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THE PRINTED BOOK IN ITALY

CONOR FAHY
EDITED BY NEIL HARRIS

Neil Harris
Introduction

At his death on 1 January 2009 Conor Fahy left a testamentary disposition for his working library to go to Queens College, Cambridge, where he had studied as an undergraduate shortly after the Second World War. The collection, comprising some 1,500 titles, almost entirely modern, since Conor was not in any way a collector of early printed books (a task he felt belonged rather to the libraries he enjoyed visiting), reflected his interests as a scholar of Italian literature and as a bibliographer of the Italian printed book. What makes them particularly valuable, as well as the personal annotations, is that many of them contain the copies of the reviews and bibliographical notices he produced. At the request of the family, I acted as intermediary for the disposal of Conor's papers and correspondence, which his widow, Gill Fahy, gifted to Cambridge University Library.[1] It was also possible to arrange for his English-language periodicals and for his considerable collection of offprints to be donated to the University of Udine.

[1] See Cambridge University Library, *Annual Report for the year 2009-2010*, p. 14. I express my gratitude to David McKitterick, who in this instance was the real go-between. Conor is remembered with a triple obituary in *La Bibliofilía*, see L. Balsamo, «Professore emerito e amico fraterno», CXI (2009), pp. 51-54; A.L. Lepschy, «Conor Fahy, maestro e collega. Un ricordo da Londra», pp. 55-58; N. Harris, «Conor Fahy, bibliografo: un ricordo personale», pp. 59-74. These are followed by an update to the bibliography of his published output, see N. Harris, «Bibliografia delle pubblicazioni di Conor Fahy, 1999-2008», pp. 75-89, in which the article published here is listed at p. 89, n. 184. Material from an unpublished item of research by Conor Fahy, relating to a worm-hole running through an at-the-time unbound and unfolded copy of the *Orlando furioso* is described in N. Harris, «Il giallo del tarlo atletico. Un'osservazione inedita di Conor Fahy sull'*Orlando furioso* del 1532», *La Bibliofilía*, CXII (2010), pp. 3-11.

Subsequently I have been acting as Conor's literary executor on a number of his unfinished projects, for which, with the agreement of Cambridge University Library, some of his working papers have been temporarily retained. The two most significant sets of material involve, first, the collation – conducted in collaboration with Fabio Massimo Bertolo and Randall McLeod – of the extant copies of the first edition of *Il cortegiano* by Baldassarre Castiglione (1528), where the research was substantially completed; and, second, a fascinating collaboration between Paolo Manuzio and the Venetian Academy in and around 1559, which led to the printing of a number of *polizze*, which explain the costs involved in publishing the Academy's editions. Obviously these accounts open an interesting window on the running of a Renaissance printing business, but, although Conor gave a talk on the subject in 2004 and drafted the text of an article, his attempt to finish the work was frustrated by the physical difficulty of travelling to visit libraries in his final years. Plans are being carried forward, including the study and collation of copies that were not seen at the time, to ensure the scholarly publication of both these projects in the coming future.

As well as these large-scale items, Conor's papers contained some intriguing odds and ends, including some short pieces which, for one reason or another, had remained unpublished in his lifetime. One of these is a 6,800 word article, *The printed book in Italy*, written for inclusion in a grandiosely entitled repertory, *Cave paintings to the Internet: An encyclopedia of the written and printed word*. The item was requested by the encyclopaedia's editor, Antonio Rodriguez-Buckingham, who at the time was a professor in the School of Library and Information Science at the Hattiesburg campus of the University of Southern Mississippi. Conor sent the text of his article in May 2001, while the encyclopaedia was planned to go to press a year later. I did not find a print-out of the said article among Conor's papers: I suspect that it and related papers may have been disposed of in one of his periodical clear-outs of material that no longer interested him, in this case induced perhaps by the behaviour of the editor who, after acknowledging receipt of the article, subsequently ceased all communication. A copy survived, however, on the hard-disk of Conor's computer and a few references to it appear in his email correspondence. The latter show that after a few years he became curious about the outcome of the encyclopaedia and tried to contact the editor. Given the latter's unexplained silence, early in 2006 he wrote to Clive Griffin, lecturer in Spanish at the University of Oxford and well-known bibliographer of Renaissance Hispanic printing, who had acted

as the original contact in supplying Conor's name to the encyclopaedia's editor.[2] Griffin unfortunately had no news of any publication nor was he able to establish any contact with Rodriguez-Buckingham.

Part of Conor's desire to understand what had become of his article was prompted by developments elsewhere in the field of book history. In particular the plan by Oxford University Press for a large-scale reference work to be entitled *The Oxford companion to the book* meant that he had received an invitation to contribute a 10,000 word article on the history of the book in Italy. Obviously in terms of content and the ground covered, any such article would have involved duplicating, entirely or in part, what he had already written for the American encyclopaedia and therefore, before taking any decision, he wanted to discover what had happened to his previous piece. In the event his decision to decline the OUP proposal was motivated rather by his fragile health at the time and by the desire to complete his research on paper in the Aldine printing shop which formed the core of his last published articles. Just for the record, the task of writing the article for *The Oxford companion to the book* passed to myself and duly appeared in 2010.[3] I remember, however, a conversation at Conor's home in Ely, where he first mentioned the article written for the American encyclopaedia and his uncertainty about whether it would ever be published.

When in the summer of 2009 I began to examine and inventory Conor's papers, prior to their transfer to Cambridge, including the contents of his computer, I was intrigued to find this text, of whose existence I knew, but which I had never seen. My first concern was to establish whether it had indeed been published. I therefore wrote to professor Rodriguez-Buckingham, who in 2007 had retired from the University of Southern Mississippi, but, with the title of *emeritus*, still had a page on the university website and an email address. Despite several messages, including one to the Faculty dean, no reply was forthcoming. I also contacted the supposed publisher of the encyclopaedia, Greenwood, who kindly informed me that the work had never been received and that the contract signed with the editor had been cancelled.[4] This correspondence also established that Conor's contribution had been on a voluntary basis and that no contract had been exchanged between him and the publisher, so that the

[2] Email Conor Fahy to Clive Griffin, 13 January 2006.

[3] See N. Harris, «History of the book in Italy», in *The Oxford companion to the book*, edited by Michael Suarez S.J. and H.R. Woudhuysen, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, I, pp. 257-269.

[4] I thank Mariah Gumpert of Abc-Clio Greenwood for her courteous assistance.

literary property unquestionably belonged to his heirs. Once the decision had been taken to publish the article in Ecdotica, I wrote again to professor Rodriguez-Buckingham, summarising the facts as I knew them and asking if he had any objection to the publication of Conor's article in an Italian journal. Again no reply was forthcoming.

At this point, having established the history behind the article, we turn to the text itself and the reasons for wanting to make it known to a wider public. Obviously it was written primarily with an instructive purpose, with a general readership in mind, and respecting a precise word-limit. Its interest therefore does not lie in the presence of original research, but in its excellence as a brief synthesis of the themes to which Conor had dedicated much of his scholarly career. Having just written myself, as mentioned above, a slightly longer piece with exactly the same parameters, when I first read it, I was fascinated to see how Conor went about the business, what he chose to include and, perhaps even more significantly, what he chose to omit. It is worth therefore inviting the reader, before starting Conor's text, to take a moment to think about how they would approach the daunting task of summarising the history of the Italian book in seven thousand words.

Editing the text presented no real problems, since Conor had high standards in the way he finished and polished any piece of work before sending it to a publisher. Apart from the correction of a couple of very minor mistakes, the article therefore appears as I found it. The only decision involved the addition of an unobtrusive critical apparatus. Conor makes reference to a number of – at the time – recent studies in book-history, without naming the author or the title of the work, quite legitimately given the informative nature of the article. He also drew on his own experience as a bibliographer and historian of the Italian book in his choice of examples. I have therefore introduced into the text a sequence of notes, ordered alphabetically, that briefly explain these references. Since these notes are not part of the original text, they have been placed at the end of the article. Otherwise this article is a masterly synthesis of a complex cultural and technological history and therefore is only to be enjoyed.

Conor Fahy

The Printed Book in Italy

Italy was printing's second home. Once established there, a decade or so after its first recorded appearance at Mainz, in Germany, the printed book became one of the manifestations of the Italian Renaissance, and the main instrument in the spread of Italian culture throughout Europe. In the seventeenth century printing in Italy declined in quality and importance, to recover somewhat in the eighteenth. The Napoleonic period and the industrial revolution drastically changed the face of Italian printing; the modern Italian printing industry is relatively much smaller in scale than its Renaissance ancestor, but has some of the same virtues.

Fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

The generally accepted date for the introduction of printing in Italy is 1465, when two German clerics, Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, issued at Subiaco, some fifty miles from Rome, a collected edition of the Church Father, Lactantius, dated 29 October 1465. They had set up their press in the Benedictine monastery of Santa Scolastica, probably in the previous year, and had already printed two other books, one undated and one – a Latin schoolbook – now lost. However, the recent reappearance on the London antiquarian book market of what is known as the Parsons fragment – several pages of an Italian devotional tract – has raised again the possibility, accepted by some scholars, of there having been printing activity in north Italy early in the 1460s.[a] In 1467 Sweynheym and Pannartz moved to Rome, and in the next six years printed there some forty-five further editions, almost all with a press-run of two hundred and seventy-five copies.

Italy was the first foreign country to which German printers brought their new invention. The printed book was born religious, as a modern scholar has put it,[b] and Rome was then the center of the Christian world; this explains why it was the first Italian city to see major printing activity. But Sweynheym and Pannartz's list, with its emphasis on the Latin classics and on Church Fathers such as Lactantius and Augustine, popular with lay intellectuals, also highlights the connection between the new printing industry in Italy and the cultural movement known as Human-

ism, in which Italy led the world. The prestige of Humanism was to prove decisive in enabling Italy soon to outstrip its teachers, and become the European leader of the new industry.

At Rome Sweynheym and Pannartz were joined by other printers, mainly of German origin; indeed during the fifteenth century the vast majority of printers in Rome were Germans, though often advised, financed and sometimes managed by Italians. A German was also responsible for the introduction of printing in Venice (1469), soon to surpass Rome as the center of Italian book production, because of its commercial expertise and international trade connections. For one of the lessons printers quickly learned (the hard way, through bankruptcies) was that the mass production of books was governed in the last analysis by commercial, not cultural, considerations. This is graphically illustrated in the complaint of Sweynheym and Pannartz, contained in the dedicatory letter of one of their editions (1472), that their workshop was full of unsold books, but empty of necessities. They calculated their total production to date to have been about twelve and a half thousand volumes – the work of only a single printing-house in the course of five years' activity. It was clearly going to take time for the reading public to absorb the exponential increase in the offer of books due to the advent of printing.

The spread of the art in Italy, and its precarious nature, can both be seen in the fact that printing occurred in the peninsula in at least forty-seven localities during the 1470s, in addition to Rome and Venice. While in a few such localities (Milan, Bologna, Florence, Naples) the industry was destined to prosper (up to a point), in others it never shook itself free from the burden of competition with the major players; and in fifty per cent of these sites its appearance was fleeting, for within a few years it had vanished, never to return.

The model for the new industry was Venice. Here, in the 1470s, foreign printers, mostly German (but the greatest and most important was a Frenchman, Nicholas Jenson), teamed up with merchants already resident in the city, often also foreign, and with other investors, to bring humanist knowledge, international finance, tried marketing techniques and the beginnings of mass production methods to the new product. It has recently been suggested that the publications put out by Jenson, with his partners Johann Rauchfas and Peter Ugelheimer, in a six-month period in 1477 would have required the simultaneous use of at least ten presses; perhaps the firm used the services of other printers, as well as their own printing-house.[c] At the end of the decade Jenson's firm amalgamated with the other main Venetian printing firm, headed

by John of Cologne. The new organization, known as the Compagnia di Venezia, was the biggest commercial enterprise in early Italian printing. The Compagnia had bookshops or agencies in several Italian cities, and Ugelheimer regularly visited the Frankfurt book fair on its behalf. Book exports followed the well-used trade routes from Venice to Austria, Germany and France. The value of having outlets in other parts of Italy, and north of the Alps, was not lost on contemporaries and successors. Meanwhile, Italians were beginning to infiltrate the industry, a process more or less complete by the turn of the century. The printing-house belonging to the Compagnia seems to have been taken over in 1482 by the Italian printer, Andrea Torresani, later to become partner and father-in-law of the greatest figure in the first century of printing, in Italy and elsewhere, Aldus Manutius.

Latin was the language of the Church, and also the international language of culture, and it is not surprising that some seventy-five per cent of surviving Italian fifteenth-century printed books are in Latin; there was also a small but significant production of editions of the Greek classics, as well as the beginnings of printing in Hebrew. As for editions of Italian texts, many were works of devotion, or of popular culture, but the early 1470s also saw first editions of the Italian classics, Dante (*Divine Comedy*, 1472), Petrarch (*Canzoniere* and *Trionfi*, 1470) and Boccaccio (*Decameron*, 1470); among contemporary masterpieces, Politian's *Stanze per la giostra* and *Orfeo* (both 1484) were printed only a few years after composition, though their first diffusion was by manuscript. Editions of Latin and Greek texts continued to be prominent in Italian printing for many decades, but were gradually overtaken by vernacular texts.

Illustration has always been an important adjunct of the book. At the less cultured end of the spectrum, as in early fifteenth-century blockbooks, it provides a pictorial representation of the action, or of the message, for those who find reading difficult or impossible; at the other end, it enhances the enjoyment and value of a prized volume. From the early days of printing, books intended to appeal to all types of readers have been illustrated. Woodcuts form the natural accompaniment to printing, as, like typographical characters, they are cut in relief, and so can be incorporated into the forme and printed together with the letterpress. Engravings on copper or other metals employ the opposite technique: the lines to be inked are cut into the metal, and the paper has to be forced into the engraved lines to take the ink, an operation which cannot be carried out with a typographical press, which does not generate sufficient power.

A few attempts were made in the fifteenth century to use copperplate engravings as book illustrations, but the vast majority of early printed illustrations were woodcuts. But the influence of the manuscript can be seen for several decades in the occasional practice of adding manual illumination to some printed copies. In the 1470s printed books were still being produced which needed to be finished by hand before sale, with rubrication and other decoration; the case of a Jenson's *Breviarium romanum* of 1478 has recently been highlighted.[d] Many copies of other Jenson editions contain illuminated titlepages and opening gatherings. Venice seems to have been the center of this practice in Italy: thirty years later, copies of Aldine editions printed on vellum were still being superbly illuminated by local artists for the Venetian aristocracy. It was there, too, that the most famous example of Italian woodcut book illustration was produced, the Aldine *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* of 1499, with its more than a hundred and fifty woodcuts, specially designed and cut for the edition, perhaps after drawings by Benedetto Bordone. Woodcut illustration continued to be a feature of the Italian book for most of the sixteenth century. Only very occasionally, however, were great artists involved in this aspect of book production in Italy; the woodcut portrait of the author in the definitive edition of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1532), attributed to Titian, is the exception which proves the rule. Worthy of mention, too, are the woodcut illustrations of medical texts like Vesalius's anatomical treatises and Dioscurides' study of the medical uses of plants (though the most famous set of Dioscurides blocks was actually cut in Germany); because of the hundreds of illustrations involved, woodcuts continued to be used in editions of Dioscurides throughout the sixteenth century. Indeed, there are cases even in the seventeenth century of manuals and textbooks illustrated with woodcuts, because they required large numbers of illustrations. In general, though, changing tastes in the second half of the sixteenth century led to the gradual return of copper engraving as a medium of book illustration. Even though engraved illustrations had to be printed on a cylinder press, before or (more usually) after the letterpress, by the end of the century they had taken over from the woodcut for quality work, remaining unchallenged in this capacity until the arrival of lithography in the nineteenth century, and the simultaneous revival of the woodcut (both features rather late to appear in Italy).

The importance of Venice in fifteenth-century printing has sometimes been exaggerated, but its primacy is undisputed. Its surviving output numbers some three thousand six hundred editions, more than any other European city, and about fourteen per cent of the total; com-

parable figures for its two nearest rivals, Paris and Rome, are two thousand eight hundred and fifty and one thousand nine hundred and seventy respectively.[e] The pre-eminence of Venice would probably be even more clearcut if the number of sheets printed, rather than of editions, were taken into account, because many of its folio and quarto editions were large tomes. There are no reliable figures for the sixteenth century, but it is likely that the number of surviving Venetian editions is in excess of thirty thousand, perhaps substantially in excess. Whatever the exact figure, and although eventually equalled and then overtaken in quality by printing centers north of the Alps, such as Basel, Lyons and Paris, Venice was unquestionably the dominant city in Italian printing until the fall of the Venetian Republic in 1797.

It was in Venice at the turn of the century that one of the most influential figures in the early history of printing, Aldus Manutius, produced his creative innovations, which have left a permanent mark on printing and publishing. Born near Rome, he was a gifted scholar, and first earned his living as a teacher. He moved to Venice in about 1490, and in 1495, in partnership with the printer Andrea Torresani, and with a member of the Barbarigo family, began an ambitious programme of publishing the Greek classics in the original. His Greek type has been variously judged, but there is no doubting the cultural importance of the Greek texts, ninety-four of them in first editions, which flowed from the Aldine press during Aldus's life; the process continued for a further fifteen years after his death in 1515, when the press was effectively in the hands of his brother-in-law Gian Francesco Torresani. In 1496 the typecutter Francesco Griffo cut for Aldus a Roman type whose influence has lasted to this day. It was the culmination of more than thirty years of development, which had begun with the earliest printers in Germany and Italy, and continued through Nicholas Jenson in Venice, the aim of which was to develop a type matching the clarity and beauty of the humanist book-hand. Francesco Griffo also cut the first italic font, Aldus's main innovation in the field of type. Based on the humanist cursive script, it was devised for use in another of Aldus's historic innovations, a series of pocket editions of Greek and Latin classics, together with the *Divine Comedy* and Petrarch's Italian poetry, which began to appear in 1501. Though not cheap, these little octavos provided scholars and persons of culture with texts which could be easily used outside the study or library. They were another big step along the road towards the total emancipation of the printed book from the manuscript, the model of which had conditioned its early years.

While Venice continued in the sixteenth century to produce large numbers of editions in Latin and the other learned languages – commentated editions of the classics, new philosophical, scientific and medical works, university texts – the percentage of works published in Italian (and occasionally in other vernacular languages, such as Spanish) steadily increased. Many of these were slim works of piety, information or entertainment, aimed at a popular audience, and liable, like schoolbooks, to be used to destruction: without doubt many editions in this category, in the sixteenth century and later, have disappeared without trace. Others were more substantial works of prose and poetry belonging to one or other of the popular literary genres of the day. As an example we can take the chivalric epic, that is, tales of the knights of old, loosely based on the Arthurian legends and the Carolingian epics – the sort of book Cervantes was later to satirize in his novel *Don Quixote*. The masterpieces of this genre, Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Innamoramento di Orlando* (1483) and Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516), were not originally printed in Venice, but it was the Venetian publishing industry that exploited the commercial possibilities of the genre, deluging the market with continuations, adaptations, imitations and, after Ariosto's death in 1533, editions of his work, which had quickly supplanted the *Innamoramento di Orlando* in the favour both of critics and of the public.[f]

Ariosto had financed the first and the definitive editions of his poem, both published in his home town of Ferrara; like other great writers of the early sixteenth century (Bembo, Castiglione), he had written his work in the expectation of its being printed. While the circulation of literary works in manuscript, in Italy as elsewhere in Europe, never died out, the printed medium now became the normal way of communicating with the reading public. By the middle of the sixteenth century, largely through the influence and example of the notorious Pietro Aretino, it had become possible for men of letters to contemplate making a living out of writing and working for the press. Such people naturally gravitated towards republican Venice, center of the Italian printing industry, where patronage, though still important, mattered less than in most other Italian states, where the form of government was autocratic.

Throughout its period of dominance in Italy the Venetian publishing industry aimed the bulk of its productions at a national, not to say international, market. The only other Italian city which could be said continually to have had a similar dimension to its book industry was Rome; this was because of its importance as the center of the Catholic Church, and as a repository of antiquarian and artistic treasures. After the fifteenth

century Roman production underwent a relative decrease in volume, offering no serious challenge in the following centuries to the hegemony of Venice. But many publications of the Roman printing industry were worthy of note, for example the scientific works published by the Accademia dei Lincei in the first half of the seventeenth century, and the guides to ancient and modern Rome, often illustrated with splendid engravings.

At all times up to and including the present day, printing in Italy has taken place in numerous other locations in the peninsula. In general, during the Renaissance and beyond, printing in these towns, even in large centers of population such as Milan and Naples, served local needs, only occasionally aiming higher. Florence is perhaps a special case. In terms of quantity, it was a minor player on the Italian printing scene during the Renaissance; by the 1560s the Giunti of Florence were complaining to the Grand Duke of Tuscany that they only had enough orders to work at half-press, while the Venetian branch of the family was able to run several presses simultaneously. But the special place of Florence in Italian cultural history made some of its publications of national and even international significance. In the 1490s editions of the numerous sermons and writings of the tempestuous Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola, prior of San Marco in Florence, saw the printing press involved for the first time in the speedy and widespread dissemination of a popular religious message, with political implications. The lesson was not lost on the German reformers thirty years later. Several sixteenth-century Florentine editions of literary texts, too, were of national and even international significance. Such were the first edition of Machiavelli's *Arte della guerra* (1521), the 1527 Giunti editions of the *Decameron* and of early Italian poetry, and the first and second editions (1550 and 1568) of Vasari's *Lives*. But in the end it is the limitations of the Renaissance printing industry in Florence that strike one now. These are highlighted by the decision of the Accademia della Crusca, one of the major cultural institutions of Florence, to use the Venetian printing industry, not the Florentine one, for the production of its thousand-page folio dictionary of Italian (1611-12), even though the dictionary, the first to be published of a modern European vernacular, extolled Tuscan, and in particularly Florentine, as the basis of the literary language.

A special type of printing in which Italy led the way for two hundred years was music printing. The representation of music in print presents particular problems, as it requires the presence of at least two elements, staves and notation, with the latter superimposed on the former. In vocal

music the text constitutes a third element. Once again the center of music printing in Italy was Venice. Some remarkable results were achieved in the printing of fifteenth-century liturgical books, but the process was slow and expensive, as notes and staves had to be printed separately. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Italian printers began seriously to address the problem of printing vocal and instrumental music on a commercial basis, for secular as well as religious purposes. One solution was to print each page from woodcuts; quite large print runs could be achieved, but the blocks took much time to prepare. The first Italian printer to specialise in music printing, Ottaviano Petrucci, who began printing at Venice in 1501, aimed at a typographical solution: he printed the text together with the staves, but still had to pass the sheets through the press a second time for the notes. The breakthrough, generally attributed to a French printer, Pierre Attaingnant, came in 1528. Attaingnant cut and cast a music font in which the characters with the notes also contained a section of the stave, thus enabling staves, notes and text to be printed together. This innovation reached Venice in the late 1530s and, in the hands of the printer-publishers Antonio Gardano and Girolamo Scotto, led to an explosion of music printing which put Venice at the head of European music publishing for more than a century.[g] During the next thirty years Gardano and Scotto produced between them over eight hundred music editions, more than the rest of Europe put together. Their repertory covered instrumental and vocal music, religious and secular, but their mainstay was vocal part-music in Italian, in a word, the Italian madrigal and related genres, which they popularized throughout Europe. A further thousand editions of similar music, much of it by internationally famous composers such as Lasso, Gesualdo, Marenzio, Victoria and Palestrina, were published between 1570 and 1611 by Gardano's son Angelo. In all, it has been estimated that up to the year 1650 over six thousand music editions were published in Italy, nearly five thousand of them in Venice. Changes in musical taste, and the rise of the engraved music edition, finally brought this significant chapter in the history of Italian printing to a close.

Sixteenth-century Venice was also important in the history of printing in Greek. The invention of printing more or less coincided with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks (1453), who forbade their Greek subjects to produce printed books in their own language. While editions of the classics of ancient Greece were published in various Western European countries, for more than three hundred years Venice was the center of printing in modern Greek. A recent study lists nearly four

hundred and fifty sixteenth-century Venetian editions of contemporary Greek works intended for a Greek readership, produced in the main by printers and publishers specializing in this market.[h] Printing in Greece itself did not really begin before the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s; until that time Greeks looked to their exiled countrymen in Italy to supply their cultural needs.

Hebrew also figured in the varied panorama of Italian Renaissance printing. Some Hebrew books served the cultural interests of Christian scholars; but printing in Hebrew was also aimed at Jewish residents in Italy, whether produced by Jews, such as the Soncino family of the early sixteenth century, or by Gentiles such as Daniel Bomberg, who printed at Venice from 1511 to 1549. Bomberg's editions are said to number over two hundred. Like Bomberg, later Venetian printers of Hebrew texts were Christians.

Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Despite the occasional success story, the seventeenth century was generally one of decline for Italian printing. The ever-increasing power of large, centralized European states such as France and Spain, and of the Ottoman Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, affected the wealth and the self-confidence of Italians, and Venetians in particular. The Counter-Reformation, too, with its emphasis on censorship and proscription, imposed serious restrictions on the circulation of ideas and the freedom of the press. Unfortunately, the absence of adequate bibliographical reference tools for Italian printing is even more marked in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than in the sixteenth, and judgements can only be impressionistic.

In the early seventeenth century the Venetian printing industry was in serious difficulties, due to a combination of censorship, political circumstances and the ravages of plague. The number of presses in the city declined sharply, from well over a hundred in the sixteenth century to less than fifty, and this decline continued until towards the end of the century. Simultaneously, printing activity in smaller Italian centers increased. Despite the reduction in the number of its presses, however, Venice was still unquestionably the largest printing center in the peninsula, though in the present state of our knowledge the exact situation is impossible to determine. In this context, it is instructive to consider the production of a flourishing seventeenth-century firm from

another area, that of Giuseppe Pavoni of Genoa, about which we are, for once, fully and accurately informed, thanks to some recently compiled, scholarly annals.[i] Genoa was an independent maritime republic with a paper-making industry of international proportions and, unlike Venice, it was experiencing at the beginning of the seventeenth century a period of financial success and artistic splendour. At a time when the biggest single category of publications elsewhere in Italian printing was the religious book, Pavoni's list of more than five hundred titles, published between 1598 and 1642, comprised mainly secular works, many by local writers, particularly the leading Genoese poet of the period, Gabriello Chiabrera. This highlights the great variety of Italian printing, and the difficulty of generalizing. At the same time, Pavoni's was just one isolated concern, using no more than two presses; the many sorts of books he did not print had to be imported into the city's bookshops from other centers – such as Venice.

Even in decline Italy was still a repository of artistic and cultural treasures and of scientific knowledge; many cities throughout the peninsula had an age-old history and culture of which they were both aware and proud. Writers from these cities, if they wanted to reach a national or international audience, still tended to publish in Venice or Rome, but there were occasional praiseworthy local initiatives which had wider aims. An example is the *Musaeum Francisci Calceolarii*, a seven hundred and fifty page folio volume with forty-five copperplate engravings, printed and published in Verona in 1622 – by far the most ambitious book produced in that city in the first thirty years of the century.[j] The work, printed on good-quality local paper, comprised a description in Latin of the contents of a natural history collection which had been assembled in the sixteenth century by a Veronese apothecary; as such it was intended by its authors, and regarded by its readers, as a serious contribution to medical literature. The engravings were made from plates mostly executed in Verona. These are often of high quality, unfortunately not always matched by their printing, which is sometimes out of register. The apothecary's grandson, who commissioned the edition, sent copies for sale to neighbouring cities, particularly Venice, and also despatched over a hundred (more than one-fifth of the print-run) for sale in Germany. The success of this attempt to distribute the book on the international market is shown by the fact that nine copies can be found today in the university and college libraries of Oxford and Cambridge; almost all can be shown to have reached England within twenty-five years of publication.

The *Musaeum* is an example of one of the two types of publications into which, it has been said,[k] books printed in Italy in the seventeenth century can be divided, that is, the luxury edition commissioned by a private individual, illustrated with engravings. The other type is the commercial edition, often badly printed on poor quality paper, with many printing errors. This is perhaps a jaundiced and over-simplified view, but it certainly contains an element of truth. A feature of seventeenth-century Italian printing is the substantial reduction in the number of editions of the Latin and Greek classics, now produced in more reliable scholarly editions north of the Alps, and, perhaps more surprisingly, of the classics of Italian literature – only four editions of the *Divine Comedy* in the whole century, six of the *Decameron* (in the revised edition approved by the Church), and one of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. Instead, Italian presses concentrated on publications of immediate interest or on the literary works of contemporaries, many now more or less forgotten. It is here than one finds examples of the second category of publication referred to above, often printed in minor centers.

The pattern of Italian printing remained basically unaltered in the eighteenth century, but there were already signs of the seismic change which at the end of the century would drastically and decisively alter its geography and its organization. The most significant was the increasing availability in Italy of books imported from Switzerland and France, which made available the liberal ideas of the English and French Enlightenment. Much of this trade in books came through Turin, but the city most affected by the new ideas was Milan, which emerged in the second half of the century as an important intellectual center, home of the principal Italian supporters of the Enlightenment. Two complete editions of the French text of the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert, the standard-bearer of these new ideas, were printed and published in north Italy, at Lucca (1758-76) and Livorno (1770-89).

Meanwhile, Venetian printing staged a revival from the low point reached in the first half of the previous century. By 1735 there were once more about a hundred presses active in the city. Some products were of high standard, with fine illustrations. The most sumptuous and perhaps the most famous Venetian book of the Settecento was an edition of Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, published in 1745 with engravings after drawings by Giovanni Battista Piazzetta. The Venetian presses also published numerous elegant, privately printed booklets, decorated with engravings and typographical ornaments, on the occasion of important events in the life of the aristocracy and the rich. Venice resumed, too,

the printing of liturgical books, a solid source of wealth for printers in Catholic Europe. A sign of the flourishing nature of the industry in the middle of the century is that it attracted the attention of outside investors, as in its early years. Perhaps the best known of these was a rich English merchant resident in Venice, Joseph Smith, known to history as Consul Smith, whose superb collection of early Italian printed books and of Italian prints and drawings was sold to King George III in 1763, and now forms part of the British Royal Collections at Windsor Castle and of the King's Library, housed in the British Library, London. In the middle years of the century Smith formed a partnership with Giambattista Pasquali, printer and bookseller. Their publications, which included an Italian translation of Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia*, helped to make available in Italy liberal and free-thinking ideas emanating from Britain and France. As in the Renaissance, so again in the eighteenth century much of the output of the Venetian presses was intended for export to other parts of Italy, particularly the Papal States and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but also outside Italy, to the Iberian peninsula and even to the East.

No account of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century book in Italy would be complete without reference to the remarkable story of the Remondini firm, based in the small town of Bassano del Grappa, about forty miles northwest of Venice, in the foothills of the Dolomites. Set up about 1660 to print public notices, popular works of devotion, school books and other items to satisfy local needs, it aimed from the outset, and with enormous success, also at another product, that of the simple engraved picture, mainly images of saints and other religious subjects, but also secular images such as domestic animals, seasons and months of the year, and other subjects drawn from popular culture. These pictures were distributed by pedlars from the Val Tesino, in the hills above Bassano, who for the best part of a century and a half walked the length and breadth of Europe, selling the products of the Remondini presses. The geographical range of this indefatigable sales force can be seen from the fact that prints were available for them to sell with texts in eight different languages, printed not only in Roman, but in Greek, Cyrillic and Hebrew characters. From simple beginnings the Remondini firm grew until at its peak in the 1760s it had thirty-two engraving presses and eighteen printing presses, making it incomparably the largest printing establishment in Italy, and one of the biggest in Europe. From the 1730s the firm had exclusive use of the products of three paper mills in the neighbourhood. It also had its own bookshop in Venice. Its workforce, said at its peak to number about a thousand, had to endure a proto-

capitalist regime reminiscent of that of eighteenth-century English factories. Though in the course of time the Remondini booklist came to include some items of culture, the products of their engraving presses remained steadfastly popular; the firm also produced other commercial items, such as wallpaper (now much prized).

In complete contrast is the most outstanding fine printing establishment of eighteenth-century Italy, the Stamperia Reale of Parma, directed by one of the great type-designers and cutters of modern Europe, Giambattista Bodoni.[1] Bodoni was from Saluzzo, in Piedmont, and had perfected his skills as a type-cutter in Rome, at the printing house of the Vatican Congregation *De propaganda fide*, which made use of a wide range of type in exotic languages for the printing of liturgical works and of religious tracts intended for dissemination throughout the East. Bodoni was appointed director of the newly formed Stamperia Reale at Parma in 1768, and for the next forty-five years produced, alongside the day-to-day output of the Stamperia, a series of luxury editions printed with type which he had designed and cut. These editions contained few if any illustrations: they were to stand or fall by the quality of their typography. His sense of typographical space makes Bodoni's books the epitome of neo-classical taste, while his boldly-printed type, with its exquisitely delicate serifs, exercised a powerful influence on nineteenth-century European typography. His *Manuale tipografico*, published posthumously in 1818, is a remarkable exhibition of the type-cutter's art, and contains specimens of nearly three hundred fonts.

Nineteenth and twentieth centuries

With the demise of the Venetian Republic in 1797, a victim of the Napoleonic wars in Italy, came the end also of the dominance of Venice in Italian printing. Since then no one city has held such a commanding position; leadership in the Italian book scene has passed to Milan, or to Milan in conjunction, at different times and in different degrees, with Turin, Florence and Rome. As in previous centuries, however, the panorama of modern Italian printing and publishing has remained rich and varied; much important activity has also taken place elsewhere, in Bologna, Naples and Bari, for example.

The importance of Milan in the opening decades of the nineteenth century is due mainly to its leading role in Italian culture. As already said, in the second half of the eighteenth century the city was the center

of the Italian Enlightenment, and its central role continued in the first half of the nineteenth century when the spiritual heirs of the Enlightenment championed the doctrines of Romanticism. Italian Romanticism was nurtured in Milan, and the Milanese presses, which in the eighteenth century had printed many of the works of the leaders of the Italian Enlightenment, and their journal *Il Caffé*, published in the early years of the following century the journal of the Romantics, *Il Conciliatore*, and most of the works of the Romantic writers, including the greatest, the poet and novelist Alessandro Manzoni, whose novel *I promessi sposi* (1827) is the first modern Italian classic.

Technologically, however, the center of Italian printing for the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century was in neighbouring Turin. There, in 1830, an enterprising and far-seeing printer, Giuseppe Pomba, took the first step towards bringing the Italian printing industry into the industrial age by importing from England a machine press. What is more, he used it, not to print a newspaper, a role for which it had first been invented and used, but to print books. This provoked Pomba's competitors in Turin to do the same. In 1859, there were forty-seven machine presses in Turin, but only six in Milan and seven in Florence; the definitive edition (1840-42) of Manzoni's great novel was printed in Milan on a large Stanhope iron hand-press, imported from Paris for the purpose.[m] In general, the Italian printing industry was slow to come to terms with modern industrial techniques, in comparison with England, France and Germany. In 1861, the Milanese printer Giulio Pozzoli, in the first edition of his printers' manual, was still referring to stereotype as a process which only a few Italian printers had heard of, let alone used. It was only in the second edition of 1882 that he could describe it as 'now generally known'. The stimulus for modernization was the unification of Italy in the 1860s. By 1873 the number of machine presses had grown to just under seven hundred and fifty, but there were still more than two and a half thousand hand presses in use; the machines were mainly to be found in the four principal centers of Turin, Milan, Florence and Rome. It is worth noting, too, that many nineteenth-century Italian machine presses, particularly in the early years of their use, were powered by hand, not by steam.

The modern Italian book industry is perforce of modest proportions. In the Renaissance the universality of Latin and the superiority of Italian culture had created the conditions for the development of an international trade in the Italian book. In modern times the situation is very different. It is the English-speaking world which approaches most

closely the former universality of Latin. As for Italian, it is barely spoken outside the national boundaries. Moreover, in the last two centuries the country has had a relatively high level of illiteracy: as recently as 1951 thirty per cent of the population was illiterate, or only semi-literate. Moreover, at that date two-thirds of the population did not speak Italian, but only their local dialect. As late as 1994, only thirty-eight per cent of the population always and only spoke the national language.

Since 1850 book production in Italy has been in the hands of a small number of important publishers and a large number of small concerns. In the nineteenth century the more important publishers were usually also printers; one of the driving forces in the ever more efficient mechanization of their printing-houses was the fact that they often owned and printed newspapers, as well as books; this was, for example, the basis of the success of the firms of Sonzogno (Milan) and Le Monnier (Florence). A specialist firm which deserves mention is the Milanese music publisher Ricordi. Founded in 1808, Ricordi printed and published among others the works of the great Italian nineteenth-century opera composers Rossini, Verdi and Puccini; alone among Italian nineteenth-century publishers, it aimed at an international market, so reviving the glories of the Venetian music-publishers of the Renaissance. As for books, the best-seller *Pinocchio*, first published in 1883, had sold a total of three hundred thousand copies by the turn of the century; to put that figure into international perspective, it is more or less the same as the number of copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) sold in the United States within a year of its publication. At the beginning of the twentieth century Italian books which sold more than ten thousand copies were considered a success.

The twentieth-century Italian book industry has retained many of the same features; perhaps the main difference is that publishing is now usually, though not always, separate from printing. The Fascist experience of the 1920s and 1930s was a deadening influence on the free circulation of ideas; yet the book industry survived intact, and some parts of it, particularly the luxury edition, flourished. Since the Second World War the market has been dominated by a few major players, all from north or central Italy, particularly Einaudi (Turin) and Mondadori (Milan). Both were founded earlier, Mondadori as far back as 1911; during the Fascist period both, Einaudi in particular, offered writers and intellectuals opposed to the régime an outlet and a means of livelihood, specially through translations, mainly from English and American literature. After the war Einaudi continued to lead through the quality of

its list; though not neglecting home-grown talent, it was instrumental in introducing into Italy, by means of translation, significant foreign works, both creative and speculative. Mondadori, while not neglecting the quality market (the greatest modern Italian poet, Montale, was one of its authors), aimed more at mass production. With a few of its paperbacks (*tascabili*) Mondadori achieved print-runs in the hundred thousands. Several other publishers have produced successful series of paperbacks, but in general the market in Italian books has continued to be of modest proportions. This does not of course exclude the possibility of the occasional international best-seller, such as *The Leopard* of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa in the 1950s, or more recently the novels of Umberto Eco, nor of internationally famous authors like Alberto Moravia and Italo Calvino. The cultural vitality of the Italian book is also shown by the continuing proliferation of small publishing houses.[5]

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[5] In the text of the article Conor's final signature is followed by cross-references to other entries he presumed the encyclopaedia would contain, i.e. «Blado, Bodoni, Giunti, Manutius, Jenson, private presses». On the hard-disk of his computer I have found only the entry for the «Giunti». Whether he wrote or undertook to write the others remains a small mystery.

Notes

[a] The reference here is to the remaining eight leaves of an octavo edition in Italian of the *Leiden Christi* (Passion of Christ), a popular German work which in the 15th century circulated widely in Northern Europe. Discovered in 1925 by Munich bookseller Rosenthal, the item was described by Haebler in 1927, before it disappeared the following year into the collection of Louisiana bibliophile, Edward Alexander Parsons (1878-1962). Bibliographically out of sight, out of mind, it was forgotten until it resurfaced and was sold by Christie's in London in 1998, giving rise to an extensive debate about its chronological significance. Its metalcut-illustrations were used in Southern Germany sometime around 1459-61, therefore the fragment may have been printed soon afterwards, almost certainly in Italy, while the state of the language suggests that the translation was done in or near the triangle formed by Parma, Bologna, and Ferrara. Shortly after the auction, when the fragment was bought for the Scheide collection in Princeton, its existence was connected to a document written in Bondeno, near Ferrara, in February 1463, containing an agreement between a German priest, Paul Moerch, and his compatriot, named as Ulrich Purschmid, or Bauerschmid, from Baisweil, near Augsburg, see P. Scapecchi, «Subiaco 1465 oppure [Bondeno 1463]? Analisi del frammento Parsons-Scheide», *La Bibliofilía*, CIII (2001), pp. 1-24. However, while I find the arguments in favour of printing happening somewhere in the Po valley earlier than Subiaco perfectly plausible, I remain unconvinced by the «Bondeno connection», see Harris, «History of the book in Italy» cit., p. 258.

[b] This is the thesis of the well-known study by J.M. Lenhart, *Pre-Reformation printed books: a study in statistical and applied bibliography*, New York, Wagner, 1935.

[c] See M. Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson and the rise of Venetian publishing in Renaissance Europe*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1991. As well as a long-standing personal acquaintance with Martin Lowry (1940-2002), Conor Fahy had reviewed positively his earlier monograph on Aldus Manutius in *Italian Studies*, XXXVI (1981), pp. 95-96.

[d] See L. Armstrong, «Nicolaus Jenson's *Breviarium Romanum*, Venice, 1478: decoration and distribution», in *Incunabula. Studies in Fifteenth-century books presented to Lotte Hellinga*, edited by M. Davies, London, The British Library, 1999, pp. 421-467.

[e] The statistical data is taken from P. Needham, «Venetian printers and publishers in the fifteenth century», *La Bibliofilía*, C (1998), pp. 157-185.

[f] Conor's interest in the *Orlando furioso* was obviously governed in the first instance by the work done for his important monograph on the final 1532 edition of Ariosto's poem, see *L'«Orlando furioso» del 1532. Profilo di una edizione*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1989, while his knowledge of the publishing history of Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* (in the text of his article he employs the form *Innamoramento di Orlando* re-introduced by Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti and Cristina Montagnani in their critical edition of 1998) derived also from having followed my research for the *Bibliografia dell'«Orlando Innamorato»*, Modena, Panini, 1988-91, which he had reviewed in *La Bibliofilía*, XCV (1993), pp. 71-79.

[g] Conor's interest in the technicalities of music printing was stimulated by his reviews for an Italian readership of a number of American bibliographies in this field, see «Antonio Gardano e la stampa musicale rinascimentale: appunti su una pubblicazione recente», *La Bibliofilía*, XCIV (1992), pp. 285-299; «Ancora sulla stampa musicale veneziana del Rinascimento: appunti su tre recenti pubblicazioni», *La Bibliofilía*, CII (2000), pp. 309-323.

[h] See E. Layton, *The Sixteenth-century Greek book in Italy: printers and publishers for the Greek world*, Venice, Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia, 1994.

[i] See G. Ruffini, *Sotto il segno del Pavone. Annali di Giuseppe Pavoni e dei suoi eredi 1598-1642*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1994.

[j] The example obviously draws on his monograph: *Printing a book at Verona in 1622. The account book of Francesco Calzolari Junior*, edited with an introduction by C. Fahy, Paris, Fondation Custodia, 1993.

[k] See F. Barberi, «Introduzione alla tipografia italiana del Seicento», *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia*, LII (1984), pp. 212-237; 507-526.

[l] Though it is not specifically mentioned, Conor's knowledge of Bodoni and the history of the Stamperia ducale in Parma was much influenced by his work on the earliest known Italian publishing manual, written by one of Bodoni's principal collaborators, see Z. Campanini, *Istruzioni pratiche ad un novello capo-stampa o sia Regolamento per la direzione di una tipografica officina (1789)*, a cura di C. Fahy, Firenze, Olschki; London, Modern Humanities Research Association, 1998.

[m] The mention of Manzoni's novel and of the complexity of the printing of the 1840 edition was prompted by one of Conor's few excursions into the 19th century, see «Galley proofs in an Italian edition of 1840-42», *The Library*, s. VI, vol. II (1980), pp. 469-470; «Per la stampa dell'edizione definitiva dei *Promessi sposi*», *Aevum*, LXVI (1982), repr. in C. Fahy, *Saggi di bibliografia testuale*, Padova, Antenore, 1988, pp. 213-239.

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