

1 · PRINTERS, AUTHORS AND THE RISE OF THE EDITOR

 ${f T}$ HE FIRST CENTURY OF PRINTING IN ITALY saw a steady increase in the importance of the editor of vernacular texts. For the three decades after the appearance of the first dated vernacular book in 1470, the fact that an editor had been at work was not always considered worth mentioning, nor was particular attention drawn to it. Often editors were not identified; and even when they were, their names might be hidden away in a dedicatory letter or at the end of a book, in some concluding verses or in a colophon. However, around the start of the sixteenth century, this situation began to change. First of all, title pages of vernacular books announced the fact that they had been revised or that they contained additional material. The first page of the Venetian Petrarch of 1500, for example, said that the poems had been 'newly corrected' ('correcti novamente'). As competition between Venetian editions of Petrarch grew more intense, the next step was to use title pages to identify editors by name. One would only have learned the identity of the editor of the 1500 Petrarch, a certain Nicolò Peranzone, from reading the preface or the colophon. In 1508, though, the edition printed by Bartolomeo de Zanni included Peranzone's name on the title page, pointing out that he had corrected the poems 'with many shrewd and excellent additions' ('con molte acute et excellente additione'). This kind of prominent identification of the editor, alongside the author and the printer, gradually became normal practice. By the end of the sixteenth century, books could even occasionally contain portraits of editors.2

But editors, unlike compositors or pressmen, were not indispensable to printers. Their employment was a potential source of delay and expense which was no doubt avoided whenever a printer felt that it was sufficient merely to reproduce a manuscript or an earlier printed edition without alteration. What, then, were the benefits which outweighed these disadvantages and which, as the printing industry grew, meant that the role of the editor was drawn increasingly to the public's attention?

To a certain extent, the demand for editors came from living authors. Some of these, of course, took an active part in correcting their own texts both before and during printing.³ But, in a climate of growing linguistic orthodoxy, with the Tuscan of the great writers of the Trecento becoming generally accepted as a literary norm, and with more attention being paid to punctuation and



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spelling, those who were uncertain of their usage might ask someone else to check their work before printing. And the degree of correctness of an edition was not just a matter of personal satisfaction for authors: it could also have a bearing on any income they hoped to earn from the printing of their works. An early example of a writer having a work scrutinized specifically for printing is provided by Nicolò Malermi's translation of the Legenda aurea by Iacopo da Varazze, which was printed in Venice in 1475 only after the Venetian Malermi had had his language revised by a Florentine.⁴ When Giorgio Interiano of Genoa sent his Vita et sito de Zychi to Aldo Manuzio to be printed in 1502, he gave it, said Aldo, on condition that it should be emended wherever necessary, though in the event Aldo corrected only the spelling, leaving everything else as it stood for the sake of authenticity.⁵ By the mid sixteenth century, an editor could act on behalf of an author to see that a work was printed correctly. Pietro Aretino was delighted to accept Lodovico Dolce's offer to 'rewrite' ('riscrivere') the second book of his Lettere in 1541: it was important, he wrote to Dolce on 1 September, that a work should be well written and well punctuated, and he gave Dolce permission to add to or delete from the book as he thought fit. Bernardo Tasso found it natural to use Dolce and Girolamo Ruscelli as his agents when he wished to have some of his Rime printed in Venice.⁶ Ruscelli was also one of those approached by a doctor, Giuseppe Pallavicino, who wanted to have a collection of his own letters corrected for printing. When Ruscelli proved unable to undertake the task, Pallavicino was grateful to be able to entrust the letters to another leading editor, Francesco Sansovino, in 1565 in the hope that Sansovino would be able to 'enrich' them ('con isperanza ch'ella ... le possa arricchire').7 Bernardo Cappello concluded his collection of Rime (1560) with a sonnet claiming that he would hardly dare publish his work without the contribution of his editor, Dionigi Atanagi, calling him a new Aristarchus who gave polish and adornment to the wisest writers of the age ('O novello Aristarco, e'n questa etate et lima e fregio a' più saggi scrittori').

But the persons who most frequently employed editors were printers and publishers. There were various reasons for which they might decide to have a text edited. In the first place, they might want to improve its readability. If its language was considered unacceptable to the readers at which the printed edition was aimed, it was very likely that an editor would be asked to adapt it in order to meet his audience's demands. He could also be expected to improve punctuation and accentuation. Secondly, the printer or publisher would want the edition to be as complete as possible, especially if there were rival editions competing for the market. He would want to be sure that there were no gaps in the text. If the work had been printed before, he might want to attract purchasers by having some sort of supplement added. This might be additional text or some ancillary material which would make the text easier to understand and easier to consult: a table of contents, for example, or an index



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of proper names and of subjects, or an index of the first lines of a collection of poems. If the text was important enough, an editor might be asked to add one or more commentaries, or perhaps even to write a new one, or to add diagrams and illustrations which would act as a visual commentary on the text. He might include (or again, he might himself compile) material concerning the author's life and writings or exegetic material such as a glossary or linguistic notes.

Publishers of literary works would have had a third important consideration in mind. Such works were to be learned from or imitated as well as enjoyed. Their readers therefore needed to be reassured not only that the edition which they were buying was useful to them because of the range of its contents but also that its text was 'corretto': 'correct', that is, and usually also 'corrected' by an editor. Those producing the book therefore had to project an image of themselves as caring about accuracy, and the best way of doing this was to claim in the preliminary or concluding matter of a book that careful revision had brought it back to its pristine form.

In practice, such revisions tended to achieve not authenticity but conformity with contemporary standards. Nevertheless, printers and editors did not tire of using letters to the readers or dedications in order to compose, with differing degrees of honesty, variations on the same commonplace: that the carelessness, ignorance or greed of those responsible for the text up to now (whether scribes or printers) had been responsible for the degradation of the text, but that, thanks to the generosity and care of the present printer, the work was now in its original state. Among examples of the contrast drawn by editors between earlier printers and their current employer's striving for perfection, one can cite Francesco Tanzio's letter to the reader in his Milanese Petrarch of 1494. One could, he wrote, easily remedy the corruption to which printed books were liable, 'if printers had their books very diligently revised and corrected beforehand by men who were learned and expert in the subject-matter with which those books deal which they wish to print' ('se gl'impressori faccessono prima diligentissimamente rivedere e corregere da huomini docti et experti in quella facultate qual tractano essi libri che vogliono imprimere'). Unfortunately, he went on, few printers were willing to employ editors, because of 'their insatiable avarice' ('la insatiabile loro avaritia'), but his own printer, Ulrich Scinzenzeler, was an exception, putting honour before gain.⁸ Similarly, Pre' Marsilio of Fossombrone, in the dedication of a Petrarch printed in Venice in 1513, applauded the invention of printing but lamented the lack of care, due to 'base gain' ('vil guadagno'), which had led to the corruption of both Latin and vernacular texts; his printer, though, Bernardino Stagnino, had a different motivation, being 'most desirous of every perfection in such a work' ('de ogni in tale opera perfectione desidera<n>tissimo'). In the middle of the sixteenth century, Lodovico Dolce and Lodovico Domenichi praised the care which Gabriele Giolito took over



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the texts which he printed (Dolce in his Ariosto, Domenichi in his Petrarch), and Girolamo Ruscelli wrote of Giovanni Griffio's 'affection for scholars' ('affectione alli studiosi') and 'diligence in printing' ('diligenza nell'impressione') in one of his Petrarchs of 1554. Ruscelli also praised Melchior Sessa the younger effusively in 1558 because of the printer's generosity in bringing classical and the best vernacular works to the greatest degree of perfection achievable in printing and 'in providing them with annotations, explanations and other such things for the benefit and convenience of those who study them' ('con aiutarli d'annotationi, di dichiarationi, e d'altre cose sì fatte per utile e comodo de gli studiosi').9

A comparable strategy was to include a letter or poem written in the name of the long-dead author, but probably composed by an editor, extolling the printer's concern for the correctness of the text. This material would no doubt be intended to attract purchasers and could be reproduced unscrupulously by different printers with minimal changes. In a Latin and vernacular edition of the Aesopus moralisatus printed in Verona in 1479, a sonnet attributed to Aesop credited an anonymous 'correttore' for removing the errors (blamed on scribes) which previously afflicted both versions of the text, and pointed out how vulnerable to change and needful of correction were works destined mainly for children and the uneducated. In 1487 the Dalmatian Bonino Bonini reprinted the work in Brescia, merely inserting his own name in the sonnet so as to get credit for the revision. 10 An example from Florence is the Decameron of 1516, which was preceded by a letter to the reader purporting to be from Boccaccio. The writer says that the printer Filippo di Giunta, having collected several texts copied from the original, has newly printed the work, using the judgement of several learned Florentines, so that he has brought it back to the state in which it left the author's hands.

Finally, the employment of an editor could help the printer or publisher to stress that a book was up to date. 11 Newness was an important selling point in this period. Title pages often pointed out that a book had been 'nuovamente stampato': the Florentine *Decameron* just mentioned is one of many examples. If this information was considered important, it would have been even more useful to be able to claim that an edition came fresh from the hands of an editor. Thus, for instance, the title pages of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* in the 1530s and 1540s often had phrases such as 'very recently printed and corrected' ('novissamente stampato e corretto') or 'very recently restored to its integrity' ('novissamente alla sua integrità ridotto').

Printers as different as Bonini and Filippo di Giunta, then, wanted to be seen to be satisfying their readers' demand for texts edited well and recently. But editing was not something that the great majority of printers could do for themselves. In general, printers were businessmen and craftsmen, only rarely men of letters. In any case, the running of the operations and finances of a



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printing house created a multitude of other demands on their time. It is true that in some exceptional cases a printer might edit his own texts. For instance, the printer (and priest) Boneto Locatelli of Bergamo corrected the Rationale divinorum officiorum of Guillaume Durand in 1491. We shall see in chapter 4 that Aldo Manuzio edited Petrarch in 1514. Some editors nominally made the transition to printing in their own right, though the extent of their involvement on the technical side must remain open to doubt. But the fact that a printer claimed responsibility and credit for a text did not necessarily mean that no separate editor was involved. We know, for instance, that Vincenzio Borghini wrote at least two prefaces signed by members of the Giunta family. From the beginning of printing in Italy and throughout the Cinquecento, printers who wished to attain eminence in their craft needed a network of editorial contacts among local intellectuals.

This was especially necessary for the academic and erudite market, at which many Italian presses were aiming. The strong humanist tradition in Italy meant that the reading public was justified in looking for respectable standards of scholarship in the printing of the Latin and Greek classics or in legal, philosophical, theological and medical works. Printers of such texts would therefore draw attention to their collaboration with men of letters. An advertisement for the company formed by the French printer Jenson in 1473 or soon after claimed that 'the excellent Nicholas Jenson has readers skilled in both tongues [i.e. Latin and Greek] and seeks out the best-known experts, not merely one of them but several ... so that in his texts there remains nothing to be supplied or deleted'. 14 And scholars were well aware of the way printers depended on them: a year later, dedicating his edition of Valla's Latin translation of Herodotus printed by Jacques Le Rouge in Venice, Benedetto Brugnoli was confident enough to assert that printers could not produce books properly on their own but needed others, not least those who would revise and correct copy-text for them ('qui exemplaria recognoscant atque emendent').15 The Venetian state was particularly conscious of the relation between its prestige and a high standard of printing of classical texts. It could exert a degree of compulsion on printers to produce correct Latin texts: two bookprivileges, which gave the exclusive right to publish an edition within its territory for a certain number of years, were granted in 1504 and 1514 respectively on condition that the legal texts concerned were diligently corrected ('castigati'). 16 On 30 January 1516 the Consiglio dei Dieci took the remarkable decision to charge the scholar Andrea Navagero to check all classical works ('de recognoscer tute le opere de humanità') which were to be printed in Venice. 17

Even when producing texts in the vernacular, still considered by many to be inferior to Latin, printers often needed to employ men of letters as editors. This was not just because many early printers were foreigners, but also because the editorial problems here could be just as great as with a Latin text.



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First of all, there was a growing demand for printed editions of the Trecento classics: but it was difficult for printers to produce accurate ones, since the texts had become corrupt over the years. Furthermore, it was important to be able to satisfy the demand from many readers for commentaries and other aids to understanding these texts. As for works written outside Tuscany or since the Trecento, it might be felt desirable to adapt these at least to some extent in order to bring them more closely in line with Trecento Tuscan, whose importance as a model, even if only a partial model, was becoming accepted by an increasing number of users of the vernacular. But that was no easy matter. Tuscan was more or less distant from the native dialects of the great majority of those who worked for presses outside Florence, and even a knowledge of contemporary Tuscan did not make one an expert in the Tuscan of the Trecento. Latin grammars were readily available, but no grammar of Tuscan was printed until 1516. All these tasks, then, called for skills of a sort which most printers did not possess.

Since printers were often accused, as we have seen, of sacrificing quality in order to save money, they did not want to seem to be employing editors simply in order to increase their profits. They preferred to claim that their concern for accuracy arose out of an altruistic desire to benefit their public, with no expense being spared in this honourable cause. Thus the Venetian printer Nicolò Zoppino said, in a letter to the reader in an edition of 1529, that he would endeavour to make his future works welcome and praiseworthy to every reader both for their spelling and for their simple Tuscan language, regardless of any necessary expense and effort incurred ('sforzaromi in ciò che per l'avenire l'opre nostre et per la nuova ortographia et per la semplice lengua toscana grate et lodevoli appresso di ciascun lettore si restino, non mi curando di spesa né di fatica alcuna che gire vi potesse'). 18 But no press could survive on idealism alone. A hard-headed businessman such as Zoppino would only have been prepared to spend money on the correction and usefulness of texts as long as he believed that this outlay was also going to promote sales. Even if printers did not like to say this, editors were naturally ready to remind them that a well-edited text could help a book to be a success rather than a failure on the bookstalls. In 1470 an editor of Latin texts, Giovanni Andrea Bussi, claimed that his prefaces allowed printers to put a higher price on their products. 19 Presenting Pulci's Morgante in the Venetian edition of 1502, Niccolò Massetti of Modena said that the work had become incomprehensible; he had corrected many verses 'so that the printer can sell it' ('perché 'l stampator puossa essa vendere'). 20 Twenty years later, Cassiodoro Ticinese wrote of how Zoppino had asked him to correct and revise ('corrigendo ... rivedere') the works of the Florentine poet Girolamo Benivieni, pointing out that much profit would accrue to the printer as well as no little praise to the editor ('affermando che molto allui di emolumento et a me non pocha lode de ciò risulterebbe').21



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During the first century of printing, therefore, an investment in editing came to be seen as one of the keys to success both by ambitious printers and publishers and by authors. A reputable printing house would want to win readers with the superior correctness and usefulness of its books, as well as with their typographical elegance. Authors would want to ensure that their works were reproduced accurately and would be received well, often because they hoped for direct or indirect financial benefit. But to what sort of persons did printers and authors turn when they wanted a text edited, and what relationships existed in practice between editors and their employers?

Printers in Venice and Florence came from a wide variety of social, cultural and geographical backgrounds. Nicholas Jenson, for example, was a Frenchman, probably a metalworker by profession; Aldo Manuzio, born near Rome, began his career as a teacher; Filippo di Giunta came of a Florentine family of weavers and was a stationer before turning his hand to printing. Most printers were laymen, but the clergy too had close connections with printing in Italy from the very beginning. Some presses were run by members of the secular clergy, others by friars: the Franciscans had a press at the Frari in Venice, a Dominican ran the press of Sant'Iacopo di Ripoli in Florence, where nuns helped to compose the type. Women could also be involved to some extent in the financial side of printing after the death of their husbands, as one sees from examples such as those of the widows of John of Speyer, Giorgio Rusconi and Melchior Sessa the younger.

Those who edited vernacular texts were just as diverse in their origins, save that they were almost all Italian and apparently always male.²² At one end of the social scale were three of the most learned vernacular philologists of the Cinquecento, Pietro Bembo, Vincenzio Borghini and Lionardo Salviati, all members of distinguished Venetian or Florentine families. Nicolò Delfino, editor of the Decameron in 1516, was another Venetian patrician and served his state in various offices. Alessandro Vellutello was a member of a patrician family of Lucca. Others could claim respectability on account of their education or career. Girolamo Centone, Castorio Laurario, Lucio Paolo Rosello, Lodovico Domenichi and Francesco Sansovino all studied law in Padua (and, in Sansovino's case, also in Bologna) before working as editors for Venetian printers. Tizzone Gaetano may have given diplomatic and military service to the brothers Federigo and Pirro Gonzaga before becoming an editor in Venice in the 1520s.²³ Marco Guazzo was a soldier as well as a writer and editor. Editors might also come from the ranks of the regular or secular clergy: Franciscans were actively connected with the Venetian printing industry in its early years, and editors in Venice and Florence in the second half of the Cinquecento included members of the Dominican, Carmelite, Benedictine and Camaldolese orders.

Editors generally had some source of income other than the printing press.



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Some were teachers, like Colombino Veronese, who helped two Germans print Dante's Commedia in Mantua in 1472 and was one of the first vernacular editors to be identified by name. Gerolamo Squarzafico and Antonio Brucioli also worked part-time for printers and part-time as teachers in Venice.²⁴ Members of the secular clergy might also come into this category. Pre' Marsilio, for instance, said in the Venetian Petrarch of 1513 that he had been fitting his editorial work into the gaps left by his priestly and teaching duties ('le mie sacerdotali e scolastice occupationi'). 25 Church and school took up most of the time of Antonio Craverio, who worked for Giovanni Giolito in Turin in the 1530s.²⁶ Another cleric who was teaching Latin in 1587 and worked as a corrector for the Venetian press was Ascanio Guidotti from Naples.²⁷ In the fifteenth century, at least, some scribes helped printers by editing texts for them.²⁸ But the growth in the importance of editors in Venice from the 1530s onwards meant that a handful of secular men of letters were for long periods able to make a living there mainly or even exclusively from activities connected with the press, combining editing with work as translators, anthologists and sometimes authors. Even then it was exceptional for editors to work regularly for just one printer, as did Lucio Paolo Rosello for Gregorio de Gregori in 1522-3 or as did Dolce for Gabriele Giolito after 1542. Most were freelances, working for different employers as the opportunity arose.

In Florence, editors were probably mostly of local origin. But those working in Venice, by far the largest centre of printing in Italy, came from all over Italy, with many employees being drawn eastwards from Padua and beyond, and others northwards from the Marche or further south. To give a few examples, Rosello was from Padua, Domenichi from Piacenza, Squarzafico from Piedmont, Peranzone, Pre' Marsilio and Atanagi from the Marche, Sebastiano Manilio from Rome, Tizzone Gaetano from Pofi, near Frosinone; Ruscelli was born in Viterbo and had travelled as far afield as Milan, Rome and Naples. Tuscans were well represented, helped no doubt by their linguistic advantage. Vellutello, as we have seen, was from Lucca; Brucioli and Anton Francesco Doni were Florentines; Francesco Sansovino lived mainly outside Tuscany but was brought up by the Florentine architect Iacopo Sansovino; Francesco Baldelli came from Cortona and Tomaso Porcacchi was from Castiglione Aretino. Only Bembo and Dolce, of the best-known editors, were from Venice itself. The picture in the Venetian printing industry, at least, is one of an open society where differences of regional and social origin had little or no importance.

What was the position of an editor in relation to those with whom he was collaborating? In order to gather sufficient evidence for an answer to this question, we need to broaden our horizons to include Latin works and cities other than Venice and Florence; it seems fair to assume that, in the present



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context, the experience of editors dealing with different languages and in different centres were similar.

It needs to be said first that an editor could occasionally be an employer rather than an employee. He might be acting as publisher, instigating and financially promoting the printing of a book. In Venice, editors as well as printers, publishers and authors requested book-privileges from the state.²⁹ An editor might have a work printed wholly at his own expense, or might bear a proportion of the costs. Piero Donato Guadagnoni entered into a partnership with a printer and a notary in Umbria in 1470, according to which he was to provide a corrected legal text and capital of 150 ducats, and was to receive a quarter of the profits. 30 In 1472, Antonio Moretto and Squarzafico appear to have financed a Venetian edition of the letters of Leonardo Bruni, and Francesco Caimi financed his edition of Petrarch's De vita solitaria in Milan in 1498.31 In Padua the French printer Pierre Mauser borrowed money, in order to help him finance editions, from people who were going to be remunerated for their services to him: 25 ducats in 1476 from Giacomo Bordegazzi, working probably as proof-corrector, and 100 ducats in 1477 from the lecturer Giovanni Pietro Carari and a colleague, Paolo Varisco, who were working for him as editors.³² Sebastiano Manilio was granted a bookprivilege for the 1494 edition of his translation of Seneca's letters and shared the costs (as the colophon says) with the printers Stefano and Bernardino di Nalli.³³ The colophons of some incunabula printed in Venice by the company of Ratdolt, Maler and Löslein say that the first two printed the books together with Löslein as corrector and partner ('socius'), though one cannot be sure that this referred to a financial partnership. Innocente Ziletti, teacher and later bookseller, is described as 'helper and partner' ('adjutor sociusque') in the 1476 edition of the Italian version of Petrarch's De viris illustribus. 34 Carlo Bembo obtained book-privileges for the Petrarch and Dante of 1501-2 edited by his brother Pietro and printed by Aldo Manuzio, and Pietro may well have been in financial partnership with Aldo. 35 Alessandro Vellutello financed his edition of Virgil (1534), his Dante (1544), and (jointly with Giovanni Giolito) the fourth edition of his Petrarch (1538).36 A medical lecturer from the Bolognese Studio, acting as partner ('consocius'), editor and accountant to a printer in Modena in 1475, lived in the printer's house and received money for clothing expenses.³⁷ This situation was reversed in 1553-5 when Ruscelli had the printer Plinio Pietrasanta living in his house in Venice and paid him a salary.38

Most often, though, an editor would work at the request of a printer, a publisher, or an author. His function was that of an intermediary between the author's study and the printing house, but he remained to some extent aloof from the latter and normally prepared his copy-text away from the press. Tomaso Porcacchi wrote in his dedication of Bembo's Asolani in 1571 that he had been spending the previous summer in the country villa of a marquis near



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Verona, writing in the cooler hours of the day and at other times discussing virtue, when letters arrived from the printer Giolito in Venice asking him to contribute to some planned new editions of Bembo's works. This self-portrait of an editor working in idyllic, scholarly seclusion, part of a courtly world into which printers entered cap in hand, was doubtless much idealized. But we do have some evidence of a clear distinction between the editor or editors who established the text, working outside the printing house, and the more humble copy-editor who added the final touches and saw the book through the press. Two Latin canon law texts printed by Nicholas Jenson in Venice in 1474 and 1475 were edited for him in Padua by Alessandro Nievo (da Nevo) of Vicenza, who delegated the routine work to a pupil of his, Pietro Albignani da Trezzo of Brescia. Letters by Albignani at the end of these volumes show that someone else, a certain Francesco Colucia from Verzino in Calabria, supervised the correct printing of the volumes in Venice on Jenson's behalf. Colucia, who had already edited Rutilius Taurus for the French printer in 1472, was asked by Albignani on both occasions to ensure that the pressmen did not stray from the path he had set out and that due care was taken over spelling and punctuation.³⁹ In 1479 Albignani edited these and other texts for the printer John of Cologne. Albignani was still working in Padua, still had (for at least one edition) a contact in Venice, a priest called Bartolomeo Pozzi (Puteus), and was still uncertain enough of the compositors to ask Pozzi to ensure that they followed his text closely.40

This separation of spheres of influence, combined with the rapidity with which composition of type and imposition were followed by printing, could well mean that the editor was not involved in proof-correction. This was evidently the case, for instance, when Gerolamo Squarzafico complained in 1484 that his Venetian edition of Petrarch was not printed or corrected as he would have wished; or when Francesco Tanzio claimed in his Milanese Petrarch of 1494 that any mistakes would be those which compositors almost inevitably made (he did not expect to see proofs, therefore, nor did he think anyone else would correct them effectively); or when Griffio wrote in the supplement to the Decameron which he printed for Valgrisi in Venice, 1552, that the house of the editor, Girolamo Ruscelli, was so far away from the press that it was not possible to consult him whenever the printers were unable to decipher his original.⁴¹ Later, Tomaso Garzoni distinguished 'il correttore' from the proof-reader ('lo scontratore') in his list of those involved in bookproduction.⁴² However, Pre' Marsilio described in 1513 how he acceded to Bernardino Stagnino's request that he should correct proofs on the day of printing ('son condesceso a la requisitione et instantia de meser Bernardino Stagnino ... a dover correggere ... e libri ne la sua officina a la giornata da stamparsi') as well as preparing Petrarch's Trionsi for the press. Filippo Beroaldo the younger assured readers of his edition of Tacitus's Annales (Rome, 1515) that he had proof-read the printed sheets together with the