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978-1-108-07652-4 - The Bibliographical Decameron: Or, Ten Days Pleasant Discourse upon Illuminated Manuscripts, and Subjects Connected with Early Engraving, Typography, and Bibliography: Volume 2

Thomas Frognall Dibdin

Excerpt

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## FIFTH DAY.

VOL. II.

B

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## ARGUMENT.

*Progress of Printing in Germany and Italy continued.  
Rise and Progress of Printing in France; at Paris; at  
Rouen; at Lyons; at Antwerp, and other Places in the  
Low Countries. Progress of Printing at Venice: the Aldine  
Press, the Presses of the Giunti, the Sessæ, and Gioliti, &c.  
The Presses of Froben, Oporinus, &c. at Basil. Portraits  
of Printers. Introduction of Title-Pages; simple and  
decorative.*

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[More information](#)*Aldegraver Sc. 1540*

## Fifth Day.



LET us now resume our typographical journey. Symptoms of ennui were however occasionally manifested, on the part of the ladies, during the discourse of yesterday; and I thought I more than once discovered an inclination, on the part of Lisardo, to break the chain of enquiry and research. His impatience will, I trust, be somewhat regulated and subdued during the discussion of to-day; for we have a world of variety to unfold—and I should be loth to let the effect of my exertions be lost by any premature effort to give them an improper direction. So prepare, my worthy friends, to hear of learned and laborious printers, who filled the world with their praises as well as their books; who devoted even their midnight vigils to give permanency to their works; and who, discarding the filthy attractions of mere lucre, directed all their energies as well for the benefit of mankind as of

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their families. Yes, brave spirits of the immortal dead ! . . of ALDUS, of FROBEN, of OFORINUS, of the STEPHENS, and of PLANTIN !—methinks I see you, (tho' it be day-light—and Addison never heard of a morning ghost) hovering over me at this instant, and encouraging me with smiles of more than mortal expression ! I see the adamantine column to which your eyes and hands are occasionally directed, and where your names are inscribed upon scrolls wrought in porphyry which defies decay ! . . . I obey with promptitude your high behest—

LISARDO. If this be not bibliographical inspiration, tell me, I pray, in what that species of inspiration consists ? I crave pardon for past impatience, and will cease to interrupt in future. But remember *Devices* \* . . the *Devices* of those

\* *remember Devices.*] The unknowing in the learning of devices, may read with pleasure and instruction the little quarto volume of Spoerlius, published in 1730, under the title of '*Introductio in Notitiam Insignium Typographicorum.*' Was it, or was it not, preceded by Draudius's '*Discursus typographicus experimentalis, &c. cum insignibus præcipuorum typographorum, quæ frontispiciis librorum imprimere consueverunt,*' Francof. 1625. 8vo.? Spoerlius denies its existence; and thinks 'the glory of having first collected the devices of printers,' is due to Roth-Scholtzius—not forgetting, however, the specimens of this kind, few in number, which were exhibited in Orlandi's feeble performance, entitled '*Origine e Progressi della Stampa o sia dell' Arte Impressoria,*' 1722, 4to. Baillet had only described a few of them without fac-similes; and it must be remembered that the fac-similes both of Orlandi and of Scholtz are on a reduced scale. Spoerlius notices the extra ordinary collection of this kind which was in the possession of a Nuremberg physician of the name of Roetenbecius; and we may plume ourselves on the not less extensive similar collection of John Bagford in the British Museum. '*Multum (says Spoerlius, not untruly) juvat hominem literis deditum, libros quoscunque hujus vel illius officinae a se invicem dignoscere posse. Itaque notas variarum officinarum nosse opus est . . . Cum itaque typographi peculiare notas sui characteristicas operibus suis imprimi curaverint, testor heic omnes ingenios homines, annon ii laudem et bonam gratiam mereantur, qui colligendis his notis tempus suum studiumque commodant? maxime cum nonnisi summo cum labore ex innumeris codicibus colligi possint,*' p. 13-15.

I may here borrow the emphatic invocation of Spoerlius. '*Huc ergo adeste, qui notitiæ librorum studeatis acquirendæ, et opes ingeniorum in tot diversissima*

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typographical heroes with whom you have just held such aerial converse—

LYSANDER. Your words betray or misinterpret your intentions. Here is an interruption at the very outset. But I can forgive you. Yes, Lisardo shall have all his devices, and shields, and symbols, and the decorative accompaniments of the art of printing . . . at least, he shall have a *reasonable measure* of such ornaments—for an Atlas folio would not contain them *all*.

LISARDO. 'Tis well. I obey; and anticipate with delight all the marvellous intelligence which you are about to unfold.

BELINDA. Whatever symptoms of ennui might have been discoverable yesterday, on the part of our frail sex, I can pretty safely affirm, for Almansa as well as myself, that the sight of all those shields, or marks, or devices, which is promised us by my well-beloved husband, will fully prevent the occurrence of the least portion of *nonchalance* to day. So pray proceed, my dearest Lysander. Our thankfulness shall keep pace with your endeavours to amuse and instruct.

LYSANDER. Such encouragement is irresistible, and I proceed to do my best. If I remember rightly, we concluded with giving the finish to an account of early printing in Germany and in Italy; yet I can almost reproach myself for having omitted to notice two very rare and very ancient German printers, who worked in partnership, and with

volumina dispersas, et bonorum librorum characteres, uno quasi oculi obtutu dignoscere addiscite. Quod vinum vendibile sit, ex hedera appensa . . . jam intelligere potestis,' p. 15 : and further observe—what I believe is not applicable to the labours of my predecessors—that the FAC-SIMILES OF THE DEVICES, which the reader is here about to see, are, in truth, conformable to the exact meaning and application of the foregoing appellation : in other words, they are, in every respect, CONFORMABLE TO THEIR ORIGINALS.

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whom I have but lately cultivated an acquaintance. Listen to their harmonious appellatives! CHRISTOPHER BEYAM and JOHN GLIM.\*

ALMANSA. Frightful beyond compare! In what does the merit of their printing consist?

LYSANDER. In having executed works of an early date. Among them is a *Boethius* of 1470, and a *Manipulus Curatorum*, without date, but probably not a twelvemonth later, and the first impression of that once popular work.

\* *Christopher Beyam and John Glim.*] The very rare book, in which the associated names of these printers appear, is the *Manipulus Curatorum* of Guido de Monte Rocherii; without date, in folio: but supposed by the compiler of the Bologna-Crevenna Catalogue, (vol. i. no. 563) to be the first impression of that once popular work. It is probably executed before the edition of 1476, by Cæsar and Stol, and is considered to have a number of variations as well as an additional chapter; but upon what authority Vernazza, in his *Lezione sopra la stampa, Cagliari, 1778*, 8vo. (as referred to by Denis, p. 621, and Panzer, vol. iii. p. 4) attributes the execution of it to the *Seville* press, in the year 1470, is utterly inconceivable. Neither Caballerus, in his *Specimen de Prima Typographia Hispanica Ætate*, nor Lichtenberger, make the least mention of such an early specimen of the Spanish press. The book in question has been recently obtained by Lord Spencer, from Count Delci; and is a folio, printed in long lines, without numerals or catchwords, having 34 lines in a full page. The colophon is thus—on the reverse of the 136th and last leaf: beneath the words DEO. GRACIAS.

Hoc beyamus opus pressit Christoforus altum.

Immensis titulis estat origo sua.

Cui Glim cōsocius clara fuit arte Iohannes

Germanam gentem: non negat esse suam

The type is uniformly roman, except the *d*; which is a sharp gothic letter. There are titles to the several sections, chiefly in roman capitals; and the smaller roman letter may be considered as approximating to that of Gunther Zainer, and the Fivizani—the latter, from their *Virgil* of 1472—also recently acquired by his Lordship. But the *Boethius* of 1470, by Glim alone, (I believe) is on its route to the library of the same Noble Collector. An ancient ms. note, at the end of the copy of the *Manipulus*, &c. says, '*Questo è un libro bello:*' but since the time of such inscription the worms have unluckily become enamoured of its 'beauty,' and have left behind too many proofs of their attachment!

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Before however I bid adieu to Germany, let me entreat you always to pay marks of attention and respect to the productions of the *first Printer at Nuremberg*—ANTHONY KOBURGER: a noble fellow in his way,\* and diligent almost beyond competition. His volumes are remarkable for their dimensions, and his ample margins betray a thoroughly well cultivated taste respecting the management of those important features in a book—*black and white*.

\* ANTHONY KOBURGER — *a noble fellow in his way*.] It may be questioned however whether Koburger, Koberger, or Coburger, (for his name is spelt each way) be the first printer at Nuremberg; as the earliest Nuremberg book, with a date, (the ‘Comestorium Vitiorum’ of Retza, of the date of 1470, see *Bibl. Spenceriana*, vol. iii. p. 489) is attributed to the press of CREUSSNER: and it should seem, from the *Typographical Annals* of Panzer, (vol. ii. p. 167) that Sensenschmid and Kefer also preceded Koberger. However, this latter printer may be considered as taking the lead of all his Nuremberg brethren of the matrix, and his works fully merit the encomium pronounced upon them by Lysander Mallinkrot (p. 87) has not only himself called Koberger ‘inter reliquos . . . facile princeps . . . qui ævo suo non illius modò vrbis (Noribergæ), sed totius Germaniæ Typographorum et Bibliopolarum . . . præcipuus fuit, quod plurima et insignia ab ipso impressa et distracta volumina abundè testantur’—but has directed our attention to the eulogies of a most competent judge, and contemporary, Jodocus Badius Ascensius; who dedicated a *Collection of Epistles of Eminent Men*, in 1499, folio, to this very renowned typographer. The language of Ascensius is too delightful in itself, and too congenial with my own feelings, to be here suppressed—as I find it in *Maittaire*, vol. i. p. 79, edit. 1719. After calling him ‘Antonius suavissimus,’ he goes on thus: ‘Si quidem cùm sis Librariorum facillè princeps et inter fideles atque honestos mercatores non inferiori loco positus; nihil principatu tuo dignius censeam, quàm hos tantos heroas in regales istos thalamos, omnis honestatis ac probitatis nimirum penetralia, benignissimè suscipere — Litteratos omnes et colis et foves; pervigilè que curam ad bonos Codices verè, tersè, ac sinè mendis imprimendos adhibes,’ &c. ‘Ex his (adds *Maittaire*) Badii verbis licet æstimare quantum fuerit ANTONII KOBURGER inter ejus ὁμοτέχου meritum.’

According to the testimony of Neudoerferus, Koburger had not only 24 presses at work, and more than 100 workmen, at Nuremberg, but he was engaged in printing at Basil and Lyons, and had a book-selling establishment at other cities as well as at Nuremberg. *Lichtenberger, Initia. Typog.* p. 199. He certainly printed the *Alcinoi Epitoma Disciplinarum Platonis* in the year 1472; omitted to be mentioned in the work first above referred to: but see

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LORENZO. Have you not some other favourite places or printers to notice, before you take us into the LAND OF DEVICES—France, and the Netherlands, &c.?

LYSANDER. I shall quickly prove to you that devices did not take their origin in France, however they may have been chiefly exhibited in that country. Yes . . . the question of our Host is both opportune and judicious: for let me conduct you, in imagination, as mourners to the burying place of poor FERANDUS, of Brescia\*—the printer of the

Panzer, vol. ii. p. 169, no. 10. The Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493, both in Latin and in German, is probably the ‘magnum opus’ of Koburger; and however I may have been criticised and scolded for the unwieldiness of the article, which comprises a description of that stupendous tome, I shall, with Mallinkrot on my side, and with the characteristic obstinacy of an enthusiast, continue to think that neither labour nor expense were thrown away upon it.

\* *the burying place of poor Ferandus, of Brescia.*] Ferandus was the earliest printer at BRESCIA; and although Cardinal Quirini has devoted a pretty substantial quarto tome to the *History of Brescia Literature*, 1739, and has described at large the earlier editions of the Roman poets which were printed there, he has wholly omitted the name of Ferandus, and of course of the Lucretius, Juvenal, and Cecco d’Ascoli, printed by the same artist. Mauro Boui, however, with more fortunate sources of intelligence, has done ample justice to our Ferandus; observing ‘L’ uomo benemerito che vi eresse i primi Torchi fu TOMMASO FERRANDO zelante Cittadino, e non ignobile letterato, come fan fede l’edizioni da lui eseguite, e qualche operetta da lui medesimo composta, che leggesi a stampa.’ *Primi Libri a Stampa, &c. dell’Italia Superiore*, Venez. 1794, p. LXXXIII. CVI. The noble sentiments of Ferandus—who professes his ‘attachment to his Country next to his God’—and his correct estimation of the right use of wealth and literary application—are seen in more than one of the colophons of the *Brescia Statutes*, printed by him in 1473: vide *Bibl. Spencer*. vol. iv. p. 18-21: although the last of these colophons affords a presentiment of that misery, and failure in business, which afterwards overtook him, and which caused his desertion of his country. The *Cecco d’Ascoli* and *Lucretius* are the rarest pieces of Ferandus; and both are to be found in the most desirable condition in the library of Earl Spencer. It must be admitted, however, that the type and press-work of Ferandus were little calculated to please a fastidious reader—who had been accustomed to the beautiful productions of other Italian cities. A brochure, of some 50 pages, might be well devoted to the name and merits of Ferandus. I conceive his private history to have been exceedingly interesting; and I feel every possible degree of inclination to become one of the above ‘mourners,’ and to drop a tear upon the grave of poor Ferandus.’



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*First Lucretius*, and of several other works of nearly equal rarity and value. Drop a tear upon his grave, for he died broken-hearted at the ungrateful treatment of his countrymen! Yet his name shall live 'for aye' in the annals of that immortal art which he practised with so much credit to himself and benefit to literature. I could, to be sure, dwell also somewhat upon early *Ferrara printers*—and upon the marvellous feats of 'THE BOY CARNERIUS\*—but there is really no time for the indulgence of such delightful episodes.

LORENZO. Bid adieu then to Germany and Italy, and take up the History of Printing in *France, the Low Countries, and United Provinces, &c.*

LISARDO. I crave pardon; but you know what an irritable temperament I possess. Tell us, I pray, dear Lysander—before you bid adieu to Germany and Italy—in what country did *Devices* make their first appearance? in other words, where did printers first use those symbols, marks, or shields, which have been just alluded to?

LORENZO. I will satisfy you as well as I am able. I told you, if you remember, that the earliest appearance of such printer's mark, or device, was in the Bible of Fust and Schoiffher, of the date of 1462; which device consisted of

\* *the boy Carnerius.*] In strict designation, the boy 'AUGUSTINUS CARNERIUS: see the colophon to the *Epistles and Odes of Horace*, printed by Carnerius in 1474: *Bibl. Spencer.* vol. ii. p. 75-7. ANDREAS BELLFORTIS, GALLUS, has however the glorious distinction of having put the first Ferrara press in motion—yet, as his name imports, he was a Frenchman by birth. In the colophon to the Augustinus Dattus, of 1471, (his second production) he thus designates himself:

Impressi Andreas hoc opus. cui francia nomen  
Tradidit. at cuius ferrariensis ego.  
Herculeo felix ferraria tuta manebat  
Numine: perfectus cum iste liber fuit.

'Ergo (adds Panzer) per Andream Bellfortis, Gallum.' See his *Annal. Typog.* vol. i. p. 393, no. 2. The Martial of Gallus, (his earliest work) is fully described in the *Bibl. Spencer.* vol. ii. p. 169.

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two shields, in red or in black, that were used even as late as 1531.\* Meanwhile, however, the Emperor Maximilian had granted to John Schoiffher (son of Peter) a coat of arms, incorporating, in part, the device of his father, which is thus appended to a variety of John Schoiffher's publications, from the year 1530 to 1540: if not before.



The example of Fust and Schoiffher was not immediately followed by the typographical corps in Germany. Indeed, Ulric Zel, the next German printer in point of antiquity,

\* So it appears in Bagford's Collection. Mercier had never seen it later than 1525. Consult the note in vol. i. page 343.

† *his own name, which, in German, signifies a shepherd.*] The first thing, on looking at the above figure, which strikes a graphical antiquary, is, its resemblance to the following figure, in one of the wood-cuts of ALBERT DURER, introduced in