

Printing and Entrepreneurialism in Seventeenth-Century Italy

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The seventeenth century was a time of radical readjustment for the urban handicrafts in all the Italian states;¹ and the book industry was no exception. At the turn of the century, printers in Venice, who might as well have been speaking for all the rest, had no trouble identifying the main threat to their livelihoods. As they wrote to the Venetian Senate in 1596,

We are forced to inform Your Excellencies that the virtual destruction of our art derives from nothing other than the bulls and orders of excommunication whereby His Holiness has conceded privileges [i.e., the early modern version of a copyright] to print the new Offices of the Saints, including breviaries, Roman missals and other Church books, the bible, including all ecclesiastical books, the Roman Pontificale, the breviary, the missal and other books, the Chorale of St. Dominic, the Epistles and Gospels, the Index of Forbidden books and infinite others printed in this city innumerable times, excommunicating anyone outside the Papal State who prints or sells any others except the ones printed by the Roman press.²

In every state, printers³ faced other problems in this period besides competition from their fellow printers in other states; but this may

¹ A good overview is provided by the articles by Paola Massa Piergiovanni, Salvatore Ciriaco, Paolo Malanima, Angelo Moioli, Luigi De Rosa, Luigi Trezzi and Giuseppe Felloni in Hermann Van der Wee, ed., *The Rise and Decline of Urban Industries in Italy and in the Low Countries: Late Middle Ages-Early Modern Times* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988).

² Cited in Francesco Barberi, *Per una storia del libro* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1981), pp. 346-7.

³ I use this term guardedly, to refer particularly to those whom we might more accurately call publishers and excluding small-time printers who only worked on commission and sold nothing on their own.

have been among the most significant. And how they managed, with a little help from their own local governments and a lot of entrepreneurial ingenuity, to solve such problems, survive the economic crisis and plagues of the seventeenth century and form the basis of the Enlightenment press is a still relatively obscure episode in the history of early modern industry that well deserves to be recounted.⁴

So far, however, the seventeenth-century Italian press has largely been left to the bibliographers. Nothing along the lines of Henri-Jean Martin's work on seventeenth-century Paris or Robert Darnton's work on the eighteenth-century *Société Typographique de Neuchâtel* has been done on any of the cities or firms in seventeenth-century Italy.⁵ This is scarcely surprising. A common conception, shared by press historian Elizabeth Eisenstein, is that while the industry elsewhere was in the springtime of its vitality, in Italy winter was rapidly closing in.⁶ Economic historians have pored over the mixed fortunes of other industries in the Italian states, but generally they have not regarded printing anywhere in Europe as having been a significant enough economic force to merit much attention. Immanuel Wallerstein leaves it entirely out, and Fernand Braudel limits himself to saying "it expanded and invigorated everything." Not surprisingly, Richard T. Rapp, writing about industry in Venice, made no more than a few remarks about guild policies, wages and demographics. Yet the printers and booksellers in Venice and the rest of the peninsula were among the most successful industries of the time.⁷

⁴ The Enlightenment press is a major theme of Franco Venturi's monumental *Settecento riformatore*, 5 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1969-90), of which volumes 3 and 4 have been translated by R. Burr Litchfield as *The End of the Old Regime in Europe*, 3 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989-91).

⁵ Martin, *Livre, pouvoir et société à Paris au XVII^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1969), Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: a Publishing History of the Encyclopédie, 1775-1800* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1979).

⁶ *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 411.

⁷ *Industry and Economic Decline in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Cambridge,

Compare the book industry in Spain. Granted, it was never particularly prosperous. But in the seventeenth century, just when Spanish literature was entering its "Golden Age," the industry collapsed before the onslaught of foreign competition.⁸ Like the wool industry, it survived as a supplier to more technically advanced and dynamic industries elsewhere. And while the wool industry produced raw materials to be elaborated into clothing by manufacturers in Flanders and France and reimported, draining capital and stunting economic growth, Spanish authors produced manuscripts that were turned into books chiefly in Lyons and Antwerp and reimported. Books of all sorts were also imported from Venice. In the midst of all this, printers and booksellers remained openly at war. The former were forced to rely almost entirely on paper imported at great cost from abroad, since the paper industry never developed in Spain. The latter, unable to rely upon local printers to produce enough books at acceptable prices, pressured the government to enact legislation opening the borders to the importation of whatever books they needed. The cycle of dependence on foreign production was so deeply ingrained that by 1646 there were no more than a dozen printers in Madrid, one of the largest centres, and some 40 booksellers; and this situation persisted well into the eighteenth century.

In spite of the obstacles and contretemps, the Italian printers avoided the collapse experienced by their Spanish counterparts. And because of their entrepreneurial expertise, they managed to avoid the collapse that had virtually buried the woollen industries of Venice and

Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), taking account John Marino's reservations in *Studi storici*, 19 no. 1 (1978): 79-107. The other works are Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, vol. 2: *Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World Economy, 1600-1750* (New York: Academic Press, 1980); Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, XV-XVIII Century*, vol. 1: *The Structures of Everyday Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), p. 401 (quote).

⁸ A useful *mis à point* is François Lopez, "En guise d'illustration: un procès entre imprimeurs et libraires de Madrid sous le règne de Philippe IV", *Histoire du livre et de l'édition dans le pays ibériques*, Philippe Berger *et al.* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1986), pp. 85-118. In addition, Javier Paredes Alonso, *Mercadores de libros. Cuatro siglos de historia de la Hermandad de San Gerónimo* (Madrid: Ediciones Piramide, 1988).

Tuscany and had sent silk and other industries scurrying out into the guild-free and cheap labour environment of the countryside.⁹

True, the Italian printing industries did not survive by printing the great works of the arts and sciences. Nor did they survive by printing “flattery and fustian,” as John Milton complained in the *Areopagitica*, although there was plenty of that. They survived by printing religious books serving the faithful and the clergy, novels, popular geographies and maps, textbooks, almanacs, self-improvement literature, periodicals and scores of other books for a broad audience. A history of the book industry in early modern Italy would therefore not have much to do with intellectual history in the usual sense of the term. Nor would it have to concern itself with the spectacular issues of free speech under absolutist or Counter Reformation hegemony. Instead, it would examine the complex mechanisms that brought a mass of literature, distinguished only by its mediocrity, to satisfy a habit of turning to the book for information of any sort. As the poet Giambattista Marino complained, recalling a mythic past when learned printers served scholarly readers, “today the press is reduced to simple commerce.”¹⁰

Far from being a century in which “few write and very few print” (as the Venetian printers liked to complain at tax time¹¹), the seventeenth century was a period of vitality and change. Granted, a basic idea of overall production is far harder to come by than for the previous century. Complete catalogues have been done only for smaller centres like Naples, Brescia, Piacenza, Messina, Ancona, Viterbo and Urbino.¹² These must be compared with the only large

⁹ In addition to the articles in Van der Wee, ed., *The Rise and Decline...* there is, on Venice, the fundamental article by Domenico Sella, “The Rise and Fall of the Venetian Woollen Industry,” in Brian Pullan, ed., *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy* (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 106-26; and, on Florence, Paolo Malanima, *La decadenza di un'economia cittadina: l'industria di Firenze nei secoli 16-18* (Bologna: Mulino, 1982).

¹⁰ Quoted in P. Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*, 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1962), 2: 489.

¹¹ Cited in Paolo Ulvioni, “Stampatori e librai a Venezia nel Seicento,” *Archivio Veneto*¹⁰ 8, no. 144 (1977): 94. Ivo Matto 331, “Mondo del libro” e decadenza a Venezia 1570-1730, *Quaderni storici* 24 no. 72 (1989): 743-86, bases his negative assessment mostly on labour relations, a misleading guide.

¹² Roberto L. Bruni and Diego Zancani, “Edizioni piacentine del Seicento,” *Studi secenteschi* 25 (1984): 243-88; Silvia Sbordone, *Editori e tipografi a Napoli nel Seicento* (Naples: Accademia Pontiana, 1990); *Idem*, “La produzione napoletana del Seicento.

collections available for tabulating the whole peninsula's production: the British Museum catalogue of 13,500 Italian books and the 5000 entries in the catalogue of the Vinciana bookstore in Milan, both of which include books printed in Italian, Latin and Spanish languages and a good representative collection of handbills and works in small formats, along with the catalogue of 14,000 seventeenth-century Italian language books in French libraries.¹³ These sources suggest that the seventeenth-century Italian printers produced nearly twice as many editions as in the previous century.¹⁴ Indeed, those who played it right stood to make substantial fortunes as long as they did not die in the meantime from the various occupational diseases stemming from hard repetitive work and dismal conditions outlined by Bernardino Ramazzini, the age's pioneer in professional medicine.¹⁵ The family Dolce requested Venetian nobility in 1648 after the customary provision of 100,000 ducats in deposits and gifts; and so did the family Baglioni,

Comparazione cronologica tra le materie oggetto di pubblicazione annuale," *Accademia Pontaniana. Atti*, n.s. 38 (1989): 361-74. Ugo Sopini, *Le edizioni bresciane del Seicento. Catalogo delle opere stampate a Brescia e a Salò* (Milan: Editrice Bibliografica, 1988); Filippo M. Giochi and Alessandro Mordenti, *Annali della tipografia in Ancona, 1512-1799* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1980); Giuseppe Lipari, *Gli annali dei tipografi messinesi del Seicento* (Messina: Sicania, 1990); Rhodes, Dennis E., *La stampa a Viterbo, "1488"-1800, catalogo descrittivo*, tr. Jolanda Gagligani (Florence: Olschki, 1963); Luigi Moranti, *L'arte tipografica in Urbino (1493-1800)* (Florence: Olschki, 1967).

¹³ *Catalogue of Seventeenth-Century Italian Books in the British Library*, 3 vols. (London: The Library, 1986); S. Piantanida et al., *Autori italiani del Seicento*, 4 vols. (Milan: Libreria Vinciana, 1948-51); Suzanne P. Michel and Paul-Henri Michel, *Répertoire des ouvrages imprimés en langue italienne au dix-septième siècle*, vol. I: *A-Ba* and II: *Be-Bz* (Florence: Olschki, 1970-1980); idem, *Répertoire des ouvrages imprimés en langue italienne au dix-septième siècle conservés dans les bibliothèques de France*, 7 vols. (Paris: P.U.F., 1972-85).

¹⁴ Paul Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 8, 229, estimates 17,000 produced in Venice in the sixteenth century, which was around half the total. To gain an impression of the seventeenth-century total is difficult. My estimate of circa 65,000 editions is derived from both the British Museum collection and the union catalogue of French libraries, which place Naples production at around six percent of the total. Naples production having been circa 4000 editions throughout the century yields over 65,000 in all centres.

¹⁵ Giorgio Montecchi, "Lavoro e salute nelle botteghe tipografiche di antico regime. Analisi, osservazioni e consigli del medico Bernardino Ramazzini," *La bibliofilia* 89 (1987): pp. 179-202.

just after the turn of the eighteenth century,¹⁶ building a palace near Padua decorated by images of the books that had made them great.

If the competition of their fellow-printers in other centres was the most significant problem encountered by the printers in the various Italian states, the problem of censorship was not far behind. There is no doubt that pre-publication censorship and the prohibition of works by Galileo, by soft-porn king Giambattista Marino, and by poison pen Gregorio Leti and a host of authors ranging from Erasmus to Machiavelli to Pietro Aretino were a major annoyance. To printers, lost time and money were not the only risks. Sometimes the evolution of the mechanism led to conflicts of authority that seemed to make the outcome of the process impossible to predict. In Venice, government authorization alone was sufficient until the Republic's necessities during the 1650s War of Cyprus brought about a tacit agreement with Rome, which lasted for some thirty years, mandating permission from both the government and the local representative of the Inquisition.¹⁷ In Naples, on the other hand, printers risked imprisonment by the viceroy for printing things authorized only by the archbishop, and imprisonment by the archbishop for printing things authorized only by the viceroy.¹⁸ In Tuscany, the same tension existed between the inquisitor and the secretary of state. The celebrated case of Galileo was a variation on this type. Having obtained permission to publish the *Dialogue concerning the Two Chief World Systems* from the the Tuscan grand duke, the Florentine inquisitor, and the master of the Sacred Palace in Rome, he thought he had pleased everyone until Pope Urban VIII discovered that the master of the Sacred Palace had not consulted him first. Nonetheless, papal permission was rarely invoked, and the case of journalist Demetrio Degni in Modena was much more exemplary. When he refused to place the state approval before the ecclesiastical one on the first page

¹⁶ Mario Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana nel Settecento* (Milan: Angeli, 1989), p. 133; Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere. Lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988), p. 39.

¹⁷ Mario Infelise in *Studi veneti* a Gaetano Cozzi (Venice: Carlo, 1992).

¹⁸ Silvia Sbordone, "Editori e tipografi a Napoli nel Seicento", *Quaderni dell'Accademia Pontaniana*, 12 (Naples: Accademia Pontaniana, 1990), p. 8.

of his newspaper according to the duke of Modena's new rule, he lost his licence.¹⁹

However, the problem of censorship should not be overrated. In spite of their complaints,²⁰ printers in Italy, just as in the rest of Europe, actually found censorship to be less of an obstacle than might be supposed. They discovered many methods for eluding the authorities. In Naples, where the local censorship had the worst reputation of all, printer Antonio Bulifon sent manuscripts to nearby Pozzuoli if he could not get them approved in the main city. There, the ecclesiastical representative was far more lenient than the (as Bulifon says) "scrupulous fellow" close by and his successor, "who also caused problems."²¹ To move dangerous books around Italy without risking inspection, he used the free ports. Entrance to Florence, for example, was easiest through Livorno. Roman satirist Ferrante Pallavicino, who ought to have known, regarded censorship as an advantage rather than as a disadvantage: "Prohibitions made so commonplace are no longer appreciated; and indeed, they whet the appetite for certain books, so every author is encouraged to beg for them in order to increase the value of his compositions. At the very least, they cause a great disorder and heap disgrace upon persons whose campaign against books rather than against vices seems more malicious than zealous."²² And he snidely suggested that the censorship of lustful

¹⁹ The Degni case is recorded in Giorgio Montecchi, "La censura di stato nel ducato estense dalle origini alla fine del 700," in Albano Biondi, ed., *Formazione e controllo dell'opinione pubblica a Modena nel Settecento* (Modena: Mucchi, 1986), p. 27. The main documents on the Galileo affair are collected in Maurice A. Finocchiaro, ed. and tr., *The Galileo Affair. A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

²⁰ A famous example is in Agostino Zanelli, "Debiti e crediti di un libraio bresciano del secolo XVI." *La bibliofilia* 4 (1902-3), pp. 100-1.

²¹ Amedeo Quondam and Michele Rak, eds., *Lettere dal Regno ad Antonio Magliabechi* (Naples: Guida, 1978), 1, p. 119 (quote); in addition, 1, p. 210. The view of Antonio Rotondò, "La censura ecclesiastica e la cultura," in *Storia d'Italia*, vol. 5: *I documenti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973), 2, pp. 1397-1492 should be revised in the light of Sergio Bertelli and Piero Innocenti, *Bibliografia machiavelliana* (Verona: Valdonega, 1979), p. lviii and subsequent work.

²² *Il Corriere svaligiato* [Norimberga (=Venice), s.d. (1641)], ed. Armando Marchi (Parma: Università di Parma, 1984), p. 99.

poetry might have been occasioned by wayward priests' desire to discourage heterosexuality. In dealing with their fellow printers, the printers themselves were equally quick to invoke censorship to gain a competitive edge - as the Venetian government complained already in 1596: "For some time, booksellers and printers in this city, in order to obtain the earnings they can gain by being the sole and exclusive printers of some books, to the ruin of the press in this city, have attempted to obtain letters from Rome and prohibitive privileges."²³ Some fifty years later, the printers of Imola asked the local government to use censorship to prohibit the circulation of all copies of psalters and elementary readers and grammar books except the ones they were printing.²⁴ What the early modern printers wanted was not a free press but a monopoly.

For helping the printers overcome the problem of censorship, governments may have been among their best allies. Governments began to subscribe to new theories about the effects of the press on ideas just as the system of control itself eventually began to implode under the sheer weight of its own bureaucratic red tape toward the end of the seventeenth century. The repressive mentality of the early seventeenth century, expressed in the press writings of Venetian jurist Paolo Sarpi, began to give way to a more permissive mentality. Even Sarpi himself admitted that total press control was "impossible."²⁵ After him, scepticism continued to grow concerning the likelihood of successful repression. Before the eighteenth century, no one thought of a free press. However, a damaged press was no use to anyone, and governments began seeing the virtues of getting their own views across by allowing printed apologies for their actions to circulate freely in the marketplace.²⁶

²³ Quoted in Horatio F. Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1891), p. 215.

²⁴ Pierangelo Bellettini, "Publishing in the Provinces: Printing Houses in Romagna in the Seventeenth Century," Denis V. Reidy, ed., *The Italian Book: 1465-1800. Studies Presented to Dennis E. Rhodes* (London: British Library, 1993), pp. 312-3.

²⁵ Paolo Sarpi, *Scritti giurisdizionalistici*, Giovanni Gambarin, ed., (Bari: Laterza, 1958), pp. 213-220.

²⁶ Concerning the official printers there is B. Maracchi Biagiarelli, "Il privilegio di

Mercantilist interests thus combined with ideological interests as governments sought to protect the printing industry from the worst effects of the mechanisms of censorship and control. The governments of Venice, Naples and Messina, for instance, occasionally permitted the publication of books with false place names and dates to avoid giving the impression of permitting the circulation of certain ideas whose publication could nonetheless prove lucrative or expedient. This was how two editions (1676 and 1683) of Paolo Sarpi's anathematized *Trattato delle materie beneficarie* circulated with the place name of "Mirandola," though actually printed in Venice under the noses of the civic authorities.²⁷ In addition, the government of Venice tacitly allowed booksellers to avoid paying duty and showing the revisor's permission by permitting small packages of books of any kind to be transmitted through private mailing addresses. It stoutly defended printers' rights to reprint works previously given privileges in Rome, continued to insist on application of the Clementine Index with no new additions, sped up the review process by keeping the Inquisition out, and stopped harassing the Jewish printers. The government of Naples abolished the law requiring the consignment to the government of a certain number of copies of newly printed works and that of Tuscany reduced the number of free copies due to public libraries, both of which policies had originally been instituted, at least in part, to discourage excessive book production. Moreover,

stampatore ducale nella Firenze medicea," *Archivio storico italiano* 123 (1965), pp. 334-70. The best case, however, was Venice, which prohibited the circulation of Niccolò Contarini's official history of Venice in 1631 on the grounds that it taught readers how to "act politically," and had the next official history, Andrea Morosini's, written in Latin for scholars only, whereas it later had Battista Nani write in Italian for a wider audience. This historiography is criticized for its very vulgarity by Gino Benzoni, "La storiografia e l'erudizione storico-antiquario; gli storici municipali," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4: *Il Seicento*, 2 parts (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1973), 1, pp. 72-83.

²⁷ On Messina, Giuseppe Lipari, "Committenza messinese per i tipografi calabresi del Seicento," in *Messina e la Calabria, nelle rispettive fonti documentarie dal basso Medioevo all'età contemporanea. Atti del colloquio calabro-siculo* (Messina: Biblioteca dell'Archivio Storico Messinese, 1988), pp. 389-403. On Venice, the best information is from a 1765 report by Gasparo Gozzi to the local magistrates, reproduced in Horatio F. Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, p. 347, pointing out that the practice was allowed on an experimental basis between 1671 and 1681.

the latter government allowed news sheets to circulate, at least for a time, without any supervision at all, for the expressed purpose of encouraging the industry. "First Secretary Andrea] Cioli gave the order," State Auditor Alessandro Vettori later recalled, "to let them print without having them pass through my hands, so they could go out quickly to Rome by the same post from Genoa."²⁸

The governments' behaviour increasingly seemed to suggest that the production of books ought to be not only tolerated but encouraged, just like the production of any other article. And the new policies they conceived were designed to do just that. Paper, for instance, happened to be a relatively costly item, accounting for about sixty percent of a printer's expenses and so difficult to obtain in large amounts that printers used it for settling debts among themselves as a substitute for books or cash. Some printers gave up printing altogether and became paper manufacturers, such as the heirs of Giovanni Maria Verdi in Modena.²⁹ The circulation of rags for paper decreased with every plague or war. Except in Genoa and Parma, it was usually produced in provincial factories close to clear streams and rivers in Fabriano near Ancona, in Bassano, Salò and Vicenza in the Venetian state, in Biella in the Savoy state, in Colle Val d'Elsa in the Tuscan state, in Bracciano and Ronciglione in the Papal States, and in the Sardinian town of Cagliari.³⁰ Moving paper to the urban centres of the printing industry combined with local taxes to add as much as a third to its price to the printer. In response, Venice lowered taxes for importing it from Salò for the benefit of the printers in urban Venice. The government of Lucca built up the local paper industry by stimulating competition among local paper

²⁸ Maria Augusta Morelli, *Delle prime gazzette fiorentine* (Florence: STIAP, 1963), p.6. In addition, Clementina Rotondi, "Il diritto di stampa in Toscana," *Il bibliofilo* 82 (1980), p. 137; Caterina Santoro, "Una controversa disposizione sulle copie d'obbligo nel secolo diciassettesimo," in *Studi bibliografici. Atti del convegno storico sul libro italiano* (Florence: Olschki, 1967), pp. 169-74.

²⁹ Giorgio Montecchi, "Botteghe tipografiche, libri e stampe a Modena dal 15 al 17 secolo," in *Aziende tipografiche, stampatori e librai a Modena dal Quattrocento al Settecento* (Modena: Mucchi, 1988), p. 16.

³⁰ Francesco Barberi, *Il libro italiano del Seicento* (Rome: Editrice Gela Reprints, 1985), p. 4

manufacturers and setting up protective tariffs on imports from other states. Many of the Italian governments tried to ensure the presence of sufficient raw materials to local paper factories by eliminating duties on rag imports and putting in price controls. This intervention brought about a notorious "rag war," as available supplies migrated to wherever the price was right. Paper manufacturers thereupon began to draw up the first long-term contracts with rag suppliers, consequently ensuring a continuous flow of paper to the printers for the future.³¹

Mercantilist policies in aid of other industries sometimes redounded to the benefit of the printing press, as in the case of metal for movable type. Frequent meltings-down and recasting of type after wear cost the seventeenth-century printers even more than the previous century's standard of 200 ducats per month, about four times the yearly salary of a shop hand. Since the lucrative type-casting trade had broken off to form a separate guild in most cities, with the exception of Modena, where printers Cassiani and Soliani still kept their own foundry on the premises,³² most printers could only hope that the local supply might remain plentiful. So when the Venetian government in 1667 began developing the lead-mining industry in the Vicentine hills mainly for the purpose of furnishing the Brescia arms industry with a continuous supply of lead and other metals, the increased productivity benefited Venetian printers, and this was not the least of their advantages *vis-à-vis* their counterparts elsewhere.³³

Another problem facing the printers in each of the Italian states, more serious than censorship, was the problem of competition from fellow printers in other states. Probably the most accurate thing printers ever reported to a government was that "once printing was all in Venice; now it is everywhere." And indeed, Venice accounted for nearly half of total Italian production in the sixteenth century and a

³¹ Renzo Sabbatini, *Tra passato e futuro: l'industria cartaria a Lucca* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1990), chaps. 1-3; Ivo Mattozzi, *Produzione e commercio della carta nello Stato Veneziano Settecentesco* (Bologna: Università, 1975), chap. 1.

³² Giorgio Montecchi, "Botteghe tipografiche, libri e stampe a Modena", *op. cit.* p. 23.

³³ Annibale Alberti and Roberto Cessi, *La politica mineraria della Repubblica veneta* (Rome: Provveditorato Generale dello Stato, Libreria, 1927).

large portion of European production as well. One symptom of the spread of printing in the seventeenth century was the emergence of strong competition for a share of the lucrative market for ecclesiastical books. "The business of reds and blacks" - i.e., the ecclesiastical books so-called for the colour of their type - "used to be very profitable," the Venetian printers complained. "Now it has been diverted so that no more are sent to Spain, where there was much business, since the Plantin printer has a privilege from His Catholic Majesty" (in Spanish Antwerp).³⁴ Another symptom of the spread of printing was legalized literary piracy. All early modern governments sold monopoly privileges for printing certain books regardless of those issued elsewhere. As a result, out-of-state publications all over Italy, to the chagrin of their first publishers, were regularly reprinted, frequently with no acknowledgement, not only by other Italian publishers but by Transalpine ones as well.³⁵

Venice continued to keep its lead over the other centres in Italy for the same reasons that had given it prominence at the origins of printing. Intellectual prestige and economic vitality ensured the presence of writers to supply new manuscripts, while political prestige and commerce-oriented government policies gave the printers and their goods adequate protection abroad and relative freedom from excessive impositions at home. Counting books is a bit like counting country houses; units are never exactly commensurable. Production figures record only single items, many of which were printed in several large batches of anywhere from 250 to 4000 copies each; and books of hundreds of pages are included next to handbills. They suggest that with less than half the population of Naples, Venice produced nearly five times as many books per year, for between twenty and thirty percent of the total in Italy (see Table).³⁶

³⁴ Paolo Ulvioni, "Stampatori e librai," p. 94.

³⁵ In addition, Felix De Marez Oyens, "Jan Jannssen as Counterfeiter and Pirate," *Quaerendo*, 9 (1979), pp. 351-2; Aniello Fratta, "L'attività degli Anisson di Lione nel carteggio con Antonio Magliabechi, 1669-1708," *Sociologia della letteratura*, 3 (1979), pp. 115-30.

³⁶ Total representative sample of 4130 records here and elsewhere combines the sources in para. 6.

Still, transportation costs made hegemony by Venice or any other city, either in Italy or abroad, very difficult. By land, merchandise was cheap to insure for short runs, only 1.5 percent of value, compared with three to five percent by sea; yet the shipping costs themselves were high. By sea it was cheap and often quicker to move, but the risks were prohibitive. By land or by sea, warfare and rebellion periodically drove insurance costs up.³⁷ And once books arrived at their final destinations they risked being caught in quarantine for weeks if there was any suspicion of contagion, as there was in Northern Italy in the 1630s, in Southern Italy in the 1650s, and in Southern France in 1668.³⁸

Meanwhile, various combinations of factors guaranteed a foothold to a myriad of other Italian centres besides Venice and Naples (see Table). Rome, no great centre for commerce but an inexhaustible one for Church-related literature, came next after Venice, with between seven and twenty-three percent of the total. Proximity to the patronage networks in Rome and to the coast permitted a place like Viterbo to produce almost the same share as Perugia, even though its population was only about half as much. The same advantages that aided the Venetian printers, to a lesser degree aided Florence, with five percent, Milan, with four percent, and Modena with one percent. Capital cities enjoyed extraordinary economic and cultural prestige, so that Mantua, capital of the Gonzaga state, held on to over half a percent of production, whereas Faenza, a minor city though nearly equal in population, had virtually none. The presence of a university, providing a ready audience of students and writers, turned Bologna and Padua into important printing centres, sharing some fourteen percent of total production between them (to which Padua was the minor contributor, perhaps due to the overwhelming presence of Venice), although the

³⁷ Alfonso Mirto and Henk Th. van Veen, *Pieter Blaeu. Lettere ai fiorentini: Antonio Magliabechi, Leopoldo e Cosimo III de' Medici, ed altri, 1660-1705* (Amsterdam-Maarssen, APA Holland University Press; Florence: Istituto Universitario Olandese di Storia ed Arte, 1993), p. 89.

³⁸ Documentation is in S. Ussia, ed., *Lettere di Borde, Arnaud e associati lionesi ad Antonio Magliabechi, 1661-1700* (Florence: Olschki, 1980), pp. 123, 37, 57, 59.

same advantage did not help Pisa. Of the other centres producing two percent or less, Turin, only recently made the administrative centre of the Savoy state and relatively unimportant in previous centuries, possessed a major university and became the seat of no less than eight new academies, almost the same number as old-standing and equally populous Parma, the centre of the Farnese state, whose meagre book production it eventually surpassed. Messina, which shared the status of Palermo as a provincial capital of Sicily and enjoyed a cultural revival in the seventeenth century, began to compete for the first time: after printing only 112 editions in the sixteenth century, it produced no less than 902 in the seventeenth. Some 160 other cities shared the rest of the industry, including tiny Todi and Ronciglione in the Papal States and Augusta near Syracuse in Sicily.

Alas, no amount of government intervention could change the wide dispersion of the industry both in Italy and abroad. Indeed, changes in market share seemed to be more amenable to fortuitous circumstances like war and natural disaster. Naples production collapsed in the wake of the Masaniello Revolt of 1647-48. Brescia production slackened off during the 1644-45 constitutional crisis known as the Revolt of the Discontents. Messina exports took a nosedive during the revolt of 1674-78, when the local government threw industrial policy to the winds and co-opted the press for the production of propaganda mainly for local consumption.³⁹ Each of these conjunctures offered brief opportunities for centres untouched by them and were followed by a more or less gradual recovery. Other crises were more permanent. Bergamo and Mantua production fell off during the Wars of the Succession of Mantua and Montferrat (1613, 1627), two Italian episodes of the long-standing war between Bourbon and Habsburg, and neither really came back. Likewise, after the depression and plague of 1630, only the strongest industries, like that of Venice, regained past totals. While the Venetian industry was temporarily hobbled, Naples got its first real chance to compete, only to suffer the same decline when plague hit it in 1656.

³⁹ Giuseppe Lipari, *Gli annali dei tipografi messinesi*, p. 17.

Due to the wide dispersion of the industry both in Italy and abroad and the relatively small size of most firms, printers rarely survived by just selling the books they printed. Instead, doubling as booksellers (except in Genoa where the booksellers belonged to a different guild⁴⁰), they had to exchange their own books for those of other printers to provide customers with a broad selection of titles. To keep up to date, even relatively modest firms like Combi and La Noué in Venice sent representatives yearly to collect books in the Frankfurt book fair and maintained correspondence with Florence, Naples and Rome. Their rivals as purveyors of foreign books in Italy, the Lyons firm of Borde and Arnaud, conceded their ability to get better prices for Dutch and English works. And with the emergence of a formidable industry of "red and black" religious works in Antwerp, the latter became a regular liaison for Italian printers.⁴¹ The Hertz firm in Venice used the fast-selling books they printed up in quantity in order to fill their shop with a selection of over 2500 titles at the end of the seventeenth century by bartering with booksellers in Italy and abroad.⁴²

Once the printers had managed to put together a good variety of works, unlike their counterparts in a large metropolis like Paris, most of them had to market their wares mainly outside of town if they wanted to do very well. Hertz, for instance, published catalogues of everything he had on hand, in every format from folio and quarto all the way down to 24mo and smaller, in the hope of attracting as many mail orders as possible. His catalogue was divided almost by half into Latin and Italian books. It included every possible subject from medicine and astrology to theology and the complete works of all the great men in science from Francis Bacon to Robert Boyle and Descartes. It included all the great theologians on both sides of Catholic orthodoxy, from Jean Calvin to Robert Bellarmine, side-by-side with offices of the Blessed Virgin in no less than fifteen different formats,

⁴⁰ Alberto Petrucciani, "Il libro a Genova nel Settecento. I: L'arte dei librai dai nuovi capitoli, 1685, alla caduta della Repubblica," *La bibliofilia* 92 (1990), pp. 41-90.

⁴¹ Alfonso Mirto, "Librai veneziani nel Seicento: i Combi-La Noué ed il commercio con l'estero," *La bibliofilia* 91 (1989), pp. 287-306.

⁴² *Catalogus librorum qui reperiuntur Venetiis in officina Hertziana* (Venice: Hertz, 1694), Treviso, Biblioteca Civica, V., pp. 24. I. 15.

including eye-watering 120mo, and the complete spiritual pamphlets of a certain Giovanni Marino, thirty in all, each one in 24mo. By contrast, some Parisian firms included only hard-to-move items. One of them included only Latin works, noting at the end that there were also "diverse other books in French and Italian", books that he did not have to bother listing since the city market could easily absorb them. Another even refused to mail to other cities the smaller books he sold in Paris when entreated to do so by customers, citing the waste of time.⁴³ The more successful Italian printers printed mainly for export, and some of them entirely so, for instance the Greek printers in Venice, who supplied up to 2000 copies each of some of the twenty to eighty titles they introduced per year for export to Greece, or the music printers in Ancona, who served all of Europe, or the Slavic printers in the same city, who served the Dalmatian market.⁴⁴

Governments could do equally little about the absence of conventions regarding intellectual property among all the many printing centres. A few attempts were made to enforce privileges to print certain books all over Italy. The Papacy insisted that those granted in Rome were universal. But in general, this attempt was no more enforceable than that of the Venetian Jewish community to have their privileges cover all Jews.⁴⁵ Outside the states in which extraordinary privileges were granted, they were treated just like any other kind of privilege: with indifference. Some printers even ignored privileges granted in their own cities. Giacomo Mascardi specialized in reissuing the most lucrative of the books published by his fellow printers in Rome, adding new titles, title pages and new introductory material to disguise the theft.⁴⁶

⁴³ S. Ussia, ed., *Lettere di Borde, Arnaud e associati lionesi*, p. 35; in addition, Catalogue des livres arrivés chez Mme. Pelé, rue Saint-Jacques, à la croix d'or, en 1643 (Paris: 1643), noted in Henri-Jean Martin, *Livre, pouvoir et société*, 1, p. 302.

⁴⁴ Filippo M. Giochi and Alessandro Mordenti, *Annali della tipografia in Ancona*, p. lvii. In addition, G. Plumidis, "La stampa greca nei secoli XVII," *Archivio veneto* 93 (1971), pp. 29-40; *idem*, "Tre tipografie di libri greci," *Ateneo veneto* n.s. 9 (1971), pp. 245-51.

⁴⁵ The case of the Venetian Jews is recorded in Benjamin S. P. Shen, "Social Purpose of Copyright Legislation," in Stacey B. Day, ed., *The Communication of Scientific Information* (Basel: Karger, 1975), p. 108.

⁴⁶ Franca Petrucci Nardelli, "Torchii, famiglie, libri, nella Roma del Seicento," *La bibliofilia* 86 (1984), p. 166.

Major Centres of the Italian Book Trade, 1601-1690, as percent of ten-year totals

	1601-10	1611-20	1621-30	1631-40	1641-50	1651-60	1661-70	1671-80	1681-90	1601-1690
Venice	0.16	0.38	0.47	0.28	0.33	0.30	0.29	0.33	0.33	0.32
Roma	0.10	0.07	0.14	0.15	0.19	0.22	0.22	0.23	0.21	0.16
Naples	0.03	0.05	0.08	0.14	0.06	0.02	0.04	0.08	0.09	0.06
Milan	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.04
Bologna	0.04	0.07	0.03	0.05	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.18	0.08
Florence	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.09	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.05
Mantua	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
Perugia	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01
Other	0.52	0.30	0.16	0.23	0.21	0.28	0.26	0.20	0.07	0.27
	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Sources: Catalogue of Seventeenth-Century Italian Books in the British Library, 3 vols. (London: The Library, 1986); Suzanne P. Michel and Paul-Henri Michel, Répertoire des ouvrages imprimés en langue italienne au dix-septième siècle conservés dans les bibliothèques de France, 7 vols. (Paris: P.U.F., 1972-85).

Consequently, many printers chose to rely on old chestnuts rather than on new books. Such books were not affected by counterfeiting. They cost nothing in terms of payments to authors. And they seemed to promise a secure income. As Milanese expatriate satirist Gregorio Leti complained, "In Rome, Naples, Venice, the number of these merchants is very great; but as far as good books are concerned, very few are found, because at present everyone tries to draw buyers to his store in any way he can, with much earnings and few scruples."⁴⁷ A typical inventory, that of the printer/bookseller Viviano Soliani, heir to an old and reputable firm that was to continue its existence through the following century, in 1678 listed 7,500 engravings of saints and fourteen reams of "various prayers" along with thousands of copies of books, by authors ranging from Ovid to Aelius Donatus, for use in schools.⁴⁸ Printer Antonio Bosio in Venice kept on hand a rich collection of holy cards.⁴⁹ And printer Giuseppe Remondini of Bassano made Cesare Calderino's early seventeenth-century law dictionary the mainstay of his growing

⁴⁷ *L'Italia regnante*, 4 vols. (Venice: Guerini, 1675-6), 3, p. 79.

⁴⁸ Giorgio Montecchi, "Aziende tipografiche, stampatori e librai a Modena", pp. 29-31.

⁴⁹ Venice, Archivio di Stato, Giudici di Petizion, b. 393.58, drawn up in 1694.

company for forty years.⁵⁰ Particularly successful works, such as Sebastiano Ansaloi's sixteenth-century *Almanacco perpetuo*, a sort of astrological and mathematical guide including home medical advice, were printed constantly everywhere throughout the century. And several printers in Bologna appear to have lived entirely by selling the works of late sixteenth-century novelist Giulio Cesare Croce.

Even printers who were open to printing new works kept the old standbys on hand as a secure sideline. For example, the Hertz family in Venice earned a reputation for printing scholarly works on medicine and biology.⁵¹ While they saved their own technical resources for these enterprises, they farmed out standard large-selling works they owned, such as the *Celestial Ambrosia* of local servite friar Michele Cicogna, to their less prosperous fellow-printers as far away as Padua for second and third printings. This way they were able to print, without reassembling old forms or buying new type, many thousands of copies of given works, each bearing the name of the firm.⁵²

To increase market share, printers had to rely on their own ingenuity; and one way available even to those unwilling or unable to take the risks and expenses of competing on the international scene, was to move downmarket by cutting costs on existing products. This was no simple proposition. The technology of the hand press was unlikely to improve significantly after the introduction, during the course of the century, of the rounce to move the frisket in and out, a device that enhanced accuracy rather than speed. Costs of living in towns were high, and wages were pushed up by the plagues. As long as guilds remained in control, there was little chance that the industry might follow the silk and wool industries out into the countryside,

⁵⁰ Mario Infelise, *I Remondini di Bassano* (Bassano: Tassotti, 1980), surely means this work on p. 132.

⁵¹ Roberto Cusani, *Il galenista confuso* (1697); Cesare Magati, *De rara medicatione vulnerum* (1676).

⁵² Venice, Archivio di Stato, Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, filza 361. An example of a Padua-printed work was Leone Matina, *Ducalis regiae lararium* (Padua: Hertz, 1659).

where the costs were lower. Even in the eighteenth century, efforts by Bassano printer Giuseppe Remondini to take advantage of his provincial location to undercut his Venetian counterparts were fiercely contested by the latter.⁵³ Attempts to lower the percentage of overhead costs by increasing size of plant were discouraged by government taxation policies putting large firms at a disadvantage. Meanwhile, workers in London were paid up to fifty percent less than in Venice.⁵⁴ Printers accordingly sought to save on materials and workmanship, vitiating any advantages that might accrue by more accurate technology. They bought cheaper paper, spent less time correcting proof and allowed their editions to appear sloppier and less finished than sixteenth-century ones. "Many greedy printers do not tolerate delays," complained prelate-virtuoso Juan Caramuel in Satriano, kingdom of Naples, in 1664, "and do not want to correct their [type] forms in spite of the authors' protests."⁵⁵

In this changing situation, the Venetian senators were no help at all. They responded to the downmarket trend in the same misguided way in which they responded to the trend toward cheaper fabrics in the textile business: by more quality controls.⁵⁶ In 1614, they created a special office of Superintendent of the Printing Industry to enforce the laws; and in 1653 they ordered the Prior of the guild to visit print shops regularly to make sure rigid standards were being observed" both in the assembling of the characters and in the quality of the paper, ink, and especially the correction, and in every detail so that the printings will be attractive, good, correct, and full of all the qualitates necessary and opportune for restoring as much as possible their earlier reputation."⁵⁷ Defending the traditional luxury product, they hoped, would maintain the prestige of the industry and the confidence of purchasers. Such tactics, just as in the textile trade,

⁵³ Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana nel Settecento*, chap. 6.

⁵⁴ Richard T. Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline*, p. 135.

⁵⁵ V. Romani, ed., *Il "syntagma de arte typographica" di Juan Caramuel ed altri testi secenteschi sulla tipografia e l'edizione* (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 1988), p. 47.

⁵⁶ Attilia Dorigato, "Il libro veneziano nel secolo XVII," *Révue d'études italiennes* n.s. 27 (1981), pp. 344-9.

⁵⁷ Transcribed in Horatio F. Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, p. 228.

threatened to price Venetian books out of the expanding lower end of the market.

Another way to increase market share, without running foul of government quality controls, was to concentrate on products that were inherently cheaper. This was nothing new. Squeezing material from quarto-sized books into octavo or duodecimo pamphlets was an old trick. So was the compression of material from pamphlets into folio-sized handbills, especially news reports on current events. What was new in the seventeenth century was, first of all, the wide variety of material now sent out as handbills. Even sophisticated works on science were now published this way. Gian Domenico Cassini's handbills on observations of the moons of Jupiter were a good example. Marcello Malpighi's letter on conglobate glands would have come out in this fashion, if his editor had had his way.⁵⁸ What was new, secondly, was the volume of production of books in smaller formats. Antonio Bulifon in Naples, who specialized in such books, earned the name "inventor of the duodecimo." And to keep track of all the many books that were now circulating in such formats, Florentine physician Giovanni Cinelli Calvoli invented a special tool, suggestively called *Biblioteca volante* (the "flying bibliography"), in reference, he said in his preface, as much to the periodical schedule of the bibliography itself as to the Italian term for broadsheet (*foglio volante*).⁵⁹

The best way of all to increase market share was by developing entirely new products, in other words, new titles. However, new titles seemed to be beyond the reach of most printers. The most popular

⁵⁸ The Italian edition of Malpighi's *De structura glandularum conglobatarum* (London: 1689) eventually came out in pamphlet form in 1690. The episode is in *Correspondence of Marcello Malpighi*, 4 p. 1591. Cassini's broadsheets are *Martis circa axem proprium revolvibilis observationes Bononiae* (Bologna, 1666); *De periodo quotidianae revolutiones Martis* (Bologna, 1666); *De aliis Romanis observationibus macularum Martis* (Bologna, 1666). All are in Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Misc. 871. A later example of the same genre was Giovanni Francesco Vanni's *Specimen liber de momentis gravium* (Rome, 1684).

⁵⁹ From Cinelli's account of himself, for which I used the later reprint edited by Apostolo Zeno, *Biblioteca volante* (Venice: Albrizzi, 1734), p. xli. On Bulifon, M. Fuiano, "Aspetti della cultura e dell'editoria napoletano del Settecento," *Archivio storico per le provincie napoletane*, ser. 3, vol. 91 (1974), p. 266.

authors gravitated to the better-known printers in the larger cities. Piracy was an option; but deciding what new works to pirate was not easy. Furthermore, the smaller printers did not have enough equipment on hand to keep printing their cash cows while experimenting with other works of less certain success, nor enough cash on hand to utilize the presses of many of their neighbours while occupying their own with experimental works, as the Hertz family did in Venice. They were not accustomed to much planning. They commonly took on several jobs at once, printed them up and coasted on the earnings for a while. They regarded markets as finite and did little research to extend them. After they seemed to have sold out two or three printings of a single work by relatively modest distribution methods, they went on to another one.⁶⁰

In spite of their reputation for conservatism, for which excessive state intervention and the Counter Reformation have variously been blamed,⁶¹ even the smallest Italian printers went for one new product in a big way: newspapers. First introduced in Italy by Genoese writer Pietro Castelli in 1639, on the model of Theophraste Renaudot's *Gazette de France*, the new invention was an instant success. It soon spread to Florence, and eventually it appeared in Rimini, Mantua, Milan, Ancona, Fologno, Turin, Bologna, Macerata, Messina, Naples, Perugia, Fermo, Sinigaglia and Fano (to name the centres so far identified).⁶² In many of these places, printers found that newspapers were one genre they could produce entirely by themselves. By the end of the century, it was a thriving, fiercely competitive industry. In the cities of the Papal States, state monopolies on certain kinds of news went for twenty to thirty scudi apiece, when the entire value of

⁶⁰ Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere*, chap. 5.

⁶¹ The first, by Richard T. Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline*; the second by Richard Mackenney, *Tradesmen and Traders. The World of the Guilds in Venice and Europe, c. 1250-c. 1650* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), chap. 5.

⁶² The only biography of the Castelli is by G. Gangemi in the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 21 (1978): 741-2. In addition, Valerio Castronovo, "I primi sviluppi della stampa periodica fra Cinque e Seicento," in V. Castronovo and Nicola Tranfaglia, *La stampa italiana dal Cinquecento all'Ottocento* (Bari: Laterza, 1976), p. 26. For what follows, there is valuable bibliographical information in vol. 2 of Ugo Bellocchi, *Storia del giornalismo italiano*, 6 vols. (Bologna: Edison, 1974-77).

a print shop rarely exceeded 150 scudi.⁶³ In Florence, the state monopoly priced at 400 ducats a year was bid up to 425. In Naples, where business was brisk, given the size of the city, the monopoly cost no less than 800 ducats.⁶⁴

Printers at first seemed unlikely to gain from newspapers the same advantages as from printing the old chestnuts. But they grew to appreciate the savings in time and type by the regular compilation of similar products.⁶⁵ They could leave title friezes, if nothing else, in place for many issues. They could retain formats and simply fill them up with new type. They could depend on getting more for their product than for similar quantities of the prayers or holy cards they usually dealt in. They could plan ahead and hope to avoid the long periods of unemployment between production, sale, and the undertaking of new projects that characterized spot printing. They could count on a constantly available forum for advertizing their other products. They could hope to win some prestige, at least among their fellow printers. And most importantly of all, they could count on a regular income.

After newspapers caught on, writers invented, and printers developed, still another new product capable of rendering a regular income, appealing directly to the upscale market and even competing on the international scene: the variety magazine, combining, at first, book reviews and short articles. The new genre emerged directly from earlier media for exchanging cultural news, like book catalogues and handbills, as well as manuscript letters, still valid conduits between scholars and amateurs alike. From these occasional media to the regular weekly or monthly emission, with a promise of indefinite continuation, of volumes concerning every aspect of cultural activity interesting to amateurs and specialists alike, was not a very great step, and the first

⁶³ Pierangelo Bellettini, in Denis V. Reidy, ed., *The Italian Book*, p. 312.

⁶⁴ Maria Augusta Morelli, *Delle prime gazzette fiorentine*, p. 15; Fuiano, "Aspetti della cultura e dell'editoria napoletana," p. 257.

⁶⁵ On this point, I agree with Christian Wagenknecht, "Einführendes Referat zum Rahmenthema Buchwesen und Literatur im 17 Jahrhundert," *Stadt - Schule - Universität - Buchwesen und die deutsche Literatur im 17 Jahrhundert. Vorlegen und Diskussionen eines Barock-Symposiums der Deutscher Forschungsgemeinschaft 1974 in Wolfenbüttel*, ed. Albrecht Schöne (Münich: C. H. Beck, 1976), p. 468.

to take it was Denis de Sallo in his Paris *Journal des sçavans*, published from 1665. Soon afterwards came the London *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society directed by Henry Oldenburg, and in 1668, the Roman *Giornale dei letterati* directed by mathematician Michelangelo Ricci and collaborators. It was so successful that a pirate version was immediately started up by a printer in Bologna, and it was immediately imitated in Ferrara, Parma and elsewhere.⁶⁶

The genre soon evolved. In the 1680s, Venetian priest Francesco Coli produced the *Pallade veneta*, attempting to extend the audience for the new genre of variety magazines to a new and, according to recent studies, growing group: women readers.⁶⁷ Following the model of Jean de Visé's recently-begun Parisian journal, the *Mercurie Galant*, he filled his volumes with news about theater productions, ceremonies, parades, receptions, parties, and foreign visitors.⁶⁸ He even offered political news and extracts from the original *Mercurie*. Like the *Mercurie*, he addressed his volumes to women, perhaps in the expectation that such might be more interested in the sort of entertainment he had to offer. And to make his pages more inviting, he composed the work in the innovative form of fictitious letters to various actual noble ladies.

Not a writer but a printer, Girolamo Albrizzi of Venice, brought the concept of the variety magazine to the last stage of perfection. Born into a family of once-wealthy patricians from Bergamo, he acquired his education informally.⁶⁹ And after learning the ropes as

⁶⁶ Giuseppe Ricuperati, "Giornali e società nell'Italia dell'ancien Régime," V. Castronovo and Nicola Tranfaglia, *La stampa italiana*, pp. 67-116. For the area of Emilia-Romagna, there is the very useful collection, Martino Capucci, Renzo Cremante and Giovanna Gronda, *La biblioteca periodica. Repertorio dei giornali letterari del Sei-Settecento in Emilia e in Romagna*. Vol. 1: 1668-1726 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985).

⁶⁷ Guerrino Pelliccia, *La scuola primaria a Roma dal sec. XVI al XIX* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985), p. 394.

⁶⁸ The current authority on this work is Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta: Writings on Music in Venetian Society, 1650-1750*, (Venice: Fondazione Levi, 1985), in which she corrects Ricuperati's attribution to Albrizzi, who printed a few numbers of it.

⁶⁹ There is some biographical information in the entry by Giorgio E. Ferrari in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 2 (1960), pp. 58-9, which is corrected by Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana del Settecento*, pp. 30-1; in addition, M. Lanaro, "Accademie ed editoria: l'attività degli Albrizzi a Venezia", in *Accademie e cultura: aspetti storici tra Sei e Settecento* (Florence: Olschki, 1979), pp. 227-72.

printer of the *Pallade veneta* for a time and for a local *Giornale de' letterati* spin-off called the *Giornale veneto de' letterati*, he soon took the initiative in his own *Galleria di Minerva*. Combining the *Pallade veneta* format with that of the *Giornale de' letterati*, he provided a pot-pourri of literary and political information, advertizing, and reprints of out-of-print works, frequently spread out over several numbers to keep readers' interest.⁷⁰ Rather than addressing scholars or women, he addressed the common reader in general, supplying information on a larger range of subjects than ever before: from education to gardening, from social criticism and views on women to demonstrations of recently discovered scientific principles, from travel tips to tips on literary elegance. By opening the journal up to anything his readers might wish to send in, he created a sort of interactive framework. And by publishing the submissions uncut and unedited, with all the salutations, compliments, and personal details intact, he imparted a festive and inviting tone to the work, which the recorded response suggests at least some readers found hard to resist.⁷¹ Finally, by adorning the finished product with an attractive dress, including varied type and full-page illustrations, he appealed to his readers' senses as well as to their minds.

Increased competition for markets invited new promotional schemes, and Albrizzi specialized in this. In his second year on the *Galleria*, he proclaimed, in the journal itself and in a separate broadsheet, the establishment of a new "Academy of the *Galleria di Minerva*." At the top of the list of officers were three Procurators of St. Mark - holders, that is, of the highest honorific position in the Venetian republic. Next came eight other noblemen. Probably never contacted in person, unless they talked to one another they would not discover their appointment *in absentia* had been by Albrizzi himself. Other officers included some of the most prominent literary figures around Venice. The expressed purpose of the academy was to make editorial choices about the material sent in and to suggest

⁷⁰ The places in question are in *Galleria di Minerva*, 1696, p. 286; 1697, pp. 109, 125-30, 317.

⁷¹ *Galleria di Minerva*, 1696, pp. 96, 106, 358, 211, 328, 235; 1706, pp. 148, 273.

other material that might be included, such as "reviews" of one's own work. In reality, Albrizzi sought to cement the loyalty of his regular purchasers and give them an interest in the enterprise by making them all members of this élite group. That was how he was able to claim that there were over six hundred members in all, "conspicuous for their birth as well as their virtue."⁷²

While Albrizzi invented a new *genre*, the Dandi publishing family, originally of Forlì, became the first (however modest) journalism tycoons.⁷³ With Giovanni Felice Dandi to do the printing and his brother Giovanni Pellegrino, a university graduate, to do the writing, they burst on the scene in the 1680s in the seaside city of Rimini. Their first newspaper was the *Giornale militare*, begun in 1686, bearing field notes on the efforts of the Venetian navy to recapture the Peloponnesus from the Ottomans. Eventually they took over the printing of another paper, the *Riminio*. They progressed to magazine publishing with yet another *Giornale de' letterati*-type variety magazine. As they moved to different cities in search of more suitable markets, they changed the name of the *Riminio* to *Ravenna* and later to *Forlì* to reflect the new settings for their operations. Finally settling in Forlì, they fused newspaper and magazine into one entity with the *Gran giornale de' letterati* in 1701, including political, military and literary information. In all these efforts, what the Dandi brothers lacked in originality they amply made up for in entrepreneurial ingenuity, opening academies and impressing unwary readers by advertizing copy filled with forged literary correspondence from Northern Europe.

Increased competition also invited new distribution methods; and the advances made in subscription publishing in this period laid the groundwork for some of the most ambitious projects of the following century. Newspaper entrepreneurs pioneered in this, asking subscribers to advance money for a fixed period of delivery. Entrepreneurs sold more sophisticated periodical publications that could not depend on a local market to a list of booksellers around

⁷² *Galleria di Minerva*, 1697, p. 259.

⁷³ Pierangelo Bellettini, "Gli anni ravennati della stamperia Dandi, 1694-8," *Studi seicenteschi* 23 (1991), pp. 269-313.

Italy. Benedetto Bacchini in Parma, for instance, sold his *Giornale de' letterati*, one of the most distinguished variety magazines after the Roman *Giornale*, to a list of twenty such booksellers from Turin to Palermo, who received journals in exchange for books.⁷⁴ The new technique permitted printers to fly their trial balloons and engage in some elementary market research, since failed advertizing campaigns cost far less than failed editions. And by the early eighteenth century, other works besides periodicals were regularly being financed in advance by sales to lists.

New genres, new promotional methods and new distribution techniques would, of course, have been useless without an increased demand for books. And just as these changes were taking place in the industry, some significant changes began to occur in social relations in the various Italian cities, making media awareness more important than ever before.

The return of economic stability that the Italian states enjoyed after the twin plague disasters of 1630 and 1656 produced a small spurt of prosperity for some segments of the societies that were not supported by old money. Protagonists of these changes were not the poor or the lower reaches of the artizanal ranks, who indeed may have become worse off, but the entrepreneurs, owners of shops and manufacturing concerns and merchants. Their economic improvement was accompanied by efforts to improve their status at the theoretical level. They deserved respect, their defenders insisted, because of the nobility they derived from the act of creation, so near to divinity, as well as from their contributions to the wealth and well-being of the community.⁷⁵ In places where mercantile activity did not improve significantly, the liberal professions were seen as the way to status.

⁷⁴ The handbill is in Brescia, Biblioteca Queriniana, ms. D VI 5.

⁷⁵ See Antonio Zambelli's comments in *Mercantesche dichiarazioni e ragguagli di piazze, con una tariffa di pesi ...* (Brescia: Rizzardi, 1681), p. 1. Economic restabilization is discussed by Domenico Sella, *Crisis and Continuity: The Economy of Spanish Lombardy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 105; and Rupp, *Industry and Economic Decline*, Chap. 3. In general, Paolo Malanima, in *Storia della società italiana*, ed G. Cherubini, vol. II: *La controriforma e il Seicento* (Milan: Teti, 1989) pp. 149-88.

Neapolitan lawyer Francesco D'Andrea drew the obvious conclusion. "[Those who are from] private families," he counselled, "[can] improve their mediocre fortune ... subtract themselves from the oppressions of those more powerful ... [and become] equally wealthy and esteemed."⁷⁶

Theoretical justification, however, was not enough for the protagonists of the late seventeenth-century economic and social changes. What growing numbers of them desired more was to add a visible veneer of cultural respectability to their economic prosperity.⁷⁷ And besides buying tickets, and sometimes entire boxes outright, in the local opera theatres and making modest collections of paintings, the new aspirants to social success also read - or, at least, purchased - books and periodicals of every sort. Said the author of one book aimed at weekend naturalists, "Consider what is necessary, convenient, or memorable for conversation, and it is clear that whoever has experienced the marvels of nature, learned the virtues of the plants and metals, known the nature of the animals, and looked minutely at the anatomy of man will be able to speak with more grace and enjoyment."⁷⁸ The same could be said for whoever knew the latest political developments from the newspapers, the latest geographical discoveries, the exact location of the Venetian possessions in the Greek Archipelago and so forth. By the end of the century, the proliferation of works aiming to satisfy this market was counted as one of the wonders of the age. "Today in the world of letters", noted one observer, "there are so many handbooks, so many 'shops', so many theatres of human life, [these are typical titles] and so many collections of ceremonies, of facts,

⁷⁶ Concerning the professions, I referred to Carlo M. Cipolla, *Fighting the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981) and Salvo Mastellone, *Francesco D'Andrea. Politica e giustizia* (Florence: Olschki, 1969) D'Andrea's advice is in Nino Cortese, *I Ricordi di un avvocato napoletano del Seicento: Francesco D'Andrea* (Naples: Lubrano, 1923), p. 168.

⁷⁷ Such was attested by the growing number of legal works. Even the most modest of them left their heirs with meagre collections of paintings and books.

⁷⁸ Nicolò Serpetro, *Mercato delle meraviglie della natura* (Venice: Tomassini, 1653), Introduction, p. 1.

and of sayings, that anyone can quickly prepare himself for any occasion.”⁷⁹ And Giuseppe Malatesta Garuffi explicitly addressed his variety magazine, *Il genio dei letterati appagato* (“The Satisfaction of the Inclinations of the Learned”) to “whoever, being rather uncultivated, [desires] to throw off [his] own rusticity [ruvidezza].” Indeed, with busy merchants and occasionally tradesmen spouting half-baked erudition, social climbing, in the comedies of Reggio-born writer Pietro Pariati, became one of the most potent comic themes of the times.

By using their entrepreneurial ingenuity, printers in Italy did more than just prosper. They provided a livelihood not only for themselves and the hosts of hawkers, itinerant vendors and sidewalk stalls that created a dense distribution network between themselves and the reading public, but also for scores of workers in auxiliary industries - binding, paper-making, type-casting, leatherworking and the like. They thus contributed to sustaining the economic recovery. More importantly, by actively contributing to the changing *genres*, helping to satisfy the new demand and exploring new distribution and marketing techniques, they prevented the diversion of precious intellectual and financial resources to other areas. They provided the essential foundation for a literate and informed reading public. And most importantly of all, they provided the essential base for the profession of writer which began to emerge just in the last decades of the century. By the end of the seventeenth century, the printing industry in Venice and the larger centres began to bear a number of the features of the modern industry that was to develop during the course of the following century: highly organized workmanship and a densely articulated network of suppliers and distributors. In fact, variety journalism turned out to be a hit not only in Italy but also abroad, and an excellent advertizing tool for bringing production of

⁷⁹ Camillo Ettore, *Il buon gusto ne' componimenti rettorici* (Bologna: Santi, 1696), p. 45: “Avete a sapere, come oggidì nel mondo letterario sono tanti prouari, tante officine, tanti teatri della vita umana, tante raccolte d'esempi di ritti, di fatti, e di detti, che ogn'uno può ben presto provvedersi alle occasioni di quanto vuole.” “Theatre of human life” no doubt refers to Leonardo Fioravanti's *Tesoro della vita umana*.

other items to the notice of buyers all over, preparing for the genuine take-off in book exportation that occurred when the eighteenth century became the century of journalism par excellence, and of the Enlightenment.

