTC fo0182500 (*Fiore*: six copies extant) and ISTC 00032000 (*Dante*: around one hundred copies extant).

⁷ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 96. *Edit* 16, CNCE 12128 (thirty-seven copies in Italian libraries).

⁸ *De Madiis 1484–1488*, a fundamental document for the history of the book trade, on which see below. This document is analyzed in detail in Lowry, *Nicholas Jensen*, esp. in the chapter, "The Printer, the Reader and the Market," pp. 173–206.

130,000 copies.⁹ Second, extending the data available about one edition financed by de Madiis, Lowry surmises that when he published an edition of the confessional *Defecerunt* of St. Antoninus in 1,700 copies, as a book-seller he would have made an exact evaluation of the number of copies that he could sell.¹⁰ There were titles in de Madiis' shop that sold many more copies – as many as ten times more. Thus, Lowry reasons, the press run of the *Defecerunt* must necessarily have been in proportion to that sales figure, and 1,700 can be considered an average size.

I find it difficult to share Lowry's opinions. Let us consider his first argument. It seems to me that de Madiis' figures are anything but middling.¹¹ The city in which de Madiis did business saw a notable volume of sales and boasted a clientele that often made very large purchases, perhaps with the intention of reselling the books elsewhere. Furthermore, de Madiis, as Lowry stresses, was deeply involved in the print world of Venice, and its leading representatives constantly did business with him.¹² As was often the case, business dealings led to kinship ties: Francesco de Madiis married Francesco della Fontana's daughter Cristina, and having been widowed, Cristina married Paganino Paganini.¹³ The volume of de Madiis' business was large compared to that of other stationers: in addition to noting that thirteen thousand books passed through his shop in four years, we must also bear in mind that he was able to present 1,361 of these books for sale at the same time, which for a retail seller was quite a high figure.

⁹ "To form any realistic idea of the number of books being circulated in and from Venice during the mid-1480s we must multiply Francesco's 12,934 sales by a factor of at least ten": Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 182.

¹⁰ There are no remaining copies of this edition of St. Antoninus, but we have a document drawing up a business agreement between Francesco de Madiis and Annibale da Parma with Marino Sarasino, for which see Riccardo Predelli, "Contratto per la stampa di un libro," *Archivio veneto* 16 (1886): 190–92. Lowry states, "We know from their contract that he [Francesco] and his partners planned to publish 1,700 copies of Antoninus's *Defecerunt*": Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 182.

¹¹ As Lowry states (Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 182).

¹² Among them, Nicolaus de Frankfordia, Andrea Torresani, Bernardino Benali, Franz Renner (known as Francesco della Fontana), Paganino Paganini, Silvestro Torti, and many others: Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 192.

¹³ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, G. Formento, b. 412, fasc. 109. 19 November 1544: testament of Cristina della Fontana, widow of Paganino Paganini, "relict in primo voto di m. Francesco di Mazi": Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino*, 248, n. 31. Francesco de Madiis had died by 17 October 1490, the date of a document in which Bernardino Fontana presented the judges of the Procurator with a suit against Cristina, "widow of Francesco de Mazi," for *falso in giudizio* (perjury): Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Giudici del Procurator*, Sentenze a legge, reg. 12, f. 24. "Mazi" is the Venetian spelling for "Madii" or "Madiis," as attested in a document (in Venetian) in which the bookseller is given as "Francesco di Mazi": Predelli, "Contratto per la stampa."

De meditac[i]o[n]e cordis.

75

tionē suā: p[re]sertim mulier a viro. Altera dū sunt in actu meditac[i]o[n]is. Fit in p[ri]mo casu crebri⁹ ⁊ leuius q[uam] a multis credi p[ot]est: agglutinat[i]o quedā animorū velata pallio sancte deuoteq[ue] dilectiōis: que p[ri]mo cōfabulac[i]o[n]ibus sub typo que rendi cōsiliū q[ui]rit: de vincta aia veluti cōfricata calefcit ⁊ sensim igne ceco carnalis amoris carpit ⁊ vrit: nec intelligitur p[ri]mo donec tandē ad risus leues: ad facetos blādosq[ue] gestus pueniū est. Auertat reus a seruis suis id quod reliquū silemus. Timeo inquit apostolus: ne dū spū ceperitis; carne psumamini. Scripsi iā pluries talia psequēter ad augustinū: nominati in tractatulo de p[ro]bat[i]o[n]e spiritui. Incurrūt aliud periculū meditātes: dū in solis fantas[i]is: duz solis imaginibus corporeis se tradūt: ⁊ toro corde vix mēter incūbūt. Fit p[er]inde q[uod] meditās duz transire satagit in contemplac[i]o[n]ē collabac[i] ad melancolicā seu fantastīcam lesionem ita tandē ut imaginē iterū versatas in imaginatiua virtute p[re]b⁹ ipsis exterioribus accipiat. Et sicut

euenit in somniac[i]bus dum dormiūt: non aliter istis in v[er]giliana cōtingit quorū verba ⁊ opera nullā inter se connectio nem: nullū ordinē seruāt: vbi neq[ue] est principiū neq[ue] finis: vbi sicut vulgo dicif: neq[ue] est caput neq[ue] cauda: s[ed] te gallo fit saltus ad cignū: ita ut vigilantes somnare videant. De qualiter dicūt vulgares: Ilz resuēt on font en resuerie. Porro timent nō timēda sperant non speranda. Hunc gaudio dissolunt: nūc subito in merore tatescūt. Quales egent amplius fomēto sacrat[i]s q[uam] monitione sapientis.

Johis Berson cancellarij
parissensis: re cōtēptu mū
di libri quatuor vno cum
tractatu de meditac[i]o[n]e
cordis felici nume finit.
Imp[er]iū Venetijs imp[er]is
Francisci de madijs.
M.cccc.lxxxvj.



Fig. 3.2. Colophon of *Imitatio Christi*. Venice: [Johannes Leoviler, de Hallis] for Francesco de Madiis, 1486; 8°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Statale, Cremona.

Moreover, de Madiis did not only sell books printed in Venice; he also sold books produced in the rest of Italy and in Germany.¹⁴ Because de Madiis does not note editions for the titles he mentions in his *Zornale*, it seems

¹⁴ Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 185. For an identification of the provenance of the books for sale, we await the publication of the entire document accompanied by a detailed commentary that is currently in preparation.

more prudent to hypothesize that these titles represent several different editions, close to one another in time, rather than large press runs.

As for Lowry's second argument regarding the 1,700 copies of the *Defecerunt* published by de Madiis, a more careful reading of the document cited in support of that figure reveals that his numbers are unreliable. The printers who were de Madiis' business partners promised to print "no more than 1,700 volumes." Moreover, the final report listing the various amounts of paper received between July and September (in all, some eighty reams) shows that when all is said and done, only 1,030 copies of the *Defecerunt* were produced. De Madiis, an experienced bookseller, limited himself (whether he liked it or not) to a press run of around a thousand copies, a high figure but not overwhelmingly so and in any event, closer to five hundred than two thousand.

It is always risky to base a hypothesis on a single event or to generalize from one piece of information, especially in a sector as vast as the production of printed books in Quattrocento Venice. Moreover, any edition, even those for which we have what might be called a record of birth, may have been specifically motivated or facilitated by extraneous factors that determined the press run: an anonymous purchaser, a specific and well-known target market, a particularly advantageous transport opportunity. The more clearly defined the documentary data, the less well it lends itself to projection into a scenario as mobile and variegated as the printing industry in Italy of the Renaissance. Every generalization threatens to lead us astray, especially when an inferred figure – here a presumed average of press runs of the period – is applied to other specific instances. There is too little reliable data. For the approximately twenty-seven thousand extant editions that survive from the age of the incunabula, we have only 160 records that mention press runs, for the most part printing contracts.¹⁵ As a data set, this information is insufficient for statistical analysis. Indeed, the existence of a written arrangement, notarized document, or some other sort of contract in which a press run was agreed suggests exceptional financial investment.¹⁶

¹⁵ Neddermeyer, "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen."

¹⁶ Regarding the survival of Venetian incunabula, Cristina Dondi and Paul Needham agree on the average number of thirty-seven surviving copies per Venetian incunable edition. Dondi and Needham reached the same figure by counting surviving copies of editions using two different methods: Cristina Dondi, "The Venetian Book Trade: A Methodological Approach to and First Results of Book-Based Historical Research," in *Early Printed Books as Material Objects: Proceedings of the Conference Organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Munich, 19–21 August 2009*, ed. Bettina Wagner and Marcia Reed (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Saur, 2010), 219. On statistical evaluations regarding the

Still, Martin Lowry is probably right when he grants the Venetian printing industry more than a sporadic capacity to publish editions of over one thousand copies, even in the first two decades of printing. In Venice, businessmen with expertise in transnational commerce brought printing to a high point by encouraging a growth in production that was unknown in the print industry in other parts of Italy.

Geographical and Historical Variations

Only a minority of printers in Venice or elsewhere were able to produce a high volume of works; reliable and widespread evidence points to much lower press runs. It is quite difficult to find printing contracts for press runs over a thousand copies outside of Venice.

Milan was one of the centers in which printing of a clearly commercial nature did develop. One Milanese printer, Antonio Zarotto (1471–1507), achieved press runs of around a thousand copies.¹⁷ A generation after him, Niccolò Gorgonzola, a publisher without cultural ambitions who tended to put out titles that were not innovative but would find a market, reached but did not exceed that quantity.¹⁸ An ambitious 1499 edition of Suidas' *Lexicon graecum*, with a press run of eight hundred and financed by Demetrius Chalcondylas, a professor in a secondary school in Milan, became the subject of lengthy juridical proceedings precisely because the backer proved incapable of fulfilling his part of the bargain.¹⁹ Giovanni da Legnano, a major publisher who fed the ample and secure market for law books, limited himself to press runs of six hundred copies.²⁰ The 1,200 copies of the ponderous history of Milan written in the vernacular by Bernardino Corio at the command of Ludovico Sforza (il Moro) in 1503 had to be issued several times to reach that number of copies sold.²¹

survival of incunabula, see Green, McIntyre, and Needham, "The Shape of Incunable Survival."

¹⁷ Ganda, *I primordi*, 80–81.

¹⁸ Arnaldo Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola: Editore e libraio in Milano (1496–1536)* (Florence: Olschki, 1988), 71–72.

¹⁹ Arnaldo Ganda, "Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler: Il testamento e altri documenti inediti (Milano, 1499–1503)," in *L'organizzazione del sapere: Studi in onore di Alfredo Serrai* ed. Maria Teresa Biagetti (Milan: Bonnard, 2004), 107–27; *ISTC* 00829000. Many copies of this edition remain, more than forty in Great Britain alone.

²⁰ This was the case for the *Lectura super Vlibris Decretalium* of Nicolaus Panormitanus de Tudeschis, published in Milan by Johannes Angelus Scinzenzeler for Johannes de Legnano, 1500, 7 vols. (*ISTC* ip00055000, twenty copies listed): Ganda, "Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler," 111–12.

²¹ Bernardino Corio, *Patria Historia* (Milan: A. Minuziano, 1503); Arnaldo Ganda, "Vicende editoriali della *Patria Historia* di Bernardino Corio," *La Bibliofilia* 96 (1994): 217–32; *Edit 16*, CNCE 13302. The principal financier of the publication was, however, a banker.

In the fifteenth century, publishing houses connected with universities or located in the more advanced urban centers often printed significant press runs. The substantial publishing facilities of the University of Padua produced works in press runs that varied in size but in general were smaller than one thousand copies per edition.²² Press runs of one thousand copies seem to have been the exception in Florence throughout the Quattrocento, and the Stamperia di Ripoli usually put out works in a few hundred copies.²³ As for Bologna, when Dionisio Bertocchi joined in 1487 with Bazaliero Bazalieri and Benedetto Faelli to form a quite sizeable partnership, he limited himself to printing six hundred copies of the *Rinaldus*.²⁴ It is evident that printers were getting to know the market well. When the printer Francesco (Platone) de Benedetti was contacted by Lasia Broccardi, who had financed the printing in 1489 of the *Consilia* of her late husband, Baverio Baviera, a well-known physician, and the *Lectura* of her late son, Marcantonio Baviera, a much less well-known judge, he agreed to a press run of 1,100 for the first, but of only six hundred for the second.²⁵

High press runs in comparatively remote places on the map of Italian printing often point to the presence of the most munificent and most ambitious of financiers: the author.²⁶ In addition to the edition of Corio cited above, examples of works produced under such conditions include the *editio princeps* of the *Dictionarium* of Ambrogio Calepino, a work Calepino completed despite overwhelming difficulties and published in Reggio Emilia in 1502 in 1,700 copies. The press run was completely financed by the author, who belonged to a wealthy noble family in

²² Sartori, "Documenti padovani," 115.

²³ Paolo Trovato, "Il libro toscano nell'età di Lorenzo: Schede ed ipotesi," in *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Politica, economia, cultura, arte*. 3 vols. (Pisa: Pacini, 1996), 2:548–53.

²⁴ Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 278–79. Faelli, a major Bolognese bookseller, furnished the paper. See *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Bertocchi, Dionisio." No copies of this edition of *Innamoramento di Rinaldo* remain.

²⁵ Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 278–88, 379, 382–84. Some fifty copies of the *Consilia* (ISTC ib00283000) remain; three editions of Marcantonio Baviera's works were printed between 1504 and 1507 (*Edit* 16, CNCE 4657; CNCE 4658; CNCE 4659), of which there is one copy of each of the first two editions extant and two of the third.

²⁶ During the entire period under consideration here, and in particular when prospects for sales were modest, the author as financier of the printing of his own work was more often the rule than the exception. Gustavo Bertoli speaks of this as a "predominant practice" in connection with the printer Marescotti, active in Florence in the latter half of the sixteenth century (Bertoli, "Autori ed editori a Firenze nella seconda metà del sedicesimo secolo: Il 'caso' Marescotti," *Annali di storia di Firenze* 2 [2007]: 77–112, <http://www.storia.unifi.it/sdf/annali/2007/Bertoli.htm>).

Bergamo.²⁷ Calepino was not mistaken in his estimation of the popularity of his text, and similarly high press runs are typical of reference works.²⁸ In other cases, however, the contrast between the expectations (and the investment) of the author-publisher and the reception by the market could be painful. Although he had in mind the publication of the first polyglot edition of the Bible, the Genoese Agostino Giustiniani, bishop of Nebbio, in Corsica, who paid expenses out of his own pocket, only managed to publish the text of the Psalms.²⁹ The printed text presents, in order and arranged over two large pages and in eight columns, the original Hebrew, Giustiniani's literal translation into Latin, a version designated *latina comune* (St. Jerome), the text in Greek, the text in Arabic, the Aramaic Targum, the Latin translation of the latter, and, finally, scholia, or commentary. Giustiniani had a good two thousand copies of this highly costly edition printed in Genoa, where printing was nearly nonexistent, providing the printer with hospitality and space for the printing operations in his own house. Fifty of these copies were printed on parchment, to be given to reigning heads of state, Christian and other. Twenty years later, only five hundred copies had been sold, producing a return that at least covered the capital invested. Giustiniani had hoped the publication of this work would launch him with great fanfare, but he was to be disappointed.³⁰

An infelicitous geographical location could be neutralized by the ability of a great bookseller to create a network. When, in 1538, Giovanni Giolito opened a print shop in Turin, a secondary city in the economy of the Italian book in the Renaissance, he drew up a contract with his printers that stipulated press runs of 1,500 copies for grammar books, schoolbooks with commentary (Virgil and Cicero), vernacular books of a practical nature (such as recipe books), and prayer books. Textbooks by professors

²⁷ Andrea Canova, "Nuovi documenti mantovani su Ambrogio da Calepio e sulla stampa del suo *Dictionarium*," in *Società, cultura, luoghi al tempo di Ambrogio da Calepio*, ed. Maria Mencaroni Zoppetti and Erminio Gennaro (Bergamo: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2005), 355–84; *Edit 16*, CNCE 8416. There are seven remaining copies in Italian libraries.

²⁸ Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 48, 122–23. There were 165 different editions of this work in the sixteenth century.

²⁹ *Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, & Chaldaicum cum tribus Latinis interpretationibus & glossis* (Genua: Pietro Paolo Porro in the house of Niccolò Giustiniani, 1516, *Edit 16*, CNCE 5916). There are fifty-five copies in Italian libraries. See also the entry in the *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Giustiniani, Agostino."

³⁰ Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino*, 31–32.

at the University of Turin were printed in as few as 750 copies.³¹ High press runs could thus be combined with apparently weak city markets when – as was the case for Giolito, a major wholesaler – the producer's commercial network was extensive and lively.

Exceptionally high press runs also included editions that were of particular interest to a sponsor. In 1488 Ferdinand of Aragon gave the printer Francesco Del Tuppo 450 ducats to print, within six months, one thousand copies of the proceedings of the court case against Pirro Del Balzo, Antonello Sanseverino, and Girolamo Sanseverino. His intention was to give as much publicity as possible to these records in order to demonstrate that the brutal repression of what would be known as the Conspiracy of the Barons was just.³²

The liquidity and the commercial might of the financier are infallibly mirrored not so much in the quality (graphic, textual, or cultural) of the edition as in the number of copies printed. The publisher – that is, the person with responsibility for a publication – first of all procured and paid for the paper. Other expenses followed – printing types, equipment, and workers, for example. The supply of paper parallels the provision of raw materials in other types of production. As the person at whose initiative a work was produced, the publisher had ownership of the edition, which included the choice of the text and often also control over how it was printed. Contracts cited above stand as proof, including those involving de Madiis and Gorgonzola.³³ Strozzi, the banker who joined with Ridolfi to finance a 1476 edition of Pliny in Italian, supplied the printer, Nicolaus Jenson, with eighty-six bales of paper, each containing five or six reams.³⁴ Partnerships were created, even for only one undertaking, in which one member furnished the print shop with a certain number of reams of paper, to be printed within a certain period at an agreed price per ream. One emblematic figure in this regard is Giovanni da Legnano, who was active in the 1470s in Milan and Pavia, where he operated as paper dealer, publisher, and wholesale and retail book dealer. When Legnano set up partnerships with printers, he usually furnished the paper needed and later supervised the putting of the editions on sale, but he showed little interest in all operations between those two moments.³⁵ When an author

³¹ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 45–50. Out of all the books that Giovanni Giolito printed in Turin, only six editions remain, for the most part in only one copy.

³² *D.B.I.*, s.v. “Del Tuppo, Francesco”; *ISTC* 01000700. Only four copies survive.

³³ Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola*, 83, 84, 102, 103.

³⁴ De Roover, “Per la storia dell’arte della stampa,” 100 and n. 1.

³⁵ Ganda, *I primordi*, 54–57.

published his own work, he might agree to furnish the paper, as was the case with the Ferrara edition of *Orlando Furioso*, printed on commission for the author, Lodovico Ariosto.³⁶

The decision about the press run was thus clearly within the competence of the person responsible for publication (who paid for it) and was even the fulcrum of his role. An error in judging the most gainful print run might compromise the entire venture. The high variations in press runs in this period seem indicative of both a search for a difficult equilibrium between conflicting factors and a continual refinement of awareness of the potential sales of each individual book. The publisher of a work might, above all, have to procure paper in areas in which paper production was low or paper was of poor quality, and therefore obtaining a customs exemption for the importation of paper could be a vital part of his role. Good political relations with decision-making centers – which in the great majority of cases was the local court – were always a prerequisite for obtaining fiscal exemptions. This explains why, even though for many decades the lords of the Italian courts showed little interest in book publication, the printing and sale of a book often involved prominent courtiers.

Press Runs in the Cinquecento

In the course of the sixteenth century, Venetian book trade changed. Growth in production from the 1540s on proved both significant in scale and robust. Press runs began to stabilize around fairly high figures. According to Paul Grendler, well into the sixteenth century average press runs reached some one thousand copies, but a major publisher might print from two thousand to three thousand copies of a book of assured high demand.³⁷ These figures too are perhaps estimates that must be applied to overall production with caution. Successful bookmen such as the brothers Michele and Francesco Tramezino, who ended their activities with a patrimony of some twenty thousand ducats,³⁸ did not venture

³⁶ Conor Fahy, *L'“Orlando Furioso” del 1532: Profilo di un'edizione* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1989), 104, n. 26 (*Edit 16*, CNCE 2541; CNCE 2542; CNCE 2566).

³⁷ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 9. For example, in 1547 Comin da Trino printed one thousand copies of Andrea Calmo's *I piacevoli et ingeniosi discorsi in più lettere compresi* (*Edit 16*, CNCE 8520) as he himself declared to the Inquisition (Cristina Michielin, “Il processo a Comin da Trino e Andrea Calmo: Implicazioni e conseguenze di una sentenza su un testo ancora in tipografia,” *Quaderni veneti* 22 [1995]: 28).

³⁸ As is evident from the division of goods among the heirs in 1579: Tinto, *Annali tipografici*, 113–17.

beyond press runs of one thousand copies, even for the most requested works.³⁹ For more ambitious editions their agency preferred to set up agreements with other publishers.⁴⁰ In 1564 a Padua publishing partnership with an overall capitalization of less than 150 gold scudi planned to print some editions with press runs of 1,100 copies, a size explicitly defined as habitual and ordinary.⁴¹ At the same time, however, in economically weaker contexts such as printing in Rome, press runs might remain very low, even for books with a good prospective market. In 1555 Antonio Barré printed only two hundred copies of a text that later proved highly successful: Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo delle imprese*, the first systematic treatment of the theme of devices and emblems in Italian.⁴² According to Girolamo Ruscelli, not a single copy could be found in Venice, not even at the price of ten scudi, for the entire Rome press run had been exhausted in only a few months.⁴³

Normally, folio editions had a small press run, as the number of books printed was always determined by the investment, and paper was an ever-present cost in book production. Still, there was a lower limit for a press run if the publisher wanted to take advantage of current legislation. At least from the 1540s on, the Venetian Senate would not concede a privilege for a print run smaller than four hundred, apparently in the conviction that a small investment was not worthy of special protection.

Sixteenth-century publishers were able to produce higher press runs than their predecessors. There were a number of reasons for this increase. Lower costs were linked to an increase in smaller formats. Quicker sales resulted from improved commercial techniques, a broader public for reading books in the vernacular, and the establishment of a distribution network within the domestic market. All of these factors explain the success of a publisher such as Gabriele Giolito, who could count on several

³⁹ As seen in the document *Tramezino 1562*.

⁴⁰ See the agreement among the Tramezino heirs, Giovanni Varisco and Luc'Antonio Giunti, for the printing of five volumes of the *Historie del Mondo* of Giovanni Tarcagnota in 1580 (*Edit 16*, CNCE 35072), with a press run of 1,225 copies: Tinto, *Annali tipografici*, 117–19. For Tarcagnota, see Gennaro Tallini, "Tra studio e bottega. Coordinate bio-bibliografiche per Giovanni Tarcagnota da Gaeta (1499–1566)," *Bibliologia* 6 (2011): 15–42.

⁴¹ This partnership included the printer Grazioso Percacino, who knew the book market between Padua and Venice thoroughly and was responsible over his career for some 250 known editions. For the contract, see Mariella Magliani, "Una società padovana per la stampa e la vendita di libri (1564)," *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 33 (2000): 189.

⁴² Paolo Giovio, *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (Rome: Antonio Barré, 1555, *Edit 16*, CNCE 21197).

⁴³ Girolamo Ruscelli, *Dediche e avvisi ai lettori*, ed. Antonella Iacono and Paolo Marini (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2011), 131–32.

thousand buyers in Italian lands, a public that he could reach relatively quickly. One of his greatest successes, Lodovico Dolce's *Trasformationi* (1553), which was an Italian translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* published with a magnificent set of illustrations, sold out the first edition of 1,800 copies within four months, and Giolito had to produce a reprint in the same year. Given that Giolito published another four editions of the *Trasformationi* before 1561, we can deduce that he must have sold several thousand copies. At the same time, he clearly considered a press run of 1,800 copies to be something of a maximum even in a potentially promising market. The public for this sort of work was quantified in a similar manner by the publisher Francesco de Franceschi. In 1563 he printed 1,700 copies of the Italian translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Giovanni Andrea dell'Anguillara, a publication that met with great success and replaced Dolce's earlier translation completely.⁴⁴

Paolo Manuzio's activity provides significant data regarding variations in press runs. There is documentation for his production during the period 1558–60, when he was a printer and a member of the Accademia Veneziana (or della Fama), that permits access to systematic data.⁴⁵ All of the accounts of the Accademia, together with all other acts relative to its initiatives, were published in print form to emphasize the official character and importance of the institution. Manuzio's accounts and detailed reports of all his expenses attest to the fact that the press runs of the works he printed varied greatly, influenced less by the conditions of their financing than by an evaluation of their sales prospects. His press runs were commonly of 825 copies (nine editions) or from 1,100 to 1,125 copies (ten editions). For only one edition (not by chance, Paolo Manuzio's own *Epistolae*, 1558; *Edit* 16, CNCE 23095) did the press run reach 1,700 copies.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Elena Bonora, *Ricerche su Francesco Sansovino imprenditore librario e letterato* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1994), 31; *Edit* 16, CNCE 41574.

⁴⁵ On the Accademia Veneziana, see Curt F. Bühler, "An Early Printing Estimate for an Academic Press," *The Library Chronicle* 20, no. 1 (1954): 61–65; Paul Lawrence Rose, "The Accademia Veneziana: Science and Culture in Renaissance Venice," *Studi Veneziani* 11 (1969): 191–242; Pietro Pagan, "Sulla Accademia Venetiana o della Fama," *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 132 (1973–74): 359–92; Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). See also *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Badoer, Federico."

⁴⁶ For the complete production of the Accademia Veneziana, with press runs for each title, see Renouard, *Annales*, 267–81. All the expenses for the realization of his editions are summarized in *Conti di M. Paolo Manutio con l'Accademia intorno le stampe* (Venice: Paolo Manuzio for the Accademia Venetiana, 1558) and *Polizze di M. Paolo Manutio alli Nob. et Ecc.ss. Academici compagni, et SS. miei Oss.* (Venice: Paolo Manuzio for the Accademia Venetiana, 1558). Today these two prints have been digitized and can be consulted online, together with other rare materials produced by the Accademia Veneziana, on the



Fig. 3.3. Title page of Ovid, *Le trasformazioni*, translated in Italian by Ludovico Dolce. Venice: Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari and brothers, 1553; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

When Manuzio was risking his own money, it was a quite different story: then we are apt to see much smaller press runs, at the level of incunabula, even for publications that were aimed at a transnational market. For example, Paolo Manuzio advised his son, Aldo, known as Aldo the Younger, to print only five hundred copies of his own commentary on Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* (*Edit* 16, CNCE 12380). He recommended the same press run for Fulvio Orsini's corrections to Virgil, asserting that "this will be a book for every literate man. Still, more than five hundred are not to be made."⁴⁷

Web site of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. See also Fletcher, *In Praise of Aldus*, 71.

⁴⁷ For Manuzio's judgment of the works of Fulvio Orsini (later published by Plantin in Antwerp), see the letter of 31 May 1567 in Manuzio, *Lettere*, 94. For indications regarding the press runs for his own work in the letter of 19 September 1567, see *ibid.*, letter VII, p. 96 and the letter of 8 November 1567: "Of the Comments I have advised that only five hundred be made so that there soon be a reason to reprint it, and thus I can perhaps have a better chance to correct them," letter XI, p. 107.

One publication that is always cited when speaking of press runs of Venetian books in the sixteenth century is Pietro Andrea Mattioli's *Dioscoride*, a fundamental work on medicinal plants and a solid commercial success.⁴⁸ There is evidence of a conversation during which the publisher Vincenzo Valgrisi is reported to have stated that he had sold thirty-two thousand copies of Mattioli's work before 1561: the physician Girolamo Donzellini said as much in a letter to Mattioli published in 1561.⁴⁹ Another letter, this time to Giovanni Odorico Melchiori, repeats the comment about the high number of copies sold.⁵⁰ Simple calculation leads to the conclusion that the thirty-two thousand copies must have been distributed among twelve editions in twelve years with an average press run of more than 2,500 copies per edition, which quickly sold out. Whether these figures are credible or not, it was Valgrisi himself who stated that the sale of Mattioli's work was extraordinary in that it followed the rhythm characteristic of new publications even when it was no longer new. Overall, the exceptional success of Mattioli's work – confirmed by its multiple editions, which were accompanied by several series of illustrations – was skillfully fostered by the Valgrisi firm, carrying the author to a European reputation greater than his actual scholarly skills.⁵¹ Press runs higher than two thousand copies thus appear to have been possible, but they remained abnormal.

⁴⁸ Pietro Andrea Mattioli, *Il Discoride* (Venice: Vincenzo Valgrisi, alla bottega d'Erasmus, 1548, *Edit 16*, CNCE 36116). This was the first in a series of twenty-five editions of this work published by the Valgrisi family.

⁴⁹ "Memini certe cum optimus vir ac diligentissimus typographus Vincentius Valgrisius Venetiis mihi narraret a prima illa editione supra triginta duo millia exemplarium hactenus fuisse divendita et distracta, avidissime tamen a quam plurimis etiamnum flagitari, quasi vero nunc primum recens in lucem emittatur" (I remember Vincent Valgrisi said to me in Venice that from the first edition of your work until then more than thirty-two thousand copies had been sold, and still for many the work was urgently required, almost as if it had just been published): Pietro Andrea Mattioli, *Epistolarum medicinalium libri quinque* (Prague: Jiří Melantrich [Georgius Melantrichij ab Aventino] for V. Valgrisi, 1561), 261. On the physician Girolamo Donzellini – a frequent presence in the Valgrisi shop, where he replenished his supply of prohibited books – who was condemned to death in Venice in 1587 as a heretic, see *D.B.I.*, s.v.

⁵⁰ Mattioli, *Epistolarum medicinalium*, 372. The statement clearly derives from Donzellini's text, however.

⁵¹ On Mattioli, see *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Mattioli, Pietro Andrea," and Sara Ferri, ed., *Pietro Andrea Mattioli: Siena 1501–Trento 1578: La vita, le opere: Con l'identificazione delle piante* (Ponte San Giovanni [Perugia]: Quattroemme, 1997). For his works, see Jerry Stannard, "P. A. Mattioli: Sixteenth-Century Commentator on Dioscorides," *Bibliographical Contributions, University of Kansas Library Series* 1 (1969): 59–81; Tiziana Pesenti, "Il 'Dioscoride' di Pier Andrea Mattioli e l'editoria botanica," in Decio Gioseffi et al., *Trattati di prospettiva, architettura militare, idraulica e altre discipline: Saggi e note* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1985), 61–103; and Andreoli, "Ex officina erasmiana."

The number of copies sold soon became an indication of the worth of a work and of the success of its author. In his biography of Tommaso Garzoni, Celso Rosini states that he had heard the publisher Giovan Battista Ciotti assert that ninety thousand copies of the *Piazza di tutte le professioni* had sold in Venice alone.⁵² Given that copies from some fifteen Venetian editions from the period under consideration here survive, the average press run appears to have been greater than five thousand copies, for a one thousand-page book. To be sure, statements such as that reported to have been made by Ciotti must be taken as celebrative rather than as accurate.

The press runs for Catholic reformed liturgical books during the second half of the century were surely quite high. The many copies the market required were always published in successive editions. According to the calculations of Paul Grendler, between 1571 and 1572 Girolamo and Bernardino Torresani printed almost twenty thousand copies of the *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis* (Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary) in six press runs of 3,300 copies apiece in a variety of small formats (12mo, 24mo, 32mo) within only seven or eight months.⁵³ The *Pontificale*, a sumptuous folio edition of the reformed liturgical book containing the rites and ceremonies commonly conducted by bishops, was published in Rome with a press run of 1,400 copies.⁵⁴ Exceptionally large press runs might also result from exceptional financing, as was the case with the 3,500 copies of the Bible in Arabic and Latin published by the Typographia Medicea with support from the Medici family amounting to the fabulous sum of forty thousand scudi.⁵⁵

⁵² Celso Rosini, *Lyceum Lateranense illustrium scriptorum sacri apostolici ordinis clericorum Canonice Regularium Salvatoris Lateranensis elogium*. 2 vols. (Cesena: Carlo Neri, 1649), 2:321–22; first edition: Tommaso Garzoni, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo, e nobili et ignobili* (Venice: Giovan Battista Somasco, 1585). To make a comparison, in 2005 the average print run of an Italian edition was around five thousand copies (data provided by the Associazione Italiana Editori, www.aie.it).

⁵³ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 176.

⁵⁴ *Pontificale Romanum Clementis VIII pont. max. iussu restitutum, atque editum* (Rome: Giacomo Luna for Leonardo Parasole & Co., 1595, *Edit* 16, CNCE 11864). There are more than sixty copies in Italian libraries. See also Tinto “Un diario,” 678–79.

⁵⁵ *Evangelia arabice, cum interpretatione latina Antonii Sionitae*. Arabic text edited by Giovan Battista Raimondi (Rome: Typographia Medicea Orientale, 1591, *Edit* 16, CNCE 5987). See Guglielmo Enrico Saltini, “Della Stamperia Orientale Medicea e di Giovan Battista Raimondi.” *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani* 2nd ser., 2 (1860): 257–308; Antonio Bertolotti, “Le tipografie orientali e gli orientalisti a Roma nei secoli XVI e XVII,” *Rivista europea* 9, no. 2 (1878): 217–68; and Raymond Cassinet, “L’aventure de l’édition des *Éléments* d’Euclide en arabe par la Société Typographique Médicis vers 1594,” *Revue Française d’Histoire du Livre* 62 (1993): 5–51, 78–79.



Fig. 3.4. Title page of *Pontificale Romanum Clementis VIII pont. max. iussu restitutum, atque editum*. Rome: Giacomo Luna for Leonardo Parasole and partners, 1595; f°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

With a firm eye on the market, the more expert bookmen recognized that it was vital they remain flexible when setting press runs. As a result we must be wary of generalizing about the size of such runs, and particularly of speaking of an average size. It would compound the problem if we were to infer from that supposed average the total mass of books in circulation, treating that total as a compact and coherent phenomenon. The commercial circulation of books was anything but homogeneous, and it has to be defined within its coordinates of time and, especially, place. Each edition had its own distribution circuit within an area that for the great legal and academic works could extend as far as the transnational market but for ephemeral print works or grammar books written by schoolmasters was not infrequently limited to the local, often little more than city-wide market.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ On the extensive transnational market for scholarly books, see Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place and Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*. On the local market for grammar books, textbooks, and schoolbooks, see Paul Gehl, "Advertising or Fama? Local Markets for Schoolbooks in Sixteenth-Century Italy," in *Print Culture and Peripheries in Early Modern Europe: A Contribution to the History of Printing and the Book Trade in Small European and Spanish Cities*, ed. Benito Rial Costas (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 69–99; Kevin Stevens and Paul Gehl, "Cheap Print: A Look Inside the Lucini/Sirtori Stationery Shop at Milan (1597–1613)," *La Bibliofilia* 112 (2010): 281–327.

CHAPTER FOUR

WAREHOUSES

Printing contracts are not the only records that furnish useful data for evaluation of press runs in the early modern period. Inventories of warehouses broaden our perspective and help in the quantification of the mass of books that a printer might accumulate after years of activity. The surviving material allows us to consider how printers and publishers warehoused their stock and to sketch the geographical limits of the markets they covered.

The Market: From Local to Transnational

For centuries, artisans in urban areas had sold the goods they produced in space adjacent to their workshops. For the earliest printers, there was no distinction between where goods were sold – in the bookshop located on the street side of their print shop – and where they were stored. Like other urban artisans, a printer, especially in the early years of print, would likely have known his customers, perhaps even been closely acquainted with them. During this first period the challenges of storing the printed product were probably temporary and relatively insignificant. Some of the earliest printed works have been examined for marks of ownership or other evidence of usage in the socio-cultural context of Mainz, and in particular in light of the existence of a large clientele comprising members of religious orders, especially Benedictines. The Gutenberg Bible went on sale even before the printing of the first edition was complete, and we know from Enea Silvio Piccolomini that it was very difficult, even impossible, to obtain one of the 180 copies.¹ The first printed edition thus posed no real storage problems.

In principle, an edition was published with a likely number of buyers in mind. At times the size of that customer base could be established precisely – as, for example, in the case of commissioned liturgical

¹ Martin Davies, "Juan de Carvajal and Early Printing: The 42-line Bible and the Sweynheym and Pannartz Aquinas," *The Library* 6th ser., 18 (1996): 193–215.

books² – and in such instances, sales must have been fairly rapid. As printing became established, publishers took greater risks in their search for a market beyond their immediate public. Although theology, law, and medicine books were often intended for a specific community of buyers in one location – the students of a particular university – it became evident that they could also find a market in other university cities, even those at some distance from their place of production.

A new phase was initiated when publishers began to produce books for a more widely scattered public that was for the most part not known to them personally. Aldo Manuzio took great risks in this endeavor. Although he could draw on earlier experiences of the large-scale distribution from the Company of Venice and other large Venetian operations, these publishers had largely restricted their production to academic books, a genre that Manuzio avoided. Manuzio was the first producer of books to arouse the interest of a large number of readers scattered throughout Europe. He made use not only of the solidity of the Venetian mercantile networks for his distribution system,³ but also of publicity disseminated by studious readers enthusiastic about his books. From the evidence left by Daniele Clario on the circulation of works printed by Manuzio,⁴ and, even more tellingly, by a humanist and churchman of the stature of Girolamo Aleandro,⁵ it appears that Manuzio's firm acquired a certain status among

² Some fifteenth-century examples of liturgical books exist. Among the various editions of the Ambrosian Missal commissioned from Antonio Zarotto, the 1488 edition (ISTC im00644400, nine copies listed) was financed by the provost of Santa Tecla, Andrea Bossi, with a press run of five hundred copies: Arnaldo Ganda, *I primordi della tipografia milanese: Antonio Zarotto da Parma, 1471–1507* (Florence: Olschki, 1984), 62. In 1495 the patriarch of Aquileia, Nicolò Donato, commissioned Erhard Ratdolt to print five hundred missals: Vincenzo Joppi, "De' libri liturgici a stampa della Chiesa d'Aquileia," *Archivio veneto* 31 (1886): 259–67 (ISTC im00645000, four copies listed).

³ The Torresani-Manuzio firm undoubtedly made use of well-established exporters such as Leonhard Alantsee, the Vienna bookseller (later also a publisher in Venice), who in 1497 brought Greek editions to Vienna for sale. Alantsee told Aldo Manuzio that in Vienna his books were met with enthusiastic reaction that included praise in prose and verse by Vincenzo Longino: Ester Pastorello, *L'Epistolario Manuziano: Inventario cronologico-analitico (1483–1597)* (Florence: Olschki, 1957), 22.

⁴ Pierre de Nolhac, "Les correspondants d'Alde Manuce: Matériaux nouveaux d'histoire littéraire (1483–1514)," *Studi e documenti di storia e diritto* 8 (1887): 267.

⁵ Writing from Paris in July 1508, Aleandro begged Aldo to send him some Greek books, which he would be able to sell easily: "However, speak with Messer Andrea [Torresani] and have sent to me as soon as possible, either through the fair via Lyon or even sooner at least twelve of the *Erotematj* of Constantino, six Lexicon, six or more Luciani, and whatever other books you like, enough to make a chest, so that I can sell off all of them as I hope. As well as the others send me, ordered by a gentleman of this place, Aristotle *De animalibus* in Greek, Theophrastus *De Plantis* in Greek, Aristophanes, and other books." Later Aleandro proposed to Aldo that he act as his correspondent in Paris, promising to do much better

contemporaries because of its particular cultural associations, which placed it on a different level from other publishing ventures. The distribution of Manuzio's books in England, for example, accompanied Italian humanism's conquest of academic culture in that land.⁶ His works were welcomed even more enthusiastically in Basel, where Manuzio's ambitions would be continued by publishers of the stature of Froben and Amerbach.⁷ Nevertheless, the frequent inclusion of publications in Greek in Manuzio's publishing catalogues suggests that such works did not sell rapidly; Latin works, by contrast, appear to have sold out quickly.⁸

The pinnacle of such high-risk publishing, whose ever-expanding horizons required solid financial backing if a return on the initial investment was to be achieved, was the first edition of the Qur'an in Arabic, put out by the Paganini firm in Venice in 1537–38.⁹ In this case, however, the threat of financial disaster did not just loom over the project; it proved to be a

business than a certain Ianpietro, who up to that time had sold his Greek works (at a high price), "advising you that in this land there are many booksellers who willingly would become involved with you, *tamen ego sum praeferendus* (I am still preferable)": Pierre de Nolhac, "Les correspondants d'Alde Manuce: Matériaux nouveaux d'histoire littéraire (1483–1514)," *Studi e documenti di storia e diritto* 9 (1888), 213–16. Here Aleandro is simply perpetuating, but on a broader scale, the role of the teacher who provides his students with books that had come down from the age of the manuscript. See the entry "Aleandro, Girolamo" in *D.B.L.*, s.v.

⁶ Lotte Hellinga, "Importation of Books Printed on the Continent into England and Scotland before c. 1520," in *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450–1520*, ed. Sandra Hindman (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 216–17. Aldines and Venetian editions were principally imported by booksellers in Germany and the Low Countries, rather than being direct imported by the Venetians: Paul Needham, "Continental Printed Books Sold in Oxford, c. 1480–3," in *Incunabula: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Printed Books Presented to Lotte Hellinga* (London: British Library, 1999), 243–70; Cristina Dondi, "La circolazione europea degli incunaboli veneziani documentata dalle edizioni conservate alla biblioteca Bodleiana, Oxford," in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana: La Musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 179–90.

⁷ Henricus Glareanus wrote to Zwingli on 19 October 1516, "Just now Wolfgang Lachner, the father-in-law of our Frobenius, has sent for a whole wagon-load of classics, best Aldine editions, from Venice. If you want any, say so quickly, and send the cash. For as soon as such a cargo arrives, there are thirty for one, who only call out, What's the price? and have a scuffle over it": Charles William Heckethorn, *The Printers of Basle in the XV. and XVI. Centuries: Their Biographies, Printed Books and Devices* (London: Unwin, 1897), 87–88.

⁸ The three Manuzio catalogues of 1498, 1503, and 1513 have been known and studied since Renouard's time. For reproductions, see Bigliuzzi et al., *Aldo Manuzio*, 61, 119–20, 164–69.

⁹ Nuovo, "A Lost Arabic Koran"; Maurice Borrmans, "Observation à propos de la première édition imprimée du Coran à Venise," *Quaderni di studi arabi* 9 (1991) 93–126; Muhsin Mahdi, "From the Manuscript Age to the Age of Printed Books," in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. George N. Atiyeh (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1995), 1–16; Giorgio Vercellin, *Venezia e l'origine della stampa in caratteri arabi* (Venice: Il Poligrafo, 2001), 29–33.

ruinous reality. The publishers appear to have completely misjudged the audience for their venture and, moreover, the printed work contained numerous textual errors. One possible explanation for this serious miscalculation may lie in the Paganini firm's production and sale of the highly prized paper of Toscolano, on Lake Garda, a product that was much sought after in the Arabic-Turkish market,¹⁰ for it is possible that the firm hoped to sell printed paper along with such blank paper.¹¹ The failure of this venture certainly signaled an about turn. Although we have records of occasional sales of some texts in the Middle East, on the whole the printed products of the Serenissima were not sold in this geographic locality.

We know that over time, publishers invented systems for the sale of their products that enabled a more efficient distribution of their merchandise. The impetus behind their behavior stemmed, however, not just from awareness of growing demand and a desire to recover their production costs more quickly. As stockpiles in their warehouses grew, the pressure to innovate also increased. Even though we have only a few records of this component of their business, those that have survived tell a compelling story.

The Warehouse of Sigismondo dei Libri (1484)

The first and best-known book warehouse was that which proved a burden for Konrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, early Italian typographers who were active in Rome. The two men were constrained to call for papal aid in 1472 because they were submerged by debt.¹² We can sense something of the painful surprise that must have been felt by the two printers as they watched the number of books in their warehouse grow seemingly unstopably, having apparently never imaged such proliferation. The total would come to 12,475 volumes, more than any

¹⁰ Ivo Mattozzi, "Le cartiere nello stato veneziano: Un storia tra strutture e congiunture (1450–1797)," in *Mulini da carta: Le cartiere dell'alto Garda: Tini e torchi fra Trento e Venezia*, ed. Mauro Grazioli et al. (Verona: Cartiere Fedrigoni, 2001), 129.

¹¹ The fact that they shipped typographic equipment and Arabic types to Constantinople along with the printed Qur'an suggests that they were planning to set up a print shop there. The Jewish publisher Gershom Soncino had relocated his presses from Italy to Constantinople in 1527. In the sixteenth century Constantinople became established as a center of Hebrew printing, together with Venice and Amsterdam.

¹² Their appeal to the pope was written by their collaborator Giovanni Andrea Bussi: Giovanni Andrea Bussi, *Prefazioni alle edizioni di Sweynheym e Pannartz prototipografi romani*, ed. Massimo Miglio (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1978), xvii–xxxv, 83–84, tables xxxviii–xxix.

other warehouse had ever seen and a figure that suggests that the firm's problems lay principally (although perhaps not exclusively) in their failure to put in place systems that would enable these books to be sold at a distance. Their full warehouse was not a sign of a healthy business.¹³

The list of books that was drawn up when the Bolognese bookseller-publisher Sigismondo dei Libri died twelve years later, in 1484, is the first known detailed inventory of a bookshop and warehouse.¹⁴ The document records the merchandise as it was distributed across different spaces. The books could be found either in a ground-floor room in the "apotheca" open to the public (an advantageous location next to the church of San Petronio) or in a storage area proper, which occupied two rooms on an upper floor. The stored books functioned in part as a reserve for replenishing the assortment of works offered for sale in the bookshop, but above all they included hundreds of copies of editions financed wholly or in part by dei Libri. This distribution followed the usual organization of space in shops of the time: the upper rooms, which were less humid than those that gave onto the street, were used for keeping materials that would be sold over a longer period.¹⁵ The bookshop made available for direct sale to the public over four hundred printed books¹⁶ and forty-five manuscripts.¹⁷

¹³ The situation was not much better for Pietro Adamo de Micheli, jurist and the first printer in Mantua. In 1473 he begged the duke of Mantua for help because he was overwhelmed by the quantity of books, valued at six hundred ducats, that he was not able to sell: Canova, "Letteratura, tipografia," 81.

¹⁴ This inventory (*Libri 1484*) is published in Domenico Fava, "Un grande libraio-editore di Bologna del Quattrocento: Sigismondo dei Libri," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1941): 80–97 and, more recently, in Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 250–56, but was made known by Lino Sighinolfi, "Francesco Puteolano e le origini della stampa in Bologna e in Parma," *La Bibliofilia* 15 (1914): 451–67. The document is a simple list of books, recorded by location and giving the number of copies for each title but with no indication of numbers of pages or price. The order in which the titles are listed does not seem to correspond to any special criterion (by subject, or by format, for example). The quality of the notation is rather good and is more precise for law books, and indeed, a notary acted as scribe. In general it shows no obvious distortions: perhaps a bookseller was present when the document was drawn up.

¹⁵ German print shops and bookshops were organized in a similar manner: Christoph Reske, "The Printer Anton Koberger and his Printing Shop," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (2001): 98–103. It was an organization that lasted until the eighteenth century, as seen in Giorgio Montecchi, *Aziende tipografiche, stampatori e librai a Modena dal Quattrocento al Settecento* (Modena: Mucchi, 1988), 143–53.

¹⁶ An exact tally is impossible, given the presence of rubrics such as "volumina liber-colorum parvorum" (volumes of small booklets), which probably included the vernacular works and cheap booklets that we would love to know more about. My count does include the group of "111 volumina in forma minori variarum rerum" (111 small volumes of various things), because it quotes a number of books.

¹⁷ "45 volumina librorum scriporum cum calamo" (forty-five volumes of books written with a pen): *Libri 1484*, 95.

The majority of the works listed as present in the bookshop appear in one copy. (For the better part, these are massive law books.) The most striking exception is the *Rudimenta grammatices* of Niccolò Perotti, of which there were twenty copies.¹⁸ In short, the bookshop contained a wide assortment of works – some two hundred different titles are listed – but these were stored prudently in a minimal number of copies, even though the editions for sale were not printed in Bologna and therefore it seems unlikely that additional copies would have been immediately available.¹⁹

The situation was quite different in the upper-story rooms crammed with books. There were 422 copies of the 1477 edition of Baldo degli Ubaldi's *Lectura super VI codicis*, printed by Domenico Lapi at Sigismondo dei Libri's expense, which must have taken up a good deal of space since they occupied five *scaffae* (shelves).²⁰ Dei Libri also kept in the same space, on various *scaffae* or heaped up on a table, 130 copies of the *Apostillae supra VI codicis* of Alexander Tartagnus,²¹ 324 copies of Cicero's *Epistolae ad familiares* in a variety of formats, 84 copies of the *Sonetti e canzoni* of Petrarch with commentary by Francesco Filelfo,²² 172 copies of the *Repetitio super capitulo "Cum contingat" de iure iurando* of Johannes de Imola,²³ 223 copies of the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* of Valerius Maximus,²⁴ and 150 copies of the *De conservatione sanitatis* of Benedictus de Nursia, all of which were from editions printed at the initiative of dei Libri.²⁵ In addition to this mass of books, there were one hundred copies of various editions waiting to be relocated into the bookshop. This stock amounted to some 1,605 books in one room.

Elsewhere, in a solarium without *scaffae* because in a sunny place there was no need to keep books raised up above the floor, there were another 659 copies of various editions in folio, all published by dei Libri, and a large quantity of "useless and imperfect sheets" that were probably printer's waste.

¹⁸ Ibid. Around fifty editions of this work were published in Italy before 1485.

¹⁹ The highest number of editions in the bookshop had been printed in Bologna; next came editions from other university cities such as Padua or Pavia, or from Venice and from Milan. Roman books were almost totally absent. There were also many books published in the region of Emilia: in Ferrara, Reggio, and Parma: Fava, "Un grande libraio-editore," 87–89.

²⁰ *ISTC* iu00017500: five copies listed, none of them in Italy.

²¹ *ISTC* it00018550: two copies listed, none in Italy.

²² *ISTC* ip00380000: more than thirty copies listed.

²³ *ISTC* ij00348000: eleven copies listed.

²⁴ *ISTC* iv00028500: seventeen copies listed.

²⁵ *ISTC* ib00314000: more than sixty copies listed.

The figure of 2,664 for the total number of printed books that belonged to dei Libri at his death must be considered approximate, however, given that the inventory also includes a number of general categories with unspecified content or quantity, but a more accurate count is likely to have been higher rather than lower. This bookseller-publisher's shop displays clearly defined characteristics. The bookshop, to which the public had access, offered a limited number of books (only slightly more than one-sixth of all the volumes that dei Libri owned), but the content of these works varied enormously. The storage spaces were intended for the stocking of large numbers of published volumes in expectation of sales that were intended to take place not only in the shop below but also within a distribution system that reached beyond the city walls. Among the books inventoried, fewer than one-third had been published by other printers.

The Warehouse of Platone de Benedetti (1497)

Chronologically the next bookseller's warehouse of which we know the contents was also in Bologna. An inventory of the books in the possession of the deceased Francesco (called Platone) de Benedetti was registered in a notarial act of 1497.²⁶ There were many more books this time: 10,576 copies of some 650 publications.²⁷ Although this was a notarial inventory, the goods were not registered by location but in alphabetical order in two series. The first series of only 270 copies lists law books ("Libri in iure civili et in iure canonico"); the second ("Libri in humanitate") includes the other 10,306 books. This categorization is a typical commercial distinction that we shall see in shop inventories in other university cities.²⁸ The law books were evidently the most expensive, to the point that it is rare for more than one copy of each work to be noted, and only exceptionally are there as many as ten. The second series covers all the remaining production categories of the period, including texts in the vernacular, and contains some

²⁶ Platone de Benedetti died unexpectedly in August 1496 leaving underage children, which explains the need to inventory all of his possessions. See Albano Sorbelli, "La libreria di uno stampatore bibliofilo del Quattrocento," in *Studi e ricerche sulla storia della stampa del Quattrocento: omaggio dell'Italia a Giovanni Gutenberg nel V centenario della sua scoperta* (Milan: Hoepli, 1942), 259–336 for a list of the books (*Benedetti 1497*). Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 321–41 provides the entire document.

²⁷ Overall the inventory contains 746 entries, but repetitions are frequent and it is unclear whether a single title can stand for different editions or whether multiple copies of the same edition are listed in different places.

²⁸ Cf. *Leonardo di Bartolomeo (Giunti) 1517* and *Giolito 1538*.

individual editions in such number that they evidently formed genuine stock, as is the case with the 278 copies of Donatus' *Ars grammatica*, 338 of Aesop, 286 of the *Salteri* (Psalters), and as many as one thousand copies of the *Officioli B. M. V.* (Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary). Some of these editions had been printed by Benedetti himself, as were *Silva cui titulus Nutricia* by Poliziano, published in 1492, 910 copies of which were still in stock²⁹ and *De instituendo sapientia animo* by Matteo Bossi, printed in 1495, with 248 copies in stock.³⁰ It should be stressed that this large assortment of works were not necessarily produced in Bologna. Aside from the editions printed by Platone himself, most of the books came from Venice, Milan, and Florence. Imported books that can be traced precisely in the storehouse of an important producer provide indirect evidence that book trade was largely based on exchange. Cities with a prominent printing industry, as was true of Bologna, fitted naturally into a circulation of books



Fig. 4.1. Mark and colophon in Matteo Bossi, *De instituendo sapientia animo*. Bologna: Platone de Benedetti, 1495; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

²⁹ *ISTC* ip00899000: twenty-five copies survive.

³⁰ *ISTC* ib01043000: almost fifty copies held in Italy.

that would soon be intense. We know that Benedetti exchanged books with Cristoforo da Sesto, and he left some books in Pavia for sale there.³¹ In an act of sale recorded the following year, in 1498, all of this commercial capital was calculated as equal to fifty-four reams of *carta reale* (royal paper), equivalent to 27,000 leaves, quoted at four lire per ream (for law books), for a total value of 216 lire.³² The 165 reams of books printed in *carta piccola* (82,500 leaves) that made up the rest of the materials in storage were valued at the much lesser sum of forty soldi per ream, for a total value of 350 lire. Hence the value of Benedetti's stored books, calculated at their sale price, was 566 lire in all.³³

This record tells us that at the end of the Quattrocento Platone de Benedetti kept in his storehouse and bookshop in Bologna a total of some ten thousand books, the fruit of fifteen years of activity, between 1482 and 1496. Benedetti had himself published about 60 percent of these books, but he had also taken on an increasing numbers of volumes from other publishers. The more active he was as a printer and the more books he produced, the more his storehouse gathered in not only his own books but also editions produced by other printers.

To throw further light on the significance of Benedetti's inventory, we can compare this listing with the inventory of the books held at his death, in 1496, in his house by the printer Andreas Belfort, who had been active in Ferrara since 1471. These books amounted to 1,987 copies of 240 editions, 60 percent of them printed by Belfort himself.³⁴ These much smaller numbers are an excellent indication of the difference in terms of production and commercial possibilities not only between Platone de Benedetti and Andreas Belfort, but also between Bologna and Ferrara.

The Warehouse of Niccolò Gorgonzola (1537)

The next known analogous document is the richly detailed inventory of the book warehouse of the Milanese printer Niccolò Gorgonzola, which

³¹ Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 340. Cristoforo da Sesto was a bookseller active in Milan from 1489: Arnaldo Ganda, *Filippo Cavagni da Lavagna editore, tipografo, commerciante a Milano nel Quattrocento* (Florence: Olschki, 2006), 155. Later documentation shows that Benedetti had sent to Pavia thirty copies of Ludovicus Bologninus, *Interpretationes novae* (Bologna: Franciscus [Plato] de Benedictis, 1495, *ISTC* ib00839000): Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 351.

³² Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 344–47.

³³ This represented an overwhelming portion of Platone de Benedetti's possessions, given that the presses, the types, and the other tools were quoted at about 138 lire: Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 344–47. The total value of the operation amounted to 704 lire, 16 soldi.

³⁴ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 40.

throws light on a seemingly unstoppable growth of warehouses.³⁵ In terms of quantity, there is clear evolution here: after thirty years of activity, Gorgonzola had 205 editions in storage, representing a total of 80,450 volumes, or about a million printed sheets.³⁶ Only a quarter of these books can be attributed with certitude to his own entrepreneurial initiative, although when citing this figure, we must also bear in mind that material produced by Gorgonzola for general consumption was highly ephemeral.³⁷ His storehouse reflects an ample autochthonous production, mixed only in small part with Venetian books. And indeed, every city displayed a certain autarchy in its popular publishing for a broad market, and Milan seemed particularly called to the publication of such material. Gorgonzola did not often or easily reach foreign consumers. He appears to have limited his participation in such distant markets to occasional replication on a reduced scale of works by Venetian publishers that had proved appealing.³⁸ The inventory of his holdings suggests that at times his press runs were higher than a thousand copies. In addition to some very slim editions of which there might be four thousand copies in stock,³⁹ the document lists, for example, 748 copies of *Rugino*, a chivalric romance printed twenty years earlier.⁴⁰ Given the nature of the work, it seems unlikely that only 250 copies would have been sold in two decades. But it is probable that many editions produced for a broad market have not come down to us.

That a large number of books remained in Niccolò Gorgonzola's warehouse does not by any means suggest that he was unable to sell off his products. He was surely a successful publisher, and at his death he held the

³⁵ *Gorgonzola 1537*, in Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola*, 126–45, with commentary on pp. 55–65. The document pertains to the warehouse alone and does not mention the contents of the bookshop on Piazza dei Mercanti that Gorgonzola opened in 1505: Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola*, 21–26. The entire contents of the shop were willed to Matteo Pollari without an inventory: Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola*, 121.

³⁶ For each of the 205 titles listed, the number of copies is given with the exact count of sheets in *quinterni* (five-sheet gatherings).

³⁷ Of the 205 editions inventoried (with numbers of copies varying between one and a thousand), only some sixty are included in Gorgonzola's *Annali* as reconstructed by Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola*. Another five editions were traced later.

³⁸ For example, there is the edition of the works of Teofilo Folengo of 22 August 1522 (*Edit 16*, CNCE 19360) that Gorgonzola picked up from the edition of Alessandro Paganini (Toscolano 1521: *Edit 16*, CNCE 19359), on which see Nuovo, "Alessandro Paganino e Teofilo Folengo,"

³⁹ Like the so-called "Libriti in quinterni di Como" (*Gorgonzola 1537*, 132). These were school textbooks containing the Pythagorean table and the four arithmetic operations.

⁴⁰ Pier Francesco da Camerino, *Rugino: Il sesto libro dell'Innamoramento di Orlando* (Milan: Rocco da Valle and his brother for N. Gorgonzola, 1518, *Edit 16*, CNCE 6600): *Gorgonzola 1537*, 135.



Fig. 4.2. Title page of Antonio Fregoso, *Riso de Democrito*. Milan: Niccolò Gorgonzola, 1515; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

tidy sum of 1,253 lire in cash.⁴¹ Furthermore, his salesman in the bookshop, Matteo Pollari would surely have been well aware of the health of Gorgonzola's business and yet acquired the entire contents of the bookstore, including defective copies and printer's waste, for a total sum of 4,035 lire and 12 soldi.⁴² The eighty thousand books were all housed in a room in Gorgonzola's home, a large building close to the center of Milan that he had rented in 1530. He had made so many improvements to the building that the owner let him live there for free.⁴³ We can imagine that one of those improvements was to adapt rooms in the house to function as a warehouse.

⁴¹ Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola*, 123.

⁴² A special section of the sales contract for the contents of the storehouse refers to *foleatū* – printer's waste and gatherings of incomplete and imperfect editions not included in the calculation of expenses: Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola*, 140. Although without value, these had been kept, and sheets printed in red and black were carefully placed in a crate.

⁴³ Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola*, 45.

Book Warehouses in the Cinquecento

Study of publishers' warehouses in the Cinquecento is problematic because of both the scarcity of source material and its complexity and diachronic stratification. We need to evaluate inventories carefully, keeping in mind that normally we can distinguish between groups of books intended for direct sale in the bookshop and groups of books that were stocked in warehouses. Books of the first sort were enormously varied, with only a few copies per edition, and they were arranged according to a system that was comprehensible to the client and enabled the bookseller to locate a title quickly. Books of the second sort, normally the product of the owner's own printing and publishing activity, consisted of a relatively restricted number of editions usually held in hundreds of copies (or in any event, in multiple copies). The Turin bookshop and warehouse of Giovanni Giolito (1538) offers a perfect example of this duality in the workshops of publisher-booksellers. The distinction between a shop open to the public and a warehouse is stated clearly in the heading of his inventory, *Inventario de la bottega di Turino et de quelli [libri] sono in magazin*. In the bookshop there were some seven hundred editions in 2,537 copies, with an average of between one and four copies per edition. The warehouse contained the results of somewhat more than three years of printing work: twenty-seven editions with 13,460 complete copies plus a number of gatherings of incomplete copies.⁴⁴

On occasion, the two categories overlapped, in particular because the stock of failed booksellers had been added to books of both sorts, but also when second-hand books were acquired, sometimes as the result of the purchase of a private library. Unfortunately, we have no inventories of the warehouses of Venetian firms that offer the same level of detail as the documents just discussed, for they would help us explore this issue in greater depth. Yet even the limited evidence available is revealing. In his testament dated 12 August 1491, Matteo Codecà stipulated how the books he had produced in partnership with Bernardino Benali should be divided. These books were not his whole output, for as he operated for the most part on commission as a printer, he did not own or physically store all the works he produced. His testament noted twelve editions and listed the copies of these works that were in storage, for a total of 11,086 books.⁴⁵ The Codecà-Benali firm, certainly not the largest operating at the time in

⁴⁴ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 50–54.

⁴⁵ A portion of this testament appears in Cecchetti, "Altri stampatori," 172–73.

Venice, had been in existence for only nine months when this inventory was taken.

Less informative are the inventories of merchandise that changed hands when a debt was repaid in the form of books, because in these cases it is almost certain that only a portion of the stock of the person paying the debt was involved.⁴⁶ One instance in which the evidence is more complete is the inventory of the one hundred bales of books, with a value of 660 ducats, that Girolama, the daughter of Johannes de Spira and the wife of Gaspar Dinslaken (also called Gaspare Alemanno de Colonia) inherited from her husband in 1511 as restitution of her dowry.⁴⁷ Here, the volumes inventoried – exactly 327 titles, for an overall total of 4,173 copies – came from the warehouse of a major merchant and only occasionally from that of a printer.⁴⁸ The number of copies per title is limited, usually varying between one and a few dozen, except in the case of works published by Girolama's father or perhaps acquired as his share of editions in which he had been involved.⁴⁹

We can learn more from a somewhat later inventory drawn up for the division of goods between the brothers Michele and Francesco Tramezino and dated 10 January 1562.⁵⁰ In this document Michele declares his intention to retire from business (although in reality he continued to act as a printer until his death in 1579), and he divides with his brother the entire warehouse stock of their books, with each brother receiving one half. The inventory shows that Michele had in storage in Venice 29,294 books, a quite modest number given that by that date he had printed about two hundred editions. The relatively small number of books in storage

⁴⁶ See, for example, the documents published in Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 312–16 about the division of the Bazalieri (Bazaliero Bazalieri) inheritance in Bologna in 1495.

⁴⁷ *Girolama 1511*, published in Ludwig, “Contratti tra lo stampador Zuan di Colonia.” In terms of its structure, this is a list of titles followed only by the number of copies, similar to *Cornucopia*, no. 37 (p. 70). A bale of books, according to this document, might contain from about twenty to about forty books, depending on their format. On laws for dowry restitution in Venice, see Anna Bellavitis, *Famille, genre, transmission à Venise au XVI^e siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2008), 63–72.

⁴⁸ *D.B.I.*, s.v. “Dinslaken, Gaspare,” by Tiziana Pesenti.

⁴⁹ Girolama received a large number of copies of three editions: 200 copies of the *Consilia* of Antonius de Butrio (many editions since *ISTC* ib01340400); 311 copies of the *Epistolae familiares* of Francesco Filelfo published in 1502 (*Edit 16*, CNCE 18985); and 118 copies of the *Oratio stampo Stagnin*. I do not know of editions of Horace printed by Stagnino after the 1486 edition: *ISTC* ih00450000: Pillinini, *Bernardino Stagnino*, no. 8.

⁵⁰ *Tramezino 1562*. This document records a division of goods initiated by Michele Tramezino. Each brother retained possession of the contents of his bookshop (Michele's in Venice; Francesco's in Rome), including the books printed in Venice by other printers or that had come from France or Germany.

reflects not only his ability as a businessman but also the fact that he was the first of his family to dedicate himself to printing. When a number of generations of bookmen succeeded one another, as happened in major family firms, the number of books that accumulated, both as stock and to be sold, was usually very large.⁵¹

It is therefore hardly surprising that the Venetian publishers were unable to store all their books at home or in the rooms attached to their workshop. They found themselves constrained to turn to the owners of the only spaces within the city that were sufficiently large: first and foremost, the monasteries, and secondly, the great families who were willing to rent out rooms within their palaces that were suitable for the conservation of printed material in quantity. From around 1510, for example, Antonio Moretto kept a Rialto warehouse with “diverse quantities of printed books”⁵² that was quite separate from his shop near the Mercerie, which Marc’Antonio Sabellico called famous.⁵³ Masses of printed paper were particularly vulnerable to fire, more so than other sorts of merchandise. The memory lingered long of the fire that on the night of 4 January 1529 struck the monastery of Santo Stefano, where, Marin Sanudo tells us, many bookmen had stored their printed books, which were destroyed within two hours. The bookmen who suffered the greatest damage in this fire were Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano⁵⁴ and Pietro Benali, who claimed

⁵¹ The life of the various firms could continue beyond the presence of a particular name on a title page. The intense negotiations for matrimonial alliances carried on by the bookmen of Venice, especially during the sixteenth century, contributed significantly to this process. Kinship ties through matrimony became indispensable for long-lasting commercial alliances, as a means of uniting patrimonies or gaining a son-in-law who would continue the firm’s activity after his proper apprenticeship. It was also an advantage to be able to provide daughters with dowries made up largely of books: Claudia Di Filippo, “L’editoria veneziana fra ‘500 e ‘600,” in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, vol. 6: *Dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, ed. Paolo Prodi (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1994), 615–48.

⁵² Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Avogaria di Comun miscellanea*, busta 6a, P/23, now *Miscellanea di carte non appartenenti ad alcun archivio*, b. 21. The statement is contained in the denunciation of a crime that Moretto had suffered in his later years. As proof of the wealth accumulated by this merchant, who sold paper as well as books, it is sufficient to note that his testament states that his fortune amounted to twelve thousand ducats: Patricia Osmond and Ennio Sandal, “La bottega del libraio editore Antonio Moretto: Editoria e commercio librario a Venezia, c. 1480–1518,” in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana: La Musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 236.

⁵³ Osmond-Sandal, “La bottega del libraio,” 233.

⁵⁴ Vittorio Rossi, “Bazzecole bibliografiche: II. Un incendio a Venezia e il tipografo Bernardino Benalio,” *Il libro e la stampa*, new ser. 4, no. 2 (1910): 52 reports a provision of the *Provveditori alla Sanità* in which Giovanni Bartolomeo, *librer ad signum fontis* (bookseller at the sign of the Fountain) was absolved from having to pay those who lent a hand in recovering the books that he held in a storeroom of the monastery of Santo Stefano.

that he had lost not only many other books but also the entire press run of the just-completed edition of Calepino's *Dictionarium* for which he had obtained a ten-year privilege; he applied to have the privilege renewed.⁵⁵

In 1536 Giovan Francesco Torresani kept his stock of books in the monastery of San Faustino.⁵⁶ According to the contract of 7 March 1542 that dissolved the Manuzio-Torresani-Barbarigo partnership, the books in storage in the joint space it called "*nobilium de Cha Foscari*" were divided proportionally among the Torresani and Manuzio heirs.⁵⁷ A later agreement of 1544 by the Manuzio and Torresani heirs divided into five lots holdings warehoused in the monastery of Santo Stefano.⁵⁸

We do not know how large the Giunti warehouse in Venice was when it was almost totally destroyed by fire in 1557, but we do know from the testament of Tommaso Giunti that the fire threatened to ruin the family business.⁵⁹ The Giunti firm's volume of business was so great that Filippo Giunti had been obliged to rent a number of warehouses in Florence, the first in November 1489, the second and third in 1493, and the fourth in 1497,⁶⁰ all before he himself had become a printer; the material these storage facilities contained would therefore have been book stock printed in Venice by Luc'Antonio Giunti. The Giunti firm eventually set up a system of distribution for its merchandise whose intricacy suggests that it was accompanied by an equally well articulated structure for the storage of books. This system would be followed by all the major merchants, with the result that over time storehouses in the firms' seats of production ceased to expand, as the firm's stock was increasingly stored by branches in peripheral cities.⁶¹

⁵⁵ For Benali's *supplica* to the Senate, see Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Terra*, reg. 26, f. 15r; Rossi, "Bazzecole bibliografiche," 53.

⁵⁶ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Procuratori di San Marco de Supra*, reg. 125, f. 11.

⁵⁷ Ester Pastorello, "Di Aldo Pio Manuzio: Testimonianze e documenti," *La Bibliofilia* 67 (1965): 188. See also Lowry's comments in his book *The World of Aldus Manutius*, 85.

⁵⁸ Pastorello, "Di Aldo Pio Manuzio," 188, 208–13. This involved a group of only some 250 books.

⁵⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, Not. Angelo da Canal, b. 210; published in Camerini, "Il testamento."

⁶⁰ Perini, "Editoria e società," 270; Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 132. The landlord was the Badia of Florence, from the account books of which Pettas retrieved the information cited. The monastery accepted payment not only in books but also in various other sorts of merchandise, such as paper and wax. In any event the rent could not have been very high, given that in one case a folio edition put out by the Giunti cost more than the rent: Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 136.

⁶¹ Another example drawn from the Giunti: in 1556 Juan de Junta owned a bookstore and a warehouse in Burgos (Spain) that contained 15,837 books: Pettas, *A Sixteenth-Century Spanish Bookstore*.

The Venetian bookmen soon found out how to manage a complex company organization that made it necessary to maintain an eye on at least three fronts: the production workshop (whether or not they themselves owned this facility), the place where their merchandise was deposited, and their Venice bookshops, their principal sales locations.⁶² It was not an easy task for a publisher to manage his commitments to the various segments of his operations. In 1569 Gabriele Giolito stated that he was so busy directing work in the printing shop, which was probably situated near his home in the neighborhood of San Giovanni Crisostomo, that for an entire month he had not been able to get to his bookshop at the sign of the Phoenix in the Rialto, near Sant'Apollinare.⁶³ The Manuzios had a printing shop in San Paterniano in calle della Stamperia and a bookshop in the Mercerie near the Berrettari bridge, first at the sign of the Anchor, then at the sign of a portrait of Aldo.⁶⁴ Over the course of time organization became even more complex, involving shuffling merchandise kept in various storehouses. Aldo Manuzio the Younger, for example, had two different warehouses in 1584, one of which was defined as *grande* and located "above the big bookshop" that contained books for sale, and a second, in Santo Stefano, devoted exclusively to the storage of stock from the printing shop.⁶⁵

In 1570, when the Inquisition, with the authorization of the Republic of Venice, began to make surprise visits in search of prohibited books, it had its focus firmly on publishers' warehouses and bookstores.⁶⁶ The first true mapping of these book deposits happened during those years and was carried out by an external authority with control and repression as its goal. It is from the records of the Inquisition that we know that Vincenzo Valgrisi and Francesco Ziletti, among others, had warehouses in the Benedictine monastery of Santi Giovanni e Paolo and that Giovanni Varisco and Ludovico Avanzi had theirs in the monastery of Santo

⁶² The two workplaces – the printing shop and the bookshop – were apt to be adjacent in smaller cities but from the beginning had usually been separate in Venice because of the particularly crowded commercial districts in that city. For example, Francesco della Fontana was *stampatore di libri apresso a Sancto Apostolo*, but his bookshop was in the Mercerie area: *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 64.

⁶³ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 323–25.

⁶⁴ Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies*, 68–69.

⁶⁵ See *Manuzio-Manassi 1574–1584*, f. 124 for the inventory of the bigger storehouse, and f. 136 for the inventory of the printing shop's warehouse.

⁶⁶ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 162–69; Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia 1520–1580* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1987), 346–47 lists twenty different inventories of books requisitioned from various booksellers between 1555 and 1587.

Stefano.⁶⁷ At the monastery of Santi Giovanni e Paolo a large warehouse used by many booksellers soon became a meeting place.⁶⁸ It is therefore evident that religious orders in Venice were full participants in the print business, not just as a cultural phenomenon but also as a commercial undertaking.⁶⁹

Space rented to the major booksellers provided a stable source of revenue. In 1564 the fathers of Santo Stefano rented out nine warehouses to booksellers. The first was assigned to Ludovico Avanzi and his brothers at the sign of the Golden Tree; the second to Federico Torresani; the third to Paolo dell'Aquila; the fourth and fifth to Michele Tramezino; the sixth to Andrea del Pozzo (Arrivabene), the seventh and eighth to Giovanni Varisco, and the ninth to Giordano Ziletti.⁷⁰ A later example is provided by the warehouse of Bernardo II Giunti, the contents of which were registered in an inventory of 1600, with later adjustments up to 1615.⁷¹ This vast warehouse was filled with his own editions and those of other publishers – Ciotti, Combi, de Franceschi, Giolito, Meietti, Somasco, and many others; its inventory records the prices of the editions in a detailed and functional system of classification.⁷²

⁶⁷ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Savi all'eresia (Santo Ufficio)*, b. 14: *Contra Vincentium Vadrissium [Valgrissium] et nonnullos alios venditores libros prohibitos*, 1570.

⁶⁸ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 5.

⁶⁹ The example of Alberto Castello is indicative of such commercial involvement. A Dominican of the monastery of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Castello managed to earn four hundred ducats by collaborating with many Venetian publishers of the first half of the Cinquecento – Lazzaro Soardi, Luc'Antonio Giunti, Benedetto Fontana, Bernardino Stagnino, and Melchiorre Sessa – in the sector composed of liturgical texts and the Latin Bible: Daniela Fattori, "Frate Alberto da Castello, un domenicano in tipografia," *La Bibliofilia* 109 (2007): 143–68.

⁷⁰ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Soprintendenti alle Decime del Clero*, b. 32, 2 October 1564.

⁷¹ The inventory of Bernardo II Giunti's books, dated 1 March 1600, is now in the Ahmanson-Murphy Collection of the Library of the University of California at Los Angeles: Martin Lowry, *Book Prices in Renaissance Venice: The Stockbook of Bernardo Giunti* (Los Angeles: Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California, 1991). The manuscript (313 ff., 324 x 209 mm) was sold in England by the bookseller Molini of Florence in the early years of the nineteenth century: Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*, 2:11, n. 1. Renouard gives a brief note on it at the end of the bibliography of the Giunti that he added to the third edition of his *Annales de l'imprimerie des Alde* (1834). Martin Lowry offers a first reading of this document as part of the history of prices of the Aldines in the sixteenth century. Still, because of the many stratifications in its listings, it is impossible to get from the inventory a total for the number of books the Giunti owned or managed, as Martin Lowry graciously communicated to me.

⁷² Books are classified under the headings Humanities, Philosophy, Theology, Medicine and Astrology, Law, Greek and Hebrew books, and red and black books (liturgy), and within each classification the books were subdivided alphabetically and by format. There followed an index by place of publication: books printed in Venice in the vernacular; books

The history of the various Giunti warehouses and of how they passed from one generation to the other remains to be written. It is a complex tale: at various moments during their activities in both Florence and Venice, the Giunti stored materials and books belonging to other firms, and they also had many business associations, including transnational connections with their various branches. In Florence, for example, they took over books and materials from Lorenzo Torrentino.⁷³

The Venetian warehouse eventually included the books of the Manuzio firm. Francesca Lucrezia (usually called just Francesca), Tommaso I Giunti's illegitimate daughter, married Aldo Manuzio the Younger.⁷⁴ This marriage signaled not only the disappearance of the Manuzio firm, absorbed by the Giunti, but also a fusion of their stock. After the death of Aldo the Younger (from whom she was already divorced), Francesca Giunti Manuzio asked for the restitution of her dowry. To this end all Manuzio possessions in Venice were inventoried in 1597. In addition to various other assets, approximately eighteen thousand books were inventoried as part of the effort to determine goods to the value of 2,400 ducats, the dowry sum that was to be returned. Aldo the Younger's heirs were able to salvage only his private library, which was sold off book by book.⁷⁵

Book Warehouses and Paper Supply

Although survival rates are low and comparability limited, the records of book warehousing permit a few cautious if problematic conclusions. First, it cannot be denied that publishers were the first operators within the world of books to need to be able to store great quantities of volumes, in large part but not exclusively in loose sheets. A publisher of middling

of Rome and Florence; books printed in Germany; diverse printers; diverse cities of Italy; books of Spain.

⁷³ So stated by Filippo and Jacopo Giunti in a petition, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Mediceo del Principato*, f. 314, ins. III.

⁷⁴ Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*, 2:207. Francesca Pitacco, "La repromissione di dote di Francesca Lucrezia Giunti e la bottega veneziana di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane," in *Intorno al Polifilo*, ed. Alessandro Scarsella. Special issue of *Miscellanea Marciana* 16 (2004): 217–38. According to the will of Tommaso I Giunti, Francesca had a dowry of four thousand ducats but Paolo Manuzio, in a letter to his son Aldo of 15 May 1568, where this marriage was proposed for the first time, speaks of a dowry of five thousand ducats (Manuzio, *Lettere*, 123–24). Moreover, Franceschina, Tommaso II Giunti's illegitimate daughter, married Niccolò Manassi, the manager of the Manuzios' bookshops in Venice.

⁷⁵ Alfredo Serrai, *La biblioteca di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane* (Milan: Bonnard, 2007).

LE GUERRE DI NAPOLI DI
GIOVAN GIOVIANO
PONTANO,
NOVAMENTE DI LATINO
IN LINGVA ITALIA-
NA TRADOTTE.



In Venetia, Nel M. D. XXXXIIII.
Con Priuilegio del Sommo Pontefice Paulo III.
& dello Illustrissi, Senato Veneto, per anni diece.

Fig. 4.3. Title page of Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, *Le guerre di Napoli*. Venice: Michele Tramezino, 1544; 8°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

standing such as the Milanese Niccolò Gorgonzola kept eighty thousand books in a warehouse, and some of the major Venetian publishers would have had many more. Knowing that after twenty years of activity, Michele Tramezino owned thirty thousand books that he had published and that after only nine months of activity, the Codecà-Benali partnership had eleven thousand books, we can begin to conjecture about the total figure for books available in Venice in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. When we speak of eleven thousand, thirty thousand, or eighty thousand books, we do so in reference to a society that was seeing such book quantities for the first time. We have to wait until the end of the sixteenth century for the emergence of large private libraries with holdings of some ten

thousand books,⁷⁶ at a time when institutional libraries still counted their books only in a few tens of thousands.⁷⁷

The first problem facing publishers was how to arrange books in storage and how to ensure they could be retrieved efficiently. As time passed and the number of books held in shops grew, so too did the challenges of conservation, especially in view of the fact that a book in storage still had to be bound – that is, completed, or in the terminology of the times, *compito* – at some distance from its place of production or storage. The sale of loose sheets was the rule in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and it permitted a number of typical devices for storage management, such as re-issuing copies with the date or title page changed. Although they did not go as far as to determine a final choice of binding for the client, publishers turned increasingly to forms of economical binding that held the gatherings in the correct order and protected them during transport.⁷⁸ For this reason their warehouses began to include a certain number of books *in corezze*. *Corezze* were thin strips of leather used to bind the backs of unbound gatherings. This represented a new strategy for stock management but not an investment in publishers' bindings; sewn volumes with such straps of leather or cord were inventoried at the same price as volumes in loose sheets.⁷⁹ The point of the operation was to conserve volumes in the warehouse and in the shop and to facilitate the application

⁷⁶ Angela Nuovo, "Private Libraries in Sixteenth-Century Italy," in *Early Printed Books as Material Objects: Proceedings of the Conference Organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Munich, 19–21 August 2009*, ed. Bettina Wagner and Marcia Reed (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 235–38.

⁷⁷ The largest library in Italy, the Biblioteca Vaticana, is said to have reached twenty-two thousand volumes only in the age of Sixtus V (1585–90): Muzio Pansa, *Della libreria Vaticana, ragionamenti* (Rome: Giovanni Martinelli, 1590), 139.

⁷⁸ When a book was destined for the local market, the binding with which it appeared on sale might have been chosen by the producer: Nicholas Pickwoad, "Onward and Downward: How Binders Coped with the Printing Press before 1800," in *A Millennium of the Book: Production, Design & Illustration in Manuscript & Print, 900–1900*, ed. Robin Meyers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 1994), 96, n. 7. See also Paul Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings 400–1600* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library; Oxford University Press, 1979), 108–12. Bound books in bookshops, which we might term freshly printed, should not be confused with the bound copies found in the shops of *cartolai*, stationers, and booksellers who were not printers, which were often quite a few years old and as we shall see, might be second-hand books.

⁷⁹ Emilio Russo, "Il mercato dei classici: La letteratura italiana nella bottega di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane," *Nuovi Annali della Scuola speciale per archivisti e bibliotecari* 15 (2001): 21–53 for the warehouse and the shop of Aldo Manuzio the Younger, esp. p. 43, where Russo states that the price did not vary between unbound books and books *in corezze*. The price varied only after a binding was applied.

of a binding. It did not usually include the more costly steps of cutting the pages and applying a cover.⁸⁰ The greater part of the books in the warehouse of Aldo Manuzio the Younger and Niccolò Manassi inventoried in 1574 were in loose gatherings, but some were already semi-finished and were listed on a scale of increasing work as books “folded and trimmed” (*piegati et tondati*), as books “folded and in part *in corezze*,” and in a very small number, as “finished books” (*legati compiti*).⁸¹

Publishers were pioneers in the conservation of sizeable numbers of books in an orderly way, and it would be interesting to know exactly

R I M E DEL COMMENDATORE

A N N I B A L C A R O .

Col Priuilegio di N. S. PP. PIO V.
Et dell' Illustrissima Signoria
di VENETIA.



IN VENETIA.

Appresso ALDO MANVTIO.

M D LXIX.

Fig. 4.4. Title page of Annibal Caro, *Rime*. Venice: Aldo Manuzio the Younger, 1569; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

⁸⁰ For pictures of books *in corezze*, see Pickwoad, “Onward and Downward” and Frederick A. Bearman, Nati H. Krivatsy, and J. Franklin Mowery, *Fine and Historic Bookbindings from the Folger Shakespeare Library* (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1992), 24–25, 32–33, no. 1:8.

⁸¹ Russo, “Il mercato dei classici,” 24–25, 45.

how they did so, given that the management of warehouses was one of the thorniest problems in any commercial activity. Some form of classification and cataloguing had to be used. These methods relied on bibliographical skills carried over from the age of the manuscript, but for the first time this expertise was exercised in non-erudite circles, amongst those involved in economic activities. These techniques necessarily became widespread, just as technological improvements were also being disseminated.

Bookmen began to learn how to manage the warehouses that were both a product of and integral to their various activities. They began to consider the warehouse the entrepreneurial center and commercial capital of their activities. That capital could enable a business to survive, often remaining within a family for generation after generation.⁸² Undoubtedly, a warehouse was an essential ingredient for any enterprise that needed to ensure that its sales outlets would be supplied steadily and speedily. That warehoused stock represented the better part of the firm's capital is shown by the fact that very often when a commercial partnership was established, the share that each stockholder put up was expressed in bales of books, accompanied by a monetary valuation. For example, in 1574 when Aldo Manuzio the Younger drew up an agreement with Niccolò Manassi for the management of Manuzio's bookshop and print shop in Venice, Manuzio put up the entire capital investment, consisting of 294 bales of books, for a value (on which both parties agreed) of 3,528 ducats.⁸³

Bookmen's warehouses also contained impressive amounts of printing paper. Continuous print activity made necessary large stocks of paper rather than occasional replenishment. The aim of several contracts between printers and paper merchants that have come down to us was to ensure a supply of paper adequate for the printing of a particular edition.⁸⁴ Thanks to advance payment, the printer was assured (at least in

⁸² To cite several examples: in his testament, bookman Benedetto Fontana ordered his designated successors to carry on the sale of books: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, Not. Girolamo Bossis, b. 51, test. 91: 23.III 1501; in his testament (5 November 1527), the printer Giacomo Penzio named as his heir his nephew Girolamo, recommending that he continue to carry on the business because all his holding were books: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, Not. Giovan Maria Cavagnis, b. 218, test. 222; in his testament (1540), the bookman Bernardino Stagnino ordered his heirs to carry on "the trade of books" as long as possible: Pillinini, *Bernardino Stagnino*, 109–10.

⁸³ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Rocco Benedetti, b. 443, ff. 52r–56v, 15 January 1577: Emilio Russo, "Un contratto nel registro di bottega di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane," *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia* 69 (1999): 14–16.

⁸⁴ Mattozzi, "Le cartiere," 121–25.

theory) that he would have sufficient raw material, provided that he took care to sign the agreement many months before the printing operation began. Even then, contentious outcomes show that the existence of such a contract was not a guarantee of either timely delivery or satisfactory paper quality.⁸⁵

Paradoxically given their very large print production, we have very few contracts and little information on the ways in which the major Venetian publishers procured their paper. One cautious interpretation of that scarcity points out that many of the most important bookmen in Venice came from places where paper was produced, in particular the area around Toscolano Maderno and the Brescian Riviera district of Lake Garda.⁸⁶ As wholesale paper dealers, these bookmen might be free of the problems of partial or short-term supply; others sold both paper and books, that is, sheets both white and "black." The paper merchants would have been to some extent forced to enter the book market, for it was customary for payment for one type of good to be received in the form of other merchandise. Blank paper could be exchanged for printed paper at a rate of two to one. Paper dealers might also be paid in rags.⁸⁷ And paper merchants and publishers pursued matrimonial alliances that would assure a constant supply of good-quality paper for the presses.

Large-scale production required warehoused paper that was ready to print and easily available. The inventory of Gabriele Giolito's goods drawn up in 1550 mentions a sizeable quantity of "diverse white paper for printing" valued at three hundred ducats.⁸⁸ In 1566 Paolo Manuzio's warehouse

⁸⁵ Kevin Stevens and Paul Gehl, "Giovanni Battista Bosso and the Paper Trade in Late Sixteenth-Century Milan," *La Bibliofilia* 96 (1994): 46–47.

⁸⁶ See the volumes *Cartai e stampatori a Toscolano: Vicende, uomini, paesaggi di una tradizione produttiva*, ed. Carlo Simoni (Brescia: Grafo, 1995); Ennio Sandal, "Folli da papir" e 'merchantia de libri': Il caso della Riviera di Salò, in *Il libro nell'Italia del Rinascimento*, ed. Angela Nuovo and Ennio Sandal (Brescia: Grafo-Marchi Group, 1998), 163–95; and *Mulini da carta: La cartiere dell'alto Garda: Tini e torchi fra Trento e Venezia*, ed. Mauro Grazioli, Ivo Mattozzi, and Ennio Sandal (Verona: Cartiere Fedrigoni, 2001). Antonio Moretto, a highly successful Brescian publisher and bookseller in Venice, furnished paper to the other printing shops; see Daniela Fattori, "Democrito da Terracina e la stampa delle *Enneades* di Marco Antonio Sabellico," *La Bibliofilia* 105 (2003): 40–41; Osmond and Sandal, "La bottega del libraio," 235. Among the most important paper merchant-printers were the Danza family (see Leonardo Mazzoldi, *Filigrane di cartiere bresciane*, 2 vols. [Brescia: Ateneo di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1990–91] and Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 362–64); the Paganini family (see Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino*), and the Colosini family.

⁸⁷ The publisher Barezzi contracted in 1603 for the payment of a debt of nine hundred ducats to Ascanio Colosini in rags, to be transported from Cremona to Desenzano on Lake Garda: Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 552–54.

⁸⁸ *Giolito 1550*, 667.

in Rome contained not only seventy-nine bales of printed books but also twenty-nine bales of “royal [large] white paper, medium, and small.”⁸⁹

The history of book production is also the history of paper production, but the latter is still in large part to be written and we have little sense of the dynamics and organization of the paper industry, with all its operators and its intermediaries who were the printers’ usual interlocutors.⁹⁰ We need to know more about the many phases that lie between production and utilization – assembly, transport, warehousing, for example. Recent studies have clarified that how paper was stocked affected the way that watermarks appear in printed books today.⁹¹ We know that one early edition could contain sheets from different lots of paper, which may well be explained by the fact that a limited stock of paper purchased from a wholesaler with the production of a single edition in mind might have been made up of sheets that came from different vats and bore different watermarks. Different papers would have been mixed together not by the printer or the wholesaler but by the producer of the paper. This situation was not an unorganized response to the pressures of demand for paper, but the result of an elaborate system for the production and commercialization of paper that had been conceived precisely in order to furnish the consumer with a product of homogeneous quality.⁹²

We must not underestimate the role of stationers who sold used paper in urban areas. Recent studies of Milan in the age of the Counter-Reformation have ascertained that such vendors usually sold some sorts of printed books (grammar texts in particular) together with blank paper, registers, music paper, and various objects for writing, such as pens and ink.⁹³ Stationers were capable of stocking notable quantities of paper. Giovan Battista Sirtori, for example, had available in his shop in Milan at

⁸⁹ “Carta bianca reale mezzana et piccola”: Barberi, *Paolo Manuzio*, 175–76.

⁹⁰ For some initial proposals, see Mattozzi, “Le cartiere.”

⁹¹ See Paola Busonero et al., “L’utilisation du papier dans le livre italien à la fin du Moyen Age,” in *Ancient and Medieval Book Materials and Techniques*, ed. Marilena Maniaci and Paola F. Munafò, 2 vols. (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1993), 1:395–450. See also the full and complex investigation in Ezio Ornato et al., *La carta occidentale nel tardo Medioevo*. 2 vols. (Rome: Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro, 2001), 1:139–46, which discusses the manufacture of paper, the working cycle, the structure of the market, and systems for supplying printers. The study of the folded paper in a group of forty Venetian incunabula chosen as representative of the printing production of the Serenissima has produced extremely interesting results: about a thousand types of watermark in these books were never registered in the available repertories: Ornato, *La carta occidentale*, 1:136.

⁹² Ornato, *La carta occidentale*, vol. 2, esp. chap. 6.

⁹³ Stevens and Gehl, “Giovanni Battista Bosso.”

the end of the sixteenth century more than 1,300 reams of blank paper, for a total of over 650,000 sheets of highly variable quality.⁹⁴ His was not an isolated case, even in its remarkable scale, given that in 1589 another stationer, Giovanni Antonio Opicini, had in his shop more than eight hundred reams of paper of various sizes and uses, or around 400,000 sheets.⁹⁵ Large-scale retail and wholesale stationers, much like bookmen and other contemporary urban artisans,⁹⁶ must have known for some time how to manage large warehouses.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 75–90. Sirtori had a sizeable business: “Sirtori reveals himself as a major player in the distribution of paper to Milanese institutional consumers. His paper stocks are valued at over L. 6,500, better than two thirds of the total value of his inventory and shop goods”: *ibid.*, 58.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 49.

⁹⁶ There is a possible parallel with the production of lutes. At his death in 1552, the shop of Luca Maler, a lute maker in Bologna, contained 638 large lutes, 366 small lutes, 15 medium-sized lutes, and 107 lutes of unspecified size. He also had 1,300 soundboards ready for use: Sandro Pasqual and Roberto Regazzi, *Le radici del successo della liuteria a Bologna: Storia della liuteria classica bolognese e dei liutai bolognesi in età moderna a cui si aggiunge un censimento generale dei liutai attivi in città dal 1496 al 1998* (Bologna: Florenus, 1998), 47.

CHAPTER FIVE

MARKS AND BRANCHES

All societies make extensive use of symbols in communications. The symbols connected with objects in order to identify and distinguish their provenance or their proprietor are called marks and serve in a variety of circumstances. They may, for example, have religious or cultic valence or appear in signs or on coats of arms. In antiquity, the mark was one of the most widespread means of indicating and authenticating origin. As early as the ancient Romans, marks were used not only as a sign of ownership – cattle were, for example, marked – but also for commercial purposes, as in the *vasa fictilia*. There is even evidence of counterfeit marks. During the Middle Ages distinctive signs took on specific functions. Before the use of official numbering became common, marks were incised on houses near the doorway; they were written on merchandise entrusted to shippers; they were cited as proof of ownership of goods. Such marks can be categorized as signs, indications of inspection, guarantees, marks of origin, and commercial marks. All marks were intended to express a particular connection between a product or activity and a given person or association that had chosen this way to state its identity and distinguish itself from other individuals or groups.¹

In common law, the chief reference was the treatise *De insignis, et armis* (1355) of Bartolo da Sassoferrato, which treated the problem of the transmission of marks in particular depth. For Bartolo da Sassoferrato the purpose of the mark was primarily to defend the producer by protecting him from competition, but it also protected the consumer from being deceived, enabling him to place his trust in a product that bore a certain mark.² The principle that a mark was unique and exclusive

¹ Frank I. Schechter, *The Historical Foundations of the Law Relating to Trademarks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925); Maria Ada Benedetto, "Marchio: Storia," in *Enciclopedia del diritto* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1958–93), 25:577–87; Remo Franceschelli, *Trattato di diritto industriale: Parte generale*. 2 vols. (Milan: Giuffrè, 1960).

² Osvaldo Cavallar, Susanne Degenring, and Julius Kirshner, *A Grammar of Signs: Bartolo da Sassoferrato's Tract on Insignia and Coats of Arms* (Berkeley: Robbins Collection, University of California at Berkeley, 1994). For a vast repertoire of merchants' marks, see Elena Cecchi Aste, *Di mio nome e segno: Marche di mercanti nel carteggio Datini* (secc. XIV–XV) (Prato: Istituto di studi storici postali, 2010).

meant that fraudulent use of that mark on the part of others needed to be prohibited.³

When it came to books, the insignia and the mark were often interchangeable, but their original functions had not been identical. The insignia was used as a means of locating, choosing, and distinguishing one shop among others in a certain location, and it indicated that a certain activity took place where it was exhibited. The mark was, above all, a way to identify the products of the master of the shop and the shop itself. It guaranteed the quality of a product for which the master was accountable. The mark arose within a commercial system of limited dimensions, one that was corporative and urban, and only gradually began to fulfill a different function, spurred on by commercial or competitive concerns, whereby it was indicative of the quality of the product. In doing so, the mark became a subject of the purchaser's demand within the framework of choice that market conditions had now made possible. The mark established a link with the public, especially for businesses that did not enter into direct contact with the buying public and would otherwise be unable to inform that public of their existence and presence on the market. The mark was transformed from a vehicle that carried the maker's responsibility for the quality of the product into a means of attracting potential customers.

From the statutes of medieval Italian communes we can deduce that there were two types of mark, one obligatory and one optional. The obligatory individual mark was imposed by statute or by the competent authority in order that the responsible party might be located should the merchandise prove to be defective. Such regulation pertained to certain types of merchandise over which it was in the public interest to establish efficacious surveillance. In many Italian cities a mark was obligatory on textiles and arms, among other products. In 1389 the city authorities in Bologna made another individual mark obligatory: a statute imposed the use of the watermark and regulated its application. The statute specifically stated that falsification of a watermark was a serious crime that would lead to a fine and the destruction of the counterfeit merchandise.⁴

The commercial, or competitive, mark was individual and optional – that is, it was not required by a guild or any other authority but adopted

³ The first treatise on merchandising to absorb even part of the juridical debate on the *lex mercatoria* is Benvenuto Stracca, *De mercatura, seu mercatore tractatus* (Venice: P. Manuzio, 1553, *Edit* 16, CNCE 27827).

⁴ Andrea F. Gasparinetti, "Documenti inediti sulla fabbricazione della carta nell'Emilia," *Rivista Industria della carta* (1963): 5–39; Giorgio Montecchi, *Il libro nel Rinascimento: Saggi di bibliologia* (Milan: La Storia, 1994), 131–53.

voluntarily. Although this type of mark connected the product with a given source, this was not its primary function. It expressed the artisan's pride in his work, to which he believed he had contributed certain qualities or technical characteristics that he hoped would meet with favor among potential purchasers. The producer wanted his client to know that he could trust this sign and that every product so marked would have the same specific characteristics. The mark thus served to locate a product, distinguishing it from others also offered for sale, among which customers could choose. In light of competition and buyer choice the mark became one means of channeling customer demand. Marks of this sort are mentioned in records as early as the 1358 statutes of the merchants of the city of Cremona.⁵ With the advent of printing, however, the commercial mark would come to be disseminated more widely.

Commerce in books usually, though not necessarily, did not involve the direct relationship between producer and consumer that was typical of urban products. Goods bearing a mark could be found with increasing frequency and within a growing geographical area. When goods were offered for sale far from their place of production, only the mark permitted a buyer to establish a connection with an earlier product or to attribute to this acquisition the high quality and accuracy associated with a specific producer. This function of the mark clarifies the difference between insignia and marks: the former were tied to a system and a logic of territorial reference from which the latter were completely detached. The use of marks in books proved so successful in this period that the mark itself developed further, taking on new aspects in which aesthetic taste and the symbolic nature of the *signum* joined with economic and commercial functionality.

Marks in Printed Books

In the world of the book, marks appeared first in the paper used. What is traditionally considered the oldest watermark was discovered by Charles Moïse Briquet and is in the shape of a cross; at times the initials of one or more persons would also be included. This watermark is found on paper used for documents in Bologna around 1282.⁶ The cross remained for a

⁵ Ugo Gualazzini, *I mercanti di Cremona 1183–1260–1927: Cenni storici sulla loro organizzazione* (Cremona: Consiglio provinciale dell'economia, 1928).

⁶ Charles Moïse Briquet, *Les filigranes: Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1281 jusqu'en 1600* (Paris: A. Picard & fils, 1907; reprint, New York: Hacker Art Books, 1966), esp. pp. 8–14 and no. 5410.

RVBRICA de Marchis

Via q̄ plures mercatores utētes ad portus p̄ stratas: & ad alias ciuitates siue puintias. ac cōducentes petias pignolatorum & aliorū laborerios: bombicis ultra primū Bullū: quod faciūt sup petiis pignolatorū: & aliorū laborerios: Bōbicis: utuntur certis marchis quas faciūt sup petiis pignolatorū: & aliorū laborerios: q̄ extra ipsas petias: statutū & ordinatū est q̄ quicūq; mercator: seu societas utēs uel uti uolens talibus Marchis: teneatur & debeat ipsas Marchas īscriptis dare: & scribi & designari facere in libro suprascripto: penes nomē illius mercatoris seu societatis: aliter uti non possit ipsis marchis: Et q̄ nullus mercator siue societas uti possit Marchis alienis Et si reperiretur aliquem uti Marcha alterius mercatoris: uel societatis: absq; eius spetiali licencia & uoluntate siue similem Marchā facere illi quā faceret alius mercator: Et questio inter eos uerteretur in dictā Marcha: q̄ huiusmodi questionem suprascripti Consules & electi siue maior pars ipsorum cognoscere & terminare possit: & debeant: & condemnare: & efectualiter facere: q̄ ille qui minori tēpore usus fuerit dicta Marcha: q̄ ipsa Marcha ulterius non utatur: & q̄ heredes dictorum talium Mercatorum uti possint Bullis Marchis: & signalibus ipsorum Mercatorum predecessorum suorum: nec aliq; alius mercator: siue societas: audeat uel presumat uti ipsis Bullis Marchis uel signalibus: sine spetiali licentia predictorū heredum: & quilibet mercator siue societas: & quelibet alia persona qui uel que predictis uel alicui predictorum contrafecerit: incidat & Incurrat pœnam librarum uigintiquinq; imper. cuius pœne medietas perueniat in Mercadandiam Cremonā, & alia medietas in accusatorem.

Fig. 5.1. Registration of merchants' marks as established in the *Statuta mercatorum Cremonae*. Brescia: Bonino de Bonini, 1485, f. 1^v; P^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Statale, Cremona.

long time the basic form of the commercial mark in Italy. Its essential graphic motif was perhaps derived from the frequent addition in the medieval period of a cross to a signature or a name written by a notary, either in invocation of the divine or as a symbol of a sworn statement.

Marks in printed books are the most conspicuous example of free, commercial, and competition-based marks, and they grew in quantity and quality more greatly and endured longer than in any other form of merchandise. The conservation rate for marked books is also higher than for any other marked products.

The bookmen's mark, or device, arose from the confluence of two traditions aimed at rendering personal identity visible – heraldry and the

mercantile *signum*. Heraldry furnished an archetype for the very first device in a printed book, that adopted by Johann Fust and Peter Schöffer in 1457.⁷ This mark shows two shields hanging from a branch. It refers to the heraldic system whereby a knight in a tournament could be identified by the objects or symbols depicted on his coat of arms, so that the shield, hung in public view, usually from a tree branch, became a quintessential means of identification.⁸ Outside Italy this form was the predominant figuration for publishers' marks.⁹ Broadly diffused in Germany and France, this device often depicted an entire tree with a shield hanging from it and, to either side, two men, women, animals (real or imaginary), or anthropomorphic figures evidently derived from the real people who paraded beside the shield bearing a coat of arms in a tournament or a procession.

The merchant's mark or the mark of a warehouse was made up of a simple monogram, at times inscribed within a circle and at times surmounted by one or more crosses. This mark provided a successful archetype for the earliest Italian printer-publishers, who adopted it either alone or in conjunction with the first simple images.¹⁰

The principle that every mark must be sufficiently different from others used in the same trade such that they could not be confused was soon backed by law in France, where it was established in 1539 that master printers and booksellers could not take one another's marks and that

⁷ ISTC ip01036000.

⁸ On Schöffer's mark, see Ferdinand Geldner, "Das Fust-Schöfferesche Signet und das Schöfferesche Handzeichen," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 1 (1958): 171–74; Heinrich Grimm, "Das vermeintliche Allianz-signet Fust-Schöffer und seine Schildinhalte," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 37 (1962): 446–55; Heinrich Grimm, *Deutsche Buchdruckersignete des 16. Jahrhunderts: Geschichte, Sinngehalt und Gestaltung kleiner Kulturdokumente* (Wiesbaden: Pressler, 1965), 15–18. For a collection of Italian shields, see Gastone Cambin, *Le rotelle milanesi bottino della battaglia di Giornico 1478: Stemmi, imprese, insegne: Die Mailänder Rundschilde Beute aus der Schlacht bei Giornico 1478: Wappen, Sinnbilder, Zeichen* (Fribourg: Società Svizzera di Araldica, 1987).

⁹ Aside from James Moran, *Heraldic Influence on Early Printers' Devices* (Leeds: Elmete, 1978) and Peter Davidson, *The Vocal Forest: A Study of the Context of Three Low Countries' Printers' Devices of the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Academic Press, 1996), 41–48 (the chapter "Trees as Printers' Marks"), see Matthieu Desachy, ed., *L'Héraldique et le livre* (Paris: Somogy, 2002) for the complex relationship between heraldry and the book. The best study of marks in books remains Grimm, *Deutsche Buchdruckersignete*, even if the situation in Germany that he describes differs on several points from the tradition, nature, and use of Italian marks.

¹⁰ Examples include the devises of the company formed by Johannes de Colonia and Nicolaus Jenson (without initials) and those of Matteo Codecà and Ottaviano Scoto (with initials).

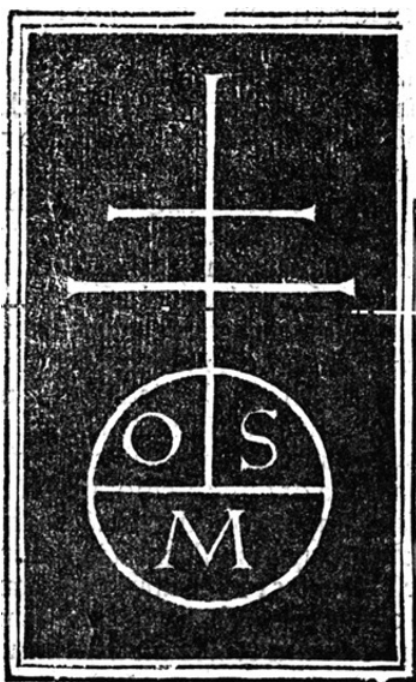


Fig. 5.2. Scoto's mark, 1495. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

each of them must have his own distinctive mark.¹¹ Although marks may appear to have had a life of their own, their origins are consistently to be found in insignia, which meant that they reflected the sign hanging in front of the bookseller-publisher's shop. Vincenzo Valgrisi chose the head of Erasmus as his devise. Most scholars have seen in this selection a free and highly significant decision to connect with the name of Erasmus of Rotterdam. On the contrary, however, the head of Erasmus appeared on a sign connected with an already successful shop, and to have used a different form would have disoriented a consolidated customer base. In 1559, however, the Holy Office did order the image removed from the shop's sign.

Marks could change and every bookman might have one or more variants of the same basic type: this was true of the Manuzio, Giunti,

¹¹ Bruno Neveu, "Imprimeurs et libraires au confessionnal," in *Le livre et l'historien: Études offertes en l'honneur du professeur Henri-Jean Martin*, ed. Frédéric Barbier et al. (Geneva: Droz, 1997), 446.

and Giolito families, whose long-lasting firms engaged in several sorts of activity. A variant had a specific purpose, used, for example, to signify a partnership.¹² It was integral to the mark as used with books that it could devolve to a widow who continued the business or to minor children or could be ceded with the business.

All of these features by no means limited the nature of the mark as a meaningful form of self-representation for the personality of the bookman who used it. The realities of the market challenged the producer to forge an eloquent and evocative image of himself as a means of furthering the reputation of his products and reinforcing their worth in the market. A mark might retain a commercial value for far longer than was likely envisaged by the person who had first adopted it as a means of promoting his products or increasing his profits.¹³

Those who produced books were well aware of the purposes of signs and marks. The Bolognese publisher Benedetto di Ettore invited his customers to check for his mark on title pages so as to avoid low-quality imitations.¹⁴ He stressed the competitive function of this sign on a title page. Imitation and outright counterfeiting of publishers' marks occurred during this period, but there was a lively awareness that fundamentally, the use of marks was a genuine subjective right that rendered a counterfeit illicit. The Manuzio firm, the first to demonstrate a broad understanding

¹² As in the case of Matteo Codecà (Capcasa). His editions at times bore his printer's and publisher's mark (a circle surmounted by a cross and the initials *MC P*, as Codecà was a native of Parma); at other times they reflected his association with Bernardino Benali (circle and cross and the initials of their two names, *M* and *B*); and at still other times only the marks of the publishers for whom he did the printing work (specifically the marks of Luc'Antonio Giunti, Girolamo Biondo, and Ottaviano Scoto). It was easy to add new elements such as initials to one's own mark when working with others, while printers' marks tended to disappear in favor of publishers' marks, thus confirming a valence that was more related to commerce than to production.

¹³ T.F. Dibdin, for example, cites the opinion of a famous bibliophile of the early nineteenth century, Thomas Dampier, who states about the Sessa firm's device: "Whenever you see a book with a cat and a mouse in the frontispiece, seize upon it: for the chances are as three to four that it will be found both curious and valuable": Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *The Bibliographical Decameron*. 3 vols. (London: Bulmer & Co., Shakespeare Press, 1817), 2:232. See Paul Gehl, "Mancha uno alfabeto intero': Recording Defective Book Shipments in Counter-Reformation Florence," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 93, no. 3 (1999): 316–58 for examples of the long-lasting affirmation of the distinctive role of the mark in the book trade.

¹⁴ In the preface to a Suetonius with commentary by Beroaldo that he published in 1506 Benedetto states: "Emptor, attende. Quando emere vis libros formatos in officina mea excussoria, inspice signum quod in liminari pagina est" (Buyer, pay attention. When you want to buy books produced in my print shop, look at the sign on the title page): Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 388.

of its legal prerogatives, complained on several occasions of wrongful reprinting of its books and even published a protest against the counterfeiting of its famous mark.¹⁵ The value of the device of the Anchor and Dolphin was acknowledged and quantifiable, given that in 1568 Paolo Manuzio conceded its use to Domenico Basa for a monthly fee of twenty gold scudi.¹⁶

Evidence of the registration of bookmen's marks in Venice goes back to the 1560s, when they were recorded, along with the marks of other

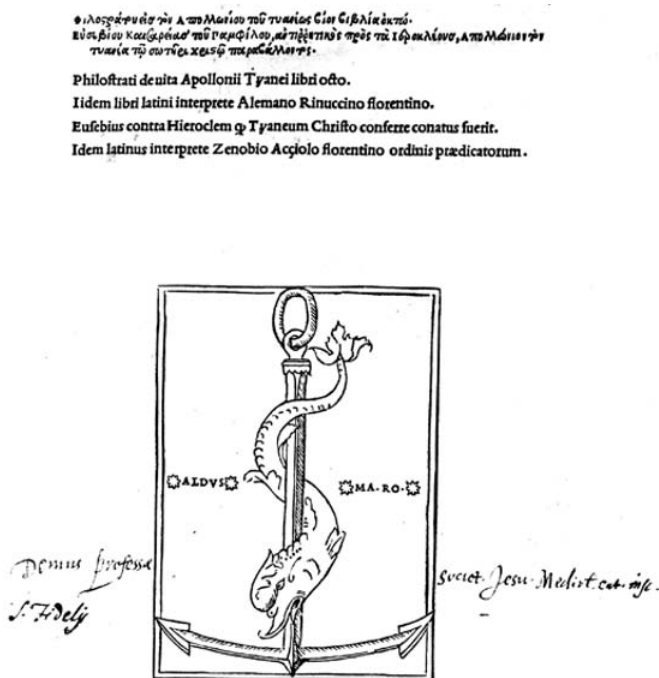


Fig. 5.3. The Anchor and Dolphin, mark of Aldo Manuzio, 1502. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

¹⁵ In the preface to the edition of Livy's *Decades* of 1518, Francesco Torresani denounced the counterfeiting of the mark, also pointing to a trivial error in its realization, as the dolphin was reversed: "The head of the dolphin is turned to the left, whereas that of ours is well known to be turned to the right": Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola*, 142–43; Renouard, *Annales*, 413–14.

¹⁶ Manuzio, *Lettere*, letters XX, XXI, XXIII–XXV.

artisans, with the magistracy of the *Giustizia Vecchia*.¹⁷ We can gather from that register that every bookman could have more than one sign or mark, that the shop's business was identified with the mark, and that the mark could be ceded along with the business. Operators were probably authorized to use more than one mark because it was customary for a single merchant to be involved in diverse activities. Additionally, a publisher who wanted to move into the production of religious books evidently might have felt it advisable to register a new mark with a sacred content if he held title to a mark that did not appear to be in accord with such material. Every mark holder watched out for imitations.¹⁸ In short, the mark had become a legally enforceable means of supporting commerce and warding off competition – the characteristics of a trademark.

In spite of this legal reality, no trace remains in Venice of any legal disposition regulating marks and signs. There is, however, a sizeable Italian tradition, beginning in the communal period, of public protection, city by city and by means of registration, of artisans' marks that note their owners' activities.¹⁹ In Cremona, registration was obligatory, and the registers have come down to us, telling us that many marks and signs were registered between 1395 and 1626.²⁰ The long series of signs registered in Cremona is particularly revealing because it is not limited, as is the case with the marks in the Venetian register, to a verbal description, but includes an attached drawing or woodcut illustration of the original mark. None of the merchants or artisans listed in the Cremona register had anything to do with the world of books, but we can recognize the success of publishers' marks from their use in selling textiles, fustian, or spices. Some marks, faithfully depicted in the register, were associated with notable success: among these were the Manuzio Anchor and Dolphin, the Giolito Phoenix, the Arrivabene Well, and the Plantin Compass. The motto of the

¹⁷ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Giustizia vecchia*, b. 49, reg. 79. This is the only remaining material in a series of which the rest is lost. It contains the devices and signs of a number of economic operators in Venice, among them thirty-one bookmen. Some of the signs registered had already been in use for decades: Giacomo Moro, "Insegne librerie e marche tipografiche in un registro veneziano del '500," *La Bibliofilia* 91 (1989): 51–80. On the *Giustizia Vecchia*, see James E. Shaw, *The Justice of Venice: Authorities and Liberties in the Urban Economy, 1550–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁸ Moro, "Insegne librerie," 73–78.

¹⁹ Franceschelli, *Trattato*, 230–34.

²⁰ Carla Almansi Sabbioneta, *Marchi ed insegne degli antichi mercanti cremonesi, 1395–1626* (Cremona: Cremona Books, 2003). For other sorts of reuse of devices, see Paolo Veneziani, "Riutilizzo di marche tipografiche," *Quaderni della Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma* 8 (2000): 5–23.

last of these, “labore et constantia,” was borrowed in Cremona by a goldsmith. Adding to images that had been used for signs since the Middle Ages – patron saints, real and imaginary animals, celestial bodies, plants, for example – the devices of the most famous publishers became common property of both merchants and their customers thanks to books, which publicized individual marks over a wide geographical area.

Contention over Marks

As an *impresa* (from the Latin *imprendere*, to undertake) and as an emblem, the mark found one of its best vehicles in the book. Books may indeed have borne the greatest number of emblems and devices in use at the time. For Andrea Alciati, the father of emblematics, the symbols used by publishers were preeminent among emblems. In a letter to the Roman bookseller Francesco Calvo dated 1522, Alciati explains emblems using two publishers’ marks as examples, Aldo’s Anchor and Froben’s Dove.²¹ There were probably no other emblems to which correspondents in different places could refer with so much precision. Emblems existed on headgear, on jackets, on medals, and on many other objects, but only those printed on books, even if they were created in a specific place, were distributed everywhere, becoming familiar to the entire cultivated public of Europe. The popularity of publishing devices was undoubtedly due to the capillary penetration they sustained, which was indivisible from the merchandise on which they were printed.

The importance of marks for bookmen is demonstrated by the number of conflicts and legal disputes that resulted from disagreements about their use. In our first example, conflict over a mark occurred within a firm. The long legal dispute over the Dolphin and Anchor device that divided the two branches of the heirs of Aldo Manuzio documents the value that the firm attached to the *signum*.²² Finding themselves with

²¹ “During this Saturnalia, at the behest of the illustrious Ambrogio Visconti, I composed a little book of epigrams, which I entitled Emblems: in separate epigrams I describe something which, from history or from nature, has some elegant significance, after which painters, goldsmiths, and metal workers could fashion the kind of thing we call badges and which we fasten on hats, or use as marks, like the anchor of Aldus, the dove of Froben.” The letter is the earliest document to attest to the existence of his *Emblemata*, printed in 1531: Gian Luigi Barni. *Le lettere di Andrea Alciato giureconsulto* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1953), 24.

²² Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d’Asola*, 323–34; Fletcher, *In Praise of Aldus*, 25–34. For the pan-European success of humanistic devices, see Anja Wolkenhauer, *Zu schwer für Apoll: Die Antike in humanistischen Druckerzeichen des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002).

title to fewer rights than the Torresani branch, the Manuzio heirs used graphic means in order to circumvent the Torresanis' claims to the principal mark. (The Torresanis would eventually win the suit.) Paolo Manuzio wrote to his son in 1569 that his brothers had attempted to change the device of the Anchor slightly and had registered it with the Giustizia Vecchia with those changes. Paolo fiercely opposed any manipulation of the glorious mark, the reputation of which he held to be unmatched when it appeared in combination with the names of Paolo or Aldo the Younger, that is, not with the name of any of the Torresanis. According to Paolo, any change diminished the dignity and honor of the mark, in effect an admission that the Manuzio heirs feared competition.²³

The more established firms defended themselves against imitations, plagiarism, and illegitimate uses of the mark by rival firms. At times the existence of very similar marks seems to have been tolerated, but at other times it was denounced, and in the latter case, the party that had adopted the form more recently was forced change his sign. The relevant magistracies took action in cases of similar devices only upon application by one of the parties, not *ex officio*.

First in line in the legal defense of their *signum*, the Lily of Florence, were the Giuntis. They brought suit against Bartolomeo Sermartelli between 1568 and 1570 for abusive use of the lily, even though at first glance their two lilies looked quite different. The image on the Sermartelli mark depicted a tortoise with a sail on his carapace. Only on that sail, and therefore of secondary importance, was a Florentine lily depicted. Still, this was enough for the Giuntis to take legal action. The accusation, brought with the legal advice of a great barrister of the period, Antonio Cioffi,²⁴ denounced the similarity between the two marks, both of which featured the Florentine lily on a white field. The onus was on the mark holder to produce evidence that substantial harm might accrue to his business as a result.²⁵

During that same period, the Giuntis in Lyon were involved in a court case against their former partner Filippo Tinghi. Here the suit was brought by Giovanna and Giacomina Giunti, the daughters of Giacomo (Jacques)

²³ Manuzio, *Lettere*, letter XL, pp. 164–65.

²⁴ Antonio Cioffi (1522–75) taught for thirty years at the University of Pisa.

²⁵ Paola Maffei, "I Giunti, Bartolomeo Sermartelli e il giglio fiorentino in un parere di Antonio Ciofi in tema di marche editoriali," in *Panta rei: Studi dedicati a Manlio Bellomo*, ed. Orazio Condorelli, 5 vols. (Rome: Il Cigno, 2004), 3:455–71. The Sermartelli device accused of being illegal was *Edit 16*, CNCM, 83, 84, 202, 1081. The fact that Bartolomeo Sermartelli continued to use the mark implies that the Giunti lost their suit.



Fig. 5.4. The Tortoise, mark of Bartolomeo Sermartelli, 1568. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

Giunti, after Tinghi had begun publishing on his own but continued to use the Giunti Lily. On 17 September 1577 Giovanna (now known as Jeanne) obtained permission from the king of France to continue publishing with the Giunti mark, defeating Tinghi.²⁶

The History of an Emblematic Mark: The Giolito Phoenix

Today, with the help of systematic, databased information,²⁷ we can trace the history of marks used by publishing firms. An exact chronology of

²⁶ In fact, however, Tinghi suffered no consequences thanks to the exit from the scene of Giacomina Giunti, Giovanna Giunti's younger sister, who ceded her rights to a partner of Tinghi's. Tinghi's right to use the mark of the Florentine Lily was repeated in a royal privilege conceded on 2 June 1578: Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 6:246–49, 337–52, 438, 456. See also Léon Dorez, "La marque de la fleur de lys de Florence: Giovanna Giunta et Filippo Tinghi libraires à Lyon," *Revue des Bibliothèques* 7 (1897): 289–313; Rozzo "Filippo Tinghi"; and Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place*, 227–50.

²⁷ In particular, the "Archivio Marche" in *Edit 16*.

their use is of fundamental importance, as the example provided by the Giolito firm demonstrates. The Giolito family held rights to some thirty different marks, almost all of them simple variants on the Phoenix. One can construct a history of the mark of the Phoenix by following the changes in the position of the mythical bird and in its symbolism, ornamentation, and connections with other symbols.²⁸ Widening our gaze to take in the publishing industry of the period, we can identify cases of imitation or parody of the Phoenix, allowing us to bring into focus a series of competing, rival, and parasitic enterprises that would have surrounded a great firm like that of the Giolitos.

In the Phoenix, the sign of a bookshop that existed in Venice even before Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari's arrival, we have an example of the development of a publisher's mark into a symbolic image. It was an *impresa*, an image that the publishers borrowed from the world of heraldry and royal and noble courts, where prominent figures intimated their hopes, fears, and desires by means of coded visual allegorical displays. The emblem is a uniform visual structure with subtle meaning and is composed of verbal and figurative parts: it comprises an image (*res picta*), a motto (*inscriptio*), and in its most complete form, a phrase or caption (*subscriptio*) that explains in a less cryptic manner the meaning of the illustration.²⁹ The emblem and the *impresa* are two types of similar and complementary representation that arose from the same complex symbolic and philosophical culture and from Renaissance studies of antiquity. Subsequently, the chivalrous character of the *impresa* merged with the rhetorical, neo-Aristotelian nature of the academies. Within this growing figurative and allusive complexity, the motto played a particular role by making a declaration that even in the world of books proclaimed a plan and stated an intent.

Gabriele Giolito's mark could not have been more fortuitous, because the phoenix encapsulates an archaic myth that moved from antiquity to the Middle Ages and Christian spirituality, accompanied by ever-new interpretation.³⁰ In 1555 Gabriele Giolito engaged with this myth in an

²⁸ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 125–46.

²⁹ "The 'emblem' ... partakes of the nature of the symbol (only that it is particular rather than universal), the puzzle (only that it is not quite so difficult), the apophthegm (only that it is visual rather than verbal), and the proverb (only that it is erudite rather than commonplace): participates in the nature of the symbol (although it is particular, not universal); in the riddle (although it is not as difficult)": Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), 148.

³⁰ For the origins of the myth of the phoenix, see Jean Hubaux and Maxime Leroy, *Le mythe du phénix dans les littératures grecque et latine* (Liège: Faculté de Philosophie et



Fig. 5.5. The Phoenix, mark of Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari, 1542. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

altogether different way when he published an entire volume on the myth of the phoenix, a book that contained ancient works in addition to a vast collection of poetic material by contemporary authors, all in praise of the mythical bird. This project was a marketing campaign unique in sixteenth-century Italian publishing.³¹ Readers were invited to savor all the meanings, mythical and religious, of the complex symbol and to appreciate the sequence of sonnets and other rhymes written by contemporary authors in honor of Gabriele Giolito, creating from the Giolito-Phoenix nexus an apparently inexhaustible source of parallelisms. Anything but a secondary or occasional edition, this volume, which is largely a poetry anthology, is almost a temple in honor of the Phoenix and of the person who had rediscovered that glorious subject and brought it to the attention of the world.

Lettres; Paris: Droz, 1939); Roelof van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix according to Classical and Early Christian Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Silvia Fabrizio-Costa, ed., *Phénix: mythe(s) et signe(s): actes du colloque international de Caen* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001); Francesco Zambon and Alessandro Grossato, *Il mito della fenice in Oriente e in Occidente* (Venice: Marsilio, 2004). For basic references, see Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, *Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1967), cols. 795–97.

³¹ Tito Giovanni Scandianese, *La Fenice* (Venice: Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari, 1555, *Edit 16*, CNCE 27113; 2nd ed. 1556, *Edit 16*, CNCE 26256). See also Bongi, *Annali*, 1:477, 2:14.

The overall operation was well thought out, and the collection can also be seen as a dossier on the publishing house's activity. The authors of the rhymes in honor of the phoenix provide an important sampling of the lyric poets who gravitated towards Giolito, and reports of the glory of his mark turned out to be entirely reliable, beginning with the stunning public revelation that a golden phoenix had been given to Giolito by Charles V.³² In a contract drawn up with his brothers, Gabriele made it clear that when the partnership came to an end, the sign of the Phoenix would remain at his sole disposition, because the imperial privilege had been granted to him alone.³³

The great success of the Phoenix mark could not but result in competition. There are known cases of imitation, such as a mark of the Pelican,³⁴ and of genuine parody, in the mark of a crow holding a scorpion in its mouth,³⁵ both of which were used by a firm working under the name of Domenico Giglio. Giglio appears to have been merely the printer in an enterprise that focused its activity on strong competition with the Giolito firm, as did other businesses in the 1550s.³⁶ There were a number of examples of parodied marks in the crowded panorama of the book trade in Venice in those years: Giovanni Angelo Ruffinelli's mark, for example, displayed three artichokes, a parody of the three Florentine lilies of the Giunti firm.³⁷

³² This was probably a small piece of sculpture, but the sources do not give a detailed description. In the long 1550 inventory drawn up for Giolito's heirs, it is listed as "una fenice indorata": see Giovanni Dondi, "Una famiglia di editori a mezzo il secolo XVI: I Giolito," *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino. II. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 102 (1968): 650.

³³ Dondi, "Una famiglia," 699.

³⁴ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, fig. 38.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, fig. 41. See also *Edit 16*, CNCM 296. The motto was highly bellicose: "Non sine quare, sic facio" (I am doing this not without a motive). The mark is a faithful reproduction of emblem no. 173 in Alciati's collection; see Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1967), 878.

³⁶ For example, the editions of Girolamo Ruscelli and Plinio Pietrasanta were signed only by the latter: Ruscelli, *Dediche e avvisi*, 36–70; Paolo Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza corretto: La stampa e le revisioni editoriali dei testi letterari italiani (1470–1570)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), 252–54.

³⁷ *Edit 16*, CNCN 1363 and 2309. In relation to parodic imitations, see the figure of a large snake wrapped around a hoe, the mark registered by the printer-bookseller Stefano Zazzera, which on protests from Aldo Manuzio the Younger and Andrea Torresani was changed into a fox with a hoe (*Edit 16*, CNCM 953) since it was abundantly clear that the graphic effect of the snake wrapped around a hoe was quite similar to the famous Anchor and Dolphin: Moro, "Insegne librerie," 72, 77.

Behind such refined use of emblematic marks undoubtedly lay consultation with contemporary men of letters. Girolamo Ruscelli (ca. 1500–66) was one of the leading creators of emblems in Venice. We owe to him the most important collection of contemporary *imprese*.³⁸ The case of Vincenzio Borghini (1515–80) provides a concrete demonstration of the participation of men of letters in the creation of publishers' devices. Borghini was asked by Bernardo Giunti to create a new mark for him.³⁹ Borghini, a man of letters and a collaborator of the Giuntis, invented the mark of the serpent with the motto "Novus exorior" (I rise renewed) and the mark of the branches of olive and ivy surrounding the depiction of a pluteus that was used to print texts from the Medici library.⁴⁰

Non-Commercial Marks on Printed Books

The title pages of books document the existence of two other categories of marks, the mark of the author or patron and the institutional mark. The first category took on the function of an *impresa* with which the author flagged his work. One such example is provided by the *impresa* of Lodovico Ariosto, a beehive with a swarm of bees being chased away by an ungrateful farmer, with the motto "Pro bono malum" (evil in return for good). This *impresa* is prominently placed in the first two Ferrara editions of *Orlando Furioso*, of 1516 and 1521. In the third edition of 1532, Ariosto opted to have a new image with two snakes, one of which has had its tongue cut out, while the other, whose tongue is still vibrating, is being threatened by a

³⁸ Girolamo Ruscelli, *Le imprese illustri* (Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1566, *Edit 16*, CNCE 37521). On Ruscelli, see Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza*, 241–97; Girolamo Ruscelli, *Lettere*, ed. Chiara Gizzi and Paolo Procaccioli (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2010); and Ruscelli, *Dediche e avvisi*. For the *imprese* created by Anton Francesco Doni, also as publishers' marks, see Anna Paola Mulinacci, "Un 'Laberinto piacevole': le 'libere imprese' di Anton Francesco Doni," in *"Una soma di libri": l'edizione delle opere di Anton Francesco Doni: Atti del seminario*, ed. Giorgio Masi (Florence: Olschki, 2008), 167–235. For the publisher mark of Doni, see Giorgio Masi, "Simboli e vicende tipografiche doniane (1546–1549)," in *Dissonanze concordi. Temi, questioni e personaggi intorno ad Anton Francesco Doni*, ed. Giovanna Rizzarelli (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2013), 71–98.

³⁹ Gustavo Bertoli, "Il giovane Borghini e la paternità del *De amministrazione nosocomii s. Mariae Novae* e di alcune marche tipografiche fiorentine," *Lettere italiane* 51 (1999): 85–93; Paul Gehl, *Humanism for Sale: Making and Marketing Schoolbooks in Italy, 1450–1650*. Online publication of the Newberry Library, Chicago, www.humanismforsale.org/text, 7.09. See also D.B.I., s.v. "Borghini, Vincenzio."

⁴⁰ The first mark is *Edit 16*, CNCM 776; the second is reproduced in the record *Edit 16*, CNCE 28093.

hand that is about to cut out its tongue too.⁴¹ The motto states “Dilexisti malitiam super benignitatem.”⁴²

Authors’ marks, which are often confused with publishers’ marks, deserve one further note. Annibal Caro and Lodovico Castelvetro adopted memorable marks during their bitter polemics about the *canzone* “Venite all’ombra dei gran gigli d’oro,” composed by Caro in 1553 in praise of the ruling house of France.⁴³ Cut to the quick by the caustic judgments



Fig. 5.6. The mark of the poet Annibal Caro, from the title page of his *Apologia*. Parma: S. Viotti, 1558; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

⁴¹ 1516: *Edit 16*, CNCE 2541; 1521: *Edit 16*, CNCE 2542; 1532: *Edit 16*, CNCE 2566.

⁴² Psalm 52:5: “You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than honest speech.” See Richardson, *Printing, Writers*, 85–89; Giorgio Masi, “I segni dell’ingratitude: Ascendenze classiche e medioevali delle imprese ariostesche nel *Furioso*,” *Albertiana* 5 (2002): 141–64.

⁴³ See the *D.B.I.* entries for both authors. See also Carlo Dionisotti, “Annibal Caro e il Rinascimento,” in Dionisotti, *Scritti di storia della letteratura italiana*. 5 vols. (Rome:

that Castelvetro had circulated about the manuscript version, Caro organized a collective response, entitled *Apologia*, which was published in Parma in 1559.⁴⁴ On the title page of the edition there is an *impresa* showing a broken stirrup hilt and the hammer of an arquebus, along with the motto “Vim vis” (to violence, respond with violence). A unicorn, the mark of the printer Seth Viotto, is relegated to the final page of the volume. There is thus a clear intention to mark the text with an image that immediately communicates its intentions and inspiration. But Castelvetro was to use a mark of his own in this quarrel – an owl, the symbol of Minerva – on the title page of his stinging reply, published only forty-five days later.⁴⁵ More of an author’s mark than the *impresa* used by Caro, the Owl would continue to be printed on the title pages of later works by Castelvetro.⁴⁶

Noble emblems refer principally to patronage relationships, and noble coats of arms are found in particular on occasional publications that honor members of aristocratic families. Most often these works contain orations, delivered in a broad variety of circumstances. The use of coats of arms could also imply financial support. The emblem of the Madruzzo family, especially that of Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo, the governor of Milan from 1555 to 1557, appears in a notable series of editions that differ in content and place of publication.⁴⁷

The marks of institutions are much more systematic. They can almost always be considered genuine publishers’ marks, in the sense that they

Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2008–10), 2:257–69. Very valuable is the recent study by Enrico Garavelli, “Tu non es leo, sed noctua. Sulle imprese del Caro e del Castelvetro,” in *Officine del nuovo. Sodalizi fra letterati, artisti ed editori nella cultura italiana tra Riforma e Controriforma*, ed. Harald Hendrix and Paolo Procaccioli (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2008), 445–68.

⁴⁴ *Apologia de gli Academici di Banchi de Roma, contra M. Lodovico Castelvetro da Modena* (Parma: Seth Viotto, 1559, *Edit 16*, CNCE 9646).

⁴⁵ This was *Ragione d'alcune cose segnate nella canzone d'Annibal Caro Venite a l'ombra de gran gigli d'oro* (Modena: [Cornelio Gadaldini, 1559?], *Edit 16*, CNCE 10038). The owl appears on top of an overturned urn bearing the motto in Greek “KEKPIKA” (I have judged).

⁴⁶ See, for example, *La Giunta fatta al Ragionamento degli articoli et de verbi di M. Pietro Bembo* (Modena: eredi di Cornelio Gadaldino, 1563, *Edit 16*, CNCE 10041), a work that Castelvetro published anonymously. On the other hand, learned men acting as publishers could make use of extremely refined and complicated marks, as in the case of Marcantonio Magno; see Mino Gabriele, “Juan de Valdés, Francesco Alunno e una enigmatica immagine: L'insegna di Marcantonio Magno,” in *Suave mari magno ... Studi offerti dai colleghi udinesi a Ernesto Berti*, ed. Claudio Griggio and Fabio Vendruscolo (Udine: Forum, 2008), 117–39.

⁴⁷ Luciano Borrelli, Silvano Groff, and Mauro Hausbergher, *Edizioni per i Madruzzo (1540–1659): Dedicatari, committenti e autori nella famiglia dei principi vescovi di Trento* (Trent: Società di studi trentini di scienze storiche, 1993). Examples of such publications include Iamblichus, *De misteris* (Rome: A. Blado, 1556, *Edit 16*, CNCE 24729); Virgil, *Il primo*

RAGIONE D'ALCUNE COSE SEGNATE
NELLA CANZONE D'ANNIBAL
CARO
VENITE AL'OMBRA DE GRAN
GIGLI D'ORO.



K E K P I K A

Fig. 5-7. The mark of Lodovico Castelvetro, man of letters, on the title page of his *Ragione dalcune cose segnate nella canzone d'Annibal Caro*. [Modena: Cornelio Gadaldini, 1559?]; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

signal the financier of the edition. The most common examples are the city coats of arms that appear on the title page of editions of that city's statutes and above all, the marks of the various ecclesiastical authorities, predominantly, but not exclusively, of the Papal States. In the latter category we frequently see in Italian publishing of the final decades of the sixteenth century the monogram of Christ, the mark of the Jesuits and an indication of the editorial activism of this institution that was at the forefront of cultural and religious activities of the age.⁴⁸

libro della Eneida di Vergilio, ridotto da Giovanni Andrea dell'Anguillara in ottava rima (Padua: G. Perchacino, 1564, *Edit 16*, CNCE 33755); *Del tempio alla divina signora donna Giovanna d'Aragona* (Venice: P. Pietrasanta, 1555, *Edit 16*, CNCE 34714). All of these editions are dedicated to Cristoforo Madruzzo, who was probably also their sponsor. See also the *D.B.I.* entry on Cristoforo Madruzzo.

⁴⁸ On the Jesuits and the book market, see Paul Gehl, "Religion and Politics in the Market for Books: The Jesuits and Their Rivals," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 97 (2003): 435–60.

Thus the mark, the *signum*, signals persons and institutions and involves them in a particular project or associates them with particular message. It is a visual language, not a verbal one, a language that contemporaries knew how to decode. Publishers managed to make their marks both a symbol of cultural identity and a means of attracting a public. As a result, a mark that was a component of the commercial organization of a firm's branches played a significant strategic role.

The Branch System

In a legal sense, a branch is a secondary office that is separate from the home office, to which it is connected but subordinate, and that operates over a determinate area with limited power, although enjoying a degree of operational independence. The existence of a branch is always indicative of a need to expand its activities felt by the main office. The branch system had been in place since the fourteenth century in international commerce, especially for Italian banks.⁴⁹ Although the banking sector provides historically the most important example of the use of branches, business enterprises also had branches that were highly significant. A bank branch is substantially different from a commercial branch, for the former not only extends loans but also accepts deposits and thus is involved in both the distribution and raising of capital, while the latter is active only in the distribution and sale of goods.

A series of stages made up the road that led the great merchant-entrepreneurs to open branches in the most important markets, stages that other types of large-scale commerce had already passed. In both banking and mercantile contexts, branches formed a lower layer in a pyramidal structure in which all decisions were taken by the parent firm. Even if the book trade followed in the same direction, however, the particular nature of the goods involved brought its own challenges.

Branch offices in the book trade were a natural offshoot of relations with correspondent booksellers and agents, over which such branch offices had clear-cut advantages. First, they ensured the constant presence of a bookshop in those cities with the highest book sales, and therefore a steady flow of receipts. Second, they made possible a faster and more accurate evaluation of cultural consumption in specific locales as well as

⁴⁹ Raymond De Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank: 1397–1494* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963).

providing direct and immediate information on changes in customer tastes, which was useful in forming publishing plans and estimating the number of copies to print. Third, they enabled control of the retail market, since branches are above all sales outlets for centrally produced goods. The opening of a branch did not exhaust the possibilities for a publisher's distribution and sales network but rather indicated a unique and strategic relationship with the city in which the branch was located.

The use of marks and shop signs by a branch was of particular significance. A parent company's granting of a concession that allowed the use of such weighty symbols not only marked the locating in one city of a bookman from another area but also, due to the strict regulation of the symbol, provided a way to maintain control over the branch. A sign that was associated with its place of origin (invariably Venice for the book trade) and referred to the address of a specific business in a specific city became known by being imprinted on a particular commodity, namely books that clearly displayed this mark.

The mark was commonly used in the bookseller's bibliography and in transactions as a synonym or substitute for the publisher's name. The Gatta (cat), the Sirena (mermaid), and the Giglio (lily) often replaced the names of the firms of the Sessa, Varisco, and Giunti respectively. Visual communication by the mark played a fundamental role in informing both booksellers and customers. A known mark that appeared on a shop sign both drew attention to the branch and bolstered the reputation of the bookseller. The appearance of the mark of a Venetian publisher on a shop sign outside Venice might be the only evidence that the shop was a branch of the Venetian firm.

The first significant, although not systematic, attempt to uncover the business organization of these firms was undertaken by the Inquisition, when it began to interrogate bookmen in Venice, who were at times caught with banned books in their warehouses.⁵⁰ At the beginning of the interrogation the publisher had to identify his activity and the scope of his business, evidently to enable an evaluation of the impact of any banned books that he was discovered to have bought or distributed. Vincenzo Valgrisi (Vincent Vaugris) declared during the legal action brought against him by the Holy Office in 1559: "I have a shop [*ho bottega*] in Bologna, Macerata, Foligno, Recanati, Lanciano, and Padua, and one in Frankfurt,

⁵⁰ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 164–65. The principle acts are in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Savi all'eresia (Santo Ufficio)*, b. 159. Reg. Processi 1569, 1570, 1571.

Germany.”⁵¹ An equivalent of the term “branch,” with the sense of the word as it is used today, does not appear in the sources of the Renaissance period, when the shop or firm that had the characteristics of a branch was simply viewed as the direct property of the parent firm. The concept of a branch was vague and shifting, and all activities led back to the sole proprietor, who for his part did not distinguish between periodic or permanent centers or between warehouses for goods left behind in a city from one fair to another and shops open all the year round, in this case in the two most important university cities, Bologna and Padua.

The branch might be given over to be managed by a dependent bookseller whom the owner believed to be loyal and trustworthy. If a partnership was arranged with a manager – one means of encouraging him to become more involved in making the branch profitable and motivating him to sell books – the relationship between the central office and the branch would have a legal basis in the contract drawn up between the home office and the bookseller-partner. The best choice, however, was to entrust the peripheral shop to kin, and indeed, the appointment of family members as agents or factors in specific towns was a practice of longstanding among Italian merchants.⁵² Control and coordination of the various branches often became a major problem for the head of the firm.

The Transnational System of Branches

As we consider the growth of publishing houses nationally, we must also remember the backing that they enjoyed from beyond the Italian Peninsula from the banking system from which they drew credit and logistical support.⁵³ During the Renaissance only the strongest firms could organize their commerce on a transnational basis. The Giunti in Florence and the Gabiano family from Piedmont (flanked by other families from the area such as the Portonari⁵⁴) did not limit themselves to commerce in printed

⁵¹ Marciani, “Editori, tipografi, librai veneti,” 508; Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Savi all'eresia (Santo Ufficio)*, b. 14, testimony given 9 August 1559.

⁵² Umberto Santarelli, *Mercanti e società tra mercanti* (Turin: Giappichelli, 1998).

⁵³ Sergio Tognetti, *Il Banco Cambini: Affari e mercati di una compagnia mercantile-bancaria nella Firenze del XV secolo* (Florence: Olschki, 1999).

⁵⁴ Vincenzo Portonari, founder of a dynasty active in Spain, France, and Italy, arrived in Lyon at least as early as the end of the fifteenth century, serving as a manager under Baldassare da Gabiano, the head of the Lyon branch of the Gabiano firm. In 1506 Portonari began to publish books on his own. There are documents relating to the intensive business relations between Portonari and Giolito, both of whom came from Trino. Giolito was

books but spread their interests over various markets, for such firms proved highly skilled at adapting to market conditions in the first two centuries after the invention of print. Usually neglecting the market for vernacular books, the great firms concentrated above all on the transnational market for works in Latin. Their greatest challenge lay in enabling access to a product with a fairly low unit value by buyers who were widely dispersed, a challenge that could be tackled by establishing a powerful commercial network, often using family members who were kept on as tight a reign as possible.⁵⁵ A close connection between production and distribution was typical of the early centuries of printing, and it was thanks to their activities as wholesalers, rather than as publishers, that great firms managed to impose their hegemony over the entire book sector in Europe. That domination gradually disappeared with the development of national markets and the concomitant decline in the transnational book trade, for the connections between merchants and wholesalers became secondary to relations among publishers of different nationalities who exchanged copyrights.

The Gabiano Family in Lyon

Italian bookmen's branches in Lyon functioned as distribution outlets, both locally and at fairs, for books from their motherhouse, but they also produced a large number of books. The Gabiano branch, one of the first branches of an Italian book firm in Lyon, was founded by Baldassare da Gabiano around 1497.⁵⁶ Baldassare was the nephew of Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano, who was present in Venice in this period and was the undisputed head of the family business.

In Lyon the firm concentrated on the publication of books that faithfully copied the editions of Aldo Manuzio's octavo series. When Baldassare da Gabiano left Lyon around 1517, his post at the head of the branch was taken by his brother Lucimborgo da Gabiano, who was born in Asti around

quite surely a partner of Portonari's in a number of his enterprises in Lyon: Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 5:395–400; Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 41–45.

⁵⁵ Even Gascon speaks of an ubiquity achieved by Italian merchants in Lyon in a number of partnerships, commission arrangements, and various relationships for which kinship formed a solid armor: Richard Gascon, *Grand commerce et vie urbaine au XVI^e siècle: Lyon et ses marchands (environs de 1520–environs de 1580)*. 2 vols. (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1971), 1:214.

⁵⁶ Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*. Volume 7 of this work is in large part dedicated to the Gabiano firm in Lyon.

1490 and arrived in France around 1512.⁵⁷ As well as participating in partnerships with his uncle Giovanni Bartolomeo and Lorenzo Aliprandi in Venice, Lucimburgo headed other publishing partnerships.⁵⁸ In 1519, together with Aymon de la Porte, Simon Vincent, Giacomo (Jacques) Giunti, and other bookmen, he created editorial consortia called “Compagnie des textes” (for publishing the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* and *Canonici*) and “Compagnie des lectures” (for publishing the commentaries on those texts). Those consortia, prolonged by new contracts, were destined to have a long life under the name “Grande Compagnie des Libraires of Lyon,” the largest publishing firm in Lyon. The Compagnie published large editions of works on Roman and canon law, which were usually the product of a number of printers and did not contain an indication of the publisher. Between 1519 and 1542 there were at least thirty-two editions in 108 volumes of such works. Lucimburgo da Gabiano and the Venetian home office maintained very close connections throughout his life. His social and economic rise in Lyon is quite evident. In 1533 he was granted French citizenship by Francis I.⁵⁹ In 1539 he acquired the seigneuries of Vourles and Côte-sur-Brignais; now a landowner, he had the castle of Vourles reconstructed, adapting it as his own sumptuous dwelling. In 1545 he was among the twenty wealthiest merchants in the city. Among booksellers, only the Sennetons and the Giunti were more prominent. Lucimburgo da Gabiano died in 1558, and the long inventory of his holdings and the company books redacted for the occasion confirm the solidity of the patrimony he had acquired and the broad reach of his commercial relations.⁶⁰

In Lyon Lucimburgo da Gabiano financed the production of a significant number of books by French printers, whose identity we know from letters he sent to his uncle Giovanni Bartolomeo in 1522.⁶¹ Anonymity was a necessity for printing by Italian merchants in Lyon, for they were accused of exploiting the privileges granted for the fairs by indulging in unfair

⁵⁷ Lucimburgo's name was spelled in many ways: Lucimburgo, Luciborgo, Luzimborgho, Luxembourg, Lucemborg, and more. I have chosen to use the spelling he himself used in signing letters to his uncle, Lucimborgo.

⁵⁸ His partnership with his uncle seems to have started in 1513 (Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 7:69). See also Jeanne-Marie Dureau-Lapeyssonnie, “Recherches sur les grandes compagnies de libraires lyonnais au XVI^e siècle,” in Roger Chartier et al., *Nouvelles études lyonnaises* (Geneva: Droz, 1969), 5–63.

⁵⁹ Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 7:28.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7:39–132. The company books were record books containing articles of association, shares of capital contributed by each partner, balances, and divisions of profits.

⁶¹ *Lettere Gabiano* (Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Miscellanea atti diversi manoscritti*, b. 91).

competition with resident merchants, who were subject to much higher taxes. Partnership contracts furnished the Italians with a means of disguising their activities, as their editions could be signed by only the local printers who produced them.⁶² If we were able to attribute to the Italian branch offices in Lyon and to the partnerships directed by the Giunti and Gabiano families all the editions that they financed, the image of printing in Lyon in the sixteenth century would surely be profoundly changed.

The eight letters that Lucimborgo sent to Giovanni Bartolomeo in Venice in 1522 offer a vivid picture of the activities of a branch book operation in the Renaissance. In his letters Lucimborgo touches mainly on three commercial topics: the personnel of the branch office, commercial relations between the home office and the Lyon branch, and the production of books. The branch was clearly subject to the decisions of the Italian home office, and Lucimborgo traveled to Venice at least once a year to report on his management of the Lyon branch.

When he talks of personnel problems, Lucimborgo complains – at times with dramatic intensity – that he is working under intolerable conditions in Lyon and that he receives no help, for he is working alone.⁶³ He asks that another family member, Giovanni Lanza, who was at the time working in the Venice shop be sent to aid him after learning how to keep account books (*tener libro*). The family sent Scipione da Gabiano to assist him, in what would prove to be Scipione's introduction to Lyon; he became a leading publisher until 1542, for the most part producing medical books. In 1529 Scipione initiated the use of the device of the Fountain in Lyon, the distinctive mark of the Venetian firm.

The correct operation of the business (or to be accurate, its absence) recurs often in Lucimborgo's letters. The difficulties in selling merchandise at a distance were innumerable. The Gabiano family traded in a variety of products, although these letters do not throw light on these broad commercial interests because they are limited to communication with the bookshop and therefore focus on books, with only occasional references to such other goods as cinnabar, caps, printed textiles, and silk cloth. In a number of his letters to Giovanni Bartolomeo, Lucimborgo does refer to accounting statements that their common partner, Lorenzo Aliprandi, had sent from Lyon about the firm's other business at the fairs.

⁶² Gascon, *Grand commerce*, 1:291.

⁶³ "I am working like a hired horse, like a damned soul; I never have a free hour; I go to sleep at midnight and get up two hours before dawn; I can't take it anymore": *Lettere Gabiano*, letter of 23 December 1522.

Lucimborgo's letters adopt the tone of someone expected to show gratitude, in this case to the head of the firm. We can hypothesize that the Lyon branch of the Gabiano firm, like that of the Giunti family, was launched with a large financial contribution on the part of the home office. Still, the experience of hard work, solitude, and bitter aggressive or even destructive competition often discouraged Lucimborgo. His initiatives were not always welcomed: after he had sent to Venice two hundred copies of the *Superfeudis* by Baldus, Lucimborgo discovered that his uncle did not want any copies because he already had too many.⁶⁴ Lucimborgo asked insistently that books be sent from Venice because the assortment in his bookshop lacked variety. Giovanni Bartolomeo shipped him four and a half bales (approximately five hundred books), but when Lucimborgo had them unpacked and checked, he found that many were defective, with missing sheets. The damage was worst for the *Repertorium iuris* of Giovanni Bertachini, probably the Venetian edition of 1507 in three volumes by Paganino Paganini.⁶⁵ He accused his uncle of failing to have had the books checked.⁶⁶ The distances involved meant a wait until the missing sheets arrived in later shipments, which caused serious harm to business in the meantime.

As for printing production, Lucimborgo's letters provide incontestable evidence of a high degree of market integration between Venice and Lyon. Throughout 1522, Lucimborgo announced, with great satisfaction, the various phases of the printing of an edition of Avicenna that was published at the end of that year. This new edition of the *Canon* in the translation of Gerard of Cremona, with corrections by Pietro Antonio Rustico and preceded by a set of notes, errata, and *castigationes* by Symphorien Champier, was the first edition of this text in France to show an awareness of humanist scholarship.⁶⁷ In June 1522 Lucimborgo announced that he

⁶⁴ The edition is Baldus de Ubaldis, *Superfeudis* (Lyon: Jacques Myt, 1522, USTC 155558).

⁶⁵ *Edit 16*, CNCE 5592. As we saw in chapter 2, Paganino Paganini was the brother-in-law of Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano.

⁶⁶ "You send me few books, and not of the best nor among the ones I need; and in those that you do send there are many missing parts, perhaps because you have not had the time to have them checked over. This is due to your negligence, and to the fact that you think only of your individual profit and not that of the firm. It is not worth working this way, or paying the high transport costs. And if you do not change your style, I will not stay around to waste time with your niggardliness [*pidocchieria* is the term he uses], because it is madness to waste more time in this book traffic": *Lettere Gabiano*, letter of 23 December 1522.

⁶⁷ Avicenna, *Liber canonis totius medicine ab arabica lingua in Latinam reductus* (Lyon: Jacques Myt, 1522, USTC 145535). See Nancy G. Siraisi, *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy: The Canon and Medical Teaching in Italian Universities after 1500* (Princeton: Princeton



Fig. 5.8. Title page of Avicenna, *Liber canonis totius medicine*. Lyon: J. Myt [for Lucimburgo da Gabiano], 1522; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

was starting to print the work in a press run of 1,650 copies, and he promised, with pride, that it would be quite different from the edition that Paganino Paganini had put out in 1507.⁶⁸ By July he had printed one quarter of the book, and he stated that the whole work would be ready in time

University Press, 1987), 72. This edition is never catalogued under the Gabiano name because the colophon gives only the name of the printer, Jacques Myt.

⁶⁸ Avicenna, *Liber canonis* (Venice: Paganino Paganini, 1507, Edit 16, CNCE 3536).

for the All Saints' Day fair, at the beginning of November, and that he would send two hundred copies to Venice.

This edition of Avicenna was the cause of a significant quarrel with Jacques Giunti, or "il Zonta," as he is called in these letters. Lucimborgo had refused to give Giunti two hundred copies of the Avicenna, as Giunti had asked, because the conditions seemed to him unfair. Giunti was enraged, even menacing Lucimborgo in church, to the point that the latter felt physically threatened and began to plan a preemptory strike.⁶⁹ The Giuntis took action first. In a letter dated 23 December, Lucimborgo reported that Giunti was announcing in Lyon that a new edition of Avicenna would soon appear in Venice. Giunti was acting on his threat to ruin the Gabianos' business by putting out his own Avicenna and indeed, after only one year the most majestic of the editions of Avicenna in the Gerard of Cremona translation, a work in five folio volumes with all of the major thirteenth- and fourteenth-century commentators, was published in Venice by Luc'Antonio Giunti.⁷⁰ Lucimborgo was furious. He urged his uncle to target the best edition that the Giunti had published in Venice, so that they could replicate it in Lyon.⁷¹ Although we do not know whether Lucimborgo's plan was carried out, this affair tells us of the profound integration of commercial relations in Venice and Lyon. Lucimborgo's highly colloquial style allows us singular access to the tangled mass of threats, tensions, and rivalries that might arise among fellow bookmen, even amongst those who were partners for much of their publishing careers. It is clear that firms which operated on a broad scale could be kept well informed by their branches about market demand and the production of other bookmen, which helped them to fine-tune their own initiatives.

The Manuzio Firm in Paris

The Manuzio-Torresani house, less powerful than the Giuntis but cloaked in a cultural prestige that other firms never attained, also took steps to gain a better hold in the most important foreign markets. There is frequent

⁶⁹ "El Zonta thumps his butt on the ground and threatens loudly": *Lettere Gabiano*, letter of 25 November 1522.

⁷⁰ Avicenna, *Praesens maximus codex est totius scientie medicine principis Alboali Abinsene cum expositionibus omnium principalium et illustrium interpretum eius*. 5 vols. (Venice: Luc'Antonio Giunti, 1523, *Edit 16*, CNCE 3541).

⁷¹ "El Zonta is saying that the Avicenna is going to be printed in Venice. He makes very loud threats. Please put your mind [to it] if they do so, and if they do, we have to repay the favor": *Lettere Gabiano*, letter of 23 November 1522.

testimony to the commercial presence of the firm of the Anchor in Paris between 1530 and 1569.⁷² The first correspondent to provide a long-term outlet for Manuzio-Torresani products in the French capital was Jean-Pierre Varade, a Milanese gentleman who had settled in Paris as a bookseller after the Italian Wars. When he died in 1540, Varade owed 768 livres tournois to the Manuzio-Torresani firm. Francesco Torresani d'Asola went to Paris to audit the accounts. There was already a shop at the Manuzio sign of the Anchor and the Dolphin on rue Saint-Jacques that stocked many books in Latin, Greek, and vernacular Italian, which the Venetian firm had deposited there for sale. The bookshop and its books were assigned to the bookseller Jean Picard.⁷³ According to his contract, Picard received a commission of 5 percent on books, which were to be sold at a price fixed in advance. The shop must have been a branch, given that Giovan Francesco Torresani held title to it and paid the rent.⁷⁴ By as early as 1547, however, Picard had fled, unable to repay his debts.⁷⁵

Torresani then signed a contract with the bookseller Nicolas Le Riche, who opened a new branch office, using Aldo's sign, near the Collège de Cambrai. Around 1548, Le Riche published a rather inaccurate sale catalogue of Aldine books, followed by a list of his own editions, divided by language (Greek, Latin, and Italian), as was the tradition of the motherhouse.⁷⁶ In 1548, however, Torresani was in contact with the great

⁷² According to H. George Fletcher, after the 1544 division of property between the Manuzio and Torresani relatives the Torresani won the right to conduct the export business: Fletcher, *In Praise of Aldus*, 11–12.

⁷³ It does not seem that this Picard was the same man as the homonymous book binder whose existence is attested around 1581: Philippe Renouard, *Répertoire des imprimeurs parisiens, libraires, fondeurs de caractères et caractères d'imprimerie, depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie à Paris (1470) jusqu'à la fin du seizième siècle* (Paris: Minard, 1965), 345; Ernest Roquet, *Les relieurs français (1500–1800): Biographie critique et anecdotique* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1979), 372.

⁷⁴ Anthony Hobson, *Humanists and Bookbinders: The Origins and Diffusion of the Humanistic Bookbinding, 1459–1559, with a Census of Historiated Plaquette and Medallion Bindings of the Renaissance* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 267–70; Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola*, 353–56; Annie Parent-Charon, "Le commerce du livre étranger à Paris au XVI^e siècle," in *Le livre voyageur: Constitution et dissémination des collections livresques dans l'Europe moderne (1450–1830)*, ed. Dominique Bougé-Grandon (Paris: Klincksieck, 1999), 103.

⁷⁵ Flight was a typical outcome of a merchant's insolvency and a cause for severe punishment. Only rather late did the legislators understand that it was insolvency, not flight, that should be disciplined, as it was a cause of bankruptcy. Bankruptcy was an offence according to the rigorous system of rules that disciplined mercantile society and discredited the guild to which the merchant belonged: Santarelli, *Mercanti e società*, 68–75.

⁷⁶ Renouard, *Annales*, 345; Graham Pollard and Albert Ehrman, *The Distribution of Books by Catalogue from the Invention of Printing to A.D. 1800 Based on Material in the*

bookseller and binder Gommart (Grimmart) Estienne, and in 1550 he put Estienne under contract for three years as the manager of his branch operation.⁷⁷ Estienne was to receive a double percentage on sales (probably 10 percent) since he was binder of books for the king and therefore had access to the best local clientele. There are further small but significant indications of the commercial prestige that the Aldine editions achieved in Paris. The inventory of the warehouse of the bookseller Galliot Du Pré notes non-French books by geographical provenance alone ("Allemagne," for instance, for all German books, but cities – Venice, Florence, Ferrara – for Italian books) and only one foreign publisher, "le vieil Alde" (Aldo Manuzio), is identified by name.⁷⁸

The importance of the Paris market is demonstrated not only by the frequent sojourns in that city of Gian Francesco d'Asola (Torresani) in the 1540s, but also and above all by the fact that in 1554 commerce in Aldine printed matter was taken in hand directly by Bernardo Torresani, the son of Gian Francesco. Working from the Paris branch in 1554, Bernardo, known as Bernard Turrison, undertook an entrepreneurial activity of his own, publishing some twenty editions.⁷⁹ In the late 1570s the Aldine mark was used by the bookseller Robert Coulombel for a limited publishing venture, testifying to the persistence in Paris of the reputation of Aldo and the profitability of prolonged use of his mark, which had probably been rented or ceded by the title holders.⁸⁰

The Branch System in Italy

The branch system was an efficient response by Venetian bookmen, far and away the dominant force in Italy in the book sector, to Italian cultural and political polycentrism. Italy, although politically divided and in large part controlled by Spain, provided a uniform market in cultural, linguistic, and religious terms, although availability of capital led to local variations

Broxbourne Library (Cambridge: printed for presentation to members of The Roxburghe Club, 1965), 56; Christian Coppens, "Sixteenth-Century Octavo Publishers' Catalogues Mainly from the Omont Collection," *De Gulden Passer* 70 (1992): 26, nos. 33, 34.

⁷⁷ Annie Parent, *Les métiers du livre à Paris au XVI^e siècle (1535–1560)* (Geneva: Droz, 1974), 155; Hobson, *Humanists and Bookbinders*, 271; Parent-Charon, "Le commerce du livre," 103.

⁷⁸ Parent-Charon, "Le commerce du livre," 106.

⁷⁹ Renouard, *Annales*, 295–99; Parent, *Les métiers du livre*, 153–55; Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola*, 353–56. Bernardo is also mentioned as in Paris in 1572: *ibid.*, 369.

⁸⁰ Renouard, *Annales*, 299–300; Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola*, 365–66.

in cultural production and consumption. Nevertheless, political divisions provided obstacles for business, by making communication more difficult, for example, or by imposing customs duties, and also because of the resultant extremely fragmented monetary system.

Branch organization developed in Italy primarily in order to ensure a continuous relationship with customers in the university cities. Padua, Pavia, Perugia, Bologna, Naples, and the lesser university towns, with all their students and professors, could not but provide excellent markets for books, but the printing firms that had flourished in these centers in the second half of the fifteenth century had almost disappeared by the start of the sixteenth century. Bookshops in university towns became almost completely reliant on imports. Although few records of these activities remain, the most important Venetian bookmen all owned shops in the university towns of Italy.

The records become more plentiful by the 1540s, and the branch system appears to have grown rapidly during the entire century, increasingly taking on characteristics that would later prove typical. The system clearly depended on the initiative of the important Venetian bookmen, one of whom was Gabriele Giolito, who adopted the mark of the Phoenix and developed a network of branches from the start of his career.

Giolito Branch Organization

Gabriele Giolito developed a branch network in the 1540s, in a period of growing success for the family firm.⁸¹ Giolito's business was organized nationally, and the opening of a branch involved the establishment of a strategic relationship with the chosen city. The production of the firm of the Phoenix was substantial – to this day some one thousand editions are still extant. Strikingly, 95 percent of its book production was in the vernacular, with only 5 percent in Latin. To ensure a market for this level of production, it was necessary to consolidate distribution and sales in Italy as much as possible, concentrating in particular on key cities that for various reasons had shown greater interest in Giolito's editions.

The Giolitos' commercial branches are listed in an inventory of the family's assets prepared soon after the founder's death. In 1545 Gabriele, the heir to the business and new head of the firm, declared to the rest of the family, who were to divide up the inheritance, that he had stores

⁸¹ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 151–69.

in five important Italian cities: Venice (where the main office was), Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, and Naples. Apart from this declaration, only fragmentary and meager documentation about these branches remains in the archives.

Giolito's branches were located in Padua, Bologna, Ferrara, and Naples, and not in other Italian cities, because of the specific cultural and market conditions in those four cities. Bologna and Padua were home to the most important Italian universities, and although Giolito did not publish university texts, he benefitted from the presence of a large number of readers, students and professors, who were extremely interested in contemporary poetry, among other things. Ferrara, too, had a university, but it was also the seat of the Este court, which had a strong cultural influence and was the cradle of poets such as Ariosto, the author published most often by Giolito. Ferrara was a frequent source of new texts – for example, plays that had been performed there – that were subsequently produced in Venice by Giolito and found a vast reading public. It appears that the Giolito branch in Ferrara was of both large and lasting importance in the city, for in 1560 Alfonso II d'Este invited Giolito (in vain) to become the first ducal printer, the *ducalis typographus*. The existence of a bookshop with the sign of the Phoenix is attested as late as the start of the seventeenth century, by which date the firm itself had no longer been in existence for some time, although its symbol retained its renown. Naples, too, had a court, ruled by a viceroy, as well as a university. In addition it was a very populous city, with more than 212,000 inhabitants according to the 1547 census, almost the same population as Paris. Such an important city, and one very distant from Venice, could be adequately supplied only through a permanent outlet such as a branch. A large number of the financial backers of several of Giolito's printed editions operated out of Ferrara and Naples, as is clearly evident in dedications and from associated patronage relationships. All the cities with Giolito branches had one other feature in common: a local printing sector that was underdeveloped or non-existent. Where there were no true entrepreneurs connected with the book trade, there was room for the importation and sale of books by outside bookmen.

The establishment of a branch began when the Venetian publisher identified a store that was well positioned and then sought to take it over from the bookseller or stationer, along with its customer base. In Padua, Giolito bought a shop in the Monte di Pietà' and signed a contract with Ippolito Saraceni, the *bidellum* (bedel) bookseller at the university, who stayed on as manager of the branch. In Ferrara, Giolito rented a completely furnished bookshop that had previously been rented to a local bookseller

from the Sivieris, a family that for generations had prepared manuscripts of all sorts for use at the Este court.⁸² Because Giolito tended to take over a going concern rather than open a new store, he accrued the benefits of an ongoing and well-known business with an established clientele.

Giolito's second step was to select the personnel who would manage the branch and reach agreement with them. There were several options here. In Ferrara, on one hand, Gabriele Giolito handed over the bookshop to one of his brothers, with whom he was already in partnership, which meant that the growth of the business could be constructed on existing personnel. In Padua, on the other hand, Giolito drew up a contract with Ippolito Saraceni, who was clearly a bookseller with considerable experience.⁸³ In 1535, seven years before he was recruited by Giolito, Saraceni had declared himself a creditor of John August Sbardellati, the uncle of Andreas Dudith Sbardellati, and in order pay the debt Sbardellati's library, a collection of about 180 books, had been confiscated and given to Saraceni.⁸⁴

The conditions stipulated by Giolito strictly defined Saraceni's subordinate role. He was to sell the books consigned to him "on behalf" of Gabriele Giolito, making as much profit as possible for his "patron." Thus Saraceni functioned only as factor of the bookshop, and the inventory of the books consigned to him, which unfortunately has not been preserved, made him accountable from the moment he received the merchandise. Giolito secured for himself a series of important guarantees. Saraceni could never be supplied by other booksellers, not even to refresh the selection of books for sale: restocking would be attended to each month by Giolito. There was thus an explicit ban on competition, so much so that if books that did not come from Giolito were found in the shop, they would be assumed to be his. It is important to note here that this clause referred to both new and old books, that is, also to the used-book market. The resale of so-called older books by retail booksellers was an independent sector, usually local in scale, and one that wholesalers tried to control. Giving out books on credit, which amounted to their loan to privileged customers, was a stationers' practice that was explicitly forbidden by Giolito.

⁸² Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 117.

⁸³ Archivio di Stato di Padova, *Notarile*, 4838, pp. 116v–117r; Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 384–86.

⁸⁴ József Jankovics and István Monok, *András Dudith's Library: A Partial Reconstruction* (Szeged: Scriptum Kft., 1993).

Any accounting non-compliance by Saraceni would be treated as fraud and made subject to a penalty of fifty gold ducats. Saraceni was not, however, an employee, for he did not receive a salary but was instead paid a percentage on the books he sold, clearly in order to motivate him to sell as many as possible. The commission differed depending on which of two categories the books came under. He earned 5 percent on the more expensive books, which were primarily transalpine imports printed in France and Germany, and on Venetian books for which Giolito had paid cash, rather than acquiring them by barter exchange. Saraceni earned a 10 percent commission on all other Venetian books, all books printed in Italy outside Venice without exception, and on books printed by Gabriele Giolito himself.

Saraceni was not permitted to launch any independent business initiatives in either the sale or production of books. Perhaps this restriction contributed to the short life of the Padua branch. The relationship between Gabriele Giolito and Saraceni soon deteriorated, as is revealed by a judgment only four years later that obliged Saraceni to pay forty-eight ducats owed to Giolito. By 1545 Giolito no longer had a branch in Padua.

The Giolito Branch in Naples (1545)

The greatest challenge in operating a branch lay in effective long-distance management by the head of the firm. Predictably, it was his most distant branch, in Naples, that created the most significant problems for Giolito. Although records show that the Naples branch had existed since 1545, it is only from the 1560s on that we have ample documentation of its activities. These records refer to the trial of Gabriele Giolito in Venice in 1565, for the possession of banned books in the Naples branch,⁸⁵ testifying clearly to legal recognition of Giolito's ownership of the branch and hence his legal responsibility for its activities.⁸⁶ At the start of the hearing Giolito named the cities in which his bookshops were located: Venice, Bologna, Ferrara, and Naples. At the hearing the Naples branch was located precisely

⁸⁵ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Savi all'eresia (Santo Ufficio)*, b. 20; published in Bongi, *Annali*, lxxxv–cix, and in part in Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 523–25, and Francesco Quarto, "Uno sconosciuto editore del XVI secolo a Napoli: Giovanni Alberto Borgominerio da Trino," *La Bibliofilia* 102 (2000): 188–90.

⁸⁶ The same thing happened to Andrea Calvo, who in 1541 had to appear before the Holy Office in Milan to answer charges that the manager of his branch in Pavia had sold heretical books in violation of the Index of Prohibited Books issued by the Senate of Milan in 1538: Stevens, "New Light on Andrea Calvo," 41.

("under the house of Marino Frizza") and identified ("it bears the sign of the Phoenix"). It is surely no coincidence that the most distant of Giolito's branches, located in a city in which he had probably never set foot, had fallen foul of a fundamental tenet of business integrity by which Giolito and the mother firm abided scrupulously – observation of prohibitions. It appears, however, that Giolito was not punished for what had taken place in Naples.

The trial records reveal that the prohibited and suspect books were found partially hidden in a mezzanine in Giolito's Naples branch shop not immediately accessible to the public. They had been preserved, perhaps in the vain hope that more progressive times would come. These works were probably presented and sold to loyal clients, their loyalty evident in that the formal accusation about possession of prohibited works came not from customers, but from the former manager of the Naples branch after he had been dismissed by Giolito for incompetence. There were more than seven hundred of these banned books, but many of them were bound and often specifically defined as "old" and had therefore arrived at the shop as second-hand goods. Giolito could legitimately refuse to accept responsibility for the banned books, which clearly had been bought on the local market for resale. Evidently it was difficult, if not impossible, for the parent firm to control the second-hand trade of its branches.

The organization of the Naples branch was complex. The manager ran the bookshop. He had experience with books, as a bookbinder for example, and was responsible to the head of the firm for each book held in the shop. There was a well-defined and inflexible hierarchical relationship between the manager of the shop and Giolito, a relationship very similar to that between Saraceni and Giolito in Padua. Supervising the manager were other individuals who assisted the head of the firm and looked after his interests. The Corsini merchant bankers, for example, provided legal, financial, and logistical support to Giolito. The monthly receipts from the bookshop were deposited with the Corsini, and a business branch also required financial backing by a credit institution. Above the manager, as director of the shop, was Giovanni Alberto Borgominiero, whom Gabriele Giolito defines in the trial records as the person who controlled all the accounts and inventories on his behalf. Borgominiero was a relative of Gabriele Giolito's, and it is natural that Giolito would have placed his trust in him.⁸⁷ Borgominiero was the real commercial

⁸⁷ Quarto, "Uno sconosciuto editore."

director of the Naples branch and had the right to make managerial decisions, which brings us to the last feature typical of the branch system in Italy, its evolution.

The branch system in the book trade demonstrates the capacities of a developing business sector. Under favorable conditions, branches would often evolve from performing a simple sales function to operating as a business unit, becoming in the process increasingly autonomous. In particular, the branches' own publishing became independent, as Borgominiero's activity in Giolito's network evinces. Borgominiero published some editions in Naples, starting in 1561, for which he was allowed to use parts of the famous Giolito mark, to which he added his initials, *GAB*. These editions were produced in association with Giovanni Maria Scoto, another bookseller, whose management of the Naples branch of the famous Scoto family business in Venice can be seen in his mark: it resembled that of Giovanni Maria Scoto and contained an eagle losing its feathers to the sun, with the motto "Renovata juventus."⁸⁸

There is no doubt that Borgominiero had a legal right, as well as a concession, that allowed him to use parts of the Phoenix mark. It seems likely that in his role as manager of the Naples branch and as an expert on the local situation, he saw the potential of publishing activities in Naples, an opportunity of which he apparently took full advantage, as he published a dozen editions over the next five years. The agreement of the parent firm can be seen in the fact that his first printed work was Lodovico Dolce's *Vita dell'Imperatore Carlo V*, which was also published in Venice in 1561 and was protected by a twenty-five-year privilege given to Gabriele Giolito.⁸⁹ It is unthinkable that the manager of Giolito's Naples branch would have committed an egregious violation of the privilege granted to the head of the firm by printing without permission, making himself guilty of disloyal competition. It seems, therefore, that the popularity of a book that had just been printed in Venice led to its being republished in Naples: the work had to be issued twice in one year, and it seems likely it was printed for the third time in the same year in Naples because the parent firm could not meet the demand.⁹⁰ Exceptional demand was probably the decisive factor that convinced Giolito to set up a decentralized place of production in partnership with other publishers.

⁸⁸ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, fig. 45; *Edit 16*, CNCM 1105.

⁸⁹ *Edit 16*, CNCE 53534.

⁹⁰ *Edit 16*, CNCE 17373.

The Giolito Branch in Rome (1582?)

The final two decades of the firm of the Phoenix's activity were characterized by quantitative as well as qualitative decline. Gabriele Giolito's death, in 1578, occurred as the market in Rome was growing, and it is not surprising that the only significant use of the Phoenix device outside Venice was in Rome. Here the bookseller Giovanni Martinelli, manager of the Roman shop that bore the sign of the Phoenix, not only sold books printed by the Phoenix firm but was also granted use of the publishing mark, personalized by his initials, *GM*, for a series of publications.

Giovanni Martinelli began his business relationship with the Giolito heirs in 1582, when he represented them in a dispute in Rome with another bookseller. A play printed in Venice by the Giolito firm in 1584 bears a dedication to Clelia Farnese by Martinelli, who clearly appears as the client. Other evidence makes evident why Martinelli, who was a native of Parma, set himself up in Rome under the protection of the powerful Farnese family.⁹¹ Shortly thereafter, from 1587 to 1597, he signed several editions in Rome with the words "ex officina Ioan. Martinelli ad signum Phoenicis" or even with his name and the Phoenix mark alone. The marks used in Rome and Venice are absolutely identical. Martinelli, a bookseller and publisher, made use of several Roman printers, and his production is significant both in terms of quantity (around seventy works) and quality.

Thus it is possible that some firms did not just express their cooperation with a single entrepreneurial project through the use of marks, but by means of agreements also took advantage of the reputation and the market that the most renowned marks had attracted. This phenomenon may also explain the spread of many marks of Venetian origin in numerous Italian cities toward the end of the sixteenth century. We see, on the one hand, a powerful diffusion of the initiatives of the great Venetian bookmen throughout Italy and, on the other, a more widespread exploitation of the famous and established marks. In short, the great publishers, by spreading and distributing their commodity, rendered the Italian book market more and more united.

⁹¹ In a book published much later (Sebastiano Fabrini, *Dichiaratione del giubileo dell'anno santo*. Rome: B. Bonfadino for G. Martinelli, 1600: *Edit* 16, CNCE 5390) Martinelli wrote a dedication to Ranuccio I Farnese, duke of Parma and Piacenza (1569–1622), in which he stated that he was a Parma subject and had served the Farnese family for a long time, providing books for Cardinal Odoardo Farnese (1573–1626), brother of Ranuccio.

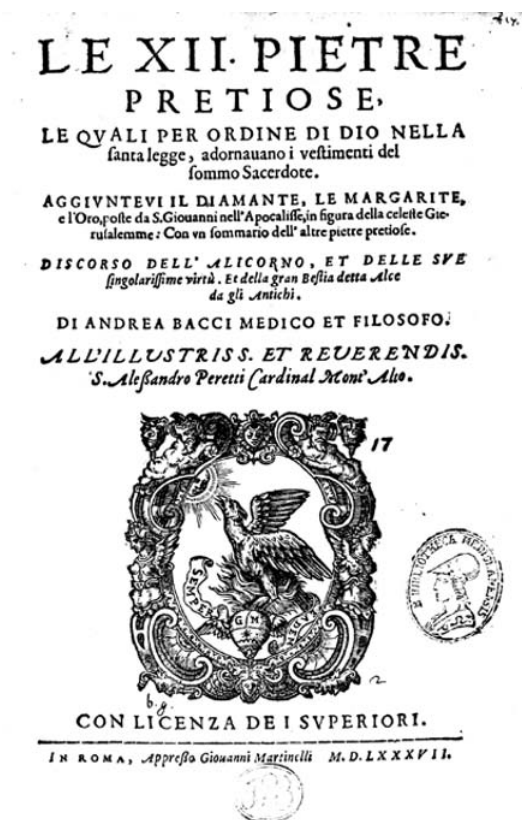


Fig. 5.9. The Phoenix, mark of the Giolitos used in the branch in Rome, in Andrea Bacci, *Le XII pietre pretiose*. Rome: Giovanni Martinelli, 1587; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

The branch system was the fundamental structure supporting the sale of a publisher's editions, but it also saw the development of satellite publishing enterprises of a parent firm, usually based in Venice. Although the branches' production of books was minor, it demonstrated that this arrangement was able to exploit all available sources of profit, beginning with the power of the publisher's mark to attract customers. A commercial branch could become a secondary seat of productive activity. A non-Venetian site could offer important advantages, in particular the possibility of printing a text for which a privilege had been granted in Venice but which did not enjoy that protection in the state in which the branch was located.

The branches evolved into small publishing houses that had permission to use the marks of the main offices. The branch system in Italy was therefore one of the driving forces behind the re-emergence of printing entrepreneurs, who had been found throughout Italy in the fifteenth century, only to become highly concentrated in Venice. As motors of growing networks and increasing expertise in the book trade in the main Italian cities, commercial branches played a significant role in ending the near monopoly of Venice.

Branches and Marks

The existence of a branch office is suggested by the appearance of the mark of a publisher in a city that was not his principal seat of activity. The branch bookshops bore the sign of the house that they represented. It is not known whether a mark registered in Venice with the Giustizia Vecchia had also to be registered in the city where the branch was located. There are clear indications, however, that publishers sought much broader protection for marks, as well as a more powerful tutelage, than that assured by the Venetian magistracies alone. Paolo Manuzio and Gabriele Giolito, for example, obtained an imperial privilege for their exclusive title to their marks, providing protection for the mark over an area far greater than its land of origin.⁹² We can infer the effect of such *diploma insignium* from that granted by Maximilian II on 8 April 1571 to Paolo Manuzio, conferring an imperial knighthood and granting a charge of arms that incorporates Aldus' Dolphin-and-Anchor device. Manuzio's insignia were thus confirmed, reinforced by the imperial eagle and by the initial "M," described in detail in the original document, where it is accompanied by a painted picture.⁹³ Moreover, that exact image was used as a publisher's mark by Aldo Manuzio the Younger between 1572 and 1584.

⁹² Dondi, "Una famiglia," 699.

⁹³ *Diploma Maximiliani secundi Paulo Manutio concessum* (Venice: Aldo Manuzio the Younger, 1571; *Edit 16*, CNCE 56709). Renouard, *Annales*, 509–12, esp. p. 511. A printed copy of this diploma is in Milan in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, S. R. 72, which is the one consulted and transcribed by Renouard. Another copy is in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York: Fletcher, *In Praise of Aldus*, 76. The imperial diploma confirming the insignia was fundamental both for commercial tutelage over wide areas beyond the places of origin of the marks themselves and for the evolution of the mark from a simple sign of fabrication and/or commerce to its full weight as coats of arms and insignia. The imperial diploma closed the decades-long controversy between the Manuzios and the Torresanis about the ownership of the mark: Manuzio, *Lettere*, 232–33; Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola*, 373–81.



Fig. 5.10. The mark of the Anchor and Dolphin with the imperial eagle, in Luca Peto, *De mensuris, et ponderibus Romanis, et Graecis*. Venice: Aldo Manuzio the Younger, 1573; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

The use of the mark was so important that contracts would include a clause stipulating ownership of the mercantile sign.⁹⁴ We can see the consequences of these agreements in the diffusion of publishers' devices. The bookshop in Rome of Sebastiano de Franceschi at the sign of Peace

⁹⁴ In the banking sector see, for example, the partnership contract for a branch bank in Bruges stipulated by the Medici, in which point one is a clarification, accompanied by a drawing, of the sort of insignia to be used and requires its restoration to the Medici firm at the close of the partnership: De Roover, *The Rise and Decline*, 551–55.

employed the same insignia as Francesco de Franceschi and his heirs in Venice,⁹⁵ and the same insignia appears as a mark in books printed in Rome. Vincenzo Valgrisi owned a bookshop “ad insigni Erasmi” in Bologna at least until 1559, where Giovanni Alessi, qualified as “Institorem et Gubernatorem,” hence Valgrisi’s alter ego, served as manager.⁹⁶

The authorized use of a mark by a branch bookshop has never been examined systematically. The well-known protest of the Manuzio heirs at the awkward counterfeiting of their mark on books published in Lyon – the anchor and the dolphin were reversed – has, quite understandably, led scholars to perceive a mark used in a different location or by a different operator as counterfeit or, at least, an illegal imitation.⁹⁷ I suggest instead a more complex approach to the phenomenon, open to a variety of hypotheses. The appearance of the marks of well-known Venetian publishers on products printed outside Venice produces a web of possible interpretations that needs to be carefully untangled.

Certainly instances of incorrect use of a mark, perhaps deliberate exploitation of that mark, were numerous in Italy. I cite here but two examples: Plantin’s Compass was used by Gaspare Bindoni and Niccolò Bevilacqua, with whom the Plantin firm had no business links;⁹⁸ the caduceus was faithfully copied from the device of the great Froben by the minor Venetian bookmen Camillo and Rutilio Borgominieri.⁹⁹

It is also attested that one agency might adopt more than one mark, sometimes in connection with different types of production. The right to use a mark was hereditary in both the female and male lines as long as a firm continued to exist and could be acquired through marriage.¹⁰⁰ Marks could be rented and sold, and they were always sold along with a shop, as an indication of its reputation. For example, when Francesco Ziletti sold his bookshop in Rome to Giorgio Ferrari in 1570, he

⁹⁵ Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 136.

⁹⁶ Archivio di Stato di Bologna, *Notarile*, Cristoforo Pensabeni, 1 October 1565. See also Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 19.

⁹⁷ For example, see Emerenziana Vaccaro, *Le marche dei tipografi ed editori italiani del secolo XVI nella Biblioteca Angelica di Roma* (Florence: Olschki, 1983), 8–9.

⁹⁸ Both Gaspare Bindoni, whose name is associated with the mark of the Compass on the title pages, and Bevilacqua held title to the mark (along with title to the bookshop and the print shop) as shown by the Register of the Giustizia Vecchia in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia (busta 49, reg. 79), where the firm registered the use of the mark in 1565: Moro, “Insegne librerie,” 62.

⁹⁹ Walter J. Friedlander, *The Golden Wand of Medicine: A History of the Caduceus Symbol in Medicine* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 110–12.

¹⁰⁰ Grimm, *Deutsche Buchdruckersignete*, 34ff, with some discrepancies concerning the situation in Italy.

also ceded the insignia “ad signum serpis” (at the sign of the Serpent).¹⁰¹ Similarly, in 1603, when Antonio degli Antoni sold his Milan bookshop to his brother-in-law Giacomo Antonio Somasco, it came complete with the “sign of the Gryphon.”¹⁰²

Branches and the Diffusion of Publishing Initiatives

As we have seen when examining the case of Gabriele Giolito, Naples quickly became a major market for Venetian booksellers. A fairly high number of bookshops were controlled in different ways by Venetian producers, often as branches of the motherhouse in Venice. The Neapolitan branch of the Venetian publisher Girolamo Scoto and his heirs, for example, under the direction of Scoto's nephew Giovanni Maria, produced some fifty titles.¹⁰³ Venetian entrepreneurs collected a sizeable amount of capital on the Neapolitan market, which they could invest in book production, and many Neapolitan booksellers or merchants had works printed in Venice, often in partnership with Venetian publishers.¹⁰⁴

The branches opened by Venetian booksellers in Rome in the late sixteenth century had even greater impact. Strategically, their significance had less to do with control of the retail market and more to do with an urgent need to gain control of the publishing initiative in a city that was of growing importance in the world of books. The major Venetian bookmen had already had shops in Rome for some time, as we have seen with the example of the Giunti shop. We know from the letters to Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano that the Scoto firm also had a shop in Rome by 1522. Counter-Reformation Rome provided a turning point, producing an aggressive publishing policy that promoted religious texts of various types in new and exclusively authorized versions. Those new versions not only had the legal status to conquer the market but also rendered unsellable earlier editions that were stored in large number in Venetian booksellers' warehouses. Caught in this predicament, Venetian bookmen

¹⁰¹ Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 163. The same thing happened with stationers' shop signs: Achille Bertarelli, “I segni di bottega de' Cartolai milanesi nei secoli XVI e XVII,” *Il libro e la stampa: Bollettino ufficiale della Società Bibliografica Italiana* 1 (1907), fasc. 4–5: 113–21; Stevens and Gehl, “Giovanni Battista Bosso,” 52–53.

¹⁰² The Somasco family in Milan later used the sign of the Gryphon for their printing as well.

¹⁰³ Bernstein, *Music Printing*, 50–51.

¹⁰⁴ Pietro Manzi, “Editori tipografi librai napoletani a Venezia nel secolo XVI,” *La Bibliofilia* 76 (1974): 35–138.

understood that a presence in Rome was indispensable, and during the 1570s and 1580s many of them moved to Rome, opened branches in Rome, or reinforced the branches they already had in Rome. In short, printing in Rome was now second only to Venice, but not as the result of the emergence of a group of local entrepreneurs, but rather because of the Venetian presence in Rome.

Transfer of production could build on the earlier establishment of a branch office. Many Venetian publishers initially found it difficult to produce quality books in Rome, where the print workers did not possess the technical skills on which they could count in Venice, and as a result they used their Roman seats only to sell books. Among these figures, the Tramezino family was among the first to take up the advantages of dual residence, especially as recipients of printing privileges, along with the author-publisher Michelangelo Biondo, a curious and interesting figure.¹⁰⁵ Even Giordano and Francesco Ziletti, who backed many initiatives in the city of the popes, never printed there, at least not under their own names. Only later was there an increase in the number of publishers whose main seat was in Venice but also had a shop in Rome, where they were able to carry on publishing activities. These publishers included Sebastiano de Franceschi, the Zanetti, Gardane, Griffio, and Valgrisi families,¹⁰⁶ Domenico Basa, the Sessas, the Paganini-Varisco firm (which twice transferred the direction of the Roman shop at the sign of the Mermaid, first to Girolamo Franzini,¹⁰⁷ then to Bartolomeo Faletti¹⁰⁸), and the Giuntis; two members of the Manuzio family, Paolo and Aldo the Younger, bring up this list, probably incomplete, of publishers who found it convenient to establish a fixed residence in Rome.¹⁰⁹

The very complexity of their organizations made it possible for the major Venetian bookmen who had already succeeded in setting up commercial networks over a vast territory to extend their activities into other

¹⁰⁵ Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 144–46. See also Angelo Romano, “Michelangelo Biondo poligrafo e stampatore,” in *Officine del nuovo. Sodalizi fra letterati, artisti ed editori nella cultura italiana tra Riforma e Controriforma*, ed. Harald Hendrix and Paolo Procaccioli (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2008), 217–41.

¹⁰⁶ On the Roman editions of the Valgrisi firm (1549–51) under the direction of Giordano Ziletti, Valgrisi's son-in-law, and published with a papal privilege, see Romani, “Luoghi editoriali,” 523–24. For the Gardane branch in Rome, see Agee, *The Gardano*, 63–73.

¹⁰⁷ Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 460–61.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 423. Bartolomeo Faletti obtained the papal universal privilege for the reformed Roman missal. His heirs formed an association with Varisco and published nine different editions in 1570–72: Grendler 1977, *The Roman Inquisition*, 173–74.

¹⁰⁹ For ample attestations, see Masetti Zanini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*.

Italian cities. Strategically placed branches, decentralized warehouse facilities, and sales networks, all controlled within the family and through matrimonial alliances, provided a platform from which to initiate further publishing activities. This phenomenon is hard to describe because of the number of partnership and agency names behind which a single publisher might operate. Local Venetian publishing activity was diminished by the launch of new initiatives in many areas of the Italian Peninsula as the geography of printing in Italy was redrawn.

That their book production was only one aspect of their complex commercial activity helped the great bookseller-merchants of the second half of the sixteenth century react promptly when conditions for production in the Venetian market began to be less profitable. Recognition that such businesses were multifaceted helps us comprehend why a publishing firm could become a presence in a location for which we know of no connections, as in the cases of Francesco de Franceschi, for example, a Venetian publisher who was active at various times in Ferrara, Bergamo, Pavia, Bologna, and Frankfurt,¹¹⁰ or of the Zenaro family.¹¹¹

A less nebulous example of the same phenomenon can be seen in the firm of Francesco Ziletti and his heirs, one of the most interesting businesses of the late sixteenth century. The name Francesco Ziletti stands behind a series of relationships, both between firms and between kin, linking Cremona, Brescia, and Turin to Venice and thus also to other localities in which Ziletti operated. Ziletti had married Niccolò Bevilacqua's daughter Giacomina, and after the death of his father-in-law around 1573, he held title in Turin, under the corporate name "heirs of Niccolò Bevilacqua," to the bookshop of the Bull, which Bevilacqua had founded.¹¹² In Brescia his partner was one of his cousins, the publisher and bookseller Francesco Marchetti,¹¹³ and Marchetti in turn had close business connections with the Bozzola family of bookmen, who were active in both Brescia and Cremona. All of those men were in various ways kin, partners, or

¹¹⁰ Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 450–53; *D.B.I.*, s.v. "De Franceschi, Francesco (Francesco Senese)."

¹¹¹ Paolo Veneziani, "Il libraio al segno della fontana," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1999): 242–66; Patrizia Bravetti, "Damiano Zenaro editore e libraio del Cinquecento," in *Humanistica Marciana: Saggi offerti a Marino Zorzi*, ed. Simonetta Pelusi and Alessandro Scarsella (Milan: Biblion, 2008), 127–32.

¹¹² Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 513. On Bevilacqua, see *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Bevilacqua, Nicolò"; Giovanni Dondi, "L'editoria in Piemonte nel secolo XVI," in *La stampa in Italia nel Cinquecento*, ed. Marco Santoro. 2 vols. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1992), 1:179–210; Merlotti, "Librai, stampatori e potere," 571–81.

¹¹³ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Rocco de Benedetti, b. 438.

supporters of Ziletti. Evidence of their interconnectedness is found in editions signed collectively by Ziletti, Marchetti, and Bozzola, which document in various versions of their title pages the different degrees of their participation, according to which the press run was divided into lots, not only in the provincial cities, but in Venice as well.¹¹⁴ In Cremona, the Ziletti were represented by Giovan Battista Pellizzari, a wealthy merchant and Francesco Ziletti's brother-in-law.¹¹⁵ As Ziletti's fiduciary and wholesale representative, Pellizzari would surely have had authorization when



Fig. 5.11. Orpheus with his lyre, mark of Francesco Ziletti used by Giovan Battista Pellizzari in Cremona, in Diego de Avellaneda, *Quaestio theologica*. Cremona: G. B. Pellizzari, 1594, 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

¹¹⁴ Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 192–93.

¹¹⁵ See chapter 10.

in 1590 he published books using a mark that was evidently derived from Ziletti's – Orpheus with his lyre, somewhat roughly realized.¹¹⁶

These examples are only fragments, tesserae in a complex mosaic still to be reconstructed. The entrepreneurial zest for expansion demonstrated by the great bookmen active in Venice helped them to take full advantage of local and provincial situations as they strove to realize their mercantile and publishing ambitions in contexts less crowded than Venice. It is probable that behind this behavior there also lay a need to circumvent privileges conceded in Venice or a desire to grasp possibilities offered by a local customer base. We need to keep this picture in mind as a counterweight to an interpretation of the increase in printing production in some cities of central and Northern Italy during the last thirty years of the sixteenth century that might identify the development of an autochthonous industry in competition with the great bookmen of Venice. Such local enterprises were indeed a reality, but they took root less often than is thought. Much as we might want to clarify the role played by Venetian publishers in printing in, for example, Rome and Turin, we are hindered by the scarcity of information and often by the difficulty of interpreting data that does survive. It is certainly prudent, however, to avoid automatically defining the book production of many Italian cities as competition for Venetian publishers simply on the grounds that it took place outside Venice.¹¹⁷ Where previously the great bookmen of Venice were firmly centered on Venice, in this period their loci of activity multiplied.

Foreign Branches in Italy?

One final question remains. It seems strange that although Italian booksellers opened branches abroad, the great publishers north of the Alps never found it profitable to establish bookshops of their own in the Italian cities, even in Venice and Rome. Publishers such as Plantin or Wechel considered branches in Paris indispensable if they were to be able to supply an important market that could not be reached through the book fairs.¹¹⁸ It seems, however, that all the great European firms needed if they

¹¹⁶ See *Edit 16*, CNCM 896. Francesco Ziletti used two marks, a Stellar Comet and Orpheus with his lyre.

¹¹⁷ An assertion made even by the excellent Grendler: Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 225–33.

¹¹⁸ Henri Stein, "La succursale plantinienne de Paris," *Bibliographie moderne* 1 (1920–21): 1–24; Parent-Charon, "Le commerce du livre." See also Ursula Baumeister, "Beys (Gilles, alias Egide)," in *Imprimeurs et libraires parisiens du XVI^e siècle: ouvrage publié d'après les manuscrits de Philippe Renouard* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1979), 3:312–72.

were to sell books in Italy was an exchange relationship with Italian wholesaler-producers at the Lyon and Frankfurt fairs. The assortment of *oltramontani* books imported from Frankfurt and circulated thanks to catalogues published for the occasion in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is eloquent testimony to the attention Italian booksellers paid to distributing imported books.¹¹⁹ It is significant that bookmen from all over Europe participated in the fairs in Frankfurt, but only the Italians, on their return, published printed catalogues of the books they imported. The speed with which books printed outside Italy were made available in Italian bookshops is demonstrated by the assortment in the Florentine shop of the Giunti family hinted at by Vincenzio Borghini's notes on his purchases. Books from all over Europe arrived in Florence in the same year in which they were published, thanks to the Giunti firm's formidable network.¹²⁰

Foreign entrepreneurship was not, however, totally absent from Italian cities. For an instructive episode we can turn to the brief adventure of a partnership for commerce in books ratified in Padua on 7 February 1565.¹²¹ The arrangement was signed by three people: the organist Marco Antonio Putti (de Putis) and Doctor Andrea Raciencourt,¹²² both of whom lived in Padua, and Doctor Adam Henricpetri, a patrician from Basel. The presence of Adam Henricpetri as a partner makes evident that the aim of this partnership was to assure a commercial outlet for editions published or sold by his father.

Adam Henricpetri (1543–96) was barely twenty-two years old when the Padua partnership was drawn up; he was a son of the great Basel publisher Heinrich Petri and the older brother, by three years, of Sebastian Henricpetri.¹²³ His education had been particularly carefully planned. In

¹¹⁹ Alfredo Serrai, "Cataloghi tipografici, editoriali, di librai," in Serrai, *Storia della Bibliografia*. 11 vols. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988–2001), 4:30–34; Christian Coppens, "The Communication Circuit Made Accessible: Some Unexploited Sources, Publishers' and Booksellers' Catalogues," in *Il libro antico tra catalogo storico e catalogazione elettronica* (29–30 ottobre 2010) (Rome: Accademia dei Lincei, forthcoming).

¹²⁰ Gustavo Bertoli, "Conti e corrispondenza di don Vincenzio Borghini con i Giunti stampatori e librai di Firenze," *Studi sul Boccaccio* 21 (1993): 279–359.

¹²¹ Archivio di Stato di Padova, *Notarile*, vol. 2424 bis., ff. 106–11, mentioned in Magliani, "Una società padovana," 184; unpublished.

¹²² Raciencourt, that is, Rachecourt, or Roesig, in the province of Luxemburg, or Lothringen, in Lorraine. The document defines this person, who was already active in the book business in Padua, as "Dottore Lotaringio."

¹²³ Bernard Antoon Vermaseren, "Der Basler Geschichtsschreiber Dr Adam Henricpetri (1543–86) und sein Buch über den niederländischen Aufstand gegen Spanien," *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 56 (1957): 35–65.

his early years he studied in Nozeroy under the supervision of Gilbertus Cognatus (Gilbert Cousin), who had been a secretary of Erasmus of Rotterdam.¹²⁴ Cousin had collected a large library, and he surrounded himself with paying students for whom he acted as preceptor. Later Adam Henricpetri studied law in Basel, Dôle, and perhaps in Pavia and Brescia, earning his doctorate *in utroque* in Ferrara in 1564. In 1565 he was appointed professor of Institutions at the University of Basel. After acting as dean of the faculty there for a number of years, he resigned in 1583 and became general council to the city authorities.

Adam Henricpetri knew Italy well. He had lived in several Italian cities and was aware of the tensions that inhabited them. In a 1562 letter to Basil Amerbach, the son of Boniface Amerbach, he recounted that in Bologna two German students of noble family had been subjected to torture by the pontifical legate and thirteen other students had been threatened with the same treatment after violent clashes between students and the local police force. Because of these serious incidents, all German students abandoned Bologna to transfer to Padua.¹²⁵

Adam Henricpetri was named professor at the University of Basel on 20 January 1565. On that date, however, he was still in Italy, where he remained for a few weeks for reasons that had little to do with the university studies he had just completed. On 21 February he was in Brescia, where he signed a receipt for ten gold scudi that Giordano Ziletti, represented by the bookseller Francesco Marchese, owed him. The partnership set up fifteen days earlier in Padua shows that Adam Henricpetri was busy selling the family print production and a vast assortment of books that his father, an enthusiastic presence at the Frankfurt Fair, had gathered together.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Lucien Febvre, "Un secrétaire d'Érasme: Gilbert Cousin et la Réforme en Franche-Comté," *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 56 (1907): 97–148. See also *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas Brian Deutscher, 3 vols. (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1985–87), 1:350–52.

¹²⁵ Vermaseren, "Der Basler Geschichtsschreiber," 40, erroneously presents these events as having taken place in Padua, with the students fleeing to Bologna. This is clearly impossible, given that Bologna (but not Padua) was in the Papal States and criminal jurisdiction there was entrusted to the pontifical legate. The incident had weighty consequences, and the damage caused was undone only during the papacy of Gregory XIII, when the privileges of German students were reinstated. See *Privilegia a sacrat. Imperat. et ss. Romanorum pontificibus nationi Germanicae in Bonon. gymnas. indulta* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1593, Edit 16, CNCE 64445).

¹²⁶ According to Heinrich Petri's epitaph, he visited the Frankfurt Fair 108 times: Heckethorn, *The Printers of Basle*, 154.

The bookshop that Henricpetri founded with his two partners following the agreement of February 1565 was a response to an ambitious entrepreneurial project. It was not a branch, strictly speaking, because the Petri family did not hold full title to it and it did not display their famous insignia.¹²⁷ The Petri of Basel, who had been singled out in the Index of Prohibited Books of 1558–59,¹²⁸ could not show themselves openly on the Italian market using their own name and insignia. Nevertheless, they remained producers of book merchandise with ample sales in Padua, thanks in part to the many German students at the university.

Closer analysis of the contract that forged this association provides further evidence of the partners' intended goals. The company had been founded above all for the management of a bookshop that did not yet exist at a location that had not yet been selected. All the expenses were to be paid in equal parts by the three partners, and all decisions were also to be taken jointly. For two years no profits could be drawn off but had to be reinvested in the business. Earnings were to be calculated every six months, and their first use was to pay all debts so as to preserve the firm's reputation and credit rating. After the first two years, profits were to be divided into four parts, the fourth part to remain with the business. Withdrawals could be made without penalty only in case of force majeure, that is, death.

It is worth noting that none of the three partners was a bookseller. That meant that they had to find an employee to keep the bookshop, who would be paid a salary funded by all three partners. If one of the three wanted to take on that responsibility, he would not be paid a salary but would receive 12 percent on all sales. The shop would also have to take on a binder. The person responsible for the shop could not buy or accept prohibited theology books, a fundamental regulation in a university city that was frequented by Protestant students and where commerce in second-hand books was mostly carried on among students. The bartering of books produced by foreign printers in exchange for Venetian books was also prohibited: books from north of the Alps always had to be sold at their stated price.

¹²⁷ The Petri device represents a hand striking a rock with a hammer, with flames issuing out of the rock that are fanned by the wind (a reference to Jeremiah 23:29): Heckethorn, *The Printers of Basle*, 155.

¹²⁸ Jesús Martínez de Bujanda et al., *Index de Rome, 1557, 1559, 1564: Les premiers index romains et l'index du Concile de Trente* (Sherbrooke, Québec: Centre d'Études de la Renaissance, Éditions de l'Université de Sherbrooke; Geneva: Droz, 1990), 332, 336.

Adam Henricpetri seems to have been responsible for supplying all books sold in the shop. He was to furnish books printed in Basel, Frankfurt, Paris, and Lyon, paying also for making up the bales and transportation costs. If books should be damaged during transport, all three partners had to participate in making up the loss, unless it could be shown that the person responsible for the shipment had been negligent, in which case, he would pay the damages. The partners who lived in Padua were to pay for the books they received every six months at the Frankfurt Fair. The first shipment of books, with which the shop opened, cost 450 florins, with each partner paying 150 florins.

The partnership was not limited to the management of a bookshop supplied directly by the Petri firm of Basel. Plans included the production of books. The partners saw two possibilities here. The first was to have books printed in Venice or Padua by other printers. In that case they would use the bookshop sign as a mark: three falcons (*Trium Falcorum Societas*) were to appear on the title page, with the names of the three partners printed on the last sheet. The second possibility was to install a new print shop, for which Adam Henricpetri was to send a skilled worker and high-quality printing equipment from Basel. More agreements were drawn up to employ a corrector, a job that could also be done by one of the partners. Finally, they made it clear that a portion of the basic holdings of the bookshop's capital included two and a half bales of books belonging to Marc'Antonio Putti, stock that would be expanded with many bales of books that Andrea Raciencourt would buy in Venice and Henricpetri would buy in Basel.

The publishing and commercial partnership venture of the Three Falcons does not seem to have turned out very well. No editions bearing the Three Falcons device remain. As regards the bookshop, two and a half years later, on 17 November 1567, Marco Antonio Putti, the owner of a bookshop called "of the Two Falcons" situated in the *contrada del Bo* at San Martino,¹²⁹ called a notary to the shop. He had just received a sizeable shipment of bales of books from Basel that had arrived ruined, rotten and unusable. According to their agreement, in order to obtain compensation Putti had to demonstrate successfully Henricpetri's exclusive responsibility, which meant that the bales had to be opened in the presence of a notary. The list of these books includes 1,414 copies, widely distributed

¹²⁹ The name indicates Andrea Raciencourt had withdrawn from the partnership or had died.

over a high number of editions, all printed in Germany, France, or the Low Countries.¹³⁰

It is hard to tell whether this disastrous shipment was the last act of the partnership. There is no other evidence to tell us how long it lasted, even as a commercial association given that the publishing firm seems to have remained unborn. The goal of the partners was to be able to have shipments of the best European print products sent directly to Padua without their having to pass through the book importers in Venice. Even if we can reach no conclusions about the profitability of this initiative, its very exceptional nature shows that the mediation of Venetian book dealers remained standard practice for the importation of books from north of the Alps.

As a rule, the book firms of Northern Europe preferred to keep an agent in Italy rather than open a branch office. In 1531 and 1532 Johann Bebel, a Basel publisher, maintained his own agent in Venice.¹³¹ Such agents are difficult to characterize, however, in part because their activities were usually multifarious. One person of whom we can at least gain a glimpse is Bartolomeo Chemer. Chemer's bookshop was visited by the Holy Office in 1582, and several prohibited titles, all imported from Frankfurt, were found there.¹³² The interrogation to which Chemer was subjected revealed a proud but pragmatic man. The inquisitor of Venice, Angelo Marabino, tried to intimidate him by pointing out that he could be suspected of heresy for having imported prohibited books into the city. He added that Chemer's position was aggravated by the fact that he came from Leuven, an area in which many had adopted the new creed. Chemer responded with resentment, saying that with all due reverence to the Most Holy Tribunal that was interrogating him, it was false to say that his city of origin had ever been suspected of heresy. Leuven, to the contrary, could be defined as a bulwark of the Catholic faith, as everyone knew. Pragmatically, Chemer observed that the rules for customs inspection in Venice were impossible to observe and that prohibited books were sold in the city on a daily basis. The Inquisition imposed the hefty fine of six ducats on Chemer.

¹³⁰ Archivio di Stato di Padova, *Notarile*, vol. 4093, ff. 260–71, unpublished, but mentioned in Magliani, "Una società padovana," 184.

¹³¹ Bietenholz and Deutscher, eds. *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 1:112–13 and *Die Amerbachkorrespondenz, im Auftrag der Kommission für die Öffentliche Bibliothek der Universität Basel bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Alfred Hartmann* (Basel: Verlag der Universitätsbibliothek, 1953), 4:88.

¹³² Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 186, 319–20.

It is from the papers of another publisher, Michele Tramezino, who had business relations with Chemer, that we can grasp Chemer's role in Venice more completely. In 1580 Chemer was the agent representing the great editorial firm of the heirs of Arnold Birckmann, a business active in Cologne, Paris, Antwerp, and London.¹³³

¹³³ Bietenholz and Deutsche, *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 1:148–49. The heirs – Birckmann's widow, Agnes von Gennep, and their sons Arnold the Younger and Johann – were active with this name from 1542 to 1585.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BOOK PRIVILEGE SYSTEM

Tension within the market, in particular friction caused by competition, had been tackled in Italy by mature economic and legal thought even before printing became part of that market. Animated by innovative merchant-entrepreneurs, however, printing gave new life to various existing means of regulation. These instruments better defined the product for sale by ensuring that it had specific recognizable features, in a process that was driven above all by competition. We have already encountered one form of customization, the distinctive mark or device.

Today the book market in a land such as Italy is nationally and linguistically based. In the Renaissance, in a territory such as Italy, it was transnational. Different states coexisted on the Italian Peninsula, and vast territories (and hence markets) were not independent but rather under foreign administration. From the linguistic viewpoint, the market for Latin works was, so to speak, global, and Italian publishers always remained intensively active in this sector. Moreover, literature in Italian also found a market throughout Europe.

For much of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, publishers, printers, and booksellers had no guild and their lively and entrepreneurial commercial drive was therefore unimpeded by corporate regulation. They enjoyed a direct economic return, proportional to risk, from their activities. Subject only to the general magistracies, they used their ingenuity to adapt the available legal instruments to the needs of their business affairs, and in particular to protection of trade in books. The most characteristic and longest lasting of the instruments they employed was certainly the privilege, which in part gave rise to today's notion of copyright.¹

¹ The system of book privileges in Italy is treated in Richard J. Agee, "The Privilege and Venetian Music-Printing in the Sixteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1982) and Agee, "The Venetian Privilege and Music-Printing in the Sixteenth Century," *Early Music History: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Music* 3 (1983): 1–42; Maria Grazia Blasio, *Cum gratia et privilegio: Programmi editoriali e politica pontificia: Roma 1487–1527* (Rome: Roma nel Rinascimento, 1988); Stanley Boorman, *Ottaviano Petrucci: Catalogue Raisonné* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 77–108, 747–48, 1143–64; Maurizio Borghi, *Writing Practices in the Privilege- and Intellectual Property-Systems*, <http://www.Case.edu/affil/sce/authorship/Borghi.pdf> and Borghi, "A Venetian Experiment on

The Institution of the Privilege

In order to understand the significance of the recourse to privileges in the history of printing and the book trade, it is useful to recall some of the characteristics of the privilege and of its historical and legal development.

Perpetual Copyright," in *Privilege and Property: Essays on the History of Copyright*, ed. R. Deazley, M. Kretschmer, and L. Bently (Cambridge, Open Book Publishers, 2010), 137–55; Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*; Carlo Castellani, "I privilegi di stampa e la proprietà letteraria in Venezia dalla introduzione della stampa in città fin verso la fine del secolo scorso," *Archivio Veneto* 36 (1888): 127–39; Fontana, "Inizi della proprietà letteraria"; Vittorio Frajese, "Regolamentazione e controllo delle pubblicazioni degli antichi stati italiani (sec. XV–XVIII)," in *Produzione e commercio della carta e del libro, secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti della "Ventitreesima settimana di studi," 15–20 aprile 1991*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1992), 677–724; Franceschelli, *Trattato*; Fulin, "Documenti"; Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*; Joanna Kostylo, "Commentary on Johannes of Speyer's Venetian Monopoly (1469)," "Commentary on Marcantonio Sabellico's privilege (1486)," "Commentary on Aldus Manutius's Warning against the Printers of Lyon (1503)," "Commentary on the Venetian Decree of 1545 Regarding Author/Printer Relations," in *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450–1900)*, ed. L. Bentley and M. Kretschmer, www.copyrighthistory.org; Leicht, "L'editore veneziano"; Paola Negrin, "Licenze e privilegi di stampa a Venezia (1527–1550)" (M.A. thesis, Università Ca' Foscari, Venice, 1991); Angela Nuovo, "Paratesto e pubblicità del privilegio (Venezia, sec. XV)," *Paratesto. Rivista internazionale* 2 (2005): 17–37 and "Ruscelli e il sistema dei privilegi a Venezia," in *Girolamo Ruscelli. Dall'accademia alla corte alla tipografia*, ed. Paolo Marini and Paolo Procaccioli (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2012), 193–213; Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*; Tiziana Pesenti, "Stampatori e letterati nell'industria editoriale a Venezia e in terraferma," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4, pt. 1:93–103; Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*; Giovan Battista Salvioni, "L'arte della stampa nel Veneto: La proprietà letteraria nel Veneto," *Giornale degli economisti pubblicato dalle Società d'Incoraggiamento di Padova* 2 (1877): 21–53; Rossana Sordelli and Luigi Sordelli, "I privilegi di stampa a Milano nel sec. XVI," *Rivista di diritto industriale* 1 (1957): 101–55 and Rossana Sordelli and Luigi Sordelli, "Aspetti monopolistici del commercio librario milanese in un raro documento del secolo XVI," *Rivista di storia del diritto italiano* 31 (1958): 343–48; Nicola Stolfi, *La proprietà intellettuale*. 2 vols. (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice, 1915–17); Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza*; Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*; Zorzi, "Dal manoscritto al libro" and Zorzi, "La produzione e la circolazione del libro," in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*. 8 vols. (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1992–98), 4:817–958 and 7:921–85. For France, see Elisabeth Armstrong, *Before Copyright: The French Book-Privilege System 1498–1526* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Annie Parent-Charon, "La pratique des privilèges chez Josse Bade, 1510–1535," in *Printers and Readers in the Sixteenth Century: Including the Proceedings from the Colloquium Organized by the Centre for European Culture, 9 June 2000*, ed. Christian Coppens (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 15–26; for Germany, with particular reference to the invention of intellectual property, see Ludwig Gieseke, *Die geschichtliche Entwicklung des deutschen Urheberrechts* (Göttingen: Schwartz, 1957) and *Vom Privileg zum Urheberrecht: Die Entwicklung des Urheberrechts in Deutschland bis 1845* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1995); and Martin Vogel, "Deutsche Urheber- und Verlagsrechtsgeschichte zwischen 1450 und 1850: Sozial- und Methodengeschichtliche Entwicklungsstufen der Rechte von Schriftsteller und Verleger," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 19 (1978): 1–190; for Vienna, see Hans-Joachim Koppitz, "Die Privilegia impressoria des Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchivs in Wien: ein Überblick," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 69 (1994): 187–207 and Hans-Joachim Koppitz, ed. *Die kaiserlichen Druckprivilegien im Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*

In the Renaissance discoveries and inventions took on a role in social and material progress that was destined to continue even into our own day. Both governing powers and inventors recognized the social import and economic value of such novelties. Political authorities attempted to attract creative talent from outside their own territories and sought to provide the support that would enable the newcomers to contribute to the economic wellbeing of their lands or to the expansion of their political or military power. The goal was often to ensure supply of the internal market, freeing it from dependence on far-off producers, and to extend gradually the range of goods that could be exported. The wish to provide work for the poor also provided an important stimulus, but so too did competition between cities or between states over the manufacture of prestigious goods and their associated honor and glory.

Inventors proved more than willing to immigrate to a new location where better working conditions had been created for them. Not infrequently, an inventor, much like an artist, would travel in search of someone who would take in his new work. He might stop off only briefly before moving on again in search of better conditions. Such progress was typical of early printers, especially those who moved among small centers, where sources of stimulus and financing dried up rapidly.

Governing bodies promised, and guaranteed, various advantages in order to attract not only inventors but also highly skilled workers. Incentives could include employment and a salary, a house for the worker and his family, a place in which to carry on his activities, and fiscal exemptions. If the development of the invention or the technical process itself called for the use of state property (for example, public waters for mills),

Wien. *Verzeichnis der Akten vom Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des Deutschen Reichs* (1806) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008); for the imperial privileges requested in Vienna by Pietro Perna, Leandro Perini, *La vita e i tempi di Pietro Perna* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2002), 116–17, 375–81; for Spain, see Fermín de los Reyes Gómez, *El libro en España y América: Legislación y censura (siglos XV–XVIII)*. 2 vols. (Madrid: Arco/Libros, 2000); Reyes Gómez, “Con privilegio; la exclusiva de edición del libro antiguo español,” *Revista General de Información y Documentación* 11, no. 2 (2001): 163–200; and Rafael M. Pérez García, *La imprenta y la literatura espiritual castellana en la España del Renacimiento, 1470–1560: Historia y estructura de una emisión cultural* (Somonte-Cenero Gijón [Asturias]: Ediciones Trea, 2006), 119–74; For the Netherlands, see Chris Schriks, *Het kopijrecht, 16de tot 19de eeuw* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers/Kluwer, 2004); for England, and its connection with Venice, see Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); for all of Europe, see Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*, 134–70. The term “privilege” comes from the Latin *privilegium*, or *priva lex* (law-exempt), a special favor that went beyond common law, or even better, *lex privata*, as the privilege was if not *contra legem* at least *praeter* (out of) *jus*. A privilege was not just outside the law; it was an explicit exception to the law in favor of an individual or category of individuals.

such concessions could also be included as fringe benefits.² If the invention was a success and created sufficient demand, additional concrete gains might ensue.

A privilege protected the privilege holder from competition, allowing him to use a specific novelty for his sole benefit for a specific period, in the sense that potential rivals were prohibited under the threat of various sanctions from “doing” (*fare*) anything “against” (*contro*) the exclusive rights conceded to the privilege holder. Such a prohibition took the character of an order on the part of the authority that had conceded the privilege.³ A privilege did not grant the power to do something, a right that was often already covered by common law, but rather made that power exclusive, preventing its exercise by any other person.⁴ The privilege was based on the *jus prohibendi* or *excludendi*.⁵ In other words, to rights already afforded by common law, the privilege added the ability to act alone, with all others required to abstain from also carrying out that same act.

Privileges did not take a constant and specific form, even though with time and their repeated use in similar situations, they tended to adopt a standard formula. Among the concrete forms were the *brevetto* (patent) and the *lettera patente* (permit, licence), in which, either at the demand or request of the interested party or autonomously *motu proprio*, the king, the lord, the pope, or the supreme governing body, by means of “grace” and “favor,” conceded a particular right. The text of the privilege included a brief and schematic description of the object involved that nearly always closely followed the text of the petition or request.

It was not by chance that legislation regarding privileges for inventions is particularly rich and abundant in Venice, beginning in the fifteenth

² Carlo Marco Belfanti, “Guilds, Patents, and the Circulation of Technical Knowledge: Northern Italy during the Early Modern Age,” *Technology and Culture* 45, no. 3 (2004): 569–89; Liliane Hilaire-Perez and Catherine Verna, “Dissemination of Technical Knowledge in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era: New Approaches and Methodological Issues,” *Technology and Culture* 47, no. 3 (2006): 1–30; Luca Molà, “Stato e impresa: Privilegi per l’introduzione di nuove arti e brevetti,” in *Il Rinascimento Italiano e l’Europa*. 6 vols. (Treviso: Fondazione Cassamarca; Costabissara [Vicenza]: Angelo Colla, 2005–), 3:533–72.

³ Franceschelli, *Trattato*, 266. On the privileges for inventors in Venice, see Roberto Berveglieri, *Inventori stranieri a Venezia, 1474–1788: Importazione di tecnologia e circolazione di tecnici artigiani inventori: Repertorio* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1995) and Berveglieri, *Le vie di Venezia: Canali lagunari e rii a Venezia: Inventori, brevetti, tecnologia e legislazione nei secoli XIII–XVIII* (Sommacampagna [Verona]: Cierre, 1999).

⁴ All too often the character of the privilege remains misunderstood. Even recently, we read, “the *privilegio* gave a special concession or right to reproduce specified works in printed form for a specific length of time”: Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 26, an affirmation in which I might also point out the erroneous use of the word “right” (*diritto*) in a misleading sense that makes it synonymous with concession. Rights are not conceded.

⁵ Franceschelli, *Trattato*, 276.

century. Venice was early in regulating the inventor and his production techniques, which were recognized in the general law of 19 March 1474.⁶ Concessions of patents for inventions in Venice between 1474 and the end of the sixteenth century were numbered in the hundreds.⁷ The repercussions of Venice's great activity in this area were felt in other regions with which the city was in constant contact: Germany, for example, imported the fundamental characteristics of Venetian procedure. Venice was particularly solicitous of innovators in the realms of mills, ships, and arms, and those who furthered the maintenance of watercourses, on which Venice relied as transport routes. In such cases, the concessions were genuine industrial monopolies and a means of realizing a social good.

Most Italian states encouraged innovation and thereby made room for the effective transfer of technical knowledge. In the Duchy of Milan, fiscal exemptions, rewards encouraging innovation, and the concession of monopolies and privileges for those who introduced new crafts or manufactured goods were the stuff of daily legislation. Italy drove forward innovation not only because it was a home of creativity – indeed, in this respect it found its equal in other areas such as Germany and the Low Countries – but also because it designed and codified juridical and economic mechanisms that defended and propagated that creativity.⁸

Italy led the field in legislation that covered printing. In France, for example, the privilege system spread only after the French came into contact with an analogous policy in Milan when Louis XII took over the Sforza chancery in September 1499. The Venetian practice, continued by Italian bookmen in Lyon, was also influential.⁹ Even in distant Portugal, it was bookmen from Italy who were among the first to request and obtain royal privileges, as seen in the activity of João Pedro Bonhomini (Giovanni Pietro Bonomini of Cremona).¹⁰ As heirs of Italian merchant-bankers who had single-handedly forged their own legal instruments as the need arose, thus creating modern commercial law, Italian bookmen helped to spread the book privilege throughout Europe, as the principal legal means of regulating print production during the ancien régime.

⁶ Luigi Sordelli, "Interesse sociale e progresso tecnico nella parte veneziana del 19 marzo 1474 sulle privative agli inventori," *Rivista di diritto industriale* 23 (1974): 359–411.

⁷ Berveglieri, *Inventori stranieri*; Molà, "Stato e impresa," 550.

⁸ Molà, "Stato e impresa," 572.

⁹ Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 5–7, 118–19.

¹⁰ Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 8; Jorge Peixoto, "Os privilégios de impressão dos livros em Portugal no século XVI," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1966): 265–72.

Book Privileges

The book privilege was not entirely innovative. Its novelty lay in the object to which the privilege was applied, and especially in their earliest form, book privileges were similar to patents for new inventions.¹¹ The adaptability of this institution to the buoyant and complex demands of the nascent publishing industry is striking. Such privileges were soon more than exceptional measures and began to provide a necessary infrastructure for the whole system of market regulation for the publishing sector. The privilege was the principal legal instrument that determined the development of the book market, its successes and misadventures included.

The first known printing privilege granted by a European government was that conceded by Venice to Johannes de Spira in 1469, making it legal for him and him alone to pursue the art of printing in the city for five years.¹² Moreover, the privilege prohibited the importation into the state of books that had been printed elsewhere. This privilege *pro arte introducenda* was similar to many privileges conceded earlier in the Venetian Republic, and if that model had continued to be followed for this new market sector, the development of printing would have been severely impeded. Because the privilege was personal, however, it was annulled by the sudden death of Johannes de Spira. Together with Venice, the Duchy of Milan led the way in conceding privileges to the earliest printers and booksellers, men such as Antonio Planella, Panfilo Castaldi, Pietro Antonio da Castiglione, and Ambrogio Caimi.¹³ The privileges conceded first to Planella and then to Castaldi in this period were similar to that received by Johannes de Spira in Venice,¹⁴ but this form of privilege was subsequently abandoned.¹⁵

¹¹ Joanna Kostylo, "From Gunpowder to Print: The Common Origins of Copyright and Patent," in *Privilege and Property: Essays on the History of Copyright*, ed. R. Deazley, M. Kretschmer, and L. Bently (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 21–50.

¹² Fulin, "Documenti," 99–100, no. 1; Kostylo, "Commentary on Johannes of Speyer."

¹³ Sordelli and Sordelli, "I privilegi di stampa a Milano" and Sordelli and Sordelli, "Aspetti monopolistici."

¹⁴ Motta, "Pamfilo Castaldi," 252–57.

¹⁵ One highly visible exception was the behavior of the Republic of Genoa, which as late as 1533 conceded to the printer Antonio Bellone an absolute privilege of twenty-five years duration to print in its dominions. The text of the privilege appears in Nicolò Giuliani, *Notizie sulla tipografia ligure sino a tutto il secolo XVI, con primo e secondo supplemento* (Genoa: Co' tipi del R. I. de' sordo-muti, 1869), 436–42 and is discussed in Graziano Ruffini, *Sotto il segno del Pavone: Annali di Giuseppe Pavoni e dei suoi eredi (1598–1642)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1994), 13–18. See also Frederick J. Norton, *Italian Printers 1501–1520: An Annotated List, with an Introduction* (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1958), xxiv–xxv.

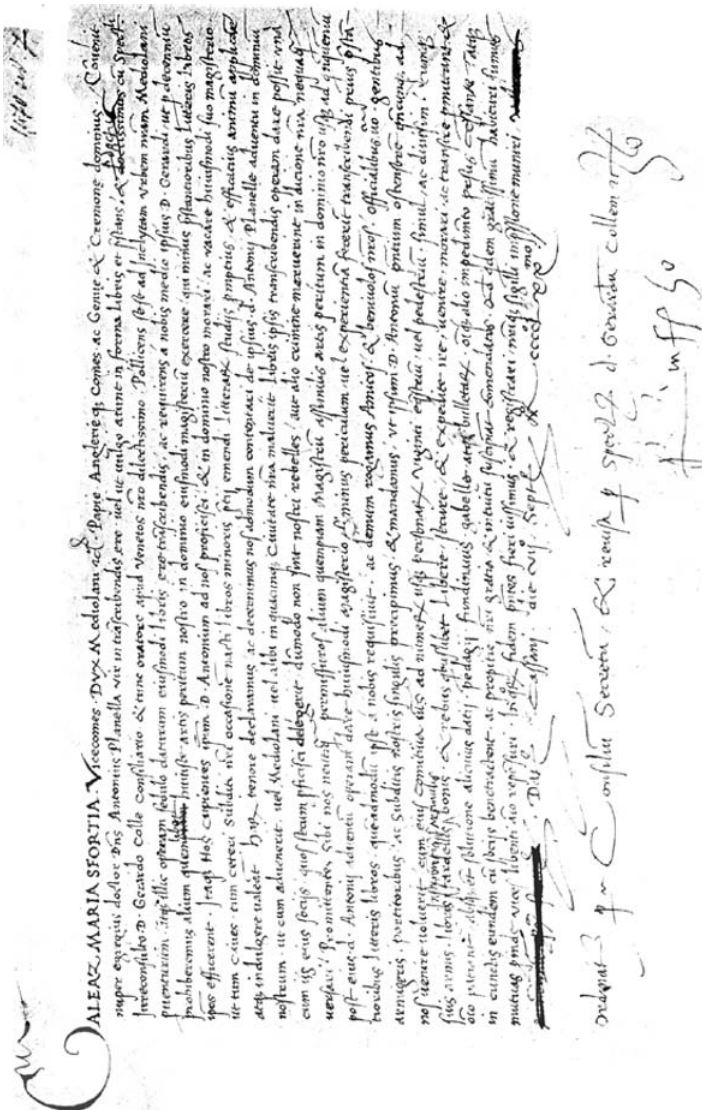


Fig. 6.1. Printing privilege granted to Antonio Planella, 7 September 1470. Milan, Archivio di Stato, *Carteggio sforzesco*, Registri ducali 136, fol. 50. Courtesy of Archivio di stato, Milan.

In Venice, after a slow start – the first two privileges were separated by seventeen years – the number of requests for privileges grew rapidly in the 1490s. Within one decade, the number of privileges officially conceded and registered, each of which often contained concessions for more than one edition, doubled, then tripled.

Three different groupings of privilege can be identified – industrial, literary, and commercial, although we must be aware that the boundaries of these definitions were porous. Industrial privileges protected inventions that accompanied and enabled the improvement of printing, as seen in various techniques for music printing. Privileges protecting design innovations and new typefaces could not exist without concrete protection of the book as the product of such invention, to which commercial protection was also given. For example, in 1496 a privilege was conceded to Aldo Manuzio for the Greek typeface that he claimed to have invented, an industrial privilege that assured him the benefits of his invention for a twenty-year period.¹⁶ The realization of such a privilege, however, was possible only when it was applied to every Greek edition that Aldo Manuzio produced, as indeed happened, beginning with Aristotle's *Organon* (ISTC ia00959000), in which the privilege was printed at the end of the volume, in Latin so that it would be more widely understood.¹⁷

Literary privileges were granted to authors or curators of texts with the intention of protecting their economic interests. Privileges were not seen, however, as an inherent right to which the author was automatically entitled. Authors were not given rights of ownership of their work, but they were granted a degree of exclusivity in that they could entrust the publication of their text to a publisher they considered appropriate. In practice, this privilege strengthened the author's position in his relationship with the publisher of his work and gave him the opportunity to supervise the

¹⁶ Fulin, "Documenti," 120, no. 41, an authentic and recognized patent giving the holder exclusive use of his invention. There was no contradiction in the privileges conceded later to Gabriele da Brisighella (which had to be reconfirmed, thus showing that there were complaints and resistance: Fulin, "Documenti," 133, no. 80) and to Nicolaus Blastus, in both cases regarding series of Greek types and works to be printed using them, because their typefaces were evidently completely different from Aldo's (*ibid.*, no. 85). Still, one has the strong impression that Aldo and his powerful entourage strongly hindered the enterprises (all in the hands of Greeks or Cretans) that were printing in Greek in competition with him: Bigliazzi et al., *Aldo Manuzio*, 13–23; Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio*, 112–16; Kostylo, "Commentary on Aldus Manutius's Warning."

¹⁷ Nuovo, "Paratesto e pubblicità." It is certainly significant, however, that after the Venetian Republic had conceded a privilege to print in Greek to others, Aldo began to request protection specifically for every title that he intended to publish: Fulin, "Documenti," 136, no. 89.

REGISTRVM.

f
 Ἀριστοτέλους
 ἀν' ἐπιστήμῃ
 ται, γὰρ μὲν
 λοις ἰοικέν

g
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 κότων οὐδὲν
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h
 σιῶ, δὲ καί οὖ
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 Ἀριστοτέλους
 μὲν γὰρ

i
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m
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 γὰρ δὲ πείθει
 Φορὰ οὐδὲ

n
 γροισιν ἰδέας
 των μέγαλη
 μηδετέρω
 μένωνται τὸν

o
 οὐ ὑπάρχει
 ψισ ἀγῶνος
 γὰρ ὅτι

6h γὰρ
 p
 τωσ ὡς
 τέ μὲν
 ληλάτε
 λογίαν

q
 οὐ πείθει
 ται καὶ ἀξιοῦνται
 τρικὸς
 εἰ μὴ δὲ

r
 λ' ὅτι
 τωσ ἡκιστα
 νον, οἶον

f
 πόλε ἀγαθὸν
 φατέον
 σιν ἀρα

Τ Ε Λ Ο Σ ~

Impressum Venetiis dexteritate Aldi Manucii Romani.
 Calendis nouembris. M. CCCC. LXXXV.

Concessum est eidem Aldo inuentori ab illustrissimo Se
 natu Veneto ne quis queat imprimere neq; hunc librum:
 neq; ceteros quos is ipse imprefferit: neq; eius uti inuento.
 sub pœna ut in gratia.

Fig. 6.2. Colophon and privilege in Aristotle, *Opera*, in Greek. Venice: Aldo Manuzio, 1495; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

accuracy of the printed text. In a technical sense, then, the author transferred the privilege to which he had title to the printer-publisher to whom he entrusted his text. The majority of privileges were commercial in nature, requested by publishers to protect their interests against competition for a specific work or a group of works. Printing a book involved high costs, which could be recouped only by the sale of a correspondingly large number of books. Temporary protection in the domestic market ensured that no competitor could publish and sell the same work and thereby make inroads into the publisher's profits. In practice, the system of privileges drew no distinctions between the various categories of petitioners (printers, publishers, authors, curators, owners of manuscripts, etc.), because its purpose was not to recognize individual rights but to regulate commerce. Its aim was economic: to construct an ideal environment for the development of printing, with consequent advantages for the state.

The concept of competition was new to the book world. In the age of the manuscript, the normal procedure for the production of a work had been to transcribe it from an existing copy. That mentality was inherent in the very idea of a book and the transmission of a text, to the extent that for some time the early printers continued to accept it automatically.¹⁸ By the 1490s, however, it was clear that the sums of money involved in putting out an unpublished work and the risks tied to publication were not protected under the current laws. Unauthorized reprints, or even pirate editions made while a work was being printed by copying sheets filched from the pressmen, were an ongoing threat.¹⁹ Such activity determined the nature of competition in the book sector and encouraged bookmen to seek protection adequate to their needs.²⁰ The privilege was the instrument best able to protect the financial investment that printing required, for it could, in theory, hold at bay potential inroads into profits.

¹⁸ This concept was in part incorporated in the request for a privilege when the petitioner declared his ownership of the manuscript of the work to be printed, thus implying his right to copy it, a right traditionally considered legally exclusive to the possessor. One example is found in the request for a privilege made by Carlo Bembo (for his brother Pietro) for the printing of manuscripts, both thought to be autograph, of Petrarch and Dante: Fulin, "Documenti," 146, no. 115 (editions realized by Aldo Manuzio: *Edit 16*, CNCE 36111 and 1144).

¹⁹ As stated by the bookseller Bernardino Rasina (Bernardinus Rasinius Novocomensis) in his petition of 1496: Fulin, "Documenti," 121, no. 44; Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 55–56.

²⁰ It should be noted that the Italian word *concorrenza* with its current meaning of "competition" is attested for the first time in these requests, which means that it arose in connection with printing: Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza*, 46, n. 53. In requests for a privilege the word bears the highly negative sense of perfidy (Fulin, "Documenti," 166, no. 162) and fierce and destructive conduct (*ibid.*, 175–76, no. 184).

We can infer the publishers' motivations from their petitions, where we discern a typology of requests for privileges in which certain arguments follow one another with a degree of consistency reference to the expenditures the petitioner was facing and the sacrifices he was making; to the idea that aggressive competition was unfair; and to the particular merit of the publisher or the unpublished work awaiting printing. One recurrent presence is the assertion by the petitioner that he has lived for years in Venice, has printed there for a long time, and has paid the taxes related to his work – all important arguments for petitioners who were almost always non-native.²¹ The content of the privilege prohibited the printing of the work by others and the importation or sale of copies printed by someone else and included notice of the duration of such prohibitions.²² Next came a statement of the sanctions for anyone who broke with these prohibitions. The transgressor would have all counterfeited copies of the book confiscated, and it was standard practice for a fine to be imposed for each copy printed or sold. The sum collected was usually to be divided into thirds: a third would go to the state treasury or to specific entities such as the Arsenal or some hospitals, a third to the magistrate to whom the case was brought, and a third to the person denouncing the infringement. The privilege covered causes for its nullification or cancellation, such as concealment of the true facts or the making of false statements. The privilege might be deemed invalid if a privilege had already been conceded for the work in question to another publisher or if the price of the book exceeded a certain sum, because the book had to be sold at a fair price, *justo pretio*.²³

²¹ For a survey of petitioners' arguments, see Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 34–40.

²² It should be stressed that the fact that the duration of privileges was usually fixed at ten years suggests that an edition could be sold out in that period, or at least its costs could be recovered.

²³ The debate over the *justum pretium* went back to scholastic authors and deepened over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the School of Salamanca: Armando Saporì, "Il giusto prezzo nella dottrina di San Tommaso e nella pratica del suo tempo," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 90 (1932): 3–56; Raymond De Roover, "The Concept of the Just Price: Theory and Economic Policy," *Journal of Economic History* 18, no. 4 (1958): 418–34; Toon Van Houdt, "Just Pricing and Profit Making in Late Scholastic Economic Thought," in *Myrica: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Memory of Jozef IJsewijn*, ed. Dirk Sacré and Gilbert Tournoy (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 397–414. "The just price did not correspond to cost of production as determined by the producer's social status, but was simply the current market price, with this important reservation: in cases of collusion or emergency, the public authorities retained the right to interfere and to impose a fair price": De Roover, "The Concept of the Just Price," 421–22.

As no general law covering printing existed, it was the petitioner who structured the application and summarized why it should be granted. In Venice, the number of requests soon rendered the contents of the petitions repetitive, but they nonetheless remain a relevant and little-used reserve of information on the genesis of book editions throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

While it was valid, a privilege essentially gave legal backing to three fundamental elements of book production: the printing of the text, its importation, and its sale. Each stage concerned a different sort of entrepreneur: the first, printers and publishers; the second, import wholesalers; and the third, booksellers in their bookshops. The last two elements were particularly important in Venice, which was not only the printing capital of Italy but also in effect a permanent book fair. If a book could not be sold in Venice, its market would be much diminished and it would not be stocked by the major wholesalers, almost all of whom had their headquarters in Venice. Thus until the first half of the sixteenth century, anyone who obtained a privilege in Venice, in spite of the limited extent of the territory of the Republic, in effect controlled the whole Italian market.²⁴

Unlike France, for example, in Italy, privileges were granted only by the central administrations of the various states and not by other bodies such as the universities.²⁵ Still, the universities might be entrusted with the duty of controlling the texts to be printed, as happened with the *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova* in the Venetian Republic.

Literary Privileges

The first literary privilege to be granted was that given by the Venetian *Collegio* (cabinet of government) to Marc'Antonio Sabellico on 1 September 1486 for his *Rerum Venetarum libri XXXIII*. The author of this work, which the Venetian Senate deemed worthy of being published, was invited to consign it to a good printer who would make it available, and in doing so, he was attributed a specific *jus prohibendi* that forbade anyone other than

²⁴ The more complex subsequent development of the book market in Italy and in Europe as a whole implied that the Venetian privilege was not enough to assure adequate protection.

²⁵ In France as well, however, the intervention of the universities seems to have been connected more with cultural interests than with commercial ones, and the aim was to guarantee the correctness of a text rather than to govern the conditions of its sale: Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 55–62.

the author or his chosen printer to print the work or have it printed.²⁶ The fact that Sabellico was the official historiographer of the Republic facilitated the concession of this first privilege but was not its underlying reason, and indeed, a few years later, Pietro Francesco Tomai of Ravenna was allotted similar protection for his *Phoenix*.²⁷ In his request for a privilege, the *memoriae magister* seems to ask and obtain protection for his invention of a mnemotechnical method that he had laboriously put together, rather than for a text that he had redacted, but only with a printed text could he realize a profit on his creation. Tomai's privilege thus confirms the connection between literary privileges and privileges for inventions.²⁸ In the privilege conceded to Tomai, the *jus prohibendi* is more fully articulated, for it stipulates punishment not only for printing the work but also for importing volumes printed outside the Republic, as had also the privilege received by Johannes de Spira. Unlike Sabellico's privilege, there was no time limit on Tomai's concession, as if it was to be perpetual. This type of privilege would subsequently also include an expiration date.

The literary work was to be protected because the investment in such an expensive publishing project had to be safeguarded. The privilege was more likely to protect the publisher than the author and understood his product not as an artistic creation but as an example of an industrial activity that the authorities wanted to promote. For many years the greater part of printed texts came out of a centuries-long tradition, but a distinctly different situation arose when contemporary authors began to translate those same texts. The very concept of authorship was much broader and more flexible than it is now, and it encompassed a range of individuals in addition to the creator of a text (in word or image) and its editor. Still, the author, whose prestige depended not only on his reputation but also on his social class and his family, became increasingly self-aware, defining and promoting himself as an autonomous subject. Ludovico Ariosto took care to protect the first printing of his *Orlando Furioso* with multiple

²⁶ Fulin, "Documenti," 102, no. 3. On literary privileges, see Castellani, "I privilegi di stampa" and Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 69–76. On this specific instance, see Ruth Cavasse, "The First Known Author's Copyright, September 1486, in the Context of a Humanist Career," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 69 (1987): 11–37 and Kostylo, "Commentary on Marcantonio Sabellico." The edition is *ISTC* is00005000.

²⁷ Fulin, "Documenti," 102, no. 4; Montecchi, *Il libro nel Rinascimento*, 165–83. The edition is *ISTC* ip00531000.

²⁸ These two aspects of the privilege would continue to be combined and intermixed. See, for example, the request for a privilege by Giovanni Antonio Tagliente, who asked for protection for his work and for a printing system of his invention with which he intended to print the work: Fulin, "Documenti," 204, no. 246.

privileges requested from a number of governing bodies.²⁹ The Republic of Venice made a great exception when it gave protection to a book that was not to be issued in Venice: a privilege was accorded first in 1515, then confirmed in 1528 and conceded to Ariosto's heirs for ten years in 1542. The publishing history of *Orlando Furioso* in Venice tells that the holder of the privilege authorized only a few editions of this work and thereby demonstrates both the great success of this work and the limitations of the system. The most tortured sector of the book trade, beset by illegitimate reprints, was precisely that of literature in the vernacular, works that were often within easy reach of all, for prices were modest for books in medium and small format without illustrations, books that any Venetian printer could easily produce.³⁰ The privilege system demanded vigilant pursuit of infringements, which were not infrequent among printers. It was not an easy task, however, to move the administration to apply sanctions.

During the sixteenth century, requests for privileges involved many authors of literary works (including Pietro Bembo, Ludovico Ariosto, Castiglione, Bernardo Tasso, Pietro Aretino, and Giovan Giorgio Trissino) and their heirs, and extended to geographical maps (Giacomo Gastaldi), engravings, and prints (Ugo da Carpi, Titian).³¹ Included here are only the more famous names; a full list would include a large number of professional translators and university professors, in particular from the University of Padua, who requested literary privileges in the course of the sixteenth century. The records suggest that authors were well aware of the possibilities offered by the privilege mechanism. In the first half of the century, for the author himself to request a privilege was still considered evidence of a lack of dignity and honor, as shown by the case of Pietro Bembo, who never requested a privilege in his own name.³² Authors who

²⁹ Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso secondo la "princeps" del 1516*, ed. Marco Dorigatti, with the collaboration of Gerarda Stimato (Florence: Olschki, 2006), xlvii–l.

³⁰ Among the more vociferous instances of illegal reprints, one case that stands out is Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua: Edit 16*, CNCE 4997 and CNCE 62770. There was, however, also an anthology of letters: *Novo libro di lettere scritte da i più vari autori e professori della lingua volgare italiana* (1544): *Edit 16*, CNCE 64158, which was reproduced in a fraudulent edition: *Edit 16*, CNCE 25758. It was characteristic of these illicit reprints that they emerged from circles and firms that were close to the ones producing the works involved; they were therefore likely the product of industrial spying.

³¹ Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print*, 299–302; Jaime Stapleton, "Art, Intellectual Property and the Knowledge Economy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 2002; <http://www.jaimestapleton.net/aipkecontents.pdf>), 30–81; Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*.

³² During Bembo's lifetime, privileges for his works were requested by his publisher Aldo Manuzio (Fulin 1882, 157 no. 148); by his brother Carlo (Fulin, "Documenti," 146,

lived later or who did not belong to the patriciate – the poet Torquato Tasso is one example – avidly sought such protections during their careers.

Legal protection of privileges, although widespread and enforced, was not universal. Alongside such privileges, there persisted the more ancient and long-lasting custom of patronage, whereby the author sought the support of an illustrious personage in the form of stable employment or occasional financing of a work dedicated to the patron.³³ If the outcome of a publishing venture was particularly uncertain, it might also happen that the author himself would be obliged to buy an appreciable number of copies or assume the entire costs of publication.³⁴

Venetian Printing Legislation before 1540

Although the regulation of printing through the institution of the privilege appeared in a number of Italian states,³⁵ it must be stressed that the normative framework was created in Venice, the only Italian state to pass laws of this sort in the sixteenth century. The precocity and maturity of printing-related legislation in Venice has traditionally been connected with the notable volume of production, and with the Republic's resultant determination to protect a sector that was so important to the local economy by passing anti-monopolistic regulation.³⁶ Privileges granted to

no. 115); by his secretary Cola Bruno; and by his nephew Giovan Matteo. For an overall view, see Bongi, *Annali*, 1:218.

³³ Erasmus, most prominently, lived on income derived from systematic dedications added to copies of his books that were distributed to the dedicatee by what amounted to his agents, men charged with collecting the money: Jean Hoyoux, "Les moyens d'existence d'Erasmus," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 6 (1944): 7–59. See also Karine Crousaz, *Érasme et le pouvoir de l'imprimerie* (Lausanne: Éditions Antipodes, 2005). A mixed system (recourse to the privilege, plus remuneration from dedications and special publications) was also habitual among editorial collaborators active in Venice in the 1540s such as Lodovico Dolce, Lodovico Domenichi, and Girolamo Ruscelli: Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere: Lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988); Nuovo, "Ruscelli e il sistema dei privilegi a Venezia."

³⁴ For total financing by authors as a condition of publication by Marescotti, a Florentine printer, see Bertoli, "Autori ed editori."

³⁵ Milan was as early as Venice in giving privileges to printers. The other Italian states followed later. In Rome printing privileges were first given in 1498; in Florence, in 1516: Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 40; Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 326–30.

³⁶ For an analysis of the development of the administrative institutions of Venetian government bodies to the point that they successfully supported economic activities, see Yadira Gonzáles de Lara, "Self-Enforcing, Public-Order Institutions for Contract Enforcement: Litigation Regulation, and Limited Government in Venice, 1050–1350," in *Political Economy of Institutions, Democracy and Voting*, ed. Norman Schofield and Gonzalo Caballero Míguez (Heidelberg and New York: Springer, 2011), 95–117.

editions printed outside the state exist, but they are few.³⁷ Toward the end of the sixteenth century, however, requests became more frequent for editions printed in provincial cities that were part of Venice's domain – in Vicenza and Padua, for example, which both saw a strong revival of printing.³⁸

In the most vital years of the privilege system, between 1472 and 1517, Venice was one of the richest cities in Europe, a center of capital for financing with a stable currency. In these years printing grew so rapidly that requests and concessions of privileges without specific legislation became common. The mass of precedents instead formed the foundations for common practice. The granting of a privilege remained a formal legislative procedure that on each occasion theoretically required independent deliberation. The process was, however, at heart administrative, as is shown by the frequent references by applicants to similar previous concessions. Privileges could be gained without particular difficulty. We need to recall, however, that the privilege system was based on the principle of voluntary, not obligatory, requests.

In the first series of privileges, those issued up to 1526 and published by Fulin, we begin to see not only intimations and reconfirmations of privileges, but also more dialectical statements indicative of oppositions and tensions. Of particular significance was the Senate's decision in 1517 that all concerned should be informed that the privilege held by Aldo

³⁷ Aside from the case of Ariosto, which we have already seen, these exceptions were publishing enterprises that enjoyed unusually generous support. For example, the twenty-year privilege conceded by the Venetian Senate to Plantin for his *Biblia Regia*, the polyglot Bible published between 1568 and 1573 in eight volumes, is published in the edition itself (for the original of the privilege, see Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Terra*, reg. 49, fol. 70v, 25 October 1572). Requested officially by the ambassador in the name of King Philip II of Spain, the privilege was conceded for an edition that, although produced by a *cittadino d'Anversa* and in the city of Antwerp, was officially held to be "done at the order of his Majesty." This kind of privilege can also be understood as an extension of the patronage system. See also Witcombe, "Christopher Plantin's Papal Privileges," 142–43, and Kostylo, "Commentary on Marcantonio Sabellico." On the *Biblia Regia*: Leon Voet, *The Golden Compasses: A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp in Two Volumes*, vol. 1: *Christophe Plantin and the Moretus: Their Lives and Their World* (Amsterdam: Van Gendt, 1969), 56–64; Karen L. Bowen and Dirk Imhof, *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 84–121.

³⁸ Procedures for granting a privilege were slightly different for these two cities. Since the publishers of the Venetian *Terraferma* were not obliged to be members of the Venetian booksellers' guild, in order to obtain a privilege they needed to have at least 180 members of the Venetian Senate present and to garner five-sixths of the votes: Pesenti, "Stampatori e letterati," 107.

Manuzio and his associates for printing with Greek types had lapsed.³⁹ The ending of the Manuzio privilege made possible the importation of Greek books printed elsewhere into the Venetian Republic. We can surmise the existence of pressure from other operators eager to enter into the market for Greek books. The authorities appear to have attempted to regulate the phenomenon of printing by reducing ambiguities, abuses, and causes of tension among bookmen.

Across all sectors, including sanitation and commerce, Venetian legislation was commonly not precautionary in nature but was introduced under a stimulus provided by specific circumstances. It was only in 1517, in the face of a worsening situation, that the Venetian Senate emitted the first “Parte in materia di stampa.”⁴⁰ This decree was explicitly designed to remedy publishers’ hoarding of privileges for which no editions had been produced. The granting of too many concessions had brought on a crisis that had led some printer-publishers to leave Venice. The Senate cancelled all existing privileges issued by the College and the Senate. In future, privileges were to be issued only by agreement of a two-thirds majority of the Senate, and only for works that were new or had never been printed. The primary purpose of this law was to correct distortions caused by the reduction of the privilege, in practice, to its purely negative content, as *jus prohibendi*, which had become an obstacle to initiative. After 1517 we can detect a clear restriction of concessions and increasing effort to eliminate certain ambiguities. In the case of privileges conceded to the author, for example, the work or works covered had to be printed in Venice.⁴¹

A second *Parte*, emitted by the Council of Ten in 1527 introduced the licence to print, or pre-publication censorship,⁴² but for this discussion of the privilege, a further *Parte* issued in 1534 is of more significance. The 1517 *Parte* had failed to establish a precise time limit for a privilege that was

³⁹ Fulin, “Documenti,” 190, no. 213. For the text of the deliberation, see Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 33, n. 23.

⁴⁰ In Venice, the term “Parte” referred to all deliberations in the area of law. A complete collection of Venetian legislation regarding printing emitted during the sixteenth century can be found in Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 207–22 and Tiziana Plebani, *Venezia 1469: La legge e la stampa* (Venice: Marsilio, 2004). For the 1517 *Parte*, see Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 74, 505 and *Primary Sources on Copyright* (with a reproduction of the original).

⁴¹ The requests presented by authors did not always state the name of the printer who would carry out publication. In the privileges given in Fulin, “Documenti,” nos. 220, 229, 233, and 236, it is clearly stated that the concession was valid provided the book was produced in Venice.

⁴² 29 January 1526, *more veneto*: see Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 208 and Plebani, *Venezia 1469*, 39–41.

not used.⁴³ In 1534 the harvesting of privileges without publishing the works involved was again denounced as harmful to the industry, but now a deadline was also set, stating that a privilege had to have been executed within one year of its date of issue; the only exception was for a work so long that it could not be printed within one year at the pace of one sheet per day.⁴⁴ The decree stated again that only new works merited protection, and the principle that a privilege could be obtained in Venice only for works produced in Venice was again made explicit, with the obvious intent of promoting local printing. Finally, regulation of the sale price for printed books was entrusted to the *Provveditori di Comun*, a state office, which with the assistance of experts was to fix a fair price on the basis of the quality of the product.⁴⁵

In 1537 a law was passed to ensure that paper was of suitable quality. Some paper currently in use was held to be defective and incapable of holding ink, while paper used in foreign print products seemed to be very evidently of increasing beauty.⁴⁶ The diminution of the margins around the printed area of the page was deemed pernicious, as it made it difficult for the reader to add marginalia, an interesting legislative protection of a method of study that had become widespread. The state's defense of the quality of the book was perhaps necessary because printing had as yet no guild, which traditionally ensured the quality of the relevant product, but often the laws passed by the governing authorities were aimed at safeguarding the interests of consumers. Finally, the law of 1537 repeated that privileges could be granted only for new works and not for works that had undergone only a few additions and corrections. Evidently, the

⁴³ 3 January 1533, *m. v.*: see Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 75–76, 208–9, and Plebani, *Venezia 1469*, 36–38.

⁴⁴ In reality, when a well-grounded petition could be framed, it was possible to obtain the prolongation of a privilege. Pleading technical difficulties, Girolamo Dalla Casa, called “da Udine,” twice obtained a privilege (the first time for four months, the second time for a year) for printing the two volumes of his musical treatise: see Agee, “The Privilege,” 123–26. Aldo Manuzio the Younger obtained a similar prolongation in 1583 for a series of works for which he had obtained a privilege in 1581 but was unable to produce “within the limits of the year conceded by the laws”: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Terra*, reg. 54 (1582–83), fol. 139r.

⁴⁵ In Spain beginning in the 1490s, concession of a privilege was accompanied by the fixing of the sales price, or *tasa*, above all when institutional materials such as bulls and collections of laws were to be printed. Only in 1558 were the two aspects separated: Fermín de los Reyes Gómez, “La tasa en el libro español antiguo,” *Pliegos de bibliofilia* 4 (1998): 35–52. Instances involving the sales price, with a figure determined, were equally frequent in France: Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 73–75.

⁴⁶ This provision was dated 4 June 1537: Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 76–77, 209–10, and Plebani, *Venezia 1469*, 53–58.

concept of novelty was evolving and had to be continually redefined in the face of the tumultuous development of printing. Not all printed texts were eligible for privileges, excluded in particular were so-called common texts – *libri comuni* or *comunali* – which included liturgical works and ancient and medieval authors. Privileges could, however, be obtained for commentaries and translations, given that they were considered new works.

Although contingent motives might lead the Senate to take action to protect the interests of a publisher, printer, or author, the most common reason for a privilege to be granted seems to have been the need to protect economic interests. Economic considerations are frequently explicitly mentioned in both requests for privileges and in the privileges themselves, while considerations of other kinds, such as social utility, literary excellence, or religious value, for example, appear more rarely. Not all books were of particular economic significance, and the privilege was applied almost exclusively to a restricted category of book production. Traditionally, editions with a print run of fewer than four hundred copies were not eligible for a privilege. As we have seen, initially privileges had been requested for editions that never saw the light of day; later regulation ensured that such hoarding ceased, and the concession of a privilege was almost always followed by the realization of the edition. The use of the privilege thus increased at a pace with book production, but it always involved only a small number of publications – precisely, those of noteworthy (and somewhat risky) commercial nature. Between 1527 and 1550, only 842 privileges were granted in Venice, but some five thousand books were published; approximately 17 percent of output was therefore covered by a privilege, a rather high percentage in comparison with the figure for Paris in the same period, which was only 5 percent.⁴⁷ The publishers who were most active in obtaining privileges were among the most successful of their time: Michele Tramezino and Gabriele Giolito. The number of their applications for privileges should not be read as an indication that these two bookmen were the most important in Venice. The Giunti family, for example, made less use of the privilege because they tended to produce ancient and medieval medical and liturgical books and were therefore active in a segment of the trade that was not reliant on new works. Between 1527 and 1550 the number of first editions published with a privilege rose to around 80 percent. The system of privileges was

⁴⁷ Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 78.

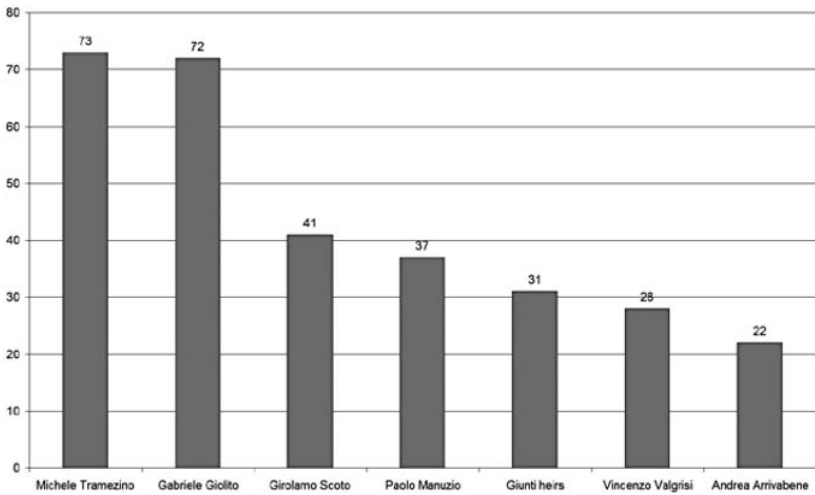


Fig. 6.3. The number of privileges obtained by publishers in Venice, 1527–1550.

therefore apparently working, in particular by providing protection for bookmen investing in the publication of new texts by contemporary writers. The support for first-time publications provided by the privilege system stimulated the search for and the publication of such works, birthing the concept of novelty, which proved to be a motor in the history of publishing. In short, the system offered greater opportunities to the more innovative publishing houses, such as those of Giolito and Tramezino, which were also the firms that took on the greatest risk as they sought to open and reinforce new markets.

According to Joanna Kostylo, the system of book privileges served publishers as a primitive legal mechanism for the construction of legal monopolies and for the reintroduction of scarcity into the book market. In order to defend publishers' interests, an artificial constraint was put on the production and supply of books. Restricting the production of competing editions of specific texts helped to keep prices high.⁴⁸ But this interpretation does not take into account the fact that the printing sector in Venice was above all an export trade. Legislation was motivated by potential tax revenues rather than by a desire to regulate competition in the domestic market by controlling production and prices. The market for local printing lay mainly beyond the Republic of Venice, and the privilege system had no

⁴⁸ Kostylo, "Commentary on Johannes of Speyer."

interest in limiting the supply to external markets,⁴⁹ but focused instead on expanding local production to increase exports. The authorities in the Republic needed to prevent publishers from producing similar and therefore competing products that might undercut each other in both the domestic and export markets, but at the same time, to stimulate the production of new works for export. The laws of 1517 and 1534 put a halt to the abuse of privileges and attempted to reorient the entire publishing sector. They discouraged the publication of books that varied only a little from editions that had already appeared, in an attempt to promote the production of differentiated books.⁵⁰ Venetian publishers had few competitors in the external markets, and until they faced significant foreign competition, there was no need to stimulate competition over prices among Venetian publishers. The state sought rather to increase the volume of export trade and to achieve this expansion by encouraging novelty.

The wealth of Venetian printing was founded on the abundance of *capi*, or different works. The Venetian authorities, extraordinarily competent in commercial matters, had managed to arrange the privilege system in a way that guaranteed the interests of publishers in the local market by restricting both the printing and sale of certain works within the Republic. At the same time, they had managed to encourage the search for and production of new works, products that interested outside markets. The encouragement of new works, title by title, in the privilege system was admittedly a slow and expensive procedure, and for that reason vigorous protection was offered to inventions and innovations that led to the opening of new markets, such as printing in Greek, printing in italic type, and the various methods devised for music printing. In the eighteenth century, the Riformatori dello Studio di Padova still recognized the success of Aldo Manuzio as an outstanding episode in a book production that had seen a rapid growth in the number of *capi*, which had allowed Venetian books to conquer Europe.⁵¹

⁴⁹ The situation in Castile provides an interesting contrast. There the price of a book (*tasa*) was fixed by the Royal Council in the act conceding a privilege, as part of a system of frequent economic intervention that aimed to safeguard the buying power of the subjects of the realm in a number of sectors, alimentation in particular: Pérez García, *La imprenta y la literatura*, 122.

⁵⁰ Stapleton, "Art, Intellectual Property."

⁵¹ "Report of the Riformatori dello Studio di Padova on the Venetian Press (1765)," in Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 339–49, especially p. 342. In this fundamental document, which traces the history of printing in Venice from its origins, the lack of *capi*, and the resultant growing dependence on foreign production, is considered among the principal causes of the decline of the book trade after the sixteenth century.

Venetian Printing Legislation, 1540s to 1603

In 1545 a new *Parte* prohibited publishers from producing or selling any work without presenting an authenticated written document giving the consent of the author or his heirs to the Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, who were henceforth officially charged with vetting and approving texts to be printed.⁵² This step is traditionally viewed as a watershed moment in the history of authorship, as the first public law in Europe designed specifically to protect authors. Failure to follow this procedure would lead to the confiscation and destruction of the illegally printed books, and the infringing printer could be fined one ducat for every copy and one for each author and imprisoned for a month. Some scholars hold this provision to be a consequence of a vigorous complaint entered by Pietro Bembo about the publication of some of his youthful love letters, but a gradual movement toward recognition of authorial prerogatives also took place in the context of emerging religious censorship.⁵³

The provision that no work could be published without the written consent of the author made it possible for the authorities to find and persecute offending writers even before the new censorship rules introduced by the Council of Trent on 8 April 1546 forbade the sale or possession of anonymous books. Indeed, as Joanna Kostylo points out, the recognition given to the author in this decree can be considered incidental, since the impetus for this legislation had come mainly from the desire to censor authors rather than to affirm their authorial rights.⁵⁴

⁵² 7 February 1544, *m.v.*: Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 79, 211; Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 73–74; Plebani, *Venezia 1469*, 43–44. The Riformatori dello Studio di Padova (a board of three prestigious Venetian patricians) was a commission responsible for university appointments: see Paul Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 157–59.

⁵³ Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza*, 36–37. Contemporary authors felt the law to be profoundly just and legitimate, whatever its intentions. In light of the Venetian printing of his *Rime e Prose*, published by the printer Giulio Vassalini in 1584 (*Edit 16*, CNCE 410499) after two earlier Ferrara editions of the same text, Torquato Tasso wrote that his honor had been trampled on. Hoping to have legal indemnity for the unauthorized printing, he added, “the greed of the booksellers and the others who print counter to the will of authors was countered by the punishment of the Signoria of Venice; and now that Republic should not fail me”: letter to Giovan Battista Licino, 22 June 1587: Torquato Tasso, *Le lettere disposte per ordine di tempo ed illustrate da Cesare Guasti*. 5 vols. (Florence: Le Monnier, 1854), 3:213–14.

⁵⁴ Kostylo, “Commentary on the Venetian Decree of 1545.” A famous episode regarding printing not authorized by the author was that of the unauthorized publication of a lecture on religious toleration that Justus Lipsius was alleged to have delivered in the Lutheran University of Jena. At the time the work was published, Lipsius had returned to the Catholic

Between 1548 and January 1549 *Parti* were emitted that reflected the authorities' alarm about anti-Catholic publications and required all publishers and booksellers to heed scrupulously the Index of Prohibited Books.⁵⁵ The complex policy, and its uneven realization, that the Republic laid out in the attempt to contain the effects of religious censorship on book trade in order to defend the economic interests of an important and prestigious sector of the economy has been the object of intensive study.⁵⁶

A 1549 decree of the Council of Ten ordered the founding of a professional guild, the *Corporazione* (or *Università*) degli stampatori e librai di Venezia, essentially with the aim of controlling and regulating book trade. The statutes of the guild were not made public until 1567, and the guild itself appears to have been constantly active and effective only after 1580,⁵⁷ after which date, the guild itself established that any member who wanted to print a new work was required to register that work with the guild in advance. With that registration, a privilege was automatically granted for ten years. The Senate was to become involved only in the case of a work of unusual size and great prestige, but when a privilege was conceded by the Senate, it was valid for twenty years. These new regulations resulted in a sharp decline in the number of requests for privileges from organs of government, a phenomenon noted by Horatio Brown.⁵⁸

faith and was teaching at Leuven. The publication was highly damaging to him, and he did all that he could to have it taken off the market: Jeanine de Landtsheer, "Le privilège: Un droit de l'auteur ou de l'éditeur? À propos de Juste Lipse et de la publication de son œuvre," in *L'Auteur à la Renaissance: L'altro que* [sic] *è in noi*, ed. Rosanna Gorris Camos and Alexandre Vanautgaerden (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 101–21; Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*, 19–20. The 1545 *Parte* was designed to remedy just this sort of abuse, and after that date, every first edition of a contemporary author published in Venice must have been authorized, we can assume, by the author or his heirs.

⁵⁵ 17 May 1547 and 19 July 1548: Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 211–12; Plebani, *Venezia 1469*, 44–45.

⁵⁶ Here the basic work is Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*. See also Paul F. Grendler, "Stampatori," in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, ed. Adriano Prosperi. 3 vols. (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010), 3:1476–77.

⁵⁷ 16 January 1548, *m.v.*: Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 213. On the activities of the *Arte*, see Pesenti, "Stampatori e letterati," 97–100; Antonio Manno, *I mestieri di Venezia: Storia, arte e devozione delle corporazioni dal XIII al XVIII secolo*. 2 vols. (Cittadella [Padua]: Biblos, 2010), 2:196–99; Zorzi, "La produzione," 925–28; Laura Carnelos, "La corporazione e gli esterni: Stampatori e librai a Venezia tra norma e contraffazione (secoli XVI–XVIII)," *Società e storia* 130 (2010): 657–88.

⁵⁸ According to Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 131–33, n. 4, Brown neglected to note a significant amount of material – almost half of the privileges conceded during the last twenty years of the sixteenth century. Brown seems indeed to have paid greater attention to the index of the various Senato Terra records than to examining them carefully, page by page. But since we are still without a complete investigation that considers the number and characteristics of the Venetian book privileges (of which there were certainly

M. D. LXXI. Alti. XIX. Febuario

Confignati C'è fu concesso al fedel negro Piero Cattaneo supplicante, che altri, che lui, o di sua eredi causa da lui, non possi stampar nel Dominio negro, ouero al terzo stampar in esso uenduto i quattro primi libri della sua *Arithmetica*, con la aggiunta di altri quattro libri di *Arith.* in termine di anni uini prossimi futuri, egl' in lingua Latina, come in uolgare, sotto pena di vederli i libri stampati, i quali siano di detto supplicante, et di ducenti dieci per. nolente stampato, da esser applicato un terzo al neghitrato, che si sia in effettione, uno alla testa negra dell' *Arithmetica*, et uno all' *aculator*, offeso esse supplicante tenuto di osservare quato è disposto per le leggi negre in materia di stampo.

Al medesimo sia concesso al fedel negro Aldo Nannino saluamente per il *scrittore* suo tradotto in lingua Italiana.

Al medesimo sia concesso al fedel negro Zuanbattista Sonasto libaro a l' *insegna* del *centurio* per i *tenagli* del *costato*, et libro de *Uoluntibus cupis* di *Allogia*.

Sia nel giorno concesso per anni dieci, a Francesco Salignino per il libro chiamato *Simulacro* di *Carlo Quinto* giusta la supplicazione sua.

Al medesimo alli *Seuati* di *Maudisio* *attestato* per le *agole* di *Sio* *Dante*, per un *diuolo* dielli per un *alboro* intagliato in rame, intitolato *Silmarie* delle *nite* dell' *Alti* *Ottomanj*.

— f — 145.
— o.
— 4.

Di detto

Confignati C'è fu concesso alli *Seuati* del *g* *Maresio* *Sessa* supplicante, che altri, che loro, o di sua eredi causa da loro, non possi per lo spazio di anni quindici prossimi futuri stampar nel Dominio negro, ouero al terzo stampar in esso uenduto il libro de *lezioni* di *Hieronymo* *Ducelli*, sotto pena di vederli i libri stampati, et di pagar ducenti dugento, un terzo de quali sia dell' *aculator*, et il restante alle *donne* *comuante* della *curia*, offeso essi supplicanti tenuto di osservare quato è disposto per le leggi negre in materia di stampo.

— f — 145.
— o.
— 4.

Furono fatte le *lettere* *patenti* alli 20. del *luglio*

Fig. 6.4. A Venetian privilege (1566). Venice, Archivio di stato, Senato Terra, reg. 46, fol. 112^v.

In Milan, the booksellers' and publishers' guild contemplated passing a similar act, as can be seen in chapter twenty-nine of their first statutes, of 1589.⁵⁹ Thus guild governance of the publishing enterprise was instituted.

more than two thousand, each of which included several titles), scholars have had a hard time grasping the whole picture and the crucial relationship between requests for licences and privileges, on the one hand, and actual printed production, on the other.

⁵⁹ *Statuti et ordini dell'Università de' librai et stampatori della città di Milano* (Milan, after 1668). This work contains the text of the *Statuti* of 1589. See also Franceschelli, *Trattato*, 367; Anna Giulia Cavagna, "Statuti di librai e stampatori in Lombardia: 1589–1734," in *Libri tipografici biblioteche: Ricerche storiche dedicate a Luigi Balsamo*, ed. Istituto di Biblioteconomia e Paleografia. Università degli Studi, Parma (Florence: Olschki, 1997), 225–39.

The *Parte* of May 1603 is considered in many ways to have marked a turning point in Venetian legislation concerning printing.⁶⁰ That law sanctioned the principle that a privilege could be received after the completion of some administrative formalities – or to be specific, guild formalities – which consisted of the deposit and registration of the censors' approval with the Banca dei Librai e Stampatori. Registration was all that was needed for automatic acquisition of a twenty-year privilege. A privilege could be obtained for works that had never been printed and for the importation of works printed elsewhere. One copy of the printed or imported book had to be deposited with the library of San Marco,⁶¹ and finally, the publishing had to be carried out in a proper manner and the privilege could be withdrawn if the edition had stains, had been printed on poor paper, or was published with errors. It has been said that with this *Parte* the privilege, which until that time had been an individual concession subject to the judgment of the body that conferred it, became a right enjoyed by every publisher, and hence by every author, unless the work failed to pass pre-publication censorship, which could result in punishment.⁶² It seems, however, that this law was not observed for some time, perhaps because the Arte itself was not happy with it.⁶³

Regulation of printing in Venice in the sixteenth century thus followed two main lines. The first and earlier of these focused on promotion of the art of printing and protection of the bookmen's interests. The second and later was more sensitive to the danger of print as a medium and sought through the intervention of the Republic stronger control of printing, either autonomous or ecclesiastic. Censorship in Venice was initially above all moral and political in nature, aimed at protecting the Republic from hostile criticism or denigration, and maintained a wary eye on the circulation of confidential information.⁶⁴ Later censorship developed within the framework laid out in the various versions of the Index of Prohibited Books, at the same time raising delicate issues of jurisdiction with Rome, which the bookmen cleverly exploited. Venice's conflict with the Church of Rome occurred at the peak of this phase, a conflict in which

⁶⁰ Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 218–21; Plebani, *Venezia 1469*, 60–65; Franceschelli, *Trattato*, 372–73; Zorzi, “La produzione,” 927.

⁶¹ For a review of the history of and reasons behind the institution of legal deposit in Venice, see Mario Infelise, “Deposito legale e censura a Venezia (1569–1650),” *La Bibliofilia* 109 (2007): 71–77.

⁶² Castellani, “I privilegi di stampa,” 135–36.

⁶³ Zorzi, “La produzione,” 928.

⁶⁴ Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 65–66.

privileges were central;⁶⁵ the government of the Serenissima launched a very lively defense of the interests of publishers and booksellers active in Venice. Yet none of the many local provisions could interrupt the decline of the art of printing, which became precipitous after 1630. The rise and fall of Venetian printing was thus a complex process that cannot be related exclusively to the Counter-Reformation and its regulation of the production and circulation of books, but rather must be set in the context of the overall political, cultural, and economic climate of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁶⁶

Applying for a Privilege

The procedure for obtaining a privilege required a specific *iter*. From 1517, it was established that in Venice only the Senate could grant privileges, and indeed today they must be sought in the registers of the Archivio di Stato in Venice labeled “*Senato Terra*.”⁶⁷ The procedure was initiated by a petition (*supplica*) by the suppliant, the content of which was subsequently incorporated into the concession itself.⁶⁸ Petitioners fell into two broad categories: bookmen and authors or their heirs. Bookmen form the larger group, but authors are more numerous than might be expected; even in the first phase, before 1527, the number of privileges requested by authors represented some 30 percent of the total. The two categories were not unrelated, but rather had interests in common. Even when it was the publisher who obtained the privilege, the author often worked to approach the right intermediaries within the Venetian patriciate, so as to pay as little as possible.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ On this particular theme Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, especially chapters 7 and 8, is without peer.

⁶⁶ Richard Tilden Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976); Ivo Mattozzi, “Mondo del libro’ e decadenza a Venezia (1570–1730),” *Quaderni storici* 72 (1989): 743–86; Mario Infelise, “La crise de la librairie Vénitienne 1620–1650,” in *Le livre et l’Historien: Études offertes en l’honneur du Professeur Henri-Jean Martin*, ed. Frédéric Barbier et al. (Geneva: Droz, 1997), 343–52; Zorzi, “La produzione”; Agee, *The Gardano*, 6–27. In general, for the crisis of the learned book market, Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*, 211–34.

⁶⁷ The registrations are well represented, but the list is obviously incomplete. During a recent project researching the privileges requested by the Giolito firm, I was able to calculate that some 30 percent of privileges obtained were not registered: Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 219–20.

⁶⁸ The series of files (*filze*) containing the originals of these *suppliche*, which occasionally offer details not available from other sources, unfortunately has many gaps.

⁶⁹ One instructive example here is provided by the behavior of the prefect of the botanical garden in Padua, Melchiorre Guilandino (Melchior Wieland), on the occasion of the

Privileges had a limited life, although its length varied. Normally, a privilege was granted for the period requested by the petitioner and was only rarely shortened or extended. The duration of a privilege ranged from a minimum of one year to a maximum of twenty-five years, but until 1550 ten years was by far the most frequent timespan for a privilege. During the second half of the sixteenth century, that ten-year duration tended to have been extended, probably because by then it was too short a time in which to sell off an entire edition.⁷⁰ In the early years the privilege went into effect at the moment of concession, but later petitions stated that the starting date of the privilege was determined by the completion of the printing operations or, in other words, on publication of the work.

The penalties for infringement of the rules were of fundamental importance because only the threat of punishment could ensure this mechanism worked. Here again, the Senate followed the text of the petition, correcting it only in instances of inflated demands. The confiscation of works printed illegally was always stipulated, in favor of the privilege holder and as compensation for damage. There was also a fine to be paid, which varied in amount (the average was around two hundred ducats) and was to be divided in diverse ways between individuals and public institutions. The fine could be calculated at so much per copy or as a global figure covering the publication or sale of the unauthorized edition. Almost always the first beneficiary from a fine was the accuser – the person who had entered the denunciation – who was guaranteed anonymity, in conformity with the protection for informers that was standard in the Serenissima.⁷¹ The petitioner was less frequently a beneficiary, as he was

publication of his *Papyrus* (Venice: Marcantonio Olmo, 1572, *Edit 16*, CNCE 22406), which shows the dialectic interweaving of the shared but also conflicting interests of the author and the publisher. In several letters written in 1572 to the nobleman Alvise Mocenigo (on whom, see *D.B.I.*), Guilandino asks Mocenigo to have the privilege for which the publisher had applied shortened from the twenty years requested, which seemed to him excessive, to five to six years, which the author deemed more “honest,” which suggests that he understood little of the mechanism of privileges. He also requested that the publisher not learn of his move to have the duration of the privilege reduced, showing that he did understand that the publisher would not be pleased. Finally, Guilandino asks Mocenigo to see to it that the expenses connected with registering the privilege be as low as possible, clarifying that the work in question was in one volume, not two: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. P 273 inf. “Lettere di Melchiorre Guilandino ad Alvise Mocenigo.”

⁷⁰ Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 98–102.

⁷¹ The *Parte* declared on 19 July 1548, “And if someone should complain of some counterfeit, it will be held most secret, and he will have the pecuniary reward promised him by the above laws.” Regarding the use of anonymous denunciations in Venice, see Paolo Preto, *Persona per hora secreta: Accusa e delazione nella Repubblica di Venezia* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2003).

considered sufficiently indemnified by his receipt of the confiscated copies.

The concession was condensed into a few lines that stated the result of the vote in the Senate. In the 1540s it became customary to include in one decree references to a variety of requests made by different petitioners, connecting them with the adverb *item*, in the interest of simplifying a bureaucratic procedure that was becoming increasingly frequent. The concession statements often specifically referred to current law.

It should be noted that once the privilege had run its course, reprints were totally unencumbered. Only in 1580 did the booksellers' and publishers' guild establish that an automatic privilege for ten years could be obtained simply by notifying the prior of the Arte of the intention to print a previously unpublished work. Reprinting, formerly unrestricted, was also regulated. And as for geographical limits, a privilege granted by the Venetian Senate was valid only within areas under Venetian authority, and even within that zone, it was most important to neutralize potential competition in the city itself, given the high concentration of publishers in Venice.

The procedures described here were not only costly for the petitioner but also demanded a high investment of time and energy. Procuring what was called in technical language an "ispeditione di privilegi"⁷² also involved *sviamento delle botteghe* (distraction from business) and *grande consommamento di tempo* (took up much time), as the bookmen themselves declared to the Holy Office of Venice in 1555.⁷³

Notification and Display of Privileges

Public notification that a privilege had been obtained was an essential element in the entire procedure. The most common ways of making the existence of a privilege known to third parties were to print the entire privilege or an extract from it in the book itself or to indicate its existence using formulas such as "cum gratia et privilegio," "cum privilegio," and the like. This novel device underwent a development of its own.

The first privilege to be published in its entirety appeared in the edition of the *Phoenix seu De artificiosa memoria* of Pietro Francesco Tomai

⁷² Rose, "The Accademia Veneziana," 218, quoting from the *Capitoli di fondazione dell'Accademia della Fama*, 10 December 1557.

⁷³ Andrea Del Col, "Il controllo della stampa a Venezia e i processi di Antonio Brucioli (1548–1559)," *Critica storica* 17 (1980): 491.

published on 10 January 1492 (*ISTC* ip00531000).⁷⁴ Tomai, a master of the art of memory, had a minor stroke of genius when he decided to use the paratext (i.e., the book itself) to notify readers of the privilege, publishing it just before the colophon, complete with the names of the illustrious patricians who had voted for it. The preceding manuscript tradition would have accustomed buyers and readers to finding details of production at the end of the text. The invention and continued use of the title page was not a rapid process, but once established, that was where notification of the privilege tended to be printed. Still, it remained quite common for privileged editions not to bear any mention of the concession, and indeed

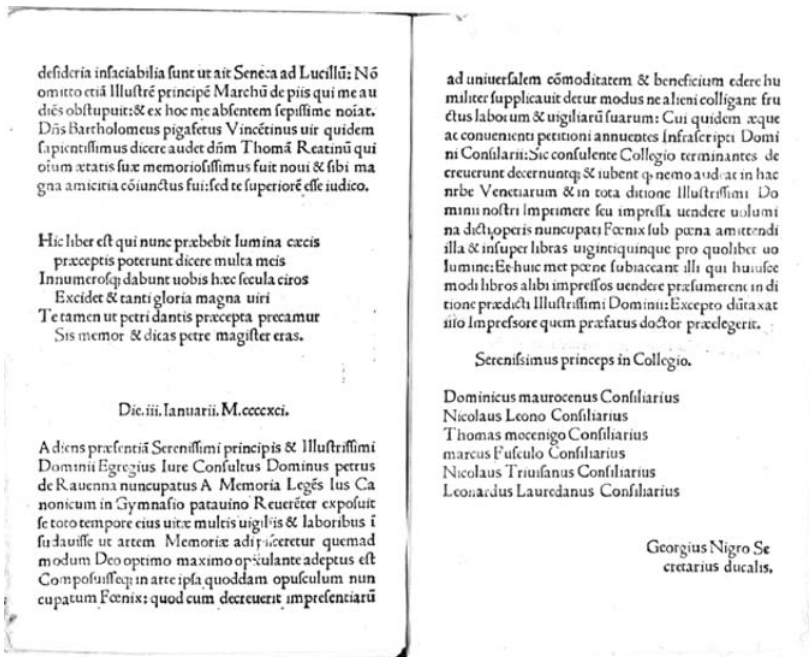


Fig. 6.5. The first privilege to be printed in a book, from Pietro Francesco Tomai of Ravenna, *Phoenix seu De artificiosa memoria*, Venice: B. de Cori, 10 January 1492; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Statale, Cremona.

⁷⁴ To be precise, the very first publication of a privilege within an edition took place in Milan, with Bettino Da Trezzo, *Letilogia* (Milan: Antonius Zarotus, after 10 March 1488, *ISTC* it00427900). The curious form chosen for the publication of this document (a translation into vernacular verse of the ducal letter, placed within the rest of the work) did not create a real precedent for the publicizing of the privilege, given its later historical development.

the privilege holder was not obliged in any way to give notification of the privilege. In Spain, by contrast, the privilege was accompanied by the imposition of a sale price, the *tasa*, and the publisher had to print it in the paratext because of its evident interest to the public.⁷⁵

In Venice, publication of the full text of the privilege, following Tomai's model, was unusual, though not precisely rare. It was also quite unusual to cite the names of the College or Senate members who had granted the concession, since by mentioning them the publisher seemed to seek to personalize the relationship between the petitioner and the powerful individuals who had consented to his request. These were rhetorical expedients, but in the final analysis they had a commercial purpose. Few other publishers printed their privileges with the names of patricians involved in its granting,⁷⁶ a form of publication of the privilege that remained exceptional to Venice. Such identification of those who granted the request could not have been welcome to patricians, who preferred to take decisions within the various government bodies without publicizing their individual positions.⁷⁷ In other states, the situation was very different, for the existence of a direct relationship between the petitioner and the petitioned, as demonstrated by letters patent or *motu proprio*, meant that privileges conceded by specific individual authorities such as the king of France, the emperor, or the pope were published in full. Precisely because of their origins in the approbation of an exceptionally illustrious personage, such privileges brought a prestige to the edition, and they were published in full in order to boast of a direct relationship between the petitioner and the authorities. Such privileges were usually endowed

⁷⁵ The first privilege in Castile with a price is printed in the book by Juliano Gutierrez, *Cura de la piedra* (Toledo: Peter Hagembach, for Melchior Gorricio, 4 April 1498, *ISTC* ig00735000).

⁷⁶ For instance, a publisher as intensely active as Giovanni Tacuino, who specialized in the publication of the Latin classics with commentary by humanist scholars, made use of the publication of the full text of his privileges, complete with the names of the noble signatories. The publication of the privilege was placed either at the end of the volume, after the colophon (as in the *Ars amandi* of Ovid with commentary by Bartolomeo Merula, *ISTC* i000143000; Fulin, "Documenti," 112, no. 24; or Juvenal with commentary by Calderini, Valla, and Mancinelli: *ISTC* ij00666000) or in the preliminaries, on the verso of the title page (as in the edition of Catullus of 1496 with commentary by Palladio Fosco, *ISTC* ic00325000). Another unusual case was the edition of the Latin translation of the works of Lucian published by Giovan Battista Sessa in 1500 (*ISTC* il00331000), where once again, the petition and the document conceding the privilege were published at the end of the volume, with all the signatures of the council members, forming something like a complete dossier of the request for the concession.

⁷⁷ Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 18–45.

with a very rich rhetorical structure and contained a superabundance of grounds for publication and praise for the person requesting the privilege, as well as listing the merits of the work, for they were drawn up with a view to their subsequent publication in their entirety.⁷⁸ Rhetorical ornamentation does not hide, however, that throughout Europe the content of the book privilege, the *jus prohibendi*, was just as it had been since first successfully established by the Serenissima.

The standard formula “cum privilegio” started to appear in books published at the end of 1497 and beginning of 1498. This formula appeared on the title page, separated from the title to accentuate the importance and different nature of the statement. This way of advertising the existence of a privilege for the work implied that readers – and competitors – were fully capable of filling out the details, including the implications. Anyone who took up a copy of a privileged book was *ipso facto* informed of the concession.

There were other means of advertising a privilege. It must have been quite common to distribute copies of the concession document to competing printers in the form of a circulating letter that would have been prepared at the expense of the titleholder. Not only was the privilege registered, but a copy was also provided to the petitioner. In Milan the privilege was *gridato*, or publicly proclaimed.⁷⁹ Forms of publication of this sort existed in Venice as well. Word of a privilege would have circulated easily within the restricted and quite crowded space of the city, which means that even if a book contained no special notification, the existence of a privilege would have been known to the other printers. Moreover, it was important to ward off competition as soon as possible, before the book was produced and published. To be sure, prohibitions were not necessarily observed, nor were they uncontested: not only was the phenomenon of editions produced in violation of the privilege fairly widespread, but also, as the records attest, repeated requests for confirmation

⁷⁸ Normally the title page simply cited the privilege, with the complete text placed in the preliminaries.

⁷⁹ In 1505 the letter patent conceding to the de Legnano brothers the privilege for twelve different works was proclaimed at the staircase of the Palazzo del Broletto and at the gates of Milan: Guido Sutermeister, *Gli editori “da Legnano,” 1470–1525*. 2 vols. (Varese: Tip. Arcivescovile dell’Addolorata, 1946–48), 2:247. At a later date, however, procedures in Milan conformed to Venetian practice, with a simple granting of a document attesting to the fact that the privilege had been obtained. See the privilege granted to Pietro Maria Crivelli in 1542 in Arnaldo Ganda, “Giovanni Antonio Castiglione e la stampa musicale a Milano,” in *Anatomie bibliologiche: Saggi di storia del libro per il centenario de “La Bibliofilia,”* ed. Luigi Balsamo and Pierangelo Bellettini. (Florence: Olschki, 1999, 320–21).

of a privilege were addressed to the body that had granted it, as in Antonio Moretto's petition of 1499.⁸⁰ On 10 December 1573, the Senate, at the request of the grantee, made known to all the principal bookmen of Venice, some forty men, the concession to Francesco Patrizi of a ten-year privilege for two books.⁸¹ For the most part, it was the holder of the privilege who had to take the initiative, as the Milanese publisher Matteo Besozzi did when in 1570 he distributed a printed advertisement notifying all his colleagues that he had obtained certain important privileges for some religious books.⁸² Again, this communication resembled a circular letter, a form of communication that was probably much more common than the surviving material testifies.

A copy of the privilege drawn up by a notary or by the ducal secretary was given to the petitioner so that he could exhibit and use it. In Venice it often happened that at the foot of the registered privilege there was mention of the release of letters patent to the interested parties immediately after registration (normally on the following day). All such copies given to petitioners have been lost.⁸³

Notification was more complex when several privileges were involved, which was often concealed under the laconic formula "cum privilegi." These privileges were not specified and their detail could not be deduced from the published book. On other occasions, the privilege was mentioned in formulas such as "Con privilegio di Papa Clemente et del Senato di questa Città, et di tutti gli altri Stati et Signori della Italia" – only the States of the Church and the Republic of Venice are mentioned explicitly, even though privileges had accurately been gathered also from lesser states. This formula enabled the recipient of the privilege to avoid listing those states, which would have risked giving offence to the various *signorie* of Italy over the precedence implied by their position in the listing.⁸⁴

As for the sanctions for counterfeiters, scholars no longer seem to share the opinion of Horatio Brown, and others after him, that infringements usually remained unpunished and the greater part of the laws remained a dead letter.⁸⁵ Although Aldo Manuzio's protests about the production of

⁸⁰ Fulin, "Documenti," 137, no. 92.

⁸¹ Corrado Marciani, "Un filosofo del Rinascimento editore-libraio: Francesco Patrizio e l'incisore Giovanni Franco di Cherso," *La Bibliofilia* 72 (1970): 196–97.

⁸² Cavagna, "Statuti di librai," 235, n. 46.

⁸³ The Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp is unique in conserving a large collection of privileges, both originals and copies.

⁸⁴ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 260–61.

⁸⁵ Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 58–59.

illicit reprints of his works outside Venice, particularly in Milan and Lyon, have attracted scholarly attention, to date only sporadic interest has been shown in investigating the efficacy of Venetian privileges.⁸⁶

In 1500 and again in 1503, the editor Amadio Scoto appealed to the Venetian magistracy of the Signori di Notte al Civil to ask that they block the printing of works for which he had been granted a privilege. On the first occasion, his target was Bernardino Benali, who was in the process of printing a medical text to which Scoto held title; on the second occasion, which can be found in a petition in the name of the bookseller Girolamo Durante, his target was Andrea Torresani. The latter was fined the notable sum of five hundred ducats.⁸⁷ There are several known cases of falsification of privileges; in 1552, for example, Curzio Troiano Navò and Giovita Rapirio were put on trial for having done so.⁸⁸ Bookmen took recourse to law to protect their interests more often than has been thought. For example, in 1559 the bookseller-publisher Paolo Gherardo succeeded in blocking the distribution of the Sansovino edition of *La fabbrica del mondo* by Francesco Alunno,⁸⁹ perhaps because it had been published in violation of the privilege conceded to the author, on the basis of which Gherardo had produced his edition of the work in 1556.⁹⁰ This was thus a case of precautionary sequestration.

Many disputes were probably resolved informally, without judiciary involvement, on the basis of commercial transactions between the interested parties. It seems legitimate to state that if the privilege system had been ineffective, it would not have developed as it did over the course of the sixteenth century, nor would men of the book world – publishers and authors first among them – have been so eager to seek its protection. And we cannot expect observance of prohibitions or surveillance over possible law breakers to be anything like they are today.

Not only was the system of privileges active at a local level, but during the latter half of the sixteenth century it covered an ever-increasing

⁸⁶ There is discussion of some legal cases that arose from infringements of French privileges in Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 196–98, and William Kemp, “A Complex Case of Privilege Infringement in France: The History of the Early Editions of Caviceo’s *Peregrin*, 1527–1529,” *Bulletin du Bibliophile* 2 (1992): 41–62.

⁸⁷ Volpati, “Gli Scotti,” 370. For the privilege in question, see Fulin, “Documenti,” 142–43, no. 106.

⁸⁸ Agee, “The Venetian Privilege,” 18; Kostylo, “Commentary on Aldus Manutius’s Warning.”

⁸⁹ Francesco Alunno, *Della fabbrica del mondo* (Venice: Francesco Sansovino et compagni, 1560, *Edit* 16, CNC 1314).

⁹⁰ Bonora, *Ricerche su Francesco Sansovino*, 65. Gherardo’s edition is *Edit* 16, CNCE 1312.

geographical range. It was the only form of commercial protection that authorities throughout the Italian Peninsula routinely made available to authors and publishers, no matter the city in which the work or works in question were printed. Only in Venice was the privilege system intended, always and exclusively, to favor local industrial production. In Milan, for example, it was normal practice for privileges to be granted to major bookmen such as Paolo Manuzio⁹¹ and Luc'Antonio Giunti⁹² for editions they had published in Rome and in Venice.

The second half of the sixteenth century witnessed an increase in the number of privileges granted by the various governments. In part this growth was brought about by political and administrative divisions, but increased competition also played a part and publishers were obliged to submit applications to the courts of all the Italian and European states if they were to enlarge the market in which their privileges were effective. Very often the statement "con privilegi" that appears on a title page hides the patient weaving of a legal protection throughout Italy, state by state, signory by signory.

Effective protection, whether in Italy or throughout Europe, of any published book arose only from an entire mosaic of privileges obtained in the areas in which the work was to be sold. The publishers who succeeded in obtaining joint protection in a number of states made up the highest level of the market, in terms of both the extent of their business and their own status, and they were obliged patiently to establish relations with court figures who mediated all requests for such concessions. The ability to sell goods in an area that corresponded to the linguistic and cultural market was a challenge that faced publishing in Italy even up until the nineteenth century and Italian unification. In the sixteenth century, and especially in the second half of that century, lack of a privilege for one of the Italian states could give rise to ruinous competition.

The privileges conceded to Venetian publishers by other states did not protect local production; they addressed only the economic interests of the Venetian operators. By conceding privileges for works printed elsewhere, the various heads of Italian signories reinforced the Venetian print

⁹¹ Archivio di Stato di Milano, *Studi p.a.*, 97, request for a privilege of six years duration for the catechism in Italian and in Latin and for commentary on Cicero, *Epistolae familiares* (two major successes of his press: *Edit 16*, CNCE 12057) entered 15 October 1566 (Pius V had granted his privilege the preceding 24 September): see Barberi, *Paolo Manuzio*, 149–52.

⁹² For the *Prediche quadragesimali* of Cornelio Musso, printed in 1586 (*Edit 16*, CNCE 27753), Giunti obtained a fifteen-year privilege: see Archivio di Stato di Milano, *Studi p.a.*, 97.

business, limiting themselves to pocketing the costs that the procedure for obtaining a privilege demanded of all publishers.⁹³

As the books themselves did not make clear by which privilege they were covered, it is legitimate to hypothesize that an information system existed, run by privilege holders who spread word of their privileges through the channels of information also employed for commercial correspondence. Like all interested parties, honest competitors were urged to heed the privileges, for obvious reasons of reciprocity. The major bookmen undoubtedly brought their correspondents and the managers of their branches up to date periodically regarding privileges granted, so that they could avoid offering for sale editions that infringed a privilege. Thus Gabriele Giolito warned the bookseller Giovan Battista Cappelli, who was in charge of the bookshop at the sign of the Phoenix in Naples, that rival firms had obtained certain privileges in the Kingdom of Naples and that he should not accept illegal editions for sale.⁹⁴

Finally, privileges were usually transferrable to a third party, provided that possibility was mentioned in the concession. The formula for granting a privilege attests to this when it states that the *jus prohibendi* of the privilege holder could be terminated when he wanted if there was agreement regarding any permission that involved a third person.⁹⁵ The transferred privilege kept all its powers and its limitations, including its duration.

Aldo Manuzio the Younger ceded to the bookseller-publisher Charles Pesnot of Lyon the privilege conceded to his father, Paolo Manuzio, by Emperor Maximilian II for Cicero's *Commentaries* and *Letters*.⁹⁶ Similarly,

⁹³ In a 1569 letter to Lelio Montalerio, a relation in Mantua, Gabriele Giolito asked for help in obtaining a privilege from the duke of Mantua. The cost that Montalerio mentioned was one scudo. Giolito then asked Montalerio to suspend his efforts because with the intercession of Bernardo Tasso, who was secretary to the duke, he could obtain a reduction of the cost or even concession of the privilege gratis. Privileges in the lesser states seem to have been an extension of the patronage system. See Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 323–25; Kostylo, “Commentary on Marcantonio Sabellico.”

⁹⁴ Bongi, *Annali*, cviii; Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Terra*, reg. 45 (1564–1565), f. 20v. About Cappello, see Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 254–56.

⁹⁵ This was normally done with the formula, “eiusdem [of the petitioner] expressa licentia,” or in the vernacular, “a niun altro che egli, o chi averà causa o licentia da lui, sia concesso” (to no other than he, or who shall have cause and licence from him, may it be conceded), and the like. The same was true for privileges for inventions: Berveglieri, *Le vie di Venezia* and in France: Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 193–94; Parent, *Les métiers du livre*, 300–311. It was also fairly common in Spain: Reyes Gómez, *El libro en España y América*, 35. On occasion traces of this transfer exist in the edition produced.

⁹⁶ Marciari, “Editori, tipografi, librai veneti,” 490–91. After the transfer of the privilege, the following editions were published: *In Epistolas M Tullii Ciceronis quae familiares*

but as a sign of love and consideration, the Milanese publisher Paolo Gottardo da Ponte ceded to his brother Pacifico the right to print, for one time only, the *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis* (Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary), for which he held a ten-year privilege granted by the Senate of Milan.⁹⁷ A discrepancy between the name of the publisher and the name of the holder of the privilege is thus not necessarily an indication that the edition is illegal, given the possibility of a transferred privilege. Another example is the *Rime* of Annibal Caro, published in 1572 with the imprint and mark of Aldo Manuzio the Younger.⁹⁸ The title page mentions two privileges, one from the pope and one from the Venetian Republic, conceded to Domenico Basa, a bookman who had various alliances and connections with the Manuzio family and who had in this case evidently transferred the privilege to Aldo Manuzio the Younger.⁹⁹ The most massive occurrence of cession and transfer of privileges probably took place when the papal curia began to confer privileges for the newly revised liturgical texts, about which I shall say more below.

Finally, privileges were automatically transferred to a holder's heirs as an integral part of the goods that the business owned. Thus the list of possessions drawn up for the Varisco heirs in 1597 mentions bookshops, houses in Venice and elsewhere (for instance, the branches at the fairs of Lanciano and Recanati and the bookshop in Naples), warehouses, the sign of the Mermaid (which was to remain the undivided property of all the heirs), and a variety of book privileges.¹⁰⁰ Another example is the restitution of the dowry promised to Francesca di Tommaso Giunti, the widow of Aldo Manuzio the Younger, which was calculated in 1597 at 2,400 ducats. A list of household goods and shop equipment, of the copies of printed books stored in great number in the print shop's warehouse, together with the goodwill of the bookshop and ownership of the sign and the mark to be used on print products is followed by privileges for seven different

vocantur Paulli Manutij commentarius (Lyon: Charles Pesnot, 1580); *In M. T. Ciceronis de Officiis Libros tres Aldi Mannuccij, Pauli F. Aldi N. Commentarius; item in Dialogos de Senectute, Amicitia; Paradoxa; Somnium Scip. Ex VI de Republ. (Cum Ciceronis textu)* (Lyon: Charles Pesnot, 1582). On Pesnot, see Stephen Rawles and Michael A. Screech, *A New Rabelais Bibliography: Editions of Rabelais before 1626* (Geneva: Droz, 1987).

⁹⁷ Kevin Stevens, "Sibling Rivalry: Honor, Ambition, and Identity in the Printing Trade in Early Modern Milan," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée* 115 (2003): 107–22.

⁹⁸ *Edit* 16, CNCE 9650.

⁹⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Terra*, reg. 47 (1568–1569), c. 24rv; *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Basa, Domenico."

¹⁰⁰ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 551.

works that, along with Torquato Tasso's *Rime*, constituted the firm's major successes in recent years.¹⁰¹

The Privileged Printer

At a certain point other Italian states launched initiatives linked to the use of privileges that affected the print industry. Such initiatives were not intended to place all printers on the same plane, as was true in Venice, but quite obviously favored one printer, who took the title of ducal printer. This practice suggests that the privilege was utilized to encourage the reinroduction of printing in individual states.

In Florence, Cosimo de' Medici established the Italian model for this new relationship between printer and state. On 5 April 1547, a twelve-year contract was drawn up between the duke of Florence (represented by his first secretary, the jurist Lelio Torelli, who wrote the agreement) and Lorenzo Torrentino, a printer and bookseller from the Duchy of Brabant who had by this date been active for some years in Bologna.¹⁰² According to this contract, Torrentino committed to opening a print shop in Florence with two presses, ample print materials (nine sets of types, six of them Latin and two Greek), and the necessary workers and correctors. Torrentino himself was to be paid an annual salary of one hundred gold scudi. He enjoyed an exclusive privilege for printing in the territory, but at the same time, he was warned not to sell at prices that were too high; if he did so, the ducal authorities would automatically fix book prices. Furthermore, the duke himself would procure the indispensable privileges from other lords and rulers, without which the exclusive right to print would be enjoyed only within the Medici lands. In order to further encourage Torrentino's business, a series of clauses in the contract emphasized his control of commerce by prohibiting other booksellers, again for a twelve-year duration, from selling in Florence books printed in France and Germany. An exception was made for law books, the sale of which remained free of restrictions. Reduction of import and export taxes and permission to bear

¹⁰¹ Pitacco, "La repromissione di dote," 238.

¹⁰² Godefridus J. Hoogewerff, "Laurentius Torrentinus (Laurens Leenaertsz van der Beke): Boekdrukker en uitgever van den hertog van Toscane, 1547–1563," *Het boek* 15 (1926): 273–88, 369–81; Berta Maracchi Biagiarelli, "Il privilegio di stampatore ducale nella Firenze medicea," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 123, no. 2 (1965): 304–70; Frans Slits, *Laurentius Torrentinus: drukker van Cosimo, hertog van Florence (± 1500–1563)* (Gemert: Heemkundekring "De Kommanderij Gemert," 1995); Angela Nuovo, "Stampa e potere: Sondaggi cinquecenteschi," *Bibliologia* 1 (2006): 53–85.

arms like a noble complete the picture of exceptional princely protection of a productive and commercial activity that in itself was not vital to the duchy, unlike the defense or maintenance of the population, but that was accorded significant strategic importance.¹⁰³ Torrentino had a right to the title of ducal printer and could make use of the Medici coat of arms as his device.

The contract really consisted not of a simple privilege, but of a complex of incentives that included a salary, privileges and a commercial monopoly, and fiscal reductions. Overall, it aimed to offer the best opportunities in order to furnish the duchy with a first-rate print operation, which it had not had for some time. Its principal and specific aim was the publication of the text of Justinian's *Pandects* from an ancient manuscript held in the Medici library, which was indeed printed in 1553 with a collection of international privileges.¹⁰⁴

Torrentino's print production – some 290 works published between 1548 and his death in 1563 – is certainly of notable size and quality, and it exemplifies in quite impressive manner the way in which the duke could encourage the development of a publishing enterprise in his city and assure a high standard of production, even in comparison with the leading Venetian publishing houses. Still, although the complex of privileges and facilitations given to Torrentino was striking, the advantages that he derived from them remained somewhat aleatory, and quite surely the duke himself invested no capital in the print shop. In order to furnish the shop adequately with typefaces and other apparatus, Torrentino went so heavily into debt that he continued to be burdened with repayments to the end of his career.

Torrentino's case served as an example, demonstrating to the Venetian bookmen that they too could become state printers connected with certain administrations. Another well-known case was the transfer of Paolo Manuzio, a symbolic name in Venetian publishing, who, having declined other propositions in Italy and Germany, signed a contract in 1561 with the Apostolic Chamber in Rome. This contract promised the founding of a new printing establishment, whose "superintendent and governor" Paolo Manuzio was to be. He was also promised a sumptuous annual honorarium of five hundred gold scudi, five times the amount paid to Lorenzo Torrentino. The Apostolic Chamber also took over all current and ongoing

¹⁰³ For this kind of agreement in general, see Molà, "Stato e impresa," 647–51.

¹⁰⁴ *Edit 16*, CNCE 13438. Privileges had been conceded by, in addition to Cosimo de' Medici, the pope, the emperor, the king of France, and even the king of England, Edward VI (a rare occurrence in Italy). A privilege from Venice was, of course, lacking.

printing expenses. Paolo Manuzio thus became the director of a printing establishment that belonged to the Apostolic Chamber, and he was charged with running it for twelve years, instructing the workers, and installing machinery and other necessary furnishings. He was entrusted with the crucial task of producing editions that were correct, worthy of his reputation as a great Latinist, and of impeccable orthodoxy. Any monetary gains were to be divided between the Apostolic Chamber and Manuzio himself, who thus filled the role of director of operations with joint participation in the profits.¹⁰⁵

Manuzio's contract in Rome moved still more clearly than Torrentino's in Florence in the direction of an institutionalization of the publishing business, including recognition of the scientific and cultural contribution that it made to the preoccupations and ideological and religious demands of the various rulers of Italy. In Florence, besides the publication of Justinian's *Pandects*, the aim was to disseminate effectively the literary works of the Florentine Academy, to promote the Tuscan language, and to glorify the Medici family. In Rome, what was considered urgent was control of the publication of the new editions of reformed canonical works.

The great Venetian bookmen were continually tempted by proposals involving emigration. In this area the Gonzaga of Mantua moved first, although they offered much less than the Medici. The first invitation came to Gabriele Giolito at the beginning of his career, in 1543, four years before Torrentino's contract in Florence, when the duchess of Mantua suggested that Giolito transfer his business to that city, offering a number of fiscal advantages and privileges. Giolito courteously declined.¹⁰⁶ The second invitation that we know of came from Alfonso II d'Este, duke of Ferrara,

¹⁰⁵ Barberi, *Paolo Manuzio*; Martin Lowry, *Facing the Responsibility of Paulus Manutius* (Los Angeles: UCLA University Research Library Department of Special Collections, 1995); Paul F. Grendler, "The Adages of Paolo Manuzio. Erasmus and the Roman Censor," in *Renaissance Education Between Religion And Politics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) part X, pp. 1-21; Fletcher, *In Praise of Aldus*, 73-74; Nuovo, *Stampa e potere*. As is known, both Paolo Manuzio and his son Aldo the Younger received many offers to transfer their operations: see *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Manuzio, Paolo."

¹⁰⁶ Paolo Pellegrini, "A Bibliography of Mantuan Imprints: Further Documents: Gabriele Giolito, Venturino Ruffinelli, Benedetto Agnello (and Ludovico Tridapale)," *La Bibliofilia* 109 (2007): 231-33. The invitation was accepted by a lesser printer, Venturino Ruffinelli, who moved from Venice to Mantua in October 1543. His privilege, signed by Ercole Gonzaga in November 1543, included the printing monopoly for the domain and several tax exemptions but no salary, the most significant variation from the contracts of Florence and Rome. Another fundamental difference concerned the dimensions of the states and the related extent of the areas in which the privileges were valid: Angela Nuovo, "Mantova, i Gonzaga e la stampa," in *Le cinquecentine mantovane della Biblioteca Comunale di Mantova*, ed. Francesca Ferrari (Florence, Olschki, 2008), xxi-xxxiii.

CANONES, ET DECRETA
SACROSANCTI OECVMENICI,
ET GENERALIS CONCILII
TRIDENTINI

SVB PAVLO III, IVLIO III, PIO IIII,
PONTIFICIBVS MAX.

Index Dogmatum, & Reformationis.



R O M A E,
Apud Paulum Manutium, Aldi F.
M D L X I I I I.

In Aedibus Populi Romani.

Fig. 6.6. Title page of *Canones, et decreta sacrosancti oecumenici et generalis Concilii Tridentini*. Rome: Paolo Manuzio, 1564; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

almost twenty years later, in 1560. In this case, Giolito asked for a salary of three hundred scudi per year, which was rejected. Major publishers like Giolito would not have considered moving their business away from Venice without the guarantee of a substantial income. Giolito continued to use his considerable talents to publish books in Venice.¹⁰⁷

With the success of the Florentine experiment, movement intensified. The phenomenon of privileged printers, the learned and powerful publishers whose presence truly gave luster to a state, found its parallel in the great professors who increased the reputation of the universities. It was soon clear that the basic administrative and scholastic needs of the lesser states, and to some degree the various cities, could not be satisfied by the importation of printed books. Moreover, in Rome it was clear by the early sixteenth century that a printer needed to be engaged with a contract for the production of decrees, papal bulls, and various administrative acts. For the first time, printing was a legal means in Rome for authentic, large-scale reproduction of acts of the chanceries. A process that initially met the needs of just one specific court, whose decisions involved all of Christianity and were therefore destined to have a large circulation,¹⁰⁸ was soon adopted in the smaller states, the communes, and the seminaries as well.¹⁰⁹ Demand on the part of communities poorly served by the press converged with offerings on the part of printers willing to transfer their businesses in the search for incentives that might produce a monopoly or more likely, a micro-monopoly. Yet in spite of the crushing and urgent need for a revival of printing in many states, the various administrations remained dead set against the investment of capital in the sector; they were generous only in the concession of privileges, which were not necessarily combined with fiscal advantages, although at times, though rarely, they might offer a salary for a fixed number of years.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 158–61.

¹⁰⁸ For a series of Roman broadsheets, see Ugo Rozzo, *La strage ignorata: I fogli volanti a stampa nell'Italia dei secoli XV e XVI* (Udine: Forum, 2008), 189–237. *Edit 16* includes about 2,500 Papal Chancery documents such as bulls, *privilegia*, and *indulgentiae*.

¹⁰⁹ In Venice as well, the need for correct and elegant printed versions of the laws and decisions of the various government bodies led to the concession of the first privilege for official printed matter, that conceded to the Accademia Veneziana in 1560: Renouard, *Annales*, 279. The short life of the Accademia Veneziana meant that other printers immediately took over this task, but we do not know whether they held title to privileges.

¹¹⁰ For a large but nonetheless partial panorama of the printers involved in this phenomenon in the various cities of Italy, see Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, s.v. “Alessandri, Marino d” (18–19); “Baldini, Vittorio” (57–62); “Bartoli, Ercoliano, Flaminio e Flavio” (75–79); “Bartoli, Girolamo ed eredi” (80–81); “Bellone, Antonio,

ALLI MOLTO MAGNIFICI SIGNORI DEPV TATI DI CREMONA.



Di Vostre Signorie

Diuotissimo & perpetuo seruidore

Vincenzo Conti, Stampatore.

Fig. 6.7. Vincenzo Conti, *Petition to the Signori of Cremona*, c. 1555. Courtesy of Archivio di stato, Cremona.

Cristoforo e Marc'Antonio" (92–98); "Benacci, Alessandro" (98–104); "Benacci, Vittorio" (105–9); "Bevilacqua, Niccolò" (127–28); "Bianchini, Nicolò" (128–29); "Blado, Antonio e Paolo" (147–49); "Bonetti, Luca" (171–73); "Cacchi, Giuseppe" (223–27); "Campo, Antonio" (238–40); "Cantagalli, Giansimone e Vincenzo" (251–53); "Cavazza, Cesare" (281–84); "Colaldi, Agostino" (300–302); "Conti, Francesco" (326–28); "Conti, Vincenzo" (329–39); "Dalle Donne, famiglia" (357–59); "De Angelis, Giuseppe" (364–66); "De Monti, Sertorio" (371–72); "Discepolo, Girolamo" (381–83); "Doni, Anton Francesco" (386–88); "Dragoni,

Pre-publication Censorship and Licencing

The licence to print, or pre-publication censorship, was an instrument completely different from the privilege. The other Italian states preceded the Republic of Venice in passing such laws and gaining control over what was published. But Italian legislation was by no means precocious, given that in Spain pre-publication censorship was imposed by the *Pragmática de los Reyes Católicos* in 1502; it would also be maintained in later centuries.¹¹¹

In Rome concern over what was printed culminated in the establishment of the *imprimatur*, which began with Innocent VIII's bull *Inter Multiplices* of 1487, reaffirmed by Pope Leo X with a bull in 1515.¹¹² Other than in the special case of Rome, in Italy state censorship arose not in the face of extensive print production that was difficult to control, although that certainly was the case in Venice, but rather in places and at times of depressed production, and it affected both print products and manuscripts.

In Florence, strict legislation was already in effect by the beginning of the sixteenth century. On 6 September 1507 deliberation among the *priori* and the *gonfalonieri* resulted in procurement of a licence to publish, granted in the name of the first chancellor, becoming obligatory; infringement of this requirement could result in a fine of twenty-five gold florins, ten whip lashes, and twenty-five years in prison. Both printers and manuscript copyists were subject to the law, which was confirmed by the authorities of the Republic on 17 June 1527.¹¹³ Although we do not know whether Cosimo de' Medici reissued or changed that legislation, we can

Cristoforo" (393–99); "Facio, Isidoro e Lepido" (415–17); "Farri, Pietro" (428–30). On Benacci see also Pierangelo Bellettini, "La stamperia camerale di Bologna. I: Alessandro e Vittorio Benacci (1587–1629)," *La Bibliofilia* 90 (1988): 21–53.

¹¹¹ Reyes Gómez, *El libro en España y América*, 96. The provision applied to the kingdoms of Castile, the Crown of Aragon, Navarra, and, later, the New World.

¹¹² Bibliography on the history of Catholic censorship is now vast. As a point of departure, see Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*; Ugo Rozzo, *Linee per una storia dell'editoria religiosa in Italia: 1465–1600* (Udine: Arti grafiche friulane, 1993); Vittorio Frajese, *La nascita dell'Indice: La censura ecclesiastica del Rinascimento alla Controriforma* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2006); Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 69–74; Christopher F. Black, *The Italian Inquisition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 158–207; and Vittorio Frajese, "Censura libraria," in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, ed. Adriano Prosperi, 5 vols. (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010), 1:324–28.

¹¹³ Antonio Panella, "La censura sulla stampa e una questione giurisdizionale fra Stato e Chiesa in Firenze alla fine del secolo XVI," *Archivio storico italiano* 5th ser., 43 (1909): 141–42.

imagine that he did not budge from obligatory pre-publication censorship, as is suggested by the severe punishment meted out in 1552 to Lodovico Domenichi for publishing his translation of Calvin's *Nicodemiana* without permission and with a false place of printing, given as Basel. He was condemned to imprisonment for life, not because of his support of heretical ideas, but for printing and distributing this text in violation of the laws governing printing.¹¹⁴

Pre-publication censorship also spread to Milan, where it was explicitly imposed on printers by Francesco II Sforza in 1534.¹¹⁵ Even earlier, however, in 1522, censorship of political writings in verse known as *frottole* had been declared. Moreover, in 1523 Francesco had introduced severe measures to counter the distribution of Protestant books imported into the duchy.¹¹⁶ In Milan, as elsewhere, pre-publication censorship was first established without the involvement of religious bodies, although later the Inquisitor would be included among the competent authorities.¹¹⁷

In Naples, book publishing was regulated somewhat later, in 1544, by the viceroy, Pedro Alvarez de Toledo, who issued a law prohibiting the printing, sale, and possession of all books of theology and sacred scripture that had been produced during the past twenty-five years and did not have the approval of the magistracy of the Cappellano Maggiore. In 1550, control was extended to all types of books.¹¹⁸ The later establishment of censorship in Naples meant that such regulation first appeared in a purely

¹¹⁴ Enrico Garavelli, *Lodovico Domenichi e i "Nicodemiana" di Calvino: Storia di un libro perduto e ritrovato* (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2004). Thanks to the many prominent persons who petitioned the duke for clemency, Domenichi remained in prison for only six months.

¹¹⁵ In that period, the printing business in Milan was so depressed that the law was addressed to only five people, each of them named in the act: Vincenzo Meda, Giovan Antonio Zarotto, Francesco Cantalupo, a certain Togneto, and Gottardo da Ponte (Archivio di Stato di Milano, *Carteggio sforzesco*, 1450, Milano città, *sub data*: for the text of the law, see Simone Albonico, Review of Ennio Sandal, *L'arte della stampa a Milano nell'età di Carlo V: Notizie storiche ed annali tipografici [1526–1556]*) [Baden-Baden: Koerner, 1988], *Rivista di Letteratura italiana* 7 [1989]: 192, n. 9).

¹¹⁶ Joseph Hilgers, "Bücherverbot und Bücherzensur des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts in Italien," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 28 (1911): 110–18.

¹¹⁷ Kevin Stevens, "Printing and Politics: Carlo Borromeo and the Seminary Press of Milan," in *Stampa, libri e letture a Milano nell'età di Carlo Borromeo*, ed. Nicola Raponi and Angelo Turchini (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1992), 106, 128.

¹¹⁸ Pasquale Lopez, *Inquisizione stampa e censura nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600* (Naples: Delfino, 1974), 29–31; Giovanni Lombardi, *Tra le pagine di San Biagio: Economia della stampa a Napoli in età moderna* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2000), 129–31.

religious manifestation, and only subsequently adopted the character of the early state censorship of other areas.¹¹⁹

The institution of pre-publication censorship had quite different consequences for book circulation in Venice, the city that clearly dominated the Italian market. The first provision, passed by the Council of Ten on 30 January 1516, established that no books in the humanities could be printed without a careful review and the approval of the learned Andrea Navagero, under the threat of exclusively pecuniary sanctions.¹²⁰ Quality control, which was thus initiated, was intended to maintain the viability and reputation of Venetian books in the face of growing competition. To be sure, many readers expressed their disapproval of incorrect print products, as can be seen in the statement that the jurist Giovanni Nevizzano printed at the end of his *Sylvae nuptiales*.¹²¹ After accusing the publishers of technical incompetence and excessive earnings, Nevizzano invokes the right to cancel the privilege if the printed text is inaccurate, finding it unjust that an unsatisfactory product should be granted a commercial advantage. Significantly, Nevizzano asserts with satisfaction that an authority has already established this rule by deputizing a group of experts to check over texts and by setting punishments for infringement of this regulation. This statement is telling testimony of the circulation of information among those who worked in the book trade. Still, there is no proof that this Venetian provision was observed systematically.

The *Parte* emitted by the Council of Ten in 1527 represents a genuine shift in legislation pertaining to printing.¹²² It introduced the licence to print, that is, pre-publication censorship.¹²³ Originally, no role was

¹¹⁹ For a later period when state censorship was more efficaciously organized, see Montecchi, *Aziende tipografiche*, 67–91, and Mario Infelise, “Note sulle origini della censura di Stato,” in *Filippo II e il Mediterraneo*, ed. Luigi Lotti and Rosario Villari (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2003), 223–40.

¹²⁰ Fulin, “Documenti,” 95–96, 189, no. 210; Plebani, *Venezia 1469*, 50.

¹²¹ Giovanni Nevizzano, *Sylvae nuptialis libri sex* (Asti: Francesco Silva, 1518, *Edit 16*, CNCE 31508).

¹²² This provision is dated 29 January 1526, *m.v.*: Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 208; Plebani, *Venezia 1469*, 40–41.

¹²³ Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 70–72 speaks of the occasion that caused this provision, which was a protest on the part of the friars of San Francesco della Vigna about the publication of Luigi Cinzio Fabrizi, *Libro della origine delli volgari proverbi* (Venice: Bernardino and Matteo dei Vitali, 1526, *Edit 16*, CNCE 18474), a work published with a privilege granted by the Senate. For the history of the institution of the licence in Venice, see Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 59–69. I prefer to use the term “licence” rather than “imprimatur” because although the two coexisted, in time “imprimatur” took on a completely religious connotation, whereas the licence arose as a permission granted by a lay body.

reserved to the Holy Office, which was inactive at the time. The licence gave concrete form to highly effective state-enforced preventive censorship, for the Council of Ten granted a licence to print or import books only after the works in question had been read by two reviewers. Their intention was to establish control not only over morality, but also over the quality of the text, operating in the unquestioned conviction that it was not only licit but also a duty for civil authorities to exercise control over what was put into circulation. In regulating the institution of the privilege with increasing coherence (specifying under what conditions it could be requested, for example), Venetian legislation surreptitiously introduced a previously unknown institution into pre-publication censorship. Given the volume of book production in Venice, pre-publication censorship required efficient, smoothly functioning procedures.

Until the 1540s, requirements were largely disregarded and a certain informality reigned.¹²⁴ We know of 842 registrations of privileges and 474 of licences to print between 1527 and 1550.¹²⁵ It is clear that documentation of privileges was initially better and more complete; documentation of licences is fragmentary. This situation had changed by the century's end, when the licencing system was fully functional, and some hundred licences and twenty or so privileges were granted per year. Indeed, a licence was obligatory, while a privilege was still voluntary.

In Venice, pre-publication censorship had been entrusted to the Chiefs of the Council of Ten, a body tasked with maintaining the security of the Republic and safeguarding morality. As the years passed their powers remained unchallenged, but there were a number of modifications in practice, including the introduction of a written sworn statement from two persons competent to judge the contents of the text to be published. Such approvals came to be called *fedi*, or certificates of approval. This was an important change, given that the reviewers took real responsibility for the contents of the text. Such persons were chosen by the council, and they came from the state apparatus (secretaries to the council or ducal secretaries), from among ecclesiastics (all ranks, from friar to patriarch), from university circles, and from among trustworthy gentlemen or patricians. As a rule, the choice of a reviewer reflected the nature of the text to be examined. The *fedi* had to attest to the fact that the reviewer had

¹²⁴ The institution of pre-publication censorship remained almost unused until 1542, according to Zorzi, "La produzione," 951.

¹²⁵ There are many lacunae in the papers of the Chiefs of the Council of Ten in the Notatorio and in the Filze concerning the granting of licences. For an attempt to schematize licences and privileges granted, see Agee, *The Privilege*, 18.

discovered in the work nothing against the Christian faith, the Republic of Venice, or good morals, and nothing counter to the political or diplomatic interests of the state, or at least nothing defamatory.

After 1562, the procedures for pre-publication censorship were reformulated. In order to obtain a licence to print, the applicant now had to present three certificates of approval (*fedi*): one from the Inquisitor (or an ecclesiastic who worked with him) for the doctrinal teachings of the Catholic Church and morality; one from a professor of the University of Padua or the Scuola di Rialto for the political content of the work; and one from a ducal secretary for questions of foreign policy and possible offence to rulers friendly with the Venetian Republic. The three separate *fedi* thus together ensured the adequacy of the work in the areas of faith, morality, and politics both internal and external. For the first time the presence of ecclesiastical authorities was part of a legal procedure, which until then had always been entirely secular in Venice.¹²⁶ Also in 1562, the Council of Ten established that the person requesting a licence was to deposit two copies of the text to be printed, one of which would be examined for the licence itself, and the other consigned, bound, to the Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, who would retain the copy until the work had been printed, in order to compare the approved text with the printed text.¹²⁷ This body would pronounce its decision after reviewing the publisher's manipulations of the approved text and his interpolations. The minimum punishment stipulated for infringements was one hundred ducats, and examination of the text was extremely painstaking.

Licences obtained in this manner can be separated into two groups: the first contained those of a general nature, with no individual's name attached, which were conceded to whoever might want to print a work; the second group did bear an individual's name. The printers of works of the second sort, less numerous than the first, did not have any implied right to exclusivity, which was conceded only by a privilege. The process of pre-publication censorship could take from one to three months, and it has been calculated that it might have cost as much as three ducats for a manuscript of 160 leaves.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Zorzi, "La produzione," 951–52.

¹²⁷ Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 92–93. Usually, the text submitted for the licence was considered only indicative, and the applicant reserved the right to change it, even notably, before sending it to the printing presses. The law also stipulated that the bound copies of texts sent to the Riformatori might (if considered worthy) be conserved in the public library: Infelise, "Deposito legale e censura."

¹²⁸ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 152–54.

The reform of 1562 thus noticeably heightened control over Venetian publishing. Its preventive impact was not only a result of its functioning as a barrier to objectionable texts. Self-censorship by authors proved to be another, and unfortunate, outcome, as they adapted to the limitations imposed on the expression of their ideas. Between 1560 and 1580 Venice's fear of heresy as a threat to the state grew, and pressure was being felt for an accord with Rome and Spain, the forces then predominant in Italy.

Trials of the time contain traces of criminal failure to observe the pre-publication procedure, as in the case against Marcantonio Giustiniani, convicted of having prepared and distributed world maps (*mappamondi*) in 1568 without holding a licence to print.¹²⁹ There was also the famous condemnation on 2 August 1544 of Bernardino Bindoni, Andrea Arrivabene, Pasqualino da San Sebastiano, and Giulio Danza for printing the *Paradossi* of Ortensio Lando without a licence. In 1548, Antonio Brucioli was fined fifty ducats and banned from the Republic of Venice for two years for printing several texts without a licence.¹³⁰ In 1553 Giovanni Griffio, as printer, and Paolo Gherardo, as publisher, were fined twenty-five ducats and subjected to a month in prison for having printed without a licence.¹³¹ In 1555 Girolamo Ruscelli and Plinio Pietrasanta were interrogated in court for having printed without a licence an obscene work entitled *Capitolo delle lodi del fuso*.¹³² During the quarrel between Lodovico

¹²⁹ Giacomo Moro, Review of Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere: Lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988), *Rivista di Letteratura italiana* 8 (1990): 677–80. Geographical knowledge was of significant strategic interest, especially for a marine power, and enhancing it without authorization might work against the vital interests of the Republic. Marcantonio Giustiniani was ordered by the Council of Ten not only to comply with the censorship procedure but also to request the privilege. A privilege was granted to him on 13 May 1568 (partially published in Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 238, n. 7). The work under examination was the famous Arabic *Mappamondo* or Map of Hajji Ahmed that Giustiniani published in collaboration with Michele Membré and Nicolò Cambi, intermediaries for the Turks and interpreters for the Venetian Republic. No copy of the first issue exists today, only eighteenth-century reproductions: Vercellin, *Venezia e l'origine della stampa*, 103–6; Angela Nuovo, “A proposito del carteggio Pinelli-Dupuy,” *Bibliotheca. Rivista di studi bibliografici* 2 (2002): 114–15.

¹³⁰ For the editions of Lando, see Conor Fahy, “Edizioni veneziane dei *Paradossi* di Ortensio Lando,” *Studi di filologia italiana* 40 (1982): 155–91; Antonio Corsaro, “Tra filologia e censura: I *Paradossi* di Ortensio Lando,” in *La censura libraria nell'Europa del secolo XVI*, ed. Ugo Rozzo (Udine: Forum, 1997), 297–324. For Brucioli, see Edoardo Barbieri, “Giovanni della Casa e il primo processo veneziano contro Antonio Brucioli,” in *Giovanni della Casa ecclesiastico e scrittore*, ed. Stefano Carrai (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2007), 31–69.

¹³¹ The edition, *Littera del Re Cristianissimo drezada alli elettori del Impero*, is not extant: see *D.B.I.*, s.v. “Griffio, Giovanni.”

¹³² *Edit 16*, CNCE 59553; Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza*, 253–54; Antonella Iacono, *Bibliografia di Girolamo Ruscelli: Le edizioni del Cinquecento* (Manziana [Rome]:

Dolce and Ruscelli, Gabriele Giolito was found guilty of having printed a short text without a licence in 1552.¹³³ In 1558 Giovanni Francesi, bookseller at the sign of Hope, and Matteo Pagano, bookseller at the sign of Faith, were condemned to pay a fine of three ducats each for having published a work identified only as *Storie* without express licence; the lenience of the sentence was openly connected with the extremely submissive and humble attitude of the two men.¹³⁴ The Holy Office even punished a Carmelite friar, Michele di Freschi, for having conceded a licence to print too hastily, without realizing that the text contained “things most perverse.” The work in question was a Giolito edition of Pompeo della Barba’s *Due primi dialoghi*.¹³⁵ Not once, but twice, in 1567 and 1575, the printer Domenico Farri was found guilty of having printed without a licence.¹³⁶ Imprisonment was a common penalty for those responsible for the diffusion of works that were held to defame the political or religious authorities.¹³⁷ In 1568 the Spanish man of letters Alfonso Ulloa was arrested and tried, not for having printed a work without a licence, but for the much more serious crime of having counterfeited a licence to print. He was sentenced to death, but the sentence was changed to life imprisonment because Ulloa agreed to furnish information that proved to be of great importance for the Republic.¹³⁸

Despite the fact that the *Parti* emitted regarding print production covered both privileges and licences to print, it would be a serious mistake to put the two institutions on the same plane, as if they were analogous concessions. The interests protected by privileges were strictly private; a privilege was granted in response to a request and was intended as a defense of the investment of individual bookmen; for this reason, the penalties

Vecchiarelli, 2011), 63–64; Giorgio Masi, “Scabrose filature. Il *Capitolo del fuso* fra Ruscelli e Doni,” in *Girolamo Ruscelli. Dall'accademia alla corte alla tipografia*, ed. Paolo Marini and Paolo Procaccioli (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2012), 401–53. Ruscelli and Pietrasanta defended themselves by declaring that this was not a first edition, but only a corrected re-edition for which they presumed a licence would have already been obtained when published.

¹³³ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 95.

¹³⁴ Andrea Del Col, “Il controllo della stampa,” 482.

¹³⁵ Pompeo della Barba, *Due primi dialoghi* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1558, *Edit* 16, CNC 16457); Bongi, *Annali*, 2:44. Lodovico Dolce was also found guilty of having released the licence without having personally read the work: Del Col, “Il controllo della stampa,” 482. The book was eventually put on the Index.

¹³⁶ Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 425.

¹³⁷ For other examples, see Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 156–61 and Kostylo, “Commentary on Aldus Manutius’s Warning.”

¹³⁸ Moro, *Review*, 676–81.

specified for counterfeits were purely pecuniary. Public interests (morality, foreign policy, defense of institutions, religious orthodoxy) were of much greater importance and were protected by the obligatory nature of the pre-publication censorship procedure; the penalties for its infringement were therefore severe.

Book Privileges in Rome

In Rome the granting of book privileges was initiated timidly, and the pope seems at the beginning to have been unaware of the prerogatives of such books privileges.¹³⁹ Unlike in Venice, in Rome this policy was never framed within overall legislation, which can in part be explained by the fact that printing in Rome had less impact on the local economy.

Technically, in Rome the privilege had to be requested directly through the pope, and it was conceded, as *motu proprio*, in the form of a papal brief, personally signed by the pope. Although in theory acts of this sort were to be registered and archived, recent research has found far fewer registrations in the archives than warranted by displays of privileges in books and prints in circulation during the sixteenth century.¹⁴⁰

The duration of the papal privilege was initially seven years; in the period between 1510 and 1520 it became ten years. It was granted to authors, printers, publishers, or even owners of a manuscript slated for printing, following similar legal forms in Venice.¹⁴¹ Only in the 1520s did Roman privileges become less episodic. Protection was aimed, in particular, at the production of some of the major publishers, such as Antonio Blado, Francesco Minizio Calvo, and Lodovico degli Arrighi. These men published an increasing number of works on current affairs and contemporary literature, including a few texts of pro-French propaganda, following the positions of Gian Matteo Giberti, a major protector of Roman

¹³⁹ Fontana, "Inizi della proprietà letteraria"; Blasio, *Cum gratia et privilegio*.

¹⁴⁰ Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*; Frajese, *La nascita dell'Indice*, 391–401. A significant challenge for study of papal privileges resides in the absence of coherent archival series for such privileges on the model of Venice, as is also the case for the smaller Italian states. According to Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 45–52, the first registration of a papal privilege conserved in an archive and not just displayed in the published work concerns the privilege conceded by Julius II in 1509 to the printer Giovanni Giacomo Luchino, who was living in Venice (Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Arm. 39, vol. 27, fol. 127rv).

¹⁴¹ Blasio, *Cum gratia et privilegio*, 83. For information on Roman privileges, see Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 75, and for the 1540s in particular, see Paschini, "Un cardinale editore."

printing at the time.¹⁴² On occasion, the concession ordered that the price of the book be fixed by the Master of the Sacred Palace, even if no trace of that imposition remains in the books themselves.¹⁴³ The intercession of cardinals or other prominent persons, as registered in the acts, shows that for a long time the granting of concessions did not reach the same level of routine as in Venice but had to be supported by patrons and negotiated case by case on the basis of investigation of particular circumstances. It was undoubtedly Leo X who inaugurated a less sporadic policy regarding permissions, with the aim, as his briefs express it, “ut bonae artes temporibus nostris maxime florent.”¹⁴⁴ The greater frequency of concessions for works in Greek or translated from the Greek stands out clearly. The policies of Leo X (Giovanni de Medici) in granting privileges can be interpreted as favoring Tuscans.¹⁴⁵ The fact remains, however, that whether or not the concession was tied to a discernible cultural program,¹⁴⁶ it had to be paid for, and the price was not small.¹⁴⁷

That the officials who processed privileges were relatively unfamiliar with the procedures involved is shown by a highly significant material witness: the original handwritten concessions are constellated with cancelled phrases, as if they were created without reference to a pre-existing model.¹⁴⁸ We also have the concession of a privilege on 26 June 1533 to Melchiorre Sessa to reprint the works of Lodovico Martelli, which uses a few handwritten corrections to adapt the text of a privilege granted by Clement VII to Blado for his 1531–32 edition of the works of Machiavelli to the needs of the new text.¹⁴⁹

Papal privileges were not requested exclusively for works printed in the Papal State, however, and as early as the 1520s they can be found in

¹⁴² Blasio, *Cum gratia et privilegio*, 68–69.

¹⁴³ Blasio, *Cum gratia et privilegio*, 84; Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 72.

¹⁴⁴ Fontana, “Inizi della proprietà letteraria,” 211.

¹⁴⁵ For example, the edition of the *Ciriffo Calvaneo* of Luca Pulci with additions by Bernardo Giambullari, printed in Rome by Giacomo Mazzocchi, obtained a papal privilege valid for three years on 28 September 1514 and granted in Giambullari's name, as *Laico Fiorentino* (*Edit 16*, CNCE 54581). In similar fashion, a privilege was granted for the 1515 edition of another Florentine, Francesco Albertini, for his *Opusculum de mirabilibus nove & veteris urbis Rome* (Rome: G. Mazzocchi, 1515, *Edit 16*, CNC 741).

¹⁴⁶ Blasio, *Cum gratia et privilegio*, strives to demonstrate this.

¹⁴⁷ In June 1516 Froben spent six ducats for a privilege to publish the Erasmus edition of the works of St. Jerome through his agent in Rome, the learned Michael Hummelberg, a sum that Froben held to be rather high: Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 13.

¹⁴⁸ See, for example, the privilege conceded to Ariosto's heirs, in facsimile in Fontana, “Inizi della proprietà letteraria,” 214–15, ills. 1 and 2.

¹⁴⁹ *Edit 16*, CNCE 30004; CNCE 23997; and CNCE 24013. This privilege is also reproduced in Fontana, “Inizi della proprietà letteraria,” 217, fig. 3.

editions printed in Savona, Cremona, Milan, Florence, and Venice.¹⁵⁰ In contrast to the Venetian privilege, the geographical range effectively claimed in a papal privilege extended beyond Rome and the Papal State (“in Urbe quam in totu statu Ecclesiastico”) to all of Italy and beyond (“tam in Italia, quam extra Italiam”). From their first appearance, papal privileges were held to be enforceable in all the territories and regions subject to the Holy Roman Church (“Santae Romanae Ecclesiae mediate vel immediate subiectus”) and valid throughout Christendom, under penalties that were not only temporal but also spiritual: immediate excommunication (“excommunicationis latae sententiae”) was one frequently brandished threat.

One particular case that shows both the importance of the papal privilege and the fundamental relevance of legislation relating to privileges is found in the quarrel between the Manuzio family in Venice and the Giunti clan in Florence.¹⁵¹ The dispute arose from the Florentine publishers’ protest at the concession of the privilege to Aldo Manuzio by Alexander VI in 1502, subsequently confirmed by Julius II and finally by Leo X on 28 November 1513, that granted Manuzio exclusive right to print in his Greek and italic type. Thanks to energetic negotiations, the Magistracy of the Otto di Pratica of Florence, working through Francesco Vettori, the Florentine ambassador in Rome, managed to have the Giunti’s arguments prevail. The Giunti obviously wanted to continue to have full permission to print in octavo and in italics in Florence, as in fact they had done up to then. The Medici pope was sympathetic to the arguments of his fellow citizens, to the point that on 15 February 1516 he granted a full privilege to Filippo Giunti and his sons for all the books in Latin and Greek that they would print from that moment on, provided their editions were more accurate and more philologically correct than those that already existed. The privilege, which was for ten years duration, was to become effective on publication.¹⁵²

Vittorio Frajese has spoken, and rightly so, of printing as one of the sectors in which the papacy used the so-called double key of the temporal

¹⁵⁰ Norton, *Italian Printers*, xxviii.

¹⁵¹ Demetrio Marzi, *Una questione libraria fra i Giunti ed Aldo Manuzio il Vecchio: Contributo alla storia dell’arte della stampa* (Milan: F. Pagnoni, 1896); Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius*, 156–58; Kostylo, “Commentary on Aldus Manutius’s Warning.”

¹⁵² For the text of this privilege, which appears in many of the Giunti editions, see Angelo Maria Bandini, *De Florentina Iuntarum typographia* (Lucca: F. Bonsignori, 1791), 26–28. For the context of this dispute, see Carlo Dionisotti, “Stampe giuntine,” in Dionisotti, *Machiavellerie* (Turin: Einaudi, 1980), 177–92.

and the spiritual.¹⁵³ The consequences of this interpretation of the institution of the privilege soon became apparent in Venice, where increasingly often, books were published bearing both the Venetian and papal privilege.

The form of a papal privilege was quite standard. It was usually divided into four parts, the first of which identified the supplicant and the item covered and often stated why protection was being sought. This information was followed in the second part by a section granting indemnity (*indemnitate*) to the supplicant for a certain period, during which time copying the same work without permission from the supplicant was prohibited: the *jus prohibendi* indeed. The third part concerned general and particular restrictions, the geographical area of enforcement, and penalties. Restrictions were usually applicable to “one and all” (*omnibus et singulis*), of whatever status, rank, order, or condition. The fourth part included the mandate (*mandato*) issued to those directly beholden to and responsible for enforcing papal authority, both spiritual (archbishops, bishops, their vicars and officials) and secular (legates, vice legates, nuncios, etc.), requiring all to render the supplicant every assistance in the prosecution of his case against transgressors.¹⁵⁴

Beginning in 1515, the papal privilege was also sporadically conceded for books printed in France, where it was printed before that of the king. In France, however, various legal pronouncements limited the validity of the papal privilege to the Papal States, within which the pope was temporal sovereign.¹⁵⁵ The “universal” validity of papal privileges was in practice variable, depending as it did on the influence of the papacy over a particular territory, on subjective fear of excommunication, on possible connections between the publisher and the curia, and finally, on an effective mobilization of the local ecclesiastical authorities to work with the political authorities of the various states. This explains why the Roman privilege exerted little power outside Italy.

The development of papal privileges before the Counter-Reformation was certainly pushed forward by authors. An examination of the privilege that the apostolic nuncio Baldassare Castiglione obtained in 1528 for the printing of his *Cortegiano* in Venice by the heirs of Aldo Manuzio allows us to understand the relations that permitted major authors to exert sufficient pressure on the pontifical court to obtain a privilege. As an

¹⁵³ Frajese, *La nascita dell'Indice*, 392.

¹⁵⁴ Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance*, 49–50.

¹⁵⁵ Armstrong, *Before Copyright*, 13, 61–62.



Fig. 6.8. Title page and papal privilege in Virgil, *I sei primi libri del Eneide di Vergilio*. Venice: Niccolò Zoppino, 1544, 8°.

experienced author, Castiglione preferred the powerful presses of the Serenissima to the more modest Roman printers.¹⁵⁶ Pietro Bembo led the way in this area as well.¹⁵⁷ Authors who are much less well known today obtained a papal privilege for works published in Venice. To cite one example, in 1526 Luigi Cinzio Fabrizi was granted a papal privilege for a work that was accused in Venice of having downright scandalous and obscene content.¹⁵⁸ Polidoro Virgilio also managed to obtain a papal

¹⁵⁶ On the history of the *princeps* edition of the *Cortegiano*, see Fabio Massimo Bertolo, "Nuovi documenti sull'edizione principe del *Cortegiano*," *Schifanoia* 13–14 (1992): 133–44; Amedeo Quondam, "Questo povero cortegiano": Castiglione, *il libro, la storia* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2000).

¹⁵⁷ Fontana, "Inizi della proprietà letteraria," 210–11.

¹⁵⁸ The colophon of this edition reads, "Con la gratia del sommo Pontifice & della Illustrissima Signoria di Venegia per diece anni che nessuno non lo possa stampare ne far stampar et caetera sotto le censure et pene che nelle dette gratie si legono" (with the grace of the most high Pope and the most illustrious Signoria of Venice for ten years, that no one can print them or have them printed etc. under the censure and penalties that can be read in the said grace): *Edit* 16, CNCE 18474.

privilege for his *Historia Anglica*, published in Basel,¹⁵⁹ a model also adopted by the heirs of Ludovico Ariosto.¹⁶⁰ In the 1530s, the printing privilege for a text was felt, even in Rome, to be an “ordinary thing that is conceded without difficulty.”¹⁶¹

The Great Venetian Bookmen and Papal Privileges

It soon became clear to Venetian booksellers, who were accustomed to a much more clearly defined, restricted, and anti-monopolistic system for conceding privileges, that papal, nominally universal, protection had significant advantages.¹⁶² In 1539, Paul III granted Michele Tramezino a broadly defined privilege for law books published and to be published. In 1547, another privilege was conceded to him with a vague formulation, and therefore with a larger field of application. The papal privilege covered Tramezino within the Papal State, but all his editions were still printed in Venice.¹⁶³ Their use of the privilege was perhaps one of the most innovative aspects of the mercantile career of the Tramezino brothers. The editions that they published between 1536 and 1574 punctually announced on the title page double privileges, papal and Venetian, which were usually given in full in the first pages of the volume. The Tramezino brothers sought legal protection not for just one or another of their editions, as was the custom, but for all of their publications, displaying a constancy and organization that required an assiduous presence in both key places, Rome and Venice, but also reveal acute legal and commercial sensitivity. The concession of a papal privilege formed a strident contrast with the behavior of the Venetian Senate, which tied the concession of a privilege to carrying out the printing in Venice itself, implicitly if the petitioner

¹⁵⁹ Polydori Vergilii Urbinae Anglicae Historiae Libri XXVI (Basel: Bebel, 1534): Fontana, “Inizi della proprietà letteraria,” 212; Archivio Vaticano, Arm. 40, To. 46, n. 525, f. 297; *USTC* 684704. The papal privilege bears the date 19 December 1533.

¹⁶⁰ Fontana, “Inizi della proprietà letteraria,” 215–16.

¹⁶¹ As stated by Claudio Tolomei in his request for a privilege to print the vernacular version of Leone Ebreo, *Dialoghi d'amore* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1535, *Edit 16*, CNC 24038); Fontana, “Inizi della proprietà letteraria,” 209.

¹⁶² The privilege system in effect in Venice took care to give a precise definition of the particular edition involved or the new technical invention for which the privilege was conceded, thus assiduously avoiding so-called blanket privileges.

¹⁶³ Leicht, “L'editore veneziano.” Protection was assured for ten years for several unspecified works in Latin and Italian and for hitherto unprinted works translated into Italian from Latin, Spanish, and French. This privilege can be read, for example, in Ottaviano Vestri Barbiani, *Actionem, & iudiciorum Mores* (Venice: M. Tramezino, 1547, *Edit 16*, CNC 35144); Tinto, *Annali*, 28, no. 70; Leicht, “L'editore veneziano,” 365.

was a Venetian publisher and explicitly if the privilege was requested by the author, in particular if he resided in another state.

Between the mid-1530s and the 1540s, major publishing enterprises in Venice were increasingly likely to display a papal privilege.¹⁶⁴ The Giunti clan managed to obtain papal protection for their series of great medical texts of antiquity. Their edition of the medical writings of Aëtius of Amida in the translation by Padua professor Giovanni Battista Da Monte, published in three volumes in 1534–35, had a ten-year privilege from Clement VII.¹⁶⁵ This work was the keystone of a publishing project of rare ambition, since it was intended to be followed by Galen in Latin in seven volumes (*Edit 16*, CNC 20174), an edition planned by Luc'Antonio Giunti but realized by his heirs in 1541 and published with a double privilege (Venice and Rome) for a prolonged duration of fifteen years.¹⁶⁶ Finally, there was the great Avicenna in two volumes published in 1544, for which the privilege of the king of France was added to that of the pope.¹⁶⁷ Such editions were evidently understood as endowed with exceptional cultural importance, which was why they received papal protection, as explicitly stated in the privilege for the Galen edition.

The popes granted privileges for a specific work, following the Venetian style, but they also gave privileges for entire categories of works and even for works to be published in the future. One example will suffice. In 1574 Gabriele Giolito obtained from Gregory XIII a perpetual and general privilege for all of his publications, printed and yet to be printed, providing they were reviewed and approved by the Inquisition.¹⁶⁸ This privilege, given in advance, tended toward a completely different concept in which exclusive rights were connected not to the printing of a certain work but to the person of the privilege holder, at whose death they expired. We might say that the papal privilege was in a certain sense more true to the original nature of the institution; it gave advantage to a single person over

¹⁶⁴ For comments on this phenomenon in the category of military books, see John R. Hale, "Industria del libro e cultura militare a Venezia nel Rinascimento," in *Storia della cultura veneta* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1980), 3, pt. 2, 249.

¹⁶⁵ Archivio Vaticano, Arm. 40, To. 48, n. 95, f. 50; Fontana, "Inizi della proprietà letteraria," 213; Camerini, *Annali*, 1:259–60, no. 369.

¹⁶⁶ *Edit 16*, CNC 20174; Camerini, *Annali*, vol. 1, no. 457. The edition does not appear to have sold rapidly, given that on 15 January 1554 the Giunti obtained a ten-year prolongation of the privilege for this edition, "there still being in house a great quantity": Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Senato Terra*, reg. 39, f. 203r. The prolonging of the privilege was approved with a barely sufficient number of favorable votes.

¹⁶⁷ *Edit 16*, CNC 3545; Camerini, *Annali*, 1:354, no. 496.

¹⁶⁸ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 255.

all others by means of a special favor conceded by the one individual who had the power to grant it. Only Venice, perfectly acquainted with the characteristics of commerce, had managed to bend the privilege into an institution capable of functioning as a guarantee against underhand competition and as a stimulus for production.

The papal privilege could concede two enormous advantages. One of these advantages was economic: avoidance of the exhausting procedure of requesting individual privileges, since in itself the papal privilege assured the holder (at least in theory) the entire Italian market. The other advantage was moral and religious: the papal privilege was the most authoritative recognition possible of the orthodoxy of a text, and thus again contained a commercial guarantee.

The episode that saw the publication by the Giuntis of the reformed *Breviarium Romanum* in 1536 revealed some of the characteristic challenges that would surround the publication of religious editions during the latter part of the sixteenth century.¹⁶⁹ First of all, the major publishing firms needed to have a family member present in Rome in order to obtain privileges. Then, in light of the difficulties and insurmountable technical obstacles of producing large press runs in the city of the popes, it was preferable to publish in Venice, with its existing printing and trade infrastructure, having first obtained the necessary permissions.

Rome dictated a significant turn of events during the Counter-Reformation. Following decisions taken by the Council of Trent, the pope promoted new reformed editions of the two most important liturgical manuals, the breviary and the missal, preceded by the Tridentine (or Roman) catechism, an instruction manual for pastors in Latin and in the vernacular that contained basic doctrine as formulated at Trent.¹⁷⁰ When the new versions of the liturgical texts were ready, all previously published versions were banned, and the pope granted the privilege to print each of these texts to just one publisher in Rome. One Roman publisher, Paolo Manuzio, obtained, however, universal privileges for the new reformed versions, first for the Tridentine Catechism and then for the Roman Breviary, that were valid for five years in Rome, Venice, and elsewhere; violators of his privilege faced excommunication and fines of five hundred ducats. But Manuzio was capable of realizing only the first or the first few editions; never could he have managed to satisfy, unaided and in a short

¹⁶⁹ See also chapter 2.

¹⁷⁰ These events are narrated in impeccable fashion in Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 169–81.

time, the immense Catholic market. He therefore ceded his privilege to third parties, realizing notable sums of money in the process, as the subcontracts were offered to the highest bidder. This opportunity set off negotiations and even kindled the business ambitions of the major bookmen, the Giunti at their head. Paolo Manuzio and the *Typographia in aedibus Populi Romani* were active protagonists in the sub-concession of privileges signed before a notary. In 1567 Manuzio, finding himself unable to meet the demands of the Catholic market, ceded to third parties territorial zones that were included in his five-year universal privilege for printing the Roman breviary revised by Pope Pius V, as specified in the papal indult.¹⁷¹ The Florentine merchant Carlo del Nero made the best offer, received an exclusive privilege for Spain and Portugal, and for the “Indies” subject to those kingdoms, in exchange for a payment of 1,750 gold scudi. Del Nero then transferred the privilege to the Giunti in Venice, or perhaps he had acted as their representative in the agreement with Manuzio. The privilege for the Catholic Low Countries was transferred to Christophe Plantin, who was under the patronage of the mighty Cardinal Granvelle, in exchange for one-tenth of the printed breviaries.¹⁷² This example demonstrates the absolute necessity of obtaining privileges for liturgical texts of the Catholic Reformation in large-scale operations that covered an extremely broad market. In the final decades of the sixteenth century, that sector of the market, with its assured revenues, launched a previously unheard-of emphasis on business in the print world and involved the major courts of Europe.

Other publishers – the Giunti, for example, Giovanni Varisco, Domenico Basa, and Christophe Plantin – found ways to enrich themselves through the process that the papal privileges set in motion. The potential contained in privileges for liturgical works is well illustrated by the achievements of the Plantin firm, which tripled in size thanks to a privilege covering the Low Countries and to a sort of virtual monopoly for Spanish domains conceded by Philip II since 1571, growing from five

¹⁷¹ “... possino questo loro privilegio comunicare et trasferire ad altre persone con li patti et conditioni che a loro parerà” (that their privilege can be communicated and transferred to other persons with the agreements and conditions they consider fit): preface to the agreement for the transmission of the privilege of 15 December 1567: Barberi, *Paolo Manuzio*, 180–81.

¹⁷² Barberi, *Paolo Manuzio*, 76–79. The notarial documents are published in *ibid.*, 184–88. See also Witcombe, “Christopher Plantin’s Papal Privileges” and Bowen and Imhof, *Christopher Plantin*, 122–234. Paolo Manuzio speaks about this transfer and his relationship with Plantin in a letter to his son Aldo the Younger of 29 November 1567: Manuzio, *Lettere*, 110.

presses in 1569 to fifteen in 1574–75.¹⁷³ We can imagine that some Italian publishing firms underwent a similar expansion, but unfortunately no documentation remains.

The privilege accorded to reformed texts for worship was reinforced commercially by the elimination of earlier editions from the market. Losses for booksellers who had vast assortments of religious and liturgical works in their shops and warehouses were immense,¹⁷⁴ but the volume of new business was enormous. We know that fourteen presses were required to print the breviary, and that the press run of the new version of the *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis* ran as high as twenty thousand copies in six different editions, all printed in Venice within a few months in 1571. The same situation pertained for other authorized texts. By that time, publishers were well accustomed to the process whereby new reformed editions pushed older versions out of the market. Often the declared non-conformity of the older editions was pure speculation on the part of privileged bookmen who managed to obtain declarations to this effect from the pope, following the prohibitions listed in the Index of Prohibited Books.¹⁷⁵ Most of the Venetian printers were cut out of these lucrative operations. As a result, they attempted to get around the prohibitions as best they could, often with the tacit backing of the local authorities. The struggle was long, however, and uneven in its success, and the pope did not hesitate to use the effective tool of excommunication. On his side, the pope defended the need to use his privileges universally in order to make sure, by means of controlled production by a sole printer in Rome, that

¹⁷³ Jaime Moll, "Plantino, los Junta y el privilegio del nuevo rezado," in *Simposio Internacional sobre Cristóbal Plantino*, ed. Hans Tromp and Pedro Peira (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1990), 9–23. Voet, *The Golden Compasses*, 1:65–69; Robert M. Kingdon, "The Plantin Breviaries: A Case Study in the Sixteenth-Century Business Operations of a Publishing House," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 22 (1960): 133–50; Bowen and Imhof, *Christopher Plantin*, 122–25. Paolo himself calculated that he would realize at least two thousand scudi from the printing of the privileged breviary (Manuzio, *Lettere*, 142–43).

¹⁷⁴ Controls were severe and prolonged. As late as 1599 the Inquisitor ordered that some copies of the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary that had been printed before the Catholic Reformation be burned in Ancona: Rosa Marisa Borraccini, "Un sequestro librario alla fiera di Recanati del 1600," in *Libri, biblioteche e cultura degli ordini regolari nell'Italia moderna attraverso la documentazione della Congregazione dell'Indice*, ed. Rosa Marisa Borraccini and Roberto Rusconi (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2006), 401 n. 12.

¹⁷⁵ Giovanni Mercati, "Vecchi lamenti contro il monopolio de' libri ecclesiastici, specie liturgici," in Mercati, *Opere minori*. 6 vols. (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1937–84), 1:486. The highly complex web of publishing speculation that arose in those years between Rome and Venice resulted in the concentration of initiative in the hands of only a few publishers. One of the leading figures here, a friend of Paolo Manuzio's in Rome and an associate of Luc'Antonio Giunti's in Venice, was Domenico Basa, on whom see the entry in the *D.B.I.*

only the reformed and perfectly correct version of the new texts was in circulation, even though the privilege did not really cover the text itself. The practical advantage given to the privileged publisher was purely economic, since he held a genuine monopoly in the market, with the result that the Roman editions of reformed texts cost two or three times as much as the analogous Venetian editions.

The privilege, brought into existence in order to protect the publishing enterprise and ensure healthy commercial competition, had been covertly redeployed. In a changed historical context, focused now on the consolidation and diffusion of the Counter-Reformation, it had become a monopolistic means of excluding competitors.¹⁷⁶ The papal privileges granted to the Tridentine editions of the canonical texts had a powerful impact on the market. For one thing, they affected the most profitable sector of retail sales – prayer books – which in earlier times had been open to all printers. Although by their own efforts the Giunti had achieved a dominant position in the market, even the smaller print shops had printed *ufficioli*, small-sized books of prayer for individual use, and it is certain that all booksellers' shops would have been filled with similar materials, new or (often) used. The market had been divided up, providing a living to many small operators. These men were struck down by the Church of Rome, not for religious reasons, but through the traumatic restructuring of the market for religious books.

The effects of this development were felt strongly in Venice. Clearly, only the most powerful bookmen, those who were able to establish the necessary relations in Rome, made money. Others were ruined. In 1588, Rome made an official request, through the papal nuncio, that papal privileges be valid also in Venice, which meant that if a book was printed in Rome, it could not be reprinted in Venice without explicit permission.¹⁷⁷ The lesser printers could only come to the bitter conclusion that they would all have to go to Rome to practice their craft.¹⁷⁸ In the final twenty years of the sixteenth century, the Italian publishing sector was moving

¹⁷⁶ This was quite clear to contemporaries, as seen in the *memoriale* that Giovan Battista Bandini, editorial collaborator of the *Typographia Vaticana*, sent to Clement VIII in 1596, published in Mercati, "Vecchi lamenti," 485.

¹⁷⁷ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 225.

¹⁷⁸ Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 140. The various petitions initiated in this period by the printers and booksellers of Venice were aimed at conserving or restoring the equilibrium of the previous age, when the local print system included privileges that had been in effect valid throughout Italy and common books free for all, making it possible for many printers to survive. These complaints were for the most part legitimate expressions of objective hardship, even if many Venetian bookmen had adapted to the new situation

toward a new model in which it was no longer dominated by one major center but by two, Venice and Rome.¹⁷⁹ On a parallel course, a few particularly able publishers – Plantin, for example – made their fortunes, expanding their businesses in ways that the world of the book had never seen before.

During the second half of the century, then, the great bookmen of Venice witnessed the affirmation of Rome as the ideal place from which to corner the Catholic market. When faced with the thirty-year privilege granted for the *Pontificale*, the manual detailing procedures for the episcopal celebration of the sacraments, which appeared in a sumptuous Roman edition in 1595, the Venetian Senate decided that things had gone too far, and it approved a *motu proprio* on 14 June 1596 in which all papal privileges, present, past, and future, were declared null and void in Venetian territories.¹⁸⁰

The Senate's action was legitimate, intended to protect the Venetian guild from the continual bullying of its more powerful members, but it could not resolve the basic problem. Transnational protection of publishing initiatives and book trade could only be pursued at that time by means of multiple privileges for a single given work, privileges that were requested and obtained simultaneously and valid throughout Italy or throughout Europe. The pope was the only authority able to enforce prohibitions and apply fines with an efficacy that ignored territorial borders. In a broader sense, in the dispute over book privileges we can identify an episode in Venice's attempt to contest the emergence of the papacy as an institution with a national base that held semi-sovereignty over the regional Italian states.¹⁸¹

The controversy between Venice and Rome over privileges, although it regularly entered into questions of jurisdiction and involved diplomats and cardinals, confirms the importance of this instrument for the entire

extremely well, thanks to a radical commercial and productive restructuring of their business over Italian territory.

¹⁷⁹ For all the instruments of active print production put into effect by the Church in the Counter-Reformation, see Frajese, *La nascita dell'Indice*, 351–56.

¹⁸⁰ For an image of the original and a transcription of the *motu proprio*, see “Primary Sources on Copyright”; see also Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 215; Zorzi, “La produzione,” 924. Correct understanding of this deliberation requires contextualization within the broader jurisdictional dispute between Venice and Rome in those years, for which see Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 254–85.

¹⁸¹ On the impact of Robert Bellarmine's theory of the “*potestas indirecta*” of the Church in early modern Europe, see Stefania Tutino, *Empire of Souls: Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) and the Christian Commonwealth* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

C L E M E N S

P A P A V I I I .

AD FVTVRAM REI MEMORIAM.



ROMANI Pontificis officio consentaneum est, vt, quorum fides, atque industria præclara aliqua in re ad communem Catholicæ Ecclesiæ vtilitatem gerenda elucescit, illorum vicissim commodi ea ratio habeatur, quam labor in rectè coeptis ad optatum finem perducendis suscepit postulat. Quo in genere, quoniam dilectum filium Leonardum Parasolium, cuiusque Socios meritis censemus, vt potè quorum sumptu, ac labore effectum est, vt Romanum Pontificale, quod instaurari, ac restitui mandauimus, partim recentibus typis excusum, partim æneis figuris, & aptiore cantu auctum in lucem prodierit: idcirco illorum industriam, ac diligentiam plurimum in Domino commendantes, illorumque indemnitati, qui in operis huius editione multas pecunias impenderunt, prospicere cupientes, ne, vnde alijs prodesse studuerunt, inde damnum, aut præiudiciū consequantur, quod sanè sequeretur, si ipsum opus ab alijs imprimeretur, vel recuderetur: eos specialibus fauoribus, & gratijs prosequi volentes, & à quibuscumque excommunicationis, suspensionis, & interdicti, alijsque Ecclesiasticis sententijs, censuris, & poenis à iure, vel ab homine quauis occasione, vel causa latis, si quibus quomodolibet innodati existunt, ad effectum præsentium dumtaxat consequendum, harum serie absoluentes, & absolutos fore censentes, eorum in hac sui supplicationibus inclinati, Leonardo, & Socijs prædictis, quorum nomina, & cognomina præsentibus pro expressis haberi volumus, auctoritate Apostolica tenore præsentium concedimus, & indulgemus, ne quiquam, quacumque ille fuerit dignitate, vel officio, aut priuilegio, vel facultate munitus, per triginta Annos à data præsentium computandos, Pontificale prædictum sic restitutum, auctum, & ornatum, absque expressa, & in scriptis redacta licentia dictorum Leonardi, & Sociorum quouis quæsito colore, causa, vel prætextu, imprimere, aut ab alijs præterquam de huiusmodi licentia impressum vendere, seu venale exponere, vel habere: tam in Alma Vrbe, totoque, reliquo Statu Ecclesiastico nostris, quam alibi vbicumque in toto terrarum Orbe possit. Inhibentes propterea omnibus, & singulis vtriusque sexus Christianis delibus, præsertim librorum Impressoribus, & Bibliopolis, ne, dictis triginta Annis durantibus, tam in Vrbe, totoque, Ecclesiastico prædictis sub mille ducatorum auri de Camera, pro vna Delatori, & Iudici exequenti, pro alia Camera nostræ Apostolicæ, ac reliqua tertijs partibus locis pijs irremissibiliter, necnō amissionis librorum, & Typorum omnium eisdem Leonardo, & Socijs applicandorum; extra Urbem vero, ac dirionem Ecclesiasticam huiusmodi sub excommunicationis latæ sententiæ, à qua nullus, præter Romanum Pontificem, nisi in mortis articulo absolueret possit, poenis, toties, quoties cōtrauentum fuerit, eo ipso incurrendis, Pontificale prædictum sine huiusmodi licentia imprimere, aut ab alijs, præterquam de licentia huiusmodi impressum vendere audeant, vel præsumant. Et nihilominus vniuersis, & singulis Patriarchis, Archiepiscopis, Episcopis, & alijs locorum Ordinarijs vbique, & in Statu nostro temporali, etiam Legatis, Vicelegatis, Gubernatoribus, & alijs iustitiæ Ministris, præcipimus, & mandamus, vt, durantibus dictis triginta Annis, quoties pro parte dicti Leonardi, & Sociorum fuerint requisiti, vel eorum aliquis fuerit requisitus, sibi in præmissis efficacis defensionis auxilio assistant, & ea obseruari faciant, & contra inobedientes per, prædictas, & alias eis bene visas sententias, censuras, & poenas, appellatione remota, procedāt, inuocato etiam ad hoc, si opus fuerit, auxilio Brachij secularis. Non obstantibus quibuscumque Constitutionibus, & Ordinationibus Apostolicis, Priuilegijs quoque, Indultis, ac Litteris Apostolicis, quibuscumque personis, & locis, sub quibuscumque tenoribus, & formis concessis, ac iteratis vicibus confirmatis, & innouatis. Quibus omnibus, etiam si de illis specialis mentio habenda foret, illorum tenores præsentibus pro expressis habentes, hac vice specialiter, & expresse derogamus: ceterisque contrarijs quibuscumque. Volumus autem, vt præsentium transumptis, etiam impressis, manu Notarij publici subscriptis, & sigillo personæ in dignitate Ecclesiastica constitutæ munitis, eadem prorsus fides in iudicio, & extra adhibeatur, quæ ipsis præsentibus adhiberetur, si forent exhibita, vel ostensa. Datum Romæ, apud Sanctum Petrum, sub Annulo Piscatoris, die tertiadecima Februarij, M. D. XCVI. Pontificatus Nostri Anno Quinto.

M. Vestrius Barbianus.

Fig. 6.9. Thirty-year papal privilege, from *Pontificale Romanum*, 1595; ¹P. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

makeup of the market. Rome's policy on privileges had proved a powerful factor in generating extremely lucrative publishing initiatives, but only a select few could participate, where previously the field had been open to all. In the sixteenth century, the Church of Rome harmed the Venetian print industry not only when it prohibited books but also when it promoted them.

SELLING AND DISTRIBUTION

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISTRIBUTION

There are many indications that something singular took place in the world of print in Italy not in the earliest stage of the diffusion of printing but sometime later, during the 1470s, when a combination of events pushed the printed book into a more mature phase. Technical improvements played a significant role, in particular the invention of the copper matrix, unknown to Gutenberg and to early European printers, who had used temporary matrices of sand or clay.¹ Other basic yet innovative developments sped up and rationalized book production. One improvement that began in Rome but soon spread to the rest of Italy was the technique of in-quarto printing on full sheets; previously quartos had been printed on divided half sheets to simplify the process.² Technical refinements clearly reflect better organization of labor, more skilled workers, and continual research and innovation. Above all, they point to new and significant investment in the print sector. It was indeed in the 1470s that major merchants already active in Italy developed an interest in the new field of printing. As in all the other sectors of their activities, they adopted dual roles, as entrepreneur and merchant. A jump in both quality and quantity can be seen in a number of Italian cities: beginning in the 1470s, the book business began to take shape, and merchant-publishers operating in Venice took the lead, imposing their products and their commercial practices.

Still, the gradual creation of commercial networks did not cancel customs that for centuries – from the age of the manuscript – had affected book distribution. Friendship and kinship as well as stable relations among members of the same religious order across various cities all remained efficacious in the distribution of books in the Renaissance.

¹ Blaise Agüera y Arcas, "Temporary Matrices and Elemental Punches in Gutenberg's DK Type," in *Incunabula and Their Readers: Printing, Selling and Using Books in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Kristian Jensen (London: The British Library, 2003), 1–12.

² Lotte Hellinga, "Press and Text in the First Decades of Printing," in *Libri tipografici biblioteche: Ricerche storiche dedicate a Luigi Balsamo*, ed. Istituto di Biblioteconomia e Paleografia. Università degli Studi, Parma. 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1997), 1:1–23, esp. pp. 13–14.

These were, however, occasional exchanges, not always suited to putting sizeable quantities of merchandise into circulation. Nevertheless, the ways in which books circulated outside the formal structures of the book business, such as bookshops, are not to be underestimated, especially when an author contributed substantially to the diffusion of his own work.

The successful distribution of the *Supplementum Chronicarum* organized in 1483 by the author of the work, Giacomo Filippo Foresti, is a significant example of that process. In the contract for the printing of the *princeps* of this work,³ for which Foresti bore the whole cost,⁴ he and the printer, Bernardino Benali, agreed on how the copies would be distributed. The author prohibited the printer from selling the book in Lombardy – specifically, within a triangle covering the cities of Verona, Bologna, and Bergamo, where Foresti lived – clearly reserving the Venetian market and the Veneto for Benali.⁵ The statement of the various sales operations drawn up by Foresti attests that on a first level he circulated copies within his own order, the Augustinians: the brothers of the monastery of Santa Maria Inconronata of Milan took responsibility for the sale of sixty-two copies; the monks of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice bought nine copies; the monastery of Santi Pietro e Nazario in Verona another six, and the abbey of San Faustino in Padua, the center of the congregation, only one. Single copies were sold to a number of brothers. On the lay side, a number of copies of the *Supplementum* were sold to wealthy individuals, in particular members of aristocratic families linked to the Augustinian monastery by devotional and spiritual ties, first among them conte Nicolino Calepio, the father of Ambrogio da Calepio (also known as Ambrogio Calepino), author of the famous *Dictionarium Latinum*. Various members of noble families in Bergamo with ties to Foresti's monastery acquired copies from the author. Unbound copies of the *Supplementum* without illuminations were sold at prices that varied, according to sympathies and convenience, between three and four lire. Special copies were prepared for illustrious recipients. Foresti commissioned a Milanese shop to provide illumination and bindings for two copies of his book, one for

³ Jacobus Philippus de Bergamo, *Supplementum Chronicarum* (Venice: Bernardinus Benalius, 1483). Out of 650 copies of the first edition, *ISTC* ij00208000 records that 108 are extant.

⁴ In reality, as shown by Vittori, "Entre Milan et Venise," behind Foresti's name, printing was financed by the Comune of Bergamo and a nobleman, Domenico Riccio of Savona.

⁵ Canova, "Nuovi documenti mantovani," 377–78.

Liber.

5

Primus



Fratrie Jacobiphillippi Bergomensis ordinis fratrum Eremitarum diuiti
Augustini in omnimoda historia nouissime congesta Supplementum Chroni-
carum appellata. Liber primus feliciter incipit.



In principio creauit deus ce

lū et terrā: terra autē erat inanie et incōposita. Scribun-
tur Genesios p^o ca^o: Visibilium omnium (Aug^o teste: vt
h^o vndecimo de ci. dei: cap^o 3^o) Maxime est mundus.
Inuisibilium vero maximus ē deus: sed mundum esse
conspicimus: deum vero credimus. Quā autem deus fe-
cerit mundum nulli potius credimus q̄ ipsi deo. Vbi i
quies ipm̄ audiuimus: Nunq̄ interim? respondit nos
melius q̄ in scripturis sanctis. Vbi dixit propheta ei^o.

In principio fecit deus celum et terram. Nunquid na-
tus fuit ibi iste propheta quando fecit deus celum et ter-
raz? Non. S; ibi fuit: vbi fuit sapia dei: per quam facta sunt oīa: que in aīas et
sanctas se trāssert amicos dei et pphetas pstituit: eisq; opa sua sine strepitu itus
enarrat. Loquunt^r quoq; eis angeli dei qui semper vidēt faciem patris: volun-
tatēq; eius q̄b^o oīz semper annunciant. Et propterea ex ijs vnus erat propheta
hic qui dixit et scripsit. In principio creauit deus celū et terrā. Terra autē erat i
anis et incompōsita. Informis quippe illa materia erat: quam de nibilo deus fe-
cit appellata primo celū et terra. Et dictū ē in principio fecit celū et terram: non
q; iā hoc erat: sed q; hoc eē poterat: nā et celū postea scribit^r factū: quā modū
si semen arboris p̄siderantes dicamus: ibi esse radices: et robur: et rami: et fru-
ct^u: et folia: nō q; iā sūt: q; nō de futura sūt. Sic dictū ē. In principio fecit de^o ce-
lū et terrā: quasi semē et celi et t. rre: cū adhuc i cōsūlo eēt celi et terre mā: s; q; cer-
tū erat inde futurū eē celum et terrā: iā et illa mā celū et terra appellata ē.

Cūq; primū fecisset deus celū et terrā: cūz ipsū quoq; elemētis: q̄ in his elemētis
condita sunt. f. aqua et spūs abyssosq; et tenebras: necdū luminib^o neq; syderib^o
pstituris. Dixit deus. Fiat lux. Et vidit deus lucē: q; bona eēt: et scparauit iter lu-
cē et tenebras. Et tenebras vocauit noctē: ac sic factū ē vespere et mane dies vnus:
qui fuit primus dies seculi: nō prim^o diez omnīū: iōq; nō primus: sed vnus no-
minatus est. Et sic eo die fecit materiam. f. informē: angelos: celos: lucez: terrā:
aquam: et aerem.

Dies primus.

Secundo at die factum ē firmamentum solum in medio aquaz: per quod et diui-
sit inter aquam et aquam.

Dies secundus.

Tertio vō die pgregauit dñs aquas q̄ sub celo erant i vnā pgregationē: et p̄festim
apparuit arida: quā deus ipse noiauit terrā: atq; pgregationes ipsas aquaz ap-
pellauit maria. Iherbāq; pduxit terra: et lignū fructifēz cū semine suo.

Dies tertius.

Quarto postmodū die fecit deus luminaria i firmamēto celi duo: solē videlicet et
lunā: ac stellas vt sol luceret super terram ad incobationēz diei: et luna noctis: et
vt diuiderent iter diē et noctem et essent i signa et tēpora: et dies et annos: et essent
in splendore firmamenti celi et lacerent super terram. Quibus ita perfectis ma-
nifestum ē luminibus ipsis antecedere lucem trib^o diebus.

Dies quartus.

Quinto p̄terea die eduxit dominus ex aquis reptilia animaz viuaz et volati-
lia et rez celi. Et fecit deus voluas et cetos et oīm aīam viuam rep̄cē quas edu-
xerūt aque fm̄ genus suū. Et vidit deus q; esset bonū et bñdixit ea et dixit. Cre-
scite et multiplicamini et replere aquas: et volatilia silr multiplicentur sup terrā:
et factum est vespere et mane dies quintus.

Dies quintus.

Sexto deniq; die dñs dixit. Educat terra aīam viuā fm̄ genus suum quadrupe-
dia. f. et reptilia et vniuersas bestias terre: fm̄ genus suū. Et vidit deus q; bona
essent et benedixit ea. Et sic iste sunt generatiōes seculi: v; celi et terre: q; create
sunt in die quo fecit deus celum et terram: vt p; Genes^o.

Dies sextus.

Fig. 7.1. Beginning of text of Giacomo Filippo Foresti, *Supplementum Chronicarum*. Venice: Bernardinus Benalius, 23 August 1483; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

the marquis of Monferrato, Bonifacio III Paleologo (1424–94), and the other for Deffendo Suardi, a member of the Suardi family in Bergamo, who for two centuries had been leaders of the pro-Ghibeline party.

Not all copies were sold, however. Some were given to friends or acquaintances who had helped the author. Prominent among these was Foresti's friend Ambrogio Calepino, also a brother in Foresti's monastery in Bergamo. One name among Foresti's customers reveals the connection between this informal system of diffusion and the professional commercial networks of the period, that of Peter Ugelheimer, a leading figure in the book trade in Italy in the 1470s and 1480s. Ugelheimer bought thirty-five copies. This transaction, in which other books accounted for two thirds of the payment, persuaded Foresti to establish ongoing connections with Ugelheimer.⁶ As further proof of the success of the initiative, we have a list of books (all printed) that Foresti acquired with the proceeds from the sale of the *Supplementum* and that constituted the founding nucleus of the library of the monastery of Sant'Agostino in Bergamo.

The printing of a new work with the participation of an author who became the owner of the press run in whole or in part and took part in the task of selling or distributing it as he wished was a practice that never disappeared. In 1560, when Gabriele Giolito was about to print Bernardo Tasso's poem *Amadigi*, he entered into a five-year partnership with the author in which each paid half of the expenses and had a right to half of the earnings. The press run was 1,200 copies, printed on high-quality paper that Tasso had procured from the Lake Garda region. The author thus found himself the owner of six hundred copies, 154 of which he distributed as a homage to illustrious persons, often with sumptuous bindings. This was a large investment with an uncertain outcome from which the author garnered only a few letters of thanks. The copy destined for the king of Spain did not even arrive at its destination. Tasso sold the remaining copies back to the publisher at a reduced price. Giolito soon found himself obliged to take over the sale of the entire press run of the work, and he never agreed to Tasso's request to publish it again. The results of the enterprise in economic terms were obviously not what the author had hoped.⁷

⁶ For a list identifying Foresti's clients, see Vittori, "Entre Milan et Venise."

⁷ Bernardo Tasso, *L'Amadigi* (Venice: Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari, 1560, *Edit 16*, CNCE 26310); Bongi, *Annali*, 2:97–109.

Distribution and University Cities: Cultural Contacts and Fiscal Exemptions

Although difficult to detect today, one channel for the distribution of books was particular to the great university cities of central and Northern Italy. For centuries these universities exchanged not only students and teachers, but also books. Many professors were soon involved in printing in the major university cities (Bologna, Padua, Pavia, Perugia, Siena, and more), both in the planning phase and in commercial practices. Teachers and students were also initially active not only in the circulation of academic books, but also in their sale, although from the 1470s, professionals began to take over sales. A channel for the distribution of books had been established between Padua and Perugia, for example, as early as 1475–76. It linked Johannes de Tremonia, the German bedel of the university in Padua, and Johannes Vydenast, a printer in Perugia, with Nicodemo del Cardellino of Lucca, “librorum impressorum mercator” (merchant of printed books), playing the role of middleman.⁸ Similarly, when Giacomo Bordegazzi of Orzinuovi, a small town near Brescia, was engaged by the Padua firm of Maufer-Valdezocco to sell a medical work (Gentile da Foligno’s commentary on the third book of Avicenna, a gigantic folio edition of 531 leaves⁹), the agreement stipulated, following a geography clearly based on the sites of the nearest universities, that Bordegazzi would sell the twenty-five copies with which he had been entrusted in Ferrara, Bologna, and every other place he might find opportune. Bordegazzi was paid the handsome stipend of six ducats per month.¹⁰

Dutch booksellers were much in evidence in the book trade in Italian university cities. Ferrara provides but one example. There, in the 1470s the bookseller Johannes de Holandia sold books printed in Venice and Padua,

⁸ Rigoni, “Stampatori del secolo XV,” 297–98, 331–32. The episode is known because when the bedel died, in 1480, Nicodemo del Cardellino asked for the restitution of the books or their corresponding value in coin from the commissioners and Johannes de Tremonia’s heirs, thus giving rise to a suit. On Cardellino’s request, three booksellers gave testimony, confirming that the market prices in 1475–76 were as Cardellino had stated, which meant that the prices had changed by 1480. The three booksellers were Luc’Antonio Giunti, “Bartholomeus de Cremona” and “Johannes Albus, socius ser Johannis de Cologna” (probably Johannes Manthen).

⁹ Gentilis Fulginas, *Super tertio libro Canonis Avicennae* (Padua: Petrus Maufer, 1 December 1477, *ISTC* ig00145500).

¹⁰ Sartori, “Documenti padovani,” doc. 28, dated 13 January 1478, pp. 152–53. Bordegazzi acted in various roles during the realization of this volume: as a partial investor at the beginning, as corrector of proofs during the operation, and as distributor.

and he had as a house guest the printer Henricus de Arlem (Haarlem), a man active in the entire area between Venice and Bologna. In his house in Ferrara, Johannes de Holandia drew up a series of documents that attest to business relations among a community of Hollanders dedicated to the production of books (in Padua and Venice) and the sale of books (in Ferrara). He was clearly well located for selling books to those connected with the University of Ferrara, but he never invested in the production of university textbooks. University booksellers like Johannes de Holandia undoubtedly facilitated the penetration of books produced by the major printers in this case in Padua and Venice, into the Ferrara market.¹¹

Thanks to a tradition that was centuries old, the university cities were exempt from customs duties on books. Despite attempts to impose such duties in Padua in the 1470s, the bedels of the university, where matriculation involved a complex and costly procedure, managed to remain exempt from all the gabelles for the transport and introduction of books in Padua and its environs, as is stated in the 1550 statutes.¹²

The book trade usually remained subject to all the usual tolls and customs duties. In 1497 one Bolognese bookseller noted that a trip to take possession of 177 books that had been previously sent from Bologna to Milan cost him 2 lire and 7 soldi in transport costs. On his way to pick up the books, he paid to cross the Panaro, Secchia, Taro, Enza, Po, and Lambro rivers, plus a fee to enter into Pavia. On his return trip from Pavia to Cremona, carrying the merchandise with him, he paid to cross the Po and the Panaro and to pass in and out of the city gates of Parma, Piacenza, Pavia, and Cremona.¹³ It is hardly surprising that in a territory as fragmented administratively as Italy, exemption from customs duties and excise taxes could give substantial encouragement to book trade. Such exemptions were not easy to obtain, however, for direct taxes were low and the greater part of each government's regular income came from indirect taxes such as gabelles.¹⁴

In Southern Italy, the Neapolitan pragmatic sanction of 1475 that conceded exemption from gabelles and customs duties for books simply repeated and maintained the exemption previously reserved to those who

¹¹ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 23–27.

¹² Pietro Verrua, "Studenti, librai, bidelli, strozzini e dazio," *La Bibliofilia* 30, no. 6 (1928): 223–28. The same exemption pertained in Pavia: Anna Giulia Cavagna, "Il mondo librario d'età moderna tra produzione e consumo: Pavia tra Università e Stato di Milano," in *Storia di Pavia*. 5 vols. (Pavia: Banca del Monte di Lombardia, 1984–2000), 4/2:661.

¹³ Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 353.

¹⁴ Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, 510–11.

transported manuscripts for personal use. The exemption was later extended to all who bought and sold printed books, including Jewish merchants, with the result that it created a highly visible proliferation of book merchants in Naples during the fifteenth century. The route most frequently used for books arriving in Naples from Venice was transport by sea to Puglia (the shipments were unloaded in Trani or Molfetta) and then on by land to Naples. The first book merchant to import printed books from Venice, obtaining both the normal exemption from customs duties in Naples and an exemption from the gabelles and warehouse taxes from the Puglia port of Trani, was Alessandro Calcedonio, in 1478.¹⁵ Many merchants from Venice then took up residence in Puglia.¹⁶

In the sixteenth century as well, full or partial exemptions from customs duties could be the determining factor in the survival of publishing firms in places with few other advantages. This point was made in a petition to the Apostolic Chamber on the part of Francesco Cartolari, a bookman active in Perugia. In 1510, in support of his activities and in recognition of his cultural merits and of his support of the university, Raffaele Riario, the Apostolic Camerlengo, granted him the right to export, exempt from all gabelles, a maximum forty *salme* of printed books per year.¹⁷

Fiscal exemptions were a delicate proposition, however, and they could have entirely unintended, and undesirable, results. In 1536 in the Kingdom of Naples, Charles V conceded exemptions from all gabelles to the merchants of white printing paper (*carta da torchio*), printed books, and printing equipment. Agostino Nifo, philosopher and physician to the emperor, had lobbied for this provision as a way of supporting printing and the book trade in Naples.¹⁸ Printed books passed through customs in Naples without paying duties well into the eighteenth century, but this provision did not have the results anticipated. For one thing, Naples became a retail market into which it was profitable to import books from

¹⁵ Carlo De Frede, "Sul commercio dei libri a Napoli nella prima età della stampa," *Bollettino dell'Istituto di patologia del libro "Alfonso Gallo"* 14, fasc. 1–2 (1955): 62–78, elaborates on the archival materials published in Mariano Fava and Giovanni Bresciano, "I librai ed i cartai di Napoli nel Rinascimento," *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* 4 (1918): 89–104; 6 (1920): 220–50; 20 (1934): 34–73. For Calcedonio, a successful businessman of the book trade, see *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Calcedonius (de Calcedoniis), Alessandro."

¹⁶ As did Jacobo Paganini of the Venetian Paganini firm in 1538: *Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Tomasi, b. 984, f. 233, 20 June 1538, witness to the act, "Jacopo di Paganini da Brescia libraro in Trani."

¹⁷ Rossi, *L'arte tipografica in Perugia*, 48–50. The *salma* was a unit of capacity, the equivalent weight of which varied through time but was approximately 150 kilos.

¹⁸ Giovanni Antonio Summonte, *Dell'istoria della città e regno di Napoli*. 3 vols. (Naples: Antonio Bulifon, 1685), 3:488.

other states, in particular from Venice. For another, the paper imported using the exemptions was not always used for printing, as paper dealers and stationers preferred to sell it off on the retail market.¹⁹

Distribution from Venice

It is easiest to describe the organization of book distribution from its earliest days by starting from the major centers of production, where the routes taken by the books originated. Above all, examination of Venice is indispensable, for here we find the essential traits of the historical evolution of networks for book distribution. Venice immediately established itself in dual roles, as a center of production and as a large commercial emporium for this new merchandise, and it made use of all its traditional advantages in order to do so. These strengths included a widespread business culture and significant entrepreneurship; an excellent commercial network by land and by sea; constructive legislation; and the continuous presence of colonies of foreign merchants who opened up access to important markets.

Outside Italy the largest market for incunabula printed in Venice was in Germany. In the fifteenth century, nearly half of the editions printed in Venice were printed by Germans, whose center of operations was the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the collegial exchange house located at the Rialto bridge.²⁰ Traders from Southern Germany had been traveling across the Alps to Venice since the Middle Ages. In an effort to control Venetian-German commerce, the Republic compelled the German traders to reside in the Fondaco.²¹ All commercial and diplomatic negotiations also took place in the Fondaco, and merchandise in transit was stored there.²² As compensation for compulsory residence in the Fondaco, the merchants obtained some tax privileges and an exclusive right to trade between Venice and German lands, which meant that Venetian merchants were

¹⁹ Lombardi, *Tra le pagine di San Biagio*, 45, 163–72.

²⁰ Gerhard Rösch, "Il Fondaco dei Tedeschi," in *Venezia e la Germania: Arte, politica, commercio, due civiltà a confronto* (Milan: Electra, 1986), 51–72; Zorzi, "Stampatori tedeschi"; Lowry, "Venetian Capital"; Zorzi, "Dal manoscritto al libro"; Wirtz, *Köln und Venedig*.

²¹ There were 120 German traders by the 1480s and 900 in 1580: Chambers and Pullan, *Venice*, 328–32.

²² Henry Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venedig und die deutsch-venezianischen Handelsbeziehungen*. 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1887); Manlio Dazzi, *Il Fondaco nostro dei Tedeschi* (Venice: Zanetti, 1941); Giorgio Fedalto, "Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova," in *Storia della cultura veneta*. 6 vols. (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1976–86), 1:514–18.

prohibited from trading with the German cities.²³ This strongly encouraged the establishment of a market between Venice and Germany, constructed by Germans, in the new sector of printed books.

The strength of that market is also shown by the books that have come down to us: for example, 80 percent of the 1,600 Venetian incunabula conserved in the British Library were rubricated in Germany.²⁴ Indications of the provenance of incunabula supply information about distribution. The majority of the incunabula in the libraries of Oxford are Italian (58 percent, 65 percent of which are Venetian), but importation of books into England was largely the work of merchants from Germany and the Low Countries, not Venetians merchants.²⁵

More precise data covering the early penetration of Venetian incunabula into Bavaria exists. Among the monasteries there, which were major purchasers of printed books, Venetian books had a growing presence from the 1480s. In 1486, for example, the monastery of Windberg began to buy more books printed in Venice than in Southern Germany, thanks to Johannes Muscatell, an able bookseller in Augsburg, who was evidently quite active in the distribution of imported books. With the arrival of Venetian books the nature of monastery libraries even changed, as they opened their shelves to humanistic works and law books.²⁶

Still, and in spite of this mass of data, the circulation of books should not be confused with their commercial distribution strictly speaking. The owner who placed his name or another sign of ownership in an incunabulum may not have been its first purchaser. Ownership of a copy may not attest to a commercial distribution of books north of the Alps, but to its owner's sojourn in Italy for reasons of study, commerce, diplomacy, politics, religion, military service, or more. In that sense, the book market of Rome had a formidable role in the diffusion of Italian books in Europe. Roman book trade could count on a varied clientele at different cultural levels, from simple pilgrims to brilliant intellectuals and from lower clergy

²³ Maartje van Gelder, *Trading Places: The Netherlandish Merchants in Early Modern Venice* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 36–38.

²⁴ Nicolas Barker, "Dibattito," in *Produzione e commercio della carta e del libro secc. XIII–XVIII. Atti della "Ventitreesima Settimana di Studi," 15–20 aprile 1991*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1992), 433.

²⁵ Needham, "Continental Printed Books"; Dondi, "La circolazione europea," 185–86.

²⁶ Bettina Wagner, "Venetian Incunabula in Bavaria: Early Evidence for Monastic Book Purchases," in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana: La Musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 153–77; Bettina Wagner, "The Windberg Accounts: A Premonstratensian Monastery and its Library in the Fifteenth Century," *Bibliologia* 3 (2008): 17–34.

to great diplomats, and on vast numbers of buyers passing through the city.²⁷

From the start the Spanish market had special importance for Venetian bookmen since Spain was an excellent retail market for the major publishing firms, given that even at the peak of its splendor, Spain exported texts but not books.²⁸ The Republic of Venice sought to protect the interests of its subjects even in that far-off land. On 14 August 1492, the Serenissima wrote to the viceroy of Valencia to request that he aid an emissary of the bookman Ottaviano Scoto who was going to that city to collect sums of money owed to Scoto.²⁹ In 1491 Luc'Antonio Giunti printed works intended for Spain on commission from the Genoese merchant Guido de Lavezaris. Lavezaris could be considered a typical operator in the Spanish book market. Intensely active in the book trade, he also published books in partnership with prominent individuals in Spain. With Lazarus de Gazanis from Piedmont and Andrea de Liondedei, a native of Pesaro, or with Spaniards like Juan de Porras, a printer in Salamanca, Lavezaris financed editions in Seville printed by Stanislaus Polonus and Meinardus Ungut and by Johannes Pegnitzner and Magnus Herbst. Lavezaris was also able to finance editions printed in Venice by Luc'Antonio Giunti and Johann Emerich for the Spanish market.³⁰

The concrete steps taken in Venice to deal with the challenges of book distribution are very revealing of the hazards of this trade. The first documentary witness tells of 234 books that the publisher Johannes de Colonia entrusted to Sigismund Rechlinger in 1471 for him to sell in Regensburg.³¹ Rechlinger did not succeed in selling all the merchandise, nor did he

²⁷ The Roman book market of the fifteenth century is well known thanks to the painstaking research of scholars grouped under the title *Roma nel Rinascimento*. For a useful synthesis of this sort of research, see Anna Modigliani, "Prezzo e commercio dei libri a stampa nella Roma del secolo XV," in *Produzione e commercio della carta e del libro secc. XIII–XVIII. Atti della "Ventitreesima Settimana di Studi," 15–20 aprile 1991*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1992), 921–27.

²⁸ Griffin, "Literary Consequences."

²⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Serenissima Signoria*, "Lettere sottoscritte, missive, Mar," from 12 March to 30 August 1492, b. 887, f. 164.

³⁰ Klaus Wagner, "Guido de Lavezaris, genovés (1512–1582), de librero a gobernador de Filipinas," in *Tra Siviglia e Genova: Notaio, documento e commercio nell'età colombiana*, ed. Vito Piergiovanni (Milan: Giuffrè, 1992), 378–91 and Klaus Wagner, "Les libraires espagnols au XVI^e siècle," in *L'Europe et le livre: Réseaux et pratiques du négoce de librairie, XVI^e–XIX^e siècles*, ed. Frédéric Barbier, Sabine Juratic, and Dominique Varry (Paris: Klincksieck, 1996), 31–42. For the success of Genoese merchants in the book trade in Seville, see Carmen Álvarez Márques, *Impresores, libreros y mercaderes de libros en la Sevilla del Quinientos*. 2 vols. in 3 pts. (Saragosa: Libros Pórtico, 2009).

³¹ Cortesi, "Incunaboli veneziani."

respect the prices that Johannes de Colonia had set, because he found himself facing unexpected competition from other booksellers. He sent a missive requesting permission to sell all the remaining books to a client who had offered to buy them at an advantageous price, given that shipping the unsold merchandise back would be both costly and risky. Aside from the legal complications of this unhappy story, and Rechlinger's perhaps incomplete honesty,³² it is interesting to note Rechlinger's function as a merchant-operator in this commercial operation. He apparently had no correspondents in Regensburg with specific local knowledge, and according to the information that he received from those who commissioned him, he should have found the field free of competition and been able to sell his stock without difficulty. Instead, as he himself tells us, when he arrived on the scene he found a number of other booksellers from Mainz, Augsburg, and Nuremberg, who were also selling books, and at rock-bottom prices.³³ The fact that he took into consideration (and sought to avoid) the eventuality of a return to Venice with unsold books shows that he lacked contacts in Regensburg who could provide him with a place to store the merchandise until more favorable market conditions arrived.

This model of commercialization at a distance, in which one merchant capitalist entrusted merchandise to a merchant-operator, was common, especially when the merchant wanted to enlarge his business into unknown and distant marketplaces. The merchant-operator's role could vary greatly, from that of someone who was almost an employee and was simply charged with a task to that of an autonomous entrepreneur who bought and sold a variety of merchandise, his own and that of others. Here the disappointing outcome of the enterprise was the result of a lack of knowledge about what was already available in the destination city and of the fact that merchandise could not be returned to its source without perhaps seriously compromising its quality. The system of distribution deduced from other commercial sectors did not work as well for the sale of the specialized merchandise that was the printed book.

Later, attempts were made to distribute books in a better-articulated manner. In Italy, the situation was complicated by the lack, or at least the relative scarcity, of book fairs, which in these years were taking hold in France and Germany as principal places for the exchange of and trade in

³² Sigismund Rechlinger was in fact imprisoned because of a debt owed to Johannes de Colonia (Cortesi, "Incunaboli veneziani," 201–5).

³³ "Hardly had I arrived, when I found many who were selling books, from Mainz, Augsburg, Nuremberg, and other cities, who were selling their books for a piece of bread": *Rechlinger 1471*.

books among booksellers. In Italy, the publishing firms needed to reach the buyers in their own cities, which made necessary an extremely complex territorial organization. From the latter half of the 1470s, the distribution of merchandise began to involve a number of intermediaries. Books were entrusted to retail vendors in various cities after they had signed a notarized contract or a private agreement. At a later time, an agent or procurator who held a power of attorney from that firm would come to receive the money earned or take back the unsold books.³⁴

A refined organization of this sort is well described in a document of 1477 that refers to one of the most important circuits in the book trade, the route from Venice toward Florence and Tuscany, running from the production capital for books to one of the richest and most cultured areas of Italy.³⁵ Simone di Bartolomeo, a Florentine who worked for the printer-publisher Francesco della Fontana (Franz Renner) in Venice,³⁶ wrote from that city to his brother Bernardo, a textile merchant in Florence, informing him that he had sent him two chests of books containing some 150 copies representing seventeen editions.³⁷ Not all of these editions had been printed by Fontana. Taking advantage of the variety of the books produced locally, Venetian bookmen soon succeeded in broadening their assortment and learned to operate as wholesalers. Simone di Bartolomeo was a *garzone* in the firm and was entrusted with the job of salesman as a way to make money, a prize of part interest in the firm that the early masters

³⁴ An organization of this sort is described in the contract with which the bookseller Antonio of Avignon (who resided in Padua) charged Giacomo Giberti of Chiari (near Brescia) to act as his factor and proxy holder to collect money, distribute books to be sold, transfer them or exchange them for other merchandise, and duly report on all the operations that had taken place: Sartori, "Documenti padovani," doc. 38, p. 161. Unfortunately, the places in which these transactions occurred are not specified in this source, probably because this was an open mandate and the sites were freely chosen by the proxy holder.

³⁵ Ridolfi, "Francesco della Fontana." Literacy among the male population of Florence, calculated in 1480 to be around 30 to 33 percent (Grendler, *Schooling*, 71–78), was one of the best preconditions for the development of an extensive market for books.

³⁶ For information on Franz Renner from Heilbrunn, Italianized as Francesco della Fontana, see Ridolfi, "Francesco della Fontana," 55–60.

³⁷ "In the name of God, on the 8th day of November 1477. Dearest brother: As I have already written you, my master Francesco wants to send you some of his books so you can sell them there. For that reason I send you, on his account, two chests of books, which contain the books listed and the prices at which you are to sell them. I beg of you, if you ever have done anything for me, do it this time, since it would be very useful to me if I do something that pleases my master, because I can hope to have more merit in his eyes": *Simone di Bartolomeo 1477*, 62–63. This was not the first shipment, given that in the receipt for the chests Bernardo asks his older brother to send thirty or forty breviaries of the sort that had been sent before, which "will have a good sale": *Simone di Bartolomeo 1477*, 65. A chest of books sent from Venice would have contained from seventy to eighty books.

receptura maiorē gl̃ie hitum .sed q̃a augebit̃ p̃fectio sue ñalis uirtutis. Q̃to
 aut̃ p̃fectior ē naturalis aīe uirt⁹ tanto cū eq̃li adiutorio sūp̃ ñali deū clari⁹ ui-
 det. q̃ aut̃ p̃fectior futura sit p̃ corporis resumptionē naturalis aīe uirtus Ric.
 pbat sic. Q̃to res h̃z p̃fectiorē eēndi modū tāto p̃fecti⁹ potest h̃re sue uirtutis
 opationē. Sed aīa beata p̃ sui corporis resumptionē hēbit p̃fectiorē eēndi mo-
 dum q̃ mō q̃a oīs ps h̃z p̃fectiorē modū eēndi in toto q̃ sepata iō hēbit p̃fectio-
 rem ñalē uirtutē q̃ mō. Preterea ña recta nō appetit ñalē h̃re aliqd quo
 hito ñ fieret p̃fectior sc̃dm modū eēndi nec sc̃dz uirtutē. s̃z si cuiuslibz aīe beate
 est ña recta & q̃libet ñalē appetit resumptionē corporis pp̃rii. ergo p̃ illā
 resumptionē q̃libet fiet p̃fectior sc̃dm eēndi modū uel sc̃dm uirtutē. P̃fecti-
 orē ergo hēbunt aīe eēndi modū & uirtutē p̃ reassumptionē corporū q̃ ante &
 p̃ consequēs maiorē beatitudinē. Q̃ aut̃ aīa in corpore corruptibili i p̃fectiorez
 hēat suā opationē ñalē q̃ sepata hoc ē p̃ accidēs. s̃. rōne. corruptibilitatis cor-
 poris. Quia ut d̃r sap̃ie. ix. Corp⁹ qd̃ corrupt⁹ aggrauat aīam. Sed ut dic Aug⁹
 .xii. sup̃ Gēñ. uersus finē. Cum aīa hoc corp⁹ iā nō aīale sed p̃ futurā cōmutati-
 onem spirituale recepit. p̃fectū hēbit ñaīe sue modū obediēs & impans uiuifi-
 cata & uiuificās tā ineffabili facilitate ut sit ei gl̃ie qd̃ fuit sarcine. Erit itaq̃ in
 illa generali resurrectionē sup̃admirāda leticia & iocūditas aīcorū dei qui ex affe-
 ctū expient q̃ fructuosuz ē pp̃t̃ xp̃z quoscūq̃ subire labores. Ec̃cōuerso x̃o dam-
 nati miseri ex pene acerbitate cognoscēt q̃ta ē stulticia q̃ta demētia negligere
 aīam & fouere corp⁹ contēnere celū & querere mūdū resistere deo & seruire di-
 abolo. Sollicite igit̃ p̃uidendum ē ut ab ipsis ip̃iis sep̃ati per bona opa & ueraz
 penitentiā anumerari ualeam⁹ angelicis choris ordinib⁹q̃ s̃ctōz collaudātes
 & benedicentes deum per imortalia seculorū secula. Amen.

¶ Rubertus celeberrimus finxit non parua minorum
 ¶ Gloria me fratrum Paulo regnante secūdo.
 ¶ Quarto sed Sixto ueniēs Halbrūna alemānus
 ¶ Franciscus formis ueneta me pressit in urbe
 ¶ Mille quadringentis & septuaginta duobus.



Fig. 7.2. Colophon of Roberto Caracciolo, *Sermones*. Venice: Francesco della Fontana, 1472; f° & 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Statale, Cremona.

often reserved for their best apprentices. He offered good guaranties for successful sales, because his contact in Florence was his own brother. In his letter to Bernardo advising him that the books had been shipped, he included a list of the merchandise sent. The route was, naturally, via Bologna, where an intermediary, a paper-maker called Master Antonio, would take care of re-routing the books to Florence. The chests could be recognized by the “.f.” that the publisher used as his mark.³⁸ Payment of the gabelles was up to the receiver or more accurately, it was up to him to bargain in order to obtain the lowest possible tariff.³⁹ Once the books had arrived, Bernardo would have been expected to send (and, in fact, did send) a detailed receipt. The date of that receipt allows us to calculate that the chests had taken a month to arrive, while the list of books appears slightly diminished by the absence of a few copies, evidently either taken by the intermediary, Master Antonio in Bologna, as an honorarium or else used in some manner to pay customs duties.⁴⁰ The agreement regarding payment makes it clear that Bernardo was to forward the earnings once a figure of twenty-five to thirty ducats had been reached. As an alternative, he could hold these sums aside, ready and in coin, for the moment when Simone, acting under orders from his employer, went on one of his tours to collect his earnings, which would include Pisa and Lucca, cities in which he had left books and to which he would go to collect money.⁴¹ A commercial structure is already sketched out here. There were weak points, and to be sure, trade in books, like all other goods, had its risks. Still, this organization continued to function satisfactorily and was maintained for some time to come. Its weakest point was the distant retailer: was he trustworthy, could he sell books, would he honor his debts?⁴² The range of

³⁸ “These two chests of books I am sending to Bologna to a certain master Antonio, paper-maker, so that he in turn can send them on to you in Florence; and advise him that the muleteer will bring him these cases; You will pay him, and thus make sure that Antonio pays the muleteer and that you keep a good account of all expenses”: *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 64.

³⁹ “Use your wits to have the lowest possible gabelles”: *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 63.

⁴⁰ The missing books were four copies of *Quadregesimali* of Michele Carcano (*ISTC* ic00194000) and one copy of Boccaccio's *Ninfale fiesolano* (*ISTC* ib00757000).

⁴¹ “When you arrive at a profit of twenty-five or thirty ducats, see that you have them in order when I come, as I am going, in the name of God, to Lombardy and Genoa and will return there to collect money in Pisa and in Lucca, where I left books the other time”: *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 63.

⁴² Bernardo, after a first payment of fifty ducats, disappeared from the scene (leading to legal quarrels, as a result of which we know of these arrangements). Francesco della Fontana was forced to send a procurator, Cristoforo di Arrigo, who was German, but he obtained nothing but public recognition of the debt, which amounted to 192 *fiorini piccoli*: *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 66.

distribution (which was also the range for the subsequent collection of earnings) of every firm was dictated by the abilities and wealth of the head of the firm. The lesser printers in Venice could make use of the distribution networks put in place by the major firms, entrusting their own books to them, an opportunity that was not available to printers who worked in the smaller cities.

The entry of the great merchants into the new business of production of printed books brought a jump in quality where distribution was concerned. Such men, applying their customary operational methods to the new enterprise, showed that books could travel the routes and follow the strategies of transnational commerce. When Girolamo Strozzi, a prominent merchant-banker, financed the publication in Venice of a number of books printed by Nicolaus Jenson and Jacobus Rubeus, he set up a distribution plan on two levels.⁴³ The first level covered the Italian Peninsula, with a particular focus in the shops of Florence but with points of sale also in Siena, Rome, Pisa, and Naples, thanks to his Strozzi kin and various contacts from his many other business ventures. On a second and transnational level, Strozzi organized the annexation of books to other goods on his galleys headed for Bruges and London. He sought out prospective purchasers (that is, Florentine and Tuscan merchants) wherever he could find them, in a sales strategy that if adopted for books alone, would have been very costly, but was less expensive when wedded to the distribution of other goods. Strozzi's book distribution became the operational model for all the great merchant-entrepreneurs of the book trade. Bookmen realized that trade in books could be successful only if it too adopted the existing complex organization of transnational commerce.

Middlemen

This period also saw the emergence of new occupations linked to the trade in books. A growing body of operators increasingly often acted as intermediaries in book sales, or more explicitly, took on the task of creating the book market as a web of social relations. The new market that was born in connection with this new product required new agents capable of creating links between the producers of books and their users. Compared to the

⁴³ See De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa" and "New Facets on the Financing and Marketing of Early Printed Books," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 27 (1953): 222–30; Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 130–32. The editions are ISTC ip00801000; ip00873000; and ib01247000.

essi laltre dalcune altre. Ne e fraude alchuna nella uita di piu guadagno.

COME SI CONOSCONO LE GEMME. CAP. XIII.

m A noi per lopposito uogliamo insegnare a conoscere le false poi che edi bisogno che anchora el luxo sia difeso dalla fraude. Adunque oltre a segni iquali habbiamo monstri di perse in ogni spetie di gemma dicono che le trasparèti si uogliono prouar da mattina o se e necessario i fino alla quarta hora del di. Dipoi uietono che si guatino. La proua si fa in molti modi. Prima col peso se sono piu graui: dipoi si considera la materia: Imperoche le false fanno bolle improfondo & nella superficie sono ronchiose. Ne peli e inconstantia di freddo & lo splendor macha prima che uenga allocchio. Egioiellieri ricusano una efficacissima proua & questo e che esipesti quello che si leua della gemma in piastre di ferro. Ricusano similmente la proua della lima. Epezzi della obsidiana non bruniscono le uere gême & fuggono el bianco delle contrafatte brunite & e tanta differentia che alchune non si possono lauorare col ferro alchune non si lauorano se non col ferro che habbi perduto el taglio. Ma tutte si lauorano col diamante & molto gioua in queste el feruore de trapani. FIVMI che produchino gême sono Araxe. Mater. Gange. & di tutte le regioni India maximamente le produce. Ma narra to gia tutte lopera della natura faremo coperatioe delle cose. Ilperche sopra tutte le parti del mondo e bellissima Italia & meritamente obtiene il pricipato della natura & e la seconda madre del mondo per huomini per femine per Capitani per soldati per abondantia di Serui per excellètia darti & dingegni Per Sito per Salubrita & temperamento da ria Et perche facilmente ci possono uenir tutte le nationi hauendo essa eliti pieni di porti & benigni uèti. Imperoche el sito suo e uolto & ricorre in parte utilissima cioe in mezzo di leuate & diponete. Pretere e excellentissima per la copia dellacqua per la salubrita delle selue per termini de monti. Ne cisono animali fieri che nuochio. E el terreno fertile & abondante di pastura. Ne e cosa laquale siricerchi alla uita humana che sia piu eccellente al troue che i Italia. Queste sono Biade Vino Olio Lane Lini Veste Giouechi. Ne ueggio caualli che sieno preferiti a nostrali. Ne e stata inferio ad alchuna altra regione di Minei doro dargento di rame & di ferro metrecte gli fu lecito exercitarle & di queste al presente grauida per ogni dota cida uarii sughi & sapori di biade & di pomi. Doppo Italia fumo che sieno le parte maritime della spagna excepto che le cose fabulose dellindia.

OPVS NICOLAI IANSONIS GALLICI

IMPRESSVM

ANNO SALVTIS . M. CCCCLXXVI.

VENETIIS.

Fig. 7.3. Colophon of Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, Translated in Italian by Christophorus Landinus. Venice: Nicolaus Jenson, 1476; f^o. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

world of the manuscript book, those links gradually became more anonymous and more widely dispersed, until the book market was sufficiently integrated and stable to be able to guarantee that its product could be put out, sold, and used, both at the time and in future.

Publishers began to include in their entrepreneurial organization commission agents and factors who either held contracts as shareholders in the business, or received a fixed commission, or were on salary. The leading bookmen of the Quattrocento were the first to seek to formalize relations with individuals charged with sales and the collection of earnings, activities that the bookmen often directed personally. These agents and procurators are difficult to pull into focus, either as individuals (their activities are rarely registered in archival documents and never emerge in the printed books) or in their *modus operandi*. Their work was, however, indispensable.

Pietro Antonio da Castiglione, a wealthy Milanese publisher of law books, stated in 1473 that he himself worked hard to follow the distribution of his merchandise: "At all hours I am on horseback for this business," he wrote to Giangiacomo Simonetta, the ducal chancellor, whom he would have liked to have as his partner in printing the works of Francesco Filelfo.⁴⁴ It is hardly surprising that in 1490 Castiglione drew up an agreement with the printer Filippo da Lavagna, already his partner in the publication of several volumes, to manage all their common affairs connected with the distribution and sale of books, including receiving moneys owed, buying books, and barter exchanges. Castiglione states in the contract that he has a large quantity of books dispersed in various places and many people owe him money,⁴⁵ as a result of which he charges Filippo da Lavagna with going first to Lyon and Venice and then to several other places with a mandate to sell, buy, or trade books, according to need. The earnings from that commercial activity were to remain within the partnership and be reinvested in the production and sale of books.⁴⁶ The act stated the prices of the books for sale (which were mostly law books published by Castiglione, plus a few breviaries), specifying that those prices were valid within the city, since books sold outside Milan cost ten soldi more per ducat, to cover transport costs and customs duties. The books,

⁴⁴ "Ogni ora sono a cavallo per questa mercanzia": Ganda, *I primordi*, 43.

⁴⁵ Another document tells us that in one Genoese bookshop, Castiglione had more than 1,500 books in storage, waiting to be sold: *Lupoto* 1487.

⁴⁶ Motta, "Pamfilo Castaldi," 59–64; Ganda, *Filippo Cavagni*, 201–5. Lavagna also dealt in silk in the same years.

which were stored in Castiglione's house, constituted the capital of the partnership, and Castiglione promised to keep it at the considerable sum of twelve thousand ducats in Milan coin for the entire duration of the partnership, which was set for four years. Filippo da Lavagna, now Castiglione's associate, was to give up printing on his own, while Castiglione gave himself a freer hand in this area.⁴⁷ Two printing and publishing firms were thus merged into one enterprise in which a new and more clearly articulated division of tasks aimed at reinforcing the entire structure of the business.

The first partnership exclusively dedicated to the on-going sale of books, and their importation and exportation, was created by Benedetto Faelli and Guglielmo Premiti in Bologna in 1482. The two partners contributed in equal parts to the association's capital of 240 ducats, in coin (Premiti) and in books (Faelli). At that time, Faelli had not yet started his career as a printer, and the document defines him only as a bookbinder for the chapel of Sant'Andrea degli Ansaldi, which was where Premiti had his bookshop. The two men promised to take turns going to Venice every two months to sell and buy books, and to balance their books on a bi-monthly basis.⁴⁸ This arrangement suggests that one partner kept the shop while the other went to Venice to buy Venetian books and to sell books printed in Bologna, a system that presents an alternative to that of passive replenishment through Venetian distributors, which seems frequently to have been followed in various Italian cities during the first decades of printing. Faelli and Premiti's system was probably used less and less as the increasingly efficient organization of distribution by the larger Venetian producers became dominant. More than an evolution in relations of exchange, this method always depended upon the entrepreneurial skills of the individuals involved.

Among professionals skilled in dealing with this new merchandise, the old habit of settling debts with merchandise rather than with coin remained in place. We find this practice in Brescia in 1486, in the act dissolving the partnership for the sale of books drawn up in 1483 between Bonino de Bonini,⁴⁹ a publisher active in Brescia in those years,

⁴⁷ In order to launch this arrangement, Pietro Antonio da Castiglione gave Lavagna a monthly pre-payment of four ducats out of his own half of the earnings.

⁴⁸ Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 236–37.

⁴⁹ Bonino de Bonini was active in Brescia from 1483 to 1490. He then moved to Lyon, where he launched a successful career as bookseller and book dealer between Italy and France, also acting as a political informer for the Republic of Venice: *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Bonini, Bonino de."

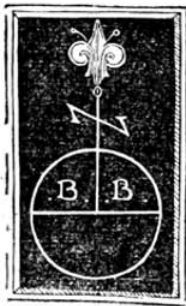
PARADISO

quello che cōcepe. Impoche chome dice Auguſtino. *Deus uerius cogitatur quā exprimitur. Et uerius ē quī cogitur. Et certamēte e uero che più poſſiamo cogitare & cōceperē nell'animo di dio che nō poſſiamo exprimere. Et niēdimeno aua/chora e molto maggior choſa iddio che nō poſſiamo cōceperē o pēſare. Et pero ſogg. me che nō e poco ſe innanzi che poſſiamo conoſcere quello che lui ſia almiſcho conoſciamo quello che non ſia. ET Q. VESTO che io ho cōceputo e tū/ to. i.e di tal miſura ariſpetto di quello chio uidi che nō baſta a dire che ſia pocho: ma biſogna dire che ſia minima choſa.*
 O SVMMA luce: dalla quale naſce ogn'altra luce. CHE SOLA in te ſidi: Che in te ſola ti poſſi: perche nō poſſi eſſer cō/ tenuta ſe nō da te medeſima: ne ite ſa ſe nō da te. ET INTENDENDO te. Il che nō poſſo fare altri che te: perche neſſuno intē/ de iddio ſe nō iddio. AD ME aridi: Quasi dica lietamēte mi ti moſtri. Imperoche tūto intende l'huomo. didio quāto lui ſe gli manifeſta. Queſta circulaſione choſi cōcepta chome diſopra habbiamo deſſo pareua inte. CHOME LVME re/ flexo: perche luno circulo riſſeſſeua el ſuo lume nell'altro. ALQ. VANTO CIR. cōſpeſta dagl'occhi miei. Quasi dica ueduta da me: Ma in minima parte. DENTRO DA ſe ordina choſi queſta circulaſione pareua dentro da ſe pinſa. i. ſi/ gurata del ſuo fulgore: peche niente ricue fuori di ſe. DELLA noſtra effigie. i. della figura humana: pche quiui e l'human/ ra di chriſto coniuſta colla diuinita. Et queſto uidi io: perche entro el mio uifo. i. ogni mia uiſua potentia era meſſa in lei/ liche ſignifica che hauea meſſo ogni forza de ſuo intellecto in contemplare quella.

Quale el geometra che tutto ſaſſe
 per miſurar lo cerchio & non ritruoua
 penſando quel principio onde gli indige
 Tale erio ad quella uita noua
 ſaper uoleua chome ſi conuenne
 limago al cerchio & chome uifindoua
 Ma non eran da cio le proprie penne
 ſenon che lamia mente fu percoſſa
 da un fulgore in che ſua uoglia uenne
 Aallata phantaſia qui mancho poſſa
 ma gia uolgea al mio diſio el uelle
 ſichome rota che equalmente e moſſa
 Lamor che muoue el ſole & laltre ſtelle

humana moſſa da dio ſi muoue equalmente a tutte le choſe accordando la ſua uolonta con la uolonta di dio. Et per que/ ſto non gli dando idio più poſſa lui accorda la ſua uolonta con la uolonta diuina adunque diremo che mācandomi lapoſ/ ſa lamore. i. lo ſpirito ſancto el quale muoue el ſole & laltre ſtelle. i. tutte le creature ad amare el ſuo creatore uolgea el uelle/ i. la uolūta al mio diſio: cioe fece che al mio deſiderio ueniſſi altra uolonta: & nō potēdo io adempiere el mio diſio che era cōtemplare ad perfeſione la trinita lo ſpirito ſco mi uolſe a uolere qlllo che io poteuo. Et e certamēte optimo ſine ad tan/ ta opapiche in una ſentētia cōchiude molte choſe. Prima dimoſtra che bēche lamēte humana ſia auidiſſima di ſapere el/ tutto. Niēdimeno debba ciaſchuno eſſere cōtento ad tanto lume quanto gli porge la diuina gratia. Pretereā admoſce/ che legge che non riconoſchino la excellētia didio dalle ſue parole. peche chi e finito non poſſo in una minima parte cōpren/ dere loſinito. Et delle medeſime parole ſi ritrahe che qlla piccola parte che ha expreſſa non p ſuo ingegno: ma p diuina/ gratia ha potuto exprimere. Per la qual choſa io ſimilmente imitādo le uelgie di tanto poeta cōſeſſo ingenuamēte nō ha/ uere ad pſeſione ſi poſſo interpretare & aprire gl'altri ſenſi: equali in queſta comedia ſotto poetici uelami ſtāo naſco/ ſi. Et qlla piccola parte che ho potuto nō ad me arrogātamente attribuiſco. Ma dalla diuina gratia humilimēte riconoſco/ pche chome di ſe dixē Paolo: Choſi dime affermo gratia dei id lum quod lum. Ippe ſe ſe alcuna choſa cie di uerita ſiene/ laude ad epſa uerita datrice dogni uerita. Et tūdi gl'errori fattribuiſchino al mio debolo ingegno. Et ſe luogo alchuno i q/ ſto noſtro comēto ſi trouaſſi: al tutto contrario o in alchuna parte diſcordāte dalla noſtra orthodoxa reſugione di ſubito/ ſi corregga dānandoli in quello non la mia uolonta la quale affermo eſſer pura & ſincera. Ma la pocha doſtrina la qle cho/ ſi non fuſſi in me deſectiua chome la conoſcho.

d Iſidera ſapere chome l'humanita ſi coniuſte cō la diuini/ ta. Et dimoſtra che lui era choſi aſſiſto in queſta inquiſito/ ne chome e el geometra: el quale uol miſurare el circulo: i. non ri/ truoua quel principio onde gli indige. i. del quale lui ha diſiſogno/ Adunque tale era Danthe in quella uita noua. i. quella imagine/ che nouamēte hauea ueduto ne guri della diuinita: Et deſidera/ ua ſape chome ſi conuenie: & adapta limago. i. la imagine dell'hu/ manita al cerchio ſecondo della diuinita: & chome ſi faſta tal cō/ iunſtiōe. Ma le proprie pēne. i. le forze mia: le mie uirtu: le mie do/ ſtrine Non eron da cio. i. non eron ſufficienti a queſto. Se non eſſe/ lamente fu percoſſa da un fulgore & ſplendore di noua gratia di/ uina che millumino: Et in queſto uenne ſua uoglia. i. la uoglia di de/ ſa mente. i. ſu adempiuta la uoglia della mente ſua: Et uoleua el/ poſta ſcriuere quello che hauea intēto. Ma la phantaſia non fu ſi poſ/ ſente che poteſſi informare apprendere chel poe: lo poteſſi ſcriue/ re Ma lamore diuino & lo ſpirito ſancto: el quale muoue el ſole & le ſtelle: perche e motore del tutto gia uolgea el mio diſio: & el/ mio uelle: cioe el mio diſio: & la mia uolūta. Si chome ruota/ che equalmente e moſſa. In ſentētia expri me: che la mente



FINE DEL COMENTO DI CHRISTOPHORO LAN/
 DINO FIORENTINO SOPRA LA COMEDIA
 DI DANTE POETA EXCELLENTISSI/
 MO. ET IMPRESSO IN BRESSA PER
 BONINVM DE BONINIS DI RA/
 GVXI A DI VLTIMO DI
 MAZO. M. CCCC. LXXXVII.

Fig. 7.4. Colophon of Dante, *Commedia*. Brescia: Bonino de Bonini, 1487; ¹⁹. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

and Miniato Delsera, a Florentine, who is defined as a printer.⁵⁰ Delsera was apparently in credit with Bonini, given that the documents speak of a salary that the latter owed him. Moreover, Bonini was to restore to Delsera a large amount of books (360 copies taken from forty-six editions). Delsera seems to have acted as an agent and traveling salesman in a business plan that also included books other than those that Bonini produced. Delsera accepted compensation partly in coin and partly in goods. Not that this interrupted business relations between the two men: in 1495 they were both forced to flee the Duchy of Milan for failure to pay a large debt contracted with the Milanese bookman Pietro Antonio da Castiglione.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Angelo Brumana, "Nota su Bonino Bonini," *Commentari dell'Ateneo di Brescia: Atti della Fondazione Ugo da Como* 190 (1991): 95–121. Miniato Delsera had signed two editions with Bonini: *ISTC* iv00098000 and is00711000.

⁵¹ *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Castiglione, Pietro Antonio da."

CHAPTER EIGHT

FAIRS

Io ne disgrazio Lanciano, Ricanati e quante fiere ha il mondo.
Pietro Aretino, *Dialogo della Nanna e della Pippa*¹

Fairs, necessary for commerce in all types of merchandise, played a decisive role in the distribution and sale of the special merchandise that was books.² The particularly important fairs for the book trade were international: no periodic gathering in Italy could be compared with the two principal book fairs in Europe, those of Lyon and Frankfurt. Connections with Lyon were established quite early, and fairs in that city attracted Italian merchants, publishers, and workers. Italian merchants dominated the Lyon book fairs not only in mercantile activities but also, and above all, in financial business.³ The most important communities were those of the Florentines, the Lucchesi, the Genoese, and Milanese-Piedmontese. The Florentines were primarily bankers; the Lucchesi and Genoese were bankers and merchants, while the Milanese and Piedmontese were merchants or artisans. Among the last category there were many printers, who established themselves in Lyon in successive waves. Quite soon branches were set up by home firms in Italy (Gabiano, Giunti), and the Italian presence in the city gradually extended well beyond the periodic fairs. The Lyon branches of the major Italian booksellers were an expression of a complex interweaving of production and mercantile initiatives, at times in

¹ "I wouldn't exchange this for Lanciano, Recanati, and all the other fairs in the world": Pietro Aretino, *Dialogo nel quale la Nanna il primo giorno insegna a la Pippa sua figliuola a esser puttana, nel secondo gli conta i tradimenti che fanno gli uomini a le meschine che gli credano, nel terzo e ultimo la Nanna et la Pippa sedendo ne l'orto ascoltano le comare e la balia che ragionano de la ruffiania*, ed. Carlo Cordié (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1977), Giornata 3, par. 78, p. 373; quoted from Aretino, *Dialogues*, trans. Robert Rosenthal (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 317.

² For a general introduction to the system of European fairs in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, see Stephan R. Epstein, *Freedom and Growth: The Rise of States and Markets in Europe, 1300–1750* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) and Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *Fiere e mercati nella integrazione delle economie europee secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti della "Trentaduesima settimana di studi," 8–12 maggio 2000* (Florence: Le Monnier; Prato, Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica F. Datini, 2001).

³ Gascon, *Grand Commerce*.

competition, at other times in cooperation with one another. The Italian bookmen in Lyon were also highly active in the importation of French books into Italy. The success of printed books from Lyon and from Paris grew enormously in Italy throughout the sixteenth century. One eloquent illustration of this development is provided by the strategic role acquired by the route from Lyon to Venice, which shifted from one period to another, not only passing through Milan, as might be predicted, but also touching centers such as Trino and Turin, crucial transfer points in the traffic between France and Italy.⁴

Italian Bookmen at the Frankfurt Fair

While the more enterprising Italian booksellers soon established residence in Lyon, for the most part Italian booksellers were only in Frankfurt for the fair. With its seasonal rhythm (it took place twice a year, in the spring and in the autumn), the Frankfurt Fair eventually influenced the entire publishing industry, creating deadlines for book production.⁵ Books formed only one element among all sorts of merchandise at an international fair that had sprung up well before the invention of printing. The oldest references to a fair at Frankfurt go back to 1240, in which year, it is recorded, the fair was conceded privileges by Emperor Frederick II. Thanks to many other privileges obtained, which were not only fiscal, Frankfurt was able to elbow competition from other nearby cities out of its way. As the many literary testimonies to its splendor suggest, the fair enjoyed

⁴ Angela Nuovo, "Produzione e circolazione di libri giuridici tra Italia e Francia (sec. XVI): La via commerciale Lione-Trino-Venezia," in *Dalla pecia all'e-book: Libri per l'Università: Stampa, editoria, circolazione e lettura*, ed. Gian Paolo Brizi and Maria Gioia Tavoni (Bologna: CLUEB, 2009), 341–49.

⁵ Alexander Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*. 5 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Knauer, 1910–25), 3:1–128; James Westfall Thompson, *The Frankfurt Book Fair: The Francofodiense Emporium of Henri Estienne, Edited with Historical Introduction ...* (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1911); A.H. Laeven, "The Frankfurt and Leipzig Book Fairs and the History of the Dutch Book Trade in the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Centuries," in *Le magasin de l'univers: The Dutch Republic as the Centre of the European Book Trade*, ed. C. Berkvens-Stevelinck et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 185–97; Johannes Fried, *Kunst und Kommerz: Über das Zusammenwirken von Wissenschaft und Wirtschaft im Mittelalter vornehmlich am Beispiel der Kaufleute und Handelsmessen* (Munich: Stiftung Historisches Kolleg, 1993); Sabine Niemeier, *Funktionen der Frankfurter Buchmesse im Wandel: Von den Anfängen bis heute* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 2001), 8–17; John L. Flood, "Omnium totius orbis emporium compendium: The Frankfurt Fair in the Early Modern Period," in *Fairs, Markets and the Itinerant Book Trade*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press; London: The British Library, 2007), 1–42; Pettegree, *The Book*, 78–82; Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*.

its most glorious period in the sixteenth century. A number of men of letters who passed through Frankfurt describe the extraordinary quantity of merchandise available at the fair and the intense activity. Henri II Estienne's praise of the Frankfurt Fair in 1574 is one of its most famous evocations. With great enthusiasm, he describes an abundance of merchandise of every sort, but especially of books, and the crowds of men of letters who outnumbered the merchants themselves. Estienne even speaks of the fair as the "Athenae Francofordienses" and as a fair of the Muses, praising the plentiful number of books, booksellers, printers, and authors, who argued among themselves in a variety of languages.⁶

The Frankfurt Fair dominated the European book market for about two centuries, but its fortunes peaked between 1565 and 1625.⁷ The Italian bookmen, and those active in Venice in particular, soon took part in this fundamentally important international event, where they encountered Italian merchants who dealt in a broad variety of goods. Their presence is all the more natural in light of the commercial relations that printing in the Italian Peninsula had already established with the German world, furthered by German merchants such as Johannes de Colonia. Peter Ugelheimer, a major figure, was a native of Frankfurt, and it is highly probable that he attended the fair on a regular basis, given that in 1476, when he took over the business of Johannes Rauchfass, he agreed to cover the total sum due in installments that would be paid at successive Frankfurt fairs.⁸ The Venetian bookmen made a point of being present as often as possible in Frankfurt, at times by using German intermediaries, in order to support the European distribution of their production. The trip to Frankfurt was certainly not easy, and Italian publishers often preferred to make use of booksellers in that city who acted as their agents, demanding a commission for their services. In 1489, for example, Hermann Rinck of Cologne took to the Frankfurt Fair merchandise from Bernardino Stagnino; although its precise nature is not specified, we can presume it was composed of books. At the fair, he was greeted by a seizure order that had been initiated by the lawyer of Peter Ugelheimer's widow.⁹

⁶ Thompson, *The Frankfurt Book Fair*.

⁷ Flood, "Omnium totius orbis emporium compendium"; Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place*, 9–24; Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*.

⁸ See above, chapter 1.

⁹ Michael Rothmann, *Die Frankfurter Messen im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998), 422. In 1497 Battista Torti attended the fair: Friedrich Kapp, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels bis in das siebzehnte Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Verlag des Börsenvereins der Deutschen Buchhändler, 1886), 457.

Evidence of the importance of the fair for Italian bookmen grows more dense during the Reformation, when Frankfurt became the center for the commercial diffusion of words that fed the religious debates: "For the Germans hardly anything is salable but Lutherana and Antilutherana," Erasmus laments in 1524.¹⁰ A few years later, in 1530, Luther himself stated that the Florentines had sent a courier to Frankfurt charged with acquiring his books for one thousand ducats and taking them to Florence, a powerful confirmation of the interest that Reformation ideas aroused in Italy.¹¹

Pietro Perna (d. 1582)

The nature of the unequal exchange that enabled Venetian books to conquer markets north of the Alps in the fifteenth century began to change in the following century, as commerce increasingly focused on the regions in which the more prestigious editions, in higher demand, were produced. New figures emerged, men who could participate in a different cultural and geographical context. Pietro Perna offers a remarkable example of this development.¹² Known as the only bookseller-publisher refugee in Basel, Perna was born in Villa Basilica, near Lucca, in 1519 and became a member of the Dominican order but fled Italy for religious reasons in 1542. Perna was active in Basel as a printer, publisher, and bookseller, where he worked with Michael Isengrin, Heinrich Petri, and Johann Oporinus. A highly talented bookman and skilled merchant, he not only took an active part in diffusing Protestant ideas in Italy, a role for which he is usually recognized, but also functioned more generally as an intermediary between the Protestant world and Italy. From Basel, Perna controlled exchanges with Italy, performing many functions for both the Basel

¹⁰ "Nam apud Germanos vix quidquam vendibile est praeter Lutherana ac Antilutherana": letter to Juan Luis Vives of 27 December 1524.

¹¹ In a letter to Nicolas Hausmann of 18 April 1530 Luther writes: "The Florentine people have sent a messenger to Frankfurt and ordered him to buy one thousand ducats worth of my books and bring them to Florence; perhaps out of spite for the Pope they will permit [the preaching of] the gospel there. This has been written to us from Frankfurt as certain": Martin Luther, *Letters*, ed. and trans. Gottfried G. Krodell. 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963–75), 2:286–87.

¹² The basic studies on Perna are those of Leandro Perini ("Note e documenti su Pietro Perna, libraio-tipografo di Basilea," *Nuova Rivista Storica* 50, nos. 1–2 [1966]: 144–200; "Ancora sul librario tipografo Pietro Perna e su alcune figure di eretici italiani in rapporto con lui negli anni 1549–1555," *Nuova Rivista Storica* 51, nos. 3–4 [1967]: 363–404; Perini, *La vita*) and Igor Melani, ed., *Itinerari del sapere dallo Stato di Lucca: Carte e libri nell'Europa del Cinquecento. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Villa Basilica, Lucca, 24–26 aprile 2009* (Lucca: Istituto storico lucchese, 2011), special issue of *Actum Luce: Rivista di studi lucchesi* 40 (2011).

ILLUSTRISSIMO AC SAPIENTISSIMO
PRINCIPIS COSIMO MEDICI FLORENTINO
cum Duci Petrus Perna Bafil. Typographus.
S. P. 12.



RTVM scientiarumq; praeclentium celebre domi-
ciliū semper fuisse progenitores tuos Magnanime COS-
MO adolysimorum monumenta graeci Latiniq; literis
ab hinc centum iam annis edita testantur. Quos enim
bonos auctores haberemus, nisi & Ciceroni & Laurentij
magnifici sumptibus, nō tantum libros, quos optimos ex
omnibus fere gentibus & linguis conquisuerunt, verum
etiam doctos viros ē Græcia euocatos, tanquam sacras
stirpes in Florentinum agrum transfussissent? atq; ita co-
luisissent, ut non solum modo verum omnes quoq; totius Europa regiones & angulos
suauissimum literarū fructibus replerissent? Hinc Ficini, Pici, Politiani (Oy boni qui et
quanti viri) atq; alij propē innumerabiles, tanquam ex equo Troiano prodierunt. Nam
præstantissima quæq; ingenia emulatione quadam liberis excitata, Florentiam quasi
nomas Athenas Ateneis proavis tuis, misitica prorsus & noua liberalitate allicen-
tibus, comulauerunt. Excitabat eos artium pulcherrimarum dignitas: tōmouebat loci
amunitas, commoditas atq; celebris præmia honestissima alliciebant, tuorumq; ma-
iorum summa humanitas ac propē diuina. Honore enim & præmijs artes vigent: &
nemo est tam durus, qui gloriæ studio non accedat: quæ si desint, ingenia uel præcla-
rissima nefcio quomodo torpere solent. Atq; illi præclara hæc fundamenta cece-
runt: tu uero COSMO Principi, ab eorum uestigijs nequaquam recedis: uerum ut dignitate
maioribus tua antecellas, si magnificentiæ operū & rerū gestarū gloria omnibus quoq;
præstas. Nam cum principatus tui in medium rerum omnium certamen atq; disce-
men incidisset, adolefcenti ac pene puer, tanta prudentia atq; constantia Remp. admini-
strasti, ut paucis mensibus omnes illos intestinos dubiosq; motus intus & foris sedares
atq; comprimeres. Quid de finitimo, acutissimū, & periculosissimū, quod cum uolles po-
tentissimū gestasti, bello dicam? Quæ prudentia suæ cepisti, administrasti constantia, uir-
tute ac fœlicitate tandem uictor coniecisti? Sunt hæc quidem magna, qui neget? Atq;
ab istiusmodi rerum gestarū gloria quidam etiam Magni cognomeni sunt adepti. Ce-
rum illa maiora & diuturniora, ac omnino amabiliora, quibus ad maiorum tuorum
gloriam propius accedis, quod nimirum regia plane magnificentiā literarū bonarūq;
artium Italia, ubiq; sed potissimū in florentissima academia Pisana tuarū ac finis:
monumenta ætati uirgatissimū propagas, uero doctissimos magnū alieu atq; euocas præ-
mijs ut docendo scribendo, & faciendo, commentando iuuentutem erudians, monumentum
in literarū, non modo præcites, uerum etia abeñes omnes qui ubiq; sunt instituti:
ac nō solum tuo felicissimo seculo, sed omni posteritati plurimū prestas. Quis igitur hæc
utilitate maiora, uera gloria ampliora, firmitate diuturniora esse negabit? Nemo cer-
te, qui intelligat quæ ad mentem atq; animum excolendum pertinent & faciunt, ea
longe præstare quæ corporis uirtutis armis geruntur. Siquidem corpus, quæq; cor-
4 2

Fig. 8.1. Pietro Perna's dedication to Cosimo de Medici of the edition of Plotinus, *De rebus philosophicis*, 1559. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

publishers whom he served as agent, distributor, procurator, and intermediary with clients and authors, and for Italian publishers.¹³ In 1552 Lorenzo Torrentino, printer to the duke of Florence, named Perna as his representative at the Frankfurt Fair, in Flanders, and in France,¹⁴ and Perna played

¹³ See, for example, the packing slip that accompanied a shipment of books from the fair to Boniface Amerbach: "I send to you the books I brought from Frankfurt, not because you have to buy them, unless you wish, but to let you see them": Perini, *La vita*, 271.

¹⁴ The agreement reads: "Tam in nundinis Franchaforte quam in Flandria et Gallia." Perna also received a charge to pursue counterfeiters of the imperial privileges and

a fundamental part in the importation of books from north of the Alps into the Duchy of Milan. A constant presence at the fair in Frankfurt, where he had a permanent warehouse from 1562 to 1582, the year of his death,¹⁵ Perna brought an average of five new works to the fair each year. The relationships he cemented with the Italian publishers whose books he distributed in Basel were particularly significant.

Perna also sought to publish works by the best Italian authors, among whom the cultural prestige of Basel was great, thus bypassing the Venetian publishers. His correspondence with Marco Mantova Benavides, a professor of law at Padua, contains persuasive arguments in favor of his publishing. Perna almost always wrote to Benavides on his return from Frankfurt.¹⁶ On one occasion he wrote to Benavides in alarm about the printer Giordano Ziletti: "At the last fair he told me, 'You are seeking to have things from Mantua to print and you are looking for them in vain because he has promised them to me, and promised so strongly that he will not give them, nor can give them, to anyone else because he has reached an agreement with me.'"¹⁷ Perna did not believe Ziletti, however, because he had gauged accurately the superiority of the environment in which he operated in comparison to Venetian book publishing, which by this date was in decline. He wrote to Benavides: "I know well and can state that you will be poorly served outside here [Basel], nor will there be anyone who does what I would like to do, which is a volume of all your writings in the same format and the same typeface, which would bring honor to Your Excellency and authority to your works and writings, something that no Italian in Italy can ever do." Perna skillfully sounded the same note in other missives:

How we print here [in Basel] is one thing, and how those of Venice paint and do portraits is another; they, not knowing two crossed letters, being either themselves corrupters [of texts], or else they use people unfamiliar with printing to correct a work. And Alciati, a most learned and most elegant man but very greedy, wrote to Michel Isengrin, his printer, in these words: "Non

privileges granted by the king of France held by Torrentino: Hoogewerff, "Laurentius Torrentinus," 373–74.

¹⁵ Rudolf Wackernagel, ed., *Rechnungsbuch der Froben & Episcopius, Buchdrucker und Buchhändler zu Basel, 1557–1564* (Basel: B. Schwabe, 1881), 104; Perini, *La vita*, 124.

¹⁶ Perini, *La vita*, 274–78.

¹⁷ "La fiera passata mi ha detto: 'Tu cerchi d'avere le cose del Mantova da stampare e tu le cerchi invano perché egli l'ha promesse a me e talmente promesse che non le darà né può dare a nessun'altro, perché ha patteggiato meco': Perna, letter from Basel, 28 January 1560. Perna later brought suit against Giordano Ziletti in Frankfurt in 1568: Perini, *La vita*, 274.

poenitet me meam in te liberalitatis; meliorem enim reddidisti meum librum quam ego tibi tradiderim" [I do not repent of my generosity toward you, because you have made my book better than it was when I sent it to you]... I am not Isengrin, but he has made me what I will be and what I am in printing, to the point that he made me his partner before he died.¹⁸

The Italian printer-publisher Pietro Perna thus boasts of the solid textual excellence of books printed in Basel, striking up a favorable comparison with the superficial and frivolous Venetian habit of adorning printed works with authors' portraits. His words are indicative of the launch of a new era in which publication in Italy was no longer sufficient to fulfill the potential for Italian authors in a Europe-wide market.

Pietro Longo (d. 1588)

The Counter-Reformation made necessary more stringent control of commercial traffic connected with the Frankfurt Fair. As a result, information regarding the presence of Italians at the fair becomes less nebulous. Rarely did the major Italian printer-publishers go to Frankfurt in person; they preferred to send their books with couriers and specialized merchants. Prominent among those in Venice was Pietro Longo, holder of the unenviable record of being the only bookseller condemned to death in that city, on 31 January 1588, probably for smuggling prohibited books.¹⁹

Pietro Longo must have been a constant presence at the Frankfurt Fair, judging from the account books of Nicolaus Episcopius for 1562–63.²⁰ Longo was noted, along with Gaspare Bindoni and Pietro Valgrisi, as among the Venetian participants in the fair of 1569.²¹ He was closely connected with Pietro Perna, lived with him in Basel, and managed a bookstore for him in Protestant Strasburg. In 1568 Longo, who worked intensively in the book trade in Lombardy, was arrested by the Milanese Inquisition for unpacking a bale of books without its permission.²² Even the Milanese publishers Piero and Francesco Tini made use of Longo's offices as a Venetian exporter, in 1579.²³

¹⁸ Perna, letter from Basel, 22 April 1560, in Perini, *La vita*, 276–77.

¹⁹ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 186–89. Nuovo, "A proposito del carteggio," 111–12. Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*, 172, states that Longo was probably executed for his heretical belief rather than for his illicit importations.

²⁰ Wackernagel, *Rechnungsbuch der Froben & Episcopius*, 100, 104.

²¹ Kapp, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels*, document IX, pp. 772–74.

²² Stevens, "Venetian Invoices," 294.

²³ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 545.

Longo must have assumed a prominent role in the world of Venetian booksellers in the 1570s and 1580s, given that his name is often found in the relevant but unfortunately fragmentary records. His firm was established in Venice in calle dei Botteri.²⁴ From 1573 at the latest, Longo was active in Italy, plying the Venice-Mantua route as a book courier for Gabriele Giolito.²⁵ In Basel in 1579, Pietro Perna entrusted Longo with books for Antonio Riccoboni and Girolamo Mercuriale in Padua.²⁶ We know from correspondence between Hugo Blotius, the imperial librarian, and the physician and antiquarian Girolamo Mercuriale, that it was Longo who procured for Mercuriale a copy of Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum vitae humanae* in the second edition of 1571.²⁷ In 1583 Longo was recognized as one of the leading creditors of the Tramezino-Pinargenti firm.²⁸ In 1587, a few months before being condemned to death, Longo was considered by Vincenzo Bonardo, the secretary to the Congregation of the Index of Prohibited Books, to be the leading book merchant in Venice.²⁹

Many references to Pietro Longo and his importation and export of books can also be found in the papers of learned men and collectors. When, in 1573, Gian Vincenzo Pinelli proposed to Claude Dupuy in Paris that they extend their exchange of books and other objects by adopting a triangular pattern that would include Frankfurt, their Venetian courier was to be Longo, while Denis Du Val, a factor of Andreas Wechel's, was to take on this role for Dupuy.³⁰ The route by which books traveled from

²⁴ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, HSS Cod. 9690: *Album Amicorum* of Hugo Blotius, c. 113r.

²⁵ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 340.

²⁶ Perini, *La vita*, 301.

²⁷ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, HSS Cod. 9690; Paola Molino, "L'impero di carta. Hugo Blotius, Hofbibliothekar nella Vienna di fine Cinquecento" (Ph.D. thesis, European University Institute, 2011), 7; Antonio Rotondò, "La censura ecclesiastica e la cultura," in *Storia d'Italia*. 6 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1972–77), vol. 5, pt. 2:1449–51.

²⁸ Tinto, *Annali*, 122.

²⁹ "Quanto all'aver de libri, può servire Pietro Longo principale mercante de libri in Venezia" (About buying books, the leading merchant of books in Venice, Pietro Longo, can be of help): Rome: Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (*Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidei*, formerly known as the Holy Office), *Index* II/2, cc. 507ff. Longo also worked sporadically as a publisher in Venice in 1575–76, either alone or in partnership with Gaspare Bindoni. He published several works by the French jurist Charles Du Moulin, who was later consistently censored: *Edit* 16, CNCE 23807; CNCE 10572; and CNCE 42698. See also Rodolfo Savelli, "Da Venezia a Napoli: Diffusione e censura delle opere di Du Moulin nel Cinquecento italiano," in *Censura ecclesiastica e cultura politica in Italia tra Cinquecento e Seicento: VI giornata Luigi Firpo: Atti del convegno, 5 marzo 1999*, ed. Cristina Stango (Florence: Olschki, 2001), 101–54.

³⁰ Pinelli and Dupuy, *Une correspondance*, letter of Pinelli to Dupuy, 13 November 1573, 84, n. 37; Dupuy to Pinelli, 28 March 1574, 95, n. 40; Dupuy to Pinelli, 30 March 1574, 103,



Fig. 8.2. Portrait of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli from Paolo Gualdo, *Vita Ioannis Vincentii Pinelli*. Augsburg: ad insigne pinus, 1607. Courtesy of Biblioteca civica Bertoliana of Vicenza.

Frankfurt to Venetian territories was subject to significantly less thorough inspection by the Inquisition than routes from Paris to Genoa or to Lombardy.³¹ Longo did not much appreciate having to do these favors, for which he earned nothing, as Pinelli paid only the transportation costs. He gave Pinelli incorrect shipment dates, as a result of which Pinelli was unable to deliver him his packages, at first occasionally then nearly systematically. When Pinelli wrote to Dupuy after Longo was condemned to

n. 41. We learn from a number of letters that packets sent by Pinelli took fifteen days to travel from Venice to Frankfurt. Gian Vincenzo Pinelli lived in Padua, where he owned a magnificent library: Angela Nuovo, "The Creation and Dispersal of the Library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli," in *Books on the Move: Tracking Copies through Collections and the Book Trade*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press; London: British Library, 2007), 39–68.

³¹ Ten bales of books coming from the Frankfurt Fair and belonging to Damiano Zenaro and Francesco de Franceschi were sequestered in the Lombard city of Como in May 1581: Perini, *La vita*, 233–46.

death, he displayed little sympathy for Longo, and he appears to allude to a complex of crimes rather than a single offence.³² Nor did Pietro have a good reputation in Rome. When he acted as a courier for books sent to Rome by the Hungarian humanist Sambucus in 1583, the impression he made in that city was largely negative.³³ In other communications during the years that followed, Fulvio Orsini alludes on several occasions to books that Longo failed to send him because they had been sequestered to pay Longo's debts.³⁴ The situation continued to deteriorate and several months before Longo was executed Orsini wrote that very bad rumors about him were circulating in Rome.³⁵ The evidence thus seems to indicate that Longo's activities as a merchant, debts, and failure to keep his word had brought him a very poor reputation in Rome; nor was his reputation any better in Frankfurt, as a comment in the notebooks of Jan Moretus records.³⁶ The acts of Longo's trial, which took place in Venice, are lost, and as a result we cannot know whether Longo's offences led directly to his unhappy end or whether they simply compounded his delinquencies as a smuggler of prohibited books and a relapsed heretic.³⁷

During the years in which Italy was losing its primacy in the market for learned books, the production of Antwerp, Lyon, Paris, Basel, and Geneva found a highly efficient showcase in the eight-day-long, twice-yearly Frankfurt Fair. Vincenzo Valgrisi (originally Vincent Vaugris) was probably not the only Venice-based bookman who owned a shop in Frankfurt – or,

³² “Il mal esito di quel poveraccio di Pietro Longo capitato male per suoi peccati vecchi e nuovi” (the unfortunate outcome befell poor Pietro Longo, in trouble for his sins, old and new): Pinelli and Dupuy, *Une correspondance*, letter of Pinelli to Dupuy, 22 February 1588, 387, n. 160. In the following years, Pinelli used other bookmen as couriers to Frankfurt: in 1593, the Paduan bookseller Francesco Bolzetta, in February 1600 Tommaso Baglioni, agent of the Meiettis. Tommaso Baglioni, publisher of the *Sidereus Nuncius* of Galileo in 1610, was the founder of one of the most prosperous and enduring Venetian publishing firms.

³³ “Ieri ebbi i libri da Francoforte tutti bagnati e stracciati, da quel libraio [Longo] che è scortesissimo uomo ... il che ho voluto dire a V. S. acciò che lei dovendomi mandare cosa alcuna, non si serva più di lui per conto mio” (Yesterday I had books from Frankfurt that were all wet and torn, from that bookseller who is a most discourteous man ... which I wanted to say to Your Excellency [so that] if you should send me anything, you should not use him any more on my account), so wrote the book collector and librarian for the Farnese family, Fulvio Orsini, to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli on 14 September 1584: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 423 inf.

³⁴ Orsini to Pinelli, 15 January 1587; 30 January 1587: Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 423 inf.

³⁵ Orsini to Pinelli, 18 April 1587: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 423 inf.

³⁶ Longo had received forty écus in cash from Moretus for a copy of the works of Alphonsus Tostatus that he never sent: Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*, 172–73.

³⁷ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 186–89 records the testimony, all of it indirect, about the end of Pietro Longo.

more accurately, a warehouse and temporary sales space that operated only during the fairs, as he himself stated when he was interrogated by the Holy Office in 1559 on suspicion of heresy.³⁸ His shop, which was under the direction of his son Pietro, was inventoried and evaluated at 1,900 florins, as he notes in his testament.³⁹ Giordano Ziletti and his nephew Francesco, who had kinship ties with the Valgrisi family, are frequently mentioned as present in Frankfurt, and like Valgrisi and Longo, had quite a few inevitable misadventures with the Inquisition.⁴⁰

Giovan Battista Ciotti (d. after 1625)

Giovan Battista Ciotti exemplifies the *modus operandi* of a successful Italian bookseller at the Frankfurt Fair in the generation following Perna's. A regular attendee at the Frankfurt Fair from the late 1580s, where he established intense commercial relations with Plantin's firm, Ciotti (together with another enterprising Sienese in Venice, Francesco de Franceschi) displayed great opportunism in developing a productive business north of the Alps.⁴¹ He had a number of learned books printed by Johann Feyerabend of Frankfurt and maintained close ties with Conrad Waldkirch, Pietro Perna's son-in-law and successor, in Basel. Like Pietro Longo some years before him, Ciotti specialized in private shipments for the learned: from 1589 on, he acted as an intermediary between Gian Vincenzo Pinelli and Carolus Clusius in an exchange of bulbs and seeds.⁴² It was at Frankfurt that in 1590 Ciotti got to know Giordano Bruno, and the regularity with which Ciotti frequented the fair is clear from the letters he exchanged with authors such as Giovan Battista Marino, Alessandro Tassoni, and Tommaso Stigliani, and from the correspondence of Paolo Sarpi. In the summer of

³⁸ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 508.

³⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, Not. Cesare Zilioli, b. 1261, n. 895 (10 April 1566); Andreoli, "Ex officina erasmiana," 318–23. One florin was valued at four lire and ten soldi.

⁴⁰ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 189–91.

⁴¹ Dennis E. Rhodes, "Some Neglected Aspects of the Career of Giovanni Battista Ciotti," *The Library* 6th ser., 9 (1987): 225–39; *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Ciotti, Giovan Battista"; Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 293–95; Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place*, 42–55; Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*, 199, ill. 6.5; Valentina Lepri, "L'editore Giovan Battista Ciotti tra mercato e politica," in *Itinerari del sapere dallo Stato di Lucca: Carte e libri nell'Europa del Cinquecento. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Villa Basilica, Lucca, 24–26 aprile 2009*, ed. Igor Melani, special issue of *Actum Luce: Rivista di studi lucchesi* 40 (2011): 413–28; Dennis E. Rhodes, "Spanish Books on Sale in the Venetian Bookshop of G. B. Ciotti, 1602," *The Library* 12, no. 1 (March 2011): 50–55.

⁴² Giovan Battista De Toni, *Il carteggio degli italiani col botanico Carlo Clusio nella Biblioteca Leidense* (Modena: Soc. Tip. Modenese, 1911), 67–153.



Fig. 8.3. Title page of Giovanni Antonio Magini, *De planis triangulis*. Venice: Giovan Battista Ciotti, 1592; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

1599, Ciotti was arrested and severely fined by the Inquisition, along with other Venetian booksellers, for having imported prohibited works from Germany. Within the framework of an entrepreneurial activity that was extremely complex and varied – also because he was active in many places, not just in Frankfurt, Basel, and Venice, but also in Vicenza, Bologna, Ferrara, Bergamo, and Verona – Ciotti specialized in the importation of books. The catalogue that he printed after the Easter fair of 1602 listed his stocks of books “in Ultramontanis Regionibus impressi,” including 1,200 titles of works printed in widely distributed locations that included Antwerp, Lyon, Frankfurt, Cologne, Basel, and Paris.⁴³ The assortment of

⁴³ The catalogue is mentioned and quoted briefly in Serrai, “Cataloghi tipografici,” 33–34.

editions gives a concrete idea of how active Ciotti was in this sector. The leading role that the Frankfurt Fair played in diffusing foreign books is indeed well demonstrated by the growing number of catalogues published by Italian booksellers on their return from the fair.⁴⁴ Although the Frankfurt Fair was frequented by bookmen from every corner of Europe, only the Italians published such listings of imported books, perhaps because the extent of the penetration of books from north of the Alps varied across the Italian Peninsula. The papers of all the major learned collectors of the period bear witness to the difficulty of procuring the best of what was printed abroad.

Italian Books at the Frankfurt Fair

In middle decades of the sixteenth century, from 1546 to 1576, Venice was almost always the principal source of books from abroad presented at Frankfurt: only once, in 1568, was it outstripped, by Antwerp. Venetians presented an average of 52 editions each year, as compared to 32 editions from Antwerp, with Plantin alone sending an average of 14. Paris and Lyon followed at some distance. The wave of the plague in 1577 brought on an evident drop in publications, but when it had passed, there was a strong recovery, with 50 works from Venice presented in 1579, after which the average remained low – and lower than that of Antwerp – for the rest of the century. After 1600 it recovered noticeably: in that year, 92 works arrived from Venice, followed by 95 in 1601, 127 in 1602, and 139 in 1603, a growth that reaching its peak in 1604 with 146 works.⁴⁵ Numbers then gradually dropped, while books from Antwerp remained at a constant level. Venetian books represented 6.6 percent of all works sent to the Frankfurt Fair for the period 1564–99; 5.1 percent from 1600 to 1617, and only 2.2 percent from 1606 to 1630.⁴⁶ While during the entire sixteenth century Venetian bookmen seem to have participated in the fair as individuals, or at least with individual agencies, after the turn of the seventeenth century the *Societas Veneta* made its appearance in Frankfurt. This

⁴⁴ Christian Coppens, “I cataloghi degli editori e dei librai in Italia,” *Bibliologia* 3 (2008): 112. In the early years of the seventeenth century, not only Ciotti (1602), but also Gaspare Bindoni (1601) and Roberto Meietti (1602, redacted by Tommaso Baglioni) published catalogues of books imported from the Frankfurt Fair.

⁴⁵ See Carl Gustav Schwetschke, *Codex nundinarius Germaniae Literatae bisecularis* (Halle: Schwetschke, 1850–77).

⁴⁶ These data are taken from Zorzi, “La produzione,” 944.

society was above all a partnership with commercial ends, but it also carried out publishing activities. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the composition and the nature of this *Societas*.

Other data can be gathered from analysis of the bibliography drawn up by Nicolaus Bassaeus, which offers a partial listing of books offered at the fairs in Frankfurt.⁴⁷ This work provides 1,588 citations of Italian publications, for a total of some 1,800 volumes presented at the fair in the period 1564–92. Venice is confirmed as the leading Italian city in the exportation of books to the Frankfurt Fair, with 1,289 works, or about 10 percent of its book production.

Books produced in Rome came, quite predictably, in second place in rankings of exportation by number. Toward the end of the century, bales for sending books were prepared in the Typographia Vaticana, the print shop managed by Domenico Basa. An important role was also played by the merchant Gaspare del Vivario. In 1592, Vivario shipped ten bales of books from Rome to the Frankfurt Fair, but as the books arrived wet and rotten, he suffered a loss of 150 scudi.⁴⁸ He does not appear to have given up, however, for in 1593 he shipped from Rome another fifteen or so bales of books printed by Bartolomeo Grassi, Domenico Basa, Giorgio Ferrari, and Girolamo Franzini. He should also have shipped the Latin-Arabic edition of the Gospels put out by the Typographia Medicea but did not do so because its price was too high.⁴⁹ In 1594, Nicandro Filippini, Andrea Basa (Domenico Basa's nephew), and the Paduan bookseller-publisher Paolo Meietti departed from Rome with books for the Frankfurt Fair.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Nicolaus Bassaeus, *Collectio in unum corpus, omnium librorum Hebraeorum, Graecorum, Latinorum ... , qui in nundinis Francofurtensibus ab anno 1564 usque ad nundinas Autumnales anni 1592, partim novi, partim nova forma, ... editi, venales extiterunt: desumpta ex omnibus catalogis Willerianis ... & in tres tomos distincta ... Plerique in aedibus Georgij Willeri civis & Bibliopole Augustani, venales habentur* (Frankfurt: Bassaeus, 1592). I thank Roberta Signorini and Graziano Ruffini for supplying me with the previously unpublished data that follow.

⁴⁸ See the letter of Vivario to Jan Moretus written from Frankfurt on 5 October 1592: Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Archives, Arch. 94, f. 325. Vivario owed Moretus money; Moretus had entrusted him with four bales of books to sell in Rome. According to Leon Voet, Vivario was Flemish and his real name was Van den Wouvere (Voet, *The Golden Compasses*, 623), but that seems strange, given that his letter to Moretus is written in Italian.

⁴⁹ Bertolotti, "Le tipografie orientali," 231–32; *Edit 16*, CNCE 5985.

⁵⁰ Tinto, "Un diario," 676; Berta Maracchi Biagiarelli, "Libri in arabo da Roma alla fiera di Francoforte (1594)," *La Bibliofilia* 81 (1979): 127–31.

The books sent from Florence were above all works on law and philosophy, half of them published by the Giunti firm.⁵¹ Even smaller cities like Brescia and Verona displayed a good capacity for exportation that was at times greater than that of bigger Italian cities such as Milan, Ferrara, and Naples that were the capitals of their states. According to Bassaeus, Naples was the only Italian city that did not export books to the Frankfurt Fair during this entire period.⁵² The Italian books most often exported were law books and religious and ecclesiastical books in general, while quite understandably, the many books published in the vernacular were much less likely to be exported. Fewer than a dozen titles in Bassaeus' list were produced by the Giolito firm, out of over a thousand editions published by what was one of the dominant dynasties in book trade in sixteenth-century Italy. This evidence shows that the book market within the Italian Peninsula was sufficiently well articulated and had achieved a penetration that more than permitted its survival, and even its prosperity. Many Italian publishers did not need to export books. Moreover, the Frankfurt Fair's importance as an international event peaked during the Counter-Reformation, at a time when every exchange with German lands was looked at with suspicion. The importation of Italian books continued to flourish in various forms in France and above all Spain, lands that remained Catholic.⁵³

Italian Fairs

No Italian fair ever attained the importance or the commercial capacity of the great French or German fairs, although in many places on the Peninsula there were opportunities for periodic exchange that might be defined as fairs. These fairs were gatherings organized by merchants from more distant areas in which bargaining for merchandise and exchange

⁵¹ Graziano Ruffini, "La Toscana e le fiere del libro di Francoforte," in *Itinerari del sapere dallo Stato di Lucca: Carte e libri nell'Europa del Cinquecento. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Villa Basilica, Lucca, 24–26 aprile 2009*, ed. Igor Melani (Lucca: Istituto storico lucchese, 2011), special issue of *Actum Luce: Rivista di studi lucchesi* 40 (2011), 347–77.

⁵² The data given in Schwetschke, *Codex nundinarius* are slightly different: two editions were sent to Frankfurt from Naples in 1569, one in 1577, one in 1578, one in 1591, and one in 1592. Naples was, however, almost a nonexistent presence at the fair.

⁵³ "Where there are editions of the same book of the same date printed in Italy and Germany, it is often the case that French libraries now hold the Italian copy, suggesting that the Italian book trade with Paris and Lyon was more successful than the German": Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place*, 64.

negotiations took place under the special protection of the local authorities. In Northern Italy, the fairs of the cities of the Po Valley or in the Venetian *Terraferma* had little significance within the broader framework of international exchanges.⁵⁴ Tied, on the one hand, to the fairs of the pre-Alpine area and, on the other, to fairs along the Adriatic coast, in a system of exchange that enabled reduced transaction costs, such gatherings had little importance for commerce in books.⁵⁵

The absence of great fairs in Italy is usually explained by the existence since the late thirteenth century of mercantile cities as “permanent fairs,” with a large volume of exchanges and, usually, the presence of foreigners. This description is true above all of the larger cities of central and Northern Italy, Venice in particular. In historical terms the fair is an example of the phenomenon whereby the mobile marketplace became permanently fixed, and a good assortment of merchandise could be found every day in the cities’ shops. This development had been complete for some time in the larger cities, emptying periodic opportunities for trade and exchange of their significance.⁵⁶

Of greater influence were the fairs that took place in connection with commerce on the Adriatic. Since the tenth century, maritime commerce on the Adriatic had been very closely connected with the land-based commerce of the cities of Lombardy. The Adriatic was the principal artery for traffic between the peoples of Northern Europe and the Levant. Above all, this commerce involved goods in transit. It was dominated by Venice, but the Marche, Abruzzo, and Puglia also had a large part in it. Important fairs included those at Fermo, instituted in 1355 by Cardinal Alborno, and the fair at Recanati, which had begun as an annual market connected with the rural church of the Madonna of Loreto. Fairs might be connected with a pilgrimage center or take place on the feast day of the local patron saint;

⁵⁴ “Indeed in comparison with France and the circuit of fairs in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Champagne, Italy played a very minor role in the international system of credit and distribution of goods north and south of the Alps. While Italian merchants were major players abroad, the peninsula itself contained relatively few important events”: Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400–1600* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 167. See also Welch, “The Fairs of Early Modern Italy,” in *Buyers and Sellers: Retail Circuits and Practices in Mediaeval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruno Blondé et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 32.

⁵⁵ Paola Lanaro, “Periferie senza centro: Reti fieristiche nello spazio geografico della Terraferma veneta in età moderna,” in *La pratica dello scambio: Sistemi di fiere, mercanti e città in Europa e in Italia, 1400–1700*, ed. Paola Lanaro (Venice: Marsilio, 2003), 21–51.

⁵⁶ Gino Luzzatto, “Vi furono fiere a Venezia?” in *La foire* (Brussels: Éditions de la Librairie Encyclopédique, 1953), 267–79.

the fair at Senigallia, for example, developed with the cult of the relics of St. Mary Magdalen. Such fairs were held at fixed dates, and they served as centers for a commercial system that covered a large territory, not only the March of Ancona, but also zones as far north as Venice and Milan, in the south, Teramo, Lanciano, and L'Aquila (the seats of other important fairs), and in the east as far as Dalmatia and surrounding areas. It should be noted that the privileges gradually acquired by these fairs resulted from petitions from the communes involved, made on their own initiative. The central powers showed less interest in these events than was true of the great French or German fairs.⁵⁷

By contrast, Southern Italy had an interlocking network of a good 230 fairs, spread over the course of the year and located along the main arteries of communication. Those routes included the *via degli Abruzzi*;⁵⁸ the road that connected Naples to the port cities of Puglia, on the Adriatic; and the sea lanes, which, although dangerous because of pirates, nonetheless often remained the only convenient way to reach far-flung localities. The merchants who plied the southern Adriatic could stop at a number of ports, among which the most flourishing were Trani and Barletta.⁵⁹

These fairs were predominantly commercial in nature: great quantities of merchandise were brought to them to be consigned to regional agents; direct sales to customers also took place; and payments were received. It was precisely the fairs that conferred a cyclical character on commercial traffic, making due dates predictable and giving defined shape to periodic financial arrangements. The fairs were key events in the movement of merchandise in both wholesale and retail sales. Retail dealers came to the fairs to supply their shops. The greater intensity of the fair system in the south of Italy is related to the lesser development in that zone of great urban centers and to more difficult communication via land.

⁵⁷ For information on the fairs of the Adriatic coast, see Lodovico Zdekauer, *Fiera e mercato in Italia sulla fine del Medioevo* (Macerata: Bianchini, 1920).

⁵⁸ The *via degli Abruzzi* ran from Florence to Naples through the central Apennines, a trip of about twelve days. It connected Florence, Arezzo, Siena, Perugia, and Spoleto through L'Aquila, Popoli, Sulmona, and Castel di Sangro (cities rich in raw materials such as wool and saffron) to the southern cities of Naples, Capua, and Teano.

⁵⁹ Alberto Grohmann, *Le fiere nel Regno di Napoli in età aragonese* (Naples: Istituto Italiano per gli studi storici, 1969), 47–57. In Sicily, Palermo and Messina became nerve centers in the transit of books in the Mediterranean area. Many major Venetian merchants, the Giunti first among them, soon established a permanent presence in those two cities.

Venice, a Permanent Book Fair

In Venice, the most famous fairs – those of Ascension Day and Christmas – produced periodic upswings in a commerce that flourished throughout the year.⁶⁰ The fair of the Ascension, in local dialect the “Sensa,” lasted for fifteen days. Those who went to the fair were almost all members of the Venetian guilds who had shops in the city, along with the glassmakers of Murano.⁶¹ It seems, in fact, that the participation of the shopkeepers was obligatory and was often considered a burden and unwarranted expense, for habitual customers preferred to visit the regular shop.

For the booksellers, the fair of the Ascension was only one more opportunity to sell merchandise. During the Quattrocento, the bookseller Francesco de Madiis went to the Sensa, but he made no better sales than he usually enjoyed in his shop. Sales during the fair were largely of low-priced materials, which means that the bookseller realized little profit on them. The fairs may have become better sources of sales by the mid-sixteenth century, if we can believe Girolamo Ruscelli, who reported that the edition of *Orlando Furioso* edited by him and published by Valgrisi might sell out in the period from April to May 1556 thanks to the fair of the Ascension.⁶²

Like many other fairs in Italy, the fair of the Sensa was held principally as a complement to a religious feast day. Venice, however, already had the market of the Rialto, which was held every day and was a lively meeting place for all the merchants of the city, local and foreign alike. This market

⁶⁰ Frederic C. Lane, “Fleets and Fairs: The Function of the Venetian Muda,” in *Studi in onore di Armando Saporì*. 2 vols. (Milan: Istituto editoriale cisalpino, 1957), 1:649–63; Lane, “Rhythm and Rapidity of Turnover in Venetian Trade of the Fifteenth Century,” in Lane, *Venice and History: The Collected Papers of Frederic C. Lane* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 109–27.

⁶¹ The Arti chosen to frequent the fair were assigned to a certain number of spaces in Piazza San Marco or under the arcades of the Procuratie, where they were expected to construct shops out of wood or set up stalls: Luzzatto, “Vi furono fiere,” 270. For the fair of the Sensa, see also Lina Urban Padoan, *Il bucintoro: La festa e la fiera della “Sensa” dalle origini alla caduta della Repubblica* (Venice: Centro internazionale della grafica, 1988).

⁶² “Mess. Vincenzo [Valgrisi] ha ferma speranza che a settembre non n’abbia d’aver uno in bottega di questi che ora ha stampati così in ottavo, come in quarto: tanta calca di librari di qui et di fuori, et tanti particolari che glielo chieggono. Et potrebbe ancor essere che con questa Ascensa si desse loro un bravissimo scacco matto” (Vincenzo [Valgrisi] firmly hopes that by September he will have not a one left in his shop of [the books] that he now has printed in both octavo and quarto: such a throng [there is] of booksellers from here and from the outside, and so many individual customers who ask him for them. And it might be that with this Ascension we give them a hearty checkmate): letter of Girolamo Ruscelli to Giovan Battista Pigna, 18 April 1556, in Ruscelli, *Lettere*, 67–70, repeated on p. 99. This edition of *Orlando Furioso* (Edit 16, CNCE 2698) had a tremendous success, forcing the earlier editions edited by Lodovico Dolce for Gabriele Giolito off the market.



Fig. 8.4. Title page of the edition of *Orlando Furioso* edited by Girolamo Ruscelli. Venice: V. Valgrisi nella bottega d'Erasmus, 1558; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

had all the characteristics of the international fairs, but rather than being held only during a particular period took place every day of the year.⁶³

That book fairs in Italy never had international importance was sufficiently remarkable to merit mention in Henri Estienne's brief treatise on the Frankfurt Fair. Within a polemic, particularly fraught in these years, about whether Germans had reached literary and intellectual equality with Italians, Estienne, a Frenchman, stressed that Italy lacked a fair that could even distantly be compared with the German fair.⁶⁴ That in

⁶³ Luzzatto, "Vi furono fiere," 278.

⁶⁴ "Ostendant quaeso ipsi Itali, ostendant in sua regione, non dicam quod cum nundinis istis hac in re comparari, sed quod vel cum minima illarum parte conferri possit.

Italy there was no need to go to a fair to replenish one's supply of books is confirmed by the large number of texts that mention an abundance of books of all sorts available in Venice at all times.

The major producers of books acted as wholesalers throughout the year, dealing with all who wanted to be supplied with books for resale. Anyone who had it in mind to acquire a certain number of books would send an emissary to Venice charged with visiting the most prominent booksellers, drawing up a list of the best books, and comparing prices. This procedure was followed in 1560 when the abbot of San Galgano in Siena instructed Geronimo Cocco to go to Venice to acquire books for him, quite logically sending him to a fellow Sienese who lived there. Cocco wrote to the abbot that he had found the best prices for the best editions in the bookshop of Francesco de Franceschi, a native of Siena. Cocco had failed to find only six titles, but Franceschi was persuaded that he could procure them, thanks to a shipment from Lyon that was due in the near future.⁶⁵ In 1568, when he planned to found a library in Bosco Marengo (Alessandria), his place of birth, as illustrious a figure as Pope Pius V charged the nuncio Giovanni Antonio Facchinetti with seeking the 370 books he thought indispensable for the library not at Frankfurt or some Italian fair, but at the bookshop of Giovanni Maria Giunti in Venice. Heedless of the embarrassment this might cause in a zealous promoter of the Inquisition like Pius V, Giunti furnished Facchinetti with a list of the best editions, two out of three of which came from north of the Alps. A great house such as that of the Giunti family could supply all the best editions, and by this time, these were no longer printed in Italy.⁶⁶

That Italian clients acquired books in Venice was surely predictable. We also have testimony, however, that the acquisition of books in Venice might be undertaken by clients as far away as Spain, if warranted by the circumstances. The university library in Salamanca acquired books produced abroad, ordering large shipments so as to get the best prices. In 1533 it explicitly charged a bookseller with going to Venice to procure a hundred or so books in Greek and in Hebrew published by Aldo Manuzio

Aliquid certe ostentare, sed nihil ostendere poterunt" (Let those Italians show in their own country something, I shall not say that can be compared with our fair, but that can be compared with the smallest part of our fair. They will be able, of course, to show off, but not really to show anything): Thompson, *The Frankfurt Book Fair*, 23, 171–73.

⁶⁵ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Procuratori di San Marco de Ultra*, b. 25, Commissarie e amministrazione, b. 25, Commissaria Cocco, c. 22.

⁶⁶ Ugo Rozzo, "La 'Biblioteca ideale' del Nunzio Facchinetti (1568)," in Rozzo, *Biblioteche italiane del Cinquecento tra Riforma e Controriforma* (Udine: Arte grafica friulana, 1994), 191–234.

or other of the better houses. He had to acquire them at the price current in Venice, for which he had to ask for official certification from the Signory of Venice.⁶⁷ In light of the sums involved, these procedures were ratified by notarial documents. The bookseller charged with these negotiations was Juan Agostin del Burgo, an Italian bookman who was one of the partners of the Compañía de Libreros de Salamanca, which was dominated by Juan de Junta and Alejandro de Cánova. He can probably be identified as Giovanni Agostino da Borgo Franco, Luc'Antonio Giunti's procurator in 1518 and a man who – like many other booksellers connected with the Giunti firm – was probably also active in Spain. Giovanni Agostino da Borgofranco took advantage of one of these trips to publish a text by Hernán Núñez de Guzmán, Comendador Griego, called Pinciano, a professor of rhetoric at the University of Salamanca and one of his best customers. Núñez's writings on Seneca, which were printed in Venice, reveal the Salamanca professor's ambitions.⁶⁸ Given that the Iberian Peninsula was a particularly weak participant in the exportation of books, Spanish authors had to reach out to the presses of Venice, Antwerp, or Basel in the hope of being noticed.⁶⁹ The market for printed books in Venice thus was based on a very different and much more complex structure and articulation than the participation of Venetian bookmen at fairs, Italian or international, might lead one to think.

Book Fairs in Italy

Even in Italy, however, there were book fairs that took place along with the more general fairs, large and small. Even the most modest of these, those with the most limited geographical range, took advantage of the essential conditions for making gatherings of this sort remunerative, which were

⁶⁷ Vicente Bécares Botas, "Compras de libros para la Biblioteca Universitaria Salmantina del Renacimiento," in *Coleccionismo y bibliotecas (siglos XV–XVIII)*, ed. María Luisa López-Vidriero and Pedro M. Cátedra (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca; Madrid: Patrimonio nacional, Sociedad española de historia del libro, 1998), 83–135.

⁶⁸ Hernán Núñez de Guzmán, *In omnia L. Annae Senecae philosophi scripta, ex vetustissimorum exemplarium collatione, castigationes utilissime* (Venetiis: impressae, iussu & expensis honesti viri Ioan. Augustini de Burgo, 1536, *Edit 16*, CNCE 47427). For the occasion Giovanni Agostino had designed a fine publisher's mark with the monogram ZAB (Z = Zuane, local vernacular for Giovanni), which is displayed on the title page and on f. P4v. On Núñez, see Jean Signes Codoñer, Carmen Codoñer Merino, and Arantxa Domingo Malvadi, *Biblioteca y epistolario de Hernán Núñez de Guzmán (el Pinciano): Una aproximación al humanismo español del siglo XVI* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001).

⁶⁹ Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place*, 65.

exemption from customs duties and freedom from the protectionist rules of the guilds.⁷⁰ One example of a local fair is provided by the fair of La Quercia, a village two kilometers from Viterbo, which was held in May and in September around the sanctuary of the same name.⁷¹ The fair attracted merchants offering all kinds of merchandise from the surrounding territory and, above all, from Rome. It was an event so important in the region that it suffocated the book trade in Viterbo by taking customers away from the few bookshops in that city, most of which were run by people from elsewhere.⁷² But while the fair took business away from the city's shops, it had an enormous effect on the life of the small village of La Quercia, where the diligent Dominican fathers offered the merchants a number of stalls for rent, which soon became shops with a proper foundation and solid walls, visibly changing the town's urban texture.⁷³ The friars and the entire community drew from the fair's many collateral activities, which included rental fees and maintenance for the shops, hospitality for pilgrims, hostelry, the sale of sacred images, and the drawing up and redaction of agreements.

The Fairs of Recanati and Foligno

Obstupet his Baldus, nec scit pensare qualhora
iverit ad feram Lanzani seu Recanatae
has comprare cosas, non soldos quinque valentes.
Teofilo Folengo, *Baldus*, XIII, 461–64.⁷⁴

The most important fairs in Italy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were held at Recanati, in the Marches, and Lanciano, in Abruzzi.

⁷⁰ James Raven, "Book Distribution Networks in Early Modern Europe: The Case of the Western Fringe, c. 1400–1800," in *Produzione e commercio della carta e del libro secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti della "Ventitreesima Settimana di Studi," 15–20 aprile 1991*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1992), 587.

⁷¹ Attilio Carosi, *Librai, cartai e tipografi in Viterbo e nella provincia del patrimonio di S. Pietro in Tuscia nei secoli XV e XVI* (Viterbo: Comune di Viterbo, 1988), 18–20.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 15–18. Carosi records the names of some of the booksellers active in Viterbo in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, giving their places of origin: Pier Matteo Tesori from Fossombrone; Ludovico di Bartolomeo from Piedmont; Domenico del fu Sebastiano from Florence; Ludovico Casaglia from the diocese of Turin, along with one man from Viterbo, Francesco Claudi, who had been apprenticed to Tramezino in Rome.

⁷³ Carosi, *Librai, cartai*, 18 n. 46.

⁷⁴ "Baldo is amazed at these things; he doesn't know when Boccalo went to the fair in Lanciano or in Recanati to buy these things that aren't worth five cents": Teofilo Folengo, *Baldus*, trans. Ann E. Mullaney, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 30.

The fair of Recanati arose from the initiative of the Recanati town government during the second half of the fourteenth century, spurred on by an increase in spontaneous commercial activities linked to the throngs of pilgrims on their way to the sanctuary of Loreto. The commercial reach of the fair, which was recognized by Pope Martin V in 1421, grew until it covered an interregional territory that included Venice and Milan to the north, Umbria, Tuscany, and Lazio to the west, the central and northern portions of the Kingdom of Naples to the south, and Dalmatia to the east. Venetian merchants arrived by sea, although the Adriatic off the Marches was dangerous and so infested with pirates that even boats transporting books might be attacked.⁷⁵

The oldest attestation that merchants participated in the interconnected fairs of Recanati and Foligno dates from 1484 and appears in an act passed in Perugia.⁷⁶ The same date is given in the earliest records of shops and stalls rented to three booksellers: Pietro Ocellini, Alessandro da Firenze, and Matteo da Fabriano.⁷⁷ The first shipments of books from Venice to Recanati are dated to 1490.⁷⁸ Another act from Perugia, dated 1512, documents a debt owed to the great Jewish publisher Gershom Soncino, who was living in Pesaro at the time; the sums owed were to be paid in two installments, half at the next Recanati fair and the other half at the following Foligno fair.⁷⁹ Other documents speak generically of selling goods in the Marches, which might allude to places such as Fermo that

⁷⁵ The ship carrying the library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, which was being transported by sea from Venice to Naples at the request of his heirs, was attacked in September 1601 off the coast of Fermo and about a third of the materials being shipped were lost: Roberta Ferro, "Per la storia del fondo Pinelli all'Ambrosiana: Notizie dalle lettere di Paolo Gualdo," in *Tra i fondi dell'Ambrosiana: Manoscritti italiani antichi e moderni*, ed. Marco Ballarini et al. 2 vols. (Milan: Cisalpino, 2008), 1:256–88.

⁷⁶ Rossi, *L'arte tipografica in Perugia*, doc. 33, pp. 35–36. On the Recanati fair, see Lodovico Zdekauer, "Per una storia delle fiere di Recanati," *Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di storia patria per le Marche*, ser. 3, vol. 2 (1916): 247–65; Borraccini, "Un sequestro librario." At Foligno the fair took place between April and May; at Recanati between 1 September and 31 October, but with variations connected with the overall organization that, in some periods, shifted it to November and December: Grohmann, *Le fiere nel Regno*, 85–86; Borraccini, "Un sequestro librario," 412.

⁷⁷ Borraccini, "Un sequestro librario," 413.

⁷⁸ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Podestà di Chioggia*, b. 46, f. 379: 30 September 1490. Mattia Nordio had a *bolletta* (permission) to transport printed books and take them to the Recanati fair.

⁷⁹ Giacomo Manzoni, *Annali tipografici dei Soncino* (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1883–86), 320–21.



Fig. 8.5. Map of Italy in the sixteenth century, with the cities of Recanati and Lanciano.

were traditionally important stops on the Venetian mercantile routes.⁸⁰ The system of fairs formed an interconnected and integrated network. We know of transactions made in Lanciano for which one half of the payment was to be made at the Recanati fair and the other half at Lanciano.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Potestà di Chioggia*, b. 46, f. 379: 14 January 1506: Salvatore Boselo, a bookseller living in Venice, had a receipt for a chest of books to be transported to the markets in the Marches.

⁸¹ Marciari, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 495. In 1585, at the fair in Lanciano, Camillo Paganini, the son of Alessandro, extended a credit of 125 ducati for a sale of books to the Testa brothers, Giangiacomo and Gianfrancesco, booksellers in L'Aquila, who promised to pay one half at the Recanati fair and the other half at the next Lanciano fair.

Recanati and Lanciano were the most important fairs for the sale of Venetian books in central and Southern Italy, in the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples respectively. It is not known whether publishers of privileged books could also denounce their colleagues' pirated editions at those fairs, as they might do in Frankfurt when an imperial privilege was infringed.⁸² It is certain, however, that at times the question of the validity of papal privileges was brought up at the fairs of Recanati and Foligno, over which the pope had jurisdiction. The papal authorities made clear that the specific prohibitions of a papal privilege trumped all general privileges, for the two localities usually enjoyed exemptions guaranteeing freedom of commerce.⁸³

As the printing industry developed, warehouses and fixed bookshops were created at the sites of the more important fairs. The Venetian publisher Lazzaro Soardi records in his testament that since 1514, he had owned books in storage at both Lanciano and Recanati.⁸⁴ In the 1550s, Federico Torresani gave merchandise to the bookseller Baldassarre Costantini to sell at the Recanati fair, requiring him to bring back to Venice the moneys taken in. Between fairs, the books stayed in Recanati, which eventually caused trouble between the two men.⁸⁵ In 1559 Vincenzo Valgrisi stated during an interrogation that he kept shops in Foligno and Recanati (among other places), which shows that the fairs had not lost their importance.⁸⁶ Also in 1559, Camillo Giunti denounced the prior of the monastery of San Domenico to the consuls of the fair for passing himself off as an inquisitor and confiscating a large number of non-prohibited books,

⁸² Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place*, 115–17.

⁸³ See, for example, a privilege extended by Julius III in 1551: "Motu simili et ex certa scientia ne supradicta opera imprimenda per decem annos, post dictorum operum impressionem a quocunque sine ipsius licentia imprimi, aut vendi seu venalia teneri possint concedimus, et indulgemus inhibentes omnibus, et singulis tam in Italia etiam in Fulginatensis et Raccannatensis civitatibusque extra existentibus bibliopolis, et librorum impressoribus sub excommunicationis latae sententiae.... Invocato etiam ad hoc si opus fuerit auxilio brachii secularis, non obstantibus constitutionibus, et ordinationibus Apostolicis, privilegiis quoque indultis, et literis Apostolicis quibuscunque et praesertim dictis Fulginatensis et Raccannatensis Civitatibus super libertatibus et exempionibus mercatorum quorumlibet editis, concessis, confirmatis, et innovatis etiam iteratis vicibus": Benedetto Vittori, *Medicinalia consilia ad varia morborum genera* (Venice: V. Valgrisi, 1551, *Edit 16*, CNCE 54095). The same formula was used for the privilege accorded by Pope Pius IV to Pietro Andrea Mattioli for his *Commentarij in sex libros Pedacij Dioscoridis Anazarbei de medica materia* (Venice: V. Valgrisi, 1565, *Edit 16*, CNCE 39013).

⁸⁴ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, Not. Giacomo Grasolario, b. 1184, test. 301, published in Rhodes, *Annali*, 84.

⁸⁵ Marciani, "Il testamento," 170–71.

⁸⁶ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 508.

which he had then sold, pocketing the profits.⁸⁷ In 1566 Veronica Sessa sent the clerk in her shop, Giuseppe Fortunato, to the Foligno fair.⁸⁸ At the death of Melchiorre Sessa, his heirs went to Siena to set up an agreement with the bookseller Filippo Sigismondi, who owed them money from 1574 for books consigned to him at the Foligno fair; an accord was reached whereby the account would be settled by means of payments made over three years at ten scudi per year, to be paid at the Recanati and Foligno fairs.⁸⁹ In 1597, when the brothers Marco and Giorgio Varisco divided up their father's inheritance, made up largely of commercial capital in books that their highly able father, Giovanni Varisco, had accumulated, Marco took over the warehouse for the Recanati fair and Giorgio that for the Lanciano fair.⁹⁰

The fairs of Recanati and Lanciano had both grown beyond the confines of the city, which had led to the building of new and somewhat ephemeral structures – shops and kiosks – outside the city walls. The fairs proved of fundamental importance for keeping up to date and knowing what others were doing, for testing out new products, and for establishing contacts and gathering in requisitions and orders. The existence of the network of fairs may also help to explain the great mobility of very opportunistic bookseller-publishers such as Niccolò Zoppino, a man who showed himself capable of grasping opportunities on the fly and capturing local ambitions during the course of fair circuits or trips from one city to another.⁹¹ Other bookseller-publishers followed analogous courses. Zoppino's presence at the fair in Foligno must have been regular, given that in 1543 he was enjoined by Tommaso Giunti and Melchiorre Sessa, acting as arbiters, to pay a debt of one hundred ducats with profits realized at Foligno.⁹²

⁸⁷ Borraccini, "Un sequestro librario," 403. Camillo must have been a member of the Giunti family.

⁸⁸ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 502.

⁸⁹ Curzio Bastianoni, "Libri e librai a Siena nel secolo XVI," in *Manoscritti, editoria e biblioteche dal medioevo all'età contemporanea: Studi offerti a Domenico Maffei per il suo ottantesimo compleanno*, ed. Mario Ascheri and Gaetano Colli (Rome: Roma nel Rinascimento, 2006), 54.

⁹⁰ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 549–52.

⁹¹ Jeremy M. Potter, "Nicolò Zoppino and the Book-Trade Network of Perugia," in *The Italian Book 1546–1800: Studies Presented to Dennis E. Rhodes on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Dennis V. Reidy (London: British Library, 1995), 135–59. On Zoppino's activities in general, see Luigi Severi, "Sittibondo nel stampar de' libri": *Niccolò Zoppino tra libro volgare, letteratura cortigiana e questione della lingua* (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2009) and Lorenzo Baldacchini, *Alle origini dell'editoria in volgare. Niccolò Zoppino da Ferrara a Venezia, annali (1503–1544)* (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2011).

⁹² Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Not. Agostino Pellestrina, b. 10638, ff. 73v–74r.

It is not an easy task to pin down the characteristics of the Recanati fair, the quantity of merchandise presented, or the types of book put on sale. One recent study has reconstructed two different series of data, one relative to the shops rented out by the Comune of Recanati, the other covering disputes and violence, which came under the jurisdiction of a special magistracy during the months that the fair was held.⁹³ We know, unfortunately, of no series of documents testifying to ordinary commercial activities, which often were left unrecorded. Nor do we have any printed catalogues of books presented at the fairs. Even if we cannot measure its impact, we can say with certainty that the Recanati fair was a vital channel for the importation of Venetian books into the Papal States, as well as an essential platform for supplying books – religious books in particular – in the regions of the Marches and Umbria, where there were many populous monasteries and convents.

The sale of suspect texts was challenging in this market. In 1559, as the Venetian bookmen fought as well as they could against the enforcement of the Index of Prohibited Books, the Apostolic Seat forced them into obedience precisely by threatening to seize their holdings in warehouses and bookshops in Recanati, Foligno, and Bologna. They were even prohibited from attending the book fair at Foligno. A letter written by the most prominent members of the booksellers' guild, gathered in the shop of Tommaso Giunti, to the Comune of Foligno asking that they and their books be given a safe-conduct to participate in the fair was doomed to failure. The Venetian bookmen had to obey.⁹⁴ In the only (and fairly late) confiscation at the fair of which we know, carried out with exaggerated zeal by the Inquisitor of Ancona, Stefano Vicari, in 1600, very few of the forty-six editions seized (from the shops of the bookseller at the sign of the Fountain – the Zenari family – Tommaso Giunti, and Marco Sessa) display anything that would justify their seizure and destruction.⁹⁵ The Venetian bookmen dominated a fair to which, as far as we know, bookmen from north of the Alps never came.

⁹³ Borraccini, "Un sequestro librario." Borraccini lists among those who rented out shops Alessandro Bindoni, Ioseffo della Gatta (acting as an agent for Melchiorre Sessa), Bernardino Boselli (bookseller at the sign of the Ox in Venice), Giacomo Bericchia (agent for Veronica Sessa), and the Giunti family. A few acts of violence were committed using hammers for binding books (Borraccini, "Un sequestro librario," 416), which shows that retail sales to individual customers took place at the fair.

⁹⁴ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*, 121; Veneziani, "Il libraio," 265.

⁹⁵ Borraccini, "Un sequestro librario," 423–38 provides a list, with commentary, of the books sequestered.

The volume of exports that the Venetian bookmen made to the Papal States, in part thanks to the Recanati fair, can be demonstrated by one simple fact: until the 1590s, only one edition of the Bible was published in Rome, that of 1471.⁹⁶ No less indicative, the production of breviaries and missals in Rome during the same period was insignificant.

The Fair of Lanciano

Of the three biggest fairs in the Kingdom of Naples – Lanciano, Barletta, and Salerno – only the first played a significant role in the book trade, and in fact, it was the most important Italian book fair in general.⁹⁷ Fairs were held twice a year at Lanciano; they were called “the May fair” and “the August fair” because they began on the last day of those months, and they lasted until 15 June and 15 September respectively. The position of Lanciano, not far from the sea and at a mid-point on the road that began in Brindisi and connected the Kingdom of Naples with Ancona, Bologna, Modena, Parma, Piacenza, and the Po Valley, where it joined the busiest commercial routes, made Lanciano an obligatory stop between north and south. Lanciano could also be reached by sea through the port of Ortona. The maritime route not only complemented the land route, but at various times, it also provided either an alternative or more significant channel.

The fair of Lanciano already existed in the eleventh century. All the free fairs of the Kingdom of Naples were exempt from customs duties; what made the particular fortune of Lanciano was the additional exemption, established in 1368, from warehouse duties for all merchants, be they residents of the Kingdom of Naples or not. In the fifteenth century other privileges were conceded to Lanciano, among them the obligation of all citizens to defend, in case of war, merchandise deposited in warehouses in expectation of the next fair. The merchants who sailed the Adriatic Sea loaded merchandise from the Veneto, Lombardy, and even from north of the Alps at Venice, Choiggia, or Comacchio on their way south to the Abruzzi and Puglia. The merchandise arrived at the Lanciano fair from the port of Ortona and continued on by way of land to Naples and its surrounding areas. The fairs of Southern Italy constituted a network of events distributed throughout the course of the year according to a well thought-out

⁹⁶ See *ISTC* ib00535000.

⁹⁷ Corrado Marciani, “Il commercio librario alle fiere di Lanciano nel ‘500,” *Rivista storica italiana* 70 (1958): 421–41; Marciani, “Editori, tipografi, librai veneti”; *Regesti marciani: Fondi del notariato e del decurionato di area frentana, secc. XVI–XIX*, ed. Corrado Marciani. 12 vols. (L’Aquila: L. U. Japadre; Edizioni Libreria Colacchi, 1987–2008).

calendar. A system of this sort made it easier for merchants to find a continual source of sales and a way to stock goods for eventual sale.

At Lanciano, jurisdictional autonomy was guaranteed while the fair was held: jurisdiction over civil cases was placed in the hands of special fair judges; criminal jurisdiction was under an overall Mastrogiurato. In 1508, a large building was completed to serve as a court and a place to weigh and measure goods and also to provide a workplace for notaries. Two banks had offices in the same palace, one of them the powerful Calamazza-Pontecorvo firm.⁹⁸ The loggias – wooden constructions used by the merchants – were built by the city of Lanciano, which also rented them out and stored them from one fair to another.⁹⁹ The merchants of Lanciano closed their shops during the fair and transferred operations to the fair itself. The goods most frequently sold there were alimentary supplies (grain, barley, salt, oil, wine, etc.), spices, woven cloth (woolen and silk), caps, leather, skins, candles, needles, harquebuses and guns, slaves, paper, and books.

The earliest information relating to the participation of booksellers in the fair at Lanciano goes back to 1477.¹⁰⁰ The Lanciano fair was an event of prime importance for all of the southern Italian market, and above all for the highly important Naples market. In Naples particularly liberal legislation had unshackled the book trade from all customs and warehousing duties, guaranteeing booksellers fiscal immunity, with consequences for the local printing industry that can easily be imagined. The point of this legislation was to facilitate the arrival of Venetian books, which were essential for life at the court, at the university, and within the religious institutions of the capital city.¹⁰¹

Among the activities most frequently mentioned in notarial documents regarding the Lanciano fair (which, by their very nature, reveal only a small part of the business conducted, most of which would have been carried out in conversation between individuals) is the assignment of power of attorney in order to recover money. Today these permit us to follow the

⁹⁸ Paolo Calamazza, a Neapolitan associated with the Pontecorvo brothers, founded a powerful dynasty of bankers: Giovanni Brancaccio, *"Nazione genovese": Consoli e colonia nella Napoli moderna* (Naples: Guida, 2001).

⁹⁹ Rents provided a notable income; in 1550 they ran as high as 2,456 ducats.

¹⁰⁰ This evidence comes from a provision emitted by the king of Naples in favor of a certain "Isacco Ebreo," stating that he should not be subject to customs duties over and above what he was accustomed to paying to transport a certain quantity of corals from Sicily to the Lanciano fair: Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 461.

¹⁰¹ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 466.

ramification throughout Italy of correspondents and booksellers connected with the principal firms. According to Corrado Marciani, the scholar who has worked for the longest time on this topic, negotiations about books at the fair were carried out not on the basis of quantity (as was the habit at Frankfurt, though there were exceptions) but through evaluation of their worth and their quality, the price being agreed by the parties after appraisal of the goods.¹⁰² Nonetheless, the data remaining to us is too scant for general conclusions. What we can say with certainty is that the fair was the most important annual appointment for the business of a firm, given that it provided an opportunity to balance accounts for the entire year by systematizing the setting off of payments.¹⁰³ If any comparison can be made, given the lacunae in the sources, the Venetian booksellers mentioned at Lanciano seem more numerous than at the Recanati fair, and involved such major Venetian printing houses as the Bonelli, Constantini, Giunti, Paganini, Testa, Valgrisi, Varisco, Zenaro, and Ziletti firms.¹⁰⁴



Fig. 8.6. The Stellar Comet, mark of Francesco Ziletti, 1580.

¹⁰² Marciani, "Il commercio librario," 431–32.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 433–41, which gives a series of commercial obligations drawn up at the Lanciano fair in which the promise of payment "at the next May fair of Lanciano" is a constant.

¹⁰⁴ Marciani, "Il commercio librario"; Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti."

Notable numbers of men of letters and authors also came to the fair, to contact the most important publishers and establish the most advantageous conditions for the publication of their works. One example: in 1569 Pietro Follerio of San Severino, vice-marquis of Vasto, negotiated the reprinting of his *Praxis censualis*, which was later printed in Venice by the printer Comin da Trino for the bookseller-publisher Marco de Maria.¹⁰⁵

Although the principal Italian book fairs certainly flourished most greatly in the sixteenth century, there can be little doubt that as the times changed such concentrations of books and throngs of people could seem dangerous. In 1565 the archbishop of Lanciano, Leonardo Marini, writing from Rome, recommended to his vicar that all the books brought to the fair be inspected and those that were prohibited be sequestered.¹⁰⁶ Still, no evidence remains of either sequestrations or lists of books redacted in any manner or for any reason during the Lanciano fairs.

What might have been the overall revenues from book sales at the Lanciano fair is difficult to say. Corrado Marciani offers an estimate of about 7,300 ducats in total, calculated on the basis of his examination of local documentation that records exchanges involving Venetian books in the latter half of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁷ This figure is a serious underestimation, however. It should be enough to point out that on 18 August 1604 the Giunti firm (the heirs of Luc'Antonio the Younger) sold to Francesco Manolessi all the books that they possessed at the Lanciano fair, complete with shipping chests, bookshelves, and other furnishings, with the directive that Manolessi sell them exclusively at that fair. The inventory drawn up by Manolessi himself arrives at the figure of 5,210 ducats, even though the sale went through later for only four thousand ducats.¹⁰⁸ This was a sizable quantity of books, which the Giunti brothers preferred to liquidate when they were restructuring the firm after the death of their father. The purchaser, Francesco Manolessi, was a Venetian bookseller (and occasional publisher) who also had a shop in Ancona in the area of Santa Maria di Piazza, the central business district of that city. The fact that he seems to have had a notable sum available can be explained by his kinship,

¹⁰⁵ *Edit* 16, CNCE 19396; Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 492.

¹⁰⁶ Marciani, "Il commercio librario," 431. In 1561 Lanciano became an archdiocese, thus satisfying a need for autonomy from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Chieti.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, esp. p. 431.

¹⁰⁸ Camerini, *Annali*, 2:213. Giovanni Battista Ciotti appears as Manolessi's *fideiussore* (guarantor).



Venetijs, in officina Lucae Antonij Iunta.
M D L X V I I I.

Fig. 8.7. The Lily, mark of Luc'Antonio Giunti the Younger, 1568.

through his wife, with the local Salvioni family, who owned a well-established mercantile enterprise and enjoyed a solid patrimony.¹⁰⁹ Manolesi continued to have business connections with Bernardo II Giunti almost until 1615.¹¹⁰ I should mention that the Giunti firm's liquidation of their shop at the Lanciano fair took place at a time when the fair was gradually contracting, with notably fewer merchants present.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Rosa Marisa Borraccini, "All'ombra degli eredi: Invisibilità femminile nelle professioni del libro: La fattispecie marchigiana," in *La donna nel Rinascimento meridionale*, ed. Marco Santoro (Pisa and Rome: Serra, 2010), 425.

¹¹⁰ Filippo M. Giochi and Alessandro Mordenti, *Annali della tipografia in Ancona, 1512–1799* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1980), liii–liv.

¹¹¹ Alessandra Bulgarelli Lukacs, "Alla fiera di Lanciano che dura un anno e tre dì: Caratteri e dinamica di un emporio adriatico," *Proposte e ricerche* 35 (1995): 131–42.

A Bookseller at the Fairs: Bernardo d'Asola, Agent of the Gabiano Firm (1522)

Letters sent by Bernardo d'Asola, an agent representing Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano at the fairs of Recanati and Lanciano in 1522, furnish a summary, complete with a good many picaresque touches, that tells us exactly how book shipments might be made.¹¹² On 21 July Bernardo d'Asola set off for the Lanciano fair from Asola, a town near Mantua, where he had been born. On 19 September he was at Recanati, but his trip seems to have taken place under a cloud, because he was dissatisfied with the shop that he managed to rent. The shop set up in the middle of the town square that he had rented the previous year was much better, he writes to Gabiano, but because he has not been given precise instructions, he has not been able to confirm it with a deposit. The goods offered at the fair seem to him plentiful, but the threat of the plague hovers over it. During the years of the Italian Wars the plague was endemic on the Italian Peninsula.¹¹³ In his letter of 24 September Bernardo reports that a rumor that the pope is to come to Loreto is galvanizing the fair. There was plague in Rome as well, however, and the pope did not make an appearance at Recanati. Bernardo next goes to Lanciano, though he writes no letters from there; his next missive is dated 17 October and again is sent from Recanati. His news is far from good, however: like the other vendors, he too has sold almost nothing at Lanciano because there are few customers. Fear of the plague is paralyzing commerce at the fair. In spite of this, Bernardo asks for a new supply of books, and in his letter of 5 November he reports the receipt of three chests of books, containing among other things sixty-five breviaries. He complains that these are not the books that are being asked for, and writes that he could have earned thirty ducats if he had had the books requested by some students at Perugia. His balance sheet was a disaster. "I have been away three months on expenses," he writes to Gabiano, "and I have not earned a penny, whereas I had expected to earn at least a few dozen ducats." He continues, "Fatigues of travel, terrible nights, cold and danger are all that I have gone through, and for nothing." At the same time, however, Bernardo informs his employer about some new developments in the book trade and sends him Azzo's *Summa*

¹¹² These six letters are contained in the collection *Lettere Gabiano* (Venezia, Archivio di Stato, *Miscellanea atti diversi manoscritti*, b. 91).

¹¹³ During the Italian Wars the plague appeared in two phases, 1499–1506 and 1522–30; during the second of these, it was accompanied by typhus and famine: Alfani, *Il Grand Tour*, 129–45.

in its most recent printing.¹¹⁴ He advises Gabiano that if he should want to print that work, he should do so in quarto and no longer in folio. In short, the fair had given him the opportunity to take a general look at colleagues' books and make some suggestions.

Bernardo's return trip was unpleasant. After embarking, probably at Porto Recanati, he writes another letter to his employer, from Chioggia on 25 November. Once again he complains that he has not received instructions and does not know what to do. The unsold books have been loaded onto the boat, but the boat master does not want to keep them. Bernardo will therefore have to spend money to transport them to Venice, and he asks for help to do so, threatening that if it is not forthcoming, he will abandon the merchandise where it is and leave for Ferrara. "I do not want to die," he writes, "under the rain, the wind, and an adverse Fortune." Worse still, he is suspected of having caught the plague, though he himself is persuaded he is healthy. "Rather than end up in the Lazzaretto [the quarantine hospital]," he writes, "I prefer to die on the shore at Chioggia."

Bernardo's tour of the fairs of Recanati and Lanciano seems to have been particularly hounded by ill fortune. It may be that Bernardo himself was not a very good businessman. Still, his letters are revealing of the existence and challenges of a commercial system. Someone who left for a tour of the principal Italian book fairs could expect to be away about three months. He would leave with a load of books that undoubtedly included the latest publications or in any event, books that were assumed to be salable. He would remain in contact with the head of the firm to arrange further shipments of books as he received requests for them. Shipments that arrived late, incomplete copies, and damaged merchandise were all part of the normal uncertainties of the trade. If the firm did not have a permanent shop in which it could store unsold merchandise from one fair to the next, it is certainly feasible that with time such a shop would be set up, given the cost and the difficulties involved in a return trip with the merchandise.

¹¹⁴ This was the 1519 edition of Giovanni Giolito: *Edit 16*, CNCE 3804.

CHAPTER NINE

RETAIL SALES: DISTRIBUTION

Even if at times a printer-publisher sold his own merchandise directly from his workshop, profiting from a good position facing the street or the town square, books usually had to travel to reach their purchasers. Retail sales took place in different places and by a variety of distribution systems. Printed books were sold by stationers, booksellers, and *bibliopolae*, as specialized book dealers were called in the terminology of the age. Then as today, stocks varied enormously in size from one shop to another, as did their assortment, but a deeper line of demarcation separated established booksellers with a fixed shop, large or small, set up for commerce in books either exclusively or in combination with other sorts of merchandise such as paper or groceries, and itinerant salesmen and street sellers. Such men kept a stall at the market, on the street, or outside the church; they sold print materials at the end of a public recitation of a text or a theatrical performance; or they traveled from village to village with a basket or a barrow of printed matter. A large portion of the urban population came in contact with printed materials in the streets. The booksellers with a shop of their own dealt in types of books that could not be sold by peddlers and street vendors; moreover, they dominated the guilds and sought in a number of ways to limit the activities of those who sold printed materials without a fixed shop whenever they felt threatened by them. Within the urban space, however, all sellers of books and prints interacted to construct a market for printed texts and images.

Cartolai and Peddlers in the Diario of the Ripoli Press (1476–1484)

From the earliest days of printing in Italy there is ample testimony of the lively presence of itinerant booksellers who offered cheap printed pamphlets, fliers, and images for sale at fairs or markets. It is possible to compare the two quite different retail sales channels thanks to the *Diario* that the printing press of San Jacopo di Ripoli compiled during the years 1476–84, a document fundamental to an understanding of the history of

printing in Florence.¹ The Ripoli Press had deep roots in the city of Florence, as is evident from its association with a man of letters such as Bartolomeo Fonzio and the financial involvement of local individuals on various levels: Filippo Valori, Francesco Berlinghieri, and the *cartolai* Giovanni di Nato and Domenico di Piero di Giovanni were only some of the financial supporters of the press.² The Ripoli Press also produced

**CONSIGLIO DI Marsilio ficino fiorenti.
no, contro la pestilentia.**

1 A carità inueto la patria mia mi muoue a scriuere qualche consiglio contro la pestilentia. & accioche ogni persona thoscana la tenda & possi concesso me dicare pretermettero le disputazioni sottili & lunghe. & etiamdio scriuero in lingua thoscana. balti sapere che qualunque cosa io aproueruo. benché per breuità nō narri molto. niente dimeno. e. approuata con molte ragioni & auctorità di tutti edoctori antichi e moderni. & sperientie di molti. & spetialmente del nostro padre maestro Ficino me dico singulare. il quale lamaggiore parte de gli morbari sanaua. preghiamo iddio donatore della uita & riuelatore delle medicine uere et salutifere. checci riueli sufficienti rimedi contra la peste. & conferui el dono suo uitale ad sua laude & gloria
Che chosa e pestilentia. Capitulo primo.

1 A pestilentia e uno uapore uelenoso conretrato nell'aria inimico dello spiri
ai

dici giorni. Labitatione. Legniami. & cetera. in uentuno. epanni in uentotto. In questi tempi tieni & porta usi separati da bere & mangiare & panni dilecto almeno lenzuola & se non puoi laua almeno le dette cose. o tu le profumma. La caualatura & pecunia & ogni bestia & malfertia ti puo serbare el ueleno se nonse molto cauto. Conchiu. dendo Preghiamo iddio donatore della uita & riuelatore delle medicine uere & salutifere. checci riueli sufficienti rimedi contra la peste. & conferui el dono suo uitale ad sua laude & gloria. AMEN.

• FINIS •

Impressum Florentie apud
Sanctum Iacobum de
Ripolis. M.
cccc. lxxxii.

Laus deo & gloriose uirgini Marie.

Fig. 9.1. Beginning of the text and colophon of Marsilio Ficino, *Consiglio contro la pestilentia*. Florence: aud Sanctum Jacobum de Ripoli, 1481; 4°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

¹ The text of this document (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Magliabechiano X 143) is published in Melissa Conway, *The "Diario" of the Printing Press of San Jacopo di Ripoli 1476–1484: Commentary and Transcription* (Florence: Olschki, 1999). Among the more interesting essays regarding this ledger, see Pietro Bologna, "La stamperia fiorentina del Monastero di S. Jacopo di Ripoli e le sue edizioni," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 20 (1892): 349–78; 21 (1893): 49–69; Emilia Nesi, *Il Diario della stamperia di Ripoli* (Florence: Seeber, 1903); Susan Noakes, "The Development of the Book Market in Late Quattrocento Italy: Printers' Failure and the Role of the Middleman," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 11 (1981): 23–55; Rouse and Rouse, *Cartolai, Illuminators*; and Trovato, "Il libro toscano."

² Rouse and Rouse, *Cartolai, Illuminators*, 46–48. Although the various professions of the sellers of books were closely related, a distinction (which also indicates a chronological development) can be made between *stationarii* (university booksellers), *cartolai* (stationers), and *librarii* (sellers of mainly printed books): see Anna Melograni, "The Illuminated Manuscripts," 200.

printed texts on special order for a number of *cerretani* and *saltimpanca*, itinerant salesmen and peddlers who operated as publishers and as seller-distributors of printed matter. The Ripoli Press found a clientele large enough to keep it going within a limited geographical range, but it never managed to grow beyond a small artisan operation, and it suffered from an overly Florentine-centered vision, as can be seen in its lack of an adequate distribution system for its products. Attempts to organize distribution never reached anything like the stable structure that enabled the Company of Venice to distribute its books widely.³

A reading of the *Diario* of the Ripoli Press confirms that sales were key to successful publishing, to the point that in the majority of cases the partners in the firm (or even the special-order clients) took personal responsibility for sales. The *cartolai* sold off the few copies they had received very slowly, and they often returned unsold copies. At first it was hard to evaluate how much business a bookshop could expect to do. In October 1477, the press left on deposit for sale in the shop of Zanobi di Mariano, a *cartolaio* in Florence, the large number of one hundred copies of the *Omnis mortalium cura* (ISTC ia00847000) and left another hundred copies of the same work in December of that year in the shop of Benedetto, another *cartolaio*. This was too many: sales were very slow and many copies were returned some years after they had first been delivered to the *cartolai*.

Sales through itinerant sellers flourished, however. Printed texts entered immediately into a dynamic channel of distribution within the localities visited by the peddler. The Ripoli Press model of producing and selling cheap printed materials long continued unchanged in this sector. Works were produced, often with a surprisingly high print run, on credit. The peddlers had to buy all the copies that they took from the press and could not, unlike the bookshop owners, return unsold stock. For that reason they took batches of twenty-five or fifty copies, returning every few days for new stock. In 1480, for example, a street hawker named Antonio commissioned the Ripoli Press to print 505 copies of a chapbook containing the *Vangelo di San Giovanni* (Gospel according to St. John) and an *Orazione di*

³ Among the few exceptions to this rule: in 1481 the stationer Giovanni di Nato acquired ten copies of the *Consiglio sopra la pestilenza* of Marsilio Ficino (ISTC if00153000) in order to send them to Milan to be sold (Nesi, *Il Diario*, 99); and Giovanni di Nato's wife, Mona Mea, was at one point entrusted with fifty books for Pistoia (Nesi, *Il Diario*, 89) and on another occasion with twenty-seven books for Bologna (Nesi, *Il Diario*, 100).

San Rocco (Sermon of St. Roch).⁴ Another peddler commissioned five hundred copies of the *Lamento d'Otranto*. On another occasion, a thousand copies of the Gospel of St. John (probably a condensed version in verse) were printed for a certain Brother Lorenzo, an itinerant preacher.⁵ In this manner, marginal operators of very limited means could finance printing and contribute greatly to the diffusion of print products, especially to a public that would not have entered a bookshop.⁶ Moreover, these were not simple peddlers, but rather persons used to living on their earnings from public appearances: in Florence in particular, their success and their familiarity with the public have been widely demonstrated. When a text was first performed, the *cerretani* took advantage of the emotional reactions of highly impressionable clients to make their sales, as can be seen in the great success of singers, charlatans, and blind beggars in Piazza San Martino. Their achievement was all the greater because they drew on texts and histories that were already well known, counting on a favorable reception from a largely literate public: one example is provided by the success of *sacre rappresentazioni*, highly popular religious plays in which the spectator was involved through the use of singers, heralds, and actors.⁷ Street singers and street sellers mediated between printed, written, and oral forms of communication for a wide range of texts: gospels and prayers, chivalric epics, amorous and sentimental novellas, and above all, sacred legends, which flourished in Florence during the fifteenth century. Editions of texts of that sort quite naturally followed channels of distribution that ran through external spaces and collective moments of sociability rather than leading to bookshops with their select clientele.

⁴ Edoardo Barbieri, "Per il Vangelo di san Giovanni e qualche altra edizione di S. Iacopo a Ripoli," *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 43 (2002): 383–400.

⁵ Conway, *The "Diario" of the Printing Press*, 193, 199, 202.

⁶ Rosa Salzberg, "The Lyre, the Pen and the Press: Performers and Cheap Print in Cinquecento Venice," in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana: La musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 254–63. Even in Venice there are examples of commissions on the part of peddlers, two of the best known of whom in the sixteenth century were Jacopo Coppa and Ippolito Ferrarese: Giancarlo Petrella, "Ippolito Ferrarese, a Traveling 'Cerretano' and Publisher in Sixteenth-Century Italy," in *Print Culture and Peripheries in Early Modern Europe: A Contribution to the History of Printing and the Book Trade in Small European and Spanish Cities*, ed. Benito Rial Costas (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 201–26. This also occurred in smaller cities such as Cremona (*Edit 16*, CNCE 2689).

⁷ Domenico De Robertis, "L'esperienza poetica del Quattrocento: La tradizione popolare," in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, ed. Emilio Cecchi. 9 vols. (Milan: Garzanti, 1966), 3:436–49; Nicole Carew-Reid, *Les fêtes florentines au temps de Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence: Olschki, 1995).

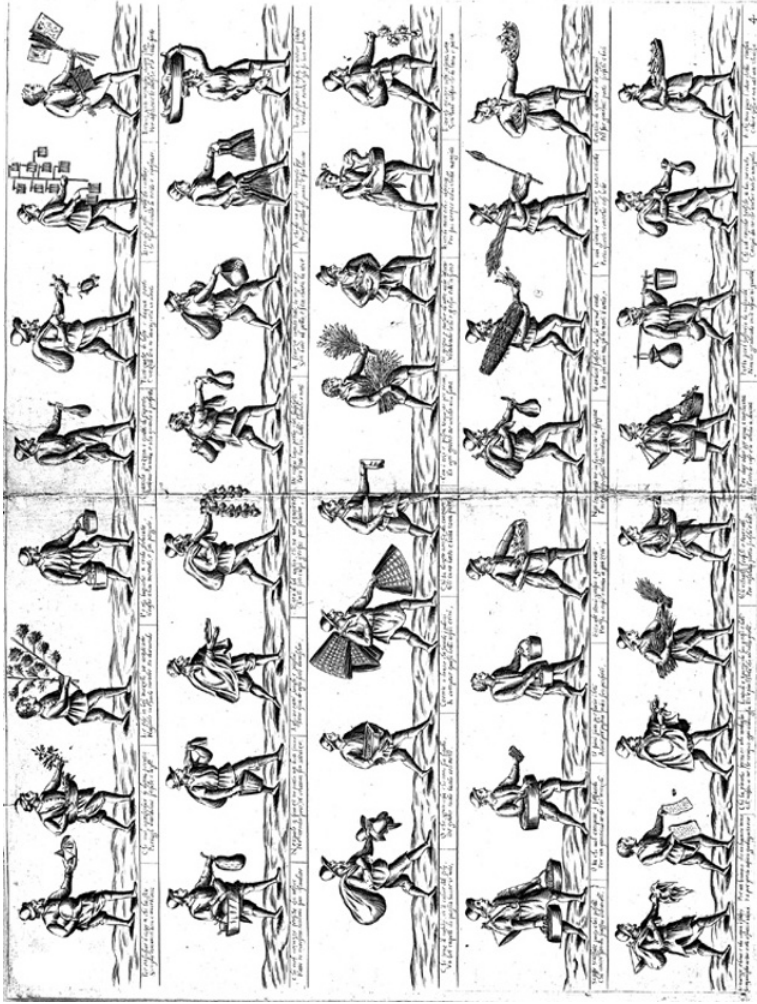


Fig. 9.2. Broadside with a series of pedlars in Lazio, f. 1, c. 1580. Courtesy of Civica Raccolta delle Stampe "Achille Bertarelli," Milan.

These texts and analogous materials have for the most now vanished, a loss that limits our knowledge of the texts themselves and of their layout and illustrations, which we have to reconstruct to fill in large lacunae. Their loss impedes our full comprehension of the ways in which such texts were read and appropriated, and of their actual public. The examples that do remain, usually in collections of texts of diverse provenance, suggest uses that could be deemed professional, as in the case of what has been termed the portable library of a street singer, a volume of miscellany containing fifty-three different works printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁸

Cheap Print Sales beyond Bookshops

From an economic viewpoint, the role of itinerant salesmen in the complex overall operation of the sale of books remained marginal.⁹ Such sales occupied particular niches in the diffusion of print matter: the material involved was shoddy and limited, and this form of distribution, although widespread, was insufficient for the construction of a genuine book market. The first reason for this weakness was structural. In the most highly urbanized areas of Italy at the time, permanent commerce had been developed as early as the age of the communes – a consequence of the concentration of free artisan labor in the cities – limiting, in comparison with other areas, itinerant commerce, which was viewed negatively in the statutes of the guilds.¹⁰ Furthermore, although peddlers operated over a vast territory, there is no evidence (or evidence only from a later period)

⁸ Antonio Maria Adorasio, "Cultura in volgare a Roma tra Quattro e Cinquecento," in *Studi di biblioteconomia e storia del libro in onore di Francesco Barberi* (Rome: Associazione Italiana Biblioteche, 1976), 19–36. Sacred and profane texts are clearly separated in the 354 pages of this volume. The point of the miscellany was to permit the street singer a rapid review of the verse that he would soon be declaiming. The volume conserved in the Biblioteca Casanatense of Rome includes one of the two copies remaining of the work in verse, *Antiquarie prospettiche romane* (Views of Ancient Rome) (Rome: ca. 1496; *ISTC* ia00774400), inscribed to Leonardo da Vinci by an unknown friend (identified by some scholars as Donato Bramante). See *Antiquarie prospettiche romane*, ed. Giovanni Agosti and Dante Isella (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo; Guanda, 2006).

⁹ Salzberg, "The Lyre, the Pen and the Press."

¹⁰ Gino Luzzatto, *Storia del commercio*, vol. 1: *Dall'antichità al Rinascimento* (Florence: Barbera, 1914), 369. The same situation has also been recognized in the highly urbanized Netherlands: Jeroen Salman, "Watching the Pedlar's Movements: Itinerant Distribution in the Urban Netherlands," in *Fairs, Markets and the Itinerant Book Trade*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press; London: The British Library, 2007), 137–58.



Fig. 9.3. Detail from fig. 9.2: the seller of lunaries.

that they managed to reach distant localities with any regularity, as was required for the systematic distribution and sale of books. Finally, the itinerant salesmen could not distribute all types of book, for the sale of certain types of works was beyond their capability. Liturgical and learned books in general, in large or medium-large formats, required bookstores, warehouses, and stable outlets for a sale that was intended to extend over time. Such books usually required binding, the essential contribution of the *cartolaio* and out of the reach of a peddler. There is no indication that the great Venetian publishers ever used itinerant booksellers in this period.¹¹ We have, however, abundant documentation that tells of constant contact between book producers and bookshops, which remained the essential end-point of the book industry in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

As a consequence, the greater part of the remaining records testify to the level of commerce in shops, the large sums of capital invested, and an

¹¹ The use of networks of itinerant peddlers became common in the eighteenth century, however: see Laurence Fontaine, *History of Pedlars in Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Mario Infelise, *I Remondini di Bassano: Stampa e industria nel Veneto del Settecento* (Bassano: Tassotti, 1980), 107–14.

educated and well-to-do clientele. But peddlers certainly contributed to a distribution network that reduced the gap between the established book-seller and more modest consumers in town and countryside. The cheap print materials they sold were for the most part distributed outside the shops, from stalls in squares, at local fairs, near churches, or during performances, including religious plays, in the town square.¹² It is possible to draw a rough distinction among the sellers between street singers (*cantastorie, canterini, cantimbanchi*), who might sell paper copies of the text being performed, and peddlers, who might sell cheap prints and chap-books along with their usual stock of devotional images, patent medicines, *palle muschiate* (small rounds of perfumed cloth), and charms. The clientele for this sort of printed matter would have found it difficult to cross the threshold of a bookstore.¹³ Precisely because of their ability to reach a broad public, texts and images of this sort made a strong impact on society and on the daily life of individuals. This effect can be seen, for example, in the extensive and capillary diffusion of information inside the complex Venetian political communication processes during the crisis of the Interdict (1606–7).¹⁴

As a rule, an artisanal and itinerant distribution of print materials was linked to an artisanal production system with restricted initial capital. Sellers of the cheapest prints were a highly visible presence in urban areas, however, as is demonstrated by their many pictorial representations, images that are much more common than interior views of a bookshop.¹⁵ As cheap print materials were for the most part distributed outside the shops, little evidence of them can be recuperated through a study of shop inventories (for which, see below). Consequently, even if we presuppose a vast production of low-cost printed matter in the period that interests us here, and even if we recognize that peddlers played an essential role in its

¹² Laura Carnelos, *Libri alla mano. Le stampe di larga diffusione a Venezia (sec. XVII-XVIII)* (Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2012); Pierangelo Bellettini et al., eds., *Una città in piazza: Comunicazione e vita quotidiana a Bologna tra Cinque e Seicento* (Bologna: Compositori, 2000); Zita Zanardi, *Le stagioni di un cantimbanco: Vita quotidiana a Bologna nelle opere di Giulio Cesare Croce* (Bologna: Compositori, 2009).

¹³ Still, there were cultivated collectors such as Marin Sanudo (1466–1533) and Fernando Colón (1488–1539) who acquired such goods in large quantities.

¹⁴ De Vivo, *Information and Communication Venice*, esp. pp. 136–56. In the seventeenth century peddlers played a strategic role in the dissemination of printed news.

¹⁵ Ugo Rozzo, *La strage ignorata: I fogli volanti a stampa nell'Italia dei secoli XV e XVI* (Udine: Forum, 2008), 26–27; Karen L. Bowen, “Sounding Out a Public’s Views of Pedlars with Texts: A Consideration of Images of Pedlars in the Low Countries (1600–1850),” *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis* 15 (2008): 93–108. See figg. 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5.

sale, the picture we get from the *Diario* of the Ripoli Press cannot be transferred automatically outside the confines of the very particular setting of Florence. The Florence market seems to have been atypical in that it was supported, more than was true elsewhere, by an intensive itinerant distribution.¹⁶

The statutes of the *cartolai*'s and booksellers' guilds provide a glimpse of the itinerant salesmen. In Ferrara, the principal aim of the earliest statute (1471) was to limit commerce in books to the booksellers who resided in the city, including the stallholders in the public square. All outsiders were to be excluded, although an exception was made for evidently itinerant merchant-printers, who were permitted to sell in the city, but only for three days.¹⁷ In Genoa in the early sixteenth century, the booksellers sought, even more explicitly and in several ways, to prohibit sales on the part of outside *circulatores* and *cantillanarum cantores* (traveling performers and street singers) who sold their print products in the squares of the city to the detriment of booksellers' shops. Although the street sellers defended themselves, stating that because their books were unbound they were not hindering bookshop sales, the Senate of Genoa decreed in 1546 that they could only sell texts of a maximum of eight pages in quarto or sixteen pages in octavo. Thus only the sale of print products made from a single print sheet was authorized. More substantial material had to be sold in shops, whose interests were protected on the grounds of their fiscal obligations and the management costs that they incurred in their ongoing activity.¹⁸

It is logical that similar corporative barriers did not exist in centers of book production and transnational commerce such as Venice during the years in which the book market was growing. Other forms of control and regulation of the book trade needed to emerge before cheap print materials is reflected in the documents. In Venice in 1543, the Council of Ten emitted a law repeating the injunction that every new text had to be subjected to pre-publication censorship before it could be published. This law clearly

¹⁶ Gustavo Bertoli, "Librai, cartolai e ambulanti immatricolati nell'Arte dei medici e speciali di Firenze dal 1490 al 1600, parte I," *La Bibliofilia* 94 (1992): 125–64; "parte II," *La Bibliofilia* 94 (1992): 227–72.

¹⁷ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 15–19.

¹⁸ Norma Dallai Belgrano, "L'arte dei librai a Genova tra il 1450 ed il 1546," *La Berio* 19, no. 2 (1989): 39–41; Paolo Marini, "Antonio Bellone e i 'circulatores': Un documento per la storia dell'editoria genovese di antico regime," in *"Books seem to me pestilent things": Studi in onore di Piero Innocenti per i suoi 65 anni*, ed. Cristina Cavallaro. 4 vols. (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2011), 1:295–308.

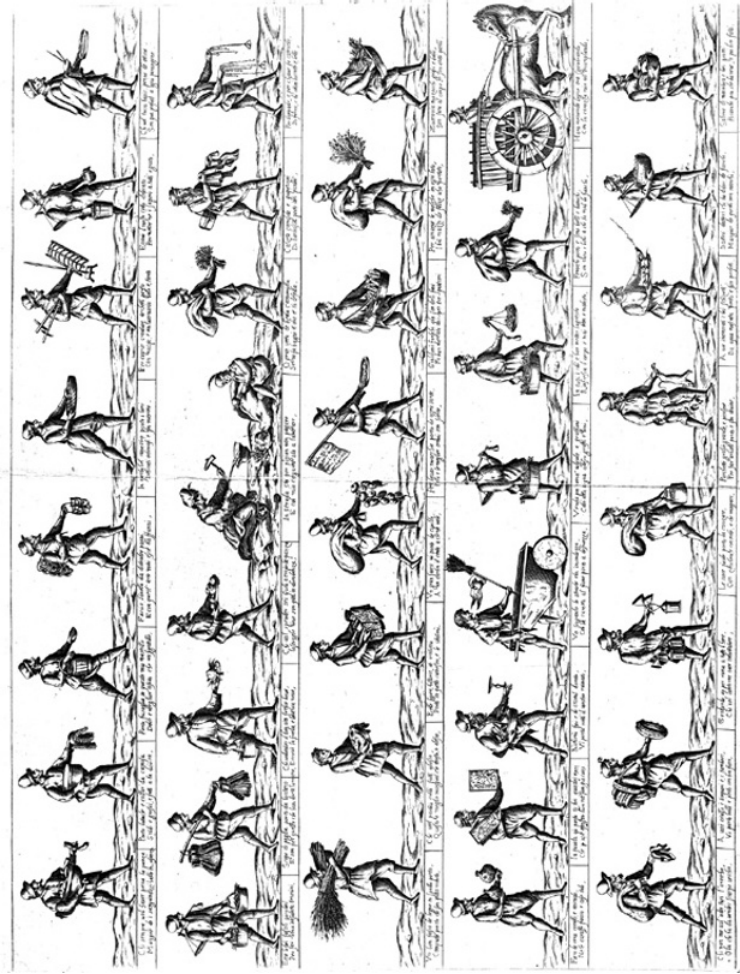


Fig. 9.4. Broadside with a series of pedlars in Lazio, f. 2, c. 1580. Courtesy of Civica Raccolta delle Stampe "Achille Bertarelli," Milan.

referred also to those “who sell such books and works, prognostications, stories and songs, letters and other similar things on the Rialto bridge, and in other places of this city.”¹⁹

The Holy Office’s attempts to impose controls on the circulation of printed matter reveal the presence of those same operators, the ways in which they renewed their supply of texts and images and sold them, and their ability to enter into contact with a vast public without subjecting their merchandise to any easy inspection. And indeed, peddlers played an essential role in clandestine commerce in heterodox materials.²⁰

Denis Marechal, a French small-scale itinerant peddler, was caught in Parma in 1558 after three days of selling not only perfumes, trimmings, and other small goods in the public square, but also portraits of Jan Hus, Martin Luther, and other German “heretics.” During his interrogation by the auxiliary bishop of Reggio Emilia, he explained that he had procured those materials in Milan from a German merchant. Already an employee and agent for another Frenchman, Gabriel Penel, who had a shop in Parma where he sold a variety of merchandise, Marechal undertook quite long trips, on his own initiative and for Penel, to replenish his stock. Even though he was an itinerant, he was backed by Penel’s shop, where he stored goods to be sold in nearby cities such as Reggio Emilia.

Marechal’s account suggests that ambulant commerce could be integrated to some extent with shop commerce. Quite a few stallholders in the piazza on Sundays sold small statues of saints and printed images and worked for booksellers on the other days of the week.²¹ Also in Venice, in 1567 a certain Giulio Bressanin di Bartolomeo, a printer working for the Giunti firm, was listed on the census as keeping a stall in the piazza on Sundays.

In the Serenissima, the distribution of cheap printed materials by street sellers increased during the second half of the sixteenth century.

¹⁹ Salzberg, “The Lyre, the Pen and the Press,” 258. See also Rosa Salzberg, “Per le Piazze & Sopra il Ponte: Reconstructing the Geography of Popular Print in Sixteenth-Century Venice,” in *Geographies of the Book*, ed. Miles Ogborn and Charles W. J. Withers (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 111–32.

²⁰ Susanna Peyronel Rambaldi, “Propaganda evangelica e protestante in Italia (1520 c.–1570),” in *La Réforme en France et en Italie: Contacts, comparaisons et contrastes*, ed. Philip Benedict, Silvana Seidel Menchi, and Alain Tallon (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2007), 53–68; Rozzo, *La strage ignorata*, 112–14; Rosa Salzberg, “Selling Stories and Many Other Things in and through the City: Peddling Print in Renaissance Florence and Venice,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 42, no. 3 (2011): 737–759.

²¹ Luca Ceriotti and Federica Dallasta, “Lutero sulle spalle: Colportage e diffusione dell’iconografia protestante in un processo del 1558,” *Aurea Parma* 93 (2009): 405–22.

The earliest notice from the local administration regarding the sale of printed materials under the city's arcades (an ideal location that offered shelter in case of rain) goes back to 1565. In 1567 it was instead the Holy Office that listed sixty-four holders of permissions for commercial activities in the official book sector. Some fifteen of the men mentioned had no shop, but sold from a stall or under the arcades.²² In 1571 Sigismondo Borgogna and Bastian di Ventura (who kept stalls in Piazza San Marco), Carlo Mombello (with a stall at San Moisè), and Rimondo di Giovanni from Bergamo (with a stall under the arcade at the Rialto) were subjected to various inspections. During the same years the registers of the Venetian guild of booksellers and printers make note of the so-called *poveri dell'Arte* (poor of the guild) who had no more than a stall from which they sold cheap prints and pamphlets. After 1565, on feast days they were only permitted to sell spiritual works, a regulation that later had to be adjusted because of the many abuses.²³ The injunctions were reiterated against the selling of prohibited books by ambulant sellers and hawkers – *vagabondi* and *ciarlatani* – and all those without a shop who sold maps, pictures, books, and tales in the public squares and in the outlying villages.²⁴

In Naples commerce of this sort was subjected to regulation somewhat later. Annibale di Capua, apostolic nuncio and archbishop of Naples (ca.1544–95), first imposed the usual prohibitions on the forty established booksellers with shops who were active in the city in 1592, then turned his attention to the stallholders and peddlers, noting that their numbers were growing and that they had proved impervious to prohibitions and regulations. In 1593 seven vendors of this sort were not only subjected to a warning regarding the prohibitions, but were also obliged to draw up an inventory of the materials they offered for sale. These goods proved to be songs, pamphlets, and devotional orations, but also included used books that had already passed through the hands of a number of owners. Each seller offered only a few books for sale – from five to twelve different works, some of them in a few dozen copies.²⁵ When Giovanni Battista Vinaccia made available a copy of a 1528 edition of Petrarch (perhaps the Venetian

²² Paolo Veneziani, "Introduzione," in *Il libro italiano del Cinquecento: Produzione e commercio*, ed. P. Veneziani (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1989) (Archivio di stato di Venezia, *Savi all'eresia* [Santo Ufficio], b. 156: "Librai e libri proibiti, 1545–1571," f. 76).

²³ Carnelos, "La corporazione e gli esterni."

²⁴ Ugo Rozzo, "Pietro Perna colportore, librario, tipografo ed editore tra Basilea e l'Italia," *Bibliotheca: Rivista di studi bibliografici* 1 (2004): 54.

²⁵ For example, there were 26 copies of the text *Avvertimenti a quelli che amano le cortigiane* (Warnings for those who love courtesans), 37 copies of a collection of prognostications, and 32 copies of a text titled *Devote contemplazioni* (an edition with the same title can be found in *Edit 16*, CNCE 17003): Lopez, *Inquisizione stampa e censura*, 328.

edition of Bernardino Vitali), the text of the work was censored and four prohibited sonnets were cut out, after which the book was returned to him for sale.²⁶

In this period an entire gamut of texts was easily accessible outside bookstores. The main offerings were always little works of spirituality, devotional books, and elementary grammar texts. To these there might be added epic chivalric works and mythological legends, arguments and dialogues, booklets on games and enigmas, news reports, and “books of secrets.” Charlatans, “professors of secrets,” and popular healers might commission similar print pieces as jobwork, selling them with their remedies.²⁷ In the cities there were places where commerce in cheap print concentrated: in Venice in Piazza San Marco and at the Rialto, in Florence at the steps of the Badia, in Siena under the Loggia del Papa, and in Rome in the Campo dei Fiori or in Piazza Navona.²⁸

Still, at least a portion of the materials of this sort were also sold in shops. In the inventories drawn up to provide evaluations in monetary terms, chapbooks and like works, when they are present, are grouped under collective headings and given low values. For a more detailed evaluation it is necessary to turn to an era that is at the limits of the present investigation, the late sixteenth century and early years of the seventeenth century. From that time larger numbers of such materials as ABCs (*tavole*), primers (*psalteri*), elementary Latin grammars (*donati* and *regole*) and catechisms (*interrogatori*) are attested, in particular in a few Milanese shops. At that date shops with cheap prints as their focus, almost like modern stationery-bookstores, could be found in Milan. These products were low-cost printings of the most requested texts, which were in large part connected with the Counter-Reformation reworking of doctrine and education.²⁹

The Sale of Books in Cartolai's Shops

As a rule, the sale of printed books in Italy, from the start, made use of the same operational structures as the manuscript trade, namely, city shops.

²⁶ Lopez, *Inquisizione stampa e censura*, 143–50, with the documents and inventories on pp. 327–50.

²⁷ William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 234–66, 361–65.

²⁸ Bastiano Mezzalingua, a Venetian, sold stories in Piazza Navona in 1593; Bertolotti, “Le tipografie orientali,” 226. For references to sellers of used books or tales who kept street-side stalls, see Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 224, 227, 311.

²⁹ Stevens and Gehl, “Giovanni Battista Bosso”; Stevens and Gehl, “Cheap Print.”



Fig. 9.5. Detail from fig. 9.4: the seller of prints and prayers.

Thus, from the point of view of urban structures, printing did not introduce profound changes, but rather managed to insert its products without any visible discontinuity into shops that for some time had been producing and selling manuscripts. At the time of the Italian Renaissance open urban spaces constituted fundamental areas of cultural exchange. Markets, streets, porticos, piazzas or city squares – this is where commercial activity and interaction were to be found; this is where cultural interactions and information exchanges took place in relative freedom. The success of printed books was determined by city shops.

Cartolai and booksellers can be considered the obligatory and preferred outlet for the better part of printed production both within the city walls and for wider distribution. But these operators, who for centuries had controlled the book trade and in the past had even controlled production, did not at first prove totally reliable, largely because they attempted to perpetuate techniques for sales and for the administration of businesses that may have been customary in the era of the manuscript but did not hold up under the new demands of commerce in printed books.

The first step that preceded a sale was the arrival of merchandise in a shop. If the delivery took place within a city, it was handled by porters (*fattorini*) or hired hands (*garzoni*). If the books arrived from a distance, they were shipped in *botti* (barrels), *casse di legno* (wooden chests),³⁰ or else in *balle involte con incerato e cotone* (bales wrapped with waxed cotton cloth).³¹ A shipment always included a packing slip listing the contents. Each package was marked on the outside with a sign that corresponded to the mark of the bookman or the merchant.³² The books were usually shipped in loose sheets.

As shipments became more numerous and their contents more varied, the printed sheets came to be gathered together in bundles (*mazzi*, also called *legacci*), each of which consisted of copies of one edition. These bundles were then wrapped in blue wrapping paper marked with an abbreviation of the work's title and the number of copies included. A number of inventories show that with time the booksellers began to leave the merchandise in bundles in the shop, perhaps to protect the product.³³

At first, however, book producers often made the mistake (or what turned out to be a mistake) of sending *cartolai* fairly large numbers of copies of a given work. The Ripoli Press would leave as many as a hundred copies of an edition with the vendor, which it then had to take back if they went unsold. As early as 1476 Girolamo Strozzi well understood that it was risky to leave large quantities of merchandise with the *cartolai* because they were slow to pay what they owed after the books had been sold. If they received only two or three copies at a time, the *cartolai* could be obliged to pay what they owed before their shops were restocked.³⁴ Simone di Bartolomeo showed a similar canniness in 1477 when he recommended to his brother (to whom he usually sent fewer than ten copies per title) that he give the booksellers no more than two or three copies of each edition, so that he could more easily recuperate the credit he had extended.³⁵ The *cartolai* of the time seem to have shown not only an understandable desire to put off payments, but an attitude at times little

³⁰ *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 62.

³¹ De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 113.

³² *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 64.

³³ *Valdemagna* 1572 and *Bòchini* 1586.

³⁴ De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 116. Girolamo Strozzi financed two Venetian editions printed by Jacobus Rubeus (Jacques le Rouge) and Nicolaus Jenson in 1476 (*ISTC* ip00873000; *ISTC* ip00801000).

³⁵ *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 63.

focused on gain. Strozzi warns that booksellers had a habit of lending out books to their friends.³⁶ At the Ripoli Press as well, books were often lent out. There are, however, also clear and deliberate accusations that retailers attempted to cheat the firm supplying the books by accusing it of having provided incomplete or defective copies – one of the most frequent complaints by retailers about wholesalers.³⁷ Strozzi advises that such fraud be prevented by a patient check of every copy at the moment of consignment, following the register of the signatures. The register of signatures was quickly recognized as a good means of quality control, verifiable as it passed from hand to hand, giving it a significance far beyond its role as a guide to the binder, the sole purpose that is commonly attributed to it now.³⁸ *Cartolai* were also in the habit of showing special consideration to a client who held an incomplete text of a work by selling him only the missing part, but that then left the copy offered for sale incomplete.³⁹

The *cartolai* were accustomed to the long-established practice of producing and selling works in fascicles delivered at various times, and they strongly resisted treating books on sale as discrete, undividable units. For their part, the producers of books accepted the reality of the sale of a product that did not necessarily coincide with the entire unit of production, which led to the publication of editions designed to be sold in gatherings and to the printing of gatherings to complete earlier editions.

One highly important event in consigning books to be sold to the *cartolai* was the redaction of an accurate list of works left on deposit. This record was the receipt for the books, and was drawn up, in the aim of avoiding future contestation, by the *cartolaio* in his own hand and noted in a journal (*quadernetto*) or record book.⁴⁰ The *quadernetto* was a quarto-sized notebook in board in which the number of copies, the title, the format, and the retail price of each book were all carefully recorded. The supplier kept a notebook for each *cartolaio* he served, so as to keep a running balance of merchandise furnished and sums paid; in Strozzi's

³⁶ De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 116.

³⁷ Gehl, "Mancha uno alfabeto intero."

³⁸ De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 116.

³⁹ The producers of books called this custom *guastare* or *rompere* (to ruin, to break), and the missing gatherings were called *difetti* (defective). Gabriele Giolito wrote to the manager of his branch in Naples: "I libri rotti stanno male in bottega ed essendo rotti non si possono vendere" (The broken books are inappropriate in the shop and being broken cannot be sold): Bongì, *Annali*, 1:cvii–cix.

⁴⁰ De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 116. One example of a receipt of this sort is *Gillio 1480*, which observes the usual scheme of listing the number of copies received, the title, and the per-copy price (in ducats, lire, and soldi).

case, collection took place every fifteen days. If the books came from a distance, a packing slip (*polizze in distinta*) was sent with the acknowledgment of receipt of the shipment⁴¹ or was sent along with the books. In both cases invoices formed documentation essential for maintaining correct relations between the wholesalers and the retailers.⁴²

Once the shop had been stocked, sales transactions with clients began. It is known that booksellers were among the first to adopt special forms of publicity to capture the public's attention. The testimony of Marc'Antonio Sabellico in this regard is well known. While describing the progress of two friends as they walk from the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice to the Mercerie, he vividly depicts the devouring curiosity with which one of them lingers to read the lists of available books that the various booksellers have put up for public perusal.⁴³ Such lists must certainly have been edited continually, both for use in the shop and for distribution to a few special clients who might be interested in acquiring the books listed.⁴⁴ Very little has survived of this publicity activity on the part of booksellers, however. The few lists of books for sale that do remain from this period are usually the work of printers or wholesale merchants, not local booksellers or bookshops.

Sale by subscription, another sales technique, was surely also in use, at least in the form of advance orders received after the exhibition in the *cartolaio's* shop of some sort of specimen of an edition that was in the process of being printed. In Florence in 1477 several such *mostre* (showpieces), or portions of books in preparation in Venice, were put on display, including St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa*, a Dominican breviary, and the Roman breviary.⁴⁵ In 1487 a large-print Bible, not yet completed, was

⁴¹ *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 63, 65.

⁴² Stevens, "Venetian Invoices" discusses seven invoices or packing slips sent by different Venetian publishers to Giovanni Battista and Paolo Gottardo da Ponte in 1563 that were kept because they were used in a request for compensation. This sort of document is extremely rare.

⁴³ Marc'Antonio Sabellico, "De Latinae linguae reparatione," in Sabellico, *Opera omnia*. 4 vols. (Basel: J. Herwagen, 1570), 3:319–35, esp. p. 322.

⁴⁴ Lists of books available were prepared for the Franciscan and Dominican monasteries of Florence in 1477: *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 63. Even earlier examples are cited in Martin Davies, "Two Book-lists of Sweynheym and Pannartz," *Libri tipografi biblioteche: Ricerche storiche dedicate a Luigi Balsamo* (Istituto di Biblioteconomia e Paleografia. Università degli Studi, Parma. Florence: Olschki, 1997), 1:25–53. The first systems for marketing books in general will be discussed in Christian Coppens' article, currently under preparation, "Marketing Early Printed Books: Publishers' and Booksellers' Advertisements and Catalogues."

⁴⁵ *Simone di Bartolomeo* 1477, 64.

placed in a prominent position on a bench in the middle of the Genoese shop of Bartolomeo Lupoto, where it was intended to entice customers to subscribe for a copy.⁴⁶

But what of booksellers' sales procedures and organization of labor, and the rhythm of their sales? In responding to such questions I shall rely on the help of a very valuable document that permits us to enter into a shop opened in Venice in the 1480s, that of Francesco de Madiis, whose day-book has come down to us.

Shop Sales: The Zornale of Francesco de Madiis (1484–1488)

From 17 May 1484 to 23 January 1488 Francesco de Madiis, a bookseller who occasionally also published books, noted in a day-book daily sales in his Venice bookshop and other things pertaining to books, including his changing stock.⁴⁷ A similar record would have been kept by every bookseller in his shop. De Madiis' active involvement in the concrete aspects of book production in Venice makes information on his shop a particularly rich source, but this document can also be taken as a significant sample of the book trade in the Serenissima in those years.⁴⁸

When he opened his shop on 17 May 1484, de Madiis was able to offer the public 1,361 books, supplemented by stock held in storage.⁴⁹ Sales were slow at first. Most customers left the shop satisfied after buying one book; the first part of the *Zornale* bears frequent notes on who the customers were, which suggests that a sale was still a notable event and the buyer

⁴⁶ Lupoto 1487, 193.

⁴⁷ *De Madiis 1484–1488* is an oblong manuscript ledger (434 mm x 160 mm) of 160 leaves, bound in parchment. On the front cover is written *Zornale*; the back outside cover bears a drawing of de Madiis' publisher's mark, an orb with a double cross along with the initials "M. F." Publication of the complete document is in preparation by Cristina Dondi and Neil Harris, and its attribution to de Madiis' shop has recently been cast into doubt. I prefer to maintain that attribution, given that all published studies accept it as genuine. Some extracts from the document were published in Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 36–39, 431–52. Among later commentaries, see Patrizia Ceccarelli, "Il 'Zornale' di Francesco de' Madiis e i romanzi di cavalleria," in *I libri di "Orlando innamorato"* (Ferrara: ISR; Modena: Panini, 1987), 101–3; Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 173–206. Cristina Dondi and Neil Harris, "Oil and Green Ginger. The *Zornale* of the Venetian Bookseller Francesco de Madiis, 1484–1488" (forthcoming) contains a sample of one month's activity (June 1484, 175 copies sold), with detailed commentary.

⁴⁸ De Madiis' publishing activities are analyzed in Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*. De Madiis married Cristina, the daughter of Francesco della Fontana, who later was the wife of Paganino Paganini.

⁴⁹ The *Zornale* states under the date 19 October 1484 that a group of six books (already a sizeable number) had been bought by a German, along with other books in storage.

merited a record. Although sales were subject to seasonal fluctuations, de Madiis employed at least four binders, listed as Salvadore, Lazaro, Maestro Pezzin, and Pre' Matio. His ability to offer a vast assortment of titles stemmed from the fact that he was operating in Venice, where it was easy to obtain not only material from the vast local production but also a good portion of what was being printed in other European cities. Thanks to this variety in his offerings, buyers began to acquire more than one book at a time. A good seventy-four customers are listed with their names, in most cases because they were known to de Madiis. These figures were often colleagues, including binders and illuminators, which confirms our sense of a dizzying circulation of merchandise, because among colleagues outstanding debts were often paid in goods.⁵⁰ Barter, which was even more frequent in cities in which money circulated less intensely, was present at every level of exchange. Books might be exchanged for olive oil, wine, flour, or ginger. And books were exchanged for other books. But de Madiis' large sales figures seem to arise also from the fact that many customers bought great quantities of books with the intention of reselling them once they returned to their (unknown) places of residence. This was not the normal clientele for a city bookseller, who more typically could hope for such strokes of luck only during a local fair.

The Sensa, the fair of the Feast of the Ascension, brought good business. Above all, it enabled the booksellers to reach a different clientele in people who were just passing through and at times were not familiar with the world of books. Books were normally sold in the shop unbound and were often assigned to a binder at the moment of sale; the few bound books in the shop were inventoried under the heading *ligati*. During the fair, however, it was precisely bound books that were sold for the most part, as were the four *Donati ligati* mentioned under the date 21 May. The fair was a time for selling printed works that normally sold slowly in the shop. For example, the sale of forty-five copies of a *Peregrinationes Jerusalem* (a basic guide for travellers to the Holy Land) occurred *alassensa* – that is, during

⁵⁰ Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 184, lists the names of those who acquired books, subdivided into the categories of "Colleagues," "Nobles," "Ecclesiastics," "Professionals," and "Unknown." Some of the "unknown" were in reality colleagues: "Pietro da Pase" was Petrus de Plasiis (30 March 1485); "m. Franc^o." could be Francesco della Fontana (that is, Franz Renner, de Madiis' father-in-law); "Zuan Rosso" was Giovanni Rosso (Johannes Rubeus Vercellensis); "Domenigo de Mandello" can perhaps be connected with Christophorus de Pensis de Mandello, another well-known printer; and in place of the mysterious "Dimitrio," I would read "Dionisio" (a name repeated on 3 December 1484 and 16 and 17 March 1485 for various purchases), whom I would identify as the printer Dionysius Bertochus.

the fair of the Feast of the Ascension, on 20 May.⁵¹ De Madiis' regular customers showed little interest in this type of material, except for acquiring, in December, a copy of a *Calendario volgare* – of which, understandably, no copy has come down to us – along with their book purchases.

A final note will not surprise any reader accustomed to perusing shop inventories. Even within such a large number of titles sold (nearly thirteen thousand) and within a time span covering several years of activity, the number of books whose titles can be identified but of which no copy of a contemporary edition has come down to us is fairly low: only 6.8 percent of the total sold.⁵²

The turnover that can be calculated from the *Zornale* shows 12,934 books sold (or gifted, or bartered) in three and a half years (among which there do not seem to have been manuscripts), for a total of over 4,200 ducats.⁵³ There is only one other source with which we can compare de Madiis' earnings, the account book of the Speyer book dealer Peter Drach.⁵⁴ During the final twenty years of the fifteenth century, Drach sold 17,155 books. It is clear that the Venetian market was more lively and more lucrative: an average of 857 books a year were sold by Drach in Speyer against an average of 3,233 books a year sold by de Madiis in Venice.

Elsewhere business was conducted at a quite different pace, however. The account book of Vincenzo Benedetti, who inherited the business of Francesco (Platone) de Benedetti, registers sales in Bologna during a period of six months (April–September 1498). Just over fifty titles, for the most part grammar books and devotional works, accounted for the entire sales of the shop. Among the titles published by this firm, only the *Stanze* of Poliziano sold well (*ISTC* ip00900300): ten copies in six months, at a variety of prices. Not a single academic book was sold, probably because

⁵¹ For the extant copies of some doubtful Italian editions, see Dondi and Harris, "Oil and Green Ginger."

⁵² Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 183. This percentage represents 878 books, a figure that includes the six hundred copies of a *Psalteriolo* (a small reading primer consisting of extracts from the liturgy arranged to illustrate the alphabet) of which no copy is extant.

⁵³ Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 181. According to Dondi and Harris, "Oil and Green Ginger," the total number of copies sold (or bartered or gifted) is over twenty-five thousand. This figure is so different from Lowry's calculations that it must be based on a different method of counting books. Therefore, until the complete publication of de Madiis' day-book promised by the two scholars is available, I prefer to remain by the already remarkable figure given by Lowry.

⁵⁴ Hendrik Mäkelar, *Das Rechnungsbuch des Speyerer Druckherrn Peter Drach d. M. (um 1450–1504)* (St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 2005); Pettegree, *The Book*, 38–40.

the period covered by the journal does not include the moment when university sessions began.⁵⁵

The Price of Books

Together with figures for print runs and sales, the price of books is the main indicator of potential access. Nevertheless, the price of books, which was paramount when it came to their diffusion and impact on various levels of society and even the size of the market, still awaits overall investigation. This is a very difficult research subject as the empirical factual basis is hardly adequate for generating models and determining trends. It would be misleading to reconstruct the diachronic and synchronic variations in the price of printed books through what is in essence a comparison of individual testimonies, even when they seem highly relevant. In addition, in the economy of the old regime, price and market played rather marginal functions, since the subsistence economy and barter were significant factors. Prices are not representative of all exchanges that were carried out in the book trade, where at all levels, resort was often made to barter with other goods. Payments in kind were common among even the wealthiest members of society.

Most recent studies have concentrated instead on the price of manuscript books and on its relation to the price of printed books. Scholars are in agreement that printing gave rise to a product that cost less than the same text transcribed by a copyist (leaving aside the added cost of embellishments, which was not, in fact, exclusive to the manuscript). There is no agreement, though, about the price difference between the two products, because the evidence varies widely, is not homogeneous, and does not easily support generalization. Manuscripts were certainly more often commissions, rather than being intended for the open market, and consequently craftsmen's freedom in fixing the price was probably greater.⁵⁶

Setting that possible comparison aside for the moment, we can turn to a few considerations limited to the sale price of printed books. From the earliest information on the book trade, we know that packing slips and invoices always indicated sales prices that the sender intended as obligatory. It is clear that publishers and printers, who were well aware of

⁵⁵ Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 348–57.

⁵⁶ Vast information on this point is given by Francesca Cenni, "La penna e il torchio," and Anna Melograni, "The Illuminated Manuscript as a Commodity."

production costs, sought to impose a price that would allow them an optimal profit margin. Fontana's list of books sent from Venice to Florence in 1477,⁵⁷ the lists received by several *cartolai* in Ferrara in the 1470s,⁵⁸ and the receipt compiled by Domenico Gillio in 1480 on accepting books from Antonio Moretto⁵⁹ are all representative examples from the early phases of the book trade, and they all clearly note prices established at the beginning of the sales process.⁶⁰ Moreover, as retailers received a commission of a percentage on sales (usually 10 percent), a starting price had to be fixed. However, this evidence tells us nothing about the retail sale price. To be sure, book producers gave an indication of price, as did Simone di Bartolomeo for his own brother. After listing the books' prices, he added that they were the prices that pertained in Venice; with the Venice price in mind, the local price could be slightly adjusted. Girolamo Strozzi sought to impose prices for his own books somewhat rigidly on *cartolai* and was inexorably obliged to lower them later, which suggests that any price set by the producer of books and imposed on the retailer could be premature. Strozzi, a man not known for improvising when it came to business, recommended to a friend to whom he entrusted the sale of his overstock that he not sell copies of Leonardo Bruni's *Storia fiorentina* for less than two florins, or the *Historia Fiorentina* of Poggio Bracciolini for less than one florin.⁶¹ The prices that Strozzi imposed must have stood for some time, but eventually, around 1483, it seems that his heirs were constrained to lower the prices in an attempt to sell off the last remaining copies.⁶² What is more, a great many copies of these works were returned unsold from *cartolai*'s shops.⁶³

Serial production of books, which widened the provision of semi-industrial goods on the market, helped to establish a current price. No longer was the price of a book to be determined almost completely by

⁵⁷ Simone di Bartolomeo 1477.

⁵⁸ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 23–27.

⁵⁹ Gillio 1480.

⁶⁰ Günther Richter, "Humanistische Bücher in Buchhändlerkatalogen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Das Verhältnis der Humanisten zum Buch*, ed. Fritz Krafft and Dieter Wuttke (Boppard: Boldt, 1977), 198.

⁶¹ De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 116. The editions are *ISTC* ib01247000 and ip00873000.

⁶² Girolamo Strozzi died late in the year 1481 or at the beginning of 1482: De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 114.

⁶³ De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 115. Returns happened in Ferrara too, with the *cartolaio* Bernardo Carnerio who was unable to sell three very expensive law books giving them back to his supplier (Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 47).

demand, as was true of the manuscript; rather it was now subject to the economic laws of the market – that is, to supply and demand. Those who produced books had the wit not to set prices so high that the retail price would be prohibitively expensive. That would not only have ruined the bookseller; the publisher would also have felt the repercussions, losing a chance to sell his wares in distant markets. Still, he could not impose fixed retail prices, given those very distances and the variations in monetary values in fragmented sales areas.

Then there is the question of the printed prices that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries some firms put in their catalogues of books for sale.⁶⁴ In all cases these figures refer to the lowest limit, the minimum price, as revealed by such formulas as “minimum pretium aurei tres” or, even more clearly, “minimum pretium Venetiis nummi aurei duo & semis.” The actual price might be significantly higher, to compensate for the distance traveled and transportation costs. But not in all cases. Johann Reuchlin, for example, wrote to Aldo Manuzio in 1502 that in Pforzheim he could buy a book published by Manuzio’s firm at the sign of the Anchor for a lower price than the one that Manuzio himself had proposed to him.⁶⁵ Publishers’ prices were offered mainly as a reference for booksellers, but if they became known to the buyer, and precisely because there was no such thing as a fixed price, they could give rise to friction with the buying public. Book producers gradually omitted mention of price, and prices printed in catalogues became increasingly rare and finally disappeared, due in part to pressure from booksellers, who wanted more room to maneuver. Even if minimum prices were no longer printed, however, they continued to circulate: this is clear from the list of books that Amadio Scoto sent in 1517 to the Brescia bookseller Bernardino Mazzetti indicating prices “ad minus,”⁶⁶ and by the notebook that Francesco Calvo passed on to Giovanni Agostino Torresani, the manager of a shop in Pavia in 1519.⁶⁷ Indications such as these remained confined to communications between

⁶⁴ Nearly all of these catalogues in octavo, dated between 1545 and 1562 and described in Coppens, “Sixteenth-Century Octavo Publishers’ Catalogues,” bear printed prices.

⁶⁵ Pollard and Ehrman, *The Distribution of Books*, 65, n. 1.

⁶⁶ Mazzoldi, “I primi librai,” 41.

⁶⁷ “Non vendantur minori pretio di quo est in dicto quinteretto” (May not be sold at a price which is lower than the one in the notebook): Stevens, “New Light on Andrea Calvo,” 43. Sales at less than the stated price were punished, as is seen in the legal action moved and won in 1483 by the Bologna publisher Francesco (Platone) de Benedetti before the Foro dei Mercanti (a commercial tribunal instituted in Bologna in the fourteenth century) against Rinaldo di Giovanni, a binder, for having sold a breviary for 28 bolognini, a price lower than the one Platone had imposed (32 bolognini): Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 241–42.

the wholesaler and the retailer, deliberately leaving the buying public in the dark. This situation is confirmed by the rise of the so-called Frankfurter tax: publishers' most important customers (such as universities and) asked for information on the prices fixed at the Frankfurt Fair, the principal commercial event in the book trade, in order to compare them with the prices asked by retailers.⁶⁸

Once again, the most extensive and coherent evidence of bookshop prices, comes from the shop day-book kept by Francesco de Madiis.⁶⁹ According to Martin Lowry, there was no discernible rule for determining prices for customers, even among different copies of the same edition. Evidently, every price was negotiated with every client. More eminent and powerful purchasers often enjoyed the loyal customer's privilege of being given the best prices.⁷⁰ A price might vary greatly from one client to another or from one day to another. Prices fluctuated less when the books were sold already bound and when they were printed on parchment. In the first of these cases, the stationer or bookseller was clearly motivated to set a price for a product whose costs he knew, and the price of a bound copy was about twice that of the same work unbound. In the second case, the high quality of the raw materials came before all other considerations. The price of a copy printed on parchment was about four times the price of the same work printed on paper.

De Madiis' day-book shows that setting the price of a printed book was subject, especially at first, to a complex dynamic determined by the novelty of the product and of its market. The fact that stocks of printed books poured onto the market made their price subject to strong fluctuations. The edition of Cicero's *Epistolae ad familiares* gives a concrete idea of the evolution of prices for one of de Madiis' best-sellers. Torresani's folio edition (266 leaves, *ISTC* ic00524000) initially sold for 3 lire. In the years that followed, however, thanks to the great success of the work, the price quickly fell, and it sold for 2.5 lire and eventually for 2 lire.⁷¹ A swift fall in price occurred also for a much less costly text, the *Psalteriolo*, commonly

⁶⁸ Richter, "Humanistische Bücher," 200; Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religion*, 16.

⁶⁹ *De Madiis 1484–1488*. About prices in de Madiis' bookshop, see especially Dondi and Harris, "Oil and Green Ginger."

⁷⁰ Federico Corner, one of the wealthiest men in Venice, paid only 13 soldi for the same book for which other customers had paid from 15 to 18 soldi and even a whole lira: Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 188.

⁷¹ A similar case of a swift fall in price was that of *De regulis iuris* of Dinus de Mugello (*ISTC* id00199000), just published in 1484, and sold for the first time, six days after its publication, in June for 1 lira and 10 soldi; its price quickly dropped to 1 lira in July and only 18 soldi in 1486–87; see Dondi and Harris, "Oil and Green Ginger."

used as an ABC, which sold for 4 soldi. During the course of a year its price was reduced by 80 percent, falling to 0.6 soldi, coinciding with a swift rise in demand that began in autumn 1486, when the number of copies sold at one time rose from six to twenty, then to fifty, eighty, and even one hundred. These sales were probably made to schoolmasters or to others who intended to resell the books elsewhere. Hence the prices of much-requested books fell because of increased demand.

In a situation of high uncertainty, it is probable that initial prices were high, and that they could fall only with a rise in sales. Profit was determined by the number of copies sold, which might be smaller than the number printed. Consequently, the price at the beginning of a book's sale was normally higher than the minimum price, in an attempt to recoup the investment made as soon as possible, even before all the copies were sold. A reduction in price was a consequence and not a cause of rising demand: the price of a book that sold well could be reduced. This process was fuelled also by competition from lower-cost editions, made possible, in essence, by a reduction in formats and number of pages, given that paper was the highest variable cost in book production. An increase in supply also undoubtedly had an effect on lowering prices. When the quantity of goods increases, the price decreases.⁷²

Various intersecting elements fixed the market price of a book. Cost came first: the unit price of a copy had to permit the recoupment of investments and generate revenue for the producer of the book. This was reflected in the *ad minus* price of the earliest book lists. The price actually applied by the vendor could differ from that minimum price for a number of reasons, transport for instance. Direct bargaining between purchaser and bookseller might also modify a price. The availability of lower-cost editions in smaller formats that used less paper became increasingly significant.⁷³ The new smaller editions, a trend that started in Venice already in the first decades of printing, contributed to reducing book prices both directly, because they were produced at a lower cost, and indirectly, because they forced booksellers to lower the price of editions in larger formats already on the market. The price paid by the buyer was the result of a series of negotiations between producer and bookseller and between bookseller and customer that gave the market its lasting contours.⁷⁴

⁷² Giovanni Bonifati, *Dal libro manoscritto al libro stampato: Sistemi di mercato a Bologna e a Firenze agli albori del capitalismo* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2008), 132–36.

⁷³ The cost of paper fell around the mid-point in a printer's variable costs, more or less on a level with labor costs: Bonifati, *Dal libro manoscritto*, 125–32.

⁷⁴ Bonifati, *Dal libro manoscritto*, 254–58.

Repercussions from widespread and uncontrolled oscillations in prices were felt in Bologna in the early sixteenth century. Local booksellers and *cartolai* complained of the constant presence of booksellers from other cities, who came to Bologna for a few days or weeks at the start of the university session, bringing their stalls or setting up makeshift bookshops. The university booksellers suffered from this predatory presence, since university statutes obliged them to sell books at prices that had been set in advance by the Rector, and they had to support the expense of keeping their shops open all year round. In 1507 the Bologna booksellers attempted to have a strongly protectionist statute passed (see Table 1).⁷⁵ They wanted to prevent persons not regularly registered as booksellers or printers – which would subject them to the jurisdiction of the Rector of the university – from printing or selling books. They also wanted to exclude booksellers who were not from Bologna, limiting trade in books to those who had lived in the city for at least twenty years. Finally, they wanted to impose uniform prices as a way of avoiding episodes of excessive competition among the city's booksellers. Hence, they fixed minimum prices for various types of books. In the text of the statute, a minimum price was fixed, but at the same time any increase was prohibited. Therefore, the provision in effect aimed to impose fixed prices.⁷⁶

For commercial purposes, books were conceived of as sets of quinternions, or five-sheet gatherings, a standard that is also adopted in the

Table 1. Fixed Prices by Book Type as Agreed by Bolognese Booksellers, 1507.

Civil and Canon Law	In folio	40 quinternions (200 leaves)	1 ducat
Arts and Medicine	In folio	40 quinternions (200 leaves)	1 ducat
Philosophy, Theology, Logic	In quarto	80 quinternions (400 leaves)	1 ducat
Humanities, Poetry	In quarto	100 quinternions (500 leaves)	1 ducat

⁷⁵ Giorgio Cencetti, "Alcuni documenti sul commercio librario bolognese al principio del secolo XVI," *L'Archiginnasio* 30, nos. 4–6 (1935): 359–62; Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 390–91. The list of booksellers, some of whom were also printers, included twenty-four names.

⁷⁶ "In primis, libros iuris civilis et canonici impressos in forma reali vendere volens, teneatur dare quinternos ad rationes quinterni quadraginta et non minus pro quolibet ducato et ad rationem ducati largi, nec precium augere et plus vendere. Item in artibus et in medicina in forma reali, quinternos similiter quadraginta pro ducato ut *supra*. Item in philosophia, teologia et logica quinternos octuaginta in parva forma pro ducato. Item in humanitatibus et poesia quinternos centum pro ducato, ut *supra*, nec plus vendere": Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 393–95.

bookshop inventories of the period. There is an obvious hierarchy here that classifies the large-format book (of law, art, or medicine) as a more costly product, followed by books of philosophy and theology in a quarto format, with humanistic books and (perhaps) books in the vernacular coming last, as the cheapest of all. Establishing fixed sale prices to avoid excessive rises was not a new rule in the guilds statutes covering price competition.⁷⁷ Introducing fixed sales prices limited competition by eliminating one of the customer's most important elements of choice: comparing the price of a given item with the price at which others offered it. The booksellers' provision and all of its restrictive clauses thus lasted only a few years and were annulled by the Senate of Bologna in 1514. When making commerce in books once more open to all-comers, the Senate limited itself to recommending that books be sold at a "just price." It is also probable that the Senate preferred to damage the interests of local booksellers than reduce the revenue they received from the custom gabelles that outsiders paid to import books.⁷⁸

Fixed prices could also be imposed, and with much greater force, by the authorities. The most efficacious laws in this respect were to be found in Spain. In the fifteenth century, the Council of Castile imposed the *tasa* – that is, the price – when it granted a printing privilege. A law of 1558 obligated the holders of a privilege to print the sales price on the book. In a ruling intended to defend the interests of purchasers by preventing a rise in prices, especially in cases of jobbing printing of bulls, collections of laws and the like, book prices were fixed by law according to the number of sheets which were used. This move, however, was hardly in the interests of either competition or lively entrepreneurship.⁷⁹

Some traces of price control can be found in Italy as well, in particular when the books in question were liturgical and financed by the Church, when all concerned wanted to avoid speculation and encourage maximum sales. These aims motivated Nicolò Donato, the patriarch of Aquileia, when he had the diocesan missal printed in 1495 (*ISTC* im00645000) and commanded that it be sold at the fixed price of twenty-five Venetian lire bound and eighteen lire unbound.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ In Bologna, for centuries the university had established fixed prices for the loan of quires in the *pecia* system.

⁷⁸ Cencetti, "Alcuni documenti," 362; Sorbelli, *Bologna*, 396.

⁷⁹ Reyes Gómez, *El libro en España y America*. Moreover, in Spain a price was never imposed on books printed abroad and imported.

⁸⁰ Joppi, "De' libri liturgici," 263–64. The missals were sold by the Augsburg merchant and publisher Johann Oswalt.

The Republic of Venice saw an attempt to set prices for books for which a privilege was held in order to generate a counterweight to the short-term guarantee of a protected market, or temporary monopoly. In 1534 privilege holders were obliged to turn in copies of their first editions to the Provveditori di Comun so that those officials, together with two experts from the book world, could fix the sales price in order to avoid excessive profits.⁸¹ But this law does not seem to have had real consequences. In fact, there are only very few remaining examples of books which contain a printed price to show that this practice was indeed adhered to on occasion. One of these works is the Giovanni Mariani's manual for monetary exchange published in 1543, every copy of which bears on its title page the printed price of twelve soldi.⁸² In a mercantile city like Venice, it was deemed better to wait until the price fixed itself in a process free from impositions.

It should come as no surprise that examples of fixed prices for books published by presses under direct ecclesiastical control are less rare outside the Venetian Republic. The editions that Carlo Borromeo had printed in Milan by the seminary press, under Michele Tini's direction, almost always show the price (preceded by the word *tassato*, taxed) after the colophon for unbound copies and for copies in board.⁸³ And indeed, a religious authority would fix the price as low as possible in order to ensure maximum distribution and sales. These publications were strategic, part of Borromeo's plan to reform his diocese, and particularly the clergy, in accordance with Tridentine norms, a project that he tackled with enormous zeal.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, 208–9. See also chapter 6.

⁸² Giovanni Mariani, *Tariffa ristampata da nuovo, de tutti li ori che coreno per il mondo redutti dalli sui precii in ducati correnti da L. 6 s. 4 per d. Con Gratia et Privilegio. A soldi 12 luna* (Venice: Giovann'Antonio and Pietro Nicolini da Sabio, for the author, 1543, *Edit 16*, CNCE 71018). This book contains lists of prices and currency and is a kind of official publication, intended to be accessible to large public of users rather than readers.

⁸³ To cite some examples: *Calendarium iussu Caroli Pres. Cardinalis tit. S. Praxedis*, 1579: "Tassato, sciolto quatrini dieci, legato in cartone, quatrini dodeci"; Carlo Borromeo, *Memoriale* 1579; *Edit 16*, CNCE 9557: "Tassato, sciolto, soldi dieci"; *Istruttioni ai sacerdoti per celebrare la santa Messa*, 1579; *Edit 16*, CNCE 68439: "Tassato, sciolto, soldi quattro, legato in cartone soldi sei e mezzo"; *Constitutiones et decreta*, 1580; *Edit 16*, CNCE 34366: "Tassato, sciolto, soldi tredici"; *Constitutiones et decreta*, 1583; *Edit 16*, CNCE 35214: "Tassato, slegato soldi quattro." For the Tipografia del Seminario of Milan, see Adriano Bernareggi, "La tipografia del Seminario di Milano," *Humilitas: Miscellanea storica dei seminari milanesi* 1 (1928): 49–57; 2 (1929): 75–79; Kevin Stevens, "Printing and Politics," 97–133.

⁸⁴ A different case is provided by the statutes of the order of the Cavalieri di Santo Stefano published in 1590 by Filippo Giunti in Florence (*Edit 16*, CNCE 10542). This edition shows a printed price on the title page: "Tassato in quattro Giulij sciolto." The giulio was a pontifical coin worth 13 soldi and 4 denari.

TARIFFA RISTAMPA
 ta da nuouo, de tutti li Ori che coreno per il
 mondo redutti dalli sui precii in Ducati
 correnti da $\text{L } 6 \text{ s } 4$ per pp
 e crescendo e calando del precio, questa seruirà
 in perpetuo, & etiam e bona per ogni altra
 mercatìa cō la reduction de pp coren
 ti in L e s depizoli.
 Con Gratia e Priuilegio. A soldi 12 luna.



Fig. 9.6. Title page with the printed price of Giovanni Mariani, *Tariffa*. Venice: brothers Nicolini da Sabbio for the author, 1543; 12°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

The most ample and trustworthy source for studying the price of books may still be the client himself, however. If we want to know what prices were really paid by book purchasers, it is to them that we must turn. But as we wait for the completion of wide-ranging projects to record the evidence of manuscript notes in books published in this period,⁸⁵ we must admit that the documentation currently available is exceedingly sparse, limited, and unavoidably anecdotal. There are very few lists compiled by

⁸⁵ The most important initiative in this field is the database MEI *Material Evidence in Incunabula*, which is in course of construction and to which many Italian libraries are contributing (<http://incunabula.cerl.org/>).



Fig. 9.7. Title page and colophon with the printed price of *Litaniarum maiorum die s. Marci*. Milan: M. Tini, 1579; 8°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

purchasers of books that give the prices they paid. One example, however, is that drawn up by Filippo Redditi of Florence between 1484 and 1496, a hastily noted but precise, chronologically compact, and brief list of some forty volumes that he had purchased, giving the price paid for each item.⁸⁶

Notations made by major collectors offer a broader terrain on which to track book prices. Fernando Colón, for example, was in the habit of noting on the last page of the books that he acquired the date, place, and cost of his purchase.⁸⁷ Of particular use when we have such information are coherent comparative data with which we can verify the relation between the prices indicated by the publisher and the prices proposed by book-sellers. Such comparison is possible only for books published by Aldo Manuzio, for which three printed catalogues survive (1498, 1503, 1513), the

⁸⁶ Armando Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino 1473–1503: Ricerche e documenti*, vol. 4: *La vita universitaria*, pt. 2, *Anni scolastici 1482/83–1490/91* (Florence: Olschki, 1985), 857–58.

⁸⁷ Pettegree, *The Book*, 87–88.

first of them with printed prices. The price Colón paid for Aldines was often higher than that indicated by Aldo Manuzio himself, thus confirming that Aldo was quite capable (as were probably all the major publishers of the period) of calculating precisely the price at which his books could sell.⁸⁸ Aldine prices were hardly low. According to later documentation, the prices of Aldine Press books maintained their level during the course of the century in spite of a general inflationary trend, but price stability for Aldine enchiridions is probably to be considered exceptional in a period of sweeping change.⁸⁹

In the late sixteenth century a large number of editions were being offered for sale at a very reasonable price. Between 1570 and 1571 the erudite Hugo Blotius gathered a collection of 170 different and recently published books, spending between one and two lire for each of them. The overall value of his collection can be calculated at around 265 lire, a fifth of the stipend that Blotius would be paid, a few years later, as imperial librarian in Vienna.⁹⁰

Among the great Italian collectors, the Sienese scholar Bellisario Bulgarini (1539–1620) had the same habit as Colón of noting where he bought a book and the price he had paid for it. Analysis of Bulgarini's purchasing notes shows that some four hundred of his acquisitions were made, principally in Siena but also in other Italian cities, between 1570 and 1620. His notes permit us to ascertain that Venetian books cost 22 percent less than other books printed in Italy and 41 percent less than those printed abroad.⁹¹ Furthermore, the price of Venetian books fell three years after their date of publication, which was shorter than the case for works from other parts of Italy, Rome in particular. In general, the price of books printed in Italy fell considerably after their publication date, and thirty years after their publication Venetian books would have lost 30 percent of their value. In contrast, the price of foreign books fell much more slowly, with a reduction of a mere 18 percent after thirty years. Among Venetian books, which made up over a third of Bulgarini's library, the lowest per-sheet price that he paid was for Giolito publications, followed by those of Francesco de Franceschi and Giovan Battista Ciotti.⁹² These data

⁸⁸ Klaus Wagner, "Aldo Manuzio a i prezzi dei suoi libri," *La Bibliofilia* 77 (1975): 77–82.

⁸⁹ Lowry, *Book Prices*, 13–15, 35–36.

⁹⁰ Molino, *L'impero di carta*, 69–91.

⁹¹ Among Bulgarini's foreign book purchases, the most expensive came from Basel and Geneva, then from France.

⁹² Daniele Danesi, "I prezzi dei libri veneziani nelle note di acquisto di Bellisario Bulgarini, 1570–1620 circa," in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and

piterno bene, d'ardente desiderio di quello infiammati, cominceremo a dire insieme col Propheta.

ci satieremo allhora,

Quand'apparita fia la gloria tua.

I L F I N E.

*Di Bellisario Bulgarini Gentiluomo
senese; il qual libro fu comprato in
Siena da m^o: Anton maria Camori
libraio & he di denari l'anno
1575. lode a Dio sempre.*

Fig. 9.8. Purchasing note of the book collector Bellisario Bulgarini, 1575. Courtesy of Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

contribute to explaining the great success of Venetian books in Italy. Their lower price was probably achieved thanks to a more efficient and hence less costly distribution system that operated effectively and according to a longstanding strategy of gradual penetration into cities.

The major bookmen – the Venetians in particular – backed a serious effort to standardize prices when they established stable relations with booksellers in other cities. Subsequently, not only the lists of books sent out with price quotations but also the continued existence of commercial relations encouraged stricter controls. And in a final stage of this development, the great Venetian bookmen dominated the phases of the distribution and sale of goods by branches of their firms in Rome, Naples, and other important cities in the most direct manner possible.

Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana: La musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 301–26. The publishers Franceschi and Ciotti were both from Siena, and Ciotti in particular was a great friend of Bulgarini, which easily explains the low price of their editions in that city.

CHAPTER TEN

SHOP INVENTORIES

The number of booksellers active in certain Italian cities in a given period can be inferred from archival documents and other sources. In 1493 the stationers in Florence were incorporated into the *Arte dei Medici e Speciali* (the guild of physicians and apothecaries), one of the seven major guilds. Between 1493 and 1600, 252 men working in Florence were recorded in this manner: 58 peddlers, 90 *cartolai*, 97 booksellers, and 7 printers licenced to sell books.¹ The printers' and booksellers' guild in Venice, however, as we have seen, was formed much later, for it was set up in 1549 and became operative only in 1587.² For the period before the rise of such guilds research can only be quite hit-or-miss.

Cartolai's and booksellers' names permit us to recognize the ways in which families constituted the structures of the various firms in the book trade, as also in other contemporary economic activities. Management often remained in the hands of members of the same family for a number of generations. We cannot build any broader analysis on unsystematic sources such as notarial archives or the archives of the major institutional book purchasers, and our questions are all too often left unanswered.³ We are given glimpses of families that managed shops from one generation to another, and we can draw up lists of names that become less nebulous only when crosschecked against a number of sources.⁴

Indirect but more systematic information on booksellers is provided by the earliest intimations of prohibited works given to booksellers, which

¹ Bertoli, "Librai, cartolai e ambulanti." For Rome, see Paolo Cherubini, "Indice dei cartolai attivi a Roma," in *Scrittura, biblioteche e stampa a Roma del Quattrocento: Atti del secondo seminario, 6–8 maggio 1982*, ed. Massimo Miglio (Città del Vaticano: Scuola Vaticana di paleografia, diplomatica e archivistica, 1983), 431–45.

² On the *Corporazione* or *Università* degli stampatori e librari of Venice, see Pesenti, "Stampatori e letterati," 98–101; Zorzi, "La produzione," 925–37; Carmelos, "La corporazione e gli esterni." In any event, the guild never covered all those persons active in the book trade.

³ See, for example, the account books of the Camera Ducale of Ferrara, which continually record those who made paper or books or supplied the court with them: Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*.

⁴ For data relative to *cartolai* and booksellers in Ferrara, see Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*.

were issued with increasing frequency by lay or religious authorities in the course of the sixteenth century. Since such prohibitions were addressed explicitly to those actively involved in producing and selling books, they were often accompanied by lists of names of booksellers and printers active in that moment. Another sources are the petitions addressed by booksellers of a particular city to the authorities asking that the latter take action against a state of affairs that the petitioners considered harmful.⁵ Finally, we can also draw from investigations of the economic activities of a population as a whole, a source that is most reliable when not tax-related.⁶

Such information is not sufficient, however, for us to grasp fully the life of a bookshop. But we have another source, and one that was of prime importance for every shop – an inventory of its merchandise. Although an inventory gives a static picture of a bookshop at a particular moment, nothing is more eloquent in allowing us to understand the extent of a shop's commercial activity. The available data are pertinent to individual situations and do not offer a systematic overview, but analysis of that data allows us to discern evolutionary movements within book trade.

Characteristics of Shop Inventories

Detailed analysis of inventories allows us to build up a precise and reliable picture of a number of aspects of the book business: efficiency of book distribution, speed with which books were sold, impact of commercial demands on book genres, tailoring of stock to a bookseller's particular situation. The ways in which retailers shaped their merchandise to accord with local demand provide a key means of contextualizing the book within local cultural consumption; the picture that emerges is far more revealing

⁵ In 1593, for example, nine booksellers in Cremona presented a petition against local rag pickers, who, promising that the booksellers of Cremona would not lack paper, had received a privilege for their activities. Paper was in short supply, however; hence the protest. The nine booksellers involved were Geronimo Manini, Giorgio Bozzola, Bartolomeo Pellizzari, Pietro Genaro, Giovanni Martino Fanzano, Angelo Rainero, Omobono Genaro, Giovan Battista Pellizzari, and Giovan Battista Puerone: Rita Barbisotti, "Librai-editori a Cremona alla fine del Cinquecento: Il caso di Pietro Bozzola e Giovan Battista Pellizzari," *Strenna dell'A.D.A.F.A.* (1993): 109–22.

⁶ One example of such a source is the food-office census taken in Cremona in 1576 for the purpose of determining the size of the population in order to organize the provisioning of grain, a document that reveals the presence of eight booksellers but does not give their names: Giovanni Vigo, "Il volto economico della città," in *Storia di Cremona*. 7 vols. (Cremona: Bolis, 2003–), 4:259.

1593

ATTO NOTIZIA
 000253

Alla men pagati li Dogarati di questa Città di Cremona, mossi
 da bon zelo, et utile verso la Città, concessero un privilegio
 quinquennale a Jacomo Calcinato, et Giovanni Guarneri,
 che mian alba, che loro, o da loro dependere non potesse
 comparir in questa città, ne condur fuori di questo Dominio
 stazze per uso di fabricar carta, pagando però essi le
 stazze alli poueri della Città tre quattrini per ogni libra,
 conformi ad un alba privilegio dalla medesma Città concessuto.
 Ma la città di Cremona resta molto defraudata dalla promessa
 di costoro, perche essi Calcinato, et Guarneri non hauendo
 punto riguardo all' obbligo sud. che tengono con la Città,
 non solo restano di condur fuori del Dominio tutta quella
 quantità di stazze, che uogliono; ma anco non conducono
 pur un foglio di carta a questa Città, come sono tenuti
 et hanno promesso, il che causa pregiudicio, et danno
 grandissimo al publico, et anco alli poueri librai; i quali
 se uogliono comprar delle carte per uso delle botteghe loro
 sono necessitati andar a comprarle da recuendazoli fuori
 del Dominio, et pagar la libra uindici, soldi. Et se questi
 tali hanno promesso di pagar alla sud. Città soldi cento
 per tal concessione, nondimeno pagandouanno ed pensiero
 di non pagar niente, perche comprano le stazze à meno
 prezzo del conuenuto con la Città, ni danno ancora dell'

Fig. 10.1. Petition of the booksellers of Cremona about the lack of paper, 1593. Courtesy of Archivio di stato, Cremona.

than that provided by local printed production. Moreover, book production cannot tell us about the sale of second-hand books, a fundamental feature of book circulation. Used-book sales, which had a major influence on production itself, can be accessed through shop inventories. Such inventories, often granted little attention, are indispensable to the history of the book.

Yet inventories too have their limits as a source. They were rarely conserved, and those few that do survive testify to very specific situations that varied from one place to another and from one date to another. Their

spatial and temporal precision tells us nothing of the dynamic nature of book production, which developed gradually and neither linearly nor homogeneously. Inventories list unsold books, sometimes stored for decades, together with books that sold very well. Only a shop day-book like *De Madiis 1484–1488* shows what was sold and in what quantities day by day in a given bookshop.

Any attempt to trace the lines of a history of the bookshop in Renaissance Italy must consider and compare shop inventories of very different sorts, all of which capture one specific moment of that shop's history. That moment might not be particularly significant, or even turn out to be misleading. Aware of such risks, I shall consider here documents that are as similar as possible in that they all offer descriptions of the merchandise contained in specific bookshops and provide acceptably detailed lists of books.⁷

With the exception of *De Madiis 1484–1488* and *Siveri 1503c*, all of the known inventories are notarial in origin, drawn up on the occasion of a change in proprietor, sale, or seizure of goods (perhaps as a safeguard), or as a postmortem listing made necessary by a complex inheritance situation, perhaps involving underage heirs. Books were usually listed with the briefest possible description, followed by the number of volumes (copies per title), and the price, either separately for each book or as a total for each page of the inventory. This description is true of *Siliprandi-Stellini 1484*, *Libri 1484*, *Martinati 1484*, *Bonomini 1488*, *Ugoleti 1491*, and *Zambelli 1525*. A few documents give further information, listing not only the number of copies but also the number of quinternions (five-sheet gatherings) that made up each individual edition (*Zambelli 1525*, *Martinati-Quintrello 1497*, and *Gorgonzola 1537*). In these cases, the bookseller's entire holdings were sold to another bookseller, a transfer that evidently required an exact evaluation of the actual number of printed sheets of every title.

With time the evaluation in quinternions was replaced by an evaluation expressed in reams (*risme*). Both methods originated in the custom of offering books for sale in loose sheets and were therefore considered by those involved in the book trade to give a more accurate count. Among the many remaining examples of evaluations of book stock expressed in reams, I might cite that drawn up in 1550 covering all the shops owned by the Giolito firm in Venice, Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, and Naples.⁸

⁷ For the complete list of the inventories of bookshops, see Bibliography, pp. 426–29. For a table recording the number of editions and copies in bookshops, see below.

⁸ *Giolito 1550*, 665–67; Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 60–66.

Usually, however, inventories list the title of the work and number of copies; not always do they include prices. In the logic of commerce, the book became a single object, prepared and at times wholly made (including some form of binding) by the printer and sold in shops that were gradually losing some of their former ability to finish a product sold in loose sheets. The business was changing character, from that of the *cartolaio* to that of a modern bookseller, understood as a vendor of finished products who did not require the services of illuminators, illustrators, or music copyists. In the late sixteenth century, bookshop inventories at times skip over the unit of measurement of the individual book and simply mention a certain quantity of bundles (*mazzi*) of a certain edition. These *mazzi* contained sheets still in their wrappings for shipment and included an unspecified number of copies of a single edition (*Valdemagna 1572* and *Bòchini 1586*).

Inventories of the 1470s and 1480s

Even with all these reservations, consulting a solid source like shop inventories leads ineluctably to counting. The question of the number of books for sale in the shops of *cartolai* and booksellers in the early period of print is indissolubly linked to questions about the size of press runs. Such figures are reliable indexes, on the one hand, for print production in the immediate environs and, on the other hand, for the liveliness of the local culture in which the target public of the bookshop participated. We can also evaluate retailers' ability to store books and how many different types of books were involved. Finally, and above all, numbers help us to classify the various types of booksellers and determine their differing standings in the city market. The documents do not permit us to go further back, however, than the end of the 1470s.

The oldest remaining inventory is dated 1477, and it enumerates the books in the shop of the German bookseller Giovanni Stai (de Staer) in Padua (*Stai 1477*).⁹ This inventory was drawn up at the request of an agent representing Nicolaus Jenson, probably because of a false rumor that Stai had died; if Stai died, Jenson would have to recuperate the books entrusted to Stai for sale. Stai offered for sale 210 copies of some ninety editions – this was a shop with an extensive assortment for that date, indicative of the exceptional vitality of printing in the area.

⁹ Fattori, "La bottega di un libraio."

According to the inventory drawn up in 1482 in Siena the day after his death, the “bibliopola seu chartularius” Agostino Cenni had offered for sale 104 copies of sixteen editions (*Cenni 1482*). These were books of theology and law accompanied by a handful of medical and humanistic texts: only one book, a law book, was bound. For the following year we have a shop inventory eight times bigger than Cenni’s, *Siliprandi-Stellini 1483*. The shop in Mantua was situated on the central Piazza del Broletto, and it held a wide assortment of 887 copies, representing some 125 editions, including a consistent group (345 copies) of grammatical texts and schoolbooks.¹⁰ The assortment was fairly wide, with a massive presence of Latin classics, a good representation of works of theology, medicine, and philosophy, missals and breviaries, and a small group of law books pertaining to the professions. The early presence of books in the vernacular – Boccaccio, Petrarch, Cecco d’Ascoli, and chivalric romances – is highly significant. The large number of books and their variety sum up the characteristics of the culture of one of the great centers of the Italian Renaissance: Mantua had a humanistic school, a professional culture (though not an academic culture, as the city lacked a university), and a public for a growing literature in Italian.¹¹ Two shop inventories dated 1484 drawn up, respectively, in the two Emilian cities of Parma and Bologna, are on a quite different level. The first, *Martinati 1484*, was redacted on the occasion of a sale. It lists 103 copies of fifteen editions, reflecting a choice almost exclusively connected with schools, both elementary and upper: Aesop, Cicero, Juvenal, Lucan, Ovid, Terence, and Virgil, plus the grammar texts of Guarino, Donatus, and Alexander of Villedieu (Alexander of Villa Dei).¹² The many notebooks, in parchment and paper, bound and unbound, show that this was a typical *cartolaio*’s shop that had added a limited selection of titles for schoolchildren to its sales of loose paper, notebooks, and registers. A good forty-seven of these books were bound, and many of them were illuminated as well, but it is hard to tell the type or level of ornamentation, which may have been quite elementary.¹³

¹⁰ These books included, among others, 44 *Dottrinali* (Alexander of Villedieu’s grammar), 52 *Salteri* and *Salterio*li, 55 *Donati*, 24 *Esopi*, 11 copies of Agostino Dati’s *Elegantio*lae, 9 copies of Perotti’s grammar text, and 150 copies of Guarino Veronese’s grammar text.

¹¹ Canova, “Letteratura, tipografia,” 95–103. I thank Andrea Canova for providing me with a transcription of this unpublished document.

¹² For a complete list of the works included, identified, and listed along with their unit price, see Margherita Martani, “Librerie a Parma nella seconda metà del secolo XV,” *La Bibliofilia* 97 (1994): 211–44.

¹³ The price difference between individual works bound or unbound was in fact quite low.

In Sigismondo dei Libri's shop and warehouse in Bologna a fairly extensive quantity of books was available to the public: some four hundred printed works and forty-five manuscripts (*Libri 1484*). Moreover, in terms of quality, the assortment of titles available at one point in time is discernibly greater. Dei Libri's offerings included some 215 works, with only a small number of copies of each edition, if we leave aside a few exceptions such as the twenty copies of the grammar text of Niccolò Perotti.¹⁴ The contents of the shop naturally revolved around law titles, but it also had a sizeable number of Latin classics, with few humanistic works. Texts in the vernacular, apparently few, may be hidden in the customary language of inventories, in phrases such as "10 volumina diversorum operum," and "volumina liberculorum parvorum," which reflect the low monetary value of these titles. No book either in the shop itself or in the upper floors given over to storage was bound.

In the same year – to be precise, on 17 May 1484 – Francesco de Madiis noted down a shop inventory in his *Zornale* (*De Madiis 1484–1488*). The document provides a veritable snapshot of the shop. Although the inventory appears at the beginning of the journal, it is hard to know whether this was the moment that de Madiis opened his business. The unadorned language of figures tells us much. De Madiis lists 1,361 books (more than four times the number of dei Libri's holdings in Bologna at the same time) in an assortment of some 380 different editions, editions, not titles, because this vast selection was achieved by offering different editions of a given text for sale at the same time, as was customary for breviaries and missals, for example. These editions differed in their material characteristics, such as format. This inventory provides a broader conception of a bookshop's assortment. A large group – fifty-six copies – of bound books were not counted as different editions because their titles were analogous to unbound versions.

This sample has covered a number of accounts that are roughly contemporary but highly varied. The account of the Siena bookshop (*Cenni 1482*), although it lists few books, shows a high monetary value because the holdings were only law books, many of them imported. The Parma bookshop (*Martinati 1484*) suggests only a tentative enlargement of the usual shop of a provincial *cartolaio*, aimed completely at a public of schoolchildren, just like some stationery-bookshops in Italy today. Analogous and in

¹⁴ By this time Niccolò Perotti, *Rudimenta Grammatices* had been printed at least fifty times in Italy.

some ways comparable are the two large bookshops, one in Bologna and the other in Venice (*Libri 1484* and *De Madiis 1484–1488*). The men who owned these shops produced books as well as selling them (Sigismondo dei Libri to a greater extent than Francesco de Madiis), and both men had a profound knowledge of the world of the book and were able to anticipate the needs of their customers. Still, there is no comparison between what Francesco de Madiis and Sigismondo dei Libri offered for sale, in terms of either quantity or quality. In Bologna dei Libri had a well-defined clientele of students and teachers in the faculties of law and arts who might, on occasion and for amusement, escape the confines of professional reading to acquire one of the chivalric romances from the bookshop's ample selection. The shop, however, did not carry most of the production of contemporary authors, neither humanists nor writers in the vernacular; not even Dante's *Commedia* or Boccaccio's *Decameron* was to be had.

Francesco de Madiis' assortment of books was not only vast but as vast as was possible at the time. He covered almost all that was available in the various fields of religious books, Latin and Greek classics (including vernacular translations), law books, and university textbooks. In its stock of vernacular works the shop perhaps reflected the limited publishing capacity of publishers in Venice, who were often foreigners and at that time tended to have the transnational market in mind. In that area and in those years, print production from the middle Po Valley and from Florence still provided indispensable reinforcement of merchandise available in Venice. In other sectors, de Madiis' offerings were more varied, thanks to local resources and in particular, to the publications of his relatives, friends, and partners.

Telling data on the early and far-reaching diffusion of printed books are not restricted to Venice, however. The shop inventory of Bartolomeo Lupoto in Genoa drawn up at his death (see *Lupoto 1487*) reveals a stock of books analogous in both quantity and assortment to that outlined in *De Madiis 1484–1488*. A wealthy city and a central link in Mediterranean commercial routes, Genoa was a city comparable to Venice. Still, Genoa lacked a local printing industry that could provide easily accessed merchandise.¹⁵ In spite of this handicap, Lupoto made available a mass of 1,508 volumes, representing some 380 editions. Moreover, because the inventory was particularly aimed at clarifying ownership of the books in the shop, we learn

¹⁵ *ISTC* lists only four incunabula printed in Genoa.

that a large portion of the total, a good 1,058 books, were the property of Pietro Antonio da Castiglione, a major merchant, wholesaler, and book publisher in Milan. Evidently Castiglione had deposited these books with Lupoto for sale on commission, retaining his ownership of them until the sale had been completed. Aside from Castiglione, Lupoto's trusted source for books, Giovanni Scoto (who may have been kin of the Scoto family in Venice), owned eighty-six volumes. Only 364 books were actually fully owned by Lupoto. These books, which are mentioned last in the inventory, are for the most part manuscripts or used bound books, the typical stock of a *cartolaio*. The thousand books in 320 different editions that Castiglione left on deposit with Lupoto present a vast selection of contemporary production that is particularly rich in law books, religious books, and Latin classics and much less so in vernacular texts. The inventory *Lupoto 1497* says much about the ability of the major merchants to reach retail book-sellers and supply them copiously. This record is a most useful document for showing how effectively the printed book was grafted onto preexisting commerce in *cartolai's* shops. We can but admire the rapidity and the flexibility of these artisans as they welcomed a new product that was arriving in truly massive quantities.¹⁶

The two inventories bearing the date 1488 (*Agostino da Siena 1488* and *Bonomini 1488*), both redacted in Pisa, make it possible to compare two contemporary bookshops and observe commercial connections in the city that was the seat of the Florentine *studio*.¹⁷ At the death of Agostino di Domenico of Siena, a *cartolaio*, the inventory of the goods in his shop shows 178 printed books plus one religious manuscript and a stock of nearly fifty titles, all of which are listed in from one to four copies, other than the thirty-eight copies of *Salteri* (psalters) and thirty-eight copies of

¹⁶ The modern edition of Lupoto's inventory in Geo Pistarino, *Bartolomeo Lupoto e l'arte libraria a Genova nel Quattrocento* (Genoa: Di Stefano, 1961), 191–217 misunderstands the document in at least two fundamental ways. It states 1) that the shop had 1,508 manuscript books and only 36 printed ones and 2) that Pietro Antonio da Castiglione, the owner of most of the books in the shop, was a Genoese noble whose private library (a library that would have been truly extraordinary for the age, since it would have consisted of a thousand manuscripts, with many works present in more than one copy) was deposited with Lupoto for sale. Consequently, it identifies even Giovanni Scoto in an analogous fashion. This profound misreading originates from a failure to compare the inventory with similar documents, or perhaps from the unfortunate hazard of having a lazy notary who specifies “de stampa” (printed) for only the two first titles, then became tired of doing so.

¹⁷ For the history of the various locations used by the *Studio fiorentino*, see Grendler, *The Universities*, 70–82.

the *Beato Simone in vulgare*.¹⁸ Twenty-eight of the books listed were bound. The choice of titles ranges over several sectors, from law books to Latin classics, grammar texts, and a good representation of texts in Italian (Dante and Boccaccio, for example). The assortment of religious books, broadly defined, was slim.

We find a quite different situation in the inventory *Bonomini 1488*, a list of the books ceded by Giovan Pietro Bonomini to Gerhard Lof when the volumes in Tuscan bookshops that had formerly been owned by the Company of Venice changed hands.¹⁹ Although the list was drawn up in the shop of the *cartolaio* Bartolo di Fruosino, it is not strictly speaking a shop inventory, as it lists a mass of materials presumably divided between shop and warehouse. According to the terms of the agreement, the purpose of the inventory was to identify the Company's books, understood broadly as books that had come from Venice. To this end, 730 copies, all unbound, of 191 different editions are noted, in a style and with a precision that clearly indicates that the transaction was taking place between professionals accustomed to listing books. Nearly 30 percent of the books were law books, 22 percent Latin classics, 18 percent religious texts (liturgical or theological works), and 15 percent works of philosophy. The very low number of texts in the vernacular (about 1 percent) shows that in Tuscany the importation of books in Italian was an exception rather than the rule.²⁰ The low figure for grammar texts (3 percent) reinforces the notion that the Company's sales outlets in Tuscany served an academic clientele in the university.

Thanks to the two inventories from Pisa, we can compare two different levels of commerce in books within the same city. The first level is that of modest stocks of books typical of *cartolai*, who were gradually being cut off from trading in the more costly academic and liturgical books.

¹⁸ The *Beato Simone in vulgare* was a vernacular version of a bestseller of the age about the killing of the young boy Simon of Trent, which was attributed to the Ashkenazi Jewish community of that city: see Johannes Mathias Tiberinus, *Historia completa de passione et obitu pueri Simonis* (ISTC it00481000). Very few copies of the Italian editions remain. Other versions of this story are known, but this one was the most widely diffused: Ugo Rozzo, "Il presunto 'omicidio rituale' di Simonino da Trento e il primo santo tipografico," *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze Lettere e Arti di Udine* 90 (1994): 185–223.

¹⁹ See chapter 1.

²⁰ These works included *L'Acerba* by Cecco d'Ascoli (first edition ISTC ic00357900), the *Fioretti della Bibbia* (first edition ISTC if00171200: see Barbieri, "Fra tradizione e cambiamento," 43–44), *Iustino vulgare* (Marcus Junianus Justinus), *Epitomae in Trogi Pompeii historias* in the vernacular (ISTC ij00625000); and Hieronymus, *Vitae sanctorum patrum* in the vernacular (first edition ISTC ih00223000).

The second level shows shops that had entered into the circuits of inter-regional commerce, the managers of which (whether independent or salaried, partners or working on commission for major producers and wholesalers) had available a much larger assortment of merchandise – in this case, about seven times larger – than that of their more modest competitors.

It is important to stress that in all the cases analyzed thus far, a high number of books offered for sale was not reached by increasing the average number of copies of each edition, but rather by enriching the assortment and diversifying the offerings. Each title is listed in only a few, even a very few, copies. One of the laws of retail sale pertained right from the start for printed books: offer the greatest possible variety of merchandise. That rule was now imposed, perhaps for the first time, in relation to what was a massive production for its time. Traditional assumptions suggest that print grew by increasing, apparently endlessly, the number of copies of individual books, a view that would surely have been echoed by Giovanni Andrea Bussi, a man of letters who worked for the Sweynheym and Pannartz printing shop and therefore watched books emerge from the presses in hundreds of copies. Those who frequented the bookshops of provincial cities and centers with little printed production, however, would have told of growing variety and a higher number of texts available to them.

Inventories of the 1490s

The remaining inventory documentation from the 1490s is more abundant, more varied, and sends us to a number of centers: Parma, Pisa, Florence, and Scandiano, a small city near Modena. I shall begin with the last mentioned, if for no other reason than that the bookshop inventoried in *Pasquali 1496* is surely indicative of urban culture. It is highly unlikely that there was another bookshop in Scandiano. The books that Pellegrino Pasquali inventoried were kept in his house, and he does not mention an actual shop, though sales – and, for that matter, printing, given the presence of a “torchular unum fulcitum a stampando libros” – could take place in the house. Pasquali had in his house some sixty different editions distributed over 151 copies, but from that group we should subtract the forty copies of the *Orlando innamorato* of Matteo Maria Boiardo also in his home, stock or residuals of the *editio princeps* of the poem (1482?), now lost. All notations of edition (citations of which, written in a notarial hand,

pose a number of problems of identification) are accompanied by an indication of a number of copies that varies from one to four. Only one book, a grammar text, is bound. The books offered for sale are a reliable mirror of the culture of a small city identified in particular with the Boiardo family, counts of Scandiano. Included are Latin classics and grammar texts, religious books for country clergy, saints' lives, and chivalric romances. Pasquali's was, in short, a small shop that reflected the community it served in both its size and its offerings.

In contrast, the Florentine shop depicted by *Salvestro di Zanobi* 1496 is not indicative of the culture of a city identified with Medici circles or even of the vigorous vernacular publishing of Florence; it does, however, tell us of the interests of a broad stratum of society of lesser economic means and little engaged with high culture.²¹ Salvestro di Zanobi offered for sale 291 volumes, some seventy of which were manuscripts.²² The 220 or so printed books cover only about thirty titles, restricting the assortment of texts to a decidedly limited range. The number of manuscripts hardly speaks of an up-to-date assortment, and whoever drew up the inventory often characterized the merchandise on offer as "old." The backward nature of this shop can be taken as in some ways typical of who knows how many other shops for which no inventory has come down to us. We note the strong presence of used books (predominantly, but not exclusively, manuscripts) and the limited scale, not so much in the number of printed books themselves as in their assortment, with a quite high number of copies per title.²³ In comparison with the organization and assortments of books in other shops, Salvestro di Zanobi's stock seems less broad and, above all, somewhat arbitrary in its selection, as if refurbished by the owner, who was not linked into the principal distribution streams, only now and then and at times with stock or remainders from other booksellers. Unfortunately, because entries on the list do not specify prices, we cannot make any meaningful comparisons between costs of manuscripts and printed works.

It is more difficult to reach a judgment about *Ugelheimer* 1490, a list of books belonging to Peter Ugelheimer that the Podestà of Pisa ordered

²¹ Christian Bec, *Les livres des Florentins (1413–1608)* (Florence: Olschki, 1984), 331.

²² The contrast between manuscript and print volumes is expressed in the inventory with "in pena" (or "in penna") in contrast to "in forma" or "in istampa."

²³ For example, there are 50 copies of the *Lalde de Nostra Donna* (Lauds of the Virgin Mary, no extant editions for this period), 13 copies of *Ghiosafà* (*Istoria di Barlaam et Josafat*, no extant editions for this period), 30 copies of *Bello Iudaico* (Flavius Josephus, *De bello Iudaico*, in Italian. Florence: Bartolommeo di Libri, 6 July 1493, *ISTC* ij00490000).

seized and placed at the disposition of Giovan Pietro Bonomini. This is not a list of shop holdings, but rather of books left on deposit by Ugelheimer in Pisa. Once again, these were books printed and commercialized by the Company of Venice; they are analogous to the books listed in *Bonomini 1488* that we have already analyzed. In all, the list presents 271 copies, subdivided into 106 different editions, one of the richest assortments we have seen in a commercial book stock. The works can be divided into classics (18 percent), law (18 percent), medicine (9 percent), philosophy (18 percent), and religious books of various sorts (23 percent). Books in the vernacular account for a sizeable proportion here (10 percent), and the very few grammar texts (7 copies of Perotti's *Rudimenta*) accentuate a tendency we have already seen in *Bonomini 1488*. The commercial nature, and thus the likelihood of sales, of this small group of books is optimal. In large part intended for a university clientele and therefore fairly costly, the titles are all in minimum numbers of copies. The most obvious sign that this is an up-to-date selection, however, lies in the unexpected presence (a presence all the more surprising given the nature of the Company's importations) of three copies of Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Innamoramento d'Orlando*. In this period, only the *princeps* edition existed, along with a first Venetian replica put out by Petrus de Plasiis in 1487 (*ISTC* ib00830500). A novelty produced in the Po Valley area, this work was imported into Tuscany via Venice. Ugelheimer was well aware of the value of this novelty, given that he stocked three copies of it, a high figure in a list of this sort and the same number of copies as for texts in great demand, such as the *Facezie* of Poggio Bracciolini (first edition: *ISTC* ip00872400) or Andrea da Barberino's *Guerino il Meschino* (first edition: *ISTC* io0575000). Moreover, no other example of the chivalric romances of the period is noted in Ugelheimer's stock in Pisa, thus confirming that in the book trade too, Boiardo's work soon won a special place.

Still in Parma, two other reliable bookshop inventories were drawn up within several years: *Martinati-Quintrello 1497* and *Ugoleti 1491*. Both offer significant evidence of the definitive affirmation of printed books. *Martinati-Quintrello 1497* reflects a well-stocked shop. For every title the inventory provides the number of copies and the number of quinternions involved, for a total of 901 volumes irregularly distributed across 134 different titles.²⁴ The number of copies per title is seldom as high as ten.²⁵

²⁴ Martani, "Librerie a Parma."

²⁵ There are exceptions: there are 90 copies of the *Instoria del corpo e de lanima* (for a total of only eight quinternions, though: for an analogous text, see *ISTC* ic872600);

Two hundred and eighty-eight copies were offered for sale already bound, and more than six hundred copies came, for the most part, from outside Parma (investigation of their provenance would seem a promising path to follow).²⁶ The bookshop's offerings reflect connections with the world of the schools, with the provincial clergy (and, given the many titles of Marian devotion, with nuns),²⁷ and with a general public of vernacular readers. Above all, it offered a good assortment of Latin classics with commentary, a genre whose production was at a peak in the 1490s.

The stock inventoried in *Ugoleti 1491*, the largest inventory known to us from the fifteenth century, contains much valuable information. The document includes some 240 editions for a total of 2,183 copies.²⁸ As also in other cases, however, we must be wary of a simple calculation that produces a figure for the average number of issues per copy, as school texts made up more than half of the books listed. Their value in monetary terms was limited.²⁹ Excluding all the schoolbooks, the shop's offerings amounted to something over nine hundred books. Similar figures can be seen in the shop reflected in *Martinati-Quintrello 1497*, but the Ugoleti shop stands out for the assortment of editions it held, which were for the

108 copies of *Tavole da pute* (a text for learning how to read, in all eleven quinternions, no extant copies); 96 copies of *Pianto de la madona* (ten quinternions; first edition *ISTC* ie00043020); and 73 copies, all bound and in different formats, of the *Officia Beatae Mariae Virginis* (Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

²⁶ Alberto Del Prato, "Librai e biblioteche parmensi del secolo XV," *Archivio storico per le province parmensi* 4 (1904): 1–56, a basic but highly valuable source of bibliographical commentary, suggests that this bookshop may have been supplied by Parma printers active in Venice such as Matteo (Codecà) and Hannibal Foxius.

²⁷ For example: *Miracoli de la madona* (*ISTC* im00616000); *Vita de la madona* (different texts with this title were printed in this period); *Pianto de la madona* (first edition *ISTC* ie00043020); *Marta e Madalena* (first edition *ISTC* il00107300).

²⁸ The inventory is a portion of the partnership contract between Taddeo and Angelo Ugoleti, on one side, and Giacomo Burali, on the other. Burali had invested in the commercial partnership a portion of the dowry of one hundred imperial lire that he had just received from his wife, Veronica Milani. The partnership was drawn up for five years, renewable if desired, and was focused on the sale and binding of books, with no mention of printing: Gianluca Battioni, "Per la storia della cultura Parmense in età sforzesca: L'inventario-catalogo di una libreria cittadina del 1491," *Archivio storico per le province parmensi* 38 (1986): 453–68.

²⁹ Schoolbooks account for 62 percent of the bookshop's stock, but their price represented only 14 percent of the overall value. The inventory includes 220 *Doctrinali* (Alexander of Villedieu, first edition in Italy *ISTC* ia00419400); 300 *Donati da puti* (Aelius Donatus, *Ars minor*); 82 *Regule di Guarino* (Guarino Veronese, *Regulae grammaticales*); 575 *Salteri da puti* (ABCs); and 100 *Vite scholastice* (probably Bonvesin de la Riva, *Vita scholastica*, Angelo Ugoleti: 1495, *ISTC* ib01026600). For grammars in this period, see Grendler, *Schooling*, 162–202 and Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

most part classics and religious texts, with a good smattering of vernacular books. There is also a notable variety in their religious offerings (missals, breviaries, and offices), as well as a sizeable number of bound books (some fifty).³⁰ In three cases the inventory gives the provenance of a breviary printed in Venice: *Breviarii di Petro Veronese* (Petrus de Plasiis),³¹ *Breviari di magistro Francesco* (Francesco della Fontana),³² and *Breviario di Paganino* (Paganino Paganini).³³ We have already seen similar listings in *De Madiis* 1484–1488, and they are perhaps to be expected in a bookseller who had personal and daily relations with Venetian publishers. The phenomenon that saw the identification of the producers of books took on more significance in Parma. Books were beginning to be distinguished not only by such material aspects as format or illustration, but also by the firm that produced them. The major Venetian publishers were succeeding in creating a market for their wares, distinguishing their product and defining themselves as firms, and thus as brands. In the future, they would invest more and more in these brands.

We can summarize the differences between the two Parma bookshops in the 1490s by one simple comparison: all of the books listed in *Marinati-Quintrello* 1497 had a total value of about seventy-four lire, whereas the holdings in the shop reflected in *Ugoleti* 1491 were worth almost ten times as much, or 703 lire.

Early Sixteenth-Century Inventories

The bookshop in Ferrara inventoried in *Sivieri* 1503c fits perfectly into the line of evolution of the Italian bookshops, as far as their inventories allow us to trace it. Here the stock of books covers 426 different titles, which is a higher figure than in the Venetian shop of Francesco de Madiis but repeats the same distribution across disciplines. The dominant groups are religious texts (31 percent) and Latin and Greek classics (29 percent), followed

³⁰ Some identifications proposed in Martani, "Librerie a Parma," 224–31 call for correction. For example, the inventory listing "*Kaim*" (no. 89) is identified as the *Ordine del sen-tiero della vita* of Jacob ben Asher, editions of which are known only in Hebrew, a fact that in a bookshop list in which Latin is distinguished from the vernacular would undoubtedly have been noted. This entry must instead refer to the more widely known Bartolomaeus de Chaimis, *Confessionale sive Interrogatorium*, which by that time had already gone through some ten editions (first edition *ISTC* ib00153000).

³¹ Various breviaries were printed before 1491 by Petrus/Pietro de Plasiis (from *ISTC* ib1118300), who was actually from Cremona, not Verona.

³² Franz Renner from Heilbronn (called Francesco della Fontana) specialized in the production of breviaries.

³³ Perhaps *ISTC* ib0112830.

culture of that city are the extensive series of chivalric romances and the list, almost complete for this period, of classical works in vernacular translation.³⁵

Quite different and highly significant for its representation of the tastes of a vast public of non-professional readers is the shop of the *cartolaio* Bono Zambelli in Cremona, inventoried on 11 January 1525 (*Zambelli 1525*). Zambelli had a respectable stock of books: some 1,500 units were divided between the storage space in his house and his shop in the Arengario of the Palazzo del Comune. This inventory is the first to establish a clear distinction between Venetian books (271) and Milanese books (the rest), evaluating the first group at a higher price.³⁶ As for content of the books, there does not seem to be any relevant difference between those printed in Venice and those printed in Milan. The greater part of both were in the vernacular. A small group of some fifteen of the most obvious titles of classical Latin texts were imported from Venice, but the nucleus of the stock, the chivalric romances and courtly poetry now intended for a popular audience, came from either Venice or Milan, without following any specific pattern.³⁷ In the stock in storage, the work with the greatest number of copies was the *Sette psalmi in littera grossa* (46 copies), which was, as the inventory recorded, printed in large type.

In his shop Zambelli had 850 books for sale, representing some 254 titles. Two sorts of book are clearly distinguished in the inventory. The first was unbound works (some 190 editions), each one of them almost always in only one copy. Fewer than ten of these books were in Latin. Amongst these unbound works the vernacular dominated at a broader, less cultivated level: we find no Dante, no Petrarch. The only more sophisticated literary works are those of Boccaccio, Pietro Bembo's *Asolani*, Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, Luigi Pulci's *Morgante*, *La Cerva bianca* of Antonio

³⁵ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 141–273.

³⁶ The higher evaluation was based on the fact that the total number of quinternions was increased by tens of units on page after page of the inventory.

³⁷ This was true, for example, of the works of Caio Baldassarre Olimpo Alessandri: *Gloria d'amor* (*Edit 16*, CNCE 919); *Linguari d'amor* (*Edit 16*, CNCE 933); *Camilla d'amor* (*Edit 16*, CNCE 907); *Olimpia d'amor* (*Edit 16*, CNCE 925); *Ardelia d'amor* (*Edit 16*, CNCE 921); and *Pegasea d'amor* (*Edit 16*, CNCE 945). The phrase *d'amor* (of love) appears on some printed works and was uniformly added by the bookseller to all titles. Similarly, the phrase *in battaglia* (in battle) was applied to verse chivalric romances as an indication of both their content and their poetic form: Angela Nuovo, "I libri di battaglia: Commercio e circolazione tra Quattro e Cinquecento," in *Boiardo, Ariosto e i libri di battaglia: Atti del convegno Scandiano-Reggio Emilia-Bologna 3–6 ottobre 2005*, ed. Andrea Canova and Paola Vecchi Galli (Novara: Interlinea, 2007), 341–59.

Orpheo	70	gr ^a	fi: i o 4	1	8
Historie di bone	70	gr ^a	fi: i o 4	1	8
Stamoti di felix bulgo	70	gr ^a	fi: 6 4	1	8
predica d'amo	70	gr ^a	fi: i 4 4	1	8
La putacion di Abraham	70	gr ^a	fi: 4 4	1	8
guerra del turco	70	gr ^a	fi: 4 4	1	8
Historia di Lamusa	70	gr ^a	fi: i 2 4	1	8
Historia diatala	70	gr ^a	fi: 5 2	1	8
Stamoti di seraphin	70	gr ^a	fi: 7 4	1	8
Historia del re di pavia	70	gr ^a	fi: i 2 4	1	8
La guerra di gora bala	70	gr ^a	fi: 2 4	1	8
Historia de gonon	70	gr ^a	fi: 6 4	1	8
El vingo di centi remitti	70	gr ^a	fi: i 4	1	8
La romanda de vno vino fute	70	gr ^a	fi: 4 4	1	8
El vno onato	70	gr ^a	fi: i o 4	1	8
Stamoti d'amo	70	gr ^a	fi: i o 4	1	8
Malicia dela bone	70	gr ^a	fi: i o 4	1	8
Froala ala barmascha	70	gr ^a	fi: 5 4	1	8
Froala	70	gr ^a	fi: 4 4	1	8
Stamoti d'amo	70	gr ^a	fi: i 4 4	1	8
Froala d'un vilano	70	gr ^a	fi: 4 4	1	8
Contrasto del matrimonio	70	gr ^a	fi: 4 4	1	8
Historia de fusanna	70	gr ^a	fi: i 3 4	1	8
Historia de s. fote bochador	70	gr ^a	fi: 4 4	1	8
Historia dela bianca en bumezo	70	gr ^a	fi: i o 4	1	8
Legenda de s. vngula	70	gr ^a	fi: 2 o 4	1	8
Historia dela lina	70	gr ^a	fi: 6 4	1	8
Fogio di nuneso	70	gr ^a	fi: i 2 4	1	8

Fig. 10.3. Page from the inventory of Bono Zambelli's bookshop, Cremona, 1525. Courtesy of Archivio di stato, Cremona.

Fregoso, the *Clizia* of Angelo Poliziano, the works of Vincenzo Calmeta and Giovanni Francesco Fortunio, the verse of Annibale Sasso and Il Burchiello, the satirical poems of Serafino Aquilano, and one or two works by Leon Battista Alberti. For the rest, we see a long series of chivalric romances and *Contrasti* and *Historie*³⁸ and also various compositions in

³⁸ To cite a few examples: *Historia del re di Pavia* (Edit 16, CNCE 22609); *Historie de Sancto Johanne bochador* (Edit 16, CNCE 22591); *Historie del Gonella* (Edit 16, CNCE 22566); *Historia di Prasildo e Tisbina* (Edit 16, CNCE 72365); *Historia del Marchese Saluzzo* (Edit 16, CNCE 73427); *Historia de la badessa di Bollo* (Edit 16, CNCE 64812); *Historia de Guiscardo e Tismina* (but *Gismonda*, Edit 16, CNCE 22413); *Historia de la bianca e la bruneta* (Edit 16, CNCE 64877); *Historia di senso* (Edit 16, CNCE 68787); *Historia de la morte* (Edit 16, CNCE 51584); *Historie del geloso* (Edit 16, CNCE 22606).

rhyme and in prose with religious or lay subjects. The accessibility of these titles resides not only in their contents or just in the language in which they were printed. They were surely also within the financial reach of many purchasers, given that their overall value is hardly more than fifty lire. Moreover, the close similarity between this bookshop's list and the inventory in *Gorgonzola 1537* clearly indicates the market for which the production of a Milanese publisher like Gorgonzola was intended. Its geographical reach included the larger Lombard cities of limited cultural consumption (Cremona, for example, did not have a university) but with a conspicuous and widely diffused wealth, in which the most obvious class of readers was not an elite but encompassed the world of the schools, merchants, and artisans.

Aside from this basic stock of unbound books, Zambelli offered the public a sizeable group of bound texts, noted under the inventory heading "Libri e officoli legati," which speaks to the sort of texts that were generally offered for sale bound. Under this heading came 660 copies, the overwhelming majority of the books on sale, which indicates that Zambelli's shop would have looked much like a bookshop today. Here, Latin works stand out among the bound books: Latin classics above all, but also vocabulary texts, many grammatical works (aids for beginners such as *Donati*, *Esopi*, *Dottrinali*, and *Regule de Guarino* accounted for a good 361 copies), and, finally, an ample range of ninety-six texts for personal devotion. Thanks to the fact that they were bound, this portion of Zambelli's goods is reported with the highest value: it was valued at about 172 lire, as opposed to about 113 lire for all of the other, unbound, books.

Bono Zambelli's shop offers valuable testimony to reading at an urban mercantile and artisan level, and it contradicts an overly rigid vision that attributes the diffusion of cheap print to itinerant salesmen alone. The inventory of Zambelli's bookshop permits us to trace the physiognomy and range of this sort of material in the age before the Counter-Reformation, at the moment and in the place in which it encountered its purchasers.

Inventories in University Cities

Bookshops in university cities show a different and more rapid development. They were usually run by men whose activities were framed by a stable relationship, defined in various ways, with the major book producers of the age. The holdings of these bookshops, where as a rule over a

thousand books were offered for sale, amply demonstrate that the major printing and publishing firms always acted as large-scale wholesalers.

Leonardo di Bartolomeo (Giunti) 1517, a remarkable inventory and above average for the period in the number of books it covers, can be taken as illustrative of the penetration of the major Venetian publishing firms into the university cities.³⁹ Drawn up at the death of the director of the firm, Leonardo di Bartolomeo, this inventory gives an accounting of the entire stock, which belonged, for the most part, to Giuntino Giunti, the nephew of Luc'Antonio Giunti. Giuntino was represented in the act by Giacomo Giunti, the member of the family who would soon, in 1520, be entrusted with heading the branch of the Giunti firm in Lyon. In all, the inventory covers six thousand copies of about nine hundred editions, almost all of them in very few copies, except for liturgical works, which the Giunti firm produced in large numbers. The inventory lists the books in several categories, the first of which is books in *formato reale* – that is, folio sized – most of which were law books (566 copies). Next on the list came unbound books, which made up most of the shop's holdings. After them came books in quarto and octavo formats called “in carattere corsivo” (in italic type), a category that included a large group of Latin classics, some of them in Italian translation. Finally there were books that were kept in chests and were probably not immediately accessible to the public. A number of titles were in Greek. It is worth noting that at this early stage the Giunti were able to supply an entire shop, thus providing themselves with a stable sales outlet in Perugia for selling large numbers of books. Those books were produced not exclusively by them, but also by others for whom they operated as wholesalers and distributors.⁴⁰ The total stock was evaluated at 211 ducats and 3 carlini.

An inventory of Giovanni Giolito's bookshop in Turin was redacted on 8 September 1538. This is a simple list of books with the number of copies held but without prices (*Giolito 1538*).⁴¹ Its clear division between the shop and the warehouse of the Giolito printing firm permits precise calculations. In the bookshop there were approximately seven hundred titles in 2,537 copies, with an average of one to four copies per title. In the warehouse the firm kept the output of three years of printing work: twenty-seven editions, for an overall number of 13,460 complete copies, plus

³⁹ Sartore, “Il commercio del libro.”

⁴⁰ Those other publishers included Giovanni Tacuino, Alessandro Paganini, and Andrea Torresani.

⁴¹ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 50–54.

sheets of some incomplete copies.⁴² The shop was managed by Giacomino Dolce, a bookseller from Cuneo, and it was located facing the buildings of the University of Turin, not one of Italy's most prominent universities. The inventory mentions the provenance of the books often enough to allow a few generalizations. The better part of the stock came from Lyon, to the point that Lyonese books account for double the number of the next-largest group, books produced in Venice. In third place come books from Trino produced by Giovanni Giolito. Only slightly fewer books came from far-off Paris, whereas the number of books from nearby Milan is much smaller. That the books offered for sale were the result of a selection based on quality is clear from the conspicuous group of books from Germany, listed immediately after Milanese books, along with a distinct group explicitly noted as coming from Basel. The books from Basel, which in those years was the European center of classical and humanistic publishing, outnumbered those from Bologna, Florence, and Padua combined.

In comparison with the other Italian bookshops we have examined thus far, Giolito's bookshop in Turin shows a distinct advance in quality. It achieved its vast assortment thanks to massive importation of books from France and from German lands rather than by reaching out to the Italian printing industry, which normally predominated, the Venetian industry in particular, in the other Italian bookshops whose inventories have come down to us. Moreover, a closer examination of the editions for sale provides further data on the refinement and broad range of the books that Giolito proposed to his customers. As the inventory proceeds, it makes distinctions among the merchandise based on monetary value. First come the most costly books (190 titles), which are law books, almost all of them from Lyon and Trino, liturgical books, and music books. The second group of titles mixes all genres and formats but emphasizes books of mid-sized (quarto) and small (octavo) format. Variety is great here, ranging from professional works for men of law, physicians, or ecclesiastics, to reading matter more suited to a large urban reading public. There are quite a few Greek books, in both Aldine editions and editions from Basel. Along with Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Callimachus, and Isocrates, an abundance of grammar texts makes clear the involvement in Greek studies of professors and students in Turin. The breadth of the assortment of books is defined by what we might call its extremes: Hebrew books on one side

⁴² On Giovanni Giolito's print shop in Turin, see Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 45–50.

and books in the vernacular on the other. The very presence of Hebrew books makes this collection an evident exception among bookshops, where even Greek books were rare, and it suggests a public interested in the Hebrew language for religious purposes.⁴³ Books in the vernacular, by contrast, are fewer than we might expect in those years. The dominant writer is a contemporary, Pietro Bembo.⁴⁴ The three major authors – Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio – are on the list, at times in surprising editions: for example, there is a Petrarch that comes from Naples rather than one of the many Venetian editions.⁴⁵ Together with works by Sigismondo Fanti and Teofilo Folengo, there are key texts in the religious unrest that was widespread in Italy in those years.⁴⁶ Ending the list, Erasmus of Rotterdam is the most famous, most important, and dominant author in Giolito's Turin bookshop.⁴⁷ In addition to Erasmus' theological writings, the inventory includes his grammatical works, which were better known in Italy.⁴⁸ The Turin branch of the Giolito firm had in fact printed an edition of Erasmus' *Grammatica* in quarto, listed in the inventory with 686 copies unsold; no copies of this edition remain today.

A document closely contemporary with the Giolito Turin inventory lists the complete stock of books that Giovanni Giolito furnished to a new bookshop founded in the university city of Pavia (*Giolito 1539*). In this case

⁴³ Included among such books were Abraham ben Meïr Ibn Ezra, *Decalogus praeceptorum divinatorum* (Basel: I. Froben, 1527, *USTC* 661159); Sante Pagnini, *Thesaurus linguae sanctae* (Lyon: S. Gryphe, 1529, *USTC* 146079); Elijah Levita, *Grammatica Hebraica* (Basel: I. Froben, 1525, *USTC* 661218).

⁴⁴ Bembo is listed with all of his published works: *De Aetna*, *Rime*, *Asolani*, and *Prose della volgar lingua*, all in various editions.

⁴⁵ This was *Il Petrarca col commento di Sylvano da Venaphro* (Naples: A. De Jovino & M. Canzer, 1533, *Edit* 16, CNCE 47379).

⁴⁶ For example: Battista da Crema, *Via de aperta verità* (Venice: G. De' Gregoriis for L. Lorio, 1523, *Edit* 16, CNCE 4631). See also Sergio Pagano, "La condanna delle opere di fra' Battista da Crema: Tre inedite censure del Sant'Offizio e della Congregazione dell'Indice," *Barnabiti studi* 14 (1997): 221–310; Lorenzo Di Leonardo, *I Lorio: editori, librai, cartai, tipografi fra Udine e Venezia (1496–1629)* (Udine: Forum, 2009), 173.

⁴⁷ There was a historical connection between Erasmus and the University of Turin: he received a degree in theology there on 4 September 1506 after a stay in that city of only a few weeks: Paul F. Grendler, "How to Get a Degree in Fifteen Days: Erasmus' Doctorate of Theology from the University of Turin," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 18 (1998): 40–69.

⁴⁸ The following Erasmus editions were offered for sale: *Epistolae ad diversos, & aliquot aliorum ad illum per amicos eruditos, ex ingentibus fasciculis schedarum collectae* (Basel: Froben, 1521, *USTC* 651629); *Novum Testamentum omne diligenter ab Erasmo Roterodamo recognitum & emendatum* (Basel: Froben, 1516, *USTC* 678736); *Hyperaspistes diatribae adversus servum arbitrium Martini Lutheri* (Basel: Froben, 1526, *USTC* 664562); and various paraphrases of the Gospels published by Froben in many editions in the 1520s. For Erasmus as a grammarian well known in Italy, see Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus*, 339–42.

what we have is not a shop inventory but a list prepared in Trino, the central office for Giovanni Giolito's business, of all the books to be transported to Pavia to be put on sale. It lists 1,064 titles in some 4,230 copies. Giovanni Giolito, the sole supplier of the book merchandise with which the partners were about to open a shop in Pavia, was acting only as a wholesaler and had no interest in the management of the shop. He set the number and range of books. The document is thus particularly significant in telling us of the commerce between wholesalers and retailers, a little-known aspect of the book trade.

The provenance of the merchandise offers a first way to describe this long list of books: about three hundred titles came from Lyon, 596 from Venice, and about one hundred from Trino. These figures reflect only titles – or, rather, entries on the inventory. If we calculate instead the size and the weight of the printed sheets, we see that twenty-six bales of books came from Lyon, as opposed to six bales from Venice and four bales from Trino.

A second way to examine this list is by looking at the way the materials are described not in terms of quality but in light of commercial relations between wholesalers. Books are given as by the ream (*a risma*) or by price (*a prezzo*), in other words, as books exchanged or books bought. In the first category were books that the wholesaler succeeded in acquiring from other publishers when he could provide them with book merchandise of an equal sort, similar to and equal in value to the books received. Exchange was the rule between producers of similar goods, and no price quotation was therefore needed. Printed sheets were the subject of this form of barter, counted by bundles of five hundred sheets (the *risma*, or ream). In a second category were books for which the wholesaler could not barter because he did not produce analogous goods to be exchanged. These items had to be purchased, each at its own price.

The books calculated *a risma* in this inventory were law books from Lyon, the books of Vincenzo Portonari in particular. But Giolito had to pay in coin for the Lyon books of the Grande Compagnie des Libraires, such as the copies of the *Corpus Civilis* that he later quoted to the booksellers of Pavia at a price of ten francs a copy or the *Tractatus Tractatum de m. A. Vincentio* for eighteen francs apiece.⁴⁹ Also listed *a prezzo* because Giolito

⁴⁹ This was the *Oceanus Iuris*, published in Lyon by Antoine Vincent in 1535 in eleven folio volumes, considered the first edition in which the genre of legal miscellanea began to take on extra-large dimensions and an encyclopedic nature: Gaetano Colli, "Attribuuntur Bartolo et tamen non sunt Bartoli": Prolegomeni ad una bibliografia analitica dei trattati

had no similar goods to exchange was merchandise in smaller formats that arrived from three particular sources in Lyon, Antoine Vincent,⁵⁰ Sébastien Gryphe,⁵¹ and Giovanni Francesco Gabiano.⁵² Here the contents are different and range from law books in quarto to humanistic books (from Gryphe in particular), and practical recipe books, all of them in Latin. Giovanni Giolito imported legal and humanistic works from Lyon, paying in coin for them, as well as some medical books, practical manuals included.

There are a number of Venetian titles among the books that Giolito bought, thanks to the commercial efforts of Gabriele, Giovanni Giolito's son, who had lived in Venice for some time. Above all, these were books in the vernacular (chivalric verse, other sorts of poetry, books of practical recipes, translations of Latin texts, and devotional texts), but there were also a number of missals, breviaries, and many *ufficioli* (books for the Divine Office), as well as costly medical texts.⁵³ This broad assortment gives evidence not only of many texts that have not come down to us but also of materials that were not strictly books, such as the twenty copies of *Man da contar* (counting hands, two soldi each),⁵⁴ or the twenty copies of *Carte de altare* (one soldo each).⁵⁵ Among Italian authors, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Bembo, Trissino, and Sannazaro were flanked by a

giuridici pubblicati nel XVI secolo," *Il Bibliotecario* 1 (1996): 163–64. Only some of these volumes are for the moment included in the Universal Short Title Catalogue: *USTC* 121035, 121037, 121039, 121041, 121043, 121045.

⁵⁰ Eugénie Droz, "Antoine Vincent: La propagande protestant par le psautier," in *Aspects de la propagande religieuse*, ed. Gabrielle Berthoud (Geneva: Droz, 1957), 276–93; Pettas, "The Giunti and the Book Trade"; Sybille von Gültlingen, *Bibliographie des livres imprimés à Lyon au seizième siècle*. 12 vols. (Baden-Baden: Koerner, 1992–2009), 7:110–61.

⁵¹ *Quid novi?: Sébastien Gryphe à l'occasion du 450^e anniversaire de sa mort: Actes du colloque*, ed. Raphaële Mouren (Villeurbanne: Presses de l'École nationale supérieure des sciences de l'information et de bibliothèque, 2008); Ugo Rozzo, "La cultura italiana nelle edizioni lionesi di Sébastien Gryphe (1531–1541)," in *Du Pô à la Garonne: Recherches sur les échanges culturels entre l'Italie et la France à la Renaissance* (Agen: Centre Matteo Bandello, 1990), 13–46; Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 8:11–286.

⁵² Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, 7:189–201; for the Gabiano family see also, here, Chapter two and Chapter five. In commercial documents, a specific reference to suppliers usually implies direct knowledge of them, or at least a commercial relationship without intermediaries.

⁵³ For example, the *Aetio in medicina*, certainly the edition in three folio volumes published by the Giunti firm in 1534 and listed at the price of nine lire.

⁵⁴ Sachiko Kusukawa, "A Manual Computer for Reckoning Time," in *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Claire Richter Sherman and Peter M. Lukehart (Carlisle, Pa.: Trout Gallery; Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespearean Library; Seattle: distributed by University of Washington Press, 2000), 28–34.

⁵⁵ *Carte de altare* were illustrated prints of sacred subjects that were intended to be placed on small domestic altars.

new generation of men of letters such as Bernardo Tasso, Lodovico Martelli, and Antonio Brucioli, and vernacular books also included a number of editions of the Bible. Texts in Latin imported from Venice were, however, rare.

Finally, it is worth noting that, unlike Giolito's bookshop in Turin in the same years, the Pavia shop had no Greek or Hebrew books, books from Basel, or German books in general. Their absence cannot be anything but a commercial choice based on the market. The shop in Pavia was aimed at a middling public closely tied to university circles and curious about the new and expanding Italian literary production, but not particularly well informed about debates in a more advanced European culture.⁵⁶ The character of these inventories is an important indication that the major bookmen supplied shops not on the basis of their own stocks, but in response to market demand in the various cities. Both shops demonstrate the major role that Giovanni Giolito played in the importation and distribution of books from Lyon into Northern Italy along a line that reached as far as Venice. To be sure, Giolito was not alone, for other major booksellers from Piedmont, such as Vincenzo Portonari and Lucimburgo da Gabiano, also followed this practice.⁵⁷

We can conclude that shops under the control of major publishers and wholesalers in Italian university cities had several common characteristics. The large number and variety of the books offered for sale were achieved by including very ample quantities of books printed outside Italy. With their large number of unbound (hence new) books and in light of their up-to-date nature and the value of their merchandise, these bookshops were significant entities within the broader system that enabled the sale of printed books in Italy.

Bookshop Inventories after 1550

The mid-sixteenth century bookshops for which we have information reflect a quite different commercial reality that operated within social and cultural realities that were also much altered. The first change, an increase

⁵⁶ Gabriele Giolito got rid of the shop after the death of his father, and it was acquired in 1540 by the Milanese publisher-bookseller Andrea Calvo: Stevens, "New Light on Andrea Calvo," 40–41.

⁵⁷ Nuovo, "Produzione e circolazione di libri giuridici." For Lucimburgo da Gabiano, see chapter 5.

in the number of books in any given shop, is undeniable. This growth was obtained by enlarging the number of editions for sale as much as possible, rather than by multiplying the number of copies on hand for each individual title; the latter figure tended to remain steady. Booksellers sought to best their competition in the assortment displayed in their shops as well as, as had always been the rule, in the quality of added services such as binding. They also wanted to avoid storing large quantities of unsold copies of badly selling titles. In essence, booksellers aimed at variety, seeking to increase the probability that a customer would find a title he desired. That the stock in a bookshop was based on quality (different editions) rather than on quantity (many copies of fewer editions) clearly reflects the limitations facing printing entrepreneurs at the time, chief among which was the impossibility of amortizing fixed production costs by increasing the press run of a given work beyond certain limits. The size of a press run could not run ahead of the number of potential readers, nor could it cause excessive expenditure on paper. Until the end of the eighteenth century, reading remained substantially an elite activity, involving only a small portion of the population. Growth in the number of titles printed and in the size of institutional libraries (especially libraries at educational institutions) and private libraries in the sixteenth century is not necessarily an indication of a dramatic increase in the number of readers. In fact, growth in the number of libraries, although considerable where private libraries were concerned, might instead indicate a degree of stagnation.⁵⁸ In practice, bookseller sought to sell more books to the same customers by encouraging them, in the best of cases, to become book collectors. Growing variety in a bookshop's offerings was thus the foundation of an evolving market.

This need for variety did not fail to strike contemporaries who were most deeply involved in the book world. In his *Dialogi piacevoli* (1539),

⁵⁸ Nuovo, "Private Libraries." The limits of the Italian book market become more clear in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in comparison with the great development of production in other areas, such as France, the Netherlands, and England. See the data provided in Eltjo Buringh and Jan Luiten van Zanden. "Charting the 'Rise of the West': Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, A Long-term Perspective from the Sixth through the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Economic History* 69, no. 2 (2009): 410–46, esp. Table 2, p. 418. All this must be contextualized within Italian economic history, which has been effectively summarized thus: "Compared to other Western European regions, the Italian economy was developed in the late Middle Ages; it was still advanced in the early Modern Age up to the mid-Eighteenth century; it was backward from then until the end of the Nineteenth century": Paolo Malanima, "Measuring the Italian Economy: 1300–1861," *Rivista di storia economica* 19, no. 3 (2003): 265–95.

Niccolò Franco presents a conversation about the bookseller's profession, seen as an art situated somewhere between the mechanical arts and the liberal arts and as an activity that lent itself to rapid enrichment.⁵⁹ Franco recommends that the bookseller not only ensure the basic necessities of a shop – a sign on the street, bookbinders on the premises, the constant presence of the bookseller, who sets the price for the client – but also, with conscious cynicism, keep in his shop the widest possible assortment of books, not necessarily selected with any notion of quality in



Fig. 10.4. Title page of Niccolò Franco, *Dialoghi piacevoli*. Venice: Gabriele Giolito, 1542; 8°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

⁵⁹ Niccolò Franco, *Dialoghi piacevoli* (Venice: Giovanni Giolito de Ferrari, 1539).

mind, so as to attract as many customers as possible. By implication, Franco criticizes textual variety as a sign of cultural decline, for example, in his polemics against texts translated into Italian in place of the original Latin or Greek versions. But variety also signifies lack of selection and hence an abandonment of the cultural responsibilities of a bookseller toward his public, behavior that Franco condemns as extreme dishonesty toward both authors and readers. From the viewpoint of the history of the book trade, the increase in the variety of texts available in bookshops was sufficiently apparent to give rise to intellectual criticism. We can analyze this evolution in Italy thanks to inventories from a number of Italian locations.

Ferrara

Antonio Sivieri's shop was inventoried in 1550 in order to make an exact evaluation of the capital invested, which means that the inventory clearly indicates all book prices. It covers some 3,400 copies, divided into 830 entries. That many books could not easily be cited in a simple alphabetical listing. An approximate alphabetical order does exist, but it conflicts constantly with other and increasingly pressing demands such as a desire to group together texts similar in content or genre.⁶⁰ The inventory headings make a distinction between *Libri de canto* (chant books: fifty-three copies) and *Libri Reallj* (generally law books, forty-two copies in all). Modern authors take on an importance equal to that of ancient authors here, and the names Giovan Giorgio Trissino, Pietro Aretino, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Pietro Bembo stand out on the list. Each title is normally represented by a quite low number of copies (from one to ten, but frequently just one). The principal attractions of this shop would have been its vast assortment of books and the many editions that came from north of the Alps. We should also note that the better part of the books were published in the 1540s, which means that a real effort to keep the stock up to date was beginning to be made. There may be a connection between that aim and the very low number of bound books (only thirteen) offered for sale.

⁶⁰ For example, right in the middle of the entries under the letter C there is a list of chivalric romances that perhaps presupposes the heading *cantari*: *Innamoramento di Carlo, Aspromonte, Altobello, Spagna, Dama Rovenza, Attila flagellum Dei*. For printed editions of these texts, see *Libri cavallereschi in prosa e in versi*, ed. Anna Montanari, University of Pavia, <http://lica.unipv.it/>.

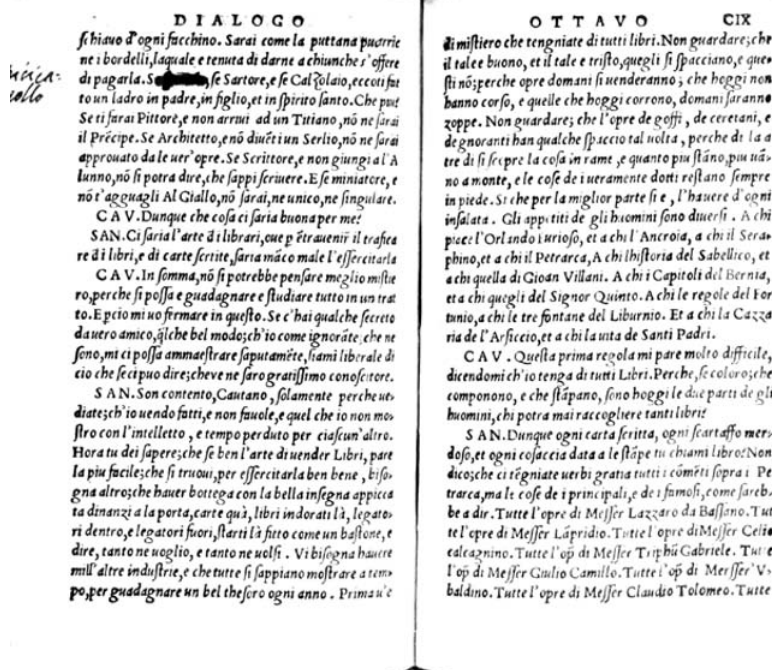


Fig. 10.5. Page from the dialogue about selling books in Niccolò Franco, *Dialogi piacevoli*. Venice: Gabriele Giolito, 1542; 8°. Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan.

Rome

Questions of a different sort arise from an examination of shop records originating between the 1570s and the early years of the seventeenth century, the latest inventories considered here. The documentation is a good deal richer for this period, and the inventories analyzed below are intended to serve simply as examples.⁶¹ *Valdemagna 1572*, the inventory of a bookshop in Rome, is hard to interpret because of its approximations. The notary, perhaps discouraged by the enormous number of books to be counted, decided only to note the number of copies in the shop when

⁶¹ We know about daily management of the Florentine shop of Piero di Giuliano Morosi thanks to his journal, dated between 1580 and 1607: Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Libri di commercio*, 553. The day-book includes an inventory listing some 950 books, among which there are many printed music books: Tim Carter, "Music-Selling in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence: The Bookshop of Piero Morosi," *Music and Letters* 70, no. 4 (1989): 483–504; Paul

there were one or two; when quantities were greater, he preferred to use such expressions as “a broken-up bundle” (*un mazzo rotto*), “a broken-up bundle, almost empty” (*un mazzo rotto quasi finito*), or “an unopened bundle” (*un mazzo sano*), referring to single editions. When he got to the letter *L* (the inventory is alphabetical), he gave up even on these formulas, and for each letter from then on he counted only the number of bundles (“27 *mazzi*, tra piccoli e grandi, incominciano per lettera *O*”). When there are bound books, he returns to noting individual editions, but without citing their titles. This mixed count cannot be translated into figures, but the fact that he worked this way is in itself significant. By now the book was a common good that existed in such abundance that the task of inventorying each individual title – the practice of calculating quantities of printed sheets had long disappeared – had become too time consuming; the solution was to count small groups of books, reckoned approximately.⁶² A *mazzo* was a highly variable unit of measurement that could stand for two copies or ten, according to format and other variables. Here in particular, it is prudent to assign to each *mazzo* (some of them intact, others almost empty) a number of copies ranging from three to five. According to this reconstruction, *Valdemagna 1572* refers to some two thousand copies on sale, of which 530 (this figure, at least, is accurate) were bound books.

Gehl, “Libri per donne: Le monacha clienti del libraio fiorentino Piero Morosi (1588–1607),” in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo: Studi e testi a stampa*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1996), 67–82; Gehl, “Credit Sales Strategies in the Late Cinquecento Book Trade,” in *Libri tipografi biblioteche: Ricerche storiche dedicate a Luigi Balsamo*, ed. Istituto di Biblioteconomia e Paleografia. Università degli Studi, Parma. 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1997), 1:193–206; Gehl, “Describing (and Selling) Bindings in Sixteenth-Century Florence,” *Italian Studies* 53 (1998): 38–51; Gehl, “Mancha uno alfabeto intero.” Other contemporary shop inventories that remain do not lend themselves to comparison with the documents examined up to this point because they offer only simple monetary estimates of the books’ value without distinguishing either prices or titles. It was also common to redact an inventory according to mixed criteria (some books evaluated in monetary terms, others just counted, and still others distinguished, if not by edition, at least by genre). An example of a document of this sort is the inventory of the goods in his print shop and two bookshops in Florence drawn up by Giorgio Marescotti for the benefit of his underage children: Cesare Tidoli, “Stampa e corte nella Firenze del tardo Cinquecento: Giorgio Marescotti,” *Nuova rivista storica* 74 (1990): 639–41. I might also mention the inventory of Vincenzo Girardone’s bookshop in Milan, published and studied in Kevin Stevens, “Vincenzo Girardone and the Popular Press in Counter-Reformation Milan: A Case Study (1570),” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 3 (1995): 639–59.

⁶² Inventories by bundles of books became more widespread: see Bòchini 1586 or the inventory of the heritage of Giacomo Gherardi (1594) mentioned in Francesco Barberi, *Per una storia del libro: Profili, note, ricerche* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1981), 327.

Still in Rome, the inventory *Semini 1583* presents a traditional arrangement of books divided between the storage area upstairs and the bookshop itself, on the ground floor.⁶³ The inventory first gives the unbound books in both the shop and the warehouse, then the bound books. Giuseppe Semini had in all 3,083 books, more than eight hundred of which he owned in only one copy. In the inventory, after the unbound books (2,278 of them) come the bound books, divided by format: 79 in folio, 161 in quarto, 565 in octavo and sextodecimo. Almost all of these books were available to the public; the warehouse held only the reserve stock made up of 685 unbound copies.

Verona

The bookshops represented by *Sivieri 1550* and *Semini 1583* made available some three thousand volumes, but they were far outstripped by the Verona bookshop reflected in *Bòchini 1586*, which lists nearly three times that number of books (roughly 8,500) in some two thousand different editions.⁶⁴ This inventory offers a broad and topographically diverse assortment of books, and its detailed account (the redaction of which required several days) permits us to visit Andrea Bòchini's shop as if we were customers in the sixteenth century. The shop contains nearly seven thousand books. On entering, one immediately encounters a group of 1,510 bound books in a variety of sizes, all on bookshelves. The inventory provides a picture of the arrangement of books on each shelf. The folio editions were placed on the upper shelves, and the smaller formats were shelved below in descending order, from largest to smallest. Thus the smallest books, in duodecimo and sextodecimo, were at floor level. Other books – sixty-eight bound and some seventy unbound – rested on tables both inside and outside the shop. Increasingly often, booksellers placed some materials for sale outside the shop, on tables and benches or stalls along the street, as shown in Sinibaldo Scorza's 1626 view of the bookshop on Piazza Pasquino in Rome, now in the Galleria Nazionale in Palazzo Venezia.⁶⁵ In Bòchini's shop, on the same bench at which he himself sat

⁶³ The owner of the shop, the Genoese Giuseppe Semini, who died between 18 July and 20 September 1583 (Barberi, *Per una storia*, 327), turns up in that same year among the Roman debtors of Luc'Antonio Giunti: Tenenti, "Luc'Antonio Giunti il giovane," 1038.

⁶⁴ Andrea Bòchini was also a publisher in Venice, where he and his brothers produced at least eight titles in the years between 1571 and 1576.

⁶⁵ One prominent man of letters considered the placing of large quantities of books on stalls to be a symptom of the decadence of the times and the decline of literature: "The Copys of HOMER, VIRGIL, CICERO, and such immortal productions of Wit, which

holding some hand-written papers (undoubtedly the shop's account books and its journal), there were ninety unbound books and 198 bound books. Some fifteen bound books stood waiting on the binder's table. All the rest of the books were piled up on shelves that ran along the internal walls of the shop. Those books, all of them unbound and in bundles, amounted to a truly notable total of some five thousand books. The bundles of books were placed topographically according to a strict alphabetical order by title as indicated on the light blue paper wrapped around the sheets. The alphabetical order started from the top three times, however, because these books were divided into three sections of unequal size: books of the humanities, including mathematics and medicine, for a total of 2,829 copies; law books (587 copies); and religious books (1,463 copies). The number of copies for every title, rarely more than ten, was displayed on the bundle.

That was not all, however. Bòchini owned a sizeable stock of books that he kept in a space next to the bookshop but facing another street. Here he kept only bound books, 187 of them printed and 1,508 in manuscript. Most of the printed books came from Aldo Manuzio's printing shop, and they included some very old editions, such as the Pliny published in Venice by Johannes de Spira in 1469 (*ISTC* ip00786000). Considering its location in a provincial city with little printing activity, the Bòchini bookshop was unusually large. But Verona was situated on a highly important line of communication with Northern Europe that ran from Verona to Rovereto, then to Trent and to Innsbruck, which encouraged the creation of commercial sites capable of functioning as storage facilities and also as the hub of an extended commercial network. To be specific, Bòchini was the Verona correspondent of Luc'Antonio Giunti, a colossus in Italian printing, publishing, and merchandising.⁶⁶ This relationship explains why Bòchini would have had such a large stock of books. Shops like his had already become warehouses for wholesalers or correspondents of large commercial networks, and they reflected the culture of the urban community around them only in a limited fashion. The stimulus that brought them into being had less to do with local market demand and much more to do with the mercantile capacities of the bookseller himself and with the strategic position of his city on an international communication route.

ought rather to be kept with a sort of Religion, and not expos'd to the People but on Festival days, were now so multiply'd by printing, that they ly and rot in every paltry Bookseller's Shop ...": Traiano Boccalini, *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, Centuria prima, ragguaglio 35, quoted from Boccalini, *Advices from Parnassus* (London, 1706), 59.

⁶⁶ Tenenti, "Luc'Antonio Giunti il giovane," 1038.

Venice

As might be expected, the bookshops of Venice were very large indeed, although the remaining evidence is too scanty for a reliable overview. The bookshop that Aldo Manuzio the Younger put under the management of Niccolò Manassi was inventoried in Venice in 1574, immediately after the death of Manuzio's father, Paolo Manuzio, on 6 April of that year. The document covers some twelve thousand books, including the stock of the bookshop of Lodovico Avanzi at the sign of the Tree, which Aldo the Younger had recently acquired.⁶⁷ His holdings were evaluated at 3,528 ducats, and the stock consisted of 294 bales of books, with the price set at twelve ducats per bale.⁶⁸ The Manuzio-Manassi firm was re-formed ten years later, in 1584, for another ten years, after liquidating the earnings of the previous partnership. At that point the common capital had reached five thousand ducats, 4,284 ducats of which was based on an assortment of books – to be precise, 357 bales of ten reams apiece, valued, again by common accord, at twelve ducats per bale. Calculating proportionally, the books that made up the capital of the partnership must at that point have been around 14,500 volumes.

The inventory *Bonfadini 1584* is a document drawn up for a medium- to small-scale operation. Between the books that Angelo Bonfadini kept in his house and those offered for sale in his shop, he had available eleven thousand volumes, including the few books he printed himself. Almost ten thousand of these (to be precise, 9,720) were in his shop. Where in bookshops other than in Venice the number of volumes per title was always reduced to a minimum, here we frequently see sizeable numbers of copies of the same printed work.⁶⁹ Booksellers were in the habit of picking up small quantities of warehoused stock (here, an edition put out thirty-four years earlier) and even of frequently exchanging certain quantities of merchandise. The books that Bonfadini offered for sale included about 1,100 editions, with a fairly high average number of items per edition. In contrast, the number of bound books was quite limited: only 361, of which forty-eight were *offici* (books of the Divine Office). The abundance of new merchandise – or at least of books that had never passed

⁶⁷ Russo, "Un contratto." For Avanzi, see the *D.B.I.* entry under his name and Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 50–51. For the acquisition of the bookshop, a move of which Paolo Manuzio disapproved, see Manuzio, *Lettere*, 311–17.

⁶⁸ Russo, "Un contratto," 14.

⁶⁹ For example, there were sixty-seven copies of Anton Giacomo Corso, *Le Rime* (Venice: al segno della Cognitione [per Comin da Trino], 1550, *Edit 16*, CNCE 13557).

through the hands of an owner – was great enough to limit resales, but with one caveat: within the category of bound books, there were sizeable numbers of “old books,” a genre that now, a century after the first diffusion of printing, was finding its own commercial definition.

The particularly large number of bookshops in Venice encouraged highly evolved ways of arranging the sale of books. From a letter of Jacopo Corbinelli to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli we learn that in 1580 a shop in calle della Spaderia already specialized in old and out-of-print books, like an early version of an antiquarian bookshop.⁷⁰ The panorama of very lively book trade in Venice undoubtedly included not only the largest bookshops in Italy, but also a certain number of intermediaries, brokers, agents, middlemen, and occasional resale dealers. Almost nothing remains of them in the documentation, however.

Vicenza

A bookshop and print shop in nearby Vicenza, inventoried a few years later (*Perin 1596*) tells of a different situation.⁷¹ The inventory was made at the death of the owner, Anna, the widow of the bookseller Perin. The shop had been set up on Piazza dei Signori in 1581, after the town council of Vicenza approved a petition in which Perin requested help for the payment of rent in order to open a fine bookshop, something the city lacked. The inventory provides a picture of this shop after fifteen years of activity. Leaving aside the inventory of the print shop (a modest facility for printing with only one working press and another deemed “imperfect”), what needs to be stressed is the large quantity of notebooks, writing paper, and parchment offered for sale in the shop. Only after a careful listing of this material does the inventory turn to the 1,166 printed books that were in the shop. The books are listed by format, and within each section they are given in more or less alphabetical order. “Used books” are listed at the end, but without giving their titles: there were thirty of these in folio format, forty-one in quarto, and 198 in octavo, for a total of 269 copies in all. Another category of books, all of them bound, was counted separately: these were schoolbooks such as *Donati*, *Dottrine Christiane*, *Salteri*

⁷⁰ Marisa Gazzotti, “Jacopo Corbinelli editore de *La bella mano* di Giusto de’ Conti,” in *La lettera e il torchio: Studi sulla produzione libraria tra XVI e XVIII secolo*, ed. Ugo Rozzo (Udine: Forum, 2001), 171–72.

⁷¹ This inventory is published in Giovanni Mantese, *I mille libri che si leggevano e vendevano a Vicenza alla fine del secolo XVI* (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1968), 15–47, but with lacunae and mistakes.

(grammars, small catechisms, Psalters) and a good 814 *Abbachi* (mathematics textbooks), for a total of 1,284 books ready for schoolchildren to use. In all, *Perin* 1596 accounts for a total of 2,450 books, half of them already bound. A large number of other books were housed in the printing shop, which also functioned as a warehouse for just-printed books. Here there was a mass of materials not yet bound. How many copies this material represented is difficult to determine, but there were certainly more than five thousand pieces, among which schoolbooks always account for the greater part. This was a small, local operation. All the major personages of Vicenza were among its clients (and its debtors): the bishop (Michele Priuli), many clerics, and men of letters of some renown such as Angelo Ingegneri. The majority of the debtors were fellow booksellers (Fabio Zoppino and Paolo Meietti of Venice, Paolo Camisano and Francesco Bolzenti of Padua), printers (like the partner in the firm, Giorgio Greco), and paper merchants from Venice, Verona, and the Riviera of Salò.

Cremona

The owner of a shop inventoried in 1602 in Cremona, Giovan Battista Pellizzari (*Pellizzari* 1602) was a printer-bookseller whose activities we can trace back to 1559. His shop was in via delle Beccherie Vecchie (today via Solferino) near the Duomo, at the sign of Orpheus. He had obtained permission from the town council to open a printing shop in an adjudication dated 14 March 1590 (although he had been printing at least since 1588) that cancelled a privilege previously granted to others.⁷² The bookshop stock inventoried at his death was extensive: as well as paper and parchment, the inventory lists over six thousand volumes of some two thousand titles, with several copies for each title, but without indicating materials on deposit from the print shop. This means that the entire assortment was the result of mercantile activity, as can also be surmised from the fact that there are no books of purely local interest. Pellizzari's business was not aimed at Cremona alone. He was in fact a merchant who had a sizeable fortune: he had been able to provide dowries for each of his four daughters of some three thousand lire, and the goods in his shop were worth twenty-five thousand lire. He also owned a house and some fields, which he left to his son, at Sabbio in the Riviera of Salò, where he had been born, a paper-making area. In 1571 he married Cornelia, the sister of Francesco Ziletti,

⁷² Barbisotti, "Librai-editori a Cremona"; Rita Barbisotti, "La stampa a Cremona nell'età spagnola," in *Storia di Cremona*. 7 vols. (Cremona: Bolis, 2003–), 4:478–511.

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Fig. 10.6. Page from the inventory of Giovan Battista Pellizzari's bookshop, Cremona, 1602. Courtesy of Biblioteca Statale, Cremona.

one of the major bookmen in Venice of the latter half of the sixteenth century; she brought him a dowry of two hundred ducats.⁷³ Pellizzari sent his son Francesco to Spain to act as his correspondent in the book trade.⁷⁴ Finally, Pellizzari was a member of the *Societas Brixiana* – an important company of publishers-booksellers formed in Brescia in 1595, which counted among its members Pietro Maria Marchetti and the brothers Tommaso and Ludovico Bozzola – while still remaining connected with the Ziletti of Venice. Giovan Battista Pellizzari operated not only as a bookseller for the city, but also as a wholesaler, making space available for the deposit of books that later were to be moved on to other destinations. The dimensions of this shop in Cremona – where the six thousand costly

⁷³ Marciani, "Editori, tipografi, librai veneti," 514. This was not a large dowry, however, given that Felicita Valgrigio, Vincenzo Valgrigio's daughter, married Francesco Ziletti eight years later with a dowry of 2,500 ducats, two thousand ducats of which were in law books.

⁷⁴ At some point Pellizzari 1602 mentions four bales of books that were in Spain, being held by Francesco Pellizzari.

books of high culture clash with the image of a provincial city with no university – show that the area in which he did business was certainly not uniquely local.⁷⁵ As a whole, the bookshop seems to have operated as a local depository in a highly ramified network for the distribution of books.

Milan

The inventory of the Milanese bookshop of Giovanni Antonio degli Antoni (*Antoni 1603*) was drawn up in 1603, when the shop was sold. The Antoni family had been active in the book world in Milan for a number of generations, and its members were involved in book-related activities in a number of places (Venice, Lyon, Antwerp, Brescia, Bergamo, and Pavia) and had published some 150 editions. The Antonis' commercial initiative was thus felt widely, and their books had been presented on a number of occasions at the most important commercial gathering of the age, the Frankfurt Fair.⁷⁶

In 1603 Giovanni Antonio degli Antoni decided to sell his shop to his brother-in-law Giacomo Antonio Somasco, a Pavia bookman active in Venice. The agreement stipulated that the evaluation of the bookshop stock and its furnishings and fittings be carried out by a third party, Carlo Ferrari, kin and a friend of both men. His decision was that the books should be evaluated uniformly at 10 soldi and 5 denari per ream. After the payment of a first installment of one thousand imperial lire, the remaining payments were to be made over ten years, for an overall sum of 8,427 lire.

This was not a transfer of the bookshop alone, but of the entire firm. The sign of the Gryphon, which was the Antonis' publishing mark, became the property of the Somascos. In connection with the transfer of the firm, Antoni also promised to obtain the rental of the shop for Somasco under

⁷⁵ To prove that Pellizzari sought a clientele beyond Cremona, it should be enough to cite the edition with which the inventory opens, a monumental collection of the complete works of Alfonso Tostado, published in thirty parts by an association of Venetian printers in 1596 and inventoried at the very high price of 186 lire.

⁷⁶ See *D.B.I.*, s.v. "Antoni, Giovanni Antonio degli"; Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 35–37. Antoni was one of the very few Italian booksellers in direct contact with Christophe Plantin, from whom he bought luxurious books such as ten copies of the *Biblia Regia* and twenty-nine copies of his Books of Hours in 32° published in 1573 with engraved illustrations: Julianne Simpson, "Selling the *Biblia Regia*: The Marketing and Distribution Methods for Christopher Plantin's Polyglot Bible," in *Books for Sale: The Advertising and Promotion of Print since the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll, 2009); Bowen and Imhof, *Christopher Plantin*, 163.

Li. Rome di Dio adi.
Quintario delle libri che ha consegnato il M.^{ro} Antonio della
Antoni a Vincenzo Somasco sotto il di sopraddetto
et questo secondo il libro d'accordo e p.^a

2	Quintario di p. ^a rever. s. ^a bussa	—	204
2	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	205
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	162
2	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	194
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	136
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	79
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	10
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	54
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	137
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	13 ¹ / ₂
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	14
3	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	21
2	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	53
2	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	75
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	95
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	36
1	— (idem s. ^a bussa)	—	206
			1712

Fig. 10.7. Page from the inventory of Giovanni Antonio degli Antoni's bookshop, Milan, 1603. Courtesy of Archivio di stato, Milan.

the same conditions and for the same figure (sixty scudi per year) that he had paid. From the buyer's point of view, possession of this highly visible bookshop was a step in the direction of enlarging his commerce in the Milanese market. Already in 1584 Antoni and Somasco had joined forces in Venice to publish a few works by the Milanese Jesuit Paolo Morigia (*Edit* 16, CNCE 29421).

Attached to the act of sale is a notebook in board of 154 leaves containing the entire shop inventory. Written by one hand, it provides the number of copies (almost always just one copy; occasionally more, but still only a few) for almost every item, along with an evaluation in lire and soldi. The books are arranged and subdivided into the traditional categories of the book trade and the culture of the age: religious works, law books,

books of medicine, literature, and “mixed.” Within this somewhat rigid structure, the last category includes all the rest of the books arranged in two series, Latin works and works in the vernacular, with Spanish and French books preceding those in Greek, and with the inclusion of some books in Hebrew.

This bookshop inventory is a document of exceptional interest, above all from a quantitative point of view. The buyer was offered an assortment of about 5,893 editions in an overall number of 11,811 copies. It is hardly surprising that the shop was deemed *grande* in this document, or that it was defined as *nobilissima* by Tommaso Garzoni in the chapter “De’ librari” of his *La Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*.⁷⁷

Editions and Copies in Bookshops

Table 2 summarizes figures that can be drawn from the printed bookshop inventories examined in this chapter. The second column lists the total number of books put on sale; the third gives the number of editions represented by those copies; the fourth gives the average number of copies in which each edition appears. In an attempt to create a coherent table, I have considered only bookshop inventories; when inventories also include warehoused materials or printing supplies, I have left those warehoused materials or printing supplies out of the calculations.

Scanning the fourth column in the table leads me to a few remarks. The average number of copies of any one edition is still rather low, ranging from a minimum of 1.8 copies to a maximum of 7.3 copies for editions in provincial shops with a less learned or smaller clientele. School texts excluded, the higher the number of copies per edition, the slower, we can presume, the sale of books and the older the merchandise. An offering of around three to four copies per title represents a balanced figure, reasonable for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the entire period under consideration. This continuity would seem to indicate that although it is

⁷⁷ “In Milano aveva nobilissima libreria Giovan Antonio degli Antonii all’Insegna del Griffo, piena di esquisiti libri in tutte le professioni, dove ora si ritrova Antonio delli Antoni, honorato suo nipote nella libreria del Griffo, il quale dimostra di non punto degenerare da’ suoi maggiori, e in molti altri luoghi del mondo” (In Milan Giovan Antonio degli Antonii had a most noble bookshop at the sign of the Griffon, full of exquisite books in all professions, where now in the bookshop of the Griffon one finds Antonio delli Antoni, his honored nephew, who shows himself worthy of his elders, and in many other places in the world): Tommaso Garzoni, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*, 1585, ed. Paolo Cherchi and Beatrice Collina. 2 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 2:1335.

Table 2. Editions and Copies Recorded in Bookshop Inventories, 1477–1603.

Inventory, Location	Copies	Editions	Copies per Edition
<i>Stai</i> 1477, Padua	210	ca. 90	2.3
<i>Cenni</i> 1482, Siena	104	16	6.5
<i>Siliprandi-Stellini</i> 1483, Mantua*	887	ca. 130	4.2
<i>Libri</i> 1484, Bologna	ca. 400	ca. 215	1.8
<i>De Madiis</i> 1484, Venice	1,361	ca. 380	3.5
<i>Martinati</i> 1484, Parma	103	15	6.8
<i>Lupoto</i> 1487, Genoa	1,508	ca. 380	3.9
<i>Agostino da Siena</i> 1488, Pisa	178	ca. 50	3.5
<i>Ugoleti</i> 1491, Parma**	2,183	ca. 240	3.8
<i>Pasquali</i> 1496, Scandiano (Modena)	151	ca. 60	2.5
<i>Salvestro da Zanobi</i> 1496, Florence	220	ca. 30	7.3
<i>Martinati-Quintrello</i> 1497, Parma	901	ca. 134	6.7
<i>Sivieri</i> 1503c, Ferrara	?	ca. 424	?
<i>Leonardo di Bartolomeo (Giunti)</i> 1517, Perugia	ca. 6,000	ca. 900	6.5
<i>Zambelli</i> 1525, Cremona	850	ca. 254	3.3
<i>Giolito</i> 1538, Turin	2,537	ca. 700	3.6
<i>Giolito</i> 1539, Pavia	4,230	1,064	3.9
<i>Sivieri</i> 1550, Ferrara	ca. 3,400	ca. 835	4.1
<i>Valdemagna</i> 1572, Rome	ca. 2,000	?	?
<i>Semini</i> 1583, Rome	2,398	ca. 1,160	2
<i>Bonfadini</i> 1584, Venice	9,720	1,160	6.8
<i>Bòchini</i> 1586, Verona	6,951	ca. 2,000	3.4
<i>Perin</i> 1596, Vicenza***	2,450	ca. 460	4.7
<i>Pellizzari</i> 1602, Cremona	ca. 6,000	ca. 2,000	3
<i>Antoni</i> 1603, Milan	11,811	5,893	2

* The 887 books in this shop included 344 school texts; the average is calculated from the total number of books excluding schoolbooks.

** Among the 2,183 books in this bookshop, 1,267 were school texts and grammar books, probably produced by the firm. The average is calculated from the total number of books excluding schoolbooks.

*** Since this inventory does not indicate the number of editions, the figure under “editions” does not include “used books,” although these are included in the total number of copies.

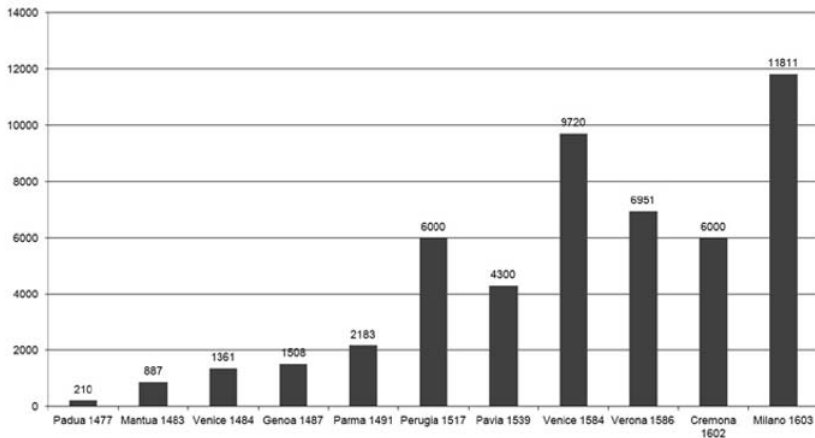


Fig. 10.8. 125 years of development: number of books in bookshops, 1477–1603.

undeniable that the total number of books in the shops increased, the buying public did not grow precipitously. Lower-than-average ratios of copies to editions (like the two copies per edition of *Antoni* 1603) represent a visible effort to enlarge choice as much as possible for particularly demanding readers.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MANAGING A BOOKSHOP

There are few images to help us reconstruct the appearance of bookshops of our period within the urban panorama. The oldest depiction is perhaps that found in a manual on improving memory published in Venice in 1520.¹ To aid in recalling an ordered series of arguments or parts of a speech, the reader is instructed to construct a series of places on which to impose striking images. The manual suggests a spatial model based on a walled town. The name of an abbey, the author explains, sets off a series of professional activities named in alphabetical order. A barber's shop (*barbitonsor*) is followed by the shops of an armorer (*bellator*), a bookseller (*bibliopola*), a butcher (*bovicida*), and a cowherd (*bubulcus*). The bookseller is pictured, as are the other artisans, with his merchandise on display in a window; some of his goods are stacked in loose sheets, some are bound into volumes propped up on a bookstand.

Internal Views

The interior of a bookshop of the fifteenth and sixteenth century looked quite different from a modern bookstore.² The bookseller did not sell what we would call books, but rather loose sheets, which he displayed in packets carefully lined up or piled up in bookcases along the walls. On each packet an external label bore the title or the author of the work it contained. Certain volumes – few in the earliest examples and in increasing number as time went on – were offered for sale already bound.

¹ Johannes Host von Romberch, *Congestorium artificiosae memorie* (Venice: Giorgio Rusconi, 1520, *Edit 16*, CNCE 22789), f. D4r; republished in a more widely circulated edition of 1533 by Melchiorre Sessa: *Edit 16*, CNCE 22790. See Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Penguin Books, 1969).

² There are some highly interesting illustrations in Taubert, *Bibliopola*, for example, tables 21, 28, and 36 in volume two. All of them come from the German world – which may have been more interested in representing internal views connected with daily life – and date from the seventeenth century. There is no reason to believe, however, that the interiors of these shops were more modern or in some way different from their Italian equivalents of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Taubert's illustrations depict a reality that the Italian inventories reflect quite faithfully.



Fig. 11.1. Woodcut depicting a city street as a series of places to be memorized, from J. H. von Romberch, *Congestorium artificiose memorie*. Venice: M. Sessa, 1533; 8°, f. 35^v.

The bookseller kept bound books in a special section of the bookcases, lined up one after the other but back to front by modern criteria: the fore edge, not the spine, was visible, which meant that the books along the walls always presented a homogenous alignment of sheets of paper, some horizontal, others vertical, which gave them the appearance of being chromatically quite uniform. As a rule, bindings were not considered of any help in locating any one book. Additionally, this arrangement protected the integrity of the book and helped to conserve it. Many books had wording on their fore edge indicating the title or author of the work.

Within this context, the role of the bookseller was of the utmost importance, both for arranging the merchandise and for retrieving it. Not by

chance, almost all depictions of bookshops show the proprietor intent on explaining something to a client. The bookseller fixed the price of a book, presumably after negotiation with the client.³ As soon as a new book arrived in the shop, the bookseller would place it in plain sight, on a table or on a bookstand known as the *mostra* (display place). So placed, this copy was available for all to peruse. Booksellers also sold adjuncts to reading and study: in Florence the Giunti firm sold eyeglasses and terrestrial and celestial globes.⁴

The bookseller's counter merits a closer look. It was strategically situated, with a bookstand holding the shop's journal, a notebook in which the

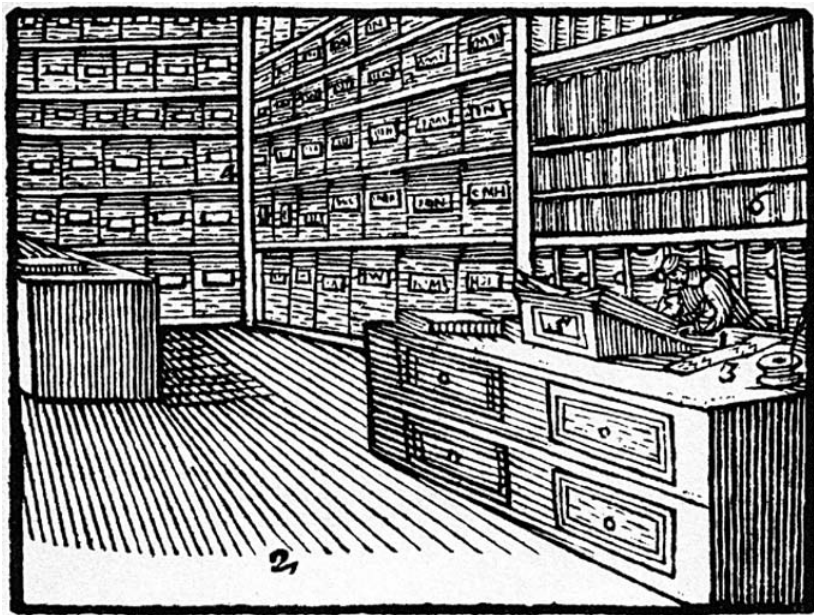


Fig. 11.2. Woodcut of the interior of a bookshop, in Johannes Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*. Nürnberg: M. Endter, 1658; 8°.

³ Fixing prices seemed to a man of letters like Niccolò Franco to be the primary function of the bookseller: "If indeed the art of selling books seems the easiest that can be found, pursuing it requires more than having a shop with a handsome sign hung at the door, papers here, gilt-edged books there, book binders inside and book binders outside: [it requires] standing there, steady as a post, saying, 'I want so much and so much I will get'": Franco, *Dialogi*, fols. 115v–116r.

⁴ Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, 150–51.

shop's owner constantly made notes of what was needed. Small objects for daily use also sat on the counter. Drawers, large and small, to which only the bookseller had access contained sheets or books kept aside for more reserved viewing or viewing on request by special customers. Here was also where the firm's account books were kept. From his place at the counter the bookseller could supervise everything that went on in the shop and even follow conversations of which he was not a part without infringing on the rules of good manners. And we know much discussion went on in shops.

Inside the Shop: The Placement and Arrangement of Books

The placement of the merchandise for sale was a prime concern in managing a shop. The customer undoubtedly had several ways of gathering information about what was offered for sale. He might, for example, peruse a list of books for sale hanging outside the entrance facing the street. Still, the opportunity to browse inside the shop, glancing over the bookshelves, must have been the most effective invitation to buy, then as now. Only rarely do the inventories that remain to us suggest a specific collocation of books inside the shop, since they are almost always notarial documents listing works alphabetically, a configuration considered the best way to set a value on the merchandise, the principal aim of every inventory.

In the early years, the limited number of books for sale made systematic arrangement unnecessary. The merchandise was sparse, and anyone could find his way around it without great effort.⁵ The situation soon changed, however, although gradually and starting in the best-stocked shops. As early as in *Libri 1484* and still more clearly in *Benedetti 1497*, inventories show a division of books by subject matter. Above all, inventories tended to separate law books from all other books, and in particular from classics, religious books, and books of philosophy and medicine. This was an arrangement that privileged the most costly merchandise, as we have already seen.

Francesco de Madiis followed a more rigorous topographical arrangement in his bookshop, one that corresponded to a semantic classification.⁶ Here the books were clearly arranged in thematic blocks, with a

⁵ See, for example, *Cenni 1482* and *Martinati 1484*.

⁶ As seen in the inventory of Francesco de Madiis' shop redacted on 17 May 1484 and given at the beginning of his day-book: *De Madiis 1484-1488*.

focus not on some abstract philosophical division of knowledge, but rather on the sorts of requests that the public might make. This arrangement allows us to classify the various interests of his clientele and evaluate their significance proportionally.⁷ The first group listed in the inventory is also the largest, accounting for 32 percent of the total. It comprises Latin classics, accompanied by a number of books in Greek (a small group, but complete for the period). Although this section was designed to appeal to teachers in the humanistic schools, it did not include Latin grammars, which formed a group apart. It did include Greek grammars, a language that few students learned at school, and a few medieval and humanistic texts promoted to the rank of classics or rather, held to be instrumental to a better understanding of the classics. This group included Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum*, Flavio Biondo, Francesco Filelfo, Giovanni Aurispa, Isidore of Seville, Platina, Giacomo Filippo Foresti and his *Supplementum chronicarum*, and Giles of Rome.

Next came a group of texts of a religious nature (24 percent of the total) but quite varied in its composition, since it grouped together, in this order, Bibles and biblical commentaries, Fathers of the Church and collections of sermons, and theological and liturgical texts for all uses and of every size. These works were, for the most part, professional books for members of the clergy. After them came a group of Latin grammars (5 percent of the total), quite evidently school texts, in which the traditional *Donato* is the title most frequently found. The following section was dedicated to law books, which accounted for only 7 percent of the total number of titles listed, but for the space they took up and their cost, they were a fundamental part of the entire bookshop. This group included law codes and commentaries, reference books and lexicons, treatises and *Consilia* – books that appear on every commercial list of the period as the most expensive. This group was exclusively professional.

After these categories came the group composed of books in the vernacular, which accounted for 19 percent of all books but took up little space and was quite composite in nature. It included highly varied texts united only by a common language. This section is worthy of more detailed analysis because it was destined to undergo great changes in the decades that followed. A group of Bibles in the vernacular was followed by many devotional texts, then by more strictly literary texts: chivalric romances,

⁷ This division should not suggest that clients bought books from only one category; the contrary was much more likely.

Petrarch and Boccaccio, and a few classical authors (Pliny, Livy, Cicero, Ovid, Juvenal) in Italian translation. Since there was not yet a large and well-defined public professionally connected with reading in the vernacular and as it would be some time before such works became habitual reading among the entire community of readers, the diversity seen in this group of books to some extent reflects what is usually called the culture of the middling sort, of the merchants and the urban artisan class. This character is shown by the presence of introductions to accounting such as *Regola d'abaco* and *Arte d'abaco* – that is, of texts that taught the practical mathematics connected with business and related problems of transfers, partnerships, exchanges, and the like.⁸ Although humanists recognized the importance of mathematics, teaching the abacus was rigidly excluded from the schools in which Latin was used and present only in schools where teaching was in the vernacular, which meant that mathematics students were usually unable to read Latin. Among the books in the vernacular in de Madiis' shop we find almost all the titles that owed their long editorial success to their use as textbooks in the vernacular schools. For example, we see *Il Fiore di virtù*, a book used for beginning readers after children had learned their ABCs; the *Evangelii epistole vulgare*, a text derived from Holy Scripture that was for centuries both a school text and a book of devotion for home and church; hagiographic texts such as the *Vita patrum volgare* in Domenico Cavalca's translation, the *Legendario de santi*, and the *Istoria di san Josafat*; and to end the list, texts for meditation such as the *Meditation de la passione* and the *Arte de ben morire*. Even chivalric romances fell partly within the province of the schools, and although their didactic use in Venice is attested only in 1587, it must have been a practice also at an earlier date.⁹ Such texts were used in the schoolroom because there was no specific reading program in the vernacular schools, which led teachers to adopt familiar texts that might presumably have been found in many of the students' homes. The employment of chivalric romances as school texts would therefore have been a consequence of their editorial success, and it also helps to explain the massive loss of this sort of literature. A consistent portion of the books in the vernacular that

⁸ Van Egmont, *Practical Mathematics*.

⁹ Grendler, *Schooling*, speaks on several occasions of the *professio fidei* of the Venetian schoolmasters of 1587, the oldest and most complete source to supply a list of vernacular readings that had become canonical in the schoolroom. The teachers state that they have their charges read *libri de batagia* (books about battles) and cite as examples *Buovo d'Antona* and *Orlando Furioso*.

de Madiis offered can thus be traced, directly or indirectly, to the world of the schools, which suggests that the widespread reprinting of vernacular texts during the Quattrocento resulted from their scholastic use. Such works provided a broad range of reading matter at home and at school, both for adults and for children – in short, for the vast part of urban society that did not study grammar.¹⁰

The section following vernacular books in de Madiis' inventory is dedicated to university studies, divided into medicine (5 percent of total books) and philosophy (8 percent). After these works comes a sizeable

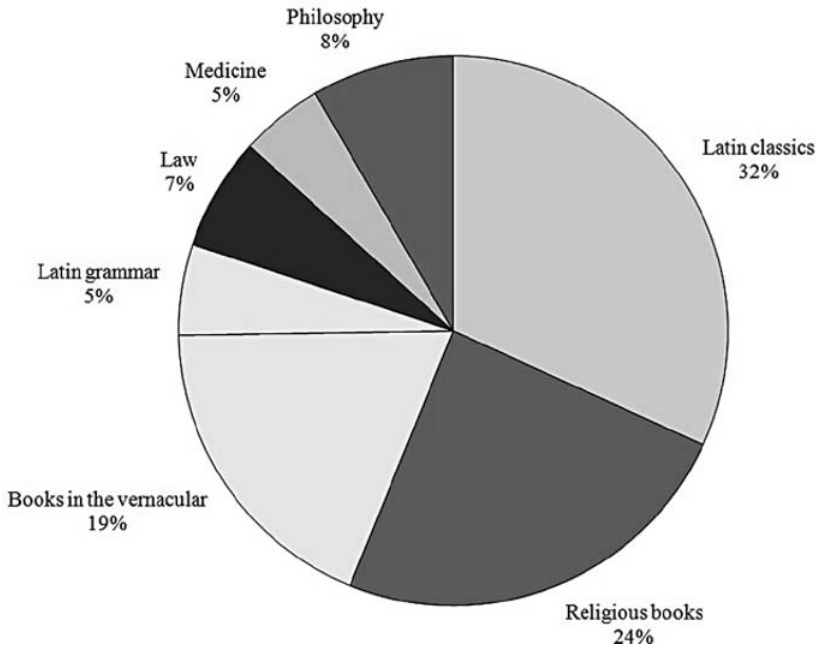


Fig. 11.3. Classification of the books in the shop of Francesco de Madiis, 1484.

¹⁰ The significant presence of such material does not mean that Venetian bookshops did not also stock the traditional texts of cultivated reading in the vernacular, works such as those of the three leading authors, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, the *Acerba* of Cecco d'Ascoli (first edition in 1473: *ISTC* ic00357900), the *Canzonette* of Leonardo Giustiniani (first edition in 1472: *ISTC* ij00500300) and Niccolò Lelio Cosmico (first edition in 1478: *ISTC* ic00943000), or the many Latin classics in vernacular versions.

group of books of varied content that had probably arrived in the shop recently and had not yet been filed in their appropriate sections. Last come bound books, which made up 4 percent of the total items offered for sale.

De Madiis apparently considered classics, religion, law, vernacular works, medicine, and philosophy (with a small section of grammar books) the most important categories in the proper management of a bookshop. There are indications that he was not alone in thinking so: the list of books printed in Venice by Erhard Ratdolt, also from 1484, classifies materials thus: *In theologia* (religion); *In logica* (philosophy); *In humanitate e poetria* (classics and medieval and humanistic aids to their interpretation); *In iure canonico et civili* (law); *In medicina* (medicine). To these sections Ratdolt adds a category in which he specialized, *In astronomia et geometria*.¹¹ Such documents suggest that a system that could be termed a “Classification of the Venetian booksellers” was already operative by the 1480s. The system could easily have been diffused everywhere thanks to lists of books for sale that were continually redacted at the time and that have almost all disappeared today. Such classification offered a logical structure to commercial strategies, as can be seen from the lists of books distributed by the Company of Venice. Entire classes of Venetian books – books in the vernacular in particular – were not exported to Tuscany in this period. Using this Venetian classification to analyze the inventories of certain provincial bookshops automatically reveals the nature of the public served by these shops: for example, learned books broadly defined (law, medicine, philosophy) are nearly absent from the bookshops of Parma (*Martinati-Quintrello 1497; Ugoleti 1491*).

This system would last, used in the major bookshops as long as the books offered for sale retained certain characteristics. The prevalence of Latin and of large formats stimulated the custom of separating out vernacular books as a category in themselves. It was above all the increase in the production of works in the vernacular that upset this status quo, a production that also brought about a greater diffusion of small formats. Whereas the categories covering learned books, although they expanded somewhat, retained a certain rigidity, the large increase in the publication of vernacular works was sufficient to upset the old fifteenth-century classification system, marginalizing learned books in general but law

¹¹ *Libri venales Venetiis impressi* (Venice, 1484), ISTC iro0029800; Konrad Burger, *Buchhändleranzeigen des 15. Jahrhunderts: In getreuer Nachbildung herausgegeben von Konrad Burger* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1907), table 27. One category that is clearly missing is vernacular books.

books in particular. The commercial history of law books increasingly followed its own distinct path. High production costs and an ample and wealthy customer base allowed such books, which were produced only by a few publishers, to maintain their value for a long time. Writing to the bookseller Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano in Venice in 1522, the Milanese bookseller Andrea Calvo refers to “good books, that is, law books.”¹² When Felicita Valgrisi married Francesco Ziletti, her dowry was half in cash and half in law books.¹³ Law books were repeatedly sold as secondhand books and were transferred from one generation to the next within families of men of the law, evidence that their staying power was greater than that of other types of merchandise.

Smaller bookshops had little need of refined systems for classifying books. In the shop that Bono Zambelli ran in Cremona (*Zambelli 1525*) all the merchandise was placed haphazardly, with no attempt to arrange books according to classification. In fact, classification would have been of no use for such homogeneous materials. Taking into consideration only unbound books, that is, new books, we see that among the 186 editions offered for sale, only five were in Latin, and those few were for the most part dictionaries. A new organizing principle was developing, however, which although undeclared can still be inferred: books were sorted by format, even unbound books. This method was evident within bookshops in the rough placement of groups of materials, with no alphabetical internal organization, according to size: in quarto, in octavo, and in single sheets (broadsheets), with decreasing monetary value from one group to the next.

We can surmise what happened in later years, as almost all remaining inventories observe an alphabetical order imposed on materials not necessarily shelved in that order. Still, it is clear that despite the tumultuous growth in numbers of printed works and although the traditional thematic subdivisions turned out to be misleading, partial, and unsatisfactory, it was hard to abandon the established categories. In one shop in Ferrara in 1550 (*Sivieri 1550*), the alphabetical order of the inventory is often broken, giving way to a list of similar works (for example, a list of the *Rime* of a number of authors). Separate listings came to be indispensable for books whose format was completely different from the rest, as for music books.

¹² *Lettere Gabiano*, letter of 12 November 1522.

¹³ Testament of Vincenzo Valgrisi, 10 April 1566: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Testamenti, Notaio Cesare Zilioli, b. 1261, n. 895; Andreoli, “Ex officina erasmiana,” 68–74.

During the second half of the sixteenth century, the sizeable stock of merchandise in the bookshops (some of which might by this time be defined as decentralized warehouses for wholesalers and merchants) came to follow one of two criteria of organization. Stock was either on one hand, arranged by format, as was inevitable for book materials that were bound, which was increasingly the practice, or on the other hand, gathered into bundles that could then be placed in alphabetical order, as was the case for loose sheets. The first letters of the title of the work or the author's name were clearly written on the wrappings of these bundles and used as a basis for alphabetization.¹⁴ When there were many bundles and the bookshop owner so desired, they could again be filed by subject matter, as in *Bòchini* 1586. This inventory returns to the system of dividing books by thematic categories, but only two of the three categories used – law and religion – are clearly defined and circumscribed. The third category, which we might label “humanities,” contains a bit of everything: Latin, Greek, and vernacular; mathematics and medicine; grammar books and books on pilgrimages; Ruzzante and Teofilo Folengo, and more. In the smaller shops, organization by format became an established practice: as in *Perin* 1596, books might be noted simply as printed in quarto, in octavo, in 12° and 16°.

In the early seventeenth century, the bookshop of Giovanni Antonio degli Antoni (*Antoni* 1603), with its stock of almost six thousand editions, reflects the most complex arrangement of books known to us. Within a carefully structured organization linked to the longstanding Venetian system – that is, separated into books of Holy Scripture, of law, and of medicine – there is a strong presence of books that are not defined but that we can categorize as books in the humanities, which included a dual series of Latin and Italian works. This group also includes books in Spanish and in French, which at this time were more numerous than books in Greek. The merchandise is classified both by content and by language. What is striking, however, is the subdivision of each class of books into specific subjects, arranged alphabetically, using a letter of the alphabet to underline the structure. For example, within the series of “*Libri di scrittura sacra*” we find sub-divisions under the letter *E* (“*Expositio hymnorum varia*,” “*Enarrationes in Evangelis varia*,” “*Exercitio spirituali diversi*,”

¹⁴ See, for example, *Valdemagna* 1572: three bundles, large and small, had inscriptions beginning with the letter *N*; twenty-six bundles were marked with a *P*, and so on (p. 248). For bundles bearing the name of the author in a bookshop in Naples in 1575, see Lopez, *Inquisizione stampa e censura*, 101, 289.

parte ligata in affe	7	6	2	1	1	2	2
Colli in affe	7	4	2	6	1	0	2
parte di Capretto ligata in affe	7	5	2	1	1	5	2
parte de carton ligata cu il fon	7	4	2	1	0	0	2
Donati ligati in affe	7	2	2	1	1	4	2
ffopi ligati in affe i q file a felle	7	7	2	1	1	5	2
ffopi ligati in affe pioli i 8 file	7	9	2	1	1	6	2
Detonati ligati in affe	7	6	2	1	1	3	2
Detonati ligati cu il fondello	7	6	2	1	1	2	2
Detonati senza il cometo ligati	7	7	2	1	1	0	2
cu il fondello	7	7	2	1	1	0	2
Donati ligati in affe cu la regula	7	9	2	2	1	5	2
de guerino	7	0	2	4	1	0	2
Regule de guerino ligate in affe	7	4	2	2	1	2	2
Regule de guerino ligate cu il fon	7	4	2	2	1	2	2
Capentino ligato in affe	7	1	2	1	1	3	2
firmamento de orland ligato	7	4	2	0	1	1	2
in affe	7	6	2	2	1	6	2
libri de batolin ligati in carton	7	2	2	1	1	6	2
parte ligata in carton	7	2	2	1	1	6	2
ffalmi ligati copti di cramo	7	8	2	1	1	0	2
Bernardino ligato cu il cramo	7	1	2	1	1	6	2
oratio cu il cometo di copti ligato	7	1	2	1	1	6	2
copti di cramo	7	1	2	1	1	6	2
Detonati de brilletta ligato copti	7	1	2	1	1	6	2
di cramo	7	1	2	1	1	6	2
ffalmi ligati in carton	7	2	2	1	1	6	2
ffalmi copti di cramo ligati senza	7	4	2	2	1	0	2
oro	7	1	2	1	1	6	2
plegrino ligato adorno	7	1	2	1	1	6	2
		2	6	7	1	4	8

Fig. 11.4. Page from the inventory of Bono Zambelli's bookshop, Cremona, 1525. Courtesy of Archivio di stato, Cremona.

"Epistole"); under I ("Istoria ecclesiastica varia"), L ("Loc communes vari"), M ("Meditation diversi," "Magister sententiarum"), O ("Opera Granata varia," "Opera Gregorio Niceno varia," "Opera Bernardo varia," "Omellie varie," "Ordo officio varia") and so on, up to V ("Vite varie"). Each of these subject headings contains a number of editions. The complexity of such an arrangement of materials is great and may have been devised by men of letters or, more generally, of a higher culture than the bookseller. Still, the day-to-day use of such a refined structure presented its own challenges. A considerable portion of the materials for sale at the time the inventory was drawn up had not yet been assigned to a specific category, an indication of the difficulty of imposing a semantic arrangement on

8	Galileo Galilei metro d.	48
1	Manuale da casa	4
1	Gabriel burasella 2 ^a V. ^a	22
1	Idem consuetudine 2 ^a V. ^a	35
1	Aguetario 2 ^a V. ^a	83
2	Grato Sonere	6
2	Fluore della 2 ^a grada 4 ^a V. ^a	79
2	pancoseimi 2 ^a V. ^a	32
14	della audizione dell'apoc.	27
	Pinto de asagora de fustina 2 ^a V. ^a	209
	Proverbi Successi	
1	proverbi continia Germani Gerolamo	24
1	de querta salomonis uelle d'apoc.	12
	Totale	930

Fig. 11.5. Page from the inventory of Giovanni Antonio degli Antoni's bookshop, Milan, 1603. Courtesy of Archivio di stato, Milan.

large bookshop stock. Contemporary private libraries encountered similar difficulties.¹⁵ The mere existence of a structure such as this is surely evidence of the competence and bibliographical skill of booksellers of the period, although it is wise to avoid generalizations about their capabilities. The day-by-day management of thousands of books and of the transactions taking place continually must, however, by the force of things, have generated a competence and pool of knowledge that can only in part be discerned from the records that survive.

Bound Books, Used Books

As is known, during the age of the manuscript, trade in used books was strong, and there is good reason to believe that the same commerce,

¹⁵ Nuovo, "The Creation and Dispersal."

far from weakening after the invention of print, continued to contribute in large part to effective book circulation. It does not seem possible, though, to determine on the basis of the resources currently to hand the proportion of the book trade taken up by used books. In the age of the printed book, the commodification of used books must have had a very significant impact on book sales, even if that impact differed for various types of books and texts. Total quantities and market share varied with time, determined by such factors as the overall economic situation, the availability and condition of goods, and location.

It is not easy to identify used books in the early years. Printing threw onto the market a hitherto unimaginable quantity of new books. Within this new reality, *cartolai* and booksellers neither readily focused on used books as a category nor designated them with that term. The only hint we have that books were being re-sold is that we find texts already bound at a time when books were usually sold unbound. Indeed, the sources agree in their use of the adjective *sciolto* (unbound; literally, loose) to refer to a new book.¹⁶ Not all books put up for sale bound were secondhand, but it seems fair to suppose that used books nestled within this category more than in any other. The binding of new material was, however, anything but rare, carried out, for example, to recuperate material that had been damaged in transport. When, in 1498, the boat that was transporting a chest of Aldo Manuzio's books from Venice to Bologna was shipwrecked, the books were left wet but not ruinously damaged, and it was decided to put the volumes on sale after binding them.¹⁷ Neither the presence in a bookshop of books that had become wet nor their sale already bound was an unusual occurrence. Water-damaged books were often sold in the Giunti shop in Florence; the shop register recorded their sale in order to justify the bargain price, which might be as little as half the normal price.¹⁸

Diachronic analysis may help us understand the phenomenon of bound books in the bookshops. The presence of books put on sale already bound

¹⁶ There are a few rather late examples of this usage. In a letter to his son Aldo the Younger, Paolo Manuzio wrote in 1568 that unbound books circulated principally as salable goods, and thus they were subject to customs duty (the *dazio*): Manuzio, *Lettere*, 131. In a promise to pay registered in Rome on 6 April 1574, the cleric Giovanni Francesco Peranda stated his obligation to pay Venturino Tramezino one hundred gold scudi "causa et occasione pretij tot librorum novorum ut dicitur sciolti": Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 163.

¹⁷ Letter of Alessandro Bondeno to Aldo Manuzio, dated Ferrara, 14 March 1498, in Manuzio, *Lettere*, 334.

¹⁸ Gustavo Bertoli, "Conti e corrispondenza," esp. pp. 309 and 317. The reference is to books bought by the man of letters Vincenzio Borghini between 1552 and 1573.

is attested from the first shops. Normally absent from the commercial congeries circulated by the major merchants (see *Gillio 1480*¹⁹ and *Bonomini 1488*), bound books soon found their own space, particularly in all bookshops. At first that space was minimal: only one book out of the hundred or so that the *cartolaio* Agostino Cenni put on sale in Siena in 1482 was bound (*Cenni 1482*). There were no bound books at all in the Bolognese bookshop of Sigismondo dei Libri (*Libri 1484*), which is surprising given that commerce in secondhand books traditionally flourished in university cities. In a bookshop in Padua in 1477 (*Stai 1477*), however, sixty-three out of 210 copies (or 30 percent) were bound. The re-use of printed books began to leave traces in bookshop inventories. In the Mantua bookshop inventoried in *Siliprandi-Stellini 1483*, bound books accounted for 13 percent of total books for sale. In the assortment offered for sale in Parma and reflected in *Martinati 1484*, the percentage of bound books suddenly jumps to 45 percent, which reflects the almost exclusively scholastic material for sale.

In the inventory dated 17 May 1484 and contained in *De Madiis 1484–1488*, the quota of bound books sinks back to 4 percent and that figure did not rise much in relation to shop business in general, given that the bound books that de Madiis sold over about three years account for only 6.8 percent of total sales.²⁰ Still, year by year, the number of books that de Madiis sold already bound did increase constantly. These works were the most requested texts, destined for immediate and intensive use (grammars, breviaries, and so forth), for which the shop provided something of a standard binding, although de Madiis also offered used books for sale. That the bindings were put on ahead of time in order to appeal to a particular (though less wealthy) clientele is clear from the fact that de Madiis sold bound books above all during the fair held on the Feast of the Ascension.

The percentage of bound books was even lower – around 2.3 percent – in the Genoese bookshop reflected in *Lupoto 1487*. But while bound books accounted for only 1 percent of the merchandise of Pietro Antonio da Castiglione, the Milanese merchant who was Bartolomeo Lupoto's principal supplier, they accounted for 6.5 percent of the books owned by Lupoto himself, an indirect but undisputable indication of a serious aging of this

¹⁹ In *Gillio 1480* only a group of books of prognostications that Antonio Moretto supplied to his correspondent in Padua were sent bound, in order to encourage their rapid sale because of their subject matter.

²⁰ Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson*, 189–90.

material. Many manuscripts are included in these figures for bound books, and for the first time we see the unequivocal term *usato* (used), applied to three grammar books.²¹

Trade in used books, long concealed by their inclusion among bound books, was a reality above all for bookshops of modest means and in mid-dling to small cities, or in any event cities at some distance from the centers of printing. It was a commerce that developed in the age of printing thanks to the increased circulation of books as goods. Bookshops that followed this pattern in one way or another included Agostino da Siena's shop in Pisa (*Agostino da Siena* 1488), where bound books represented 15 percent of stock, and the Florentine shop reflected in *Salvestro di Zanobi* 1496, where the proportion of bound books rises to 20 percent. In the Parma bookshop represented by *Martinati-Quintrello* 1497, bound books formed almost 50 percent of stock. Greater financial means or better connections within the book distribution system are often accompanied by a drastically lower proportion of bound books, even within one city. In this fashion, in the shop of the Ugoletti brothers (*Ugoletti* 1491) in Parma, bound books represented only slightly over 5 percent of total stock.

The figures for the shop of Bono Zambelli in Cremona (*Zambelli* 1525), as we have seen, provide a peak in the proportion of bound books. Here the customer would have had to work hard to find an unbound book, given that bound books took up 80 percent of the titles displayed. In the shop inventory bound books are listed under a heading of their own, as "Libri et officioli ligati," a term that testifies to the now-consecrated habit of passing books of personal devotion from one hand to another. *Martinati-Quintrello* 1497 also notes seventy-three copies of the *Officia Beatae Mariae Virginis*, bound and in different formats. *Zambelli* 1525 cites eighty-three copies of the same title, with enough variety in their bindings and formats to confirm a disparate provenance for the materials and an adaptation to personal tastes that differed according to the previous owner. This Cremona bookshop also offered many other already bound books: texts of pastoral care and prayer; classics (including a manuscript Plautus) and Latin grammars; ABCs; and a good fifty-six chivalric romances with a rough carton binding.

The increasing presence of bound books in the bookshops is so noticeable that the absence of such books stands out as odd. For example, the remarkably low percentage of bound books in the shop of Antonio Sivieri,

²¹ *Lupoto* 1487, 216.

judging from the list he redacted in 1550, is perplexing, especially because Sivieri had been doing business in the book trade in Ferrara for a long time.²² It is probable, however, given that the purpose of this list was to select books with a total worth of two hundred lire in order to satisfy the requirements of an agreement with his partner, Gaspare Cavazzi, that the books listed were drawn from the cream of the crop in the bookshop.²³ One paragraph in this agreement states that if students bring in “new

1. <i>libro menologio</i> ...	2. <i>libro menologio</i> ...
3. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	4. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
5. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	6. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
7. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	8. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
9. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	10. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
11. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	12. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
13. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	14. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
15. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	16. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
17. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	18. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
19. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	20. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
21. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	22. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
23. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	24. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
25. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	26. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
27. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	28. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
29. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	30. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
31. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	32. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
33. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	34. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
35. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	36. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
37. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	38. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
39. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	40. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
41. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	42. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
43. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	44. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
45. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	46. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
47. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	48. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
49. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	50. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
51. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	52. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
53. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	54. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
55. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	56. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
57. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	58. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
59. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	60. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
61. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	62. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
63. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	64. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
65. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	66. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
67. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	68. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
69. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	70. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
71. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	72. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
73. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	74. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
75. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	76. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
77. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	78. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
79. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	80. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
81. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	82. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
83. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	84. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
85. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	86. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
87. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	88. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
89. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	90. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
91. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	92. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
93. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	94. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
95. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	96. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
97. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	98. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...
99. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...	100. <i>libro de s. demetrio</i> ...

Fig. 11.6. Page from the inventory of Antonio Sivieri's bookshop, Ferrara, 1550. Courtesy of Archivio di stato, Modena.

²² Sivieri 1550. Only thirteen out of some 3,400 books were bound.

²³ Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*, 116–17.

used" (*novi uzi*) books, Cavazzi can sell them. The reference to new used books – that is, books just brought into the shop – indicates with the accuracy of spoken language (the agreement is in Sivieri's own hand) the commercial reality of books that a variety of persons, but students in particular, brought to a bookshop for resale after they had used them.

In the inventories a price is usually given next to each bound book. Unlike loose books, which were usually valued according to the number of sheets that made them up, bound books were priced individually according to their binding. The idea that the bound or used book was necessarily an old book of little value does not therefore appear to have taken root in this period. The price of a bound book was usually about double that of the analogous edition in loose sheets. The value of the binding strongly affected the price. The book's condition was of secondary significance, mentioned only when it was poor: *vecchio* (old) and *frusto* (worn) are adjectives more frequently encountered. In such cases the price was much lower.

In the 1580s used books acquired more shop space and a clearer definition within the category of bound books. At the same time, their price began to fall. Category headings in the inventory *Semini 1583* include "Bound folio books new and used"; "Octavo books new and used"; "New 16mo books"; and "Used octavo and 16mo books." Clearly, although not all bound books were used books, the used books were located among the bound books. Some 40 percent of bound books were used. In *Bonfadini 1584*, the inventory of a Venetian bookshop, bound books and "old" books were listed in two separate categories, even though the latter were also bound; two-thirds of bound books were old books. Similarly, in a series of small bookshops in Siena that were inventoried between 1591 and 1603, bound books account for between a third and a quarter of the entire book assortment for sale.²⁴ The impact of the sale of secondhand books on a bookseller's overall business was such that one Neapolitan bookseller, interrogated by the archbishop of Naples in 1574, stated, "My profession is as a bookseller, that is, I buy old books and then resell them – both law and medicine – when they are good."²⁵

The Verona bookshop inventoried in *Bòchini 1586*, a bookshop-warehouse with a wide selection and a large-scale business, permits further remarks. Given the possibility that some of the material listed was

²⁴ Bastianoni, "Libri e librai a Siena."

²⁵ Lopez, *Inquisizione stampa e censura*, 276. The bookseller was Marc'Antonio Passero.

only being stored here, it is hard to set numbers for bound and used books intended for sale in Verona. Certainly their proportion was exceptionally high. On tables on the street outside the bookshop there were 150 books, half of them bound, the others unbound. Within the bookshop, there were 1,708 bound books on shelves in bookcases, and it is hard to believe that many of them had a standard binding. Finally, in the storage areas behind the shop, we find a genuine depository for bound books. Here the heading “bound books” clearly points to secondhand and used books, for each entry is accompanied by a printing date and often by the name of the publisher; principally, these are Aldo Manuzio’s Greek books (for example, all of his Aristotle in Greek), along with books of other publishers, in particular foreign publishers from Basel, Cologne, and elsewhere. Some sixty volumes are of this sort, almost all of them in folio editions, some of which by this time were almost a century old. There is also a large group of law books with printing dates from the 1520s to the 1540s, and the list closes with a good group of medical works, generally of more recent date. There is little doubt that many of these books were secondhand, since it is unlikely that books of this sort would have been being put on the market for the first time. Still, we get the impression that within the used-book market Bòchini was dealing with only the higher echelons of the market – those books that, like the Manuzio Greek editions, could rightly be considered an investment.²⁶ The special attention paid to Manuzio’s publications can be explained by the fact that the sign of the Anchor was displayed outside Bòchini’s shop, indicating that he must have had commercial connections with the Manuzio firm and that it would therefore have been a natural move to encourage the circulation of Aldine editions. The phenomenon of a reserve stock of high-end books was new, and it is hard to say what perception of the market lay behind it. It is possible that the growth of private and institutional collections, in which Aldo Manuzio’s production and the Greek editions from Basel, with their pan-European reputation, played a fundamental role, supported something like an early market for antiquarian books. Moreover, together with his bound printed books, Bòchini had a large collection of manuscripts: 1,504 individual manuscripts, for which no specification is given except for their formats, which were 124 folio copies, 431 quarto, and 949 octavo. Within this imposing mass, the notary differentiates between “new” and “used” manuscripts, noting 102 of the latter in the largest format.

²⁶ I might stress that none of Manuzio’s Latin and vernacular editions appear on this list.

Adopting another viewpoint, we need to ask whether a reader and collector would have had the same relationship with his books and his library and the same desire for an accumulation of books as his modern counterpart. Our doubts are raised when we note that there is no mention in a 1576 inventory of the library of a scholar of the stature of Vincenzio Borghini of a third of the books that he had bought from the Giunti firm over the preceding twenty years. Borghini used the Giunti shop in Florence not only to acquire books, but also to sell books that he wanted to dispose of.²⁷ A significant portion of trade in secondhand books coincides with sales of entire private libraries through commercial circuits, a growing phenomenon in the latter half of the sixteenth century that accompanied a more widespread practice of selling a good range of used household articles such as works of art, furnishings, and clothing in the thriving secondhand market of the period. The postmortem sale of entire private libraries (for example, of jurists) became an increasingly common event, and it began to aliment book collecting.²⁸ This phenomenon was so visible that the Inquisition sought to require that it be notified by booksellers of titles of used books they acquired. While private libraries remained within domestic walls, however, especially in noble palaces, the Inquisition found them difficult, if not impossible, to inspect.²⁹ Sales of private libraries through booksellers sought to turn the capital represented by the books into ready money, and it is clear that booksellers were able to liquidate this stock, in whole or in part, within a short time. In Rome, Donato Gianotti's nephew, also named Donato Gianotti, sold all his books to the bookseller Venturino Tramezino in 1573, soon after the death of his illustrious uncle, a great intellectual and political writer. In 1585, when Alfonso Visconti succeeded Carlo Borromeo, who had just died, as archbishop of Milan, he sold his own entire library to the Roman bookseller Giovanni Andrea for four hundred scudi.³⁰ Other private libraries were

²⁷ Bertoli, "Conti e corrispondenza," 280–81, 329.

²⁸ Kevin Stevens, "Purchasing a Jurist's Private Library: Girolamo Bordone, Omobono Redenaschi and the Commercial Book Trade in Early Seventeenth-Century Milan," in *Biblioteche private in età moderna e contemporanea: Atti del convegno internazionale Udine, 18–20 ottobre 2004*, ed. Angela Nuovo (Milan: Bonnard, 2005), 55–68.

²⁹ Antonio Possevino, *Apparatus sacer ad scriptores veteris, & novi Testamenti* (Venice: Societas Veneta, 1606), 1:241. In 1585 an edict was printed in Bologna with the aim of imposing censorship: *Editto per gli stampatori et librari di Bologna: del modo, che si debbe tenere nello stampare, overo vendere libri, & altre cose stampate: cosi per li librari, come per altri, che vogliono vendere studii de libri venuti alle loro mani*: Edit 16, CNCE 6113; here *studii* is a metonym for "private collections." Rozzo, *La strage ignorata*, 212.

³⁰ Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma*, 161.

sold at auction. In Italy there were local auctions in the thirteenth century, if not earlier, and in Venice from 1345 at the latest the Procuratori di San Marco occasionally auctioned off secondhand books for the benefit of heirs.³¹ Sales at auction, which were more likely to occur in university cities, like Padua,³² could become significant events, as was the case with the auction of the famous collection of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, sold in Naples in 1608 to emissaries of Cardinal Federico Borromeo for three thousand scudi.³³

Although commerce in secondhand books was lively in Italy, the changes in scale and mentality that occurred in geographical areas that were becoming predominant in the European economy of the late sixteenth century were not reproduced in Italy. Commerce in secondhand books underwent enormous growth in Leiden, replicating earlier trends in the southern Low Countries, in Leuven and Antwerp in particular. In Antwerp in 1584, Louis Elzevier received the first exclusive privilege to sell books at auction, before he and his expertise moved on to Leiden. What has been called a micro-invention in the book trade thus arose in the Low Countries at the end of the sixteenth century as an organizational method for selling secondhand books. It brought together a series of existing commercial techniques: selling to the buyer with the best offer; sale of books one by one rather than as a block; the publication of a printed catalogue; setting a day and an hour for the sale. These elements were accompanied by the advantages offered by prominent universities, by the existing practice of selling used books to a university clientele, and by the presence of a very effective infrastructure that included a postal service through which catalogues could be sent. Commerce in used books was thus transformed from an occasional, though to some extent predictable, phenomenon into an enduring market system with defined structures.³⁴

³¹ Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, 185–203.

³² Don C. Skemer, "Book Auctions and Prices in Quattrocento Padua: Selling the Library of Francesco Malaffi da Vicenza, 1484–1487," *La Bibliofilia* 108 (2006): 113–58; Skemer, "Inside a Book Auction in Quattrocento Padua," in *The Books of Venice – Il libro veneziano*, ed. Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana: La Musa Talia; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), 101–25.

³³ Anthony Hobson, "A Sale by Candle in 1608," *The Library* 5th ser., 26 (1971): 215–33; Massimo Rodella, "Fortuna e sfortuna della biblioteca di Gian Vincenzo Pinelli: La vendita a Federico Borromeo," *Bibliotheca: Rivista di studi bibliografici* 2, no. 2 (2003): 87–125.

³⁴ Laura Cruz, "The Secrets of Success: Microinvention and Bookselling in the Seventeenth-Century Netherlands," *Book History* 10 (2007): 1–28; Cruz, *The Paradox of Prosperity: The Leiden Booksellers' Guild and the Distribution of Books in Early Modern Europe* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2008).

Buying and Selling a Bookshop

In a number of cities the trade in books was dominated by families of *cartolai* who had begun to sell books in the age of the manuscript.³⁵ With the advent of printing, however, the sector underwent such great expansion that we often see new operators appearing on the scene. One result was that cessions and sales of bookshops were frequent, but there was no lack of buyers interested in entering into a new activity. The most abundant documentation – once again – pertains to Venice of the mid-sixteenth century, as that city proved highly attractive to booksellers from all over, who often underwent their apprenticeship there.³⁶

Quite often it was the heirs, no longer interested in continuing the business, who decided to give up a bookshop. In 1532 Girolamo, Luigi, and Antonio de Martinis, sons of the late Francesco de Martinis, bookseller at the sign of St. Louis, sold the paternal bookshop to Pietro Sartori of Brescia for fifty ducats.³⁷ In 1536 Elisabetta, the widow of the bookseller Jacopo Corsico of Milan, found it impossible to keep up the business with small children and sold the entire shop, from the books to the furnishings, to Andrea Calvo for the sum of 2,591 lire and 12 soldi. Included in the sale was the sign of the Sun, which also passed into Calvo's hands.³⁸ In 1545 Antonio Locatello, the son of the late Boneto, sold to the booksellers Pietro Ardengo and Domenico Splendore the paternal bookshop at the sign of Saints Peter and Paul, in San Giuliano, complete with twenty-nine bales of books of various sorts, part of them in the shop and part in Antonio Locatello's house, for the sum of 240 ducats.³⁹

On other occasions the sale took place after a long rental period or at the end of a satisfactory working relationship during which the eventual buyers had successfully managed the bookshop for a number of years. An act covering a sale of this sort reveals the activity in Venice of Vincenzo Valgrisi before 1539, when he began his career as a publisher.⁴⁰ On 16

³⁵ This tradition is quite evident in Ferrara: see Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara*.

³⁶ Among the apprentices in Venice who later became famous were Guillaume Rouillé, who worked under Gabriele Giolito before 1539 (Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, 44, 68), and Jan Moretus, resident in Venice in 1562 and 1563 (Voet, *The Golden Compasses*, 2:151–52).

³⁷ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Benedetto Soliani, b. 11862, f. 53, 2 September 1532.

³⁸ Stevens, "New Light on Andrea Calvo," 35–36.

³⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Marc'Antonio Cavagnin, b. 3249, f. 29, 10 February 1545.

⁴⁰ This document is the first to attest to the presence in Venice of Vincent Vaugris (Valgrisi), who was born in Charly, near Lyon, around 1495; in it Valgrisi declares himself to have been a resident of Venice for a number of years.

December 1532 the Parma bookseller Andrea of the late Agostino, together with his son-in-law Vincenzo Valgrisi, acquired the bookshop at the sign of the Head of Erasmus belonging to Pietro di Giacomo, a shoemaker.⁴¹ The act of sale freed Pietro di Giacomo from all residual debt from payment of their salaries. The shop was ceded as an ongoing activity, that is, complete with all its contents – books for sale, previously inventoried and evaluated to their mutual satisfaction, and all furnishings. Included in the sale was what was deemed the *avviamento*, which consisted of the reputation of the sign of the Head of Erasmus, an evident indication of a commercial venture with a consolidated tradition. This sale helps to clarify a misunderstanding that has grown up around Valgrisi's decision to link his publishing activity to the name of Erasmus.⁴² The publisher's mark was not the result of an ideologically based choice but was simply the traditional sign of a well-established shop in Venice. The shop itself was the property of an artisan, who would probably not have endowed a commercial space with the figurehead of a great literary figure. It does not seem that this head of Erasmus ever had any connection with Erasmus of Rotterdam.

The sale price agreed upon was four hundred scudi, and payment was to be made in monthly installments of ten scudi until the full sum was paid (thus in a little more than three years). This long payment period was guaranteed by the shop itself and by the goods it contained, which remained *pro tempore* the property of the creditor until the debt was completely paid off. The debt was in fact paid in five years; the definitive receipt, legible in the margin of the act, is dated 16 January 1538. The business evidently thrived, for from that shop and using its sign as a publisher's mark Valgrisi quickly developed a remarkable publishing and commercial activity.⁴³

When the sale of a shop marked the cessation of its activities, the agreements were more complex. When, in 1603, the shop of Giovanni Antonio degli Antoni in Milan was sold to Giacomo Antonio Somasco, who was from Pavia but active in Venice, the agreement specified that an evaluation of the stock, the furnishings, and the equipment be made by an arbiter selected in common by the two parties. The arbiter's decision was that the books be evaluated uniformly at 10 soldi and 5 denari per ream. After a

⁴¹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarile*, Atti, Not. Bartolomeo Soliani, b. 11863, ff. 76v–78r.

⁴² See Pesenti, "Il 'Dioscoride' di Pier Andrea Mattioli," 73–74; Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia*, 344.

⁴³ On Valgrisi's activities, see Andreoli, "Ex officina erasmiana."

first down payment of one thousand imperial lire, payment was to be made in installments over ten years. But the cession of the firm also included the sign of the Gryphon that was the Antonis' publishers' mark. It too passed into Somasco's hands in 1603. Also linked with the cession of the firm was Antoni's promise to obtain for Somasco the rental of the shop under the same conditions and for the same sum (sixty scudi a year) conceded to Antoni by the proprietor, Ferrante Carcano. It was essential for the firm that the shop continue to operate at the same location, and since a rental contract could not be ceded, the seller promised to help assure that the shop's activities would be carried on under the best conditions.⁴⁴

Men of Letters and the Bookshop

In Renaissance Italy, booksellers' shops were places where gentlemen and men of letters were apt to meet. Even the nobility might frequent a bookseller's shop. These shops soon became part of the everyday practices of a worldly life. Although it was normal to send a servant to carry out all sorts of commissions, the client had to go to the bookshop in person; it was even a pleasure to do so, on occasion with a degree of pomp and solemnity, accompanied by a small suite of friends and advisers.

A significative example of an aristocrat very fond of spending his time in bookshops comes down to us thanks to a trial for a violent crime. In 1577 Count Giovan Battista Borromeo, a relative of Carlo Borromeo, stabbed to death his wife, Giulia Sanseverino, who belonged to one of the highest noble families of the Duchy of Parma. Sentenced to death and with all his goods and lands seized, Borromeo took refuge in Switzerland. On the occasion of the seizure of his assets, according to procedure, his creditors had present themselves to the magistrate to report the outstanding amounts Borromeo owed them. The bookseller Giovanni Antonio degli Antoni made a declaration that he was still awaiting payment of more than 222 imperial lire for 156 bound and unbound books that had been provided to Borromeo over the past fourteen years without payment having been received. The credit terms allowed by booksellers to their customers were normally generous, but here the bookseller was clearly constrained to oblige Borromeo. When Borromeo was in Milan, the bookseller recounted, he used to go to

⁴⁴ Archivio di Stato di Milano, *Notarile*, Not. Giulio Cesare Rugginelli, 21475, 7 November 1603.

his shop and stay one or two hours a day looking at new publications, before choosing which of them he wanted bound and sent to his house.⁴⁵

In light of the merchandise they held, it was surely natural for bookshops to act on occasion as meeting places for men of letters. Both the quantity and the quality of the evidence lead us to think that for Italian men of letters and gentlemen the bookshop quickly and consistently took on some of the functions and characteristics of libraries and academies. Access to a generous patrimony of books in a bookshop did not face the same restrictions and challenges posed by other places with a large number of books.

La Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo of Tommaso Garzoni, the leading encyclopedia of professions of the period, provides a useful account on which we can base our further considerations, for Garzoni dedicates one of his discourses to booksellers.⁴⁶ For him, selling books quite naturally belonged among the noble professions because it took place amid books, which were capable of opening the way to knowledge and virtue. The explications that follow and that aim to show that collecting books has always been held to be an honorable occupation are quite clearly developed on two levels: looking back to antiquity and the near past, Garzoni refers to a series of librarians and book collectors from Ptolemy II (Ptolemy Philadelphus) to ruling clans in Italy such as the Medici and the Gonzaga families; when he turns to the contemporary scene, however, booksellers – men who collect books with the aim of selling them in a shop – suddenly jump to the top of his list. For Garzoni, the nobility inherent in their profession is above all social, because the booksellers profit from their relations with a noble and lettered clientele, who make them learned and intelligent in return. The people whom Garzoni cites as frequenting bookshops are theologians, doctors of law, physicians, humanists, and “molti altri scienziati” (many other scholars). The booksellers’ profession is also noble because it has nothing to do with the

⁴⁵ Archivio di Stato di Milano, Finanza-Confische, cart. 561: 30.VIII.1577. See Leonida Besozzi, “Libri e librai al tempo di Carlo Borromeo,” *Libri e documenti* 17 (1992): 57–59.

⁴⁶ Garzoni, *La piazza universale*. This work contains 155 discourses, each dedicated to one or more professions or trades, for a total of about four hundred activities. The discourse dedicated to booksellers is number 128. The work, which met with success throughout Europe, had eleven editions in Italy alone before the end of the sixteenth century. See the recent edition edited by Paolo Cherchi and Beatrice Collina (Turin: Einaudi, 1996) and George W. McClure, *Culture of Profession in Late Renaissance Italy* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2004). On Garzoni, see *D.B.I.*, s.v. “Garzoni, Tomaso.”

mechanical professions: booksellers do not dirty their hands with ink and do no manual labor. Their activities are part of the merchant's art because they buy wholesale and sell retail. Finally, the profession is noble on account of its utility, because booksellers provide a service that is offered to all. Anyone can enter a bookshop and find all sorts of books from which to glean ideas useful to all spheres of life. Here, Garzoni specifies, customers can find books "of war, of love, of letters, on administration, on trades, on offices, and on whatever is desired." He cites Venice, Rome, Paris, Lyon, Antwerp, and Basel as cities with many bookshops, but only for Milan does he note a specific shop, the *grande* shop of Giovan Antonio degli Antoni at the sign of the Gryphon.⁴⁷

It is clear that Garzoni thought of bookshops as sites of free access to books and locations for reading and consultation rather than as places for simple purchases. For him, the function fulfilled by public and private libraries in the past had been inherited after the invention of printing by the bookshops. Evidently this was also his daily experience as a writer and as an editorial collaborator with the Venetian publisher Giovan Battista Somasco.

The affirmation of bookshops as locations for free reading was the result of many factors, not the least of which was their position in urban topography, on the main square or the principal street, close to schools, by the university, along the wall of the principal church, and so on. These locations were a custom that, once again, had its roots in the age of the manuscript. The *cartolai* and booksellers were often persons of culture who were able to establish a direct relationship with their clientele; they were the antecedents not so much of their namesakes today, but rather of antiquarian booksellers. The letters that the booksellers supplied by Giovanni Bartolomeo da Gabiano wrote to him from Padua, Ferrara, Mantua, and Florence give proof of their ability to satisfy their customers' requests, which changed greatly from one city to another and from one shop to another. These booksellers show themselves quite able to play a role alongside their supplier that is anything but passive, and they are capable of a high degree of precision in the orders they send to Gabiano and of what can at times be very perceptive analysis of the urban market and its potentialities.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The specific reference to this shop is inserted into the 1587 edition of the *Piazza*. We have already encountered the inventory of this shop's holdings (*Antoni 1603*) in chapter 10 and above.

⁴⁸ *Lettere Gabiano*.

A bookseller's practices in his relations with his customers are highly revealing. In Rome it might happen that a *cartolaio*, rather than selling merchandise, would lend a book, and booksellers all permitted broad consultation of books without having any sale take place.⁴⁹ This custom was so well established that its echoes can even be found in literary works that tell of contemporary behavior. In one of his *Novelle*, Agnolo Firenzuola describes two friends who disagree and to prove their assertions go to the bookshop of Iacopo Giunti to consult works by Pliny and Battista Fregoso.⁵⁰ No one is buying a book here; the two men go to the shop of a bookseller who is a friend of theirs simply to continue a discussion with texts in hand, with the perfect complicity of the person who should only be selling these books. We have no idea to what extent the generous opportunity to read books for sale aided business. It certainly encouraged the creation of a society of readers who could exchange opinions and debate matters in a place open to everyone. It was also to the advantage of booksellers to be able to supply customers with materials for discussion. On occasion the bookshops were used for the first distribution of unpublished texts, such as, for example, letters of notable general interest. In 1585 a letter of Camillo Pellegrino (1527–1603) was put on display in a Florentine bookshop for anyone to make a copy of it. The letter was a fundamental text in a polemic between Pellegrino and the members of the Accademia della Crusca regarding the superiority of Torquato Tasso over Lodovico Ariosto, the first act in a heated diatribe in the years that followed.⁵¹

A bookshop could offer an open door and hospitality to all customers in this extremely lively society that was fond of conversation but becoming increasingly socially rigid. Famous and powerful persons might be

⁴⁹ This also occurred in Florence: De Roover, "Per la storia dell'arte," 116.

⁵⁰ "Menico, a cagione che gli credesse più facilmente lo menò in bottega d'un cartolaio chiamato Iacopo di Giunta, e fattosi dare un Plinio volgare, gli mostrò quello che nel settimo libro al quarto capitolo e' dica di questo fatto, e simigliantemente gli fece vedere ciò che Battista Folgosio ne scriva nel capitolo dei miracoli" (So as to persuade [his friend] to believe him, Menico led him to the shop of a *cartolaio* named Jacopo Giunti, and, having a Pliny in the vernacular brought to him, showed him what [Pliny] says about the matter in book 7, chapter 4, and likewise showed him what Battista Fregoso writes in his chapter on miracles): Agnolo Firenzuola, *Le novelle*, ed. Eugenio Ragni (Milan: Salerno, 1971), giornata 1, novella 2, 116–17. The composition of this work can be situated in the 1520s. Iacopo Giunti, the son of Biagio, who was a brother of Luc'Antonio Giunti, opened a shop in Rome in 1518. He is listed in the census of the population of Rome taken in 1525 and 1526, had received a papal privilege, and was active in music publishing: Romani, "Luoghi editoriali in Roma," 519–21.

⁵¹ Torquato Tasso, *Opere* (Florence: Tartini and Franchi, 1724), 5:386–88; Francesco Sberlati, *Il genere e la disputa: La poetica tra Ariosto e Tasso* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2001).

encountered and engaged in bookshops, and anyone could shine in that informal setting, something that might have been impossible elsewhere. In Naples, the philosopher Giambattista Vico encountered Monsignor Geronimo Rocca, bishop of Ischia, in the bookshop of Giambattista Paci. Discussing the teaching of jurisprudence with the bishop, Vico made such a good impression that he was asked to be preceptor to the bishop's nephews.⁵²

Even better, it was possible to remain anonymous within a bookshop. A memorable moment in the history of Italian literature, a genuine *coup de théâtre*, took place in a bookshop. The great baroque poet Giovan Battista Marino chose to enter a bookshop in which Guido Casoni, a famous man of letters who later became a close friend of Marino's, happened to be holding a discussion with other men of letters. Marino launched into a recital of a sonnet of his own composition (as a visiting card), and without waiting for the stupefied reactions of the assembled persons, left the shop immediately.⁵³ This marvelous and astonishing arrival of Marino on the literary scene in Venice could not have taken place in an academy or court. It required a free gathering of cultivated men in a locale open to all – that is, in a bookshop.

The world of the men of letters who might meet in a bookshop was larger and more dense in Venice. There booksellers, often under the direct management of printer-publishers, met clients, authors, and collaborators. It was in the bookshop that the personal relations so often mentioned in the letters of Pietro Aretino, to select just one example, were established between that author, Francesco Marcolini, and Gabriele Giolito. In Venice the shop was a place not only for appointments and chance meetings, but also for prolonged and inconclusive visits by dilettantes, with time on their hands. Already by mid-century we have a portrait, grotesque but realistic, penned by one of the shrewdest experts in the publishing world of that age:

Being obliged one day to wear out a bench in the shop of a bookseller, there arrived, as luck would have it, three pedants and a translator of legends, which adds up to four ignoramuses. Thus, transporting to that place the grammatical letters of their reasonings, there arose a doubt about a definition that was the following: whether the works to be translated into our

⁵² Giambattista Vico, "Vita di Giovambattista Vico scritta da se medesimo 1725–28," in Vico, *Opere*, ed. Paolo Rossi (Milan: Rizzoli, 1959), 11.

⁵³ Giovan Francesco Loredano, *Vita del Cavalier Marino* (Venice: Giacomo Sarzina, 1633), 8–9. The sonnet that Marino recited was his "Aprè l'uomo infelice allor che nasce."

language should be put into the vernacular, into Italian, or into the Tuscan language. The opinions on this question were enough and no less awkward than they were beside the point. There was even one of them who thought that the bookseller knew as much about languages as he did about books and, turning to him, said, "What do you say?" "What do I know about it? I don't bother my head with such things," the young man replied.⁵⁴



Fig. 11.7. Title page of Anton Francesco Doni, *La libreria*. Venice: G. Giolito, 1550; 12°.

⁵⁴ "Essendo un giorno a straccare una pancaccia ne la bottega di un libraro, vi si ridusse per mala disgrazia loro tre pedanti e un traduttore di leggende, che fanno la somma di quattro ignoranti. Così, trasportandogli le lettere grammaticali de' loro ragionamenti, venne un dubbio a campo da diffinire, e fu questo: se coloro che traducevano l'opere in lingua nostrale si dovevano dire tradotte in volgare, in italiano o in lingua toscana. L'opinioni sopra questa materia furono assai, non men goffe che fuor di proposito: pure ci

The very informality of these spaces open to all made possible discussions that invited satirical treatment of indolence and ignorance and of the participants' habit of indulging in haphazard chatter, as portrayed in Tommaso Garzoni's *Sinagoga degli ignoranti*, where exaggerated idle discussions are set in a bookshop.⁵⁵ Pranks and practical jokes might also take place in bookshops where a good number of people went just to pass the time:

Alfonso de Pazzi was at the bookshop of Francesco Torriani,⁵⁶ bedel to the Accademia Fiorentina, leaning on a part of the counter that served the shop as a bench on which to spread out books, and since it was summer, he was wearing a hooded cape. Jabbering with some young men as his fancy dictated and debating about this and that, as it happens when people talk at random, he ended up with so much cloth pushed up on his shoulders that he looked like a hunchback.⁵⁷

The major publisher-booksellers made their shops into natural venues for discussion inspired by recently published books or that inspired new books: this was true of the Venice bookshop kept by Giolito at the sign of the Phoenix and of that of Francesco de Franceschi at the sign of Peace.⁵⁸

fu uno che si credette che'l libraro s'intendesse così delle lingue come de' libri, e volgendosi a lui gli disse: 'Che ne dite?' 'Che so io mi, che non me ne impaccio miga' rispose il giovane": Anton Francesco Doni, *La Libreria* (Venice: Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari, 1550), at the entry "Andrea Calmo."

⁵⁵ Tommaso Garzoni, *La sinagoga degli'ignoranti* (Venice: Giovan Battista Somasco, 1589), 39–40.

⁵⁶ Giovan Francesco Torriani, born in Pavia, was the bookseller (with the title of bedel) for the Accademia Fiorentina and a collaborator of Lorenzo Torrentino's.

⁵⁷ "Era Alfonso de' Pazzi alla libreria di Gio. Francesco Torriani, Bidello dell'Accademia Fiorentina, tutto appoggiato sopra una parte dello sportello, che serve alla bottega in luogo di panca da distendervi su i libri: e per essere di state, aveva il lucco indosso. La onde cicalando con alcuni giovani di certe cose, che li andavano a fantasia, e dibattendosi ora di qua, ora di là, sì come avviene a chi ragiona di voglia, si avea fatto fare un gonfio tale su le spalle al lucco, che pareva gobbo": Lodovico Domenichi, *Facetie, motti, et burle, di diversi signori et persone private. Raccolte per m. Lodovico Domenichi, e da lui di nuovo del settimo libro ampliate. Con una nuova aggiunta di Motti; raccolti da m. Thomaso Porcacchi* (Venice: Andrea Muschio, 1571), 372–73; quoted from *The Facetie of Poggio and Other Medieval Story-Tellers*, trans. Edward Storer (London: G. Routledge & Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1928), 372–73. This seems to indicate that in Torriani's shop the bookcases were furnished with doors that folded down, on which books could be placed on display and on which Alfonso de Pazzi could lean while engaged in discussion. His hunchbacked position provided the impetus for the practical joke on him that follows in the text.

⁵⁸ In his preface to a book published by him, Francesco de Franceschi states: "When not long ago Andrea Vesalius was about to set forth from here for Jerusalem, he was greeted in my bookshop by Agostino Gadaldini, Andrea Marini, and some other distinguished physicians who had met together by chance, and they asked him what had happened to his *Examen* of the *Observationes anatomicae* of Gabriele Falloppio, which Marino declared he had learned from Alessandro Baranzono had been given to a Venetian ambassador to carry to Padua. Vesalius replied that his *Examen* had indeed been given to Paolo Tiepolo, a

Even in a city as small as Forlì, a literary society in miniature reacted in lively fashion to new books that had just arrived in the bookshop. Succulent novelties could even create quite a stir among potential customers. When the local Forlì bookshop displayed the title page of the first volume of Pietro Aretino's *Lettere* (1538), which had just arrived in the shop, customers crowded in to attempt to buy one of the few copies available. In describing the scene to Aretino, Bernardino Teodolo speaks of using a sleight of hand to ensure he got a copy.⁵⁹

In Rome, the publisher-bookseller Michele Tramezino was a personality who left a good many traces of his prestige and his enterprise in establishing solid relations with men of letters. Tramezino's name crops up constantly in the letters of Annibal Caro (as do those of Paolo Manuzio and Antonio Blado)⁶⁰ as a dependable intermediary for sending correspondence between Rome and Venice, and Rome and Naples. Tramezino was also a trusted interlocutor in linguistic questions, more or less openly soliciting written works and commissions to print new and commercially promising works.⁶¹ Tramezino had made his Roman shop an important meeting place for scholars, who talked above all about history and archaeology, freely comparing observations and notes taken during walks in the city among the monumental ruins of ancient Rome.⁶² That daily scene may also have contributed to Tramezino's intensive production of and commerce in maps and views of ancient Rome.⁶³ Georg Fabricius records discussions of this sort that took place in Tramezino's and Antonio

distinguished representative of the Venetian Senate, when he was departing from the court of King Philip. Some of those who were present desired that a copy be made of it, but finally everyone agreed that when it had been obtained from Tiepolo it be given to me and that I make it available to all in print": Andreas Vesalius, *Anatomicarum Gabrielis Falloppi observationum examen* (Venice: Francesco de Franceschi, 1564), f.+2r (*Edit* 16, CNCE 27919).

⁵⁹ A man who had bought a copy of the book began to read it in the shop. At a certain point, wanting to compare his copy with one bought by a friend, he placed his own on the *mostra*, the bench or shelf for displaying books so that customers could look them over. Teodolo snatched it, and the other man never realized who had made off with the book he had just purchased: *Lettere scritte a Pietro Aretino: 1, Libro 1.*, ed. Paolo Procaccioli. 2 vols. (Rome: Salerno, 2003), 1: letter 165. Letters sent to the author in those years telling of the runaway success of his work became a *topos* of flattery and adulation.

⁶⁰ The opening scene of *Gli straccioni*, a comedy by Annibal Caro, is set in Antonio Blado's Rome shop.

⁶¹ Annibale Caro, *Lettere familiari*, ed. Aulo Greco. 3 vols. (Florence: Le Monnier, 1957–61), 1:150–51, letter 106, "A messer Gioseppo Tramezzino, a Vinegia," dated Rome, 16 June 1539.

⁶² Franz Ehrle, *Roma al tempo di Giulio III: La pianta di Roma di Leonardo Bufalini del 1551* (Rome: Danesi, 1911), 27–28.

⁶³ Tinto, *Annali*, xxiv–xxvi.

Salamanca's shops, and he remembers with gratitude the open discussions he had with other scholars there.⁶⁴

The custom of using bookshops as academies was also widespread in Naples, to the point that those who frequented Marc'Antonio Passero's shop were called "academicians" and the bookshop a foyer (*ridotto*), as Annibal Caro wrote in a 1560 letter to Passero.⁶⁵ Already in the 1550s Passero had provided Neapolitan texts (verse and letters for the most part) for anthologies being prepared in Venice by Girolamo Ruscelli.⁶⁶ In 1562



Fig. 11.8. The Sybil, mark of Michele Tramezino, 1544.

⁶⁴ Georg Fabricius of Chemnitz, *Roma Antiquitatum Libri Duo* (Basel: I. Oporinus, 1551), 9.

⁶⁵ Caro, *Lettere familiari*, letter 595. The bookshop of Alessandro Ceccherelli in Florence too had turned into a sort of academy in the 1560s, to the point that its habitués used pseudonyms: Alessandro Ceccherelli, *Delle azioni e sentenze di Alessandro de' Medici, ragionamento* (Venice: Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari, 1564, *Edit 16*, CNCE 10624); Menato, Sandal, and Zappella, *Dizionario dei tipografi*, 284.

⁶⁶ Tobia Toscano, *Letterati corti accademie: La letteratura a Napoli nella prima metà del Cinquecento* (Naples: Loffredo, 2000), 193–95.

Luigi Tansillo, writing to Paolo Manuzio, referred to Passero as “your Passero,” which implies that the bookseller was the Neapolitan correspondent of the best-known publishing family in the Italian cultural world.⁶⁷ Years later, in 1574, Passero, who was seventy at the time, was cited by the Holy Office and imprisoned: many prohibited books were found in his shop, all of which were burned. Passero was prohibited from exercising his trade for one year.⁶⁸ Even for men of letters who met freely in bookshops, a new history was opening up.

That Pietro Paolo Vergerio had discussed *cose luterane* (Lutheran things) in the Venetian shop of Andrea Arrivabene at the sign of the Well emerged during Vergerio’s trial.⁶⁹ Evidently one could speak freely in that shop. The same was true of the bookshop of Vincenzo Valgrisi.⁷⁰ There are an even greater number of references to the shop of the publisher-bookseller Antonio Gadaldini in Modena, one of the most important centers of religious dissent in Italy.⁷¹

The space for reading that was provided by bookshops, free and open to a significant extent, could be skillfully exploited. In 1603 laws passed in the Kingdom of Naples made it obligatory to have the written permission of the authorities before books printed elsewhere could be sold. Some in Venice felt a pressing need to communicate to the Neapolitans how the Republic had combated the interference of the Roman Curia in affairs of state. The works of Paolo Sarpi, which would not have obtained that now-mandatory permission for their sale, were sent to the Giunti shop in Naples, ostensibly to be bound but in reality to be made available for customers to read.⁷² Here the commercial circulation of books was used to create an unforeseen free zone. The bookshop can rightly be considered a place of encounters and a locus for the exchange of information that was more influential in the history of Italian culture than is usually acknowledged.

⁶⁷ Letter of Luigi Tansillo to Paolo Manuzio, dated Gaeta, 23 February 1562, in Manuzio, *Lettere*, letter XXIII, p. 365.

⁶⁸ Lopez, *Inquisizione stampa e censura*, 99–105, 275–300.

⁶⁹ Deposition at the trial of Pietro Paolo Vergerio (1549): Luigi Alberto Ferrai, “Il processo di Pier Paolo Vergerio,” *Archivio Storico Italiano* 4th ser., 16 (1885): 34, n. 3. See also Simonetta Adorni Braccesi, *Arrivabene, Andrea*, in *Dizionario storico dell’Inquisizione*, ed. Adriano Prosperi. 5 vols. (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010), 1:101–2.

⁷⁰ Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia*, 345; Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio: The Making of an Italian Reformer* (Geneva: Droz, 1977).

⁷¹ *D.B.I.*, s.v. “Gadaldino, Antonio.”

⁷² Marciani, “Editori, tipografi, librai veneti,” 466.

EPILOGUE

I had thought of sending down to Venice many others of my works to be printed, while the *Adone* and the *Strage de' fanciulli innocenti* are being published here in France. But when I was about to send some of them, I received the *Galeria*, which you have printed so dreadfully badly that on reading it I was struck with self-pity. I leave aside the paper, which is even passable, nor do I care about the type, although the type used for prose is quite worn. I shall speak only of what matters more, which is the worst possible correction. How is it possible that the corrector, having before his eyes my very clear script, can have been so careless (not to say stupid) that he could not have thought to compare the printed sheets with the original copy? I find the order of elements mixed up, the orthography changed, the words altered, the sentences ruined, the sentiments twisted: in short, there is no part of it in which you can see even a vestige of proper form.

Blessed be Manuzio, Giolito, and Valgrisio [Valgrisi], whose memory will live on, forever honored in Italian printing. Today the print trade is reduced to mere commercialism, and among the booksellers there is so much avidity for earnings that they put them before a care for their own reputations and that of the author.¹

This bitter letter, written in 1620 by the poet Giovan Battista Marino to the publisher Giovan Battista Ciotti, tells of some of the reasons for the decline of printing in Venice and in Italy in general in the seventeenth century. The quality of the material used had become worse, but more seriously,

¹ "Io avea pensato di mandar costà a Vinegia molte dell'altre opere mie a stampare, mentre che qui in Francia si stampano l'*Adone* et la *Strage de' fanciulli innocenti*. Ma quando io era in procinto già d'inviarne alcuna, mi è sopraggiunta la *Galeria* da voi stampata sì sconciamente, che in leggendola mi è venuta pietà di me stesso. Lascio la carta, la qual potrebbe pur passare, né mi curo del carattere, ancorché quello della prosa sia alquanto frustro. Parlo solo di quel che più importa, ch'è la pessima correzione. Com'è egli possibile che il correttore, avendo innanzi il mio esemplare così netto, sia stato sì poco diligente (per non dire sciocco) che non abbia saputo riscontrare i fogli impressi con la copia originale? Ho ritrovato confuso l'ordine, scambiata l'ortografia, alterate le parole, guaste le sentenze, storpiati i sentimenti: né parte alcuna vi ha, insomma, in cui si veggia pur vestigio di buona forma.

Benedetto il Manuzio, il Giolito e 'l Valgrisio, la cui memoria vivrà sempre onorata tra le stampe italiane. Oggi la stampa è ridotta a semplice mercatura, et ne' librai è tanta l'avidità del guadagno che pospongono all'interesse la propria reputazione et quella dell'autore" Giovan Battista Marino, *La Sampogna*, ed. Vania De Maldé (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo; Ugo Guanda Editore, 1993), letter 5: "Il Cavalier Marino al Ciotti stampatore," 61–65. When the Giunti republished *La Sampogna* in 1620, they inserted their own names in the list of blessed publishers: *ibid.*, ciii.

a proper philological correction of the text was lacking. Men of letters had the impression that printing had become just another commercial activity and that all memory of the honor of bookmen had vanished. To Marino, publishers of his day seemed greedy and careless of their reputation, the most precious of their assets, and thus indirectly of the reputation of their authors. While some of his remarks had long been commonplaces in the difficult relationship between authors and publishers, his praise of Manuzio, Giolito, and Valgrisi established a standard formula, the myth of a golden age of the Venetian book trade in the Renaissance.

Beginning in the seventeenth century, printing in Venice did indeed start to suffer a decline in its reputation and, worse still, a lack of investment. The real crisis, which caused a collapse in the Venetian book trade, arrived at the end of the so-called “long Cinquecento” – that is, the period that lasted until the 1620s and the terrible plague of 1630, a traumatic blow that affected the population and all economic activity in Venice. The market for learned books contracted at the same time as the major international fairs declined. After the great Giunti edition of 1622 in nine volumes, complete editions with commentary of the *Corpus iuris civilis* and the *Corpus iuris canonici* were no longer printed in Venice. The major collectors were quick to perceive the backward nature of Italian culture: “Here nothing worthy of being sent over the mountains [the Alps] is being printed,” Gian Vincenzo Pinelli had written to Claude Dupuy as early as 1573.²

In the seventeenth century the picture was radically different. Even though Venetian bookmen continued to dominate the scene, print production in Italy was much more widely distributed geographically – with the rise of Naples, for instance – and experienced much more pervasive regulation by both various governments and the Arti (guilds) of printers and booksellers. Venice retained its lead over other centers of production in several fields: religious books; books in non-Latin type (Hebrew, modern Greek, Glagolitic for Slav markets, and Cyrillic, for instance) that were destined for markets east of the Adriatic; and the new genre of periodicals. All these print products were intended entirely or in large part for the export trade. Instead of large folio volumes of the great authors or innovative scholarly works and nicely illustrated literary texts, which were now

² Pinelli and Dupuy, *Une correspondance*, 1:82. Pinelli's opinion of Italian publishing is shown by the fact that more than 60 percent of the books in his private library were printed abroad, making it the most European library in Italian territory in that period.

published much more infrequently, booklets of prayers, schoolbooks, ephemera, almanacs, holy cards (little engravings of saints), and printed news sheets dominated the market. Books became even smaller in size, with extensive use of the duodecimo, which had been one of the favorite formats of the Giolito firm since the mid-sixteenth century.

I have sought to demonstrate in the present study that the success of bookmen during the Renaissance was not a byproduct of the pursuit of the prestige and honor that authors believed to be their due – that is, of the bookmen's adherence to the ideals of the Republic of Letters – or of the promotion of scholarly works and novelties in general. Bookmen became agents for the transmission of knowledge because they were first and foremost successful businessmen who succeeded as entrepreneurial publishers, driven by the most advanced economic rationality of their time.

Aldo Manuzio, the archetype of humanist publishers, took exceptional care to procure legal protection for his publishing initiatives, and he used his reputation as a prominent member of the Republic of Letters to involve his admirers in his publishing policy and in the distribution of his works. His dedications are both scholarly texts and self-advertisement. His printed catalogues are among the most successful examples of book marketing.

Gabriele Giolito built up the market for vernacular works in innovative ways and at a very intense pace, publishing contemporary new texts on a previously unknown scale and extending requests for privileges to gain protection throughout the Italian states. He invested in the reputation of his mark, the Phoenix, to make his products immediately recognizable, and he relied on a strategic system of branches throughout the Italian Peninsula. The extent to which his firm was market-oriented is shown by his immediate adherence to the spiritual climate of the Counter-Reformation with a new production of religious works in the vernacular that were as successful as his works of Italian literature. That the greatness of the Giunti family was based on their economic and commercial power as a genuinely multinational distributor of Catholic books, as well as on commerce in many other types of merchandise, was clear even to their contemporaries.

Drawn along by the European success of Italian merchant-bankers, bookmen were able to have such great success in transnational publishing precisely because genuinely entrepreneurial publishers offered print works that represented the best cultural fruit of an unrepeatable season.

Accusations of greed that authors flung at bookmen were a product of the authors' limited comprehension of the economic aims of every undertaking. The loss of prestige of Italian printed products struck Italian intellectuals very hard, and they seemed unable to appreciate the continuing adaptability, even within more restricted cultural bounds, of the Venetian book trade.

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