Brunetto Latini’s *Tesoro* in print

Brunetto Latini (c. 1220-1294), a Florentine notary, wrote one of the first European encyclopaediae in the vernacular, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, during an exile in France (1260-1266/7).\(^2\) This literary work consists of three books, hence the plural in its title.\(^3\) The first book deals with theoretical knowledge. After a brief presentation of the encyclopaedia’s organisational plan this book starts with a discussion of theological matters. Its central section contains a universal history. It continues with physics, cosmology, and geography, and it ends with mechanical arts and a bestiary. The first section of the second book is a translation of Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*, while the second part contains a panoply of moral precepts. The third and final book revolves around the art of rhetoric and politics.

The *Tesoro* instantly became a bestseller and its fortune extended widely beyond its place of origin. Originally written in the *langue d’oil* (Old French) translations into Old Italian, generally referred to as the *Tesoro*, were quickly produced. The manuscript tradition spanned almost three centuries.

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running from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth century. Experts in Latini studies have studied this rich manuscript corpus of the Tesoro in detail. However the Tesoro also made it into the print age, as evidenced by an editio princeps (1474) and two early reprints (1528 and 1533). This print production has remained largely unexplored, except for a mere mention of its existence or a determination of textual links between manuscript and print versions.

This imbalance in scholarly attention is striking for different reasons. From a purely quantitative perspective, academic interest does not reflect the numerical significance of the manuscript and print traditions. To determine the number of printed copies that existed of the Tesoro one has to take into account that scholars cite varying figures for the fifteenth century, ranging from not more than 200 copies per edition to an average run of 500 copies, and anything in between. For the sixteenth century this figure is said to have risen to an average of 1,000 copies per edition. Even if one applies the lowest estimates for the number of copies printed per edition, this print production has remained largely unexplored, except for a mere mention of its existence or a determination of textual links between manuscript and print versions.

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production must have outnumbered the centuries-old manuscript tradition. Although a census of extant copies cannot be equated to a reconstruction of past circulation, it does provide useful indications of the number of manuscripts and print copies that existed. A recent count of Tesoro manuscripts lists 52 known exemplars, only nine of which contain the complete text of the Tesoro, and this text alone.9 Unfortunately, a similar count of print copies of the Tesoro is not available. The lack of a worldwide list of editions printed from 1450 until 1550 makes such a count even more difficult. In the Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke, covering early prints up to 1500, twenty-five libraries holding one or more copies of the 1474 print are mentioned worldwide, and fourteen in Italy alone.10 For the period after 1500 the evidence is more incomplete and imperfect. The ongoing Italian census of sixteenth-century prints, Edit16, mentions thirty-seven libraries for the 1528 reprint and fifty libraries for the 1533 reprint.11 Its sister system, Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale (SBN), adds another three libraries for the 1528 reprint, and another five for the 1533 reprint, bringing the total for both reprints to ninety-five libraries in Italy alone.12 Notwithstanding a clear distinction between the rare 1474 print and the more readily available 1528 and 1533 reprints, this evidence supports the hypothesis that the print production outnumbered the manuscript production, particularly in the category of copies containing the complete text, and only this text.13 Of course, academic interest in a topic should not be solely

10 No. M17137 (<http://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de> [accessed 8 June 2012]). A double-check of the Indice Generali degli Incunaboli delle Biblioteche d’Italia (No. 5696) and the Third Census of Fifteenth-Century Books Recorded in North-American Collections (No. L-70) shows that these listings mention the same fourteen Italian and two American libraries covered by the Gesamtkatalog.
12 Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale (SBN)<http://www.sbn.it> [accessed 7 June 2012].
13 This distinction is also supported by the price difference between both groups on the private market. Consultations of an online marketplace (<http://www.vialibri.net>) showed a 1474 print on offer for 10,224.90 British pounds on 4 June 2010, while no less than five 1533 reprints were on offer on 7 June 2012 for prices ranging between US$599 and US$1,748.
determined on the basis of quantitative arguments. The print production of the Tesoro also deserves attention because the 1533 reprint was repeatedly cited by the Accademia della Crusca, still today the national language academy of Italy and the first such institution in Europe, in its Vocabolario (1612). Furthermore this reprint constituted the basis for the only two existing modern editions of the complete Tesoro.14

This article is not merely intended to fill this gap in the historiography of the Tesoro. It will also underline that the introduction of the printing press did not end interest in the work. The production of three print editions, in combination with the rapid succession of the 1528 and 1533 reprints, even points towards a success story. The Tesoro tradition carried on, at a different speed and volume, and propelled from a different geographical area. Furthermore, these prints not only deserve to be examined as historical artefacts in their own right, but also offer an excellent opportunity to trace the printing history of a particular work and to focus on the linkage of its print editions.15 More precisely, the argument will be made that, as a result of it being printed, the Tesoro lost its malleability in the hands of copyists. Except for minor deviances between editions the textual message of the work became fixed and standardised. This textual fixity did not, however, mean that its presentation remained unchanged. The physical composition of the prints altered, from edition to edition, under the influence of different production conditions. Finally, although a detailed analysis of the knowledge culture these print editions


editions represent falls beyond the scope of this article, this account of the Tesoro’s absorption into print culture sets the stage for further research on this topic.

Analysis begins with a discussion of the local, private press of Gerardus de Lisa, a Flemish immigrant who became a Trevisan printer-craftsman (1474 print). Two Venetian publishing houses will be considered next. The first firm was a short-lived collaboration entered into by an opportunistic bookseller, Nicolò Garanta (1528 reprint), while the second one was a respected and long-standing publishing outfit, led by Melchiorre Sessa (1533 reprint). Each printer or publishing house will be historically situated within its respective printing market. The place of the Tesoro within their specific printing portfolio will also be discussed and the factors leading up to each publishing decision will be examined. Finally, the impact of differences in production context on the content and presentation of each print edition will be highlighted. For this article the following copies of the three print editions were consulted in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Stamp. Ross. 734 (1474), Ferraioli V 5971 (1528), and Capponi V576 (1533). In addition, a facsimile copy of the 1474 print (Bibliothèque Mazarine, Inc. 95), held by the Mediatheca ‘Fioretta Mazzei’, was examined in Florence. Additional copies of the 1528 and 1533 reprints were studied in the Biblioteca Riccardiana: St. 3961 (1528) and N.A.U. 649 (1533).  

*Editio princeps* (1474)

The Italian peninsula was the first foreign area to which printers took the invention of printing following the sack of the German city of Mainz by one of its rival archbishops, Adolph of Nassau, on 24 October 1462. When printing really took off in Italy in the 1470s it was,
The *editio princeps* of the *Tesoro* fits this picture perfectly. A Flemish immigrant, Gerardus de Lisa (*c.* 1430-1499), printed this first edition in Treviso on 16 December 1474. Although his name is not mentioned in the colophon, the identity of the printer is specified in a poem attributed to Francesco Rolando (1427-1490) on the verso side of the folio that contains the colophon.

This poem in *terza rima* is set up as a response to the unfinished colloquy between Dante Alighieri and Brunetto Latini in the fifteenth canto of the *Inferno* (*Inferno*, XV, 119-120). This canto ends with Latini’s final plea that his *Tesoro* would live on forever. At the end of his composition the poet assures Latini that his last wish has been granted: artfully printing in Treviso at the borders

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21 On this controversial canto, see recently: Claudia Villa, ‘Natura e corpo sociale. Retorica (e cecità) di ser Brunetto’, *Rivista di studi danteschi*, 10, no. 2 (2010), 233-249 (with further references).
of the river Sile, Gerardus de Lisa has revived Latini’s work like a phoenix, multiplying it a thousand fold.22

Printing had started in Treviso in 1471 with the publication of Saint Augustine’s manual *De salute sive de aspiratione animae ad deum* by the same Gerardus de Lisa.23 About ten years before Gerardus printed his first book he had settled in Treviso, conveniently situated on a commercial route between Flanders and Venice. At the time Treviso was not only a commercial hub, but it also possessed a flourishing university as well as an active humanist circle.24 During the early years of his printing press (1471-1476) Gerardus de Lisa enjoyed a printing monopoly in this vibrant city, but as new entrants, often linked to nearby Venetian printing houses, started to compete in the Trevisan printing market (1476), he moved on to other cities: Venice (1477-1478), Udine (1479, 1483-1488) and Cividale del Friuli (1480-1481).25 Treviso’s print production peaked in 1480 with 19 editions.26 It disappeared completely in 1494; the last book printed once more by Gerardus. He had temporarily returned to the city in 1488 after his earlier competitors had disappeared.27 However, in 1496 Gerardus found himself in financial difficulties.28 He resumed his itinerant way of life and died in Aquileia on 16 December 1499, exactly twenty-five years after having published the *Tesoro.*29 Printing did not reappear in Treviso until almost a century later, in 1589.30

27 Ibid., p. 120.
28 Ibid., p. 123.
29 Ibid., p. 124.
After this portrayal of the figure of Gerardus de Lisa and a discussion of his central position within the Trevisan printing market it befits to have a closer look at his printing activities. Immediately the picture of an occasional, almost private, press emerges. Gerhardus was a man of many occupations who only turned to printing as a side-line. His printing career was also somewhat haphazard, albeit innovative. Scholars link Gerhardus’ production of 37 editions mainly to the stimulating presence of Francesco Rolandello and his circle of friends. This son of a local notary, Rolando Rizzo da Asolo, was an accomplished poet and chancellor (1471-1476). He was also an important teacher (maestro) in Treviso. Not surprisingly one of the first editions printed by Gerhardus de Lisa was a grammar written by the same Rolandello, his *Examinationes grammaticales*. In fact, a didactic objective is generally said to be characteristic of all editions printed in Treviso from 1471 until 1476. Rolandello’s move to Venice (1477-1478) was also related to his teaching activities; he was offered the position of *magister puerorum* and taught the

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35 Comelli, p. 38.

36 Contò, *Calami e torchi*, p. 53.
children of Leonardo Loredano and other members of the Venetian nobility.\textsuperscript{37} In addition to the aforementioned loss of a printing monopoly in Treviso in 1476, Rolandello’s relocation may also have contributed to Gerardus’ decision to move his printing business to Venice.\textsuperscript{38}

Set against this historical background, the decision by Gerardus de Lisa to print the \emph{Tesoro} becomes less of an enigma. The \emph{Tesoro} is a political encyclopaedia with a clearly didactic purpose and it was originally written by Brunetto Latini, a prominent political figure belonging to a Florentine family of notaries.\textsuperscript{39} The publication of such a work had an excellent chance of being of interest to Francesco Rolandello and his circle. In fact, as stated above, Rolandello himself had a notary as father and he was a respected teacher and chancellor. On similar grounds one could venture to speculate that the number of printed copies must have been rather limited. It was probably only intended to serve the local élite of Treviso. Additional support for this supposition can be found in the low survival rate of the \emph{editio princeps} and its characterisation as a rare edition by earlier scholars.\textsuperscript{40}

Having outlined the production context of the 1474 print, we can now begin to assess the impact of these printing conditions on the text and physical composition of the edition. With respect to the text of the \emph{editio princeps} it is sufficient to note that scholars have linked it to the text of the \emph{Tesoro} manuscript \textit{Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana}, Pluteo 42.19 (L).\textsuperscript{41} It is said to be an almost exact

\textsuperscript{37} Serena, p. 91.

\textsuperscript{38} Contò, \textit{Calami e torchi}, pp. 54-55; Nova, \textit{Quattrocento}, pp. 128-29; Scholderer, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{39} In contrast to the form of address used by the publishing houses the notarial capacity of Brunetto Latini is underlined by the title ser in the incipit of the 1474 print. It reads: ‘Qui inchomincia el Tesoro di S(er) Brunetto / Latino di Firenze. E parla del nascime(n)to / e della natura di tute le cose.’.

\textsuperscript{40} Jacques-Charles Brunet, \textit{Manuel du libraire et de l’amateur de livres}, I (Paris: Dorbon-Ainé, s.d.), p. 1294; Serena, p. 234 (criticising earlier bibliophiles for taking the reference to 1,000 copies in the mentioned poem literally); Van der Meersch, p. 37; Francesco Zambrini, \textit{Le opere volgari a stampa dei secoli XIII e XIV} (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1884), p. 543.

copy thereof. 42 Contrary to the surviving manuscript corpus, which consists mainly of fragments and miscellanies and only the occasional single item codex, the 1474 print and the later reprints contain the complete text of the Tesoro, and only this text. However, this production format was not an inevitable consequence of printing. In fact, Marco Giola points out that a fragment of the Tesoro had already been incorporated into the Fiere Novello and printed in 1473 by the Venetian printer Alvise da Sale. 43

This brings us to the physical composition of the 1474 print. 44 A detailed comparison with a corpus of nineteen surviving fifteenth-century manuscripts of the Tesoro reveals a number of similarities between both media — as is often the case for early printed books. 45 Leaving aside

57. On the question as to how such a manuscript (or a related copy) came to Treviso I am indebted to the external reviewers for pointing out the presence of Corso Donati (c. 1250-1308) as podestà of that city in 1308. In that function he was assisted by his notary, Francesco da Barberino (1264-1348). On this latter figure and his connection to Brunetto Latini: Emilio Pasquini, ‘Francesco da Barberino’, in Dizionario biografico degli italiani (Roma: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, 1997), pp. 686-691.

42. Mussafia, p. 283; Raffaele Spongano, ‘Schede per il Catalogo della “Scelta” (Continuazione dai numeri 43-47)’, Studi e problemi di critica testuale, 48, no. 1 (1994), 311-26; Squillacioti, p. 556; Roberto de Visiani, Di un nuovo codice del “Tesoro” (Venice: Antonelli, 1860), p. 28.


technology related changes, such as the absence of ruling or a greater regularity of quires, there is the continued use of rag paper, which had already largely replaced parchment in the fifteenth century. 46 Structural similarities with respect to size and volume are also easily detectable. The 1474 print has a similar, large (folio) format (23.5 x 18.0 cm) with a spacious lay-out, and it consists of 126 folios. 47 Contrary to a number of fifteenth-century manuscripts with characteristic long lines, the 1474 print is divided into two columns. In addition, the 1474 print has no signatures or catchwords. At the end of the encyclopaedia a register of catchwords, preceded by an explanatory paragraph, has, however, been inserted. This register lists the beginning and final words of each folio for the first half of each gathering, lettered from a until o, as well as the final words of the last folio of each gathering. The encyclopaedia also contains a tabula rubricarum, an overview list of the work’s descriptive chapter titles followed by a chapter number. The chapter numbering starts anew with each subdivision within the tripartite structure of the encyclopaedia. 48 Furthermore, the chapter titles are preceded by a folio number, although the latter has not been printed. 49 In line with the formal bookhand typical of a large portion of the examined manuscript corpus, Gerardus de Lisa also used, for the first time, a similar, distinctive Gothic type (105G) when printing the Tesoro. 50 Moreover, the 1474 print contains a number of ornamental additions, such as hand-made initials (with visible guide-letters), borders, rubrication and paragraph signs.


47 On printing formats: Bland, pp. 53-54; Zappella, Libro antico a stampa, I, pp. 330, 339-40 (folio) and 341-42 (octavo). The copy of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana misses the sixth folio, jumping in the later added foliation from folio 5 to 7. According to Brunet this blank folio is indeed sometimes missing. Brunet, p. 1294.

48 This three-part structure is typical of the original Tesoro (see above). Exceptionally, extant manuscripts consist of four or five books as a result of a subdivision of the second and/or third book.

49 On the hypothesis that a tabula rubricarum presupposes a foliation that has not been stamped or is no longer visible because of trimming: Zappella, Libro antico a stampa, I, pp. 405-07.

These additions are executed in various colours, including gold, but, more commonly, in red-and-blue combinations. They are mainly intended to stress the encyclopaedia’s basic tripartite division as well as its more intricate subdivisions. Another structural marker is the incipit of the 1474 print. It consists of a discursive beginning, mentioning the title and author of the work, and an explanatory ending.\textsuperscript{51} The 1474 print ends with a classic explicit repeating the title and author of the work.\textsuperscript{52} This type of opening and ending is also customary for the manuscript tradition. Contrary to this tradition, the 1474 print has a colophon stating the place and date of publishing.\textsuperscript{53}

Further research on this specific production context and its impact on the content and presentation of the Tesoro is warranted to explore the broader ramifications of such an early modern appropriation of a late medieval canon of knowledge in a new context and format.

1528 and 1533 reprints

The 1528 and 1533 reprints tell a distinctively different story than the 1474 edition. From the 1480s onwards, the major printing centres had fully developed, with Venice in a leading role.\textsuperscript{54} The printing business had gone through a concentration of the number of operators, and foreign tutelage of the business had been replaced by native independence.\textsuperscript{55} It should therefore not come as a surprise that, after the local experiment by a Flemish immigrant in Treviso discussed above, the later editions were both printed by Italians situated in the world’s printing capital. Furthermore, both editions are no longer the creation of a printer-craftsman enjoying a printing

\begin{footnotes}
\item[51] For the incipit, see footnote 38. On this structure: Zappella, \textit{Libro antico a stampa}, I, p. 530.
\item[52] The explicit reads: ‘Qui finisce el Tesoro di Ser Brunetto.’ (transl.: ‘Here ends the Tesoro of Ser Brunetto’).
\item[53] For the colophon, see footnote 19.
\end{footnotes}
monopoly, but products of publishing houses built upon a division of labour and active in a highly competitive market.\textsuperscript{56}

The first reprint was published on 20 March 1528 according to its colophon.\textsuperscript{57} A newly established publishing firm led by Nicolò Garanta and Francesco da Salò was responsible for it.\textsuperscript{58} Nicolò Garanta was born in Brescia, a printing centre located between Lombardy and Venice.\textsuperscript{59} This bookseller by profession had married into a Venetian publishing family headed by Giorgio de’ Rusconi (d. 1521).\textsuperscript{60} In 1521 he decided to collaborate with Francesco da Salò in order to fill the gap in the publishing market left by the death of his father-in-law.\textsuperscript{61} Under the mark of a dolphin swimming under a star-filled sky, this collaboration produced 17 print editions, two of which were reprints (including Brunetto Latini’s \textit{Teso}).\textsuperscript{62} The editorial programme was strongly focused on literary texts in the vernacular, both contemporary works and \textit{Trecento} Tuscan classics. This latter interest was stretched to include the late \textit{Duecento Tesoro}.\textsuperscript{63} To this end, the newly inserted and richly decorated frontispiece underlined Brunetto Latini’s role as a teacher (\textit{maestro / precettore}) of Dante Alighieri, contrary to the earlier stress on Latini’s notarial capacity in the 1474

\textsuperscript{56} Gerulaitis, p. 5-7; Santoro, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{59} Nova, \textit{Cinquecento}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{60} Harris, \textit{Garanta}, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{61} Ascarelli and Menato, p. 361 (limiting its duration to 1528); Harris, \textit{Garanta}, p. 102 (until 1530).
incipit. In addition to the easily remembered mark, the productions of this publishing house shared this frontispiece to underline their unity. This homogeneity was further strengthened by a preference for the pocket format (octavo) and the use of italic, more precisely Nicolini 182 for the Tesoro.

For the execution of its printing jobs the publishing firm depended on the services of three printing outfits throughout its existence. The firm started out with Gregorio de Gregori (1525-1526), a printer with a proven track record, but, as the latter was winding down his business, the publishing firm moved on to the Nicolini da Sabbio brothers (1526-1528), a printing shop with shared roots in Brescia, a reputation for excellent quality, and an openness to work with small publishing firms. In 1530, Girolamo Pencio printed only one edition for the account of the firm of Garanta and da Salò. This last edition was a reprint. The final edition produced by the Nicolini da Sabbio brothers had also been a reissue, namely the Tesoro. This preference for re-releases in the last stages of the firm’s existence has been interpreted as an act of opportunism, linked to the greater likelihood of success of reprints. To further ensure the appeal of the Tesoro, Nicolò Garanta also inserted a dedication letter to Piero Morosini, member of one of Venice’s

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64 The title of the 1528 reprint reads: ‘IL TESO / RO DI M(aestro) BRUNET / to Latino Firentino, precettore / del Divino Poeta Dante / nel qual si tratta di tut / te le cose che a mor / tali se apparten / gono. / [leaf sign] / M D XXVIII.’, while the 1533 reprint states: ‘IL TESORO DI M. / BRUNETTO LATINO / Firentino, precettore del Divi / no Poeta Dante, nel qual si / tratta di tutte le cose / che a mortali se / appartengo / no. / [leaf sign].’

65 Harris, Garanta, pp. 121-23.

66 Ibid., p. 123.


68 On this printer: Ascarelli and Menato, p. 362.

69 Harris, Garanta, p. 112.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.
most prestigious families, as a preface. Although the series of printed editions was indeed successful, as demonstrated, *inter alia*, by the interest later exhibited by Melchiorre Sessa, the publishing business turned out to be insufficiently profitable compared to other lines of business, and the collaboration was definitively ended in 1530. From that moment on Nicolò Garanta focused again on his bookselling activities.

The 1533 reprint was the product of a well-established printing house led by Melchiorre Sessa. Following in the footsteps of his father, Giovanni Battista Sessa (d. 1509), Melchiorre continued this publishing business alone, apart from a temporary association with Pietro di Ravani (1516-1525). He operated under the well-known family brand of a cat holding a mouse in its mouth.

The decision to reprint almost the entire catalogue of Nicolò Garanta (including Brunetto Latini’s *Tesoro*) can be linked to its proven appeal to the reading public, but also to a close personal relationship between the Garanta and Sessa — something not unheard of in the close-knit printing world of Venice. The colophon does not specify to which printer the printing job was outsourced, but the wording, especially the use of the proposition ‘*per*’, indicates that the printing...

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73 Harris, *Garanta*, pp. 112-14.


76 Harris, *Garanta*, pp. 112-13 (referring to the fact that Melchiorre Sessa acted as a witness to the testament of Giulia Garanta).
was indeed outsourced — a practice not uncommon to Melchiorre Sessa.\textsuperscript{77} In the \textit{Short-Title Catalogue} Bernardino de Viano is mentioned as the responsible printer.\textsuperscript{78}

Following this presentation of the publishing firms responsible for the 1528 and 1533 reprints, their publishing activities, and the factors leading up to their decision to publish, it befits, once more, to ascertain the impact of these production contexts on the text and physical composition of these editions. In line with the opportunistic character of the reprints the text of these reissues was solely based upon the \textit{editio princeps} without any further manuscript consultation.\textsuperscript{79} The 1533 reprint even contains a literal copy of the dedication letter of the 1528 reprint although this letter lists Nicolò Garanta as the responsible publisher.\textsuperscript{80} The text of both reprints is also said to be of a lesser quality than the already corrupted version of the 1474 edition.\textsuperscript{81}

The business orientation of the publishing houses likewise left its traces in the physical composition of the reprints.\textsuperscript{82} The deliberate choice of a portable format (15 cm x 10 cm), almost half the size of the 1474 print, is indicative of a commercially savvy enterprise attempting to exploit the latest trend in book ownership: the easy-to-transport-and-consult pocket book.\textsuperscript{83} Given this reduced format, a division into two columns was also no longer needed to secure the text’s readability. Although this reduction in size initially more than doubled the print’s volume to

\textsuperscript{77} The colophon reads: ‘[paragraph sign] In Vinegia per Marchio Sesso. Nel anno del Signore / 1533. Regnante il Serenissimo Prin / cipe Andrea Gritti.’ (transl.: ‘In Venice for Marchio Sesso. In the year of the Lord 1533. During the reign of the Most Serene Doge Andrea Gritti’). On this practice: Vianello, p. 270.
\textsuperscript{79} Harris, \textit{Garanta}, pp. 142-43; Mussafia, p. 281.
\textsuperscript{80} This latter factor has been invoked to support a hypothesis of (implied) consent to this reprint by Nicolò Garanta. On this hypothesis: Harris, \textit{Garanta}, pp. 112-13.
\textsuperscript{81} Brunet, p. 1294; Gaiter, p. xli; Spongano, p. 320; Zambirini, p. 543.
\textsuperscript{82} For a description: Brunet, p. 1294; Max Sander, \textit{Le livre à figures italien depuis 1467 jusqu’à 1530: Essai de sa bibliographie et de son histoire}, II (Milan: Hoepli, 1942), p. 667, nos. 3871-3872.
271 folios (1528 reprint), the publishing house continued to pay attention to its profitability. A minimal increase in the number of lines per page (30 in 1533, compared to 29 in 1528 – notwithstanding the same format size) reflects this pursuit of profit. Thanks to this increased efficiency in page use, the 1533 reprint managed to reduce its volume by 20 folios per printed copy, bringing the total down to 251.\(^8^4\) The most costly factor for the early printing firm was, of course, paper.\(^8^5\) The use of a small-sized italic (I82 compared to 105G) also fits this space-saving enterprise, while the sober execution characteristic of both reprints points towards the same focus. This attention to formal detail is similarly illustrated by the increased regularity of the quire structure.\(^8^6\) In turn, this structural consistency is reflected in the absence of a register of catchwords. In both reprints an enumeration of quire letters, followed by a simple formula stating the type of quire, sufficed.\(^8^7\) Furthermore, the reissues contain commercially interesting product innovations in the form of para-textual elements inserted either for publicity purposes or to improve the reader’s comfort. From a publicity perspective, the introduction of a frontispiece and the insertion of a dedication letter have already been mentioned. In fact, both publishing firms not only strengthen the visual appeal of their frontispiece by framing the long titles within a richly decorated cornice, but they also enhance the visibility of these titles by means of a triangle composition and a distinctive use of capitals of decreasing type sizes.\(^8^8\) This attention to marketing is also evident from the fact that, although the typographical data in the frontispiece are incomplete, the identities of the publishing firms (1528 and 1533) and printer (1528) are

\(8^4\) On the foliation error in the 1533 reprint (indicating 249 instead of 251 folios): Brunet, p. 1294.

\(8^5\) Zappella, *Libro antico a stampa*, I, pp. 125 and 128.

\(8^6\) The 1528 print has the following quire structure: a\(^8\), A-LI\(^8\), while the quire structure of the 1533 print is: a\(^8\), A-HH\(^8\), II\(^4\).

\(8^7\) In the 1528 reprint this formula reads: ‘Tutti sono quaderni.’ (transl.: ‘All gatherings consist of four folios’), while the formula of the 1533 reprint states: ‘Tutti sono quaterni, eccetto II ch’è duerno.’ (transl.: ‘All gatherings consist of four folios, except for II which is a bi-folio’).

\(8^8\) The 1533 reprint, neatly fitting the work’s title and author on the two first lines, gives a more balanced impression than the 1528 reprint. See footnote 63 for the transcription of both titles.
clearly indicated in the colophon, again structured in a visually attractive triangle composition.\footnote{The frontispiece of the 1528 reprint only mentions the date of publishing, while the 1533 reprint incorporates the mark of the publishing firm into the cornice of the frontispiece but leaves out the date and place of publishing.} Furthermore the marks of the publishing houses, important quality indicators, are not only mentioned on a separate folio at the end of the encyclopaedia (1528 and 1533), but also incorporated into the inferior part of the cornice of the frontispiece (1533).\footnote{In the 1533 print the mark reproduced at the end of the encyclopaedia contains both the cat-and-mouse image and the initials of Melchiorre Sessa, while the mark incorporated into the frontispiece is limited to the image. In the 1528 reprint the mark consists only of the dolphin image.} Competition clearly required visibility. To accommodate the reader, the 1528 and 1533 reprints have added table of contents as front matter. Thanks to the stamped foliation of the text, these tables consist of chapter titles followed by a folio number, allowing the reader to consult particular parts of the encyclopaedia.\footnote{I.e. a reading practice not yet facilitated by the *tabula rubricarum* of the 1474 print (see above).} To the same end, running titles have been included, indicating the table of contents or designating the book involved.\footnote{The running title reproduces the word ‘*tavola*’ in capitals in the centre of each folio side in order to indicate the table of contents or it is spread over two folio sides, again in capitals and in the centre of each folio side, in order to designate the book involved. In the latter case the left title reads ‘*libro*’ (1528) or ‘*libro*’ (1533), while the right one refers to the number of the book (from one until nine).} In the latter case these running titles reflect a structural change from a tripartite division, typical of the 1474 print, to a division into nine books.\footnote{These nine books are: biblical and universal history up to the Old Testament; biblical and universal history from the New Testament onwards, and cosmology; geography and mechanical arts; bestiary: fish and waterbound animals; bestiary: snakes, birds, and airbound and landbound animals; Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*; panoply of moral precepts; rhetoric; and politics.} In line with the task division between publishers and printers, characteristic of the sixteenth-century publishing business, the reprints also contain signatures and catchwords, stamped per gathering, as well as the formula of the quire structure at the end of the encyclopaedia.\footnote{The signatures are a combination of alphabetical lettering and Arabic numbering (e.g. A/A2/A3/A4), located in the right-hand corner at the bottom of the first four pages of each quaternion, preceded by the title of the work (*Tesoro*) in a central position on the first page only. The last page of each quaternion contains the first words of the next one.} These instruments allowed the publishers and their printers to distinguish the gatherings of one edition from those of another work-in-progress. They permitted them to be
involved in the publishing of multiple editions at the same time instead of having to adhere to a book-for-book model.\textsuperscript{95}

Additional research on the wider implications of this comparison between the editio princeps and the more commercially-minded sixteenth-century editions is warranted to develop the current understanding of the adoption of proto-humanist teachings by early modern publishers and their target audience.

**Conclusions**

This article portrays a fifteenth-century Trevisan printer-craftsman and two sixteenth-century Venetian publishing houses. It has discussed their position within the Trevisan and Venetian printing markets, outlined the general characteristics of their printing portfolios, and examined the factors that led up to their decisions to publish the editio princeps or the 1528 and 1533 reprints of the Tesoro. Lastly, the impact of these different production conditions on the content and presentation of each print edition has been highlighted.

This study underlines, first of all, that the advent of printing did not end interest in Brunetto Latini’s *Tesoro*. It created a period of co-existence of both media and secured the continued dissemination of the *Tesoro*. Printing did, however, entail a shift in the centre of gravity of its production, away from Tuscany to the Veneto region. It also resulted in a faster and wider circulation of the work than in the manuscript era. In fact, the production of three print editions, combined with the rapid succession of the 1528 and 1533 reprints, points towards a success story.

\textsuperscript{95} Zappella, *Libro antico a stampa*, I, pp. 399-402 (signatures) and 402-05 (register of catchwords).
Secondly, this analysis shows that this change from script to print signalled a distinct preference for single item content. In combination with a tendency towards linguistic standardisation this preference heralded the end of the encyclopaedia’s malleability in the hands of copyists. It fixated the message based upon a single exemplar of the manuscript tradition (L).

Finally, this examination demonstrates that such textual fixity did not mean that the Tesoro’s presentation survived unchanged. Although the product of a fifteenth-century printer-craftsman still presented important similarities to fifteenth-century manuscripts, such as the use of paper, the same size and volume, the adoption of a formal letter type or a luxurious execution, the first differences were also discernible, namely a division into two columns. The transition to the sixteenth-century publishing house resulted, however, in the most significant modifications to the work’s physical characteristics. The large folio format was swiftly replaced by a portable octavo. Driven by a relentless pursuit of cost-cutting efficiency, close attention was paid to letter type (small italic) and page use (number of lines), whilst a strict use of signatures and catch words enabled the proper execution of the agreed-upon task division between publisher and printer. The sober execution of both reprints confirms the cost-monitoring focus of the publishing houses. Active in a highly competitive market, advertising instruments, like the introduction of a frontispiece, the insertion of a dedication letter or the identification of the publishing houses in the colophon or through their marks, were readily adopted. Simultaneously, foliated table of contents and running titles were introduced to enhance the reading comfort of the buying public.
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