

Costs We Don't Think About An Unusual Copy of Franciscus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum* (1474), and a Few Other Items

Neil Harris

Università degli Studi di Udine, Italia

Abstract Rubrication (from Latin, *ruber*, red), or the hand-finishing of manuscripts and (very) early printed books falls between several areas of competence. Often, however, it tells us important things about the book and its early history; it also represented an additional expense for the purchaser, so that in description it is important to distinguish between 'professional' and 'amateur' rubrication. A copy of a Venetian incunable – the *Opus restitutionum* by Franciscus de Platea – printed in 1474 in the collections of the Boston Public Library has on its final leaf a contemporary rubricator's note, with the summary of the costs of illumination and rubrication. The edition concerned was maybe sold through the *Zornale* of Francesco de Madiis, the ledger of a Venetian bookseller, which records the sales of some 25,000 books between 1484 and 1488. These sales, however, mostly concerned books sold as unbound sheets, though occasionally bound copies are recorded with a consequent increase in price. Comparison of the price recorded in the *Zornale* with the costs in the rubricator's note makes it possible to determine the expense of decoration in the purchase of a 15th-century book and to compare the same to salaries and to the cost of living. The article cites four other instances of rubricator's notes in incunabula, found in another copy of Franciscus de Platea in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence; in a Bernardus Claravallensis printed c. 1472 in Strasbourg in the Marciana Library, again with an indication of the costs; in an edition of Aquinas published in Venice in 1481 at the Beinecke Library; and in an edition of Orosius published in Vicenza c. 1475 at Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

Keywords Rubrication. Decoration. Incunabula. Book prices. Booktrade. Venice.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Franciscus de Platea and the *Opus restitutionum*. – 3 The Copy at the Boston Public Library and the Cost of Rubrication. – 4 Prices and Salaries in 15th-Century Venice: A Comparison. – 5 Further Examples of Rubrication Notes in Incunabula. – 6 Conclusions.



Edizioni
Ca' Foscari

Studi di storia 13

e-ISSN 2610-9433 | ISSN 2610-8879
ISBN [ebook] 978-88-6969-332-8 | ISBN [print] 978-88-6969-333-5

Peer review | Open access

Submitted 2019-10-15 | Accepted 2019-12-13 | Published 2020-02-24
© 2020 | © Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License
DOI 10.30687/978-88-6969-332-8/018

511

1 Introduction

Bookbuying is not commonly considered a dangerous business, one likely to reveal unexpected and unpleasant surprises. Up to a few years, or rather decades ago, it was common practice, when one went to a bookshop, to ask the employee behind the counter if they had such and such a title, the said employee disappeared into a store at the back and, after a certain period of time, emerged with a dusty copy, or the admission that it seemed that they no longer held it (and perhaps had not held it for the previous fifty years); nowadays, browsing is the name of the game, and bookshops, which are also places where one buys music and DVDs of films and next year's calendars and innumerable other book-related objects, are textual supermarkets, where one can spend the day reading without actually buying the items. I can still remember my provincially English astonishment, in the seventies, at going into the FNAC at the bottom of Les Halles in Paris and seeing crowds of young people, sitting in groups on the floor, blatantly perusing the *bandes dessinées* for hours at a time. Umberto Eco once observed that, in the supermarket-style bookshop, books were certainly easier to steal, but also that they sold many more books than the traditional models, and in the last fifty years or so they have prevailed more or less everywhere. Now of course, when browsing, even in the idlest of fashions and without the slightest intention of making a purchase, one always glances at the price, which is generally printed on the back in a very visible fashion. Necessarily so, since publishers have understood that book purchasing is sometimes a spur-of-the-moment impulse and, if the price cannot be seen, the buyer might well become a non-buyer.

There are of course commodities where purchasing is less clear cut and involves complications. For instance, motor cars, where rather notoriously, the price advertised is often for the basic model, for instance, at € 9,999 (and one wonders why not say € 10,000 and have done with it? But apparently the single euro reduction works wonders). If, however, one goes to the dealer and tries to purchase the car at this essential price, one soon discovers that there are extras: GPS navigator, radio with a DVD reader, sunroof, chrome wheel hubs, passenger ejector seats for James Bond aficionados, and so on and so forth, so that the initial bargain soon turns into something less of a bargain. Here as well, talking about books, albeit fifteenth-century books, the emphasis is going to be extras, and what extras cost.

2 Franciscus de Platea and the *Opus restitutionum*

The principal item described here is a copy of Franciscus de Platea (as GW and ISTC call him), or, more simply, and as he becomes in the sixteenth century (and is denominated in Edit16), Francesco Piazza. As with many such figures, active in the first half of the fifteenth century, relatively little is known about him outside of his writings. He was probably born between 1390 and 1400, entered the Franciscan order at some point, and in 1424 became professor of Canon law at the University of Bologna, where he remained up to his death in 1460. His best-known work (and also the only important one to find its way into print) is the *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*, a medium-sized treatise, which is considered, among other things, one of the earliest published works in the field of economics. It was briefly a successful title for early printers, across Europe. The first edition is unsigned and attributed by incunable repertories to Padua in c. 1472, and another appeared in the same city in 1473; it was printed three times in Venice, in 1472, 1474, and 1477; in Cologne in 1474; in Paris in 1476-77; and in Speyer in 1489. So nine editions in less than twenty years, after which it disappears, and has never been reprinted since. In fact, the only title to appear under Piazza's name in the sixteenth century was a *Tractato delli defecti della messa vtile per li sacerdoti semplici*, published in Florence in 1503. He belongs therefore to the largish category of late Medieval writers, whose works are initially successful in the new medium, but swiftly drop off the map as the nature of texts and communication irremediably change.

The edition concerned here is the second Venetian one, published by Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen, on 25 March 1474.¹ The same two printers also produced a page-by-page reprint on 22 January 1477.² It is not a rare book: for the first of these editions, ISTC records at present just over a hundred copies, including some fragments, in 84 institutions, and further copies are available in the antiquarian book trade; the second survives slightly less well, but still in considerable numbers. The 1474 edition is in quarto format, on Me-

¹ Platea, Franciscus de, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen, 25 Mar. 1474. 4°. GW M00828; ISTC ip00755000. On sheet-sizes in early printing and the consequent sizes in the various formats, cf. Harris, *Paper and Watermarks as Bibliographical Evidence*, 43. Browsing the various catalogues that provide reliable measurements of the size of copies, in particular BMC and the Bodleian, as well as the descriptions available in MEI, the largest copy so far recorded appears to be that at the Biblioteca Civica "Angelo Mai" in Bergamo, which measures 237 × 173 mm.

² Platea, Franciscus de, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen, 22 Jan. 1477. 4°. GW M00831; ISTC ip00758000. On the basis of the state of the gothic type 76G^b in this edition, BMC V, 227 argues that the date cannot be considered *more veneto*.

dian sheets, and contains 152 leaves. The gatherings are unsigned and therefore the repertories differ as how to describe the book, but the version of the Bodleian catalogue of incunabula (Bod-inc) appears as convenient as any: [a-b⁸ c-d¹⁰ e-f⁸ g¹⁰ h¹² i-p¹⁰ q⁸]. As the slightly irregular make-up of some gatherings implies, the sheets were cut in half before printing and impressed with the 'one-pull' technique, i.e. a page at a time in *seriatim* fashion.³ This still primitive technology necessarily had knock-on effects for the cost of labour, the time taken to print the book, and thus for the eventual price.

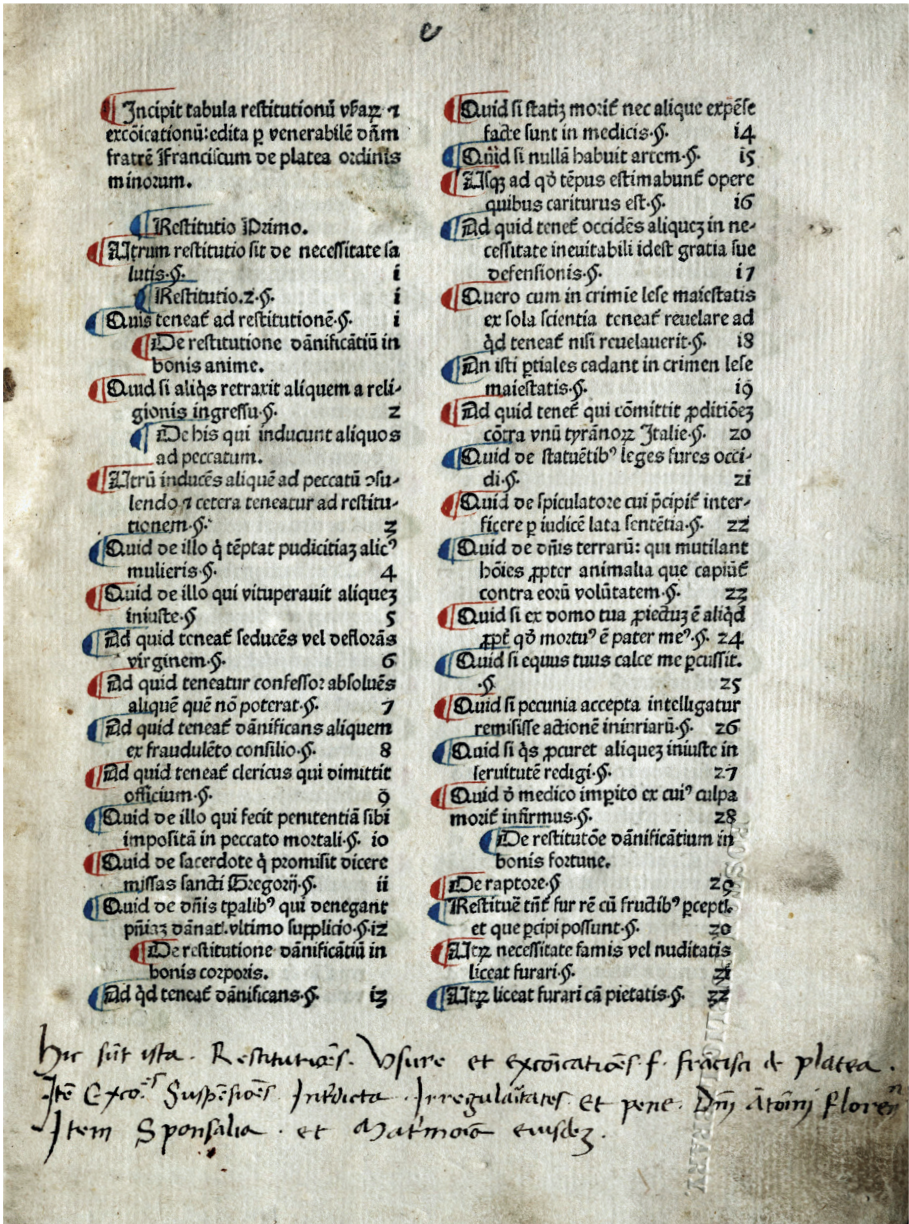
3 The Copy at the Boston Public Library and the Cost of Rubrication

With an edition that survives in such large numbers, dispersed in libraries all over the world, it is implausible that a scholar should want to see more than a few copies, or indeed any at all. New technologies are providing new forms of access to early books, however, especially to copies in less well-known, less-regarded collections. A year or so ago, by pure chance, my attention was drawn to the copy owned by the Boston Public Library (not the real Boston in England, which has a magnificent collection of early books in the tower of St. Botolph's church,⁴ but its namesake in the United States), through the twitter-feed conducted by Daryll Green, librarian at Magdalen College, Oxford (@ilikeoldbooks), who retweeted a post by the BPL's librarian and curator of manuscripts and early printed books, Jay Moschella.⁵ The American Boston, of course, has of course a world-renowned incunabula collection in the several Harvard libraries at the other end of town, technically Cambridge (another imitation), but the discovery of the scale and importance of the holdings in the city library was a surprising one. The other question to be answered is

³ On the one-pull press in early printing, where for quarto formats the sheets were often cut in half before printing, cf. Hellinga, *Press and Text in the First Decades of Printing*; Peric, *Il commercio degli incunaboli a Padova nel 1480*. In the instance of the 1474 Platea, the distribution of the watermarks - dragon, scales, and column - in the copies examined in the course of this research unequivocally shows that the sheets were divided before printing; close scrutiny also reveals the presence of pin holes in the outer margins of each leaf, which is also another sign of the early procedure.

⁴ *Boston Parish Library Catalogue*. Cf. also the review of the same by Neil Harris in *The Library*, 7(10), 2009, 221-3.

⁵ For the record, the original tweet was posted by Jay Moschella on 3 February 2017 and the present writer contacted the author, with a request for further information, three days later. I take the opportunity to thank him and the Boston Public Library for their support and interest in producing this article, including the images published here, which appear with the kind permission of the BPL. Unfortunately, in 2018, on a visit to Boston on my part, the library was closed for building work and it was not possible for me to view the copy at first hand.

Figure 1 Franciscus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. 1474.

Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen. Boston, Boston Public Library, Q.404.8, f. [a]1r.

Examples of rubrication and contents note

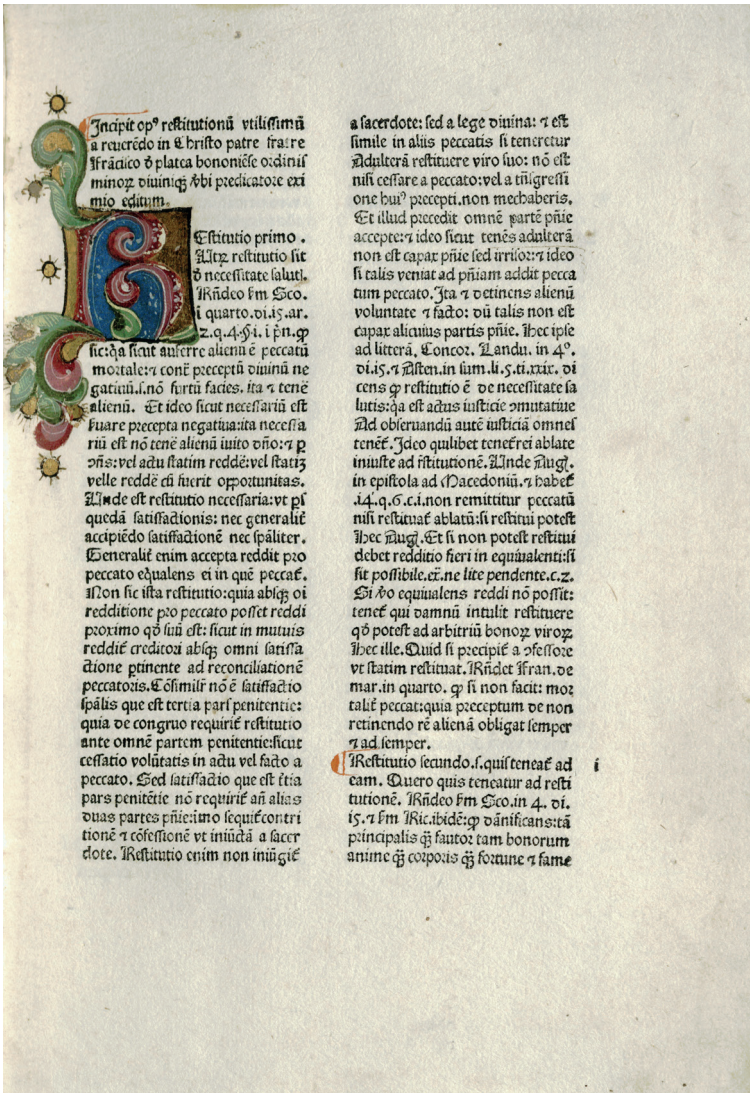


Figure 2 Francisus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. 1474. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen. Boston, Boston Public Library, Q.404.8, f. [c]1r. Illuminated letter



Figure 3 Francisus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*, 1474. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen. Boston, Boston Public Library, Q.404.8, ff. f4v-5r, h12v-11r. Examples of flourished letters

why I was browsing a twitter-feed, and the answer to that is, inevitably, idleness, or its synonym, curiosity.

Before explaining why this item captured my attention, a brief description of the copy now in Boston – pressmark Q.404.8 – and its history may be helpful. The volume has a modern binding, probably Italian from the second half of the nineteenth century, made of parchment on boards. It has conserved, however, the original parchment endleaves, of which the front one is formed of an early fifteenth-century legal manuscript with the text of the Justinian codex (book VI, title xi, and following); the back endleaf comes from the text of a notary document, again probably fifteenth-century. A pencil annotation on the recto of the front endleaf, “Dr. W. N. Bullard | Nov. 18, 1896”, identifies the modern provenance of this incunable as from the collection of William Norton Bullard (1853-1931), who graduated from Harvard in 1875 and received his M.D. from Harvard Medical School in 1880. Bullard specialised in medical incunabula and at his death left his library, as well as a bequest of \$ 50,000 for the further purchase of manuscripts and early printed books, to Boston Medical Library.⁶ Probably on account of its mainly legal content, Bullard ‘discarded’ this item from his collection by giving it to the BPL, whose catalogue of incunabula, published in a series of instalments in the twenties and thirties in the library’s in-house journal, confirms the date of the donation in November 1896.⁷

On account of the numerous short paragraphs, the copy is extensively rubricated [figs. 1-3] and, following the first two gatherings taken up by the content index, also has an illuminated initial at f. [c]1r to mark the beginning of the text proper [fig. 2]. A word about rubrication, from Latin, *rubere*, red, or the hand-finishing of manuscripts and (very) early printed books, which somehow falls between sever-

⁶ For a profile, cf. Walsh, *A Catalogue of the Fifteenth-century Books*, 5: 69. I thank John Lancaster, who has described many of Bullard’s incunabula in MEI, for his assistance in this identification.

⁷ Cf. Haraszki, “XVth-Century Books in the Library”, 376 (the notice erroneously gives the date of the edition as 1475, describes Piazza as a Dominican, indicates the height of the copy as 268 mm instead of 234 mm, and pays no attention to the rubricator’s note). A cut-out copy of the same is pasted onto the final leaf of the incunable, just above the rubrication note [fig. 4]. The contents note in an early 16th-century hand on the first leaf [fig. 1] reads: “Hic sunt ista. Restitutiones Usure et excommunicationes f. francisci de platea. Item Excommunicationes Suspensiones Interdicta Irregularitates et pene Domini Antonini Florentini. Item Sponsalia et Matrimonia eiusdem”. The second and third items were not extant as titles in print and appear to be extracts from the *Summa theologica* of Saint Antonino of Florence. It would appear therefore that they were manuscripts and that the Platea was bound up in a miscellany with a practical intent. Of Hungarian origin, Zoltán Haraszki (1892-1980) began working at the BPL in the twenties and was responsible for many of the acquisitions of Medieval manuscripts and incunabula that distinguish today’s collections. The in-house magazine *More Books* was designed to provide knowledge about the collections and their significance.

al areas of competence, most of which liquidate it as a SEP (Some-
one Else's Problem). Since no words are involved, palaeographers
dismiss it as mere decoration; since it is mainly produced with a pen
and there are no pictures, art historians regard it as falling outside
their sphere of influence; since it is not part of the printing process
and differs from copy to copy, bibliographers and incunabulists do
not consider it part of the edition; since it is inside the book, schol-
ars of bindings hold that it has nothing to do with them; and so on
and so forth. On the other hand, rubrication often tells us important
things about the book and its early history; it also had a cost, and in
description it is useful to distinguish between 'professional' and 'am-
ateur' rubrication. It is of course a left-over from manuscript prac-
tice, wherein the alternation between red and blue pilcrows (or par-
agraph marks) marked the beginning of new sections in the text and
thus aided the eye of the reader. In a context where parchment was
costly, paragraph signs saved space and also created the dense blocks
of text that are so characteristic of manuscript layout. Early printers
imitated the system by leaving small spaces to be filled in by hand
with the alternating colours; the ever-increasing quantity of copies
churned out by the new technology, however, soon made this solution
impracticable and large numbers of early incunabula have reached
us devoid of any decoration. The modern solution of paragraphing on
a new line with an indent begins with Aldus Manutius in two famous
books of 1499, his collection of astronomical treatises known as the
Scriptores astronomici veteres and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.⁸

The fact that the Boston incunable is rubricated is not surprising for
a book of 1474, especially for a legal text, and a check on the descrip-
tions available for copies of this edition available in published cata-
logues such as BMC and online resources such as MEI, well as digital
copies, shows that plenty have contemporary hand-added decoration.
The work in this particular copy is of high quality: the basic pilcrows
are done in alternating red and blue; for the flourishes of the more
elaborate letters that mark the chapters a third colour, lilac, is added;
the illuminated capital at the beginning of the text is likewise profes-
sionally executed in tempera, with a layer of gold leaf, and is related to
what art historians in this field describe as "Roverella style", that typ-
ifies the famous copy of the *Decretum Gratiani* of 1474 on parchment
owned by the Museo Schifanoia at Ferrara.⁹ Similar letters typify a
large number of early Venetian incunabula, as well as manuscripts of

⁸ Cf. Harris, "Aldus and the Making of the Myth", 361-3. Rubrication and pen-add-
ed ornament has inevitably received much less attention than illumination, especial-
ly in printed books. One pioneering study is Scott-Fleming, *The Analysis of Pen Flour-
ishing*, while printed books are considered in Korteweg-van Heertum, *Pen Flourishing
in Manuscripts and Incunabula*.

⁹ Cf. Mariani Canova, *Ferrara 1474*. I thank Lilian Armstrong for her opinion on the style.

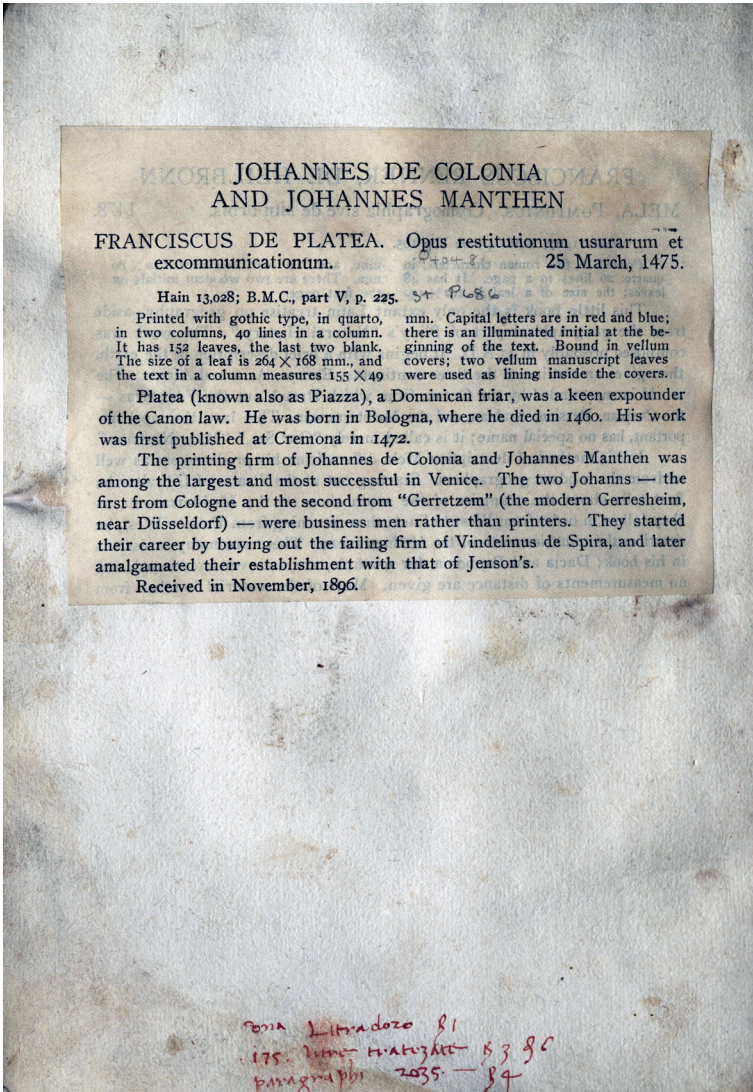


Figure 4 Franciscus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. 1474. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen. Boston, Boston Public Library, Q.404.8, f. [q]8v

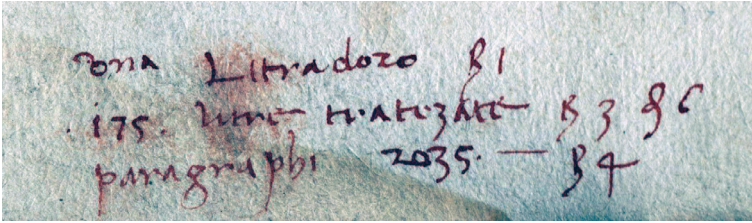


Figure 5 Franciscus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. 1474. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen. Boston, Boston Public Library, Q.404.8, f. [q]8v. Detail with the rubricator's note

the same period, and were probably produced by one or more workshops with a standardised method, making it difficult to distinguish individual artists.

What makes the Boston copy exceptional is, however, the final blank leaf, on the verso of which, at the bottom, appears in red ink the following succinct note [figs. 4-5]:

vna litra doro s 1
175 litre tratezate s 3 d 6
paragrafti 2035 s 4

Obviously this is the summary of the charges made by the rubricator for his work. Translating and amplifying the somewhat condensed Italian, it reads as follows: one illuminated letter with gold leaf (*lettera d'oro*), 1 *soldo*; 175 flourished chapter letters (*lettere tratteggiate*), 3 *soldi*, 6 *denari*; and 2,035 pilcrow, or paragraph marks, 4 *soldi*, making a total of 8 *soldi* and 6 *denari* (or 102 *denari*).

4 Prices and Salaries in 15th-century Venice: A Comparison

How much is this in late fifteenth-century terms? Albeit much older in some respects, the Venetian currency of the time was reformed in a series of measures between 1471 and 1473 by doge Nicolò Tron, who in particular established that, at the top end of the scale, the gold ducat, which previously had oscillated against other coinages, had a fixed value of 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi* or, more simply, 124 *soldi*. In 1472 he minted the first silver *lira* with a value equivalent to 20 *soldi*, each of which was in turn made up of 12 *denari* (the Venetian model was widely imitated all over the Europe of the time and, in the guise of pounds, shillings, and pence, survived in Britain up to decimalization in 1973, while the curious twisting sign for sterling on our keyboards

Name	Cost (denari)
Giacomo de gentile	1
Giacomo de Sani	1
Giacomo de roberto	2
Giacomo de la piazza	1
Giacomo de xlonfi	1
Giacomo de roberto	2
Giacomo de xuchigoy	3
Giacomo de xupponi	1
Giacomo de	5
Giacomo de malle	1
Giacomo de xola	8

Figure 6 The *Zornale* of Francesco de Madiis, f. 68v. 8 January 1487. Sale of a copy of “Franc. de la piazza” for £ 1 s 10. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, ms. Ital. XI, 45 (7439). Detail

is in fact the antique Italian abbreviation for *lira*).¹⁰ The two smallest coinages are the ones employed by our rubricator and suggest that his work was not especially well remunerated, or perhaps that earnings were based on flourishing and illuminating a large number of copies on a more or less daily basis, in order to accumulate a decent salary. Though the figures above are necessarily rounded off, if they are broken down a tiny bit further, the cost of the illuminated letter was 12 *denari*, each flourished letter cost 0.274 *denari*, and each individual pilcrow 0.024 *denari*.

What did the expense for good-quality rubrication contribute to the final purchase price of the book? One exceptional source for information about book prices in Venice in the last quarter of the fifteenth century is the *Zornale* of Francesco de Madiis. Discovered at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this document is a ledger of 160 leaves, still in its original parchment cover, which records the daily activity and sales of a Venetian bookshop for a period of three years, eight months, and one week, from 17 May 1484 to 23 January

¹⁰ Cf. Papadopoli Aldobrandini, *Le monete di Venezia*, 2: 8-9; Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, 80-5; Lane, Mueller, *Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice*, 1: 617 (table D.3: “Domestic exchange: The ducat in soldi di piccolli, 1305-1508”).

1488 (ff. 1v-114r), as well as the inventory of the stock-in-trade for just over one year, again from 17 May 1484 to 4 June 1485 (ff. 141r-149v). To give an idea of the scale of the document, a provisional count of the *Zornale's* contents lists 6,950 sales, comprising 11,100 entries and over 25,000 individual copies. Numerous features of the register suggest that the establishment was a new one, which opened its doors for the first time, coincidentally and significantly, on a Monday. The opening date is a mere decade and a half after the first appearance of printing in the city: this record therefore reveals in unprecedented detail the reaction of not quite the first, but certainly the second, purchasing public to the novelty of printed books. The relatively early date also makes it simple, with a few exceptions, to identify the titles and editions sold through the bookshop, a task that might have proved more complex had the document belonged to the final years of the fifteenth century when output had increased almost tenfold.¹¹

Very helpfully for our purposes, the *Zornale* records three sales of copies of the *Opus* of Franciscus de Platea; rather less helpfully, on two occasions – on 31 May 1485 and on 1 December 1486 – as part of bulk purchases where it is not possible to determine the price of a single title. The third time, on the other hand, on 8 January 1487 (f. 68v), the title – “Franc. de la piazza” – is on its own for the price of £ 1 s 10, or 30 *soldi* [fig. 6]. It is probable that the edition sold by de Madis is not our edition of 1474, but the later, albeit almost identical, reprint from the same printers of 1477, though in practical terms there is little difference, since the edition is also printed on divided Median sheets, using a one-pull press. Both editions comprise 38 sheets, which, on the basis of our standard analysis of edition costs, amounts to 9.47 *denari* per sheet, putting the *Opus* at the more expensive end of the scale.¹² On the other hand, the fact that the *Zornale* sells only a few copies, as well as the decade or so between the publication and the sale, suggests that this is oldish stock; in 1474, therefore, when the book was new and printed books were much more expensive than

¹¹ Discovered early in the nineteenth century, the *Zornale* is now Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, ms. Ital. XI, 45 (7439). A full transcription and commentary of the *Zornale* is being prepared by Cristina Dondi and the present Author, while some preliminary conclusions are described in the four articles listed in the bibliography. I express gratitude to the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali and to the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana for permission to reproduce the image here.

¹² The calculation is based on the total of *denari* in the price divided by the number of sheets in the book. The use of *denari* avoids inconvenient decimals that would be inevitable if the calculation instead employed *soldi*. Most prices in the *Zornale* fall within a range of 5 to 12 *denari* per sheet, cf. Dondi, Harris, “Oil and Green Ginger”. A similar analysis is being conducted for the three Aldine catalogues of 1498, 1503, and 1513, where the prices are also recorded, cf. Harris, “Aldo Manuzio, il libro e la moneta”.

in the 1480s, the purchase cost was plausibly higher.¹³ Unfortunately we have no means of determining what the original sale price might have been. The other extra element that has to be considered is the binding, given that in the majority of instances the prices recorded in the *Zornale* are for unbound sheets. Again the mark up is difficult to establish with any sort of accuracy, since binding costs were obviously subject to numerous variables, such as the quality of the materials and whether several items were bound together in a miscellany, as has indeed happened with several copies of the 1474 edition. On the basis of some sales in the *Zornale*, however, where bound copies (recorded as *ligato*) were sold for prices comparable to the same title in its unbound version, the standard increase appears in the order of 70%. The consequent calculation of the book price and its necessary extras therefore appears as follows:

Purchase of the book in unbound sheets	=	360 <i>denari</i>
Illumination (1 letter) and rubrication	=	102 <i>denari</i>
Binding (70% of purchase price)	=	252 <i>denari</i>
Total	=	714 <i>denari</i> (or 69 <i>soldi</i> , 6 <i>denari</i> , or £ 2 s 19 <i>den.</i> 6)

So the final expense works out at slightly more than half a ducat, for not a particularly large book, while the cumulative extras almost double the price. Hypothetically therefore, the single illumination and the rubrication add about 15% to the cost of the book for the purchaser.

On the whole, the cost of rubrication here does not appear extraordinarily high when compared to known salaries, especially in the lower echelons of society. The 'gold standard', or the effective value of the ducat in metal, meant that Renaissance prices and earnings, though they could vary according to seasonal factors, such as harvests, were essentially stable, at least up to the early years of the sixteenth century and there was little or no underlying long-term inflation, as in our post-Keynesian era. Comparisons of prices from different periods are possible therefore, though they have to be applied with circumspection. Records shows that in Venice, for instance, the daily wage of a master builder between 1460 and 1505 oscillated between

¹³ In the slightly earlier list of books consigned by Antonio Moretto for sale in Padua in 1480, in which the prices are again shown in ducats, *lire* and *soldi*, where a title is common also to the de Madiis *Zornale*, the indications are significantly higher; cf. Peric in this volume. There seems to be no doubt, in fact, that, from the introduction of printing in Venice in 1469, prices dropped rapidly, in part due to the intense competition, in part due also to technological improvements, such as the introduction of the two-pull press, larger print-runs, and more economical layouts and formats, which saved significant quantities of paper.

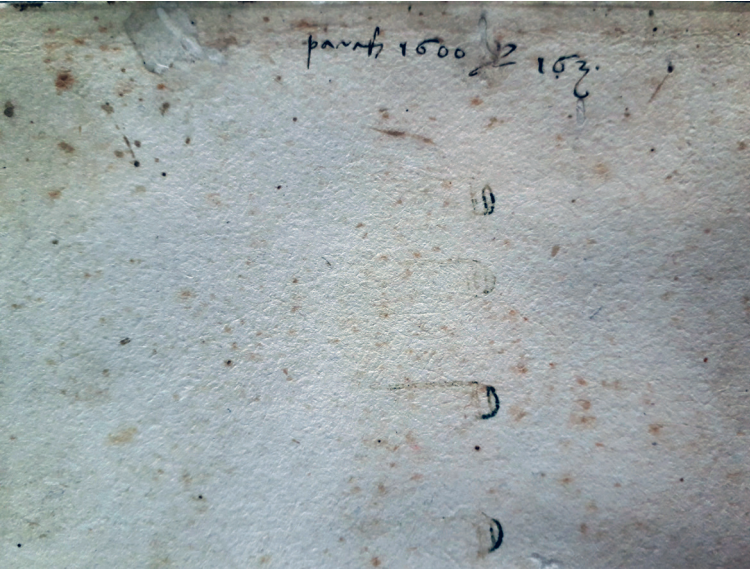


Figure 7 Franciscus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. 1474. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Magl. A.7.29, f. [q]8v. Detail with the rubricator's note

20 and 36 *soldi*, likewise that of a 'lavorante', or ordinary workman, between 12 and 17 *soldi*, while child labourers and apprentices were paid even less, not more than 10 *soldi* a day. Changing profession, in the printing trade the three ducats per month which a compositor earned in Padua during 1475, with board and lodging included, was the salary of a skilled technician in a new ground-breaking field (in fact, much the same sum was offered in 1492 by the Venetian republic to obtain the services of an experienced hydraulic engineer).¹⁴ The same source suggests that in this halcyon period a proto, or the foreman, in these shops, which had several presses and a large number of workman, commanded a salary of between five and nine ducats a month. The prices for comestibles, where the records survive, should not be treated as the equivalent of what we find on modern supermarket shelves. A chicken was a luxury food, and so in about 1460 a pair of them cost 9 *soldi*, a plump goose likewise 12 *soldi*, and a large tasty eel 4 *soldi*, and so on.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the impression is that the costs of the rubrication in the 1474 *Opus* are not exaggeratedly high and correspond, very approximately, to the day's wage for

¹⁴ Sartori, "Documenti padovani sull'arte della stampa nel secolo XV".

¹⁵ Dondi, *Printing R-Evolution 1450-1500*.

an ordinary workman, perhaps something less. On the other hand, the annotation does not tell us the whole picture and so, until more data is available, especially the full picture of the prices in the *Zornale* compared to contemporary salaries and prices, the indication here has to be taken *cum grano salis*.

5 Further Examples of Rubrication Notes in Incunabula

A major *desideratum* would be for scholars and cataloguers to report purchase prices and also costs for rubrication in incunabula in a more systematic fashion. Nowadays huge amounts of information are becoming available in catalogues and in online databases, with an increasing amount of attention for copy-specific information. In the sheer abundance of data, however, it is not easy to make such fleeting detail easy to find. While records for the purchase prices of books are not rare, although never enough to give a full picture of the fifteenth-century book trade, rubricators' notes, even ones that do not indicate prices, are necessarily much rarer. Nevertheless, by sheer good fortune, another four examples, of which one already described in the previous secondary literature, have recently become known to me.

The first of these, quite simply, is in another copy of the 1474 edition of the Franciscus de Platea at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, which I looked at in order to familiarise myself with the edition. The copy has been professionally rubricated with letters and pilcrows, alternating red and blue, and also has an illuminated initial at f. [c]1r. The note, again on blank f. [q]8v, albeit this time at the top of the page, much more succinctly, reads: "parafi 1600 Litere 163" [fig. 7]. The first figure is clearly rounded-off and an approximation; the second is inaccurate, since my count of the letters numbers 154, and of course no mention is made of the illumination. An annotation on the first leaf records that the book was purchased in 1505 by brother Benedetto ser Meliori Manetti de Masinis for the monastery of San Michele at Fiesole; the decoration, however, appears earlier and is probably Venetian.¹⁶

For knowledge of the next example, I am indebted to the generosity of Sabrina Minuzzi, who discovered it in a copy in the Marciana Library in Venice of the *Epistolae* and other tracts by Bernardus

¹⁶ Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Magl. A.7.29; the library holds another copy at Nencini inc. 45. This note is not mentioned in the recent catalogue of the incunabula of the BNCF, cf. Scapecchi, *Catalogo degli incunaboli della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze*, 337, no. 2253. I express gratitude to the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali and to the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze for permission to reproduce the image here.

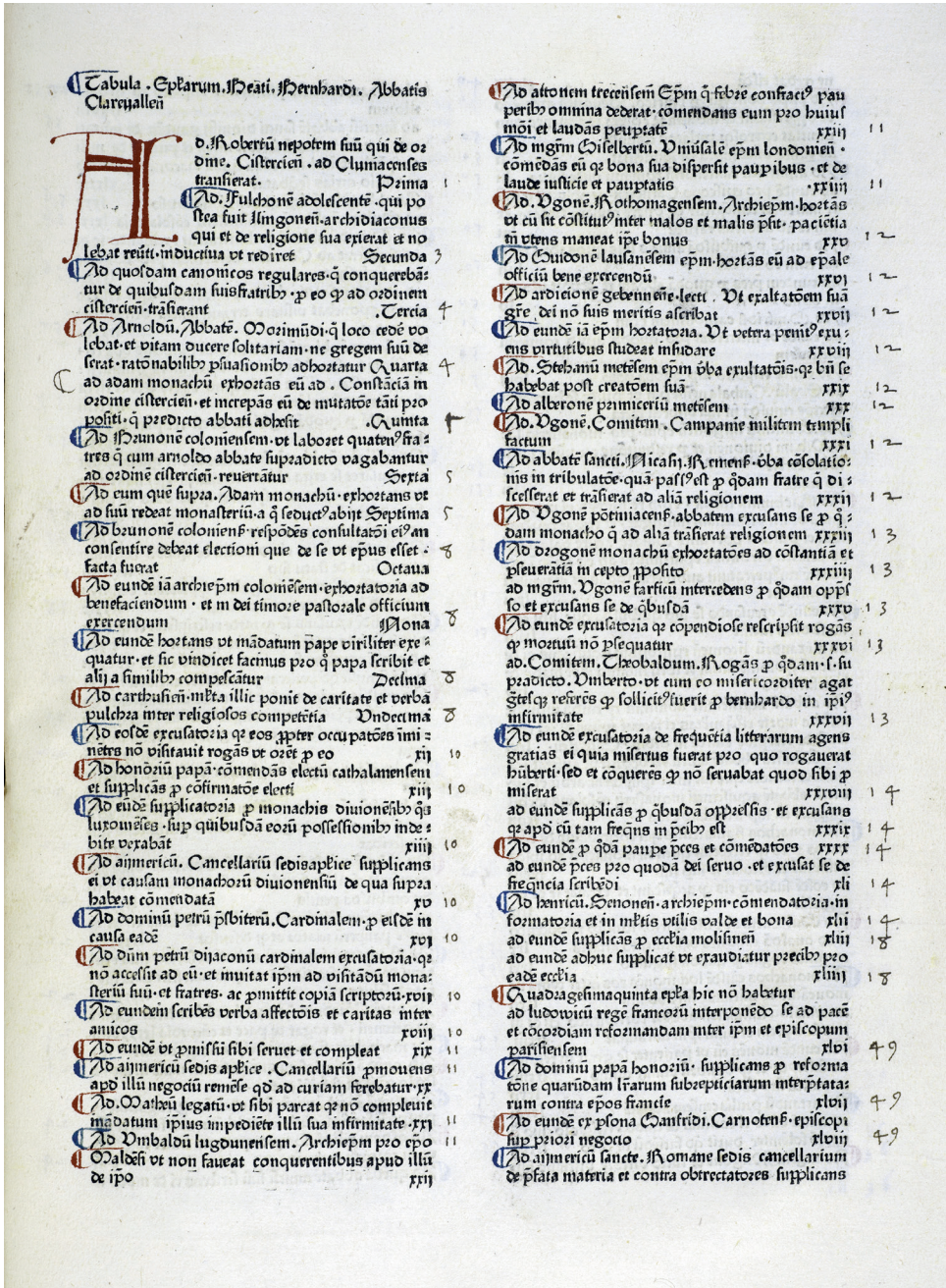


Figure 9 Bernardus Claravallensis, *Epistolae*. [c. 1472]. [Strasbourg: Heinrich Eggestein]. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Inc. 132, f. [a]1r. Detail of the flourished letter

Claravallensis, unsigned but attributed to Strasbourg and the press of Heinrich Eggestein early in the 1470s (a purchase date 1474 in the copy of the Wellcome Library sets a temporal limit, while on the basis of paper evidence, a date for printing has been proposed in 1472).¹⁷ The edition is on Royal sheets, was printed on a one-pull press with pages in *seriatim* order, and contains a total of 90 leaves. As above and not surprisingly given the early date, the gatherings are devoid of printed signings, but have an early manuscript signing, on some leaves lost due to the binder's plough. Unfortunately, in the Venice copy the signings are wrong and misplace gathering [c] to a later point in the book; corrected, the formula reads: [a-d¹⁰ e⁸ f-g¹⁰ h⁸ h¹⁰ k⁴]. The rubricator's note of expenses is written in the bottom left-hand corner of the final verso and reads, without the abbreviations [figs. 11-12]:

litre florite 2	soldi iij ^o
litre piccole 180	soldi 8
parafi 362	soldi 2

17 Bernardus Claravallensis, *Epistolae*. [Strasbourg: Heinrich Eggestein, 1472]. Royal folio. GW 3923; ISTC ib00383000. The description of the collational formula in GW places the gathering with the table of contents at the beginning of the book, i.e. [a⁴ b-e¹⁰ f⁸ g-h¹⁰ j⁸ k¹⁰], whereas in the Marciana copy it is at the end; Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Inc. 132. The leaves are numbered 1-89, with a 64 *bis*, in an early hand, while the misplaced gathering [c], signed 'f' in ms., corresponds to ff. 49-58. Full details of the volume, including its subsequent history, are provided by Sabrina Minuzzi in entry MEI 02017950. I express gratitude to the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali and to the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana for permission to reproduce the images here, and I also thank Susy Marcon for an opinion about the decoration.



Tabula . Epularum . Bernardi . Abbatis Claravallensis

Hobertū nepotem suū qui de ordine Cisterciē . ad Cluniacenses tranſierat . Prima

Ad Fulbonē adoleſcente . qui poſtea fuit ſingoneſis archidiaconus qui et de religione ſua exierat et noſebat reuēti . inducitur ut rediret

Ad quosdam canonicos regulares . q̄ conquerebatur de quibusdam ſuſſitribus . p̄ eo q̄ ad ordinem cisterciē . tranſierat . Tercia

Ad Arnoldū . Abbatē . Ozimidi . q̄ loco eadē uolebat . et vitam ducere ſolitariam . ne gregem ſuū deſerat . rationabilibus p̄ſaſionibus adhortatur

Ad adam monachū . exhortās eū ad . Conſtātia in ordine cisterciē . et increpās eū de mutatoe tūi poſiti . q̄ predicto abbati adheſit . Quinta

Ad ſtuanonē colonienſem . ut laboree quatuor ſtraſ . ites q̄ cum arnoldo abbate ſupradicto uagabantur ad ordinē cisterciē . reuertantur

Ad eum que ſupra . Adam monachū . exhortans ut ad ſuū redeat monaſteriu . a q̄ ſeducat abijt . Septima

Ad brunonē colonienſē . reſpōdeō conſultati ei . an conſentire debeat electioni que de ſe et ep̄us eſſet . facta fuerat . Octaua

Ad eundē iā archiepiſm . colonienſem . exhortatoria ad beneficiendum . et in dei ſimone paſtorale officium exercendum

Ad eundē hoſtias . ut mādatum pape uiriliter exequatur . et ſic vindicet facinus pro q̄ papa ſcribit et alij a ſimilibus compellatur

Ad carthufenſem . mltā illic ponit de caritate et uerba pulchra inter religioſos compoſita . Undecima

Ad eodē exulato . ia q̄ eos ppter occuſpatōes ini . nēns nō uifiſtauit rogās ut oriet p̄ eo

Ad honoriū papa . rōmendās electū cathalonenſem et ſupplicās p̄ cōfirmatōe electi

Ad eundē ſupplicatoria p̄ monachis diuionēſibus q̄ luxurionēſes . ſup quibusdā eorū poſſeſſionibus inde . bite uocabat

Ad ahmeriū . Cancellariū ſedis aplice . ſupplicans ei ut cauſam monachorū diuionenſiū de qua ſupra habet cōmendatā

Ad dominū petrū p̄ſbiterū . Cardinalem . p̄ eadē in cauſa eadē

Ad dñm petrū diaconū . cardinalem exulato . ia . q̄ nō acceſſit ad eū . et inuitat ipm ad uifiſtādū mona . ſteriu ſuū . et fratres . ac p̄miſſit copia ſcriptorū . xviij

Ad altonem trecentem Ep̄m q̄ febre conſectus pau . peribus omnia dederat . comendans eum pro huius . moi et laudas p̄uſtate

Ad m̄gin . Wiſelbertū . Vniūſalē ep̄m londonien . comēdas ei q̄ bona ſua diſperſit paupibus . et de . laude iuſticie et paupitatis

Ad . Vgonē . ſiſ . oibomagenſem . Archiepiſm . hoſtās . ut eū ſit cōſtituē . inter malos et malis p̄ſt . pacificā . in utens maneat ipſe bonus

Ad Guindonē laulanſem ep̄m . hoſtās eū ad epale . officiu bene exercendū

Ad ardicionē gebennēſe . lecti . Ut exaltatōem ſua . gr̄e . dei nō ſuis meritis aſcribat

Ad eundē iā ep̄m hoſtatoria . Ut uetra penitē . xxi . ens uirtutibus ſtudeat inſidare

Ad . Stebanū metſem ep̄m . ſua exultatōis . q̄ eū ſe . habebat poſt creatōem ſua

Ad albertonē p̄micitū metſem

Ad . Vgonē . Comitē . Campanie militem templi . factum

Ad abbatē ſanceti . ſiſ . ſiſ . emenſ . ſua cōſolatō . nis in tribulatoe . qua paſſus eſt p̄ q̄dam fratre q̄ di . ſceſſerat et tranſierat ad aliā religionem

Ad . Vgonē . p̄micitenſ . abbatem exulans ſe p̄ q̄ . dam monacho q̄ ad aliā tranſierat religionem

Ad . Vrgonē . monachū . exhortatōes ad cōſtātia et . p̄ſeuerātia in cepto poſſito

Ad m̄gin . Vgonē . farſicū . intercedens p̄ q̄dam oppo . ſo et exulans ſe de q̄busdā

Ad eundē exulato . ia q̄ cōpendioſe reſcripſit rogās . q̄ mortuū nō p̄ſequatur

Ad . Comitē . Theobaldum . ſiſ . ogās p̄ q̄dam . ſi . ſu . pradicto . Umberto . et eum eo miſericorditer agat

Ad eundē exulato . ia q̄ cōpendioſe reſcripſit rogās . q̄ mortuū nō p̄ſequatur

Ad eundē exulato . ia q̄ cōpendioſe reſcripſit rogās . q̄ mortuū nō p̄ſequatur

Ad eundē exulato . ia q̄ cōpendioſe reſcripſit rogās . q̄ mortuū nō p̄ſequatur

Figure 10 Bernardus Claravallensis, Epistolae. [c. 1472] [Strasbourg: Heinrich Eggestein]. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Inc. 132, f. [k]1r. Detail of the rubrication

Soma lire soldi 14

So again, just to put it into a more comprehensible terminology: two large letters with flourishes, 4 *soldi*; 180 small letters, 8 *soldi*; and 362 pilcrows, 2 *soldi*, for a total of zero *lire* and 14 *soldi*. Compared to the previous note, these charges are rather more respectable. Each of the large letters, at 2 *soldi*, or 24 *denari*, is exactly double the price of the illuminated initial in the other book; the smaller chapter letters cost 0.533 *denari* each and the individual pilcrows 0.066 *denari*, so in the first instance double and in the second almost triple. An examination of the book shows that there are indeed two large initial letters, realised with elaborate penwork, though the gold is paint rather than applied gold leaf, both at f. [a]1r [fig. 8], where the final flourish at the bottom of the page becomes a rabbit [fig. 9]. On the other hand, according to my count, the rubricator has seriously understated the number of small letters, which number 306 instead of 180, and also of pilcrows, which number 489 instead of 362. What the reason might be for this resounding discrepancy is impossible to say. The same close scrutiny also shows that someone went through the book, before the rubricator, and marked in ms. what the coloured initials were to be [fig. 10].

A note on the front flyleaf of the Marciana copy informs that it once belonged to Celso Maffei, a member of the order of Canons Regular of the Lateran, or Augustinian Canons, in Verona, who is known to have died in 1508. It is plausible that he was the first owner of the book and thus commissioned both the decoration and the binding, though the latter is no longer original and dates from the eighteenth century. The early provenance of the copy, as well as the choice of Italian for the rubricator's note in the Venetian currency of the time, suggests that this book, printed in Strasbourg, reached Italy at an early date in an unbound state. The original front flyleaf, with the note relating to Maffei on the verso, is unwatermarked, but seems to be Italian. The style of the flourishing of the two large letters on f. [a]1r is common to a fairly large area of Northern Italy, while the Venetian territory of the time, including Verona, reached almost to the outskirts of Milan.

Although the *Zornale* of De Madiis does register a handful of titles from outside Italy, it would be too much to hope to find this Bernardus Claravallensis therein. On the other hand, a hypothetical reconstruction of what a client might have paid for it is possible. The edition is composed of 45 sheets of Royal paper: the largest copy recorded so far in MEI, at Harvard, measures 402 × 282 mm, only slightly more than that in the Marciana. For such a book, taking into account also the foreign provenance, the price might be at the top end of the scale, in the order of 16 *denari* a sheet, giving a total of £ 3 or 60 *soldi*. So, along the same rationale as the previous calculation:

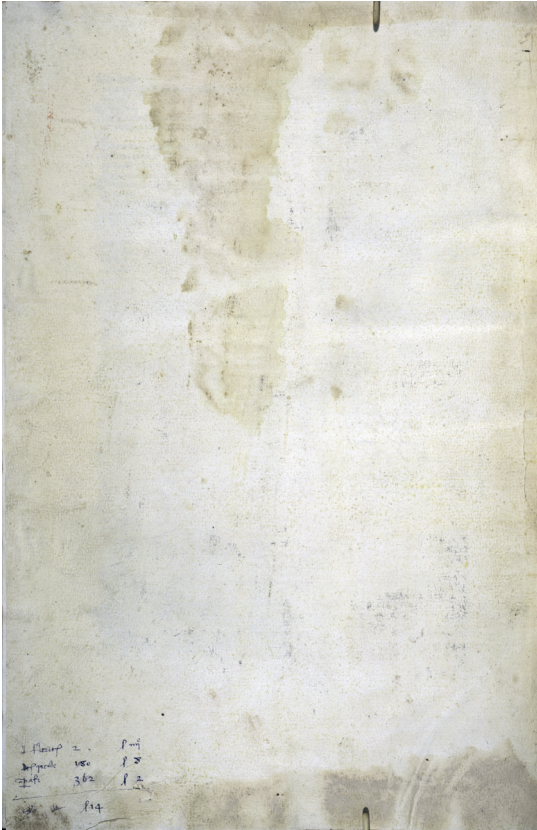


Figure 11 Bernardus Claravallensis, *Epistolae*. [c. 1472] [Strasbourg; Heinrich Eggestein]. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Inc. 132, f. [k]4v

Purchase of the book in unbound sheets	=	720 <i>denari</i>
Rubrication	=	168 <i>denari</i>
Binding (70% of purchase price)	=	504 <i>denari</i>
Total	=	1392 <i>denari</i>
		(or 116 <i>soldi</i> , or £ 5 s 16)

And therefore, very hypothetically indeed, the rubrication would have added about 12% to the overall cost of the book. What needs to be emphasised, certainly, is that these two indications for the cost of manuscript decoration differ considerably and so, until fuller information about rubrication costs, as distinct from other expenses, can be established, these payments should not be considered as typical.

1 florin	2	1 m ^o
sup prode	180	1 8
spisi	362	1 2
<hr/>		
		114

Figure 12 Bernardus Claravallensis, *Epistolae*, [c. 1472] [Strasbourg: Heinrich Eggstein]. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Inc. 132, f. [k]4v. Detail with the rubricator's note



Figure 13 Aquinas, *Commentarius in librum Aristotelis De anima*. 1481. Venice: Raynaldus de Novimagio. New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2001 +150, f. a1r. Detail of the illuminated letter

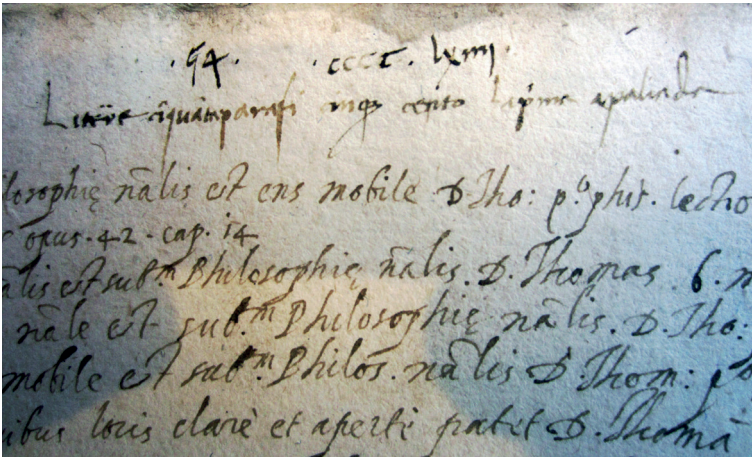


Figure 14 Aquinas, *Commentarius in librum Aristotelis De anima*. 1481.

Venice: Raynaldus de Novimagio. New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2001 +150, f. k6v. Detail with the rubricator's note

The penultimate example of a rubricator's note in an incunabula - known to me at present - is found in a copy held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University of the *Commentarius in librum Aristotelis De anima* of Thomas Aquinas, published in Venice by Raynaldus de Novimagio on 22 May 1481.¹⁸ The edition is in folio format, comprising 62 leaves in Chancery sheets, with the collational formula: $\pi^2(\pi 1+a^6)$ b-k⁶. The annotation appears on the verso of the final blank leaf (k6); underneath a later, probably seventeenth-century, hand has written eight lines of notes relating to the contents of the work. The note, which does not register any changes, but merely the amount of work done, reads as follows [fig. 14]:

¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentarius in librum Aristotelis De anima*. Venice: Raynaldus de Novimagio, 22 May 1481. Chancery folio. GW M46045; ISTC it00237000. The formula here differs from that found in the standard repertories for incunabula, in particular GW, which describe the first gathering as a⁸. The first sheet, however, appears to have a wrap-around function, possibly due to an error in casting-off, while analysis shows that the edition was printed on a two-pull press. New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2001 +150. The binding is modern (20th century), Italian, but little else can be deduced about its previous provenance, apart from the fact that the language of the rubricator's note and the style of the illumination suggest that the book was decorated in or near Venice. The copy has been significantly cropped in rebinding (286 × 198 mm), though the two blank leaves at the beginning and end of the book have been preserved. The Beinecke Library holds a second copy of the edition at Zi +4439.3, in an eighteenth-century Italian binding (probably from Rome) and has been less cropped (307 × 208 mm). I take the opportunity to thank the Beinecke Library for the award of the H.P. Kraus Fellowship in Early Books and Manuscripts in 2018, which led to the discovery of this annotation.

.54. .cccc. lxiiiij.
Litere cinquanta parafi cinque cento la prima apaliada

The interpretation is not entirely straightforward. The lower line records fifty rubricated letters, corrected numerically in that above to 54; next 500 pilcrows, again corrected to 464; the final reference is to the illuminated initial on f. a1r [fig. 13]. The term ‘apaliada’ (or ‘paliata’), which in Renaissance Italian is the equivalent of ‘miniata’ in more modern terms, is found also in the contract to illuminate the Florentine manuscripts of the King of Portugal.¹⁹ A count suggests that the figures given for the total number of decorated letters and pilcrows is substantially correct.²⁰ Just for the record, 16 copies of Aquinas’ *De anima* are sold in the *Zornale* of De Madiis.²¹ These are unlikely to belong to the *editio princeps* of 1472, while the first two sales recorded on 8 August and 3 September 1484, respectively for 24 and 25 *soldi*, almost certainly belong to the 1481 edition. On 31 May 1485, a new edition was published by Antonello di Barasconi and Gulielmus Anima Mia, still in folio format, but with an important reduction in the number of leaves, 48 instead of 62. It is significant, therefore, that in most of the single sales, or sales that can be reasonably calculated, of the title after that date the price falls to between 10 and 20 *soldi*. So, with a little bit of reverse bibliographical engineering, taking the second of the two rubrication notes above as possibly more representative in terms of probable costs, if the illuminated initial were to be charged at 2 *soldi* (or 24 *denari*), the total of the rubricated initials at 2 *soldi*, 5 *denari* (or 29 *denari*), and that of the pilcrows at 2 *soldi*, 7 *denari* (or 31 *denari*), the cost would be 7 *soldi*, or 84 *denari*. As in the procedures above, taking the slightly lower first price for the purchase of the book, i.e. 24 *soldi* (or 288 *denari*), with the presumption once more that the binding was the equivalent of 70% of the purchase expense (or 202 *denari*), the rubrication in

19 Melograni, “Tipologie e costi della miniatura fiorentina di fine Quattrocento”, 119, suggests the interpretation “decorare con motivi ornamentali sottili di colore chiaro, nel nostro caso in oro, un fondo scuro”.

20 My count agrees with the rubricator as regards the total of 54 letters, but finds 467 pilcrows.

21 Single sales of the title appear on 19 January 1486 for 15 *soldi* and on 26 August 1486 for 10 *soldi*; on 12 April 1486 six copies are sold for £ 6, or 20 *soldi* each (here the lack of a more significant reduction is surprising if the sale involves the 1485 edition, so it might instead concern a residue block of the 1481 edition); on 7 July 1486 one copy is sold, together with the “*Quaestiones Johannis Janduni*” (usually priced at £ 1 s 12, or 32 *soldi*), for £ 2 s 6, or 46 *soldi*, therefore the single price works out at 14 *soldi*; and on 7 September 1486 one copy is sold, together with the “*Tabula Alfonsi*” (usually priced at £ 1 s 4, or 24 *soldi*), for £ 1 s 16, or 36 *soldi*, so by deduction the single price is 12 *soldi*. The other four sales involving the title on 23 November 1485, 20 January 1486, 15 October 1487, and 14 January 1488, are all part of bulk purchases (defined as more than three items), where it is not practicable to deduce single prices.

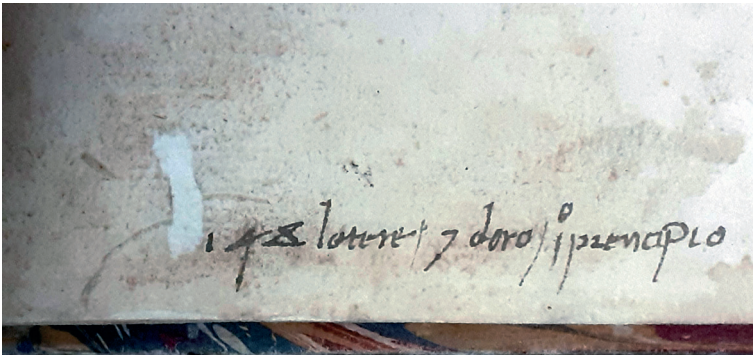


Figure 15 Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*. [Vicenza]: Hermann Lichtenstein, [c. 1475]. Cambridge, Trinity College Library, Grylls 3.459, f. [n]6v

this instance would work out at 14% of the overall cost for the buyer.

The final instance of a rubricator's note in an incunable is the only one – to my knowledge – that has been previously transcribed and reproduced in the previous literature, in an excellent article by Jonathan J.G. Alexander in 2012 [fig. 15].²² It is to be found at the bottom of the final blank leaf of one of the two copies in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, of the *Historiae adversus paganos* by Paulus Orosius, printed in Vicenza by Hermann Lichtenstein some time around 1475.²³ The note reads: “148 [correcting 142] lettere / 7 dorō / j° principio” and might possibly be in the hand of the illuminator of the volume, Giovanni Vendramin. The interpretation is fairly straightforward, since the volume contains 142 large rubricated letters in Roman style (so the figure originally written appears to be correct), seven larger illuminated initials, and one full-blown illuminated incipit page; the text did not, on the other hand, require the addition of pilcrow, which therefore are not mentioned in the summary. Born in or near the modern city of Braga in Portugal in c. 375, Paulus Orosius completed his history of the pagan peoples up to the spread of Christianity shortly before his death in c. 418, and the text

²² Alexander, “A Copy of Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*”, 294, where the note is transcribed as “14x [i.e. 140] lettere/ 7 dorō/ i° principio”. The reading of the third figure in total as a Roman numeral appears dubious; my own interpretation is that it was originally written as a ‘2’ and corrected into an ‘8’ with a stroke of the pen. Cf. also the brief mention in Alexander, *The Painted Book in Renaissance Italy*, 348, and the extensive description in Andriolo, Reynolds, *A Catalogue of Western Book Illumination*, 200, whose reading of the note follows that of Alexander.

²³ Cambridge, Trinity College Library, Grylls 3.459. I am grateful to Lilian Armstrong for bringing this example to my attention and to Nicolas Bell, Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, for his help and guidance. I further thank the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, for their kind permission to reproduce the note here.

was a major source for historians of the Roman world. As well as a rich manuscript tradition, six editions were published in the fifteenth century, beginning with the *princeps* at Augsburg in 1471, another two in Vicenza in c. 1475 (to which the copy here described belongs) and c. 1482, and three in Venice in 1483, 1499, and 1500, as well as a French translation in Paris in 1491. Twelve copies are sold in the *Zornale* of Francesco de Madiis, though these almost certainly belong to the more compact 1483 Venice edition: most of the entries form part of block purchases, but on 21 July 1484 and on 7 May 1487 it sells for 20 *soldi* and on 5 March 1487 for 18 *soldi*. The difference in the quality of the decoration by a known and important artist makes it impossible in this instance to calculate the expense of the same; presumably, however, it was significantly higher than in the instances above.

Just by way of contrast, perhaps even a startling one, some documents relating to costs of rubrication and illumination in manuscripts are also known. For instance, in 1461 Domenico Domenici, bishop of Torcello, received the copy of an Aulus Gellius that he had commissioned and paid for, so that he annotated inside the front cover, as was his habit, a break-down of the costs, as follows: parchment, 4 ducats (or 5,952 *denari*); the copying of the text, 7 ducats, with a further ducat for the insertion of the phrases in Greek, so 8 ducats altogether (11,904 *denari*); for the illumination of the first proper opening of the book, two sumptuously decorated pages, 2 ducats (2,976 *denari*); for the rest of the rubrication and illumination, 8 ducats (11,904 *denari*); for the solid binding, leather on wood boards, 2½ ducats (3,720 *denari*), and for the clasps and other silverwork that ornamented the binding again 2½ ducats, for a final total of 27 ducats (or 40,176 *denari*).²⁴ Though the various figures seem rounded-off and should not be taken too literally, the material support represented 14,8%, the work of the copyists 29,6%; the illumination and rubrication 37%, and the binding 18,5%. This particular case occurs only years after the first advent of printing in Europe and so still reflects the previous market, where manuscripts of this kind were luxury objects for the extremely rich. A later document, striking also for its anachronism in a period in which the printed book had come to dominate the market, is the contract - stipulated in Florence on 23 April 1494 - furnishing the prices applied by the Florentine artists guild (in Venetian currency!) for the illumination of two manuscripts on parchment commissioned by Manuel I (1469-1521), King of Portugal, the *Sententiae* of Petrus Lombardus and the so-called *Biblia dos Jeronimos* in seven volumes.²⁵ The agreement between the Florentine merchant, Clem-

²⁴ Speranzi, "Mani individuali e tipi grafici dei *graeca*", 247; Omero, *i cardinali e gli esuli*, 113-14. I thank the author who drew my attention to this example.

²⁵ Melograni, "Tipologie e costi della miniatura fiorentina di fine Quattrocento".

ente di Cipriano di Sernigi, who acted as intermediary on behalf of the Portuguese monarch, and the famous illuminator, Attavante degli Attavanti (1452-c. 1525), specifies – for the duration of the project – a monthly stipend of 25 ducats for the latter (more or less the salary of a successful football player in our day and age). As for charges applied to the decoration of the Bible, a fully illuminated bifolium, of which there is one in each volume, costs 25 ducats (or 37,200 *denari*); the illumination at the beginning of a single leaf, i.e. in the opening of a new book of the Bible, 3 ducats (or 4,464 *denari*); the illumination of the borders on three sides of a page, used mainly for paratextual elements, such as proems, three-quarters of a ducat (or 1,116 *denari*), or simpler borders on only two sides, a mere $\frac{1}{4}$ ducat (or 372 *denari*); a large illuminated initial, involving 10-11 lines of text, a $\frac{1}{2}$ ducat (or 744 *denari*); a small illuminated initial, involving 6-7 lines of text, a $\frac{1}{4}$ ducat (or 372 *denari*); a large rubricated initial with flourished extension into the margin 4 *soldi* (or 48 *denari*); a large decorated initial, with no extension, 2 *soldi* (or 24 *denari*); and small rubricated initials in red, blue, or green 4 *denari*.²⁶ Compared in particular with this last price list, the charges in the incunabula described here appear very small beer, akin to purchasing a Fiat rather than a Ferrari, while the sheer extremes of wealth and power in the final quarter of the fifteenth century continue to surprise and astonish, except perhaps in modern-day California, or Singapore.²⁷

6 Conclusions

Conclusions in an academic article are as unavoidable as a moral in a fairy tale, though in this particular instance it is not possible to conclude a great deal. Obviously I believe that there are further rubricators' notes of this kind in incunabula that are still waiting to be examined, or have been examined but the note has not been recognised for what it is, or perhaps need to be tagged more accurately in order to become findable, especially in very large catalogues or databases, or even in long-published items of secondary literature. The more the data is assembled, the more convincing eventual conclusions might well become. However slight, on the other hand, there is already enough information here to suggest that professional rubrication, with at least one illuminated initial, did represent a meaningful increase in cost for a book purchaser in the '70s and '80s of the

²⁶ Melograni, "Tipologie e costi della miniatura fiorentina di fine Quattrocento". The books concerned are held at Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, mss. CF 145 (Petrus Lombardus) and mss. CF 161/1-7 (Bible).

²⁷ Kwan, *Crazy Rich Asians*.

fifteenth century, oscillating between 10% and 15% of the total expense. Notwithstanding, though again the paucity of the data makes it a potentially dangerous assumption, compared to some known prices for manuscripts, it appears that publishing was forcing down the costs of hand-finishing during the all-too-short period in which customers were still willing to pay for incunabula to be rubricated and illuminated. In an increasingly competitive and cut-throat market, however, commercial book-producers quickly obviated the necessity for this extra charge, introducing elements such as decorative woodcut initials and new forms of lay-out, most importantly modern paragraphing, that made hand-added decoration redundant. The outcome, of course, was a book that, instead of brightly coloured, was almost entirely black and white, but that was the Brave New World of publishing.

Bibliography

- Alexander, Jonathan J.G. "A Copy of Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, printed by Hermann Lichtenstein in Vicenza, c. 1475, with Illuminations Attributable to Giovanni Vendramin". *Viator*, 43, 2012, 289-300.
- Alexander, Jonathan J.G. *The Painted Book in Renaissance Italy, 1450-1650*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2016.
- Andriolo, Azzurra Elena; Reynolds, Suzanne. *A Catalogue of Western Book Illumination in the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Cambridge Colleges*. Part 5: *Illuminated Incunabula*. Volume 1: *Books Printed in Italy*. London; Turnhout: Harvey Miller, 2017.
- Boston Parish Library Catalogue*. Boston: St. Botolph's Church, 2006.
- Dondi, Cristina (ed.). *Printing R-Evolution 1450-1500. I cinquant'anni che hanno cambiato l'Europa/Fifty Years that Changed Europe*. Venezia: Marsilio, 2018.
- Dondi, Cristina; Harris, Neil. "Oil and Green Ginger. The *Zornale* of the Venetian Bookseller Francesco de Madiis, 1484-1488". Constantinidou, Natasha; Walsby, Malcolm (eds), *Documenting the Early Modern Book World: Inventories and Catalogues in Manuscript and Print*. Leiden: Brill, 2013, 341-406.
- Dondi, Cristina; Harris, Neil. "Best-selling titles and Books of Hours in a Venetian Bookshop of the 1480s: The *Zornale* of Francesco de Madiis". *La Bibliofilia*, 95, 2013, 63-82.
- Dondi, Cristina; Harris, Neil. "Exporting Books from Milan to Venice in the 15th Century: Evidence from the *Zornale* of Francesco de Madiis". *La Bibliofilia*, 96, 2014, 121-48.
- Dondi, Cristina; Harris, Neil. "I romanzi cavallereschi nel *Zornale* di Francesco de Madiis (1484-88): profilo merceologico di un genere". Bartuschat, Johannes; Strologo, Franca (a cura di), *Carlo Magno in Italia e la fortuna dei libri di cavalleria. Convegno internazionale di Zurigo, 6-8 maggio 2014*. Ravenna: Longo editore, 2016, 251-99.
- Haraszki, Zoltán, "XVth-Century Books in the Library". *More Books. The Bulletin of the Boston Public Library*, 5(8), October 1930, 353-78.
- Harris, Neil. "Aldus and the Making of the Myth (or What Did Aldus Really Do?)". Infelise, Mario (a cura di), *Aldo Manuzio: la costruzione del mito*. *Aldus Ma-*

- nutius: The Making of the Myth*. Venezia: Marsilio, 2016, 346-85; also in Italian, in an extensively revised version, in Davies, Martin; Harris, Neil, *Aldo Manuzio: l'uomo, l'editore, il mito*. Roma: Carocci, 2019.
- Harris, Neil. "Aldo Manuzio, il libro e la moneta". Plebani, Tiziana (a cura di), *Aldo al lettore. Viaggio intorno al mondo del libro e della stampa in occasione del V centenario della morte di Aldo Manuzio*. Milano: Unicopli, 2016, 79-110.
- Harris, Neil. *Paper and Watermarks as Bibliographical Evidence*. 2017. URL <http://ihl.enssib.fr>, also available as a downloadable pdf.
- Hellinga, Lotte. "Press and Text in the First Decades of Printing". *Texts in Transit. Manuscript to Proof and Print in the Fifteenth Century*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014, 8-36.
- Korteweg, Anne S.; van Heertum, Cisca. "Pen Flourishing in Manuscripts and Incunabula. Similarities and Differences". *Quaerendo*, 41, 2011, 337-50.
- Kwan, Kevin, *Crazy Rich Asians*. New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2013, and the film of the same title in 2018.
- Lane, Frederic C.; Mueller, Reinhold C. Mueller. *Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.
- Mariani Canova, Giordana. *Ferrara 1474. Miniatura, tipografia, committenza. Il Decretum Gratiani Roverella*. Firenze: CentroDi, 1988.
- Melograni, Anna, "Tipologie e costi della miniatura fiorentina di fine Quattrocento: un riesame della Bibbia di Attavante per il re di Portogallo". *Bollettino d'arte*, s. 7, a. 96, n. 10, aprile-giugno 2011, 111-24.
- Needham, Paul, "Format and Paper Size in Fifteenth-Century Printing". Reske, Christoph; Schmitz, Wolfgang (Hrsgg), *Materielle Aspekte in der Inkunabelforschung*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017, 59-108. Wolfenbüttler Schriften zur Geschichte des Buchwesens 49.
- Papadopoli Aldobrandini, Nicolò, *Le monete di Venezia descritte e illustrate da Nicolò Papadopoli Aldobrandini. Da Nicolò Tron a Marino Grimani 1472-1605*, pt. 2. Venezia: Tipografia Libreria Emiliana, 1907.
- Sartori, Antonio. "Documenti padovani sull'arte della stampa nel sec. XV". *Libri e stampatori in Padova. Miscellanea di studi storici in onore di mons. G. Bellini, tipografo editore libraio*. Padova: Tipografia Antoniana, 1959, 111-232.
- Scapecchi, Piero (a cura di). *Catalogo degli incunaboli della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze*. Firenze: Nerbini, 2017. Lo scaffale della biblioteca. Materiali della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze 1.
- Scott-Fleming, Sonia. *The Analysis of Pen Flourishing in Thirteenth Century Manuscripts*. Leiden, etc.: Brill, 1989.
- Speranzi, David, "Mani individuali e tipi grafici dei *graeca* nei codici latini dell'umanesimo". *Studi medievali e umanistici*, 14, 2016, 247-94.
- Speranzi, David, *Omero, i cardinali e gli esuli. Copisti greci di un manoscritto di Stoccarda*. Madrid: Editorial Dykinson, 2016.
- Spufford, Peter; with the assistance of Wendy Wilkinson and Sarah Tolley. *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*. London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1986.
- Walsh, James E. *A Catalogue of the Fifteenth-century Printed Books in the Harvard University Library*. 5 vols. Binghamton [then Tempe]: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991-97.

List of Cited Incunabula

- Bernardus Claravallensis, *Epistolae*. [Strasbourg: Heinrich Eggestein, 1472]. Royal folio. GW 3923; ISTC ib00383000
- Franciscus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen, 25 March 1474. Median 4°. GW M00828, ISTC ip00755000
- Franciscus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum, usurarum, excommunicationum*. Venice: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen, 22 January 1477. Median 4°. GW M00831; ISTC ip00758000
- Orosius, Paulus, *Historiae adversus paganos*. Eds. Aeneas Vulpes and Laurentius Brixienis. [Vicenza]: Hermann Lichtenstein, [c. 1475]. Chancery folio. GW M28420; ISTC io00097000.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Commentarius in librum Aristotelis De anima*. Venice: Raynaldus de Novimagio, 22 May 1481. Chancery folio. GW M46045; ISTC it00237000