



The Painted Page

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE BOOK ILLUMINATION

1450-1550

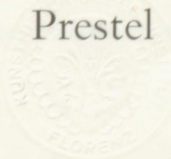
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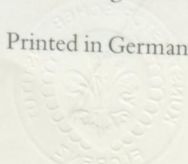
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Patrons, Libraries and Illuminators in the Italian Renaissance

By Jonathan J. G. Alexander

'Nella perfezione delle figure et adornamenti ...'
Contract for the Bible of Prince Manuel
of Portugal, 1494¹

In 1471 Borso d'Este (b. 1413, r. 1450-1471), was to visit Pope Paul II in Rome to be invested with a long coveted honour, the Dukedom of Ferrara. Complex planning was necessary for the Duke to move with a retinue suitable to his status as well as the necessary military protection. Lavish gifts would be exchanged at solemn entries and courtly entertainments. Not only his own clothing and mounts but those of his followers would be scrutinised and needed to be of the necessary magnificence. Among all the other preparations and in addition to all his other baggage, the Duke directed that his Bible should accompany him. Its two thick, heavy volumes, measuring 675 x 486 mm, had been completed ten years before by two major illuminators, Taddeo Crivelli and Franco dei Russi, directing a team of numerous assistants (figs 3, 14-17, 13-16). Even while their work was in progress arrangements were made from time to time for ambassadors to the court in Ferrara to see the Bible. Now it would demonstrate publicly and in the heart of Christendom the Duke's piety and wealth, his liberality and discrimination.²

The manuscripts and printed books included in this exhibition are all objects of similar luxury produced at the top end of the market for wealthy, powerful and prestigious owners. Their textual contents were not secondary but intimately connected to their functioning as status symbols. The Bible, for example, had in a Christian society a priority over every other text, which is signified by its invariable appearance in library catalogues as the first item. In earlier centuries large scale luxury Bibles in one or two volumes had been most commonly the possession of Christian religious institutions, especially of the wealthy Benedictine monasteries of Europe.³ Already in the 12th century in Italy, these objects were so costly to produce, however, that the laity were sometimes coopted to subscribe to the expenses, an example being the Bible of Calci near Pisa, completed in 1169 (fig. 2).⁴ In the 13th century, under the impetus of Biblical studies at the University of Paris, smaller one volume portable Bibles were made for individual use by clerics and scholars in varying degrees of luxury. At the same date the enormous three volume *Bibles moralisées*, illustrated verse by verse, were made under French royal patronage.⁵ Later, in the 14th century, various epitomes and translations into French were made which were often illustrated, for example the *Bible historiale* of Guyart Desmoulins. Duke Borso's Latin Vulgate Bible, like those produced for his father, Niccolò d'Este, and for other Italian Renaissance rulers, for example Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino (1422-1482) (fig. 2), falls, therefore, into a tradition of private ownership, but now produced on a scale comparable to that of the great monastic Bibles. The Urbino Bible, now in the Vatican Library (Urb. lat. 1-2), was written in two volumes in Florence in 1476-8 and illuminated by a group of some of the most talented illuminators available, including Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico, Francesco Rosselli and the young Attavante.⁶ It may be that there was in these projects a conscious historicising revival in

copying the large format of the earlier manuscripts, whether Carolingian or Romanesque, and that this was conflated with a Renaissance perception of the Vulgate translation of St Jerome as a product of early, patristic Christianity when the Roman Empire still existed.

The liturgical books used in the services of the Church, the Missals, Breviaries, Psalters, Evangeliaries and Epistolaries, were also in earlier centuries usually communal property of religious institutions. But personal ownership of books of every kind steadily increased in Europe from the 13th century on, and now in the 15th century a great prelate, whether Pope, Cardinal, Bishop or Abbot, would expect to commission his own Missal. In earlier centuries manuscripts were inscribed with the name of a saint, '*Liber Sancti ...*', that is as the property of the particular saint who acted as patron and protector of the church or monastery in which the book was used. In the 15th century they frequently bear family



1 Calci, Certosa. Bible. Vol. 1, fol. 120. Initial 'H', Exodus



arms distinguished by a papal tiara, cardinal's red hat or bishop's or abbot's mitre. An example is the Missal written in Rome in 1520 by the papal *scriptor*, Lodovico Arrighi, for Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, later Pope Clement VII, which contains his arms, emblems and mottoes prominently displayed in the borders (cat. 128).

As with the Bible, lay owners might also commission liturgical books, for example the luxury Breviary started in Ferrara for Duke Ercole I d'Este (b. 1431, r. 1471–1505) and completed after his death for Duke Alfonso d'Este (b. 1476, r. 1505–1534) (fig. 4). Communal books continued to be made of course, and, as with the Calci Bible, the lay community would often be involved in their commissioning and help to pay for them. An example is the great set of Choir Books with the sung parts of the Mass and the Office commissioned by the Opera del Duomo of Siena Cathedral, written between 1457 and 1466, with the illumination completed by 1476 (cats 121, 122).⁷

Individuals also owned a range of books for private reading which answered to professional, educational and recreational needs. The professions of law and medicine both required books for their practitioners and in exceptional cases individuals might afford special illuminated copies (cat. 57). As to education, if uni-

versity and school-teachers, then as now, complained constantly at the low value put on their work by society, parents were willing to spend lavishly on school-books. A particularly famous example is the grammar book provided for the young Maximilian Sforza at age five or six by his father, Lodovico il Moro, the usurping Duke of Milan (fig. 5).⁸ Its miniatures show Maximilian at work and at play and were executed c. 1495 by an illuminator active in commissions for the Sforza (cat. 16), Giovan Pietro Birago.

Somewhere between education and recreation come the Classical and humanist texts, the 'classics' which, thanks to the ideals of humanist education, were to form the *sine qua non* of a cultivated nobleman's education, and in some cases an educated noblewoman's too. An example of a cultivated female patron is Eleanor of Aragon (1450–1493), wife of Ercole d'Este of Ferrara, of whom a portrait was inserted in a manuscript on the duties of a ruler, dedicated to her by Antonio Cornazzano (cat. 20). The Classical texts of Ancient history, poetry and philosophy provided models of heroic action, moral behaviour and of literary style – Livy, Suetonius, Cicero, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, Virgil, Horace (cats 41–50, 74–76). Some patrons were even beginning to read Greek texts in the original (cats 53, 56). Certain modern texts also



3 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, VG 12 (Lat. 422). Bible of Borso d'Este. Vol. I, fol. 5v–6. Opening of Genesis, *Creation*

achieved a classic status, and of those that were illuminated and illustrated, Dante's *Divine Comedy* (cat. 58) and Petrarch's *Trionfi* (cats 59, 60) stand out. Historical works by authors such as Leonardo Bruni (cat. 64), Poggio (cat. 62) or Flavio Biondo (cat. 61) were also frequently produced in luxury copies.

Two representations can be juxtaposed to show two of the contexts for books and two types of reading in this period. Though these contexts, which it would be oversimplifying to describe as secular and religious, might now be starting to diverge in some respects, they still continued to intersect and overlap. In a painting by the Siense artist Sassetta of c. 1423, St Thomas Aquinas is shown kneeling in prayer before an altar in a chapel, thus in a religious context (fig. 6). But his work as Christian scholar and teacher is made clear by the glimpse of the adjacent library with codices laid out on the desks. In a fresco fragment of c. 1460 from the Medici bank in Milan, attributed to Vincenzo Foppa, a young

boy is seated in a school-room, reading presumably a Classical text (fig. 7). Here there are no symbols of Christian devotion and the name 'M. T. Cicero' is inscribed on the wall behind him. The boy's identity remains a subject of speculation, but many 15th-century observers might have recalled Jerome's dream, in which he was accused of paying more attention to Classical literature than to Holy Scripture. The words '*Ciceronianus es, non Christianus*' might be a dilemma for some, but an inspiration or a challenge for others (see cat. 28).

The humanists, a term originating in the late 15th century to describe 'a teacher in the progressive educational movement known as the *studia humanitatis*, a programme of study elaborated on the basis of what Cicero had had to say about liberal education' – these humanists, in addition to establishing a canon of approved authors, also aimed to reform spelling and to purify texts of corruption.⁹ In searching for older manuscripts which might contain



4 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, VG 11 (Lat. 424), fol. 7. Breviary of Alfonso d'Este. Opening for the First Sunday in Advent. St Paul and scenes from his life

better texts, Poggio and others made the legendary discoveries of new texts from Antiquity which lay buried in remote monastic libraries.¹⁰ The search for lost texts continued, but equally important was the imposition of revised rules of orthography and grammar and the establishment of better texts by improved principles of textual criticism. This effort became even more crucial with the introduction of printing where, as its critics pointed out, a false text might now be disseminated in hundreds of copies.

A distinctive feature of Italian book production from c. 1400 onwards, which separates it from book production everywhere else in Europe, is that a specific type of script and a specific type of decoration was developed for use in Classical and humanist texts. The script with letter forms which continue in use even in the age of electronic technology was evolved self-consciously by a small group of scholar-humanists in Florence, of whom Niccolò Niccoli and Poggio Bracciolini, with the encouragement of Coluccio Salutati, Chancellor of Florence, were the leaders.¹¹ The way in which the new script caught on was spectacular, and within twenty years it had spread all over Italy as a style of writing. Its adoption by the printers in Italy after 1465 assured even wider dissemination, though other countries in Europe had already begun to adopt it even before Gutenberg's invention of printing in Mainz in the early 1450s. Nevertheless the older Gothic scripts were not abandoned and continued to be used above all for the ecclesiastical service books and generally but not exclusively for other religious texts, by both scribes and printers, including of course Gutenberg himself. Though the present exhibition is not primarily concerned with script and scribes, many types of handwriting and many examples of outstanding penmanship by scribes famous in their own day are included, notably Piero Strozzi (cats 68-9, 76) and Antonio Sinibaldi of Florence (cats 31, 32, 41, 46), Bartolomeo Santvito of Padua (cats 7, 26, 38-9, 41, 43, 62, 71-5, 77) and Lodovico Arrighi (cats 128, 130). Often they signed and dated their works, sometimes claiming credit for their skill or speed in copying or including other information.¹² Pietro Ippolito da Luni of Naples says he is writing while 'turbulent warfare grips Italy' (cat. 9). Giovanmarco Cinico of Parma, who wrote manuscripts for Ferdinand I and Alfonso II of Naples (cats 10, 61), says in his colophons that he sometimes wrote at speed, '*manu corrente*', sometimes slowly, '*tranquille transcripsit*'. When he came to transcribe the *De re uxoria* of Francesco Barbaro (1390-1454) he wrote at the end '*uxoris nescius sed cupidus*' ('knows nothing of a wife but would like one')! It is interesting that among these scribes there were many non-Italians who had come to the peninsula and had learnt there to write in the new style.

With the new script went a new style of decoration also not found elsewhere in Europe, though it was to be occasionally self-consciously copied later. Its expressive Italian name is the '*bianchi girari*', in English 'white vine-stem decoration'. Contemporaries sometimes referred to it as a form of decoration '*all'antica*'. The models were in fact not Antique, for neither the letter forms nor the decorative vocabulary were to be found in Classical Roman or Early Christian manuscripts. The models were closer to hand, occurring in Tuscan 12th-century manuscripts in which a stylized plant scroll with interlacing stems and flowers, fruits and leaves was silhouetted, usually by leaving the parchment uncoloured, against coloured backgrounds, as in the already mentioned Calci Bible (fig. 2).¹³ As with the script, older styles of decoration were not abandoned. Just as various compromises were made of cursive and formal, Gothic and humanistic forms, so with the decoration, white vine-stem could be infiltrated by flora and fauna from Gothic traditions of illumination. Another motif is especially

characteristic, the small naked male children known as '*putti*' in Italian.¹⁴ Their significance may partly lie in their adaptation from Classical Roman Imperial sculpture. They occur ubiquitously in other media in Renaissance art, but particularly in sculpture. As flanking figures of a wreath or figure medallion on Classical or Early Christian sarcophagi, they were easily adapted to support the coat of arms of owners in countless borders in manuscripts (for example, cats 5, 8, 9). In this context they were perhaps thought of as implying immortality for the owner. In other contexts they may have had other meanings, signifying pagan as opposed to Christian, innocence as opposed to experience, ignorance as opposed to learning, nature implying freedom as opposed to culture implying self-control. Sometimes, as in the Berlin Jerome (cat. 28), they invade the sacred space to play hide-and-seek with the saint's lion. Satyrs, who have similar sources in pagan Antiquity and who often occur in similar contexts, may also have had an overlapping series of meanings (cats 90, 91, 101).

White vine-stem decoration soon spread from Florence all over Italy, with characteristic local variations of style. It must gradually have lost its impact as a signifier of Antiquity, however. In other areas other decorative styles or motifs were adopted to convey a similar message. For example the scribe Felice Feliciano of Verona,



5 Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, Cod. 2167, fol. 13v. Grammar Book. Maximilian Sforza at his lessons

an associate of the antiquarian Giovanni Marcanova (cats 66, 67), used knotwork and interlace for borders and initials in his manuscripts, and this is also found in manuscripts produced for the Gonzaga of Mantua (cats 21, 22).

It was in Padua and Venice, however, from the mid-century, that the most self-consciously classicising motifs were introduced into book illumination by scribes and illuminators. These included the use of membrane stained purple, green or yellow and written on in silver or gold (cat. 71), the coloured epigraphic capitals used for titles, especially by Bartolomeo Sanvito of Padua (cats 71, 73-5), and the facted initials with whose development Sanvito may also have been connected (cat. 29).¹⁵ The illuminators Franco dei Russi, Giovanni Vendramin, the Master of the Putti and others, influenced by the interests of local antiquarians in Classical inscriptions and monuments, seen for example in Marcanova's *Silloge* (cats 66, 67), developed title-pages and frontispieces on classicising stele (cats 26, 79) or attached them to Classical triumphal arches (cats 39, 75, 78).¹⁶ Figures, motifs and ornament from Classical remains were incorporated into borders, miniatures and initials by these artists, all of whom were in one way or another also indebted to the example of the Paduan painter Andrea Mantegna, himself famous for his antiquarianism. Well-known monuments like the Arch of Constantine or the Column of Trajan are alluded to in frontispieces by Gaspare da Padova, who often collaborated with Sanvito (cats 73, 74). It is evident that some of these motifs circulated as drawings. For example Sanvito mentions in his diary that he lent a Gaspare drawing he owned, depicting Phaethon, to the artist Giulio Campagnola (cat. 71). But these artists were also creatively inventive, producing imaginative pastiches *all'antica*. Already in the 1460s some of these scribes and illuminators moved to Rome; Gaspare da Padova was active there in the 1470s-1480s and the Master of the London Pliny from c. 1485. The antiquarian motifs and inventions of the Paduan-Venetian school quickly spread elsewhere in Italy, and the architectural frontispiece in particular was adopted in Naples, Milan and Florence.

Another aspect of these northern artists' work was the virtuoso display of *trompe l'œil* illusionism. For example artists made the central space of the page on which the title or text was written seem like a placard affixed to a building, with its edges curling up and holes in it (cats 78, 125). Another aspect of *trompe l'œil* is the inclusion of pearls and jewels into borders in Ferrarese illumination; Girolamo da Cremona, who worked on Borso d'Este's Bible, became particularly skilled at this type of jewelled decoration (cats 93-6, 101).



6 Budapest, Szépművészeti Museum, Inv. 32.
Sassetta. St Thomas Aquinas in prayer



7 London, Wallace Collection. Fragment of a fresco attributed to Vincenzo Foppa. Cicero (?) as a boy reading

The Master of the London Pliny created initials as if carved from crystal with gold or silver mounts (cats 28, 46, 91). These references to the work of contemporary goldsmiths both conveyed an impression of preciousness and value to the book and demonstrated the artists' mimetic skills. It also became common to include representations of Classical cameos. Many were generalised images, but especially in Florence reference could be made to specific gems which were already famous and recognisable: the cameos from the Medici collection (cats 3, 76, 85). In the 1480s the discovery of the stuccoes and paintings in the Golden House of Nero in Rome introduced a fashion for a new form of classicising decoration, the *grotteschi*. Again motifs circulated in artists' drawings and pattern-books, for example those of Amico Aspertini, as well as in book illumination (cat. 117).

The ownership of books, as already observed, immensely increased in this period in two directions. First, particular powerful and wealthy individuals might now own books in considerable numbers, and in any case in much greater quantities than in earlier centuries. The established dynasties, the Visconti-Sforza in Milan or the Aragonese Kings of Naples, for example, built up their libraries by inheritance over several generations.¹⁷ Thus the inventory made in 1426 of the library of the Visconti Dukes of Milan, housed at Pavia, contained 988 volumes, many of them taken as groups by military conquest. A later inventory of the personal library of Galeazzo Maria Sforza adds 126 manuscripts. The ducal library housed in the castle at Pavia was captured by the French army in 1499 and much of its contents were transferred at Louis XII's orders to the Château at Blois, so that today they are preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. Many of these manuscripts contain the note '*de Pavye au roy Loys XII*' (cats 14, 15).¹⁸

The Aragonese inventories are much less complete, and the surviving manuscripts even more scattered. Tammara de Marinis's volumes give an idea of the splendour of the library with their illustrations of the known surviving manuscripts. He also prints an inventory of 266 printed books and manuscripts which were pledged to the banker Battista Pandolfini for an intended war against the Turks in 1481. They were used to secure the huge sum of 38,000 ducats. Later, after the collapse of Aragonese rule as a result of the invasion of Charles VIII of France in 1494-5, manuscripts captured were taken to France. Among those which the

Kings of Naples still retained, 138 were sold to Cardinal Georges d'Amboise by Ferdinand III of Naples and are listed in an inventory of 1508 at the Château de Gaillon near Rouen. A portion of these are still in France in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (cat. 10), though others had already been lost or stolen in the 17th century (cat. 9). Even then a section of the library survived the French invasion and after being taken to Ferrara by Frederick III's queen, Isabella del Balzano, it was transported to Spain, where it was bequeathed to San Miguel de los Reyes by Ferdinand, last Duke of Calabria, in 1550. The inventory lists 795 volumes, manuscripts and printed books, a portion of which are now in the Biblioteca Universitaria at Valencia (cats 8, 9, 11, 44, 49, 65, 75, 76, 106). Once again the royal accounts give much valuable information on the sums involved in the writing, illumination and binding of manuscripts, as well as many names of those who worked as scribes and illuminators.¹⁹

A third library, perhaps even more remarkable since it was created by one individual in a short space of time, is that formed by Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino. A large part of his manuscripts still fortunately survive together, having been bought for the Vatican Library in 1658 (cats 36, 58, 62, 64). Estimated by Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421–1498) in his biography of Federigo to have cost 30,000 ducats, the library was only a part of the artistic patronage made possible by Federigo's remuneration as military commander.²⁰ Federigo's two *studioli* in his palaces at Gubbio and at Urbino are lined with extraordinary intarsia panels with illusionistic representations of all the paraphernalia of a scholar's study, including of course manuscripts and a variety of objects associated with writing and reading them. The paintings commissioned for the same spaces from Justus of Ghent and others show Federigo as literate patron, the disciple of 'Rhetoric', who is both reader and, as attender of humanistic lectures, auditor.

There were also increasing numbers of individuals of less elevated status, though often of considerable wealth, now owning books. Some of them owned collections notable for their contents rather than their size, for example Francesco Sassetti in Florence, whose library comprised probably rather more than 120 manuscripts,²¹ or Giovanni Marcanova of Padua, a doctor of medicine with a special interest in Antiquity (cats 66, 67). Printing accelerated this trend to wider ownership by making books both cheaper to produce and easier to come by, but the special copies with hand-produced illumination, which were usually printed on parchment, remained rarities and the possession of exceptional patrons, some of whom had special links to the printing industry, for example Filippo Strozzi and Peter Ugelheimer, who put up the capital for editions (cats 85, 96–101). Typically, therefore, the new technology both responded to and also fostered demand.

Information about the great libraries is forthcoming in detailed inventories, enabling us often to identify manuscripts which have since been scattered. Normally, printed and manuscript books were kept together on the shelves and are listed together in catalogues according to their texts. For smaller collections of books, archival documents such as wills and lawsuits give valuable information. For example Sassetti made an inventory of all his possessions in November 1462 and included his books with estimates of their value.

The fate of the Visconti-Sforza and Aragonese libraries underlines the lack of stability of secular as opposed to religious ownership. The churches and monasteries of Italy had also built up libraries over the centuries and continued to do so in the 15th and 16th centuries. Sometimes a new foundation or a movement for reform or the intervention of a great patron meant a spectacular increase in

library provision. Examples are the reformed Congregation of Santa Giustina of Padua, which had a major effect on libraries of the order (cat. 124), mainly in the north-east but extending down to Monte Cassino itself, or the money provided for the Badia of Fiesole by Cosimo de' Medici, il Vecchio (cat. 120).²² These great libraries remained on the whole intact until the 18th century, when some began to sell manuscripts to rich collectors, many of them wealthy English aristocrats like Sir Thomas Coke of Holkham Hall in Norfolk (*d.* 1759), who made the Grand Tour from 1712 to 1718, purchasing over 600 manuscripts (cat. 47). These included a block from the library of the monastery of San Giovanni di Verdara in Padua.

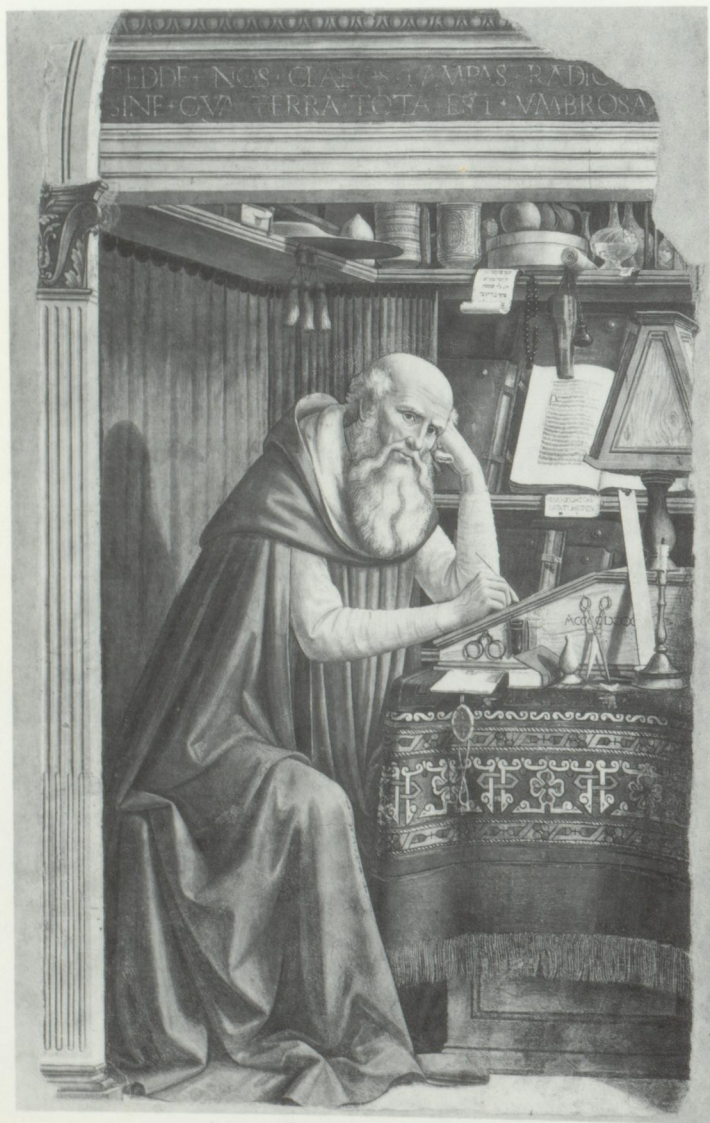
The process of dispersal was accelerated by the French invasion of Italy under Napoleon in 1798, when many monasteries were secularised and there was considerable looting. Already at this date mutilation of illuminated manuscripts was taking place, for example of the liturgical illuminated manuscripts of the Cappella Sistina in the Vatican (cats 136, 137). An earlier interest in the acquisition of Classical texts by European collectors was now supplemented by a change of aesthetic taste as a new value was put on 'pre-Raphaelite' art.²³



8 Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. VIII.2, fol. 1.
Filarete, *de architectura*, Frontispiece

With so much extra demand and such huge financial resources made available in the 15th century, it is not surprising that the book trade prospered in Italy and that the numbers of those involved in it must have increased dramatically. It is not possible to estimate either the numbers of those employed, the booksellers (*cartolaii*), scribes, illuminators and binders, or the numbers of manuscripts produced. Many of those involved had other offices or occupations, such as the priests Piero Strozzi and Ricciardo di Nanni (cats 34, 68, 120), and many scribes were also notaries (cat. 105). While the numbers of printed books issued in particular editions are occasionally known, we have no reliable estimate even of the number of surviving manuscripts, and of course have no way of accurately gauging the extent of the losses.²⁴ But at least the major centres can be identified, that is in the first rank Florence and Milan, and in the second Naples, Venice, Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, Siena and Rome, while in other cities a production was fostered in relation to specific initiatives by particular rulers at certain times – the Malatesta in Cesena and Rimini, the Gonzaga in Mantua, and Federigo da Montefeltro in Urbino. In such cases artisans would be tempted to migrate from other centres and even travel beyond Italy – for example Italian illuminators were attracted to the court of King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary at Budapest (fig. 8).²⁵

The reputation of Italy as a centre of the new learning and the entrepreneurial skill of its book trade, of which the *cartolaio* Ves-



9 Florence, Church of Ognissanti. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *St Jerome in his study*

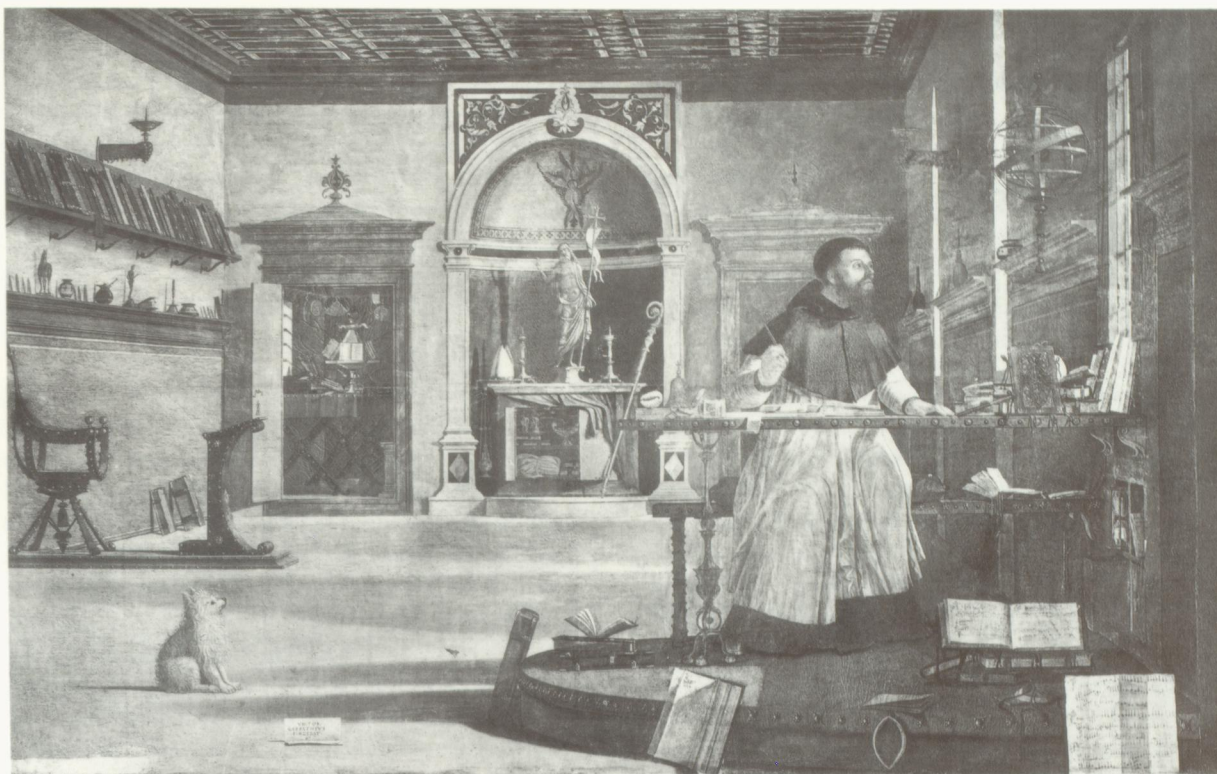
pasiano da Bisticci in Florence was a foremost example, now meant that many foreigners from outside Italy bought books either on personal visits or commissioned them via intermediaries. Attavante degli Attavanti, one of the leading Florentine illuminators, was an exceedingly successful and busy artist who not only worked for Pope Leo X in Rome (cat. 4), which is understandable since the Pope was a Medici, but also executed commissions for foreign notables, such as the Missal of Thomas James, Bishop of Dol in Brittany (cat. 3), and the Missal and Breviary of King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary.²⁶

A particularly well-documented commission from Attavante is that of 1494 for a Bible for the Crown Prince of Portugal, who succeeded the following year as King Manuel I (cat. 1). As with the Borso Bible of some forty years earlier, a contract survives which demonstrates how such major projects were set up, how long they took and how much they cost.²⁷ In both cases an intermediary agent for the ruler supervised the project and disbursed the money. Interestingly, in neither project is there any stipulation in detail as to what was to be represented in the miniatures and borders. Rather the extent of the decoration, in each case a series of grand frontispieces, was laid down, and there was a general direction that it was to be done to the highest possible standards, '*nella perfezione delle figure et adornamenti*', as the Attavante contract states. A hierarchy of decoration existed as in most illuminated manuscripts to mark divisions of the text – for the King of Portugal's Bible, the prologues as well as the different books.

There are many parallels to contemporary 15th-century contracts for paintings. In particular the quality of materials was stipulated and the length of time for completion. For the Borso Bible this was to be six years, and in fact the Bible was completed in 1461, though the final payments were only made in 1465. We do not know whether the King of Portugal's Bible was completed to time or not, but it is interesting that there are detailed let-out clauses for Attavante in case the scribes did not complete their work on schedule. Even at this date it seems likely that the majority of manuscripts were still, like these, made to commission. This was of course the great difference between manuscripts and printed books.

The illumination was almost always done after the text was written. In exceptional cases where the scribe was also the illuminator, it may have been possible to do the illumination concurrently; single sheets could also be illuminated as the scribes completed them. The scribes of both the great Bibles are known. The scribe of the Borso Bible is named in the ducal accounts as Pietro Paolo Morone, while in the King of Portugal's Bible the first and second volumes are signed by Sigismondo de' Sigismondi and Alessandro da Verrazzano respectively. The scribes left the necessary and no doubt previously agreed-upon spaces for miniatures and initials according to the general scheme laid down in the contract.

In both projects the main illuminators had assistance. Since the illumination was done on the unbound bifolia (folded sheets of parchment), it was a relatively simple matter to partition the book into sections for different individuals to decorate. In the Borso Bible the main collaborators are named as Taddeo Crivelli and Franco dei Russi, and a number of other craftsmen would have worked under their supervision. In the King of Portugal's Bible only Attavante is named, but on critical stylistic grounds it seems only the opening of each volume is painted by him. He may have designed or retouched other pages, but many are clearly both different in style and much weaker in quality, executed therefore by *garzoni*, journeymen or apprentices, or perhaps by anonymous collaborators brought in for the purpose. Sometimes these were spe-



10 Venice, Scuola San Giorgio degli Schiavoni. Vittore Carpaccio, *St Augustine in his Study*

cialists in particular techniques. An example is Guinifortus de Vimermercato (Vimercate near Milan), who has left a sample book of his skills in penwork decoration (cat. 109).

All this activity and the value attached to the manuscript book and to the skills and devotion necessary to produce it are reflected in numerous images. These occur from an early period in the manuscripts themselves, the commonest and most prestigious scribes being the Four Evangelists as authors of the Gospels.

This tradition continued – there are many examples in the present exhibition of author and scribe portraits, whether writing their works like Duns Scotus, whose image in a manuscript copied by Pietro Ippolito da Luni in Naples must also be in some sense self-referential (cat. 9), or presenting their completed works, like Girolamo Mangiarina kneeling before Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan (cat. 14).

Books are one of the commonest attributes of holy persons, including the Godhead, throughout Christian art, but in many of the 15th-century representations they are shown with a new attention to detail, both of physical appearance and of the tools necessary for writing and rubricating. In representations of scholar saints, a new emphasis on the Four Doctors of the Church – Gregory the Great, Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome – results in such images as Domenico Ghirlandaio's fresco of 1494 in the Ognissanti in Florence, where St Jerome is seated at his desk with spectacles, inkwells, pen-case, scissors, candle for light, and textual exemplar, all shown as still-life details (fig. 9).²⁸ In Carpaccio's early 16th-century painting of St Augustine in the Scuola San Giorgio in Venice, codices with brightly coloured bindings are displayed in rows on the long shelf to the left, but elsewhere spill over the table and onto the floor, graphically illustrating the growth of books and libraries already described (fig. 10). Other emblems of learning, such as the astrolabes and armillary sphere represented in the painting, also occur in Attavante's portraits of St Jerome in King Manuel's Bible (cat. 1).

By 1494 there had been printers active in Italy for nearly 30 years. At first there remained work for illuminators to do in decorating special copies of printed books by hand, even if the scribes were rendered redundant. In fact a ruler like Manuel of Portugal evidently did not consider the old technology of the hand-produced book to be superseded, and the making of handwritten manuscript copies of printed books is by no means uncommon (cat. 48). The old technology did not die overnight and Vespasiano's well-known remark about the library of Federigo da Montefeltro – 'all the books are superlatively good, written with the pen, and had there been one printed volume it would have been ashamed in such company' (in fact Federigo owned many printed books) – describes a typically aristocratic and conservative attitude which in our own century similarly greeted first the typewriter and then the word processor.

In particular circumstances where a unique copy was required for a special reason or for a special occasion, mass production was unsuitable. Examples are the service books used by new Cardinals of the Curia and afterwards donated to the Cappella Sistina (cats 128, 134), or the documents of appointment of officials of the Serenissima in Venice, including the oaths of office of the Doges themselves. In other cases the cachet of the hand-produced book was such that a manuscript as well as a printed volume was produced. A striking example is the Commentary on Gratian's *Decretum* written by Giovanni Antonio di Sangiorgio. A manuscript copy with hand-painted illumination was made for presentation to Pope Alexander VI (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 2260) and a printed edition was issued contemporaneously and was similarly decorated but with a woodcut.²⁹

However, until the 19th-century invention of colour lithography and, later still, of colour photographic printing processes, the earlier printers were unable to produce anything but the simplest colour mechanically and so could never rival manuscripts for their illumination. The word 'illumination' draws attention to

the lighting up of the page, most especially by the use of gold leaf, applied over gesso and then burnished, and by various forms of liquid or 'mosaic' gold. Even today this cannot be satisfactorily simulated mechanically in even the most sophisticated of facsimiles.

The splendour of the colour of the painted pages will be the most striking aspect of this exhibition to many visitors. And this is the characteristic of the illuminated manuscript which renders it unique. For not only were these manuscripts produced with the highest standards of skill and craftsmanship, using techniques evolved over a millennium, but the pigments and metals have also

- 1 'Perfect as to the figures and ornament'. The phrase is used in the contract with the illuminator Attavante degli Attavanti of Florence for the illumination of a Bible now in Lisbon (cat. 1). The contract is further discussed below.
- 2 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MSS Lat. 422, 423. For the history of the commission, see Hermann 1900, pp. 249-50; and for the journey to Rome, Rosenberg 1981. The Director of the Estense, Dr Ernesto Milano, kindly informs me that the two volumes presently weigh 7,720 and 7,760 kg., but they are not in their original bindings.
- 3 Cahn 1982.
- 4 Berg 1968, pp. 151-5, 224-7; Cahn 1982, pp. 224-6, 283.
- 5 Branner 1977.
- 6 Garzelli 1977; Evans, in Cologne 1992, no. 68. It was described by the *cartolaio* Vespasiano da Bisticci, who oversaw its production, as '*tanto ricco et degno quanto dire si potessi*'.
- 7 Ciardi Dupré dal Poggetto 1972.
- 8 Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, MS 2167; Alexander 1977a, pls 29-32. For a facsimile, see G. Bologna 1980.
- 9 For the humanist movement, see the classic papers by Kristeller 1956, 1985; more recently Grafton and Jardine 1986; Dupré 1993. The quotation is from Trapp 1991, p. 2.
- 10 For the transmission of Classical texts, see Reynolds and Wilson 1991.
- 11 De la Mare 1977.
- 12 Such colophons are conveniently published by the Bénédictins de Bouveret 1965-79.
- 13 Pächt 1957; de la Mare 1973.
- 14 Panofsky 1960, pp. 147-51, 169.
- 15 Alexander 1988b.
- 16 Armstrong 1981 and p. 42. For the tradition of Paduan antiquarianism, see Schmitt 1974.
- 17 Pellegrin 1955; De Marinis 1947-52.
- 18 For the library at Blois, see Blois and Paris 1992.
- 19 De Marinis 1947-52, II, 'Documenti', pp. 227-316; Blois and Paris 1992; Toscano 1993.
- 20 Clough 1973, esp. p. 138.
- 21 De la Mare 1976, p. 171, describes Sassetti's collection as 'choice rather than large'.
- 22 For the Congregation of Santa Giustina, see Alzati 1982. For the library of the Lateran Canons of the Badia Fiesolana, see de la Mare, in Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, pp. 440-4.
- 23 Munby 1972.

been uniquely preserved by their situation inside the closed volume, thus protected from both light and dirt. In opening these closed treasures for a short time to the admiration and delight of a contemporary audience, we cannot doubt that they will fulfill the expectations and desires not only of their original owners, exigent patrons like Borso d'Este, but also of their original creators, the talented and industrious artists who worked on them. In Italy in this period a significant number of the artists and scribes name themselves, and many other names have been recovered; but whether named or humbly anonymous these works are their lasting memorial.

- 24 An idea of surviving numbers can be had from the catalogues of humanistic manuscripts in Kristeller's monumental *Iter Italicum*, 1963-93.
- 25 Berkovits 1964; Csapodi and Csapodi-Gárdonyi 1969; Balogh 1975. For the copy of Filarete's treatise on architecture made for Corvinus (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. VIII, 2 [= 2796]), see Cogliati Arano 1979.
- 26 The King's Missal is now Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 9008; Csapodi and Csapodi-Gárdonyi 1969, pls I-III. His Breviary is in the Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 112; see Cologne 1992, no. 78.
- 27 The contract was printed by Milanese 1901, pp. 164-6; see also Alexander 1993, pp. 53, 181-2.
- 28 For this and the corresponding portrait of St Augustine by Botticelli, see Stapleford 1994. For the 'Eyckian' portrait of St Jerome, now in the Detroit Institute of Arts and once thought to have been the property of Lorenzo de' Medici, see New York 1994b, no. 1. For its influence on Florentine imagery of the scholar in his study, see Garzelli 1984, and cats 1, 13.
- 29 Michelini Tocci n. d.

A note on further reading

There is no very recent general account of Italian Renaissance book illumination. The reader is referred to M. Salmi, *Italian Miniatures*, London, 1957, now out of print, and J. J. G. Alexander, *Italian Renaissance Miniatures*, New York, London, 1977. For more recent general accounts of European manuscript illumination see J. Backhouse, *The Illuminated Manuscript*, Oxford, 1979; O. Pächt, *Book Illumination in the Middle Ages, An Introduction*, London, 1986; C. de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, Oxford, 1986; J. J. G. Alexander, *Medieval illuminators and their methods of work*, New Haven, 1993. For technical terms and texts M. P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: a Guide to Technical Terms*, London, 1994, may be consulted. The techniques and materials used by medieval scribes and illuminators are described by C. de Hamel, *Medieval Craftsmen. Scribes and illuminators*, Toronto, London, 1992.

The most important accounts of Italian regional schools of illumination are as follows. For Milan: Toesca, 1912 and Malaguzzi Valeri, 1913-23. For Venice: Mariani Canova, 1969; Armstrong, 1981. For Ferrara: Hermann, 1900. For Florence: Garzelli and de la Mare, 1985. For Naples: de Marinis, 1947-52 and 1969; Putaturo Murano, 1973. Full references to these works are in the Bibliography, pp. 258-67.

The Italian Renaissance Miniature

By Giordana Mariani Canova

'A ogni libro si faccia uno principio magnifico
secondo che merita questa bibbia'
Contract for the Bible of Duke Borso
d'Este, 1455

The Italian Renaissance not only transmitted its message through the ostentatious public display of monumental art in the squares and churches of Italian towns and in the public rooms of Italian princely palaces, but also through books destined for a much more limited, elitist consumption. The illuminators were extraordinarily successful at keeping up with the latest developments in painting, such as the use of perspective and light, narrative realism and the revival of Antique art. Even painters of the first rank worked as illuminators, thus providing highly innovative examples for the professional illuminators. The texts, both manuscripts and printed books, that were selected for illumination were above all by the Latin writers, favoured by humanist culture, and the Italian poets Dante and Petrarch, as well as the works written by humanists for their friends and patrons. The most splendid manuscripts and incunabula were illuminated in those court circles where princes were keen to establish extensive libraries that would serve as testimony not only to their culture and taste but to their ability to govern with the wisdom of the Ancients and the shrewdness of the modern world. Venice alone may be considered a real *respublica librorum* since, though lacking a court library, it nonetheless enjoyed an immense patrimony of illuminated books distributed among the most influential and cultured patricians of the city. The illuminated book in the Italian Renaissance was the manifestation of a learned and secular culture; it conferred enormous prestige and was proudly displayed by the ruling classes. Naturally small Books of Hours made for private religious devotion also started to be illuminated in the new Renaissance style and the great churches and religious orders too began to replace their service books, especially the Choir Books used for the Mass and daily Offices. Such changes were provoked not only by developments in style which made the medieval miniature seem dated, but by an acceptance on the part of religious orders of humanistic culture and art as a means of improving the strict observance of their rules. Given the wide variations in figurative art, roughly corresponding to the various *signorie* spread throughout Italy, it is possible to recognize different schools of illumination which, however, often overlap due to the illuminators' mobility and the circulation of manuscripts.

It is essential to take Florence, cradle of humanism and Renaissance art, as a starting point for an overview of the Italian Renaissance miniature. Here experiments in letters *all'antica* decorated with *bianchi girari*, the white vine-stem motif typical of Tuscan manuscripts of the 11th and 12th centuries, had been taking place since the beginning of the 15th century. Florentine Renaissance painting was already widely established by the 1440s, and the workshops of the *cartolai* were busy producing humanist manuscripts which were then entrusted to particular illuminators. The workshop owned by Vespasiano da Bisticci in particular specialised in high-quality manuscripts destined for the court of the Medici and for a vast Italian and even international clientele. Florentine humanist manuscripts are easily distinguished by their frontis-

pieces, which are characterised by well-proportioned borders of *bianchi girari* inhabited by animals and Classical putti, by the owners' coats of arms at the bottom, and by abbreviated scenes inserted in the initial letters and in the medallions within the borders. The effect is principally decorative, but even on this small scale the illuminators could also paint impressive portraits, lively narrative scenes and imaginative fantasies *all'antica*, the latter sometimes based on Roman cameos preserved in the Medici collection (cats 3, 76). This is evident in a Cicero by Ricciardo di Nanni for Giovanni de' Medici and a 1458 Pliny by Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico (cats 34, 50). A highly skilled painter of the same period, Francesco Pesellino, added superb full-page miniatures, such as that of Mars in a chariot (fig. 11), to a *De bello punico* by Silius Italicus, which is also decorated with a *bianchi girari* border.¹ Evocations of the festive life of Florence can be seen in the illuminations of copies of



11 Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. XII.68. Detached leaf. Attributed to Francesco Pesellino. *The Triumph of Mars*



12 Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, Ms. S. XV.I, fol. 29, Plutarch, *Lives*, Julius Caesar

Petrarch's *Trionfi* by Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico of 1456 (cat. 59) and by Apollonio di Giovanni.² The latter also transferred the liveliness of Florentine cassone painting to a richly illustrated Virgil.³

Panel and fresco painting often influenced the large historiated initials of the Choir Books commissioned by the Medici for powerful religious communities. Zanobi Strozzi reproduced the style of Fra Angelico, himself an illuminator, in the Choir Books for San Marco and for the Cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore.⁴ Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico exemplifies the extreme skill and lively narrative typical of Florentine painting in the third quarter of the Quattrocento in the Choir Books of the Badia at Fiesole⁵ and those of the Cathedral, made in collaboration with Zanobi and continued after his death.

Florence, with its permanent manuscript workshops and vast production, was unique. In all other Italian towns the clientele and activity of illuminators were more restricted, which resulted in the development of an itinerant miniaturist community, moving about the country in response to demand. In Siena, probably in the early 1440s, Giovanni di Paolo and Sassetta illuminated a Dante for Alfonso of Aragon, translating the text into spirited and subtly coloured images.⁶ An analogous pathos, typically Siennese, appears in an Antiphony for the Augustinian hermits of Lecceto, likewise illuminated by Giovanni di Paolo.⁷

In north-east Italy early signs of a *renovatio* in miniature painting can be found at the court of Leonello d'Este (r. 1441–1450) in Ferrara. This cultured nobleman, educated by the great Veronese humanist Guarino Guarini, admired the proto-Renaissance northern Italian style of Pisanello and Jacopo Bellini. Nevertheless, he summoned to Ferrara Agnolo da Siena, known as Maccagnino, a Tuscan painter and probably a follower of the new style, to paint the Muses, now lost, in his *studiolo* at Belfiore. A similar experimental tendency is reflected in the miniatures Leonello commissioned. For his Breviary, of which only a few fragments have survived, he employed Matteo de' Pasti, painter, medallist and illuminator from Verona, who was a pupil of Pisanello.⁸ An illuminated Livy of 1450 made for Leonello by Marco dell'Avogaro, one of his favourite illuminators, combines borders of Tuscan *bianchi*

girari with emblems of the Este derived from the medals of Pisanello.⁹ A copy of the *Noctes Atticae* by Aulus Gellius, written in 1448 near Bologna, but with illumination signed by the Ferrarese artist Guglielmo Giraldi, combines ornamentation still in the style of Pisanello with initials *all'antica* (fig. 13).¹⁰ At the beginning of this manuscript is a town painted with pure and luminous perspective that represents a precocious example of Renaissance illumination in north-eastern Italy. The common denominator of all these examples is an extraordinary elegance that was to become typical of Ferrara.

Other important centres of humanistic illumination were the courts of the Malatesta, where Matteo de' Pasti, perhaps recommended by Ciriaco d'Ancona or by Leonello, was employed in connection with the Tempio Malatestiano, which was being erected at this time to the designs of Leon Battista Alberti. Matteo's hand is perhaps recognisable in the Pisanellesque portrait heads in a copy of Plutarch's *Lives* executed c. 1450 for Domenico Malatesta Novello, Lord of Cesena, humanist prince and friend of Leonello (fig. 12).¹¹ Various copies of Basinio da Parma's *Hesperis*, written and illuminated at the Riminese court in the 1450s and 1460s (cat. 30), belong to the same stylistic climate.¹² By contrast, in a superb *De civitate Dei* written in 1450, an illuminator – perhaps Taddeo Crivelli of Ferrara – uses, for the first time in north-eastern Italy, the perspective, Classicism and clarity of Alberti.¹³

This strongly humanistic culture came to an end in Ferrara with the death of Leonello in 1450, as his brother and successor Borso was more inclined to a decidedly modern yet much more courtly and whimsical style. Between 1455 and 1461 he commissioned a magnificent two volume Bible, illuminated by a group of artists headed by Taddeo Crivelli and Franco dei Russi, at that time young avant-garde masters (figs 3, 14–17).¹⁴ The manuscript, one of the masterpieces of Italian Renaissance illumination, exhibits lush floral decoration in the borders with coats of arms and devices of the Este. The countless small vignettes narrate the history of the people and Kings of Israel as if they were the adventures of an aristocratic and highly refined society, a mirror of Borso's court. The perspectival constructions are by this time impeccable and the elegantly dressed characters inhabit light, Alberti-style buildings or delightful landscapes. The style is reminiscent of the part of the *studiolo* at Belfiore executed for Borso, and particularly of the paintings of Michele Pannonio an artist whom Taddeo Crivelli emulates so closely as to be almost his alter ego. Other illuminators, among them Giorgio d'Alemagna and Guglielmo Giraldi, worked with the major masters. D'Alemagna had already worked for Leonello in a style similar to Matteo de' Pasti, and had produced a Missal for Borso.¹⁵ Giraldi's composed youthful style probably derived from his familiarity with Piero della Francesca's work. We can also see in Borso's Bible the early style of Girolamo da Cremona, an illuminator who was to enjoy a major career in various parts of Italy. He worked on several sections, probably among them the two for which Marco dell'Avogaro received payment. From this we can deduce that Marco was the young illuminator's master. Girolamo's innovative Renaissance style seems to derive from Venetian and Lombard art combined with a new Classicism.

Borso's Bible was fundamental to the development of Renaissance illumination in North Italy. After the completion of the project, masters such as Girolamo da Cremona and Franco dei Russi moved to Lombardy and the Veneto. Guglielmo Giraldi, together with Giorgio d'Alemagna, illustrated a magnificent Virgil transcribed by the Venetian nobleman Leonardo Sanudo in Ferrara in 1458 (cat. 42). Taddeo Crivelli illuminated with great refinement

an elegant copy of the *Decameron* in 1467 for Teofilo Calcagnini, one of Borso's trusted counsellors (cat. 110), and at the same period two Books of Hours (cats 111, 112). Towards the 1460s, a style very similar to that of Cosimo Tura appeared, as is evident in a Choir Book in the Osservanza convent in Cesena, and in a series of beautiful historiated initials from Choir Books now dispersed in various collections (fig. 18).¹⁶

Humanistic illumination in the Veneto is remarkable for its high quality and for its antiquarian and classicising spirit, more intense than anywhere else in Italy. In the Veneto, the passion for the Antique was well established as more than a purely intellectual exer-

cise, taking the form of a search for actual physical artifacts. Already by the 14th century, when Petrarch was residing at the court of the Carrara in Padua, Antique coins and marbles were circulating. In 1436, the Bishop of Padua, Pietro Donato, brought back important Carolingian manuscripts from the Council of Basel, such as a *Chronica* by Eusebius¹⁷ as well as copies of Late Antique illustrated texts, such as the *Notitia dignitatum*.¹⁸ These and similar examples circulating in the Veneto probably had a great influence on the creation of early Venetian miniatures *all'antica*. An example is a Caesar from the 1440s of probable Paduan origin.¹⁹ We also find a type of interlace initial *all'antica*, a *cappio intrecciato*,



which imitated those found in Carolingian and Romanesque North Italian manuscripts and which circulated in the humanist milieu of Francesco Barbaro by the 1430s. The high quality and innovative style of Renaissance illumination in the Veneto was assured by the direct participation of famous painters. Mantegna's antiquarian researches and the drawings of Jacopo Bellini especially influenced the illuminators.

The birth of the Renaissance miniature in the Veneto is signalled by an illumination of the *Christ Child*, either by Mantegna himself or by his rival Niccolò Pizzolo, in a *Chronica* by Eusebius dated 1450 and copied from Bishop Donato's manuscript (fig. 19).²⁰ Two

superb manuscripts with large miniatures, given by the Venetian nobleman Jacopo Antonio Marcello to his friend King René of Anjou, are possibly by one of the Bellini, or at least from their workshop. The first, the *Passio S. Mauritii* of 1452-3²¹ is very close to the style of Jacopo Bellini, and the second, a copy dated 1459 of Strabo's *Geographia*, newly translated by Guarino, may represent in its frontispieces the early work of Giovanni Bellini (cat. 29), who was working at the time with his father on the Gattamelata altarpiece in Sant' Antonio, Padua. Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*,²² given by Marcello to King René of Anjou in 1457, inaugurates the taste for antiquarian illumination in the Veneto and contains the first dated



14 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, VG 12 (Lat. 422). Bible of Borso d'Este. Vol. 1, fol. 88v. Opening of Joshua

example of the so-called *littera mantiniana*, or faceted initial, made in the form of a Roman capital letter as if cast in metal. The manuscript was copied by the great Paduan scribe Bartolomeo Sanvito, who principally produced small manuscripts destined for private reading by sophisticated connoisseurs.

The illusionism of Paduan painting resulted in the so-called 'architectural frontispiece', in which the title and the beginning of the text are written in capital letters copied from those found on Classical monuments and in Antique codices. The earliest example is Solinus' *Polystoria*, copied in 1457 by Sanvito for the Venetian humanist and nobleman Bernardo Bembo.²³ Sanvito also tran-

scribed a Petrarch, whose illuminator, perhaps the Master of Marcello's Ptolemy, worked *all'antica*, using precious metals, gold and silver, on tinted parchment in the early 1460s (cat. 71). This master's style is characterised by a delicacy reminiscent of Bellini and by a Classical style that would become typical of later Veneto illumination.

In a similar way but with a more dynamic and expressionistic style, Marco Zoppo, a painter and follower of Squarcione, also invoked Antiquity in a Virgil copied by Sanvito in 1463 probably for the humanist Leonardo Sanudo (cat. 72). Franco dei Russi, newly arrived from Ferrara in 1463-4, created whimsical, colour-



ful compositions *all'antica* in, among other manuscripts, the *Oratio gratulatoria* written by Bernardo Bembo in honour of Doge Cristoforo Moro and copied by Sanvito (cat. 26). This Doge's solemn *promissione*, or oath, upon his 1462 election was illuminated on the other hand in Venice by Leonardo Bellini (cat. 27). He was very active in subsequent years (cat. 89), in a style close to that of his uncle, Jacopo, and of Giovanni Bellini. The influence of the Bellini painting style on illumination was clearly greater than has been recognised.

Towards the mid-1460s or shortly after, a group of Paduan artists executed poetic images of the constellations in a *De astronomia* by

Hyginus (cat. 51). Some of these invigorate the delicate style of the Sanvito Petrarch (cat. 71) with Zoppo's dramatic power; others relate to the Squarcionesque style of Schiavone. It is possible that among the illuminators working on these manuscripts of the 1450s and 1460s was Lauro Padovano, painter of several Antique-style tinted parchment leaves which are later mentioned by Bartolomeo Sanvito as being in his possession.

Perhaps in the second half of the 1460s Girolamo da Cremona arrived in the Veneto from Mantua, where he had gone after finishing Borso's Bible. He probably came to Padua to illustrate Choir Books for the Benedictine monasteries. His only signed miniature



probably was from one of these books (fig. 20),²⁴ while the Gradual and Antiphony of SS. Cosmas and Damian (cat. 123) was probably executed for the convent of the Misericordia. The vitality and complexity of culture in the Veneto is clear from this survey.

In Milan, at the court of Francesco Sforza (r. 1450-1466), the development of new Renaissance styles was slower because of the prestige of the local late Gothic tradition. In the devout and intimate atmosphere of the Duke's family, illumination concentrated on manuscripts of dynastic history, on Prayer Books, and on Classical and educational texts which were commissioned by Francesco

Sforza and his wife, Bianca Maria, for their children, Galeazzo Maria and Ippolita. In the 1450s and 1460s the illuminators continued the graceful style and narrative of the manuscripts from the Visconti period, and continued to develop the themes of portraiture and heraldic symbolism so popular in Lombardy. These elements were somewhat hesitantly combined with perspectival rules, derived in all probability from the architectural drawings of Antonio Averulino, known as Filarete, a Tuscan architect living in Milan and working for the court since 1451. A Cicero written in 1457 for Galeazzo Maria is particularly noteworthy because of its representation of a Renaissance palace in the manner of Filarete.²⁵



17 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, VG 12 (Lat. 423). Bible of Borso d'Este. Vol. II, fol. 208. Opening of Epistle to Timothy



18 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, M. 11.50.2.
Leaf from a Choir Book. All Saints

The Master of Ippolita Sforza, a refined illuminator who worked in the tradition of the Master of the Vitae Imperatorum, produced an exquisite Virgil for Ippolita Sforza on the occasion of her marriage to Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Calabria, in 1465 (cat. 11). He illuminated Classical texts as well as an elegant copy of the dance treatise *De pratica seu arte tripudii* by Guglielmo da Pesaro for Galeazzo Maria.²⁶ A representation of court life soon after the election of Galeazzo Maria in 1466 can be seen in copy of Mangiaria's *De impedimentis matrimonii* illuminated by another artist (cat. 14). In a *De sphaera*, probably executed in the 1460s at the Milanese court, the influence of contemporary French manuscripts is evident, along with the use of perspective, Lombard narrative and a sophisticated taste for astrology (cat. 18).

A more vigorous realism was to come from Brescia, a Lombard border town then under Venetian dominion, the birthplace of the painter Vincenzo Foppa. There Giovan Pietro Birago, who later would enjoy great success in Milan with his strong and expressive style, a real novelty in Lombardy, executed a Pontifical in the early 1460s.²⁷ The Pontifical combines Lombard naturalism dear to Foppa with the innovative style of painters such as Francesco Benaglio, working in neighbouring Verona. This language – somewhat crude, but full of strength and originality – was to appear again, once more influenced by Foppa, in the Choir Books executed and signed by Birago for the Cathedral of Brescia from 1469 to 1474.²⁸

In the 1460s the Renaissance style of miniature painting was also to be found at the Gonzaga court in Mantua, where Mantegna arrived in 1459. In 1461, Girolamo da Cremona replaced Belbello da Pavia, an artist working in a late Gothic style, as illuminator of the Missal of Barbara Gonzaga.²⁹ The Missal, completed by Girolamo over a long period of time, shows the artist growing steadily closer to Mantegna, a development culminating in the miniature of the *Ascension*, obviously influenced by the Gonzaga

triptych now in the Uffizi, Florence. In the copy of Boccaccio's *Filocolo* (cat. 22), written for Lodovico Gonzaga by Andreas de Laude in 1463–4, and in an almost contemporary Petrarch for Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga,³⁰ an illuminator, probably Pietro Guindaleri of Cremona, represents a monumental *urbs picta* constructed in perspective. The abundance of coloured marbles and the Classical solemnity of the architecture are evidently related to the architectural designs of Leon Battista Alberti and to his buildings in Mantua. Similar taste can be found in a Plautus illuminated for the Gonzaga by the Ferrarese artist Guglielmo Girdali (cat. 21). A magnificent Pliny from the 1470s clearly shows the influence of Alberti's architecture as well as of Mantegna's Camera Picta and Uffizi triptych.³¹ Interlace strapwork borders and letters *a cappio intrecciato*, originally from the Veneto, are characteristic of Mantuan art.

Mantegna's interest in the Ancient world was also to influence Felice Feliciano from Verona. Feliciano dedicated his life to the search for and the reproduction of Roman monuments and epigraphs, following the work of Ciriaco d'Ancona and the early antiquarians of the Veneto. He experimented, moreover, with new letter forms and ornamentation *all'antica*. His most important work is the *Collectio antiquitatum*, a collection of Roman inscriptions executed for Giovanni Marcanova, a doctor from Padua, and dedicated in 1465 to Domenico Malatesta Novello, Lord of Cesena (cats 66, 67). Veronese illumination, however, also followed a different trend. Liberale da Verona, who was working on the Choir Books for the monastery of Monteoliveto Maggiore,³² near Siena, as well as on other works, shows a linearity and expressionism which also seem to derive from Matteo de' Pasti. This was probably combined with a knowledge of the work of the Ferrarese artists, Michele Pannonio and Taddeo Crivelli, and, most of all, with a fascination for the painting and illumination of Giovanni di Paolo of Siena. From 1469 to 1475 Liberale worked on the Piccolomini Choir Books of the Cathedral of Siena, among the greatest masterpieces of Italian illumination for their quality and sumptuousness (cats 121–2). He collaborated from 1469–70 to 1474 with Girolamo da Cremona,³³ who, arriving from Mantua, was creating a style very close to that of Mantegna's Uffizi triptych in his initials. Girolamo, who had enclosed the miniature of the *Crucifixion* in the Gonzaga Missal in a jewelled frame, and who was well aware of Mantegna's predilection for painting jewellery, was probably the inventor of a precious style of bejewelled initials. This style was to have great success over all Italy (cats 46, 49). The partnership with Girolamo seems to have increased Mantegna's influence on Liberale, yet he shows a linearism and a fantastic imagination all his own. In his later illuminations of the Sienese Choir Books the figures in the initials are depicted with greater dynamism and plasticity, and they show a greater vigour and robustness, probably due to the influence of contemporary Sienese artists, in particular Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Francesco, whom we also know as an illuminator in the 1470s, for example in a *De animalibus*,³⁴ was in his turn influenced by Liberale.

In 1469–70 enterprising foreign printers, Johannes and Vindelino de Spira and Nicolaus Jenson (see cats 78, 81–89, 92–7, 102), introduced the art of printing to Venice, thus initiating a new and splendid chapter in the history of the miniature in the Veneto. For the Classical texts, often printed in large format, the illuminators created exquisite mythological scenes, elaborate architectural frontispieces with erudite images *all'antica*, and dynamic putti. The Master of the Putti, who worked for the Venetian aristocracy, seems to have been trained in the Bellini circle and influenced by Franco dei Russi, but at the same time his works

show that he had an interest in Zoppo's drawings and in the masters of the Paduan Hyginus (cat. 51). Examples in this vein are the mythological procession in a Livy printed in 1470³⁵ and in a Petrararch printed in 1472.³⁶ A Livy of 1469 (cat. 80) and a Pliny of 1472³⁷ contain fine examples of architectural frontispieces (see also page 42). In 1471 Johannes de Spira printed an Italian translation of the Bible by Niccolò Mallermi in two volumes. The influence of Borso's Bible is still perceptible in the miniatures of the copy signed by Franco dei Russi of Ferrara (cat. 82). In another copy (cat. 81) the Master of the Putti opens up the architectural frontispieces with perspectival and landscape views for the first time. They are reminiscent of Jacopo and Giovanni Bellini's drawings and combine with a lively narrative derived from Franco dei Russi and Girolamo da Cremona, whose work the artist had probably seen in the Gradual and Antiphony of SS. Cosmas and Damian (cat. 123). The Master of the Putti had many followers in Venice, among whom was the Master of the London Pliny, creator of a fine Pliny *Naturalis historia* printed in 1472 (fig. 246).³⁸ Another work in which the Master of the Putti collaborated with other illuminators is the *Columba* (cat. 70).

Paduan illumination maintained its strongly Classical character established in manuscripts copied by Bartolomeo Sanvito despite the great scribe's departure for the papal court in Rome. At this time, Bishop Jacopo Zeno of Padua was the major patron and Giovanni Vendramin was the most important illuminator. He is documented in the studio of Francesco Squarcione in 1466. In a 1469 printed edition of Pliny (cat. 78), he creates an architectural frontispiece with a sheet of parchment 'attached' at the top, perhaps even before the Master of the Putti's use of this motif. He combines *camaieu d'or* with the formal refinement and Bellini-like sentiment of the masters of the Paduan Hyginus and with the colour and inventiveness of Franco dei Russi. The fine scene of *Hercules and the Hydra* in a small Paduan manuscript dedicated to Ercole d'Este in 1472 (cat. 19) combines a strong taste for the Antique with a dynamic energy close to Zoppo's drawings, which were probably most admired in the early 1470s. Later he worked on an Antiphony in the Cathedral of Ferrara signed and dated 1482 (fig. 21).

In the 1460s late Gothic imagery and courtly style persisted in Italian Renaissance illumination, despite the recent adoption of perspectival constructions. But this initial experimental period ends in the 1470s, and is succeeded by in a phase of greater maturity. Great masters such as Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico, Francesco Rosselli, Mariano del Buono, Attavante degli Attavanti, Gherardo and Monte di Giovanni di Miniato and Boccardino the Elder, were at work in Florence. At first *bianchi girari* borders were elaborated on, for example in the Livy (cat. 68) illuminated by Mariano del Buono and Ricciardo di Nanni for the Hungarian humanist Janos Vitéz. Later the style of ornamentation was to change, becoming more elaborate, with Antique foliage, jewellery, medallions and cameos. These innovations were largely due to Girolamo da Cremona's 'precious style', evident in the Siense Choir Books and in a Breviary for the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, on which Girolamo worked with Mariano del Buono from 1473 to 1477.³⁹ Francesco Rosselli, who also worked on the Siense Choir Books, painted medallions *all'antica* and jewellery in an Aristotle belonging to Piero de' Medici (cat. 35). In the same period illustrations of increasing size appear, especially in liturgical manuscripts, which are related in style to Ghirlandaio and the circle of Verrocchio. Gherardo and Monte di Giovanni's first work, a Missal for Santa Maria Nuova, shows superb illustrated and decorated pages.⁴⁰

Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, who was building up an important library in his palace, was the major patron of the Florentine illuminators in the 1470s. Copies of works by Cristoforo Landino and by Poggio Bracciolini, illuminated by Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico, contain magnificent portraits of Federigo and of the humanist authors, as does a copy of Brunini illuminated by Francesco Rosselli (cats 36, 62, 64). Giovanni d'Antonio del Chierico and other Florentine artists, probably including Domenico Ghirlandaio, painted magnificent evocations of Italian Renaissance life in a great Bible,⁴¹ copied for Federigo da Montefeltro under the supervision of Vespasiano da Bisticci and illuminated between 1476 and 1478 (fig. 2). Other magnificent books were prepared in this period for King Ferdinand I of Naples (cat. 49). In the 1480s the Books of Hours executed for the Medici by Francesco Rosselli (cats 31, 32) show details close to Verrocchio's painting style. At the same time, opulent manuscripts with grandiose *mise-en-scènes* similar to those of actual paintings were produced for important foreign patrons. These include the Missal of 1483 for the Bishop of Dol (cat. 3) and the opulent Breviary for Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, both illuminated by Attavante, and the Didymus also for Corvinus (cat. 13), illuminated by Monte di Giovanni. Matthias Corvinus, an ardent humanist who was keen to build up a prestigious library of Italian manuscripts, commissioned a superb Bible from Gherardo and Monte in the same years.⁴² Another Bible, with commentary by Nicholas of Lyra, was executed for the King of Portugal by Attavante (cat. 1). In the second half of the 15th century Florence clearly led the rest of Italy in the field of book production with such prestigious codices.

Meanwhile, the papal court had become the centre of production of manuscripts illuminated in the Classical style thanks to the great scribe Bartolomeo Sanvito. He was in Rome from c. 1465 onwards, when Paul II, the Venetian Pietro Barbo, was elected Pope, and joined the household of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga there. For more than four decades, he indefatigably copied a vast number of manuscripts for Popes, Cardinals and others. The most important were illuminated by an artist who has sometimes been argued to be Sanvito himself. But since he did not illuminate the manuscripts he wrote from the beginning of his career, the artist has also been suggested to be Lauro Padovano, of whose work Sanvito owned examples. The artist in fact can now be identified as Gaspare da Padova (sometimes called Romano), documented as working on the Homer of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga written by



19 Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Ms. Cod. lat. IX. I. (3496), fol. 133v. Eusebius, *Chronica*. The Infant Jesus

Sanvito (cat. 39). He is also documented in 1480–5 in connection with Cardinal Giovanni d'Aragona in Rome, for whom he also illuminated manuscripts (cat. 41). The style of this master combines typical Paduan Classicism with the brilliant colours and narrative typical of Franco dei Russi during his period in the Veneto, and especially in his 1471 Bible (cat. 82). Domizio Calderino's *Commentary* on Juvenal, executed for Giovanni de' Medici in 1474, is a particularly significant example of his work.⁴³ Naturally, contact with the Roman world and its ruins accentuated the erudite character of this illuminator's art, in which the monumental architectural frontispieces are lavishly embellished with Antique references, coins, arms and sculptures. In the open landscapes within his frontispieces the master represents events from the Greek and Roman world with a marked Classicism comparable only to that of Mantegna (cats 39, 75). The texts are mainly Classical authors such as Homer, Aristotle, Virgil, Suetonius and Eusebius (cats 38, 74). The same artist seems to have illuminated a beautiful Petrarch copied by Sanvito and subsequently completed by Monte and Gherardo in Florence.⁴⁴ The manuscripts of Sanvito's later years, executed upon his return to the Veneto at the end of the 1490s, are illuminated in a similar, but poorer manner, which suggests that he had, for some unknown reason, lost his great collaborator and was consequently employing a follower or else illuminating the manuscripts himself.

From the 1470s to the mid-1490s Ferdinand I of Aragon, King of Naples (r. 1458–1494), built an increasingly important library. The illuminator Joachinus de Gigantibus moved from Rome to Naples and decorated many manuscripts with his unmistakable style of *bianchi girari*. At the same time, many luxury manuscripts were commissioned in Florence, such as the Livys illuminated by Francesco Rosselli (cat. 48), Mariano del Buono (cat. 49) and Gherardo and Monte (cat. 76). Others were superbly executed in Rome, according to the Classical Venetian taste of Sanvito's circle, such as



20 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 817–1894. Cutting. Signed by Girolamo da Cremona. Santa Giustina of Padua (?) disputing



21 Ferrara, Museo del Duomo, Antifonario II, fol. 4v. *Nativity*

the Josephus, the Valerius Maximus, and the Gregory the Great (cats 75, 41, 40). Another artist from the Veneto in addition to Gaspare da Padova also worked for the Aragonese court, the Master of the London Pliny, a follower of the Master of the Putti, who later updated his style after Girolamo da Cremona's period in the Veneto (cats 28, 46). Based on these foundations a Neapolitan court school arose which was somewhat eclectic and extremely decorative, exemplified above all by the artists Cola Rapicano, Cristoforo Maiorana and Matteo Felice (cats 9, 10, 12, 40–43, 55, 106).

Meanwhile in northern Italy and in Ferrara in particular, the death of Borso d'Este in 1471 and the rise to power of Duke Ercole I provoked an exodus of illuminators towards the Veneto, to neighbouring towns in Emilia and to Urbino. In Padua, an atelier of Paduan-Ferrarese illuminators illustrated a copy of the *Decretum Gratiani*, combining a Squarcionesque style with Ferrarese surrealism.⁴⁵ It was printed in Venice by Nicolaus Jenson in 1474 for the Ferrarese Abbot General of the Olivetans, Nicolò Roverella, who had close ties with Padua. The 1474 *Decretum Gratiani* is the first legal text printed in Venice, and was followed by a whole series of similar legal editions especially for use at the University of Padua. These editions were illustrated from the 1470s to the 1490s in the 'Roverella' style by various illuminators, notably Antonio Maria da Villafora, a master from the countryside around Ferrara who had emigrated to Padua and who worked especially for the Bishop of Padua, Pietro Barozzi, and for local monasteries. Among his late works are the *Epistolary* and *Evangelary* for Augustinian canons (cat. 7).

The most important illuminators from the Este court had moved elsewhere. Taddeo Crivelli and Martino da Modena, son of Giorgio d'Alemagna, illustrated the Graduals for San Petronio in Bologna, the former in 1476 and the latter in 1476–80.⁴⁶ In his initials Martino maintains his links with monumental painting, in particular with the Griffoni triptych executed for the same church in 1473 by Francesco Cossa and Ercole de' Roberti. His figures

acquire a greater freedom and dynamism at this point, anticipating the final phase of the North Italian Renaissance miniature. The next step is represented by the Choir Books of the Cathedral of Cesena, executed at the end of the 1480s, with their remarkably complex architectural frontispieces (cat. 125).

In 1478-80, Guglielmo Giraldi and collaborators illuminated a copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (cat. 58) in Urbino for Federigo da Montefeltro, in which the ample landscape settings of the episodes demonstrate their awareness of the Duke's Florentine Bible. Giraldi also illuminated pages in St. Paul's Epistles⁴⁷ (fig. 22) and in a Psalter.⁴⁸ In these he seems to combine Ferrarese style with a statuesque grandeur derived from Piero della Francesca and Berguete, then active in Urbino. A Gospels⁴⁹ should also be mentioned as well as some humanistic manuscripts⁵⁰ which constitute the Ferrarese section of Federigo's library. Other illuminators remained in Ferrara, including Jacopo Filippo Argenta, a follower of Tura and Giraldi, who executed the Choir Books of the Cathedral in the early 1480s with Martino da Modena and the Paduan Giovanni Vendramin (fig. 21).⁵¹

In the third quarter of the 15th century Venetian miniatures also became more varied and monumental. Once again, Giovanni Bellini seems to have been active as an illuminator, probably executing a portrait of the humanist Raffaele Zovenzoni in 1474.⁵² Here Bellini combines Venetian style with an Antique taste typical of the Veneto and shows the influence of Antonello da Messina, who was in Venice that same year. Also in the same year Girolamo da Cremona arrived in Venice from Florence, obviously attracted by the abundance of work offered by the Venetian printers, who were producing legal and philosophical works to be illuminated for the best aristocratic families as well as for the printers' patrons. In a 1475 *De civitate Dei* (cat. 93), Girolamo demonstrates his 'precious style' as well his continued use of Ferrarese and Mantegnesque elements. He in turn was influenced by illuminations from incunabules from the Veneto, as in the two volume Plutarch printed in 1478 (cat. 94-5), where he embellished the Venetian-style architectural frontispieces with the richness of his 'precious style' and imaginative touches typical of the Ferrarese school, and also created a new type of jewelled faceted initial. In another copy of the same edition of Plutarch (cat. 92), the Master of the London Pliny, aligns himself with Girolamo in a pleasing, though simplified manner.

It is questionable whether it is not Girolamo himself, as I am inclined to believe, rather than the Master of the London Pliny, as has been proposed (cat. 28), who in his Venetian phase was able to steep himself in the work of Giovanni Bellini and of Antonello da Messina. In any case such a stylistic debt appears clear if one considers the magnificent copy of Clement V's *Constitutiones*,⁵³ printed in 1476, and the beautiful St Jerome *Letters* (cat. 28), in both of which the artist deploys space in the manner of Antonello's San Cassiano altarpiece, and also uses the perspectival views traditional in Venetian incunabula. The frame in the Jerome is decorated with cameos *all'antica*, perhaps copied from Florentine manuscripts, together with Venetian 'cut' crystals.

Certainly the Master of the London Pliny, in his 'Girolamo phase' executed illuminations for Neapolitan patrons, and possibly even transferred to Naples or Rome. It should be noted that the 1478 edition of Plutarch (cats 92, 94, 95) was dedicated to Ferdinand of Aragon. The manuscripts include a Quintilian of 1482⁵⁴ and an Ovid (cat. 46), and their style in turn influenced a splendid Horace and an unfinished Pliny by a Neapolitan artist, perhaps to be identified as Giovanni Todeschino (cats 45, 106), that combine the Classicism of the Veneto, the 'precious style' and the taste for landscapes and luminous interiors.

Girolamo and some Ferrarese illuminators of the 'Roverella' style also worked together on a superb series of legal and philosophical incunabules, illuminated between 1477 and 1483 for Peter Ugelheimer, an important patron of Venetian printers (cat. 96-101). The Venetian miniature acquired a strong scenic quality in these works, probably due to the Veneto-Ferrarese illuminators' acquaintance with Ercole de' Roberti's contemporary paintings, his San Lorenzo altarpiece, now lost, and the 1481 altarpiece of Santa Maria in Porto in Ravenna. The Paduan Benedetto Bordon, who signed two of the Ugelheimer incunabules (cat. 97), shows a close relationship to the 'Roverella' style, albeit painting in a harsher manner. Girolamo da Cremona's late masterpiece is the 1483 Aristotle for Peter Ugelheimer (cat. 101).

In the 1480s Venice was also home to an illuminator whose style anticipated that of the Brescian illuminator Giovan Pietro Birago, as evidenced in his signed Milanese works of the 1490s. We can justifiably conclude that this artist was none other than Birago himself, who had already worked on the series of Choir Books in Brescia, and who was influenced by Girolamo da Cremona, Liberale, and above all Mantegna, with whom he was probably involved in the production of prints. In fact a group of prints exists in which one may recognise the same hand. Birago's main Venetian works were a Breviary printed by Jenson in 1481, with the Venetian Barozzi crest, and a *Legenda aurea*⁵⁵ executed for the Venetian nobleman Francesco Vendramin.



22 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. Lat. 18, fol. 1v. St Paul

As far as Verona is concerned, it is intriguing that there are no marked traces of Liberale after his return to his birthplace, but his style certainly influenced the illuminators working for the town's wealthy monasteries, notably the dai Libri masters, who alternated between illumination and painting. Francesco dai Libri was probably responsible for a Psalter, as well as some detached miniatures, an *Adoration of the Magi* and two splendid pages of the *Pietà* (cat. 114).⁵⁶ In these and other fragments of Choir Books for the Olivetans of Santa Maria in Organo, he shows the influence of Mantegna's Mantuan Uffizi triptych, and of his *Deposition* engraving. His son Girolamo uses a more modern style, close to that of the Veronese painter Domenico Morone, as seen in one of his signed initials (cat. 115).

In Lombardy the most important work in the early 1470s consisted of the Choir Books realised by Giovan Pietro Birago for the Cathedral at Brescia, showing a strong style already influenced by Foppa. In Milan, the miniaturist Cristoforo da Predi, known as il Muto, combined the refined traditions of the Milanese court, the taste for portraiture, and the use of Filarete-style architecture with Ferrarese influences and Birago's robust style, which he softened by a gentler sense of narrative. A signed illumination, from the early 1470s, is particularly worthy of mention, as are a New Testament, a 1476 *Life of Joachim and Anna* and a Choir Book for the Sacro Monte in Varese.⁵⁷

The great flowering of Renaissance miniature painting in Lombardy really began in the last twenty years of the 15th century, when Lodovico il Moro gave a new cultural and political impetus to the Dukedom. Bramante and Leonardo arrived in Milan at that time, and the arts acquired a new vitality. An *Epithalium*⁵⁸ by Marliani for the brief betrothal (1487-90) between Bianca Maria Sforza and Giovanni, son of Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, has a portrait already showing the influence of Leonardo, which can be attributed to Ambrogio da Predi, Leonardo's first collaborator. A whole workshop of Milanese miniaturists apparently went to Buda for the occasion. One of them signed his name 'Francesco da Castello Italico' in the Breviary of the Hungarian Domenico Kalmanecsehi.⁵⁹ The most important manuscripts executed for Matthias Corvinus' library contain elements of the Lombard and Ferrarese traditions combined with a formalism, a complex *mise-en-scène* and a decorative richness probably derived from the King's Florentine manuscripts. Examples are a beautiful copy of Filarete's *De architectura* (fig. 8) and a Cassian.⁶⁰

After the marriage in 1491 of Lodovico il Moro to Beatrice d'Este, and Lodovico's succession to the Dukedom in 1494, the couple's strong impulse towards self-glorification and their desire for a life of pomp and high culture gave impetus to the production of panegyrics and sumptuous books of devotion illuminated by the best artists available. In line with Lombard tradition, the most common images are the ducal portraits, scenes of court and town life, coats of arms and crests. In terms of style, two often interconnecting tendencies are discernible. One of these is markedly Mantegnesque and classicising in the manner of Birago, active at the court after his highly innovative period probably spent in the Veneto. The other shows the naturalism of the Lombard tradition of Cristoforo da Predi and of painters like Zenale and Bergognone, who were working in the style of Foppa. At first the influence of Bramante and Leonardo is merely suggested, but it becomes more apparent at the end of the century. Birago seems to have started his Milanese career with the illustration of three copies, one of which is signed, of the Italian translation of the *Sforziada*, printed in Milan in 1490 (cat. 16).⁶¹ The signed fragment showing Francesco Sforza with Classical warriors was probably part of a lost, perhaps manu-

script copy.⁶² Other important works include Bona Sforza's opulent Book of Hours,⁶³ Birago's masterpiece which he left unfinished in 1495 on the Duchess' departure for France, and a very small Book of Hours⁶⁴ executed for Charles VIII of France when he arrived in Milan in 1494. The 1491 marriage contract between Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice d'Este combines Biragesque ornamentation with echoes of Leonardo.⁶⁵ The *Romance of Paolo and Daria*⁶⁶ of 1493-4 and the copy of Lodovico's *Donations* (cat. 17) to the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie exhibit a narrative fluency in the manner of Bergognone and an architectural illusionism derived from Bramante and Bramantino. In the Missal of Archbishop Arcimboldi,⁶⁷ many masters are at work, among them probably Matteo da Milano, who enjoyed great success later in Ferrara and Rome.

In 1496-7 Birago, in his mature phase, worked with another illuminator on two manuscripts which continue the Sforza tradition of commissioning educational works. The first is a grammar book (fig. 5) for Massimiliano, Lodovico's young son.⁶⁸ In the *Liber Jesus*, also executed for Massimiliano, the softness of the painting and the idealisation of the refined portraits are much closer to the style of Leonardo.⁶⁹ We can only speak of the emergence of a real Leonardesque style much later, in the first decades of the 16th century, with the Choir Books of the monastery of Villanova Sillaro, illuminated by a Master B. F., supposedly Francesco Binasco. Initials cut from these Choir Books are now scattered in many collections (cat. 116).⁷⁰

In 1494, Charles VIII came to Italy for the first time with the French army, and in 1499 Louis XII invaded the Dukedom of Milan. In 1527 Rome was sacked by the mercenary soldiers of Emperor Charles V. This tormented period was the last Golden Age of the Italian Renaissance miniature. Humanistic culture was already on the wane, and the new interest in spiritual and religious matters was responsible for a revival of liturgical manuscripts and of books for private prayer. Books increasingly became precious objects, to be looked at with awe and admiration, and as the workshops of the manuscript book trade declined, the illuminators became painters of the exquisite on a miniature scale originally developed for the pages of books. The origins of the new North Italian style coincided with the *maniera moderna* imported by artists who increasingly travelled to papal Rome; the style was augmented by the presence of Pietro Perugino and of his work in Emilia from just before the middle of the 1490s. Perugino himself and the Bolognese painters Amico Aspertini and Lorenzo Costa worked together on the Ghislieri Book of Hours (cat. 117), executed in Bologna towards the end of the century. In these miniatures, the style becomes freer and softer, but the older Emilian expressionism is still strong. The illuminator Matteo da Milano, who fled from Milan probably after il Moro's fall in 1499, also worked on the Ghislieri Book of Hours, transforming his Milanese style into something more flexible and modern. Almost contemporary is the Book of Hours illuminated by Girolamo Pagliarolo for Giovanni II Bentivoglio (cat. 24). The idiosyncratic style of the Book of Hours illuminated probably in Ferrara towards the end of the century for Galeotto Pico della Mirandola (cat. 25) suggests that it was made by Francesco Maineri. Matteo da Milano is also documented at the court of Ferrara, where he executed a large Breviary commissioned by Ercole d'Este and finished for his brother Alfonso.⁷¹ In this splendid manuscript he used Flemish-style decoration and an imaginative style close to that of Birago, yet interpreted in the *maniera moderna* (fig. 4). He also produced an extraordinary Book of Hours for Alfonso I,⁷² and in collaboration with other illuminators executed a Missal for Cardinal Ippolito d'Este.⁷³

One of his late works has recently been identified in a Missal for Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (cat. 128).

Towards the end of the 15th century Francesco Marmitta of Parma, one of the most brilliant Italian illuminators, worked in a way comparable, although more sophisticated and aristocratic, to that of Aspertini. His works include a Book of Hours, a copy of Petrarch's Triumphs and a Missal donated to Turin Cathedral by Cardinal Domenico della Rovere.⁷⁴ Francesco Bettini of Verona, who signed some illuminations in another volume of this Missal (cat. 6), was probably part of the same circle. His style echoes that of Liberale da Verona and Francesco dai Libri with links to that of Marmitta, but seems close to that of the Paris *Cassian* executed by the illuminators of Francesco da Castello's Lombard workshop. Some documents even seem to associate him with this group.

Fra Antonio da Monza, who worked in the Franciscan convent of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Rome, signed a page with the *Pentecost*

(cat. 119), still very much in the vein of the Milanese followers of Leonardo, while his Antiphony of the same convent shows a greater acceptance of the contemporary Roman style (cat. 126). In the Veneto the *maniera moderna* began to appear somewhat timidly in a Lucian printed in 1494 (cat. 104), illustrated in Venice by the Paduan miniaturist Benedetto Bordon. Subsequently Bordon shows a familiarity with 16th-century painting, as seen in the Evangeliary for Santa Giustina in Padua (cat. 118). But the true protagonist of the new developments was the Dalmatian Giulio Clovio. Working for Cardinals Grimani and Farnese, he went beyond the *maniera moderna* to reach new expressiveness in a style which is truly that of Mannerism (cats 132-5). It was his impassioned and dramatic style which anticipated the spiritual crisis that was to trouble Europe in the years to come, and which was destined to put an end to a period in the history of illumination which had begun in the serene climate of humanism.

- 1 Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. XII, 68 [=4519]. For Pesellino, see Florence 1990.
- 2 Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 1129; Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, pp. 41-8.
- 3 Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 492; Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, pp. 41-8.
- 4 Florence, Biblioteca di San Marco, esp. nos 515, 516, 521, 524; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Edili 149, 150, 151; Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, pp. 11-24.
- 5 Florence, Archivio Capitolare di San Lorenzo, Corali 201 B, 202 C, 203 D, 205 F, 207 H, 208 I, 209 K; Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, pp. 11-24.
- 6 London, British Library, Yates Thompson MS 36; Pope-Hennessy 1993.
- 7 Siena, Biblioteca Comunale, MS G.I.8; Vailati Schoenburg Waldenburg 1990, pp. 331-572. For Siense illumination, see also New York 1988.
- 8 Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Typ 301; Milan 1991, no. 49.
- 9 Private collection; Milan 1991, no. 30 and pp. 129-40.
- 10 Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS S.P. 10/28 (formerly Gallarati Scotti 1); Milan 1991, nos 9, 31, pp. 70-2, 141-6.
- 11 Cesena; for Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, S. XV.1 and S. XV.2, see esp. Lollini, 'Le *Vitae* di Plutarco alla Malatestiana', in *Libreria Domini*; forthcoming; Milan 1991, pp. 121-9.
- 12 Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 630; Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 6043.
- 13 Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, D. XI.1; Milan 1991, no. 80.
- 14 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS Lat. 422, 423; Venturi 1937, 1961; Rosenberg 1981; Toniolo 1990-3; Mariani Canova in Milan 1991, pp. 87-117.
- 15 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS Lat. 239; Milan 1991, no. 86.
- 16 Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, Bessarione 4; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 11.50.1-4. For the Choir Books, see Mariani Canova 1977; Cesena 1989, nos 2, 4, 6. For the dispersed initials, see Milan 1991, no. 82.
- 17 Oxford, Merton College, MS 315; London and New York 1992, no. 7.
- 18 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Misc. 378; Alexander 1976, pp. 11-19.
- 19 London, British Library, Harley MS 2683; Conti 1979, pp. 67-76.
- 20 Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. IX.1 [=2436]; see note 17 above.
- 21 Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 940; Meiss 1957; London and New York 1993, no. 10.
- 22 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, latin 17542; Meiss 1957, pp. 57-9. For the *littera mantiniana*, see also Alexander 1988 b.
- 23 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Class. Lat. 161; Pächt and Alexander 1970, no. 603. For the architectural frontispiece, see Corbett 1964.
- 24 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 817-1894; Mariani Canova 1984 a.
- 25 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, latin 8523; Paris 1984, no. 132.
- 26 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ital. 973; Paris 1984, no. 135.
- 27 Brescia, Biblioteca Queriniana, Lat. III.11; Wescher 1968; Mariani Canova 1985, pp. 171-92; Casato 1990-1.
- 28 Brescia, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Corali 20-35.
- 29 Mantua, Archivio Capitolare; Pastore and Manzoli 1991.
- 30 London, British Library, Harley MS 3567. Malibu, New York and London 1983-4, no. 11.
- 31 Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, I-I, 22-23; Conti 1988-9, pp. 264-77.
- 32 Chiusi, Cathedral, Corali A, Q, Y; see the 'Codici Olivetani' in Florence 1982, pp. 253-536.
- 33 Siena, Cathedral, Libreria Piccolomini, esp. Corale 23.8.
- 34 Siena, Museo Aurelio Castelli, inv. 3. For Francesco di Giorgio, see Siena 1993.
- 35 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Inc. 5.C.9; Mariani Canova 1969, no. 40, fig. 39; Armstrong 1981, no. 3, figs 3-5.
- 36 Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, Inc. Petr. 2; Mariani Canova 1969, no. 45, pl. 7, fig. 53; Armstrong 1981, no. 21, figs 54, 55.
- 37 Padua, Biblioteca del Seminario; Mariani Canova 1969, no. 42, pl. 6, figs 42-52; Armstrong 1981, no. 14, figs 23-7.
- 38 London, British Library, IC. 19662; Armstrong 1981, no. 36, figs 74-87.
- 39 Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, MS 68; Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, pp. 203-4.
- 40 Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, MS 67; Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, p. 285.
- 41 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 1-2; Garzelli 1977.
- 42 Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, 15, 17; Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, pp. 303-4.
- 43 Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, 53, 2; Bauer-Eberhardt 1989, no. 9, fig. 5.
- 44 Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS 755; Bauer-Eberhardt 1989, no. 24.
- 45 Ferrara, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica di Palazzo Schifanoia; Mariani Canova 1988 b, pp. 14-69.
- 46 Bologna, Museo di San Petronio, Corali 1-X; Mariani Canova 1984 c, pp. 249-68.
- 47 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 18; Hermanin 1900, pp. 342, 356, 372, fig. 13; Bonicatti 1957, pp. 21-3, 174-5, fig. 35.
- 48 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 19.
- 49 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 10; Cologne 1992, no. 70.
- 50 For example Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 308, 337, 411.
- 51 Ferrara, Museo del Duomo; Giovannucci Vigi 1989.
- 52 Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, no shelf mark; Fletcher 1991.

- 53 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Vélins 390; Mariani Canova 1969, no. 75, fig. 69; Armstrong 1981, no. 42, fig. 116.
- 54 Valencia, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 292 (G. 1903); Armstrong 1981, no. 50, figs 102, 119.
- 55 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Inc. 4. H. 63; Warsaw, Biblioteka Narodowa, MS B.O.Z. 11; Mariani Canova 1969, pp. 136-40; Alexander 1969a, pp. 13-16.
- 56 Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, MS 2161; Paris, Musée Marmottan, Wildenstein Collection; London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, Princes Gate Collection 346. For Francesco dai Libri, see Verona 1986, pp. 32-34.
- 57 London, Wallace Collection, M. 342; Alexander 1980, no. 21, pl. II. Turin, Biblioteca Reale, MS Varia 124; Rome 1953, no. 649. Varese, Sacro Monte.
- 58 Volterra, Biblioteca Guarnacci, MS 49.3.7; Suida 1959, pp. 67-73; Cogliati Arano 1979, pp. 53-62.
- 59 Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Clmae 446; Daneu Lattanzi 1972; Csapodi-Gárdonyi 1978.
- 60 Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. VIII.2 [= 2796]; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, latin 2129. See also notes 58-9, above.
- 61 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Vélins 724, for Galeazzo Maria Sforza; Warsaw, Biblioteka Narodowa, Inc. F. 1347, signed, for the Sanseverino.
- 62 Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, Gabinetto di Disegni e Stampe, 4423-4430, 843; Milan 1958, no. 453.
- 63 London, British Library, Additional MS 34294; Evans 1992.
- 64 Venice, Fondazione Cini, 2502; Mariani Canova 1978a, pp. 70-72.
- 65 London, British Library, Additional MS 21413; Malibu, New York and London 1984, no. 14.
- 66 Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 C 27; Mulas 1991, pp. 133-212.
- 67 Milan, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS II.D.1.13; Lodigiani 1991.
- 68 Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, MS 2167; G. Bologna 1980.
- 69 Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, MS 2163; G. Bologna 1980.
- 70 For example Lodi, Museo Diocesano d'Arte Sacra; Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett: 626, 1246, 4213-4, 14610. Alexander 1991b.
- 71 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS Lat. 424, and Zagreb, Strossmayerova Galerija; Alexander 1992, pp. 32-4; Toniolo 1993; Bauer-Eberhardt 1993.
- 72 Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, LA 149. Zagreb, Strossmayerova Galerija; Toniolo 1989.
- 73 Innsbruck, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. 43; see note 71.
- 74 Genoa, Biblioteca Berio, MS s.s.; Kassel, Landesbibliothek, Cod. poet. 4.6; Turin, Museo Civico, no shelf mark (Messale del Duomo); Quazza 1990.

The Hand-Illumination of Printed Books in Italy 1465-1515

By Lilian Armstrong

'Pell'arte mia non si fa più niente . . .
Pell'arte mia è finita per l'amore de' libri,
che si fanno in forma che non si miniano più'
Bernardino di Michele Cignoni,
Siena, 1491¹

One of the least well-known artistic phenomena of the Italian Renaissance is the hand-illuminated printed book. The splendid examples in the present exhibition rival the most spectacular illuminated manuscripts of the same period, and indeed show some formal innovations that appear only later in the monumental arts. Understanding the hand-illuminated printed book requires knowledge of the history of printing; of the miniaturists who decorated incunables (that is, all books printed before the end of 1500); and of the patrons who acquired these beautiful books.

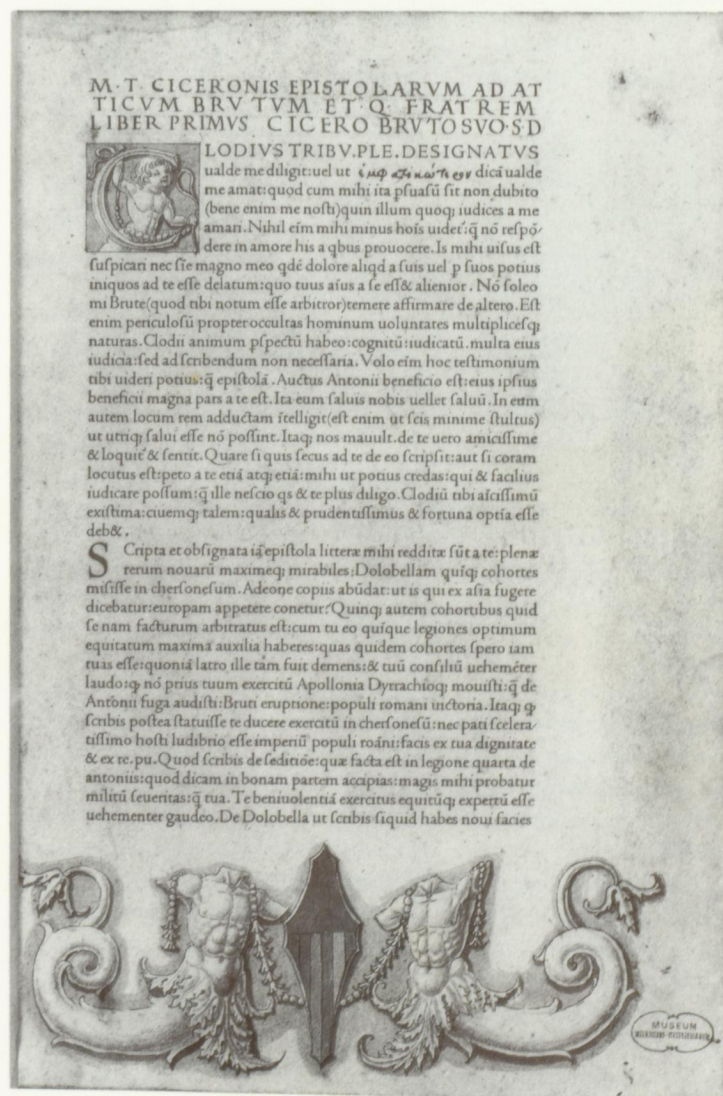
Printing in Italy, especially in Venice

In 1465 the German invention of printing with movable types was brought to the Benedictine monastery at Subiaco, outside of Rome.² Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz printed four editions there before moving to Rome, where they were active until 1473. Another German, Johannes de Spira, obtained a privilege in 1469 to be the sole person permitted to print in Venice, and brought out his first book there in that year.³ The privilege expired with Johannes' death in 1470, but his brother Vindelinius continued the printing business. Almost immediately other printers established themselves in Venice, the most successful of whom was a Frenchman named Nicolaus Jenson (c. 1435-1480), who printed from 1470 to 1480.⁴ Printing presses soon began operating elsewhere; Milan, Florence, Naples and Bologna all record a book printed in 1471, and other cities down the length of the peninsula followed.⁵ The industry grew with amazing rapidity, especially in Venice. Between 1469 and 1474 some 15 firms had printed over 130 editions in Venice; by 1480 about 50 printers are recorded; by 1500 about 3,500 editions had appeared there, making Venice the most important center for printing in all of Europe.⁶

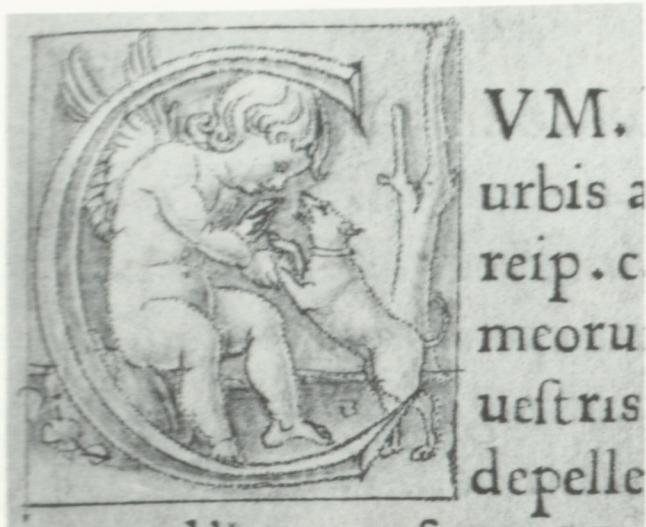
Initially the printers in Rome and Venice specialised in editions of Classical and Patristic texts. Multiple editions of the works of Cicero (cat. 79; figs 23, 24a), Livy (cats 80, 83; fig. 25), Pliny the Elder (cat. 78; fig. 24b), Quintilian, Caesar, Suetonius, Virgil (cat. 90), Martial, Juvenal, Macrobius, Augustine (cat. 93), Eusebius, Lactantius, and others poured onto a market formerly accustomed to far fewer copies of such works.

After the mid-1470s the situation changed substantially in Venice. Successful printers such as Nicolaus Jenson had realised the limitations of printing the classics, and had shifted to editions of law and theology for which the universities provided a ready market.⁷ Bibles, liturgical books, and books in Italian emerged as popular items (cats 84-7, 89, 103; fig. 30). Though never absent from the offerings of the Italian presses, editions of Classical writers, such as Jenson's impressive 1478 edition of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (cats 92, 94, 95, 102; figs 24c, 24d), were overshadowed by books for which there was greater demand. In the 1480s and 1490s many printers specialised in particular genres of text, often reprinting editions previously printed by themselves or others.

Nicolaus Jenson was not only the most successful printer in Venice in the 1470s, but his books set a very high standard for typographic design. Although Sweynheym and Pannartz in Rome and the de Spira brothers in Venice used Roman type, Jenson's Roman fonts were of unequalled beauty both for the lower case and capitals letters (cats 84-6, 92-5, 102; fig. 23). Classical texts printed in the handsome Roman fonts were laid out in single blocks of text on folios with wide margins. After Jenson's death in 1480 few printers could match the beauty of his editions, and some who tried used



23 The Hague, Rijksmuseum Meermanno-Westreenianum, 2D 42, fol. 1. Cicero, *Epistolae ad Brutum* (Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1470). Frontispiece with Priuli arms, attributed to the Putti Master



24a Trento, Biblioteca Comunale, Inc. 408, fol. 99. Cicero, *Orationes* (Venice, Cristoforo Valdarfer, 1471). Putto and a dog, attributed to the Putti Master



24b London, British Library, IC 19662, Book XXXV. Pliny, *Historia naturalis* (Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1472). Sculptor, attributed to the Master of the London Pliny

Jenson's own fonts. Johannes Herbolt and Andrea Torresanus de Asula in Venice emulated Jenson's type and lay-out, as did Antonio Zarotto in Milan (cats 16, 99-101).

In the 1490s, printing innovations lay with the design of woodcuts for book illustration, which had been resisted earlier by Venetian printers (see pp. 45-6). Towards the end of the decade, Aldus Manutius (c. 1450-1515) revived many aspects of fine printing, and his fame to this day rests not only on his editions in Greek, but also on his refined italic fonts and on the small 'pocket-book' format for Classical texts (fig. 32).⁸

Hand-Work in Italian Incunables

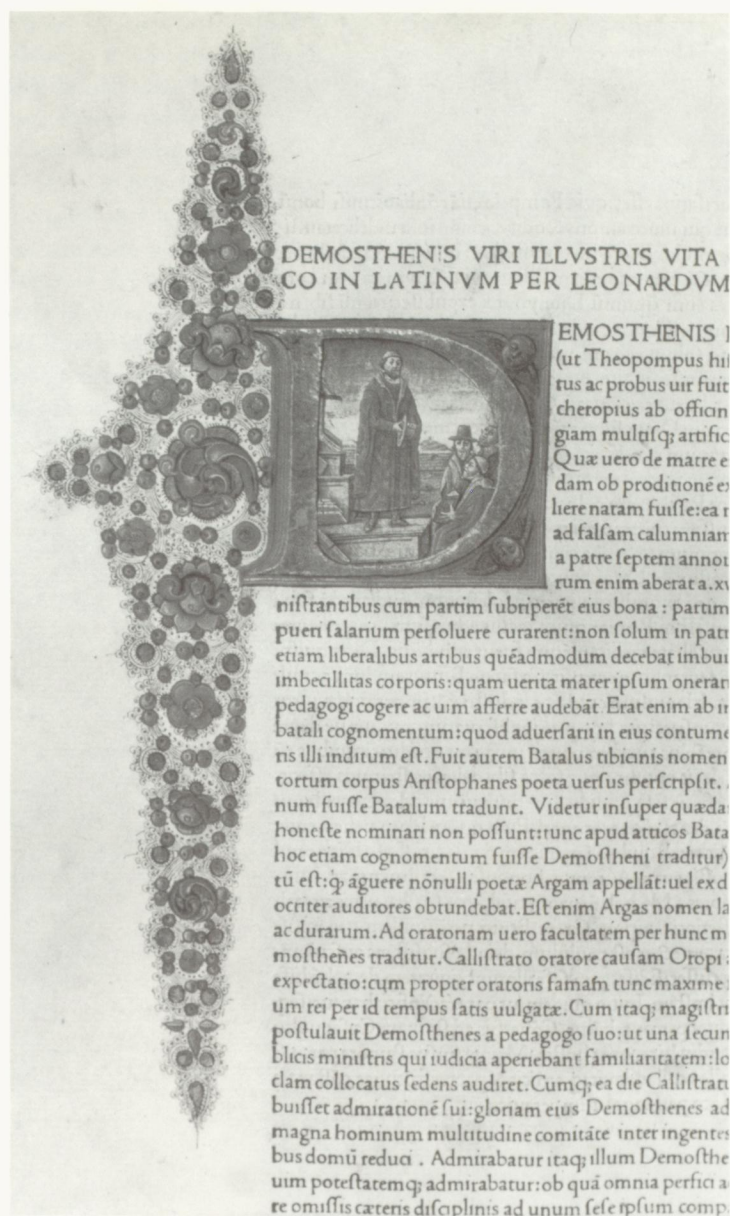
The layout of early printed books imitated that of manuscripts: margins were wide and blank spaces were reserved for capital letters by indenting lines of text at the beginnings of books and chap-

ters (cats 78-80; figs 23, 25). Initially not even the book and chapter headings were printed, but were meant to be added by a professional rubricator (cats 81, 83; fig. 23). Printers assumed that rubrication and decoration would be executed by hand after the pages had emerged from the press.⁹ The magnitude of this assumption is staggering since even the earliest printed editions ran from 100 to 300 or 400 copies, and by 1476 there were editions of over 1,000 copies. In the first decades of printing in Italy, thousands and thousands of books had red and blue capital letters added by hand throughout the text. Sometimes these initials were flourished in coloured inks of contrasting colours (cats 89, 96), while others were painted in colours on rectangles of gold, or in gold on coloured grounds (cats 87, 99).

Beyond having their books 'finished' with the appropriate initials added by hand, many buyers wanted decoration on the first page of text, that is a frontispiece. Painted borders were the most common enhancement, plus the coat of arms of the owner usually painted in the lower margin. Two patterns of borders prevailed, both adapted from contemporary manuscript illumination. The so-called 'white vine-stem' or *bianchi girari* was most common in the early 1470s, both for Venetian and for Roman incunables.¹⁰ Second in popularity were borders consisting of red and blue flowers, gold dots, and scrolling penwork, sometimes contained by rectangular frames of gold (cat. 89). The former owed its origins to Florentine manuscript illumination (cat. 34) and the latter to Ferrarese (figs 3, 14-17).

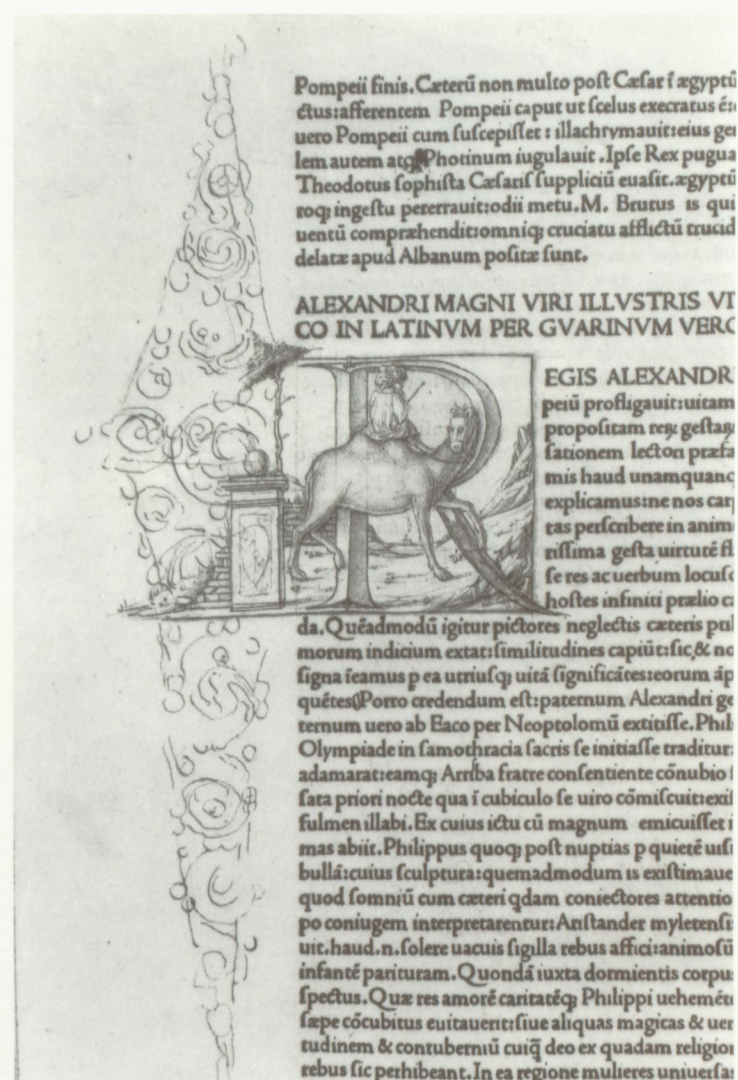
Throughout the 1470s and 1480s it was common practise to print up to twenty copies of a given edition on parchment, further emphasising the parallel to manuscripts. As the manuscript tradition had amply demonstrated, the application of gold leaf and tempera paint (or glair) was technically well suited to parchment,¹¹ although tempera and gold were also used for books printed on paper, by far the most common support for incunables (cat. 86). A second medium, which was technically more appropriate for paper, was sepia ink applied with a quill pen or a fine brush. For books printed both on paper and on parchment, drawings in pen and ink were combined with areas of water-colour wash, and with touches of gold or silver, the latter often now blackened by oxidation (cats 80, 102; figs 23, 24a, 24b, 24d). The monochromatic effect of ink drawings was appreciated for its harmony with the black and white block of the printed text. Additionally, the miniaturists were faced with decorating many more books than before. The pen and ink technique was thus advantageous since it is somewhat less time consuming than painting in tempera and applying gold leaf.¹²

The addition of painted or drawn frontispieces and historiated initials to printed books naturally required planning by the artist, even if the spaces into which his work must fit were strictly predetermined. Preliminary designs were sketched into the reserved spaces and margins with metalpoint. Such metalpoint sketches are sometimes visible under the penstrokes of finished sepia compositions (fig. 24d). Changes in the decorative programme can be detected by observing the metalpoint underdrawings. For example, the copy of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* printed on parchment by Nicolaus Jenson in 1478 and decorated for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola was probably meant to have been painted with tempera and gold (cat. 102). The miniaturist, named the Pico Master,¹³ sketched the frontispiece and historiated initials, anticipating that they would subsequently be painted in gold and colours. His metalpoint underdrawings are visible throughout the volume (fig. 24d). The edges of the compositions were neatly ruled, the figures positioned, the flower patterns indicated in the margins.



Next the Pico Master painted one initial and partial border in full colours, perhaps to show the patron what the finished effect would be (fig. 24c). Demosthenes is depicted at the beginning of Plutarch's Life of the philosopher; he holds a high 'Greek' hat and stands on a podium addressing other scholars. No other historiated initial in the book was painted in tempera. Instead, the scenes were completed by reinforcing the metalpoint drawings with pen and ink; the floral borders were never completed. The present decoration thus reveals the ghosts of the original intent.

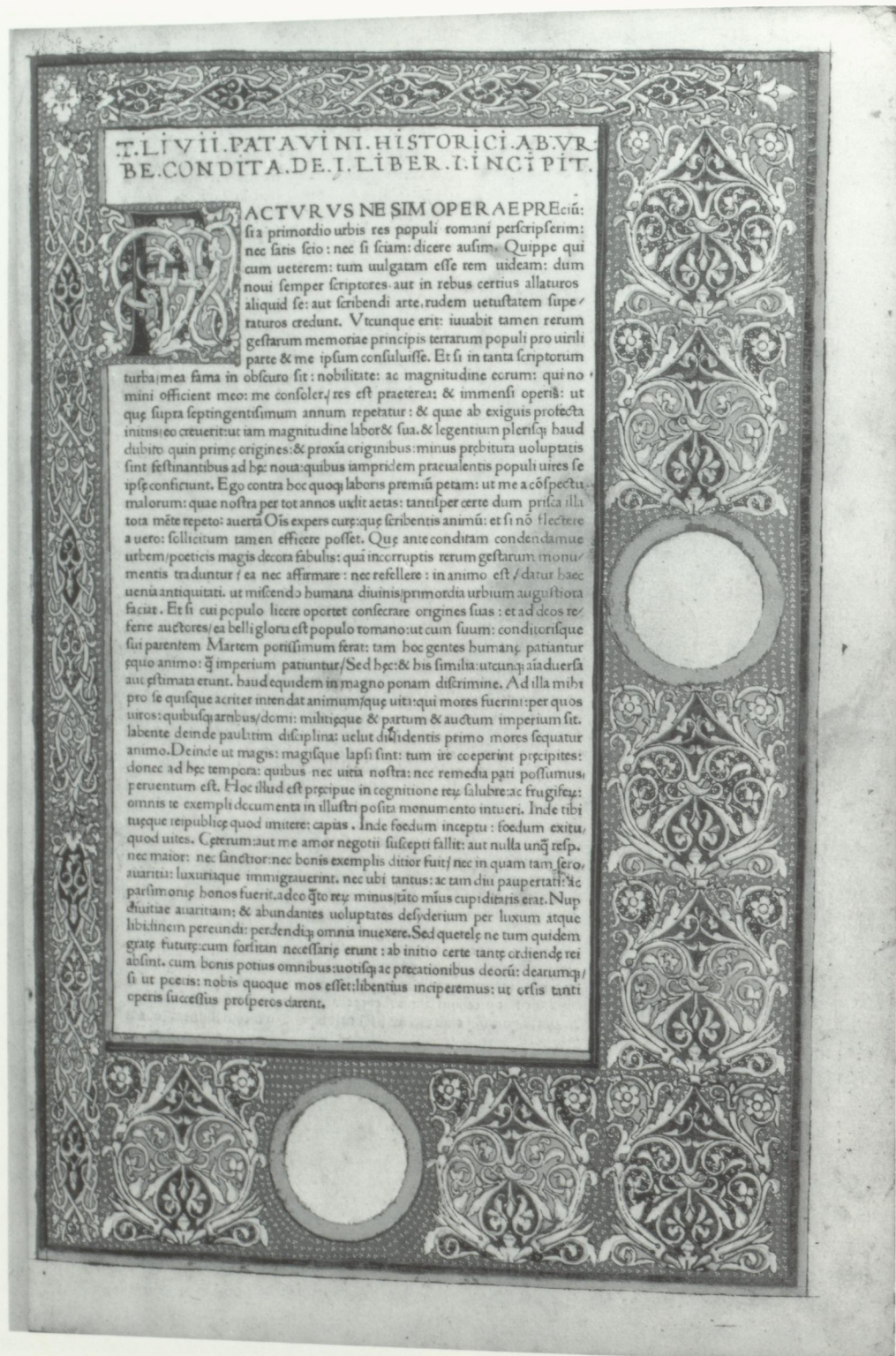
As printers and booksellers groped for ways to 'finish' the thousands of books which were emerging from the Venetian printing presses, a number of artistic experiments were attempted to speed the process of decoration.¹⁴ Miniaturists traced figurative motifs, and they standardised white vine-stem and floral borders for more efficient execution. They may also have copied motifs by the process known as 'pouncing'. Tiny holes were pricked along the outlines of a drawing, and then a fine dark dust was applied which would transfer the image to the underlying page. A Venetian incunabula of 1471 with historiated initials drawn by the Master of the Putti clearly shows such pricking marks (fig. 24a), but the questions remain as to when they were made and whether they were actually used for transfer.¹⁵



24c, 24d Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, 78 D 16, fol. PP2v and G6v Plutarch, *Vitae virorum illustrium* (Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1478). Demosthenes; Turbaned man on a camel, attributed to the Pico Master (cat. 102)

An experiment more intrinsic to printing, however, was the design of woodcut border motifs which could be stamped onto frontispieces and used as a guide for miniaturists.¹⁶ This technique should not be confused with woodcuts which were printed simultaneously with the text and thus appeared in every copy of a given edition (see pp. 45–6). The individually stamped woodcut borders consisted of units of varying widths suitable for upper, lower, or side margins. The decorative patterns – a sequence of lozenges or vine motifs – could be repeated one or more times depending on the length of the margin, and then painted over by the miniaturist.

If the frontispiece of the Livy printed in 1470 by Vindelinius de Spira and now in the Morgan Library (cat. 83) is compared with a second copy of the same edition (fig. 25), it is immediately apparent that the same decorative woodcut units have been employed. A roughly square unit of symmetrically arranged vines is repeated three times in both lower borders. However, in the British Library copy, the space at the left is filled by an additional narrow unit of lozenges extending down from the side margin. The narrow unit is necessary because the empty circular wreath occupies less space than the coat of arms, two putti and dolphins in the Morgan copy. The splendid Morgan copy demonstrates that well-known



25 London, British Library, G. 9029, fol. 25. Livy, *Historiae Romanae decades* (Venice, Vindelinius de Spira, 1470). Frontispiece with painted woodcut borders

miniaturists did not disdain to use this technique, since the putti can be attributed to Franco dei Russi (see cats 26, 82, 113).

The individually stamped woodcut borders were used in a large number of books printed by Vindelinius de Spira, and a special campaign may have been mounted for the 1470 Livy, since eight copies exist with woodcut borders similar to the Morgan and British Library copies.¹⁷ Despite the fact that this technique was probably intended to be labour-saving, it was rarely used after 1474. Ultimately, a well-trained miniaturist could execute a standard white vine-stem border almost as fast without the extra woodcut process as a guide.

The Miniaturists

The examples of hand-illuminated printed books in this exhibition are at the top of a continuum extending from the thousands of books 'finished' with simple rubrication, through hundreds with standardised painted borders, to the fewer examples with individually commissioned decoration. Many more illuminated examples appear in Venetian imprints than in books printed elsewhere in Italy. In fact it is likely that miniaturists were drawn to Venice precisely because it had become a great center for printing. Miniaturists who illuminated these spectacular books have been

gradually identified over the past two decades, either by actual name or by groups of works.¹⁸ Since incunables are usually dated and illumination would normally have been done soon after printing, the chronology of miniaturists' careers is often clearer than when considering undated manuscripts.¹⁹

The patterns of these careers vary considerably with regard to the phenomenon of printing. Some artists who were established illuminators of manuscripts accepted occasional commissions to decorate the new kind of book, the printed book, simply as if they were another manuscript. Such a characterization would fit Franco dei Russi, who worked in Ferrara and Padua in the 1450s and 1460s, then illuminated a few printed books in Venice in the early 1470s before returning to manuscript illumination under the patronage of Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino (cats 26, 58, 71, 82, 83, 113).²⁰ Leonardo Bellini (fl. 1443-c. 1485), cousin of the well-known painters Giovanni (fl. c. 1460-d. 1516) and Gentile Bellini (fl. c. 1460-d. 1507), was the dominant miniaturist in Venice throughout the 1460s, and his successful career continued into the 1480s (cat. 27).²¹ His illumination of the important Hebrew manuscript

known as the Rothschild Miscellany (Jerusalem, Israel Museum, MS 180/51) has been disputed, but is supported by comparison to a frontispiece he painted in an incunable of 1478.²² After decades of work exclusively in manuscripts, Leonardo illuminated two copies of the Breviary printed by Nicolaus Jenson in 1478 (cat. 89).²³ The motif of an eagle and a dead stag in the Edinburgh frontispiece exactly matches an image in the Rothschild Miscellany, as if they had been traced from the same model (fig. 26). Overall, however, Leonardo Bellini represents a category of miniaturists little affected by the coming of printing.

In Florence, where the strong traditions of manuscript illumination inhibited the production of luxury hand-illuminated printed books, exceptional dedicatory copies were decorated by miniaturists who otherwise also continued careers only as manuscript illuminators. In 1481 Niccolò di Lorenzo printed a famous edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in Florence with a new commentary by Cristoforo Landino and with spaces reserved for engravings by Baccio Bandini after designs by Botticelli. A copy on paper in the Houghton Library, Harvard not only received an engraving



26 Jerusalem, The Israel Museum, MS 180/51, fol. 164. Rothschild Miscellany. *The Battle of Sihon and Og, Jacob and the Angel*, attributed to Leonardo Bellini



27 Cambridge, Mass. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Inc. 6120A, fol. a1 (Detail).
Dante, *La Commedia* (Florence, Niccolò di Lorenzo, 1481). Portrait of Dante and Medici arms

on the folio opening the *Inferno*, but also an author portrait and floral border with the Medici arms painted by a miniaturist in the circle of Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico (fig. 27).²⁴ Only two copies on parchment are known, one undecorated and the other illuminated by Attavante degli Attavanti (1452–c. 1517) for presentation to the Signoria.²⁵ Otherwise Attavante and Francesco d'Antonio continued to illuminate primarily manuscripts.²⁶ The Florentine banking firm of Filippo Strozzi (1428–1491) financed an edition of the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder, translated into Italian by Cristoforo Landino and printed in Venice by Nicolaus Jenson in 1476.²⁷ Strozzi paid the Florentine miniaturist Monte di

abbiamo narrato non solamente la vita del poeta et el titolo del libro et che cosa sia poeta Ma etiam quanto sia uetusta et antica quanto nobile et uaria quanto utile et iocunda tal doctrina. Quanto sia efficace a muouere humane menti; et quanto dilecti ogni liberale ingegno. Ne giudicammo da tacere quanto in si ciuita diuina sia stata la excellentia dello ingegno del nostro poeta. Inche fusono stato piu brucie che forse non si conuerebbe; consideri chi legge che lanumerosa et quasi infinita copia delle cose delle quali e necessario tractare in forza non uolendo che uolue cresce sopra modo; a inculcare et inuolappare piuttosto che explicare; et distendere molte cose et maxime quelle le quali quando ben tacesse non per ne restera obscura la esposizione del testo. Verremo adunque aquella. Ma perche stimo non esser lettore alcuno ne di si basso ingegno; ne di si pocho giudicio; che ha uendo in teo; quanto sia et laprofondita et uarieta della doctrina; et la excellentia et diuinita dello ingegno del nostro toscano; et fiorentino poeta; non si persuada che questo principio del primo canto debba per subimita et grandezza esser pari alla stupenda doctrina delle cose che seguitano; pero con ogni industria inuestigheremo che allegorico senso arechi seco questo mezzo del camino; et che cosa sia selua. Diche ueggio non piccola differentia essere stata tra gli interpreti et expositori di questa cantica. Impero che alcuni dicono; che il mezzo della uita humana e el sonno mortu; credo dalla sententia daristotele dicendo lui nellerthica nessuna differentia essere tra felici; et miseri nella meta della uita perche lenocci che sono lameta del tempo inducono sonno; et da quello nasce che ne bene nemale sentit possiamo. Ilperche ueggiono questi; che el poeta pongha el mezzo della uita per la nocte; et lanocce pelfonno; ad notare che questo poema non sia altro che una uisione che giap parue dormendo per la quale hebbe cognoscere delle cose dallui descritte in queste tre comedie. Dicono adunque che lui imita Ioanni euangelista el quale dormendo sopra elpecto di christo redemptore hebbe uisione delle cose celeste; oueramente pongha lanocce dimostrando lui hauere cominciato el suo poema dinocce nella quale raccogliendosi lanimo in se medesimo et absolvendosi et liberandosi da ogni cura meglio intenda. Ma benché tale sententia quadri al poeta; niente dimeno le parole non la dimostrano senon co tanto obscura ambiguita; che non pare degna della elegantia di tanto poeta. Prima perche non seguita che benché nelle reuoluzioni del tempo tanto spacio occupin lenocci quanto e di; per questo dicendo io scripsi dinocce intenda io scripsi nel mezzo della mia eta; perche et nel principio et nel fine della eta humana sono lenocci chome nel mezzo et similmente e di. Ilperche per lamedesima ragione si potrebbe fare tale interpretatione pel di chome per lanocce. Altridicono che uolle pel mezzo del camino intendere che nel mezzo dellera; et principio al suo poema. Ma non e unamedesima opinione del termine della nostra; perche diuersi scriptori diuersamente sentono, Aristotile nel suo de republica

Giovanni di Miniato to illuminate his copy (cat. 85).²⁸ Monte and his brother Gherardo, however, remained far better known for the manuscripts they illuminated than for any other printed books.²⁹ Similarly in Milan, Giovan Pietro Birago illuminated several ducal copies of the *Life of Francesco Sforza* printed by Antonio Zarotto in 1490 (cat. 16), but his career too is predominantly devoted to manuscript illumination.³⁰

The case of Girolamo da Cremona contrasts to that of the miniaturists who only illuminated two or three printed books. Girolamo had a distinguished career as an illuminator of manuscripts in the 1460s and early 1470s, but after coming to Venice

in the mid-1470s, he almost exclusively illuminated printed books.³¹ Girolamo worked primarily for patrons connected to the new industry, particularly for members of the Agostini family and for Peter Ugelheimer of Frankfurt (see pp. 43-4, below), and the commissions he fulfilled are exceptionally magnificent (cats 93-6, 99, 101).

Yet other miniaturists belonged to a generation that came to maturity just as printing was introduced, and their careers are inextricably tied to the industry of printing. Giovanni Vendramin, the Master of the Putti, the Master of the London Pliny, and especially the Pico Master thrived in the 1470s by executing painted and drawn frontispieces for printed books (cats 78-81, 90, 92, 102; fig. 23). The precise business arrangements linking miniaturists to

printers are not clear, but they doubtless differed considerably from the contracts between single patrons and miniaturists which must have pertained in the cases cited above. The printers Nicolaus Jenson and Vindelino de Spira funnelled dozens of books to a few miniaturists who could be counted upon for attractive decoration speedily provided. The Pico Master illuminated nine copies of Jenson's 1472 Pliny, some for known patrons and others apparently executed on speculation, since the spaces for coats of arms remain empty.³² Similarly, the Master of the Putti and the Master of the London Pliny, who collaborated in the early 1470s, decorated five copies of the same Pliny edition, one in tempera and gold, and the others with pen and ink frontispieces (fig. 24b).³³



28 Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, MS Lat. VI, 245 (= 2976), fol. 3. Pliny, *Historia naturalis*. Frontispiece with Pico della Mirandola arms, attributed to the Pico Master



29
Rome, Museo Capitolino.
Pan, Roman,
2nd Century AD

Frontispieces

In addition to decorative painted borders, the Veneto-Paduan miniaturists developed distinctive frontispiece compositions that exploited the new Renaissance fascination with Classical Antiquity. One may be called the 'historiated-initial-and-coat-of-arms' formula. A pen and ink drawing or painted composition with an *all'antica* subject was supplied for the first initial, and the owner's coat of arms in the lower margin was suitably supported by mythical creatures of Antiquity – putti, satyrs, or sea creatures – usually adapted from Roman sarcophagi (fig. 23). Particularly appropriate for the newly edited Classical texts, these handsome but modest opening folios acknowledged the owner's noble status and subtly flattered his knowledge of the Antique revival.

The most important composition developed to decorate the opening of Venetian incunables was the so-called 'architectural frontispiece'.³⁴ The illusionistic devices and classicising components of this composition were present in North Italian manuscript illumination of the 1460s, but the compositional type was popularised by the Veneto-Paduan illuminators in the early years of printing. Two slightly different versions of the composition both appear in books printed in 1469, one painted in tempera by Giovanni Vendramin of Padua (cat. 78), the other drawn in pen and ink by the Master of the Putti (cat. 80). In the latter, the composition surrounding the printed text imitates a Roman triumphal arch, painted to look as if it existed in a space behind the page. The space at the base of the edifice is open and filled with struggling putti. Heightening the illusion is the treatment of the area just beside the text; it resembles the ragged edge of a piece of parchment suspended in front of the triumphal arch.

Giovanni Vendramin's frontispiece presents a giant commemorative monument, a stele. Columns supporting a cornice with a curved pediment occupy the side and upper margins, and the lower margin is filled with a high base on which the monument appears to rest. The base in turn is decorated with monochromatic reliefs. Variations of these two compositions are repeated in numerous North Italian frontispieces of the 1470s and 1480s, including a 'two storey' version developed by the Pico Master and seen in his eponymous manuscript, the *Pliny* written and decorated for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in 1481 (fig. 28). These compositions also became popular with miniaturists working in Rome and Naples (cats 37, 39, 40, 73, 75, 106).

The Veneto-Paduan architectural frontispiece revels in the Albertian illusion of three-dimensional space, so prized by Renaissance artists, while at the same time acknowledging the inherent flatness of the printed page. The imagery invokes the world of Classical Antiquity, and suggests the 'triumph' of the written word – archways through which one enters the glorious history of Rome, or memorials raised to the learning of the past.

The figures and objects that cluster around the architectural structures show the miniaturists' virtuoso adaptations of Classical themes and contemporary motifs, sometimes anticipating developments in the monumental arts. The putti fighting below the triumphal arch in the *Albertina Livy* show that the Master of the Putti had studied the *Hercules and the Twelve Giants*, an engraving from the circle of Antonio Pollaiuolo (fl. 1457–d. 1489) which circulated in North Italy by the end of the 1460s.³⁵ On a Suetonius frontispiece of 1471, Giovanni Vendramin painted niches holding warriors in Roman armour, an arrangement of architecture and figures which startlingly prefigures Pietro Lombardo's *Tomb of Pietro Mocenigo* in SS Giovanni e Paolo in Venice of the later 1470s.³⁶

Other groups depend upon Roman sarcophagi, such as the repeated allusion to the *Tormenting of Pan* by the Master of the London *Pliny* (cats 90, 91).³⁷ Particular Classical statues were also admired by individual artists; for example Girolamo da Cremona several times incorporated vivid adaptations of the over life-sized Roman statues of Pan carrying a basket on his head, now in the Capitoline Museum (cats 94, 101; fig. 29).³⁸ Both in incunables and in contemporary manuscripts, the architectural structures became a framework on which to display a whole panoply of Classical objects.³⁹ Trophies, vases, bucrania, and particularly medallion portraits based on Roman coins appear applied to the surfaces or hanging from cords draped over the cornices (cats 74, 80, 81; fig. 28). Finally, fictive cameos imitating those so avidly collected by Renaissance patrons became a vehicle for elaborating the symbolic content of the frontispieces (cats 28, 92, 94).⁴⁰

Ownership of Hand-Illuminated Printed Books

In books printed all over Italy, the most common decorative additions to the printed page, aside from an illuminated first initial, are coats of arms and insignia of the owners. These provide a huge body of information about ownership of early printed books which is only beginning to be investigated. Despite the impossibility of conclusive statements about ownership of hand-illuminated incunables, some inferences based on present observations of Venetian books may be summarised.

The list of families whose coats of arms appear on handsomely decorated incunables reads like the roll-call of the Venetian Golden Book: Barbarigo, Barbaro, Barozzi, Basadona, Bembo, Boldù, Bollani, Bragadin, Canale, Cappello, Contarini, Conti, Cornaro, Dolfin, Donà, Erizzo, Foscarini, Foscolo, Gabrieli, Garzoni, Gius-

tiniani, Gritti, Guidotti, Lorodano, Marin, Mocenigo, Moro, Morosini, Muazzo, Pasqualigo, Pisani di Santa Marina, Priuli, Querini, de Soverin, Surian, Torriani, Trevisan, Zeno.⁴¹ To these may be added a few non-noble *cittadini*, important families with 'citizen' status in Venice, who also were entitled to have coats of arms – Agostini, Frizier, Macigni. A sprinkling of noble families in the Veneto, Lombardy, and Emilia are also identifiable: Granfioni and Buzzacarini of Padua, Tirelto of Treviso, di Thiene of Vicenza; Botta, Lampagnani, and Trivulzio of Milan; Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. What these names make clear is that ownership of decorated Venetian incunables was widespread among the aristocracy of Venice and not concentrated in the hands of a few collectors. A large proportion of the books were in Latin, and thus they imply the ability of this class to read Latin. Many Venetian patricians were involved in mercantile activities, and ownership of incunables probably also indicates their investment in the new industry.

In some cases there are more than two or three books extant with the same coat of arms, enough to talk about the 'library' of the owner. Since the heraldic blazoning rarely verifies the specific member of a family, additional evidence is needed to confirm the owner. For example, twenty incunables printed either by Nicolaus Jenson or Vindelinius de Spira between 1469 and 1472 bear the coat of arms of the Priuli family. Almost all of these are decorated with *all'antica* drawings in pen and ink by the Master of the Putti (fig. 23), the Pico Master, or by a miniaturist working in the style of Girolamo da Cremona, probably indicating the particular taste of a single owner. It has been pointed out that the dedication by Giorgio Merula in Nicolaus Jenson's edition of the *Scriptores rei rusticae* is to Piero di Marco di Priuli; Piero di Marco thus becomes the likely candidate as the owner of these illuminated incunables.⁴²

A few detailed studies of similar collections have appeared, principally on books owned by ecclesiastics. Jacopo Zeno, Bishop of Padua (r. 1460–1481), first collected manuscripts in Rome, decorated with the white vine-stem or floral borders typical of Roman illumination of the 1460s. He then turned to Venetian printed books more ambitiously decorated with architectural frontispieces by the Paduan miniaturist Giovanni Vendramin.⁴³ A later Bishop of Padua, Pietro Barozzi (1441–1507), also came from a patrician Venetian family, and acquired a large collection of illuminated Venetian incunables. His volumes of canon law and theology were decorated with monochromatic ink and wash drawings by a distinguished Paduan miniaturist, Antonio Maria da Villafora.⁴⁴ Another ecclesiastic whose collection has been documented is Gioachino Torriano (c. 1416–1500), a humanistically trained Dominican theologian who was Vicar General of the Order from 1487 to 1500. His modestly decorated incunables were bequeathed to SS Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, and then passed to the Biblioteca di San Marco.⁴⁵ Yet another striking collection of hand-illuminated printed books is that of Girolamo Rossi (c. 1445–1517), from a noble family of Pistoia. Girolamo was a friend of the humanist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), and apparently functioned as an agent for various Florentines during a prolonged residence in Venice from 1480 to 1497. In 1504 he entered the Dominican Order and was eventually elected prior of San Marco in Florence and then Vicar General of the Order. Rossi's arms appear on books printed in various cities in the late 1470s and 1480s – Milan, Parma, Reggio Emilia, and Venice – but they were all decorated with ink and wash frontispieces and historiated initials by miniaturists working in Venice, the Pico Master and the Master of the Seven Virtues.⁴⁶

Groups of hand-illuminated incunables can be traced to monasteries in the Veneto, particularly to Benedictine houses in the family of Santa Giustina of Padua. Much work remains to be done on

this issue, but a surprisingly large number of Classical as well as liturgical texts bear an inscription or a miniature referring to the Benedictine monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice.⁴⁷

Two collections of illuminated Venetian incunables stand out, however, both for the extraordinary quality of the painted decorations, and because the owners were so closely allied with the new industry of printing. These are the incunables owned by members of the Agostini family, and those bearing the coats of arms of Peter Ugelheimer of Frankfurt.

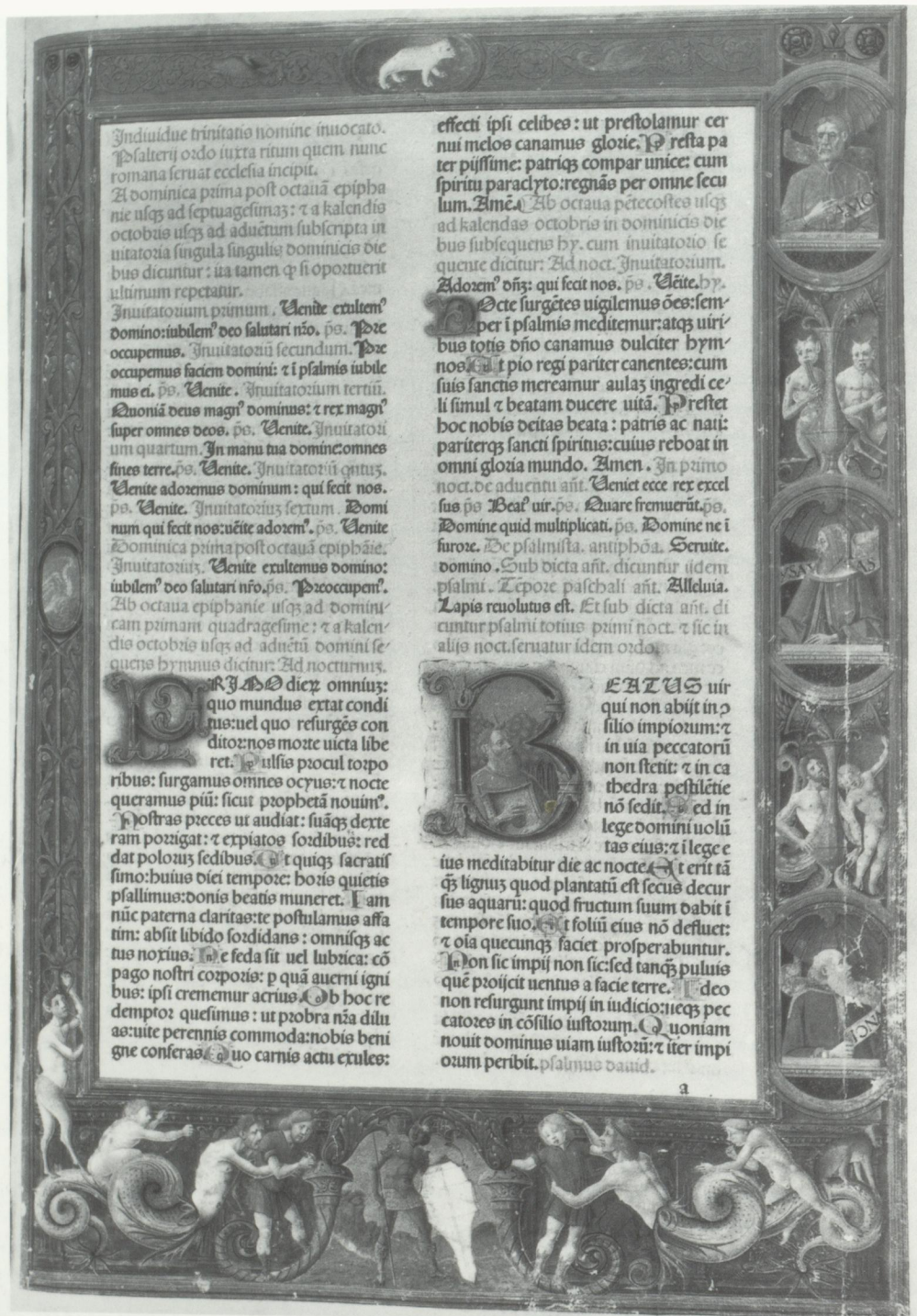
Over twenty illuminated manuscripts and books printed in the 1470s are known to have belonged to the Agostini family, including five volumes in this exhibition (cats 90, 92 [a and b], 94, 95).⁴⁸ Most are identified by the Agostini coat of arms, but others by a fascinating detail. Since parchment varied in quality, the printer Nicolaus Jenson seems to have reserved certain special lots of parchment for designated future owners. Evidence for the practise consists of names informally written in the extreme lower edge of some rectos, an area of the bifolium that would normally have been trimmed off before binding. The word '*agustini*' or '*B. agustini*' thus appears in a number of books reserved for the Agostini.

A few tantalising documents testify to the business liaison between the Agostini and Nicolaus Jenson. The family traced its origins to Fabriano, a city famous for paper production, and the Agostini are documented as the providers of paper for one of Nicolaus Jenson's most prestigious editions, the Italian translation of Pliny's *Natural History* printed in 1476.⁴⁹ In Jenson's will of 1480, Pietro and Alvisé Agostini, 'brothers from Fabriano', are named as executors, but the name appearing in several of the incunables with Agostini arms is '*B. Agostini*'. By the 1490s, the family were called Agostini dal Banco, and documents again show that they had dealings with booksellers.⁵⁰

Illuminated incunables may well have been partial payment for financial backing of particular editions. Members of the Agostini family owned the New York–Paris copy of Nicolaus Jenson's Plutarch of 1478 painted by Girolamo da Cremona (cats 94, 95) and the two volume set now in Dublin, painted by the Master of the London Pliny (cat. 92); furthermore, their arms appear on a less elaborately decorated copy on paper now in the Spencer Library of the University of Kansas in Lawrence (Summerfield Collection, G. 125, on paper).⁵¹ This exceptional grouping suggests that the Agostini invested in the edition, and received a certain number of copies as partial payment. The taste of the recipients, however, is strongly marked, since a review of the twenty volumes shows that most were illuminated either by Girolamo da Cremona or the Master of the London Pliny.

Similar business arrangements probably also account for the most spectacular group of incunables to have been illuminated in Venice in the Quattrocento, those belonging to Peter Ugelheimer, a nobleman of Frankfurt who conducted business in Venice in the 1470s and later in Milan, where he died in 1487.⁵² From 1473 on, Nicolaus Jenson was associated with Ugelheimer, and when Jenson made his will shortly before his untimely death in 1480, Ugelheimer was designated one of the executors. Called by Jenson his 'beloved partner', Peter was to inherit what Jenson clearly perceived as his most precious belongings, the punches from which his famous types were made.

Fortunately, Peter Ugelheimer was not only a businessman, but also a collector of splendidly bound hand-illuminated incunables. Fourteen incunables and one manuscript survive with his coat of arms either on the binding or on illuminated folios.⁵³ With one exception, these incunables were printed by Jenson or by the associates who continued his firm and used his fonts after his



30 Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Ink. 2872 (2°), fol. 7(a1). *Breviary* (Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1478). Frontispiece with Prophets, attributed to Antonio Maria da Villafora

death. From 1477 to 1483 a team of miniaturists worked on three volumes of canon (ecclesiastical) law and one of civil law; three philosophical texts; a Bible, a Breviary, and the complete works of Aristotle – resulting in the most sumptuous frontispieces ever to appear in any Venetian Renaissance book (cats 96–101). Girolamo da Cremona is likely to have been the dominant artist in the group,⁵⁴ joined by the Master of the Seven Virtues, the youthful Benedetto Bordon, the Pico Master, and Antonio Maria da Villafora, who illuminated the little known Jenson Breviary of 1478 now in Dresden (fig. 30). In the borders of this last named volume, Antonio Maria mixes images of Old Testament prophets with mythical satyrs and sea creatures. A dark-faced Roman soldier supports a shield awaiting a blazon, but above his head the Ugelheimer motto ‘MIT ZITT’ (‘with time’) assures the ownership.

effecti ipsi celibes: ut prestolamur cer-
nui melos canamus glorie. **P** resta pa-
ter piissime: patriq; compar unice: cum
spiritu paraclyto: regnas per omne secu-
lum. **Amen.** Ab octava petecostea usq;
ad kalendas octobris in dominicis die-
bus subsequens hy. cum inuitatio se-
quentur dicitur: Ad noct. Inuitatorium.
Adorem' dñs: qui fecit nos. ps. Venite. hy.
Ecce surgentes uigilemus oēs: sem-
per i psalmis meditemur: atq; uiri-
bis totis dño canamus dulciter hym-
nos: et pio regi pariter canentes: cum
suis sanctis mereamur aulaz ingredi ce-
li simul et beatam ducere uitā. Prestet
hoc nobis deitas beata: patris ac nati:
pariterq; sancti spiritus: cuius reboat in
omni gloria mundo. Amen. In primo
noct. de aduentu aūt. **Veniet ecce rex excel-**
sus ps. Beal' uir. ps. Quare fremuerūt. ps.
Domine quid multiplicati. ps. Domine ne i
furore. De psalmista. antiphōa. Seruite.
domino. Sub dicta aūt. dicuntur idem
psalmi. Tempore paschali aūt. Alleluia.
Lapis reuolutus est. Et sub dicta aūt. di-
cuntur psalmi totius primi noct. et sic in
alijs noct. seruat idem ordo.

BEATUS uir
qui non abiit in
filiis impiorum: et
in uia peccatorū
non stetit: et in ca-
thedra pestilentie
nō sedit. Sed in
lege domini uolū-
tas eius: et i lege
eius meditabitur die ac nocte. Et erit tā-
q; lignus quod plantatū est secus decur-
sus aquarii: quod fructum suum dabit i
tempore suo. Et foliū eius nō defluet:
et oia quecunq; faciet prosperabuntur.
Et non sic impij non sic: sed tanq; puluis
quē proijcit uentus a facie terre. Ideo
non resurgunt impij in iudicio: neq; pec-
catores in cōsilio iustorum. Quoniam
nouit dominus uiam iustorū: et iter impi-
orum peribit. psalmus dauid.

Woodcut Designs by Miniaturists

As the quotation at the beginning of this essay documents, miniaturists complained that printing put an end to their careers. While this would not actually have been true in the 1470s when the need to 'finish' the new printed books meant that there was more work than ever, by the 1490s the cry would indeed have been justified. The impossibility of rubricating and decorating hundreds of thousands of books had prodded Italian printers to use mechanical means of embellishment. The technology of printing woodcuts simultaneously with the text was well developed in Germany in the 1470s, but with a few notable exceptions Italian printers had resisted incorporating many woodcuts into their publications until the end of the 1480s.⁵⁵ In the 1490s, however, many Venetian books were decorated with woodcut frontispieces and dozens of narrative woodcuts.

Miniaturists habituated to designing decorative motifs and narrative miniatures for books turned to woodcut designs. The identification of these designers has been inhibited by the sometimes indifferent quality of the cutters who necessarily were employed to translate the designs into the actual woodblocks. Nevertheless, the painter and miniaturist Liberale da Verona (cat. 121) has long been postulated as the designer of narrative scenes for the Aesop's *Fables*

printed in Verona by Giovanni and Alberto Alvise in 1479.⁵⁶ In Venice, three miniaturists can be linked with distinctive groups of woodcuts. A number of decorative and narrative woodcuts from 1487-8 may be attributed to a miniaturist known as the Master of the Rimini Ovid, including the first woodcut illustrations for Petrararch's *Triumphs* (Venice, Bernardinus Rizus, 1488).⁵⁷ A second anonymous master, the Pico Master, appears to have been the designer of several very popular architectural frontispieces, translated into woodcuts and reproduced in a wide variety of texts (cat. 103).⁵⁸ And by 1493, Benedetto Bordon had probably begun what was to be a substantial body of designs for woodcuts that were used by many printers throughout the 1490s and into the next century.⁵⁹

The case of Benedetto Bordon is particularly interesting, in part because his name has been repeatedly associated with the woodcuts of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (*The Strife in the Dream of Poliphilus*), the curious archaeological romance printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice in 1499.⁶⁰ The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* is the most beautiful illustrated book printed in Italy in the Quattrocento. Its dozens of woodcuts harmonise perfectly with the layout of the text, creating page after page of arresting design (fig. 31). Despite recent arguments that the text was written in Rome rather than Venice, it is still likely that the overall lay-out would have



31 Wellesley, Mass., Wellesley College, Clapp Library, *81W-5q, fol. k8v-L1. [Francesco Colonna], *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, Aldus Manutius, 1499). Mythological scenes, woodcuts



32. London, British Library, C.4.d.11, verso of leaf inserted between fol. a1 and a2; and fol. 42. Martial, *Epigrammata* (Venice, Aldus Manutius, 1501). Martial and the Emperor Domitian, attributed to Benedetto Bordon.

needed supervision in Venice by an experienced artist working with Aldus, whose press did not specialise in illustrated books. Similarities between the miniatures attributable to Bordon, such as those in the 1494 Lucian in Vienna (cat. 104), and many of the woodcuts support the hypothesis that Bordon was indeed the supervising artist.

Beyond the stylistic evidence linking Bordon to the controversial *Hyperotomachia Poliphili*, there is documentary evidence that he designed woodcuts for a *Triumph of Caesar*, in all probability cut by the German woodcutter Jacob of Strassburg in 1504.⁶⁰ Thus while continuing to be active as miniaturists, Bordon and his contemporaries pursued new artistic activities more likely to be viable in the age of printing.

Hand-Illuminated Aldines: A Coda

By the late 1490s the phenomenon of hand-illuminated printed books was distinctly in decline. However, in the Classical and vernacular texts printed in Venice by Aldus Manutius around 1500, there was a last flowering.⁶¹ Aldus' books were small-format

octavos, printed in elegantly designed Italic type on folios with wide margins. Aldus revived the tradition of printing copies on parchment, and like Jenson and de Spina in the early 1470s, seems to have realised that attractive painted borders would enhance the value of individual copies.

Illuminated Aldines show the styles of several Venetian miniaturists, and copies sent to other cities were also illuminated by non-Venetian miniaturists. In Florence several volumes of Aldus' edition of Aristotle (Venice, 1495–7) were illuminated by Attavante for Matteo Bartoloni of Urbino.⁶² Most impressive, however, are the copies on parchment illuminated in the style of Benedetto Bordon that follow the format he established for his edition of Lucian in 1494 (cat. 104). Each first page of text receives a handsome border of metallic vines contrasted to solid coloured backgrounds, while opposite is a miniature representing an event in the life of the author.⁶³ In a Martial of 1501, now in the British Library, the miniaturist paints the Emperor Domitian receiving oak, laurel and ivy from the poet (fig. 32); the slightly stiff postures of the figures and the beautiful landscape recall the compositions of the Lucian miniatures.

Although heretofore the evidence linking Bordon and Aldus has rested primarily on stylistic evidence,⁶⁵ a recently noted document supports the connection. One of Aldus' friends and editors, to whom he dedicated more than one edition, was the Venetian nobleman Andrea Navagero.⁶⁶ In a letter of 13 January 1515, Navagero wrote to Giambattista Ramusio complaining about the price of having a Virgil bound by one 'Alberto'.⁶⁷ He specifies that the mini-

ature in the book is by 'Benetto'. Given that Navagero edited Aldus' edition of Virgil, it is hard to imagine that the book is other than a copy of this recent issue, illuminated by none other than Benedetto Bordon. Thus Benedetto Bordon continues into the 16th century not only as the documented miniaturist of liturgical manuscripts (cat. 118), but also as one of the last great illuminators of printed books.

- 1 'For my art, one does nothing any more – For my art has ended, for the love of books, because they make [books] in a form that they no longer illuminate' (Gaye 1839-40, I, p. 267, quoted in Bühler 1960, p. 92).
- 2 Carosi 1982; Feld 1982, pp. 283-4.
- 3 On Venetian printing, see Castellani 1889; Brown 1891; Gerulaitis 1976; Pozza *et al.* 1984.
- 4 Lowry 1991.
- 5 On Florentine printing, see Rhodes 1988; for Milan, Rogledi-Manni 1980; Ganda 1984; for Naples, Fava and Bresciano 1911-13. For these and other centers, see also BMC, IV-VII, XII, 1916-35, 1985, Introductions.
- 6 Scholderer 1924; and information from ISTC, kindly supplied by M. Davies.
- 7 Lowry 1991, chap. 6.
- 8 Lowry 1979; Fletcher 1988.
- 9 Issues of decoration in printed books are surveyed in Goldschmidt 1950; Bühler 1960; Hirsch 1974; Armstrong 1991.
- 10 For Roman examples, see Florence 1989, pls X, XII, XVI, XIX; Rouse and Rouse 1988, pls 3, 4. For Venetian examples, see Mariani Canova 1969, pls 25-6, 73.
- 11 Alexander 1992, chap. 2.
- 12 Dillon Bussi 1989, p. 35; Armstrong 1991, pp. 190-1.
- 13 Armstrong 1990a.
- 14 Armstrong 1991.
- 15 Borrelli 1989. For cautionary remarks about the technique, see Alexander 1992, pp. 50-1.
- 16 Donati 1972-3; Armstrong 1981, pp. 26-9; Armstrong 1991, pp. 195-200.
- 17 Marcon 1986a, seven copies noted on pp. 179-82; plus Cambridge University Library, Inc. 1.B.3.1b [1330].
- 18 Indispensable for the study of Venetian book decoration is Mariani Canova 1969. For subsequent studies, see later publications by Mariani Canova listed in the Bibliography, and those by Alexander, Armstrong, Cionini Visani, and Dillon Bussi.
- 19 Bühler 1960, p. 86.
- 20 Mariani Canova 1969, pp. 26-30, 104-6, 145-6; Michelini Tocci 1965.
- 21 Moretti 1958; Mariani Canova 1968; Mariani Canova 1969, pp. 22-3, 103-4, 144-5.
- 22 Narkiss 1969, p. 152; Bauer-Eberhardt 1984; Mortara Ottolenghi 1989; Mariani Canova 1990, pp. 168-70.
- 23 The second copy in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Vélins 129.
- 24 Jacoff 1994; see cats 36, 50, 59, 62, 69 and 120 for Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico.
- 25 The Attavante Dante is reproduced in colour in Florence 1992b, pp. 116-17.
- 26 Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, I, pp. 101-70, 219-45.
- 27 Edler de Roover 1953.
- 28 Borsook 1970, pp. 9, 13-14, 20.
- 29 Garzelli and de la Mare 1985, pp. 267-330.
- 30 Evans 1987; Evans 1992.
- 31 Mariani Canova 1969, pp. 58-62, 117-21, 154-5; Mariani Canova 1984a.
- 32 Armstrong 1990a, pp. 31-2.
- 33 Armstrong 1981, pp. 108-13, 125-6.
- 34 Pächt 1957; Corbett 1964; Mariani Canova 1966; Alexander 1969a; Alexander 1985a; Armstrong 1981, pp. 19-26; Armstrong 1990a, pp. 18-21.
- 35 Anderson 1968.
- 36 Mariani Canova 1969, pl. 16; Pope-Hennessy 1985, fig. 155.
- 37 Armstrong 1981, pp. 53-9; Scalabroni 1988.
- 38 Bober and Rubinstein 1986, pp. 109-11, no. 75.
- 39 Alexander 1985a.
- 40 Weiss 1988, chap. 13; Florence 1972.
- 41 Identified in the catalogue sections of Mariani Canova 1969; Armstrong 1981; Armstrong 1990a; Armstrong 1990b; Armstrong 1993b; Hermann 1931; BMC, V, 1924.
- 42 Lowry 1991, pp. 68, 83-4.
- 43 Mariani Canova 1978b, pp. 46-55; Mariani Canova 1988b, pp. 81-109.
- 44 Cionini Visani 1967; Mariani Canova 1969, pp. 80-96, 130-6, 159-67; Mariani Canova 1976, p. 158, for correction of the name from 'Sforza' to 'Villafora'. See also cat. 7.
- 45 Marcon 1986b, pp. 223-48; Marcon 1987-9.
- 46 Dillon Bussi 1989. For the Pico Master, see cats 99, 102, 103; fig. 28. For the Master of the Seven Virtues, see cats 96, 100.
- 47 For example, see nos 3, 7, 31, 36-8 in Armstrong 1990a, pp. 31-3.
- 48 To those listed in Armstrong 1986 may be added Cicero, *Orationes*, Venice, Cristoforo Valdarfer, 1471 (Trento, Biblioteca Comunale, Inc. 408; Borrelli 1989); Bonifacius VIII, *Decretales*, Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1476 (London, British Library, IC 19688); Plutarch, *Vitae virorum illustrium*, Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1478 (University of Kansas, Lawrence, Spencer Library, Summerfield Collection, G. 125).
- 49 Edler de Roover 1953, p. 110.
- 50 Lowry 1979, pp. 98, 129.
- 51 Lowry 1991, p. 135 n. 38.
- 52 Motta 1884; Lowry 1991, *passim*.
- 53 To the twelve listed by Armstrong (1990a, p. 20 n. 53) should be added: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 697, *Supplementum pisanelle*; Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Ink. 2872 (2°), *Breviarium romanum*, Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1478, and Ink. 2876 (2°), *Biblia latina*, Venice, Nicolaus Jenson, 1479 (all noted in Hobson 1989, pp. 38-41).
- 54 Mariani Canova 1988a, pp. 53-63.
- 55 Hind 1935, pp. 273-379, 396-421, 456-506.
- 56 Mardersteig 1973; Eberhardt 1977.
- 57 Armstrong 1993b.
- 58 Armstrong 1990a, pp. 27-30, 37, figs 7, 37, 40-4.
- 59 For recent surveys of this material, see Dillon 1984; Castiglioni 1989.
- 60 For the enormous bibliography on the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, consult Casella and Pozzi 1959; Pozzi and Ciapponi 1980; Calvesi 1983; Calvesi 1987; Danesi Squarzina 1987; Szepe 1991.
- 61 Massing 1977; Massing 1990.
- 62 Lowry 1979; Lowry 1983; Szepe 1991; Szepe 1994.
- 63 Florence 1989, no. 83, pls IV-VI.
- 64 Szepe 1994.
- 65 Lowry 1983; Szepe 1991; Szepe 1994.
- 66 Lowry 1979, pp. 161, 165, 190, 204-5, 231-3, 242-3, 246-7; Fletcher 1988, pp. 17-18, 39, 112, 123-4, 133.
- 67 Cicogna 1853, pp. 322-5. I am very grateful to Dr Gabriele Mazzucco for bringing this important document to my attention.