DIGITAL ACCESS TO SCHOLARSHIP AT HARVARD
DASH.HARVARD.EDU

HARVARD LIBRARY
Office for Scholarly Communication

A theory of the early Italian printing firm, Part II: The political economy of patronage

Citation
Feld, M. D. 1987. A theory of the early Italian printing firm, Part II: The political economy of patronage. Harvard Library Bulletin XXXIV (3), Summer 1986: 294-331.

Permanent link
https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37364377

Terms of Use
This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. Submit a story .

Accessibility

A Theory of the Early Italian Printing Firm

Part II: The Political Economy of Patronage

M. D. Feld

PATRONAGE, as the first part of this study has attempted to demonstrate, was the dominant factor in the early history of Italian printing. The prototypographers were summoned from Germany by members of the Vatican hierarchy; they initially set up shop in the environs of Rome; and the subsequent development of printing was shaped by the politics of the papal curia and by the Roman printers' subordination to the literary and philosophical values of ecclesiastical bureaucracy.

The very notion of a text and, as a consequence, the form of its manufacture and distribution were determined by these literary and philosophical values. The analysis of early Italian printing is, accordingly, an essay in the construction of a rational and factually verifiable relationship between textual concept and typographical evidence. In such a relationship, concept, the contribution of curial humanism, was, virtually by definition, the dominant partner.

During the late quattrocento, the text, as already noted, was apprehended under three alternative modes: (1) noumenal entity — Perotti, (2) matrix of social cohesion — Bussi, (3) facet of official policy — Lignamine. The three agents were rivals in the cultural politics of the Curia, and the interplay of the three modes must,

The research on which this paper is based was assisted by a grant from the Penrose Fund of the American Philosophical Society. An earlier version was read on 10 November 1983 at the Harvard Center for Renaissance Studies, Villa I Tatti, Florence, Italy. Part I appeared in the *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Fall 1985).

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

therefore, have been protracted and complex. They were not, however, equal contenders for curial patronage. Perotti, with his notion of the text as a *ding an sich*, had no interest in practical applications and was essentially anti-entrepreneurial. Whatever active competition there was would have taken place between Bussi and Lignamine. For them the text was an instrument of authority, a device for the attainment of some yet higher end, and, as such, the natural servitor of wealth and power.

Perotti, Bussi, and Lignamine were, nonetheless, as one in that their primary concern was for the content of the text rather than for the processes of its transcription and dissemination; for Perotti the transcending ideal of the pristine text justified the agony of editing, whereas for Bussi and Lignamine classical literature was a thesaurus of case studies in heroic behavior and public service.

The manufacture and distribution of books was thus dominated by intellectual considerations. Sweynheym & Pannartz and, for that matter, Lignamine — as the manager of a printing firm rather than the author of its prefaces — were primarily servants of an idea and, only in a secondary and derivative sense, purveyors of a commodity. Early humanist printing is, accordingly, most accurately described and comprehended in terms of its ruling concepts.

Cottage Enterprise — Court Enterprise

The major obstacle to such description and understanding is the spectral and unexorcised notion of the marketplace. Most studies of early printing predicate, as a matter of course, a discursive mode of haggled exchange in which each discussant states his position in clear and distinct monetary terms.[1] The premise of haggled exchange holds economic man to be fundamental and treats literacy as an intuitive condition rather than as a laboriously constructed system. Printing firms, according to these studies, came into being in the midst of an active reading public and were inspired by the belief that conventional and efficient means of dealing with it were ready at hand. Their operations conformed, in quasi-reflexive fashion, to the rhythmic

[1] Rudolf Hirsch, *Printing, Selling and Reading, 1450–1550*, second printing with a supplemental annotated bibliographical introduction (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 62 ff. Also, Victor Scholderer, *Printers and Readers in Italy in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1949); E. P. Goldschmidt, *Medieval Texts and Their First Appearance in Print* (Oxford, 1943), pp. 13-18.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

interaction of hypothetical producers' quantifiable response to equally hypothetical consumers' quantifiable demand.

Such a view enthrones the market as the governing element in the process of literate exchange, matching readers to texts in predictable proportions, adjusting without perceptible strain to the exponential explosion printing brought about in the number of available books, and inflicting ruin and disgrace upon those who ignored its code. Texts and readers were, according to this approach, autonomous participants in a pre-ordained harmony. The acquisitive drive of the self-centered reader was the correlative of the productive forces behind the spontaneously generated book. Entrepreneurial capitalism, in this Rousseauean state, was our prelapsarian literate condition. Commercial viability depended directly upon consumer demand; consumer demand was, for its part, the aggregate of independent and thereby intelligent decisions. The successful entrepreneur was the man who promoted the union of egotistical readers and freely created texts, and who, as his reward, enjoyed the acclamation of the general will.

Literature offers us a subtler perspective. It approaches the concept of enterprise as if it were a variant of the creative act and provides two alternative entrepreneurial models: *cottage enterprise*, wherein the behavior of the general public is the index of success, and *court enterprise*, wherein the existence of the consumer is ignored. The cottage entrepreneur, as described by those nineteenth-century rhapsodists of heroic capitalism, Samuel Smiles and Elbert Hubbard, builds a bigger and better mousetrap, and the world beats a path to his door. The courtier entrepreneur, as described by Daniel Defoe and Horatio Alger, studies the personality of the ruler of his realm and thereby gains his favor. From Daedalus to the deviser of Rubik's cube, examples of cottage enterprise come readily to mind. As for court enterprise, Robinson Crusoe is surely the archetype. Cast away in an environment where the consuming public was — initially at least — conspicuously absent, Crusoe by dint of his heroic meditation on the divine will pleased the Almighty and prospered mightily. The cottage entrepreneur succeeds by dint of rugged individualism, made manifest in the irresistible appeal of the products created by his ingenuity. The court entrepreneur makes his way as the recipient of divine or quasi-divine patronage and thrives, accordingly, in the role of privileged recipient of the latter's bounty.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

Sweynheym & Pannartz and Lignamine are object lessons in the efficacious grace of quasi-divine patronage. The texts selected, edited, printed, and distributed by their respective firms are concrete instances of their ability to read the mind of a higher power and to express his thoughts in typographic mode. What may, moreover, have been expedient in Sweynheym & Pannartz was elevated by Lignamine to the rank of a ruling principle. The mind of his master was transformed into a bibliographic complex. In sedulous detail, encomiastic humanism realized the ideal of the printer as courtier-entrepreneur. Both as publisher and editor, Lignamine laid particular stress on the personal nature of his relationship with the pope, his dependence on him, and the abundant services he, Lignamine, was in consequence rendering. The books issued by Lignamine's press and the prefaces Lignamine wrote for them had, indeed, no other justification. They were celebrations of Sixtus IV's triumphant papacy. As such, they effected a revolution in the course of Western printing.

Revolutions are frequently a case of children devouring their parents, and Lignamine's could, in this sense, have claimed legitimate antecedents. His editions, with their roman type and Ciceronian Latin, transmitted ecclesiastical policy in humanist envelopes. Lignamine did not depart from the typographical and rhetorical conventions of Sweynheym & Pannartz. In his dependence upon curial patronage, he also followed in their steps. But as a publisher Lignamine was, nonetheless, innovative in his choice of texts and in the implied attitude toward the general reader. The encomiastic text was for Lignamine an absolute. The reader, in the guise of a "good man Friday," existed solely as an adoring and subservient client.

Lignamine had, in all probability, no interest in whether anyone other than Sixtus IV and his entourage ever saw the editions devoted to the pope's praise. His Sistine texts are now unreadable for any purpose other than the investigation of encomiastic humanism's origins and rationale. Bussi's editions, in contrast, are landmarks in the history of humanism and textual criticism. His prefaces, in their professed dual allegiance, address the patrons and recipients of his texts as fellows in a common endeavor. This notion of the fellowship of all readers, lay and clerical, was an integral component of archaeological humanism's thesis of a fundamental pagan-patristic concord. Through his subsidized editions, Bessarion had identified this concord as the mythic source of Italy's and Europe's receding greatness,

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

the traditional alliance of imperial Rome and pristine Christianity. The humanist recipients of the texts in question, in the act of receipt, became commissioned agents of the reconciliation of these preordained allies. Lignamine, whose loyalty was total, conceded nothing to legendary glory. The grandeur of Rome was, for him, a fact of life. He addressed Sixtus IV as an absolute force, the incarnation of imperial Rome by simple force of intellect and will, and, by the same token, the uncontested master of his associates.

Lignamine could thus treat his as the authentic humanism. The archaeological variant of Sweynheym & Pannartz might claim historical priority, but rhetoric and reality supported its encomiastic rival. For both, the ideology of classicism and the politics of local patronage, Roman authority was absolute. The cognate myths of imperial and apostolic legitimacy were the ultimate reference points in appeals to bygone precedent and current reality. Lignamine's peculiar genius lay in his realization that the distinction between Rome's past and Rome's present was, for practical purposes, verbal, and that the reigning pope, as arbiter of local linguistic practice, could effectively define both of these concepts. In his prefaces, Lignamine, laid continual stress on the crucial nature of this role and on his own wholehearted involvement in its realization. He regularly refers to himself as *familiaris* (intimate and confidential servant) *Sixti IV*,[2] and his selection of texts was offered in vindication of this claim. Lignamine's message was his motive: Sixtus IV was the most magnificent of popes and a ruler whose virtues ennobled everyone in any way associated with him, Lignamine his designated spokesman included. Through the genius of encomiastic humanism, ideology and rhetoric were brought into harmony.

A comparison of Lignamine's Sistine prefaces with those of Bussi is instructive. Bussi had also commemorated the election of the new pope with a pair of prefaces to the first two parts of Sweynheym & Pannartz's edition of the *Postilla super totam Bibliam* of Nicolas of Lyra (13 November 1471, and 23 January 1472), their first publication during the tenure of Sixtus IV. Bussi embellished his presentation with the obligatory humanist ornaments. In the first of the prefaces, he proclaimed the pope a natural force in the benevolent Virgilian

[2] Vito Capialbi, *Notizie circa la vita, le opere, e le edizioni di messer Giovan Filippo La Legname* (Naples, 1853), pp. 56, 70, 77, 80, 88, 95, 96.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

mode and, quoting from the *Georgics*, secured him a station within the pagan pantheon.[3] In the second preface, Bussi placed the pope in social context: in a Curia notable for its learning and munificence, the pope was declared *primus inter pares*.[4] Lignamine, in contrast, raised the pope into a higher sphere. In the initial Sistine manifesto, his preface to Sixtus IV's *De sanguine Christi et de potentia Dei* ([after 10 August] 1471), he equated his author and patron with the saints of archaeological humanism, the embattled Latin church fathers and the pious Roman consuls.[5]

Archaeological humanism had praised Sixtus IV for favors humanists hoped to receive. Encomiastic humanism described the papal office in terms of the occupant's own grandiose designs. The difference could not have been lost on Sixtus, who, as Bussi noted, had the habit of reading prefaces. With this in mind, Bussi had addressed the pope as a fellow scholar, the *ex officio* head of the informal academy of Roman humanists and the prime beneficiary of their talents. Lignamine, who knew his man better, glorified Sixtus IV as one of Rome's tutelary divinities, an instrument of auto-apotheosis, in no way dependent on the apparatus of scholarship or the machinery of the Curia. The relationship, as Lignamine did not hesitate to point out, was the other way around.

Described in these terms, the outcome was a foregone conclusion. Lignamine, with single-minded clarity, had realized that the notion of Roman *imperium* was the dominant factor in humanism of any form or variety. On the basis of this realization, and abetted by an intimate knowledge of Sixtus IV's character and the politics of curial patronage, he created his own version of humanism and, in the process, an official printing monopoly. Monopolist or not, Lignamine liberated printing from the shackles of scholarship and of the past. He made it both contemporary and autonomous, ready and able to sell its services to the highest bidder. His innovation became standard practice. Over the next century the printed encomiastic preface and accompanying text was adopted by virtually every European govern-

[3] Giovanni Andrea Bussi, *Prefazioni alle edizioni di Sweynheym e Pannartz, prototipografi romani*, ed. Massimo Miglio (Milan, 1978), pp. 70, 71.

[4] Bussi, *Prefazioni* (note 3), pp. 73-82.

[5] "Sic apud nostros Augustinum Hieronymum Ambrosium Gregoriumque divine domus zelo exesos contra hereticos et latrasse et rugisse legisti. Sic apud gentiles P. Cornelium et Bebium Pamphilum consules romanos egisse meministi." Capialbi, *Notizie* (note 2), p. 50.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

ment as an effective means of converting current policy into legitimate authority. History metamorphosed into empire. Every monarch, it came to be, was in one way or another the heir of Caesar.[6]

It is ironic that Lignamine, in political and social perspective the most significant printer in the history of early modern Europe, goes virtually unnoticed in studies of the development and significance of the typographical revolution. It is doubly ironic because his contribution was essentially ideological, and ideology is supposed to be what revolutions are all about. Revolutions, however, tend to be noticed only when they are self-proclaimed, and Lignamine was neither by profession nor by intent a revolutionary. He was a curial bureaucrat who, in pursuit of an ever-greater proximity to power, moved from Rome to Naples, from Naples to Messina, and finally from Messina to Seville.[7] His casual approach to printing is what makes Lignamine's typographical record so simple and direct. Like the pioneer aeronauts, he was obsessed with the conquest of an environment, in his case, the ruling circles of southwest Europe. Lignamine was analogously indefatigable in the details of execution and indifferent, once they had outlived their usefulness, to the fate of his tools. By 1481, his career had achieved self-sustaining flight. He gave up printing and left Rome to become papal tax collector for the Kingdom of Sicily.

The Politics of Curial Patronage

His own career aside, the record of Lignamine's printing firm is noteworthy for its effect on the operations of Sweynheym & Pannartz. Lignamine's initial encomiastic preface can be read as the documentary background to Sweynheym & Pannartz's petition. The petitions can, in turn, be read as a justification of the abandonment of archaeological humanism and of its three salient features: editorial prefaces, *editiones principes*, and patristic texts. The timing and the particulars of this reaction are telling. Sweynheym & Pannartz had made their mark as innovative printers. They succumbed, nonetheless, to Lignamine's challenge as if it were the verdict of a higher court, and granted encomiastic humanism an uncontested monopoly as the legitimate curial mode. Almost immediately upon the accept-

[6] Frances A. Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (Boston, 1975), pp. 1-87, 121-126.

[7] Capialbi, *Notizie* (note 2), p. 20.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

ance of their petitions, they abandoned their idiosyncratic style of publication for a featureless humanism. They did not, however, falter in their commitment to classical literature. Unlike rival Roman printers, they made no effort to salvage independence through the printing of non-classical texts.

The data for pre- and post-petition publication illuminate their transformation. Of Sweynheym & Pannartz's thirty-nine pre-petition editions, thirty-seven fit securely into the evolutionary phases of archaeological humanism: twenty-four were pagan and thirteen patristic texts. The two anomalies, Rodericus Zamorensis's *Speculum vitae humanae* ([after 28 February] 1468) and Cardinal Bessarion's *Adversus calumniatorem Platonis* ([before 28 August] 1469) are, significantly, the only contemporary texts printed by Sweynheym & Pannartz in their pre-petition phase.

Both were reactions to papal policy. In February 1468, the most prominent Roman lay humanists were taken into custody on assorted charges of heresy, sodomy, and subversion. They were imprisoned in the papal fortress of Castel Sant'Angelo and deposited in the charge of its castellan, Roderigo Sanchez de Arevalo, archbishop of Zamora. It, therefore, is no surprise that the first book published by Sweynheym & Pannartz subsequent to that event was *Speculum vitae humanae* by the custodian of these readers of classical literature, Rodericus Zamorensis, the official charged with the investigation of the alleged conspiracy.

We have no evidence that Sweynheym & Pannartz were themselves ever threatened with juridical proceedings. As artisans, they may have been too insignificant. Sweynheym & Pannartz were, nonetheless, associated with the local humanists. Some of the alleged conspirators were in all likelihood instrumental in these printers' move to Rome in 1467. Sweynheym & Pannartz must, at any rate, have been apprehensive and have taken steps to protect themselves through the only means at their disposal. It is reasonable in these circumstances to assume that the *editio princeps* of *Speculum vitae humanae* was a propitiatory offering to its author, Rodericus Zamorensis.[8] The *Spe-*

[8] M. D. Feld, "Sweynheym and Pannartz, Cardinal Bessarion, Neoplatonism: Renaissance Humanism and Two Early Printers' Choice of Texts," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 30 (1982), 282-335, esp. 304ff. Also Frederick R. Goff, "The Earliest Instance of Printing on Vellum in an Italian Book," *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* (1966), pp. 80-85. The role of Rodericus Zamorensis in the evolution of early Italian printing merits detailed examination.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

culum was the first printed book published under overt curial sponsorship. Rodericus wrote a preface, the first composed expressly for a printed book, recommending his treatise to the attention and protection of the pope. His rhetoric must have provided the necessary security. His patronage could, however, have been no more than a makeshift. Paul II was notoriously hostile to literature in general, and classical Latin in particular. Even with his wrath assuaged, he and his entourage remained unlikely sources of patronage. In both subject matter and the circumstances of publication, the *Speculum* of 1468 was culturally and theologically antithetical to humanism.

The precedent set by the *Speculum*'s preface was, however, noted and exploited. During the latter half of 1468, Sweynheym & Pannartz resumed printing humanist texts. The initial offering in this new sequence was a two-volume edition of the *Epistolae* of Saint Jerome (13 December 1468), a text notable for its explicit affirmation of the pagan-patristic complementarity. Each volume of the *Epistolae* had a preface written by Johannes Andrea Bussi, bishop of Aleria, and each was likewise addressed to Paul II. Bussi's prefaces differed in essential respects, however, from that of Rodericus. They were not isolated efforts but the first of what proved to be a concerted series. Rodericus's preface dealt with one book, his own. Bussi spoke of a general curriculum of which he was to be the editor. Rodericus, in justification, referred to the authority of the Catholic Church. Bussi, in justification, cited the consensus of the humanist community.

Bussi wrote twenty-two prefaces in all. The first was for the letters of Saint Jerome; the last was Sweynheym & Pannartz's petition to Sixtus IV, offered as the preface to the third part of the *Postilla super totam Bibliam* (20 March 1472) of Nicolas of Lyra. Bussi's first and final prefaces are thus records of Sweynheym & Pannartz's two crises and instruments of their successful resolution. There were no prefaces signed by Bussi prior to the imprisonment of the Roman humanists, and none after the conferral of Sweynheym & Pannartz's benefices.

The editorial preface can thus be considered a kind of gyroscope, a mechanism designed to stabilize relations between the Sweynheym & Pannartz firm and its politically sensitive environment. It came into being when the anti-humanism of Paul II became an operational element in the conduct of Roman printing; it was discarded when Sweynheym & Pannartz, securely pensioned, had no reason to concern themselves with the vagaries of papal behavior. The prefaces

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

were designed to legitimize the distribution of particular pagan and patristic texts, works with an explicit ideological content. Sixtus IV's benefices removed Sweynheym & Pannartz from the political arena and enabled them to adopt an ideologically neutral editorial style.

This, at any rate, is an hypothesis suggested by Sweynheym & Pannartz's post-petition record. Once in possession of their benefices, Sweynheym & Pannartz printed no more editorial prefaces, *editiones principes*, or patristic texts. The classical corpus was not, however, abandoned. Fourteen of their sixteen post-petition items were either pagan Latin authors or translations from the pagan Greek. Twelve of these classical texts were reprints, five of which Sweynheym & Pannartz had formerly issued with prefaces. The two non-reprints were unsigned and unacknowledged editions from the pen of a humanist bishop who appears to have been Sweynheym & Pannartz's post-petition editor, Niccolò Perotti, formerly secretary to Bessarion. The remaining two books were a Latin grammar written by Perotti and a collection of sermons by Robertus Caracciolus, a preacher favored by the Greek cardinal.[9] The two books for which Perotti could take undisputed credit, the Latin grammar and a translation of Polybius, were headed by prefaces of his own composition.

From the vantage point of Sweynheym & Pannartz's petitions, archaeological humanism appears to be a seamless web, its components so intertwined as to make it impossible to extract any single one of them without seriously impairing the existence and utility of the other two. A detailed analysis of Sweynheym & Pannartz's printing record yields a different picture. The typographical implementation of their underlying ideology was piecemeal and pragmatic. The editorial preface was not an original and integral component. In terms of both function and history, it was a tool designed to cope with particular problems and to lead to particular solutions. The humanism of Roman prototypography did not spring into existence fully grown; it evolved over time and in response to local circumstances.

Editiones principes and patristic texts had been, as we have seen, a distinctive feature of Sweynheym & Pannartz's publications ever since they had set up shop in Subiaco. Bussi's editorial prefaces, in

[9] Z. Zafarana, "Caracciolo, Roberto," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, XIX (1976), 449-452, esp. 449.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

contrast, did not appear until more than three years later, at the end of 1468. The introductions to Jerome were patently motivated more by cultural politics than by disinterested scholarship. Humanism was under official attack; the first two prefaces were forthright expositions of its underlying tenet: the symbiosis of pristine, i.e., patristic, Christianity and pagan Latin literature.

Bussi's role is ambiguous. The editorial preface may well have been his special contribution to the repertory of humanism. It was not, however, the basis of his affiliation with the Sweynheym & Pannartz firm. In the first of his prefaces to the *Postilla*, Bussi refers to his four exhausting years of editorial labors.[10] His association with the printers must therefore have begun sometime in the second half of 1467, at least a year and a half before the *Epistolae* appeared in print. Bussi must have taken up his editorial duties immediately after Sweynheym & Pannartz's departure from Subiaco and almost simultaneously with their arrival in Rome.

Approximately six months later, Roman humanism became the object of an official investigation. As its pioneer printers, Sweynheym & Pannartz must have felt themselves threatened. They placed themselves under the ostensive protection of a bishop who also happened to be Paul II's chief of police. The precedent for overt curial sponsorship was thus established. With the resolution of this crisis, Bussi, Sweynheym & Pannartz's resident editor, became the spokesman for curial humanism. Whether he did this on his own initiative or under someone else's direction is the riddle to be deciphered.

The Sweynheym & Pannartz preface was an authoritative declaration of editorial intent. Given the circumstances of its publication, it was pro forma addressed to Paul II, the supreme magistrate of Rome, and presumably had his approval. A preface was, however, authoritative only to the extent that the opinions expressed could be attributed to someone who was powerful in his own right and who, in addition, had ready access to the pope. Rodericus Zamorensis fulfilled both these conditions.[11] Bussi, in contrast, was, as bishops go, both impoverished and obscure; he was, therefore, in no position to play the part of either patron or entrepreneurial sponsor. Rhetoric

[10] "Haec ego tum in pluribus aliis tum in me ferendo instructus, pater beatissime, didici, qui plurimis inexhaustisque laboribus exanclatis ultra quatriennium in difficillimorum autorum veterum recognitione versatus. . . ," Bussi, *Prefazioni* (note 3), p. 70.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. xxiii ff.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

notwithstanding, Bussi could have been no more than an alter ego, a surrogate presence for someone with the essential money and influence.

Bussi, furthermore, took pains to disqualify himself. In the colophon of the *Noctes Atticae* of Aulus Gellius (11 April 1469), he denies having received payment for any of his editions ("Edidimus gratis, sit procul invidia").[12] In the postscript to the *Commentarii* of Julius Caesar (12 May 1469), Bussi apologizes for the atrocious state of the text. The original recension, he explains, had been carefully prepared. But it was lost, and his printers would not allow him time for an adequate replacement.[13] In the preface to the first part of the *Postilla* (13 November 1472), Bussi thanks Sixtus IV for the post of Vatican librarian and for his consequent release after four years of editorial drudgery. None of these statements conveys the ring of authority or the voice of a patron.

Nor was Bussi acting as a "front." There is nothing covert or coded about the prefaces. In the etiquette of curial patronage, flattery was a client's obligation. Bussi did not hide the names or motives of the parties on whose behalf he was acting. In his first preface, to Saint Jerome, *Epistolae*, in 1468, Bussi sanctified his editorial services as the fulfillment of his obligations to his late patron, Cardinal Nicolas of Cusa. Cusa's dearest wish, he declared, had been to bring this divinely-inspired German invention to Italy.[14] In his second preface (Saint Jerome, *Epistolae II*, 13 December 1468), Bussi outlined the program of the Sweynheym & Pannartz firm: the printing of a succession of pagan and patristic texts as the prolegomena to a forthcoming defense of Plato.[15] In his third preface (Apuleius, *Opera*, 28 February 1469), Bussi identified this forthcoming Platonic defense as Bessarion's treatise *Adversus calumniatorem Platonis* ([Before 28 August] 1469), and equated Cusa and Bessarion, sages united in their adherence to Platonism as the prophetic anticipation of the concord of paganism and Christianity.[16] Bessarion, the surviving patron, inherited the responsibility for promulgating this humanist creed. *Adversus calumniatorem Platonis* was, in effect, a detailed exposition of the com-

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-19.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

plementarity of its two strains. The first three editorial prefaces were, in turn, a précis of Bessarion's theological and philosophical beliefs. Any attack on the prefaces or on the texts they protected was the equivalent of an assault on Bessarion's authority and orthodoxy.

This connection must have been clear to everyone within the Roman curial community and therefore to those advising Paul II (who, according to Bussi, never read prefaces) on the affairs of his immediate realm. Bessarion, it was well known, had secured the release of the imprisoned humanists. Bessarion's villa on the Appian Way was a gathering place for local classicists and a model for the emerging complex of Italian humanist academies.[17] The overall design of Bessarion's library was the probable pattern for Sweynheym & Pannartz's exposition of pagan-patristic harmony, and the inspiration, as well, of archaeological humanism's formative principle: the union of rhetoric and revelation into a coherent system.[18] The series of texts Sweynheym & Pannartz and other firms within the compass of Bessarion's influence were subsequently to publish are concrete instances of such a system in action.

The nature and scope of Bessarion's patronage could hardly have been dismissed as a form of pedantic self-indulgence. Bessarion was not simply a member of the College of Cardinals. He was a figure of international eminence and a power in his own right, the acknowledged embodiment of the Greek contribution to European culture and theology. Bessarion had four times entered a papal conclave as the leading candidate. He had been the unsuccessful rival of both Paul II and Sixtus IV. Defeat had not diminished his eminence; he remained the rallying point for the Curia's "loyal opposition" and the standard against which the incumbent pope's behavior was measured. Bessarion's humanism was the platform of a "shadow government," designed to bring about a new crusade and to reunite the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches.[19]

The printing and distribution of favored texts was an assertion of Bessarion's basic principles and a means of rallying and indoctrinating

[17] Ludwig Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann* (Paderborn, 1923), I, 326 ff.

[18] Lotte Labowsky, *Bessarion's Library and the Biblioteca Marciana: Six Early Inventories* (Rome, 1979), esp. pp. 157-188.

[19] Lotte Labowsky, "Bessarione," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, IX (1967), 686-696.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

his clientele. Bessarion's patronage of humanism and his advocacy of measures frequently at odds with official papal policy were thus of a piece. Both were a continual irritant and challenge to the incumbent pope.

Paul II, hobbled by the residual presence of conciliar doctrine and by his own intellectual mediocrity, had been unable to match the Byzantine cardinal's extensive learning and unwavering determination.[20] Sixtus IV was better equipped to deal with opposition of this kind. He had had the experience of living with it, having emerged from obscurity as a member of Bessarion's entourage. His elevation to the cardinalate owed much to Bessarion's influence.[21]

Paul II's prosecution of the Roman humanists was an attack on Bessarion both as curial dignitary and cultural patron. The attack failed. As is often the case in unsuccessful police actions, this failure heightened the prestige of the movement Paul II had sought to suppress and resulted in a resurrected and more openly professed and practiced Roman humanism. Bessarion's successful intercession on behalf of the accused conspirators confirmed his position as the leader of Roman antiquarian studies and, in addition, made him the director of its chosen vehicle, the Sweynheym & Pannartz press — a relationship openly declared in the prefaces and texts of 1469. The editions in question, Apuleius, Aulus Gellius, and Bessarion's own *Adversus calumniatorem Platonis*, were explicit in their acceptance of Platonism as a legitimate spiritual and intellectual creed. From 1468 on, the Sweynheym & Pannartz printing firm was thus an integral part of Bessarion's patronage network. The texts it selected, the mode in which it presented them, and the readers among whom it distributed them are facets of this connection. Archaeological humanism in its prefatorial form was the Platonism of Cardinal Bessarion projected through the medium of the printed page.

This relationship is confirmed by the circumstances surrounding Sweynheym & Pannartz's ultimate gesture, a document of approximately twelve hundred words, their printed petition to Sixtus IV (20 March 1472). Exactly one week earlier (13 March 1472) Bessarion had announced his impending departure (20 April 1472). He had accepted a mission to the courts of France and Burgundy. Taking into account

[20] Roberto Weiss, *Un umanista veneziano: Papa Paolo II* (Venice, 1958), pp. 11-23, 30-32.
[21] Egmont Lee, *Sixtus IV and Men of Letters* (Rome, 1978), pp. 17-28.

that he was about seventy, that his health was weak, and that fifteenth-century transalpine travel was taxing, there must have been considerable uncertainty about whether and in what state the cardinal would return. As it turned out, Bessarion's mission was a fiasco. He fled France and, on his way back, died in Ravenna on 18 December 1472.[22]

Wittingly or unwittingly, Bessarion was thus the *deus ex machina* in Sweynheym & Pannartz's two crises and the cause of both the invention and the demise of the editorial preface. He can be positively identified as the *necessitas* of the printed petition, the "connection" whose loss was an intellectual and financial disaster for the printers, and whose presence had been the source of their prosperity and prestige. The editorial preface came into being in reaction to Pope Paul II's prosecution of the Roman humanists. It was discarded upon Sweynheym & Pannartz's receipt of Sixtus IV's benefices. Paul II's police action was thwarted by Bessarion's successful intervention on the prisoners' behalf; Bessarion's patronage ceased with his departure from Rome on an official mission. Sixtus IV's benefices can, accordingly, be construed as a form of compensation to Sweynheym & Pannartz for the hardships occasioned by their patron's departure. Bessarion, the one cardinal of an eminence remotely comparable to that of the pope, had been the center of their patronage network. With Sixtus IV patronizing a rival printer, Sweynheym & Pannartz's peculiar humanism was neither fashionable nor viable. Their chances of finding a new curial sponsor were nil. Accepting a pension and opting out of the ideological arena was the prudent course.

The history of the Sweynheym & Pannartz firm can be read as a cautionary tale of the rewards and risks of curial politics. Their dependence on patronage — inevitable in a pre-market economy — made them pawns in the ecclesiastical power game.

Encomiastic humanism can be interpreted as the official reaction to the problems posed by an active curial opposition. Eschewing Paul II's confrontational politics, Sixtus IV took his former patron, Bessarion, as model and handled the problem of his presence by borrowing as many pages as necessary from Bessarion's own book. The new pope concocted an apposite amalgam of Byzantine traditions and humanist invention. In the process, Sixtus IV created an ecclesiology congenial to his papacy and his policies. The intellectual resources

[22] Labowsky, "Bessarione" (note 19), p. 693.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

of Rome, its scholars, printers, and artists, were commissioned to animate this new doctrine with the imperial persona of the newly elected pope. Bessarion was treated in classic Roman style; he was sent abroad, in what amounted to honorable exile, on a cause dear to his heart. Bessarion's cultural factotum, Johannes Andrea Bussi, was disarmed with new titles and more exalted responsibilities. Sweynheym & Pannartz were ushered into comfortable retirement. There was no open break with humanism's immediate past.

The Economics of a Primitive Literate System

Circumstances favored a solution of this sort. Humanism and printing were recent phenomena, unencumbered by custom and tradition. In theory at least, Sweynheym & Pannartz should have been operating in the free market of cottage enterprise, producing the most attractive product conceivable and distributing it under the most favorable terms. In practice, however, they were subject to the dictates of the local economy: an administrative system functioning on the basis of literate exchange. For some members of this system, it was desirable that certain texts be valued more highly than others, and Sweynheym & Pannartz catered to this desire. They were not so much engaged in the production and distribution of a commodity, i.e., the making and selling of books, as in offering a service, i.e., the "canonization" of uniform aggregates of specific texts. The patron chose both texts and typefaces;[23] Sweynheym & Pannartz transmuted these formal decisions into culturally hallowed graphic substance. Their dependence upon patronage went, however, beyond the need of an ideologically authoritative source for textual selection and typographical design. Given the peculiar conditions of early Italian printing, the role of patron entailed the additional obligation of providing financial support and political protection.

This service function intensified the innovative aspect of printing. It made it particularly attractive to groups and individuals dissatisfied with the conventions of literate communication. The initial impulse of this exotic technology was accordingly centrifugal. Printing's pri-

[23] M. D. Feld, "The Sibyls of Subiaco: Sweynheym and Pannartz and the *Editio Princeps* of Lactantius," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth*, ed. Andrew Morrogh et al. (Florence, 1985) I, 301-314, esp. 303.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

mary appeal was to marginal and anomalous individuals who, by virtue of their elaborate literate skills, considered themselves to be members of an elite: intellectuals consumed by a sense of unacknowledged and unappreciated talents and contributions, or resident aliens such as Cardinal Bessarion, obsessed with the nostalgia of exile.

The initial dependence of Italian printing on marginal agents inherently constrained its growth and development. Their emotional involvement notwithstanding, the issues at stake for Bessarion and the humanists were cultural and ideological and, as such, abstract and impersonal. The predominant ethos of quattrocento Rome and of the Renaissance city-state was, in contrast, concrete and intensely private. It reflected the values of a traditional, primitive society and was rooted in the straightforward, unambiguous, and unalloyed promotion of clan and domestic interests. The nepotism of Sixtus IV was a signal example of "amoral familism."[24] There was, accordingly, a state of tension between the individuals towards whom the printers, by dint of reason, turned for support, and the forces which, by custom of the country, they sought to assuage.

The attractiveness of encomiastic humanism and the achievement of Lignamine are best appreciated against this background. Encomiastic humanism was, in essence, a device for the conversion of an idealized and esoteric vocabulary, the language of archaeological humanism, into terms appropriate for the coarse realities of quattrocento Italy. The achievement of Lignamine was to focus this conversion process directly on the persona, ceremonial, and ambitions of the most powerful and influential Roman magistrate. The local opposition to humanism and printing was, as a result, not only disarmed, it became an acquiescent source of positive support.

Lignamine is, accordingly, significant as a model of resourceful accommodation. The domestication of originally exotic modes of thought and behavior is what revolutions, insofar as they are successful, bring about. For France, at any rate, the Code Napoléon was, in this sense, more revolutionary than the Declaration of the Rights of Man; and, with respect to printing, Lignamine was, by the same token, more of a radical agent than Sweynheym & Pannartz. Since revolution is a process, acclimatization rather than innovation is the ultimately decisive factor.

[24] For "amoral familism," see Edward C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Chicago, 1958); for its specific Sistine application, Lee, *Sixtus IV* (note 21), pp. 33-38.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

In 1465 typography was nonetheless an innovative technology, and it was Sweynheym & Pannartz who impressed upon Italian printing its idiosyncratically innovative character. The path they took, the horizons thus created, and the uncertainties thereby posed became the criteria against which the subsequent fifty years of humanist printing were to be measured. These criteria served, in addition, as the raw materials of Lignamine's notably more successful career. From such a perspective, Sweynheym & Pannartz's decision to locate their enterprise along the axis of a curial connection seems inspired.

Neither the decision nor the inspiration were, however, entirely of their own making. A curial connection had, as a matter of fact, been central to the original motive for bringing German printers to Italy: Cusa's desire to press their "divinely inspired invention" into the service of his own philosophical and theological interests. Sweynheym & Pannartz were, thus, from the beginning, pawns in a greater game. It must, however, be noted that, their subordinate status and alien condition notwithstanding, they exploited every opportunity. What should have been a crippling blow, Cusa's death, was almost immediately transformed by his printers into the occasion for establishing their enterprise on a more autonomous and broader basis.

Sweynheym & Pannartz took full advantage of the role played within the cultural ambience of the papal curia by their recently deceased patron.[25] The contacts created by their association with Cusa served them well. Almost immediately upon their arrival in Rome they must have been apprised of whom it was essential to appease, briefed as to how these individuals were to be approached, and informed of the means through which their favor was best gained.

Much of their success could simply have been due to common sense. As printers, it was clearly expedient for them to seek out the local agencies where literacy was most highly valued and rewarded; as artisans, they were obliged to follow the dictates and tastes of their patrons. What Sweynheym & Pannartz accomplished within so short a time remains, nonetheless, awe-inspiring. The brevity of the interval between the death of Cusa and the publication of their earliest books, and the extent to which the contents of these texts coincided with the most advanced and esoteric elements of humanism is evi-

[25] Within the Curia, Cusa had had the role of artistic director; see Marco Bussagli, "Il 'Battismo di Londra' di Piero della Francesca: Per una rilettura in chiave trinitaria," *Quaderni medioevali*, 20 (1985), 28-65, esp. 40-44, 56 ff.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

dence of a talent bordering on genius for the manipulation of tortuous politics and complex ideologues and ideologies.

In the light of such gifts, it is the end rather than the beginning of the Sweynheym & Pannartz enterprise that is puzzling: the fact that they apparently interpreted the news of the impending departure of one patron, Bessarion, as tantamount to dissolution not only of their firm but of their characteristic style of humanist printing as well. Such a reaction was at odds with the tone and contents of their petition and with their own history. In the petition, Sweynheym & Pannartz refer to themselves as an established cultural asset. They declare their "art" to be "of the greatest utility" to the Curia, and state explicitly that their livelihood has up to then been dependent upon the sale of "the portion of these books allotted to *your printers*" (my italics) — implying thereby that their curial connection was or should have been an acknowledged fact and that it was furthermore such as to give them an independent role. Insofar as it is known, moreover, the history of the firm reveals an astonishing capacity to surmount the vicissitudes of patronage and to extract the maximum advantage from high-level political tensions and fluctuations. This time, however, Sweynheym & Pannartz resigned themselves to failure. The particular circumstances of this failure were, moreover, largely of their own making. Sweynheym & Pannartz's archaeological humanism had been the ostensive model for, and presumed prerequisite of, Lignamine's entrepreneurial triumph. Lignamine's success was, to an extent and in a manner that was clearly unanticipated, incompatible with the continued existence of archaeological humanism as a viable style and of Sweynheym & Pannartz as a viable firm.

Their sudden and uncharacteristic vulnerability to the hazards of curial politics is what has to be explained. The explanation in question calls into account the specific circumstances under which Roman printers operated in the years between 1465 and 1473. Insofar as Lignamine and Sweynheym & Pannartz are concerned, the concrete details are unrecorded. They are situated just before the point at which Italian printing enters economic history. Given the nature of the available data, it seems, therefore, most expedient to begin with what is known, and from there to go backwards in time, retracing the steps leading away from Sweynheym & Pannartz.

Here we have something positive to go by. Specimen contracts drawn up in other parts of Italy in the early 1470s between humanist

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

printer-editors and patron-publishers have survived. The one most apt for our purposes, in that it deals explicitly with printing for a learned clientele, was drawn up in Bologna on 25 October 1470.[26] It defined the relationship between two local entrepreneurs and a humanist of note who had agreed to become the manager of a soon-to-be-established printing firm. The contract, going into effect on 1 December 1470, was to run for two years. The entrepreneurs, Malpigli and Azzoguidi, were to provide the initial capital and to pay the costs of labor and materials. The humanist, Francesco Puteolano, agreed on his part to hire and supervise printers for the three presses provided by Malpigli and Azzoguidi, to supply them with copy and to correct the proofs, assuring Malpigli and Azzoguidi of a stock of books of such quality as to guarantee their ready sale wheresoever. After the cost of material and labor had been deducted, Puteolano would receive either one-third of the remaining printed books or one-third of the proceeds of the sale of such books. At the contract's expiration the unsold stock, with adjustment for expenses incurred, would be divided among the contractees in equal parts. Similar contracts between patron-publisher and printer-editor, with the latter receiving one-third of the net proceeds, either in cash or in kind, have been found in the archives of two Umbrian towns, Trevi (5 July 1470)[27] and Foligno (15 December 1470).[28]

When Sweynheym & Pannartz cite in their printed petition "the intolerable burden [of] the portion of these books allotted to your printers," they are probably referring to one-third of their firm's net product. We can make only an educated guess at what this meant in actual figures. Accepting the petition's standard figure of 275 as the average size of any given edition, and arbitrarily postulating 50 percent as the portion of fixed capital, material, and labor costs included in the price of every book, we arrive at an estimate of 40 to 50 copies of every pressrun as Sweynheym & Pannartz's share. Bussi, his professions of disinterest notwithstanding, probably kept a few copies

[26] L. Sighinolfi, "Francesco Puteolano e le origini della stampa in Bologna e in Parma," *Bibliofilia*, 15 (1913-14), 451-456, esp. 455-456.

[27] Tommaso Valenti, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia," *Bibliofilia*, 26 (1924-25), 105-127, esp. 123-124.

[28] Tommaso Valenti, "Gl'inizi della tipografia degli Orfini in Foligno," *Bibliofilia*, 27 (1925-26), 348-370, esp. 368-370.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

for himself. Cardinal Bessarion and his associates in patronage must, therefore, have ended up with something in the order of 175 to 225 copies of every Sweynheym & Pannartz-Bussi edition.

We know that Sweynheym & Pannartz tried to sell their share. What Bessarion did with his books is another matter — one crucial to an understanding of early printing. The bulk of Sweynheym & Pannartz's production must have passed through Bessarion's hands; how the cardinal and his associates, in a four-year period, distributed approximately 200 copies each of some thirty editions of pagan and patristic texts defines the parameters of the prototypographer's entrepreneurial activity.

This question can be resolved hypothetically on the basis of our available information as to Bessarion's character and designs. Several possibilities emerge. Bessarion's villa was the gathering point of Roman humanists. He might have offered the books for sale to Rome's intellectual elite. The cardinal maintained a correspondence with almost every important Italian humanist and was in touch with the complex of academies emerging in the 1460s and 1470s in the peninsula's civic and courtly centers, Naples, Rome, Florence, Ferrara, and Milan. Thus, he could use Italy's major cultural centers as channels for the distribution of his books.

The terms on which these books were distributed is another crucial and hypothetical matter. Bessarion could have sold his books for gain, at cost, or at a subsidized loss. He might simply have given them away. From what is recorded of Bessarion's principles and behavior, and of the known conventions of courtly patronage and munificence, only the last alternative seems likely. The tone of Bussi's disclaimers makes it clear that in humanist circles, at any rate, printing was regarded as a nonprofit enterprise. He is quick to clear himself of any suspicion of monetary interest. Bessarion, a prince of the church, must have distributed his books freely and without conditions.[29] The bulk of Sweynheym & Pannartz's output would thus have passed through Bessarion's hands *en route* to their readers, a process guaranteed to endow the books with the ritual attributes of the gift.[30]

[29] Deno John Geanakoplos, *Interaction of the "Sibling" Byzantine and Western Cultures in the Middle Ages and Italian Renaissance (330–1600)* (New Haven, 1976), pp. 232 ff.

[30] For a general account of the ritual gift, see Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (New York, 1967), pp. 67 ff.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

From documentary evidence of the era, we derive the impression of a Bessarion assiduous in the distribution of his own written work. The cardinal had two books printed during his lifetime: *Adversus calumniatorem Platonis*, Rome, Sweynheym & Pannartz ([before 28 August] 1469), and *Epistolae et orationes* ([Paris, Freyburger, Gering & Crantz, before 23 April 1471]). Details as to the distribution of the first of these publications are sketchy. From surviving copies and the cardinal's correspondence, we can infer that a broad range of Italian cultural and ecclesiastical dignitaries received the book as a gift.[31] *Epistolae et Orationes* was printed under the editorial supervision of Bessarion's Sorbonnic factotum, Guillaume Fichet. In a letter dated 21 March 1472, Fichet informed Bessarion that forty-six presentation copies of the *Epistolae et Orationes* had already been distributed, out of a print run that was later estimated to be about one hundred.[32]

It cannot be demonstrated that Bessarion sponsored the distribution of printed books other than his own. Some notion of quattrocento typographical patronage can, nonetheless, be inferred from a contemporary description of Sixtus IV as a patron of humanists and dispenser of printed books. This account can be read as an imitation of Bessarion's own practice, for Sixtus IV, throughout his ascent from professor of theology to cardinal, was a member of Bessarion's entourage. His concept of the papacy was inspired by Byzantine imperial precedent. In his deliberate identification with historical models and his systematic patronage of humanists, Sixtus IV was an apt student of Bessarion's cultural politics.

The description of Sixtus IV as patron exists in the form of an epigram written between August 1471 and August 1472 by the Veronese humanist Leonardo Montagna. The poem is addressed to Montagna's friend and protector Jacopo Ammanati de Piccolomini, cardinal of Pavia. It is, in effect, a petition begging Ammanati to intercede with Sixtus IV on Montagna's behalf. Material wealth, the poet writes, is not his lot; he is, accordingly, modest in his expectations, at any rate for the time being. Montagna will be satisfied if

[31] John Monfasani, "Il Perotti e la controversia tra Platonici ed Aristotelici," *Res Publica Litterarum*, 4 (1981), 197.

[32] H. D. Saffrey, *Description d'un incunable imprimé à la Sorbonne* (Paris, 1971), esp. pp. 8 ff. An Italian translation of the *Epistolae et Orationes* was printed in Venice, likewise in 1471.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

Sixtus IV and his attendant muses give him as a gift ten of the German-printed books. Drawing on Sixtus IV's newly minted imperial imagery, the poet asks his friend to take on the role of Maecenas and introduce him to the pope.[33]

As his poem declares, Montagna seeks not money but recognition. He begs Ammanati to bring his case to the attention of Rome's ruler so that the pope may make him a gift of printed books. From this we can infer that Sixtus IV had among his clients both printers and humanists and acted as distributing agent among them. The preface-petition of Sweynheym & Pannartz confirms this arrangement. The prototypographers assure the pope that he, having become their protector, can have as many copies of their printed books as he wants, to give to whomever he wants.[34] Bessarion's influence is once again evident.

This reconstruction leads to an apparently paradoxical conclusion: Sweynheym & Pannartz's ability to sell their allotted portion of books was positively related to the willingness of Bessarion (or some other eminent patron) to give an even larger part of the printed run away,

[33] C[a]esareos vultus deductos [a]ere vel auro
Ille habet; hic gemmas, possidet alter opes.
At mihi nil simile est hac tempestate. Quid ergo
Pauper agam? Non est qui mihi pr[a]estet opem.
Me pater Aspalati, fateor, iam pluribus annis
Nutrit; at id pr[a]eter nil venit inde mihi.
Hoc fortuna facit, meritis non [a]equa virorum,
Hic mihi quod nequeat tradere plura pater.
Non ego divitias, princeps, hoc tempore posco;
Illas, cum fueris maximus, ipse petam.
Nunc tantum cupio quod det mihi munera Sixtus.
Qu[a]e sua Pierides sint ea dona petunt:
Sint ea dona, precor, mihi qu[a]e bis quinque reportant
Germanus mira quos premit arte libros.
Crede mihi, Sixti non derunt munera quarti,
Si mihi M[a]ecenas tu, Papiensis, eris.

Léon Dorez, "Notice sur un recueil de poésies latines et un portrait de l'humaniste véronais Leonardo Montagna (c. 1425–1485) (MS. 806 de la Bibliothèque de l'Institut)," *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliotèques publiés par L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, vol. 39, pt. 2 (Paris, 1916), 439-467, esp. 461. M. Dorez interprets the poem, its disclaimers notwithstanding, as a request for money, another instance of the "market fallacy" in action.

[34] "Da nobis subsidium de excelso throno maiestatis tuae; parati sumus pro clementiae tuae arbitrio, de nostra merce, id est de impressis quinternionibus nostris, tibi tot tradere quot volueris et quibus volueris." Bussi, *Prefazione* (note 3), p. 84.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

in a ratio of gifts to sales of something like 4:1. Ritual apart, this arrangement would in a commercial sense seem to be irrational. Bessarion's two hundred copies would have gone to his friends, associates and clients: the Roman intellectual and administrative elite, the established humanist community, and the patrons of learning; in sum, the natural constituency of serious readers. Sweynheym & Pannartz were thus left dependent on casual customers. They should, one would think, have received the news of Bessarion's departure with a sense of relief; they would henceforth have the humanist reading public all to themselves. The printers (and everyone else acquainted with the firm), however, thought otherwise. They accepted this announcement as a harbinger of disaster and declared that henceforth they would find it difficult or impossible to sell their books. As Sweynheym & Pannartz's two petitions indicate, this version went uncontested.

Events justified their apprehensions. Sweynheym & Pannartz's post-petition venture was short and undistinguished. Bessarion's departure radically transformed the firm. Their range of titles narrowed, and the physical fate of the books themselves was notably altered. A modern comparative survey of the surviving copies of Sweynheym & Pannartz's pre- and post-Bessarion editions confirms the printed petition's underlying assumptions. To cite its conclusions: "the last dozen [books] printed by the partners are much rarer than the previous thirty-six. . . . It may be noted also that of the earlier books an unusually large number are found in untouched condition, i.e., unrubricated and with no contemporary notes of ownership. . . ."[35]

There are two plausible reasons for the relative rarity of post-petition books. With the dissolution of the cardinal's distributive network, Sweynheym & Pannartz may simply have produced runs closer to Lignamine's usual 100 to 150 than to their former 275. This alone might account for the relative scarcity of post-petition editions.

A second line of reasoning assumes that there may have been significant differences between the readers included in Bessarion's distributive network and those attracted by Sweynheym & Pannartz's prices and stock. Eminent scholars and patrons of learning are invariably more likely to be the recipients of complimentary copies than

[35] *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century Now in the British Museum*, Part IV (London, 1916), p. viii.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

the common reader. Bessarion's colleagues and clients were, undoubtedly wealthier and more distinguished than Sweynheym & Pannartz's casual customers. The tendency to accumulate books is, as with other material objects, proportionate to money and social rank. Other things being equal — this statement is tautological — the rich will have more of them than those less well off. As collections increase in size, they are more likely to be maintained and disposed of as corporate entities, i.e., libraries. The books distributed by Bessarion were thus more liable to be cataloged, inventoried, and thereby preserved than those sold by Sweynheym & Pannartz.

The difference in the treatment of pre- and post-petition books may also reflect this disparity in wealth and status, though this reasoning is admittedly more conjectural. Quattrocento books came from their printers unbound and without initial capitals. Bessarion's hypothetical gifts went to well-stocked collections where, in all probability, the text in question already existed in manuscript form. There was accordingly no immediate need to have such a book processed. As a gift, it would have been acknowledged and, unrubricated and unread, stowed away. A purchased book, on the other hand, would be more likely to reflect and bear the marks of a pressing interest.

Classical literature was not, in the era of Sweynheym & Pannartz's operations, a staple commodity. Ciceronian Latin was the language of scholars, and a working knowledge was restricted to a privileged few. The Latin text was, accordingly, more of a luxury than a necessity, luxury being here defined as a commodity deemed absolutely essential to the maintenance of privilege. The pre-petition editions of Sweynheym & Pannartz included, by explicit declaration, a high proportion of books of a patently esoteric nature, e.g., Apuleius, Aulus Gellius, Bessarion, and the aborted Macrobius.[36] These texts were distributed without charge among a chosen few. Sweynheym & Pannartz's post-petition editions were presumably designed for sale to readers who by virtue of that very transaction were not members of the elite, and who, therefore, were obliged to acquire such texts at a financial sacrifice. The "chosen few" of humanists patronized by Bessarion were wealthier and, ironically enough, more numerous than the "mass" of casual readers. The history of the

[36] For an account of Bessarion's printing program in general and of his projected but never realized Macrobius in particular, see M. D. Feld, "Sweynheym and Pannartz" (note 8), 282-335, esp. 300-313.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

Sweynheym & Pannartz firm tells us as much. The aforementioned 4:1 ratio may be no more than a shorthand coefficient for the intellectual, social, and economic facts of quattrocento life. It may, in addition, be based on a fundamental and invariant condition of learned society.[37] Each of these hypotheses merits detailed consideration.

Literate Systems — Learned Systems

The hypothetical existence of a Bessarion-sponsored literate system based on the gift distribution of scholarly texts is corroborated by modern experience. The inferred details of its mode of operations correspond in almost every respect, prefaces and texts included, to the salient features of a familiar and well established mode of publishing: the scholarly monograph. In the dissemination of learned research in printed form, a significant proportion of the run is distributed free as either review or complimentary copies. There is indeed, just as in the Bessarion literate system, a positive correlation between the putative originality of scholarship and the percentage of gift copies, the frequency of gift distribution varying directly with the intellectual claims of the book in question. The percentage of gift copies of the first printing of Whitehead and Russell's *Principia Mathematica*, for example, was undoubtedly greater than that for the first printing of Russell's *The Principles of Mathematics*. In both the above cases the gift proportion was undoubtedly greater than that of Will Durant's *The Story of Philosophy*.

A second aspect of the Bessarion distribution is equally worthy of comment. Since the proportion of gift copies is directly related to a given book's intellectual claims, and since gifts tend to be given to the patron or author's scholarly peers, any increase in the intellectual pretensions of a given book will be matched by a similar increase in the proportion of recipients already familiar with its contents. The prime recipient of Sweynheym & Pannartz's books was, as has been argued, Cardinal Bessarion, the most learned of quattrocento scholars and the earliest of printing's patrons. Between mid-1468 and mid-1470, his personal library was the source of Sweynheym & Pannartz's manuscript copy-texts. Bessarion, in turn, probably distributed his share of each run among scholars who already possessed a manuscript of the text

[37] On the apparently invariant condition of "serious" readers, see Elisabeth Sifton, "What Reading Public?", *The Nation*, 22 May 1982, 628-629.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

in question. The guiding principle is timeless and mechanical. In the practice of scholarship it is notorious that review and complimentary copies tend to be given to colleagues who have participated in the discussions and to established authorities who have contributed to the research on which the printed work is based. The size of the edition, moreover, almost invariably tends to decrease and the circle of its author's indebtedness to expand in direct ratio to the intensity and professionalism of the discussions and research in question.

The gift distribution process should, accordingly, not be approached as a bit of more or less spontaneous by-play in the disinterested pursuit of knowledge. It is a measured and quantitative component of the calculus of scholarly careers. In the pursuit such careers, recognition by one's learned peers, and publication is the acknowledged method whereby such recognition is attained.[38] In the process of learned publication, it is, moreover, the review and complimentary copies that really count. Success in all its forms, public acclaim included, depends upon their reception. Intellectual status, appointments, promotions, grants, fellowships, all flow from the reactions of the recipients of complimentary copies and the authors of professional reviews. It is the force of this realization that distinguishes literate gift exchange from random distribution processes and makes it the focus of a system. Through the exchange of gift copies, scholars define themselves as a community and locate individual research within the context of their common pursuit.

The modern scholar is, in this respect, better off than the quattrocento humanist. By virtue of academic affiliation, the scholar functions as a member of an articulated class, a learned system, and knows, as a routine matter of fact, who its members are and the relative degree of authority each possesses. The early humanists, as already noted, lacked this framework. In the absence of alternatives, their organizational impulse devolved upon the text. Esotericism and editorial authority were the coordinates whereby the reader could situate himself within the humanist literate system. Humanism rep-

[38] The earliest use of the phrase "publish or perish" is, so far as I know, in a letter of the Flemish classicist Justus Lipsius (1547-1606): "*Crux* [his study of crucifixion in ancient times] nostra in tempora ad eum veniet, quae apud me quidem (candide dico) haud magni aestimatur. An non alia possemus, & in re alia; si 'aevum hoc vellet?' sed *pareamus, ne pereamus*" (my italics), Justus Lipsius, letter to Abraham Ortelius, March 1594, *Sylloges epistolarum a viris illustribus*, ed. Pieter Burman, 5 vols. (Leiden 1727), I, 163.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

resented a consensus on the characteristics that rendered specific books authentic keys to a higher truth. The process of identifying and acquiring such books was the humanist rite of passage.

In discarding the trappings of archaeological humanism, and in particular the editorial preface and the *editio princeps*, Sweynheym & Pannartz, in effect, disassociated themselves from the social and encoded context of humanism. They aligned themselves, as it were, with Perotti's notion of the value-free, transcendental edition. Value-free, transcendental readers proved, as it turned out, to be few in number.

Encomiastic publication went to the other extreme. Lignamine accepted the political and social universe of the papacy as an absolute. He concentrated on the printing of texts written by the pope or by members of his immediate entourage and, as his prefaces indicate, distributed these editions among members of the papal clientele, the individuals directly responsible for implementing papal claims. Lignamine's inspired improvisation was to recognize a literate system ready at hand in the guise of the Vatican bureaucracy and to render it impeccably humanist through his celebration of Sixtus IV as the incarnation of Roman imperium and pagan-patristic harmony. Sixtus IV made this harmony his style of public behavior, and gave his Curia and printer the mission of diffusing its colors and patterns over his complex of princely alliances and nepotistic promotions.

The dissemination of knowledge was, in no respect, a function of Lignamine's enterprise. His mission, assumed or imposed, was to render the language of the pope an integral component of Italy's structure of power. In at least two of his prefaces Lignamine declares his purpose in printing the written works of Sixtus IV to have been their distribution as gifts to the most learned men and most Christian princes.[39] He was preaching not so much to the converted as to the converting. His books were in effect tokens of the official recognition of their recipient's good faith. They had as their major objective the conflation of ideological orthodoxy and social status. In the logic of

[39] "Feceram Sancte Pater tue Sanctitati de Sanguine Christi et de Potentia Dei libellos fere trecentos impressorio artificio inscribi quibus *multos viros dignitate et scientia insignes donari* ut per omnem orbem tue Sanctitatis laudes diffunderem" (my italics), Giovanni Filippo Lignamine, dedicatory preface to Sixtus IV, *De futuris contingentibus* (Rome, 1473), in Capialbi, *Notizie* (note 2), p. 59, and also the preface to Eusebius Cesariensis, *Historia ecclesiastica* (1474), p. 71; both references are to the selective distribution of printed editions of texts written by Sixtus IV.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

encomiastic texts, possession and understanding were equivalent terms. Only those individuals with an active role in formulating and implementing the Sistine imperial revival were eligible for participation in the gift ritual.

Lignamine's books were, in both format and distribution pattern, a reflection of indigenous social and political forces. As a publisher, he was diligent rather than learned; his list is a catalog of the actors and themes of Sistine curial politics. There is no evidence for the existence of another world. Here again Lignamine was the most imaginative of early publishers. In a setting where the coordination of textual appeal and authoritative support was the crucial problem, he constructed a literate system based on the straightforward equation of reader and subject matter. With due allowance for hyperbolic flight, Lignamine can be compared to the impresario who "papers" his audience with the reviewers and "angels" of his plays, and whose productions are litanies of the personal virtues and cosmic significance of these two parties.

Lignamine's Sistine publications may now strike most as the prostitution of printing's potential and humanism's promise, and as the betrayal of Bessarion's goal, viz., the reconstitution of classical antiquity through the dissemination of its purified texts. Such judgments are anachronistic. In quattrocento perspective, Lignamine's modifications emerge as logically entailed phases in the natural evolution of humanism. Humanism, insofar as it was a movement, had as its unifying principle the belief that works of literature, to be properly appreciated, must be located in their cultural context and read as models of behavior.[40] The socialization of the book was humanism's radical contribution to intellectual history. Lignamine reversed the prevalent order of values and transformed literature from instrument into end. The encomiastic system he had, virtually by fiat, created was the aggressive embodiment of Roman might, the culmination of pagan-patristic harmony, and — a neat neo-Byzantine touch — the icon in whose presence such achievements were to be worshipped. Lignamine's revolutionary role stemmed from his wholehearted acceptance of official values as the ultimate intellectual and aesthetic criteria. His approach was thoroughly contemporary and immedi-

[40] Cf. Eugenio Garin, *Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance*, trans. Peter Munz (New York, 1965), pp. 3-4.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

ately applicable. It had a predictably drastic effect on the subsequent course of humanist printing.

Judged solely by the light of a realistic view of quattrocento culture's economic and political variables, Lignamine's logic was incontrovertible. In practice, he was not so much realizing the potential of printing as manipulating humanism's transcriptive rituals as well as that movement's peculiar concept of the "book." The rituals and concept in question were central to the Renaissance worship of classical Rome and, as a modest digression on the medieval book may serve to demonstrate, represented a sharp break with the scribal procedures of their immediate past.

The social environment of the medieval book can be depicted as a continuum, bounded on one end by a luxury object, the commissioned manuscript, and, on the other, by the anonymous product of the *pecia*, the scriptorial factory. The commissioned manuscript is best exemplified by the unique editions the Limbourg brothers illuminated for Jean, Duc de Berry (1340–1416). As books, these existed solely on their patron's terms. The duke held himself in high esteem as a Christian, a great lord, and a patron of the arts. The depicted objects, style, and texts of his manuscripts constituted an exchange of tokens of mutual admiration among these disparate elements of his worshipful personality. There is, accordingly, no interpretive vantage point superior to that of the illuminated manuscript's patron. It was and still is a monument to possessive individualism. Modern scholarship has, to be sure, identified many of the artisans involved and established a connection between the various parts and the manuscript as a whole. Such attributions, however, are invariably based on a particular feudal magnate's history and personality. The illuminated manuscript is almost always denoted by the name of its patron.[41]

In the operations of the *pecia*, the significance of the individual reader, as either creator or connoisseur, was, on the other hand, categorically denied. Details of execution were irrelevant and mechanical. The art of writing and the art of verbal composition were distinct and independent disciplines, and writing was, in both the social and intellectual sense, the inferior partner. The *pecia* book was

[41] Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean De Berry: The Limbourgs and Their Contemporaries* (New York, 1974), I, 36-66, 287-308.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

the product of the professional scribe and bore the imprint of the latter's subordinate status. It was the common carrier for the transmission of verbal clusters, a conduit channelling the matter of literacy, and expressly designed to perform just that function; the scribe in no way affected the composition or destination of the materials passing through his hands. The *pecia* was, accordingly, indifferent to the tastes and beliefs of the individual reader.[42] There is no significant sense in which the making, distribution, and discussion of texts were in active interplay.

For the early humanist scribe, in contrast, the classical text was a kind of theatre, a *commedia dell'arte* wherein he served as actor-impresario. As actor, the humanist scribe had the role of amanuensis, the original author's privileged hand. Such a hand was made manifest through its governing geometric principles. As impresario, the humanist scribe dedicated himself to the proposition that the perception and execution of such principles was an incontrovertible proof of both the principles' and executor's authenticity. The labor of transcription thus became an interpretive reading in its own right, and the possessor of a manuscript was, in the process of perusal, brought face-to-face with the criteria and the authority on which its obvious beauties and underlying truths were based.

Transcription and reading became complementary facets of a system of belief, an orchestrated faith in the supernatural existence of pristine texts, geometric forms, and the fundamental harmony between them, all three superior and impervious to the ravages of time and ignorance. These therapeutic elements could, by virtue of the faith and works of individual humanists, be transfused throughout the corpus of antiquity and the genius of Rome brought back to earth.

Pride of place among such restorative media went to *lettera antica*, the authentic Roman hand. By means of *lettera antica*, texts could be copied and read in their original form. *Lettera antica* was, however, more of an invention than a rediscovery. The manuscripts on which it was based were actually of Carolingian provenance, viz., 800 to 1000 A.D. In the context of the present discussion, that fact is irrelevant; we are here dealing with issues of faith. What is pertinent are the beliefs on the basis of which such manuscripts were singled out,

[42] Guy Fink-Errera, "Une institution du monde medieval: la *pecia*," *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 60 (1962), 184-243, esp. 203 ff.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

and the ends that they served. For humanist scribes, Carolingian letters had an aura of authenticity. They were patently pre-medieval in origin and had geometric affinities to Latin epigraphic monuments. In their absence of ornament, *lettera antica* stood out in sharp contrast to the prevalent black-letter script. However faulty its premises might have been, the elements of humanist doctrine were notably perspicuous. The characteristics of *lettera antica* could serve as material for discussion. The drudgery of textual transmission was thus converted into reasoned debate.[43]

It is this discursive context that separates the Renaissance from the Middle Ages. Medieval assessment of books was a straightforward process. The value of particular manuscripts was a direct reflection of their possessor's status. The art of transcription resided in the scribe's ability to make the symbols of such status an integral component of the text. Humanist value, on the other hand, resided in the reading experience. The significance of its texts was entirely intellectual, and all humanists were, as intellectuals, fundamentally equal. There was nothing in the way of a correlate superstructure whereby the social attributes of individual readers could be inferred from the visual characteristics of the written page.[44]

Early humanism thus postulated the essential equality of its adherents. As a social contract, it was, however, tenuous in nature and lacked the conventional minimum of reinforcing institutions. The idealization of *lettera antica* as the visual equivalent of Roman grandeur could well have been a compensatory reaction to this deficiency. The medieval book may have existed in a Hobbesian state of nature, but its status as a "natural" phenomenon conferred certain civil advantages. The Latin of medieval authors and readers was the chosen vehicle of ecclesiastical authority. The poverty of medieval Latin

[43] Berthold Louis Ullman, *The Origin and Development of Humanist Script* (Rome, 1960), pp. 11-57; also James Wardrop, *The Script of Humanism: Some Aspects of Humanist Script 1460–1560* (Oxford, 1963).

[44] The emphasis appears to have been in the opposite direction. Manuscripts commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici, the patron of the early humanists, did not include any scheme of the emblems and mottos peculiar to him. In keeping with his overall style, Cosimo eschewed overt displays of his indisputable Florentine hegemony. Such devices were, however, taken up by his immediate descendants; and, as the Medicis gave full play to dynastic pretensions, a fully elaborated system of personal insignia appeared in the manuscripts made for Cosimo's grandson, Lorenzo. See Francis Ames-Lewis, "Early Medicean Devices," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 42 (1979), 122-143.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

syntax and vocabulary was a reflection of its major stylistic postulate: clarification for clarification's sake. As a language, it was the quasi-legal rendition of syllogistic reasoning, the process through which the claims and aspirations of the church were codified and communicated.[45] Medieval Latin was, in virtue of that function, a vital mechanism in the distribution of material penalties and rewards.

The Latin of the earliest humanists had, in contrast, nothing in the way of a comparable relationship with any contemporary power structure. Latin was, throughout Italy, the language of official correspondence. A practiced fluency in Ciceronian tropes and turns of phrase was, as a consequence, highly regarded, and the humanist curriculum was an unrivaled means of inculcating that facility. But Ciceronian Latin was more an embellishment than an integral component of policy. There was no way of demonstrating that as language it was a source of power, that official Latin, to the degree it approached the Latin of the Augustan age, resulted in a comparable increase in sovereign authority. Failing such a connection, classical culture was no more than an ornament, and an uncharted wilderness lay between the talents and the ambitions of humanists.[46]

Humanists were, to be sure, well aware of this problem and had taken remedial measures. By the mid-quattrocento sweeping claims had been advanced on behalf of classical Latin and its literature. The syntax and vocabulary of ancient Rome, it was asserted, corresponded in detailed isomorphic fashion to the essential data of human experience. For every dignified and decorous aesthetic or intellectual experience, there was an accurate and felicitous Latin expression; for every word and phrase to be found in the Latin literary corpus, there was the appropriate human experience. In the case of undeniably modern phenomena, classical Latin provided rules for the formation of the proper descriptive terms.[47] Classical Latin, with its unparalleled capacity to fuse idea and reality, was, therefore, an indispensable

[45] Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York, 1957), pp. 27-35.

[46] A. T. Grafton and L. Jardine, "Humanism and the School of Guarino: A Problem of Evaluation," *Past and Present*, 96 (August 1982), 50-80.

[47] Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1350–1450* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 44-50; see also, Ottavio Besomi, "Dai 'Gesta Ferdinandi Regis Aragonum' del Valla al 'De Orthographia' del Tortelli," *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 9 (1966), 75-121.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

instrument of policy. In its ability to prepare the mind for the vivid reception of elevated thoughts and impressions, classical Latin was, in addition, the quintessential educational device.[48]

Against this background, the passage of printing to Italy acquired the characteristics of an ideologically preordained event, the realization of humanism's political implications. What had been substratum became superstructure. The books printed between 1465 and 1472 in Subiaco and Rome transformed the image of the classical cosmos into palpable reality, and its key concepts, the pristine text and the isomorphism of classical Latin and decorous experience, into a codified mode of communication. The purity of the text was made manifest in the proportions of Sweynheym & Pannartz's roman type, a patently obvious imitation of early humanism's *lettera antica*. The validity of isomorphic reasoning was, in turn, demonstrated through the detailed description and analysis of pagan-patristic harmony's complementary theses: the cognate assertions that the coming of Christ had been anticipated in the literature of ancient Rome, and that the syntax and vocabulary of that literature had consequently been adopted by the church fathers as the language expressly created for the proclamation and exposition of his message.

Taken as a whole, the editions produced by Sweynheym & Pannartz — and in particular their thrice-reprinted thematic trio of Lactantius-Cicero-Augustine — made the theses of the pristine text and pagan-patristic harmony the effective credo of Italian humanism. Its adherents could be recognized by their profession of these doctrines, and their profession could be validated by the actual possession of the relevant texts in virtually identical copies. Bussi spelled all this out in his prefaces.

Sweynheym & Pannartz's commitment to doctrinaire humanism was hardly fortuitous. It was entailed in the circumstances of their journey to Italy, and in the prerequisites for the introduction of a novel technology in an alien environment. In their decision to come to Rome, the presence of curially based, humanist interpretive communities, viz., the academies of Pomponius Leto and Cardinal Bessarion, was no doubt decisive. By their very nature, these academies

[48] William Harrison Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators, Essays and Versions: An Introduction to the History of Classical Education* (Cambridge, 1897), pp. 36-62.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

functioned as laboratories for prototypography's initial complex of problems. Sweynheym & Pannartz were not simply on the lookout for readers of classical texts. They were in search of a literate system wherein their proffered services would have the benefit of structured guidance. They had a pressing need for readers who would subsidize their operations, readers who would advise them as to the proper format for the humanist printed page, readers who would dictate their selection of authors, and readers finally who would in and of themselves constitute an active network for publicizing and distributing their books.

Under the conditions of Renaissance "high culture," such systems were based directly on patronage. Early humanist printing was, accordingly, by nature a "court" enterprise. What does seem to have been a matter of chance, therefore, was Sweynheym & Pannartz's emergence as book dealers in their own behalf. This latter development can be interpreted as an unanticipated consequence of the interplay of the technical capacities of printing and the salient characteristics of humanism. Printing made possible the production of textual aggregates whose individual members were indistinguishable from one another. Through the agency of the editorial preface and roman type, humanism uniformly stamped each item in this aggregate with humanism's own idiosyncratic traits. By virtue of such a peculiarity, edited texts could either be offered to the editor/patron's peers and clients as gift-tokens of membership in a literate system, or else sold to the general public as tickets of admission to the spectacle of that system in action.

As entrepreneurs, Sweynheym & Pannartz were dependent upon the subtle interplay of esoteric circulation and popular demand. The sale of their allotted texts was governed by the fact that the books in question were the insignia of an intellectual and administrative elite. This circumstance was once more characteristically Roman. Nowhere else during the fifteenth century was the interest in books so practical.

The papacy, the Italian administrative system with the most far-flung interests and the greatest dependence upon strictly verbal instruments, had the largest and most vigorously advertised need for professional rhetoricians and scribes. At the time of Sweynheym & Pannartz's second crisis this system was entering upon a phase of

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

dynamic expansion. Between 1460 and 1514, the papal establishment quadrupled in size, increasing roughly from 500 to 2,000 members. The real acceleration got under way with the election of Sixtus IV. What had been moderate and unplanned increase then became deliberate and active policy.[49] The pope's imperial designs were projected upon the dimensions of his household. These designs entailed an expansion in the size and scope of papal claims and expenditures, and lavish reconstruction of its Roman physical and social environment. The College of Cardinals was drastically enlarged. Satellite establishments for the pope's nephews were endowed, rivalling his own in sumptuousness, and diffusing his imperial presence throughout the city.[50] There was a consequent explosion in the demand for suitably elegant functionaries. Such functionaries were, in a Roman setting, identified with the literate system of archaeological humanism. Imperial Latin rhetoric became the acknowledged livery of this new order. Editions in the textual mode perfected by Sweynheym & Pannartz and exploited by their Roman and Italian rivals and successors became the training manuals for one of early modern Europe's more spectacular growth industries.

The uniquely Italian circumstances of this development are best discerned in comparative context. Cardinal Bessarion was the animator of an international printing program. Rome was but the keystone of this edifice. Between 1468 and 1472, Bessarion inspired three printing firms: Sweynheym & Pannartz in Rome, Fichet-Gering in Paris,[51] and Regiomontanus in Nuremberg.[52] The three presses were linked by a cluster of family resemblances. Each had one of Bessarion's associates as its editorial director: Bussi in Rome, Fichet in Paris, Regiomontanus in Nuremberg. Each was, in its own nation, the first press to use roman type. The fonts designed for Paris and Nuremberg were moreover clearly inspired by that of Sweynheym

[49] Denis Hay, *The Church in Italy in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 36-45; see also Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, 1985), p. 27 ff.

[50] Hay, *Church* (note 49), pp. 38; Stinger, *Renaissance* (note 49), pp. 95 ff; Lee, *Sixtus IV* (note 21), pp. 33-45.

[51] Anatole Claudin, *The First Paris Press. An Account of the Books Printed for G. Fichet and J. Heynlin in the Sorbonne, 1470–1472* (London, 1898), pp. 9, 10, 12, 20-22, 28-31.

[52] M. D. Feld, "Constructed Letters and Illuminated Texts: Regiomantus, Leon Battista Alberti and the Origins of Roman Type," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 28 (1980), 357-379.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

& Pannartz. Each press had as its specialty a specific aspect of Bessarion's intellectual cosmos: neo-Platonism and the pagan-patristic harmony in Rome, rhetoric and the Platonic corpus in Paris, mathematics and astronomy in Nuremberg. In each case, the editors inaugurated their programs with declarations expounding the reasons behind their mode of specialization and their selection of texts. Viewed as a group, these three ventures give the impression of an international movement orchestrated from Rome by the Byzantine cardinal.

Humanist printing in Rome, Paris, and Nuremberg also shared a common fate. With Bessarion's departure from Rome in 1472 and his death seven months later, the rhythm of publication in all three sites slowed down and came to a gradual halt. Sweynheym & Pannartz abandoned archaeological humanism, editorial prefaces, *editiones principes*, and patristic texts. In spite of, or perhaps because of this retrenchment, they were obliged a year or so later to close shop. Fichet was involved in the debacle of Bessarion's mission. He left France with the cardinal to pursue a curial career in Rome. French humanist printing did not survive his departure. Regiomontanus began printing in Nuremberg in 1471. In his case as well, the death of Bessarion seems to have been a crippling blow. Judging by the disparity between the list of books in Regiomontanus's broadside prospectus and the roster of his achieved publication, humanist printing in Nuremberg never really hit full stride. Regiomontanus too moved to Rome and died there about 1474.

Here the similarity ends. The impact on Italian humanist printing of Sweynheym & Pannartz's debacle was transient. The literate system within which such an enterprise functioned had become an established feature of curial Rome and the conventional matrix of literary patronage. Other printers, Pannartz included, haltingly at first but then with gradually increasing confidence, resumed the printing of humanist texts. Roman type, the graphic insignia of humanism, was never abandoned. Throughout all these fluctuations, it retained its role as the distinctive idiom of Italian learned publication.

Beyond the Alps, on the other hand, printing had a markedly different history. The precedent of Fichet and Regiomontanus found no imitators; Bessarion had no successors. In the Paris and Nurem-

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

berg of their era, virtuosity in Ciceronian rhetoric and the exposition of classical Latin authors was an alien concept.[53] Denied an adequate stock of learned readers, literary patronage was a hollow gesture. There was no visible foundation for the gift-distribution of canonical texts. In France and Germany, roman type and the printing of pagan and patristic Latin works were abandoned immediately and in virtual entirety, not to be resumed for another twenty years.

In Italy, on the other hand, encomiastic humanism, as it took root, created a market for the staple classical Latin texts. Authors such as Cicero, Virgil, and Livy were, in ignorance or by design, misread as case studies in curial careerism. From the distorting angle of a neo-Augustan perspective, these authors were perceived as models of rhetorical grace under stress. Roman literature was studied as a thesaurus of stratagems whereby Latinate elegance could transform the risks and uncertainties of political rivalry into an etiquette of flattering analogy and ritualized interdependence.[54] The cycles of the Romecentric papal cosmos were depicted on the analogy of Ptolemaic astronomy, its imperial vicar gleaming with the reflected brilliance of his satellite constellations.

In harmony with the most hackneyed of capitalist scenarios, self-promotion relentlessly pursued was proclaimed an instrument of the general welfare. The formularies of official Latin panegyric coalesced into the code of behavior of a "civilized" ruling class. Lignamine was a pioneer in this process and, in the trajectory of his ascent, a glowing testimonial for the advantages of a classical education. Through the spectacle of his own and similarly inspired careers, members of the middling class were drawn into the ambient of humanist culture and became themselves part of the mill where such a class was manufactured. Pedagogic institutions designed with precisely this process in mind proliferated.

A positive and perspicuous scale of values was imposed on the Latin literary corpus. The rhetoric and prosody of antiquity achieved

[53] Jacques Monfrin, "Les lectures de Guillaume Fichet et Jean Heynlin," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance*, 17 (1955), 7-23, 145-53; Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Nuremberg: A Renaissance City, 1500–1618* (Austin, 1983), pp. 39-43.

[54] John F. D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation* (Baltimore, 1983), pp. 115-143.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)

a sacred status. They were treated as something akin to the voice of God over the original chaos, transforming featureless matter into spiritual values. The relics of Rome were cited as proof that such miracles were credible. Classical literary texts served as the missals and breviaries of the cult. Under its stimulus a self-regulating, commercial market for printed editions of Latin authors came into being. Through the mechanics of such a market printing gradually liberated itself from the confines of patronage. *Habent sua fata libelli.*

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

M. D. FELD is Reference Librarian in the Littauer Library, Harvard University.

MASON HAMMOND is Pope Professor of Latin Language and Literature, *Emeritus*, Harvard University.

DANIEL JAVITCH is Professor of Comparative Literature at New York University.

Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXXIV, Number 3 (Summer 1986)