Reviews

The grim reaper, retirement, reaches us all sooner or later, and is, if nothing else, a moment for taking stock. The options of course are plentiful: cultivating roses or vegetable marrows is among the best; otherwise, for researchers in the humanities there is finally the chance to wrap up that book, or to write those last few articles, or to be busier than ever before, doing 'real work'. One inviting possibility is to collect previous writings into volume form, unless diligent colleagues and pupils have not already done so as a parting or good-riddance gift. When the writings concerned are copious, or spread over a long period of time, there is the issue of which pieces to choose and which not to choose, and, more fundamentally, what to do with them, since assembling requires unifying different publishing criteria, correcting errors, and updating bibliographies. The most difficult decision is whether to let the texts stand, more or less as they were originally written, apart from minimal retouching, or to rewrite everything systematically, which can prove a daunting task. A compromise solution, albeit sometimes the best, is to let the original texts stand, but to provide for each one an *addendum*, explaining what has happened to this particular critical issue between the original publication and the present day. These are all matters that usually pass without comment; on the other hand, if the process has not gone as smoothly as it might, thoughts about the most appropriate mechanism are not out of place.

The present volume brings together eighteen articles, originally published between 1984 and 2017, by Piero Scapecchi. The author spent his career as a librarian in the Italian state system, first at the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence, subsequently at the same city's Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, taking retirement in 2012; his origins from the province of Arezzo also mean that he has worked on the books and manuscripts of that area of Italy as well as on his adopted city, Florence. He defines himself primarily as a scholar of the fifteenth-century printed book, and has published several important catalogues of the same: of the Marucelliana in 1989 (see Marcella Leembruggen, in *The Library*, VI, 13 (1991), 281–4), the Biblioteca Rilliana in Poppi and the Monastery at Camaldoli in 2004 (see *The Library*, VII, 6 (2005), 482), the Seminario vescovile in Padua in 2008 (see *The Library*, VII, 12 (2011), 194), the Biblioteca civica and the Academia Etrusca in Cortona in 2016 (see *The Library*, VII, 20 (2019), 417), and, most recently and most importantly, of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (BNCF) in 2017 (see D. E. Rhodes, in *The Library*, VII, 19 (2018), 236–8); otherwise, he has written extensively, mainly on matters of detail relating to manuscripts and early printed books in specialist periodicals, including the present one, and in conference acts. The collection is

preceded by a short introduction by Edoardo Barbieri who defines the author, in his opinion, as 'il maggiore incunabolista italiano' (p. ix).

The articles Scapecchi has chosen to republish here, according to their original versions with only minimal corrections, are divided into four groups: discussions relating to very early printing in Italy (nos 1–7); later material, relating mainly to manuscripts used as copy-text and the inventory of a case of type in a Florentine printing shop in 1500 (nos 8–10); Aldus Manutius, in particular the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (nos 11–17); and, finally, the history of the library of the monastery of Camaldoli (no. 18). The result is an important volume which all libraries with collections of incunabula or Aldines—often the same thing—will want to own. The failure, however, to update the texts, either by revision or by *addenda*, means that a reader unaware of the author's other writings is in danger of being misled or not grasping the full picture, with the added inconvenience that there is a paucity of references to ongoing repertories, in particular the ISTC, making for an awkward identification of quite a few items discussed here. The late Dennis E. Rhodes, who was a reviewer in this journal of Scapecchi's catalogues of incunabula and other work, for the most part very positively, made a point of complaining about the author's inability to spell words or titles in English. Unfortunately, once again, no native speaker of English (nor of French nor of German) has conducted a read-through of the proofs, for instance: 'Hebert' [Herbert] (p. vii), 'Incunabula Short Titles Catalogue' (p. xiii), 'Davis' [David] (p. xvi), 'Screiber' (p. 43), 'bursaires' (p. 54), 'Zeiberg' [Zeidberg] (p. 98), 'wich' [which] (p. 99), 'etait' (p. 135), 'Rodhes' (p. 164), 'Dominque' (p. 167), 'philosopbique' (p. 170), 'Rechlin'(p. 183), 'sixtheenth' and 'bibliotèque' (p. 199), to which can be added the omission of 'Italy' from the title of Martin Lowry's biography of Aldus (p. 17).

To come to the nitty-gritty, Scapecchi has been a controversial incunabulist, as far as incunabulists can be said to court controversy. Three of his theories, in particular, have attracted interest, discussion, and rebuttals.

The earliest concerns the authorship of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published at Venice by Aldus Manutius in December 1499. The edition of course does not declare any paternity as such: the name of Francesco Colonna is found in the famous acrostic formed by the woodcut letters at the beginning of each chapter of the book, spelling out the message 'POLIAM FRATER FRANCISCVS COLVMNA PERAMAVIT'; this typographical graffitto was deciphered by contemporaries and a note in one copy of the edition, now lost, written in 1512, identifies Francesco Colonna as a dissolute friar at the monastery of St John and St Paul in Venice. The name Colonna is also alluded to in a sonnet in a variant in the preliminaries so far documented in a single copy in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. Though the identification with the Venetian friar, who died in 1527 and whose biography has been reconstructed, is generally accepted, an unconvincing attempt has also been made to identify him with another contemporary homonym, a Roman aristocrat. Scapecchi argues, on the other hand, that Colonna was the dedicatee of the work and that the real author is identified through a seventeenth-century source, which names another friar, Eliseo da Treviso of the Servite order. Scapecchi, who was anticipated in this respect by the Florentine art historian Alessandro Parronchi (not mentioned here), set forth his case in an article in *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia* in 1983, followed

by a postscript in 1985: neither is collected here; instead the reader has to make do with a later article from 2004, which provides only a partial summary of the argument. Other attempts to identify the author of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* among the great and the good of the second half of the fifteenth century have of course been legion. The one undeniable fact nevertheless is that the name Francesco Colonna appears in the book itself and it is difficult to believe that an operation as intricate as the acrostic would have been conducted for a dedicatee without somehow including the name of the author as well.

The second involves the ubication of the so-called Deo Gratias printing shop, from the fact that two of the known editions, the *Decameron* of Boccaccio and the *Epistolae et evangelia* (or *Lectionarium missae*), a sort of collection of texts for preachers in Italian translation, both end with the declaration 'DEO GRATIAS'; the third, containing the comedies of the Latin author Terence, has instead 'AMEN'. None of the editions bears a date, though the primitive typography suggests that they are very early (most scholarship agrees in or around 1470), nor any indication of where they were printed. For the last century and more the attribution has been to Naples: it was made by Robert Proctor on the basis of the copy of the Terence at the Bodleian Library, in which he noticed a resemblance to a type used by Sixtus Reissinger. In 1984, in an article reviewing things that in his opinion needed to be done in incunable studies, Scapecchi argued that the Deo Gratias printer should be relocated to Florence. The essay is included here, but the failure to revise perpetuates mistakes: at p. 13, Scapecchi states that the only copy of the Terence in a library in Italy is in Florence in the Laurentian, but this forgets the one at the BNCF (which he described in his catalogue of the same in 2017, no. 2757); at p. 14, he claims that, otherwise, the only copy of the same edition of Terence in libraries outside Italy is at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin: however, this is to ignore the copies at the Bodleian (with a very obvious Florentine provenance which Proctor failed to notice), at the Rylands in Manchester, and at the Vatican. In 1996, the historian of the Italian language, Paolo Trovato, rubbished Scapecchi's reattribution in a brief discussion of the history of printing in Florence, included in a set of conference acts published for the quincentenary of the death of Lorenzo de' Medici (1992), subsequently republished in the same author's *L'ordine dei tipografi* (1998). Trovato's observation was that both in the *Decameron* and in the *Epistole et evangelia*, though the basic form was Tuscan, in some pages the language was contaminated by dialect forms from Southern Italy, and therefore, in his opinion, the Deo Gratias shop had to be returned to Naples, the only major printing centre active south of Rome by this date. At the time of writing, in the major ongoing repertories for incunabula, GW and ISTC, the Deo Gratias printer continues to reside under the shadow of Vesuvius, where the shop is inelegantly labelled as the 'Printer of Terentius (Pr 6748)'. Scapecchi, with characteristic obstinacy, has refused to give way on the matter and, for instance, in his catalogue of the incunabula in the BNCF and in other writings, maintains the attribution of the Deo Gratias shop to Florence. In more recent years, Lorenz Böninger, on the basis of extensive research in the Florentine archives, has produced scraps of evidence that favour the identification of the Deo Gratias printer with Niccolò da Lorenzo, otherwise active in Florence from about 1474/75 onwards, most importantly the sale of twenty copies of the *Decameron* in November 1472 (see the review article of Böninger's

monograph on the printer, summarizing much of this research, by the present writer in *The Library*, VII, 22 (2021), 575–85). On the basis of Böninger's early findings, in 2007 Scapecchi published a further article in the periodical *Rara volumina*, in which, albeit refusing to engage with Trovato's evidence, he makes a much better case, above all with reference to the identifiable early provenances of the surviving copies of the three editions, for locating the Deo Gratias shop in Florence and for the involvement of Niccolò di Lorenzo in its publications. The said article, however, has been ignored by GW/ISTC, as well as by much other scholarship, and, inexplicably, Scapecchi fails to include it in this volume. This is a shame, since, in this instance, Scapecchi is probably right.

Third, the discovery of the Italian version of the text known as the *Leiden Christi* was announced by the bookseller Rosenthal in Munich in 1926; albeit fragmentary, it was recognized as a very early printed artefact, to which the great German incunabulist Konrad Haebler dedicated a short monograph in 1927, arguing that it was the oldest surviving Italian printed book, preceding by several years the establishment of a press in the monastery of Subiaco and, after a couple of undated editions, the publication of an edition of Lactantius in October 1465. Matters went no further due to the disappearance of the volume concerned. It had been purchased by the American bibliophile and collector Edward Alexander Parsons (1878–1962), who had taken it back to Louisiana; out of sight, out of mind, as far as Italian bibliography was concerned, and for a good seventy years it remained largely forgotten and unmentioned, until in 1998 it reappeared for auction at Christie's in London. Scapecchi's interest is shown by an article on the sale he published at the time in *Biblioteche oggi* (not collected here), while the Italian government made a move to purchase it; dollars, however, prevailed and it went to the Scheide library at Princeton. As far as dating the fragment went, the Italian version was a line-by-line rendering of the original German text, known in several impressions assigned to the early 1460s; moreover, it used the same metal-plate illustrations in a later, more damaged state. The argument that it was impressed in the peninsula rests almost entirely on the fact that the text is in Italian (the unicorn-head watermark in the paper is also Italian, but of course could have been exported), while linguistic evidence suggested that the translation was done by someone from the lower Po valley, somewhere in the triangle formed by the cities of Bologna, Ferrara, and Parma. By pure coincidence, a few years before the rediscovery of the Parsons fragment, a cleric and researcher based in Ferrara, don Enrico Peverada (1967–2014), had uncovered and published a fascinating document relating to an agreement signed in the small town of Bondeno and dated 24 February 1463, between a German artisan, Ulrich Pursmid, and the local parish priest, another German, Paul Moerich, to make a series of objects, including two figures in terracotta and three 'formes' with early learning texts. In 2001 Scapecchi published an impressive and lengthy article (erroneously cited here at p. xv as 1996), in which he argued that Pursmid at Bondeno in early 1463 was also the printer of the Parsons fragment. In this instance, the rebuttals were learned and thoughtful: in particular, in 2004 the late Paolo Veneziani pointed out that no mention is made in the document of a text that might correspond to the Parsons fragment and also the significance of a codicil between the parts, dated 21 April 1463, dissolving the partnership and stating that nothing had been done, while in 2009 Paul Needham emphasized the ambiguity of the term

'forme' in a Renaissance context and suggested that, rather than printing, the texts indicated in the document were planned as part of a terracotta frieze in a classroom. In 2014 Scapecchi published a follow-up article, included here, in which he cited these various counter-arguments, albeit refusing to budge from his original position. Readers nevertheless are left to their own devices if they wish to discover if anything else has been written about the matter since that date. Overall, although some coincidences—the date and the location—between the 1463 Bondeno document and the Parsons fragment are striking, the arguments against identifying them as part of the same operation seem far stronger.

These three big issues, so to speak, account for a little less than half the volume, but also provide useful examples of Scapecchi's method and approach to printed Renaissance documents, including his ability to handle large amounts of complex and often contradictory information and his willingness to go out on a limb. On the other hand, the title given to the book is perhaps a misnomer, since there is very little bibliography here, at least in the analytical sense, while discussions of Renaissance printing techniques are also conspicuous by their absence. The one article that comes closest to being a study of typography is a remarkable document discovered by Scapecchi in a manuscript in the BNCF. (There is something of a story here, since the author found and made known the existence of the same, only to lose the reference and be unable to find the original for nearly a decade, until it was rediscovered and published in 2011.) It involves the inventory of a case of type in Florence on 1 October 1500, defined as a 'lettera meçanella', belonging to Bartolommeo de Libri, received by him from Filippo Giunta and previously owned by Lorenzo Morgiani, including a count of all the individual type sorts, given not only in terms of their numbers but also in their weight in pounds and ounces. The total reached is of 33,495 sorts, including 23,140 lowercase letters, 841 uppercase, and 6,611 spaces, and an unspecified quantity of punctuation marks (by contrast, the eighteenth-century *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert provides the breakdown of a standard 'policy' of 100,000 type sorts, confirming the small scale of the Renaissance type case). It is interesting that the sale or donation (no monies are mentioned) is not for punches or matrices, but for cast type, which must have been in good condition, since otherwise it would have been melted down for the value of the metal. The document is therefore of great importance and it is maybe to be regretted that the author does not do more to make it understandable, especially for scholars not versed in Renaissance Italian typography. No transcription is provided and the reader has to make do with a complete reproduction (not of the best) of the four pages of the original document; fortunately, by fifteenth-century standards, the hand is very legible, but nevertheless this is an awkward solution. Some features in the text moreover remain obscure: for instance, 405 sorts are designated as 'coma' and 250 as 'virgoluza', but commas in the modern sense are not known in Florentine typography in this period, outside texts in Greek, and are generally considered an Aldine innovation. At a guess, the colon probably corresponds to the 'coma', since elsewhere the documents lists 'coma 213 per fare punti' (i.e. a colon was cast and then the sort was turned into a full stop with a knife), while the 'virgoluza' is most likely the question mark. Likewise it is fascinating to discover that to make a 'v', a 'y' was cast and again trimmed with a knife ('y per far v 200'), and also that a hyphen is 'la diuisione 200'. One intriguing

question is whether it is possible to identify this type in Renaissance Florentine editions, taking account of the fact that it has to appear both in editions by Morgiani, who ceased printing in 1497, and in those of Bartolommeo de Libri from October 1500. Scapecchi argues that it might be the 101R, which appears in Bartolommeo's editions in the early sixteenth century (p. 100), but this ignores the previous history with Morgiani. Consulting the online *Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke* (Scapecchi mentions only the paper version), a better candidate might be the latter's type 4: 86R, though more work needs to be done in order to establish whether it is the type with this measure used by Bartolommeo.

Rather than bibliography in the strict sense of the word, therefore, the strength of this collection of essays resides in what it says about books in a wider, more erudite sense, rich in important details, albeit often rather elliptic in the handling of information. The Aldine essays, in particular, which make up a substantial part of the volume, are biographical rather than bibliographical, or when a genuine biblio-graphical issue is raised, the treatment is cursory. Just to give one instance, in an article originally published in 1994, discussing the presence of *errata* in Aldine editions, Scapecchi remarks that the one placed at the end of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* is not found in all the copies (p. 141): it is true that a genuine resetting of the last sheet exists, which omits the full-page *errata*, but this different state is found in an absolute minority of copies and was only identified in 2006 (by the present writer in the *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*); otherwise, a certain proportion of the surviving copies lack the final leaf, but this is damage caused by time and lack of care and does not constitute a variant. The reference is, however, too brief to understand what is meant. One last point: an assemblage of previous writings is sometimes a chance to provide a bibliographical list (*usque ad diem*) of all the publications of the said author, and quite often this is the most useful and lasting feature of such a volume; it is a pity, perhaps, that the opportunity has not be taken here.

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Printing and Misprinting: A Companion to Mistakes and In-House Corrections in Renaissance Europe (1450–1650). Ed. by GERI DELLA ROCCA DE CANDAL, ANTHONY GRAFTON, and PAOLO SACHET. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2023. xxiv + 575 pp. £100. ISBN 978 0 19 886304 5.

ERRORS IN PRINTING ARE ALMOST AS OLD as the printed word. For instance, a range of some in the copy of the 42-line Bible at Frankfurt was illustrated by Gerhardt Powitz in 1990. We live with errors today, partly reborn as a consequence of the inadequacies of optical character recognition whether in scans of books to read on our screens or in attempts to mine historical texts which are thus compromised as evidence. The last are especially corrosive, for search engines remove entirely any chance of recovery.

Much of this often thoughtful book is about not just damage and mistakes, but also about reconstruction. In the words of its introduction, it 'provides the first comprehensive and interdisciplinary guide to the complex relationships among textual production in print, technical and human errors, and more or less successful