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Staying Afloat: The Vavassore Workshop and the Role of the Minor Publisher in Sixteenth Century Venice

Our enduring fascination with the renown and skill of Venetian printers in the Renaissance has, in many ways, made it difficult for historians to carve out a place for the minor publishers who also lived and worked in the lagoon. Though the Aldine was just one of approximately 150 presses operating in Venice at the turn of the sixteenth century, scholarly and popular interest has focused more intently on the small number of editions it produced than the other 4,000 contemporary editions combined – not because these editions are uninteresting, and certainly not because they are unable to tell us anything about the interests, concerns, hobbies, and priorities of Venetians in the Renaissance.[1] Rather, historians of print in Venice focused, at least initially, on the abilities of a select group of talented printers and publishers; and in so doing created a picture of an industry molded by the prodigious skill of groundbreaking typesetters and publishers like Nicholas Jenson and Aldus Manutius.[2]

Focus on the specialization and exceptionalism that have underpinned the study of the printing industry in the Renaissance – not just in Venice, but elsewhere in Europe – has gradually given way to a different kind of specialization: the examination of particular genres of, or markets for, print. Such an approach is exemplified in recent work by Rosa Salzberg, whose research on the previously neglected genre of “cheap print” serves to close the gap between those responsible for printing and distributing printed ephemera and those who purchased it.

[3] We know more than ever before about the pivotal position itinerant *cantastorie* and *cantimbanchi* occupied between the worlds of oral and written culture in the Renaissance, and the way they successfully combined street performance with the commission and sale of short printed pamphlets. However, whilst our understanding of cheap print and its points of entry into the market – chiefly, through the hands of street sellers – continues to grow, focusing on a single genre of print has presented its own problems: chief among which is a lack of appreciation for the sheer variety of printed material available for consumption in the Renaissance. The study of the history of the book, and of printed material more generally, has thus become polarized: at one extreme fascinated with highly prized volumes produced by renowned workshops using ‘new’ or innovative techniques; whilst at the other concerned to reconstruct a vibrant world of disposable print that has left very few traces for the historian.

The role of the minor publisher in Renaissance Venice, and of the Vavassore workshop in particular, charts the middle course between these two historiographical trends. Persistent interest in the output of Jenson, Aldus, or even Giolito, has ensured that the output issued by the minor press established by Giovanni Andrea Vavassore in Venice in the early decades of the sixteenth century has repeatedly slipped under the radar of print scholars.[4] There has been no attempt to collect Vavassorian editions together, or indeed to display them, and at first

glance they can appear relatively unremarkable. However, the Vavassore workshop provides an ideal case study for the breadth of perspective it offers on the printing industry of Venice as a whole. The variety of printed material produced by its presses serves as a valuable reminder of the need to avoid separating the production of books from printed images, maps, pamphlets, and illustrations; whilst the involvement of a single practitioner in the various stages of production previously considered the work of many different artisans provides a rare insight into the world of a printing *poligrafo*. A maker of prints and maps, as a well as publisher, printer, and seller of books of all kinds, Vavassore will emerge throughout the course of this article as a man willing to turn his hand to the production of printed wares of every kind – an approach that stood him in good stead to continue his activities as a minor publisher for over eight decades, even in the often saturated print industry of Venice.

I. The Formation of the Workshop

At some point before 1515, Giovanni Andrea Vavassore and his wife Samaritana arrived in Venice from Telgate, a small town on the main road that links Bergamo and Brescia.^[5] It is unclear from the extant personal documentation – two wills written by the printer himself, two by his niece and nephew, and a handful of entries in the church records for the parish of San Moisè – whether the Vavassore family were drawn to the opportunities awaiting them in Venice, or whether they were fleeing the poor living and working conditions in the Bergamasco that had followed in the wake of the Venetian defeat at Agnadello in 1509.^[6] The Wars of the League of Cambrai had had a particularly devastating effect on Bergamo and Brescia, with Venice demanding heavy contributions and sacrifices during times of war.^[7] The extreme poverty that followed led in turn to depopulation, with residents from the small towns and valleys

of the Bergamasco leaving the area in droves. Vavassore followed in the footsteps of many young artisans who, with their families, travelled to Venice and settled in parishes with a high concentration of migrants from their homeland – ensuring that they could maintain existing connections with families, friends, and business associates.

Arriving by boat in Venice, Vavassore and his wife (and perhaps also any or all of his three brothers, Giovanni Jacopo, Giuliano, and Giovanni Maria, who would also settle in the lagoon) would have been welcomed into a lodging house from which their assimilation into the city could be monitored closely by the authorities. Venetian law mandated that newcomers register by appearing before the appropriate magistracy and giving their name and place of origin within a day of arrival.^[8] Houses for different migrant groups were therefore established throughout the city to facilitate the entry of artisans and merchants, as well as to provide them with temporary accommodation and sustenance. The concentration of immigrants from Bergamo and its surrounding areas in the parish of San Moisè explains the existence of the *Calle dei Bergamaschi* at its heart. Like the *calli* and *sotoportegi* of the Albanesi (near the Frari church at San Polo) and the Bressana (near SS. Giovanni e Paolo) the *Calle dei Bergamaschi* was strategically located near to the *traghetti* or ferry stops to ensure that immigrants could be quickly welcomed into inns, *osterie*, and lodging houses before registering with the authorities.

Given their point of entry into the city, it is perhaps unsurprising that one of the largest pockets of resident Bergamaschi immigrants was to be found in the central parish of San Moisè. Situated just a minute or two on foot to the west of the Piazza San Marco, the parish benefitted from its strategic location between the political and religious heart of the city at San Marco, and the bustling market at Rialto. Home to the Frezzaria, one of the most notable shopping districts in Renaissance Venice, the parish became one of the most densely populated

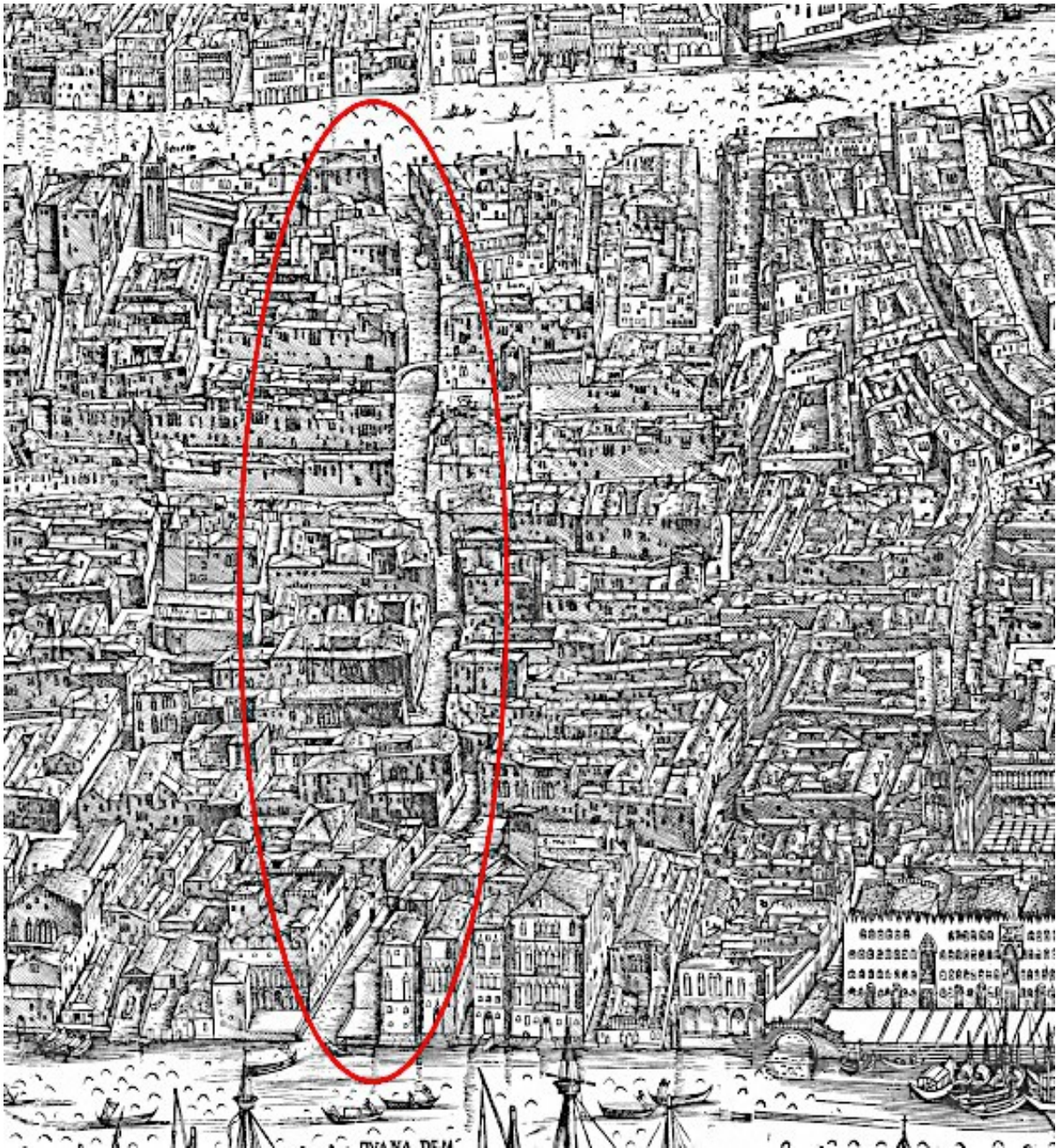


Fig. 1: Jacopo de' Barbari; *Bird's-Eye View of Venice*; 1500; woodcut on paper; 1345 x 2818 cm; Venice Project Center Historical Map Explorer. The waterways of San Moisè have been highlighted.

areas of the sixteenth-century city, and attracted international renown for the vast array of goods on sale there. Print scholars have reached a consensus that the city's burgeoning book trade found a home in the streets of San Moisè, among the pharmacies, fruit and wine shops, second-hand goods traders, fabric shops, and window makers listed among the trades in the



Fig. 2: Jacopo de' Barbari; *Bird's-Eye View of Venice*; 1500; woodcut on paper; 1345 x 2818 cm; Venice Project Center Historical Map Explorer. Boats on the Grand Canal at San Moisè opposite the Dogana da Mar.

parish records of births and marriages.[9] Despite the myriad opportunities available to immigrant artisans, a high concentration of those of Bergamaschi origin seem to have gravitated towards printing and the related trades of book-selling, woodcarving, and papermaking or stationery – perhaps because of the industry's reputation for achieving handsome profits with low start-up costs.[10]

It was in this environment – one characterized by both opportunity and familiarity – that Vavassore chose to establish his family and his workshop in Venice. Though his shop would eventually occupy a highly sought after premises in the bustlin Frezzaria, the Vavassore press was initially housed at the *Ponte dei Fuseri*, a small bridge located at the intersection between the parishes of San Fantin and San Luca. It was

not uncommon for artisans to maintain their workshops and homes in separate premises, and the parish boundaries that now appear so rigid to the Venetian historian were actually extremely fluid. Joseph Wheeler's in-depth study of the *sestiere* of San Polo has criticized contemporary descriptions and representations of the area as a coherent whole, but the experience of living and working in the parishes to the west of the Piazza San Marco does seem to have been characterized by a lack of, or the existence of very porous, boundaries.[11] Jacopo de' Barbari's bird's-eye view of Venice demonstrates this in a particularly exemplary way: the area containing the parishes of San Moisè, San Vidal, Santo Stefano, San Luca and San Fantin is one of the most densely populated areas on the map. Home to one of the most visible canals on

the 1500 woodcut – the *Rio di San Moisè*, which cuts across the center of that parish north to south before becoming the *Rio dei Barcaroli* and later, the *Rio di San Luca* – the waterways serve to cut across parish boundaries and provide convenient access to the Grand Canal on both sides (fig. 1). Located on a branch of the same canal that stretches east towards San Marco (at this point the *Rio dei Fuseri*) Vavassore's first premises would have been well served by the small boats that delivered raw materials, and by the larger cargo ships that left the lagoon with Venetian products on board (fig. 2).

More crucial than its physical location, however, is the founding of the workshop in an area with a high concentration of artisans engaged in printing or related trades. Along with San Salvador, San Fantin and San Luca contained the homes and businesses of many printmakers, publishers, and booksellers, including Giovanni Antonio Nicolini da Sabbio, Nicolò Aristotile de' Rossi da Ferrara (more commonly known by his moniker Zoppino) and the Bindoni brothers Benedetto and Agostino.[12] Nearby in the Frezzaria was a small-cluster of mapmakers, including Matteo Pagano, whose cartographic output mirrored that of the Vavassore workshop, and with whom Giovanni Andrea evidently worked quite closely.[13] The role of professional networks and working in close proximity with those in the same trade cannot be underestimated. For an immigrant artisan who had been trained as a woodcarver (*intagliador*), establishing one's place in an already flourishing trade necessitated the finding of a network of associates who were willing to share their knowledge, time, and contacts. At this, Giovanni Andrea Vavassore seems to have been particularly adept. Contemporaneously to establishing his own workshop at the *Ponte dei Fuseri*, Vavassore provided woodcut illustrations for such established members of the trade as Nicolò Zoppino, Melchiorre Sessa, Alessandro Paganino, and Paolo Danza.[14] As well as a steady source of income, opportunities like these enabled Vavassore to refine his skills and work on higher

profile projects than those produced under his own account: the woodcuts (at least three of which can be attributed to Vavassore, including the frontispiece) included in Paganino's illustrated edition of the *Apokalypsis Ihesu Christi* (1516) have been described as "some of the most complex and grandiose woodcuts ever to appear in Venetian books." [15] Just a short walk away from Paganino's premises on the *Riva del Carboni*, pamphlets illustrated by Vavassore were sold alongside the printed edicts of the Venetian Council in Paolo Danza's shop at the foot of the Rialto Bridge.[16]

Much of the surviving evidence about the everyday activities of the Vavassore workshop pertains to its later decades, but the information gleaned from the family's testaments can be applied with care to its formation and early years. Despite the fact that Giovanni Andrea and his wife Samaritana did not produce any surviving children the Vavassore workshop was, nonetheless, a family business. Giovanni Andrea's half-brother Florio joined the family in Venice in the 1530s, and together they produced at least twenty separate editions before 1545. Two of Vavassore's nephews, sons of his brother Giuliano, worked alongside their uncle in various aspects of the publishing business: Clemente, a successful and well-respected judge who practiced law in the Ducal Palace edited and provided learned commentary on several publications printed by the family presses; while his brother Alvise trained and worked in the workshop before taking over its running when Giovanni Andrea died in 1572. The family's two presses – alongside wooden blocks carved with maps, city views, and illustrations both secular and profane – remained active into the 1590s under a third generation of the Vavassore family, with Giovanni Andrea's great-nephews Alvise and Giuliano continuing to produce and sell illustrated books and pamphlets from a shop premises at the Sign of the Hippogriff in the Frezzaria. Across eight decades of activity, the documentary evidence and the surviving output of the press points towards a tight-knit family

operation, with brothers, nephews and sons (and occasionally apprentices) working side by side as printers, compositors, journeymen and booksellers.[17]

II. Printing Policy

Any discussion of the Vavassore workshop's printing policy must begin with a caveat regarding the survival rate of sixteenth-century printed material. The online database *EDIT16* currently furnishes a list of 27,148 editions produced in Venice between 1501 and 1600 – a figure that complements Ugo Rozzo's estimate of a total of 50,000 to 60,000 surviving, potentially lost, and unaccountable ephemeral editions from that period; as well as Neil Harris' assertions that around fifty percent of sixteenth-century editions are completely lost to us.[18] What is more, the majority of the surviving editions published by the Vavassore workshop conform to the characteristics established by print historians as making them less likely to survive: they are primarily printed in the small octavo format, comprise of a small number of pages, and are overwhelmingly in the Italian vernacular rather than in Latin.[19] Although my study of the Vavassore press has relied heavily on the surviving body of material issued by the workshop – including many editions which have survived in a single copy or small number of copies – I recognize that it represents an unknowable number of other editions which, if extant, might change our impression of this publisher's printing policy.

Nonetheless, the surviving books, pamphlets, maps and prints published by Vavassore do provide a sense of the sheer variety of printed material available for purchase in the Renaissance. Although calculations of those attaining full literacy through attendance at school – some 33% of boys, and 13% of girls – would render books useless to the vast majority of the population, many of those published by the Vavassore workshop speak to the complex connections between oral and written cultures at

this time.[20] Robert Darnton concluded that in the sixteenth century, even in a wealthy urban center like Venice, for most people books “were better heard than seen.”[21] If that was indeed the case, the output of the workshop still managed to put printed material within the reach of the vast majority of people: short pamphlets produced to commemorate the involvement of Venetian forces in battles and sieges were performed and sold by sellers in the streets and on the bridges, and are thus part of the oral culture now for the most part lost to the historian.[22] Furthermore, many of Vavassore's books were intended to be *seen* rather than, or as well as, heard. Pattern books of lace and embroidery, targeted towards an almost exclusively female market (with presumably low literacy rates) contain little, if any, text at all. These are primarily picture books, even if they do require certain skills to interpret and use. Seeing is also crucial to the many illustrated books published by the workshop, in which woodcut images play an equally important role as the text in conveying a given message to the reader or viewer.

The variety of printed material published by the press is certainly indicative of Vavassore's simple printing policy: to print what sold, and to make as much profit as possible whilst doing so. The buying power of the market had a profound impact on the sixteenth-century printer in any city, as their chief concern must be to read the needs of the market and respond to it accordingly, but this was nowhere more important than in Venice. The often-saturated market for printed material in the lagoon – and for Venetian printed goods outside of it – put many minor publishers out of business within years or even months. Furthermore, Vavassore not only had to meet the needs of the market, he had to fulfill the demands of, and obey the restrictions imposed by, a number of different authorities. Inevitably, therefore, the output of the press in its early decades is quite different from its production under the ownership of Giovanni Andrea's nephew and great nephews, some eight decades later. The reasons for this are many,

and I will attempt to unpick them in this section by looking at a series of case studies that focus on different aspects of the workshop's output.

As a new member of a burgeoning trade, Vavassore's starting policy was to create an extensive network of established publishers and booksellers from whom he could 'learn the ropes.' The tendency in the historiography has been to characterize Venetian print as an industry dominated by competition: in an over-saturated market in which foreigners were establishing new presses every day, only the strongest would survive. However, this case demonstrates the strength and importance of cooperation and collaboration for the minor publisher in Venice. In his first decade in the city, Vavassore amassed a complex printing network, forging close professional and personal relationships with members of the trade who had been active in Venice for years, or even decades, by the time he arrived. Whether his network was based on geographical proximity, membership of the same guild (Vavassore was a member of the Painters' Guild of San Luca), or simply a desire to produce similar wares, it provided a valuable resource on which a young artisan could draw. The process of setting up and maintaining a successful workshop required not only material assets – a press, woodblocks, paper, and ink – but also professional ones, which included demonstrable skills, an established reputation, and an extensive book of contacts. The formative years of Vavassore's activity enabled him to acquire these assets well. As well as obtaining the raw materials required to begin publishing on his own account, Giovanni Andrea benefitted from the resources and reputations of already successful publishers, and in return turned his skills to assist them.

In addition to the woodcuts produced to adorn the pages of books and pamphlets printed elsewhere, Vavassore began to produce the kind of cheap, short, and essentially disposable *fogli volanti* sold by performers in the streets and on the bridges of the city. These so-called 'flying sheets' provided an ideal starting point for a

publisher, with contemporary critics acknowledging (if not approving) their role in the life-cycle of a Renaissance press. "Some printers," wrote Anton Francesco Doni in his mid-sixteenth century *Dialogue on Printing*, "first grow rich by printing trash, and then, turning to finer things, grow wealthier still."^[23] Here, "trash" equates to a series of short pamphlets containing poems about the successes and failures of the Venetian forces in the battles and sieges that raged across the Italian peninsula in the sixteenth century. These short pamphlets – usually in quarto or octavo format – comprised of two, four, or eight sheets printed recto and verso, which could easily be reprinted as demand required. Vavassore's poems in *ottava rima* concern the battles of Ravenna (1512), Rhodes (1522), and Pavia (1525), the Siege of Naples (1527), the Sack of Rome (1527), and the legendary Battle of Negroponte, which lingered on in Venetian collective memory long after its occurrence in July 1470. Some of these pamphlets were illustrated with views of the relevant city or with imagined scenes from the battles they recount (fig. 3 and fig. 4).

Such publications required little time and investment, and could be sold directly from the shop premises or through the hands of an itinerant performer for a profit. Requiring few sheets of paper, wartime pamphlets were also among the cheapest publications produced and sold by the Vavassore workshop: costing just one *bezzo*, or half a *soldo*, their existence confirms that printed wares were within the financial reach of the vast majority of the urban population, including apprentices and unskilled workers.^[24] In the early years of the establishment of Vavassore's workshop in the parish of San Luca, interest in the fortunes of the Venetian forces was so great that these pamphlets were able to generate considerable income for the press. The profits from their sale were then reinvested in the business, allowing for the interspersing of longer, larger books, which were considerably more expensive to produce. This workshop's focus on profit and its importance to their printing



Fig. 3: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *View of Rhodes* (f.1r); in: Giorgio Falconetti, *El Lachrimoso lament che fa el gra Maestro de Rodi con gli suoi cavaglieri a tutti gli principi de la Christianita nela sua partita. Con la presa di Rodi*; undated; woodcut printed text on paper; 24 x 30 cm; Venice; Biblioteca Fondazione Cini.

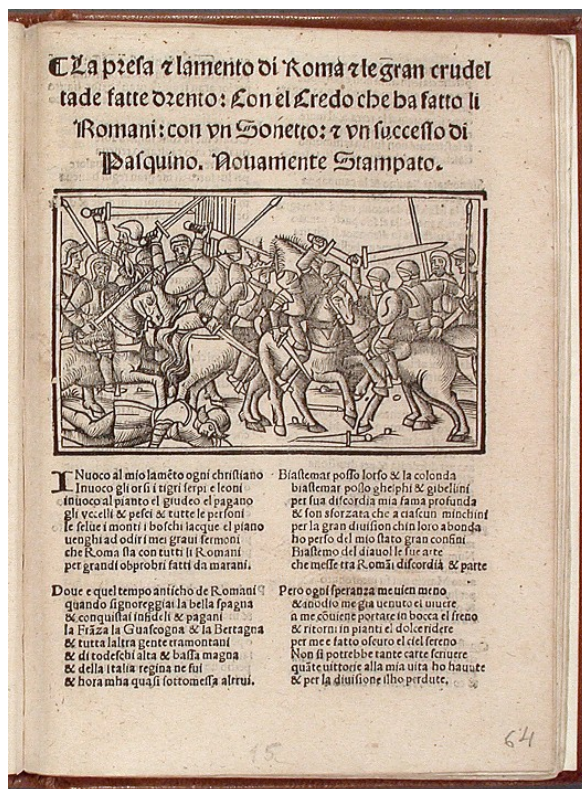


Fig. 4: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *The Sack of Rome* (f.1r.); in: Anonymous Author, *La presa & lamento di Roma & le gran crudelta fatte drento: con el credo che ha fatto li Romani, con un sonetto, & un successo di Pasquino. Novamente Stampato*; undated; woodcut and printed text on paper; 24 x 30 cm; Trent; Biblioteca comunale di Trento.

policy is compounded by Vavassore's early decision to adopt the moniker 'Guadagnino,' which literally means 'the small profit,' on the vast majority of his work.

Hot on the heels of wartime pamphlets were pocket-sized octavo editions by popular contemporary writers like Pietro Aretino and Ludovico Ariosto, including letters, sonnets, dialogues, poems and plays in the vernacular. Among the most popular of genres were the *libri de bataglia*, or chivalric romances, which captured the imaginations of readers and street performers alike. The most handsome profits were to be gained from successive editions of Ariosto's legendary epic, the *Orlando Furioso*. Named by Daniel Javitch as "the most popular book of the sixteenth century," interest in the fortunes and adventures of "Mad Orlando" was

sufficient to support the printing of new editions by the Vavassore press on an almost annual basis.[25] Aware of the importance of keeping abreast of current interests, Vavassore published editions of the poem to suit every price point – from ornately illustrated quarto editions with learned commentary, to unadorned pocket-sized octavos (fig. 5).

Given the popularity of titles like these, it would be easy to assume that secular texts were the primary concern of a minor press in Venice. However, the Vavassore workshop invested an extraordinary amount of time and effort in the production and sale of devotional books. One of the best-survived products of the press is an illustrated bible entitled the *Opera nova contemplativa* – a devotional blockbook that is extant in more than thirty copies, despite its small octavo form. This edition comprises of 120 woodcut illustrations accompanied by biblical quotes and references, and is the only known example of the blockbook form produced in the Italian peninsula. Unlike the wartime pamphlets discussed above, this volume would have represented a considerable investment in time and materials for the press. Each of the 120 woodcuts would have been carved into blocks by hand, and to complicate the project still further, the accompanying text was also hand-carved (fig. 6). Such a technique was prevalent among fifteenth-century mapmakers, but had by this time been largely replaced by the simpler and less time-consuming method of inserting pieces of moveable type into the block. Sold as unbound sheets, Vavassore allowed his buyer to go on a journey through the Bible: 40 scenes from the New Testament are flanked by 80 scenes from the Old Testament, creating complex typologies that present the fulfillment of prophecies in the life and death of Jesus Christ. Despite Vavassore's addition of 'signatures' to facilitate the correct ordering of his work, there is considerable variation among the surviving copies. Certainly, some of this reordering was accidental. However, other methods of personalization – from repurposed bindings, to hand coloring, to



Fig. 5: Unknown Designer; woodcuts for Canto Ventesimo & Canto Terzodecimo; in: Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso di M. Lodovico Ariosto. Ornato di nuoue figure & allegorie in ciascuno canto. Aggiuntoui nel fine l'espositione de' luoghi difficili*; 1553; woodcut on paper; 6.5 x 8.9 cm; Reggio Emilia; Biblioteca Comunale A. Panizzi.

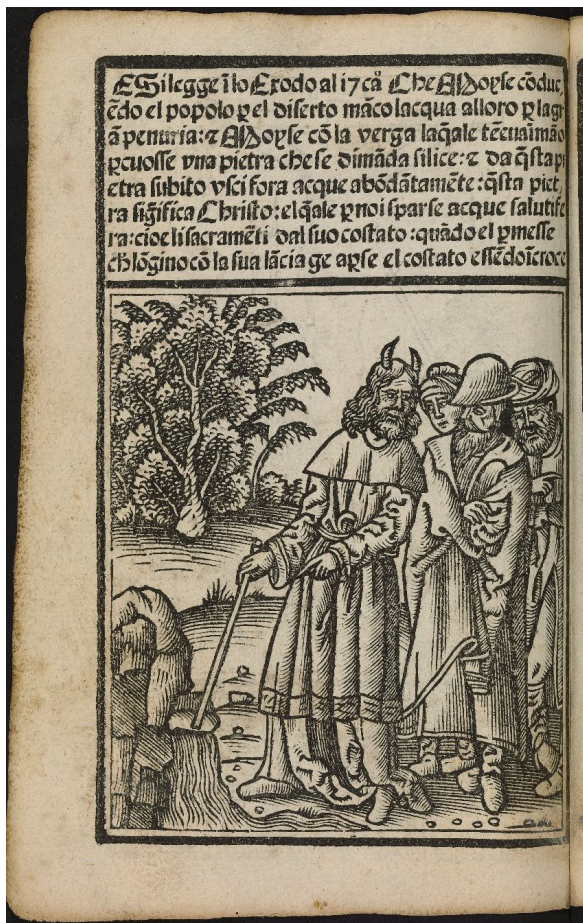


Fig. 6: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore or Florio Vavassore; *Water from the Rock*; in: *Opera nova contemplativa*; undated; woodcut with woodcut text on paper; 15 x 22 cm; Oxford; Bodleian Library.



Fig. 7: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore or Florio Vavassore; *Doubting Thomas*; in: *Opera nova contemplativa*; undated; woodcut on paper with evidence of hand-coloring; 15 x 22 cm; Venice; Biblioteca Fondazione Querini Stampalia.

the exclusion of certain scenes, and the addition of textual colophons – suggest that Vavassore created a Bible that appealed to a varied audience who felt able to express their understanding of The Word in a very individual way (fig. 7 and fig. 8).

It is difficult not to equate a larger number of extant editions, as is the case with the *Opera nova contemplativa*, with contemporary success. Here I use ‘success’ as a replacement for ‘popular,’ for the latter has become a loaded term that has too frequently associated low price with low quality, and in turn a lower standard of readership.^[26] The investment of time and resources in such a complex edition as this

would mean that a larger number of copies would have to be produced and sold in order to breakeven, but it also represents a part of Vavassore’s printing policy that looked to the long term. Although metal type can be used, broken down, and reused again for a myriad of different purposes, wooden blocks such as those used for the blockbook could not be repurposed. Once carved, the blocks may have been resilient enough to be used again and again, but they would never be appropriate additions to other volumes subsequently published by the workshop. Nonetheless, Vavassore was aware that secular poems and stories might quickly fall out of favor, but biblical scenes and

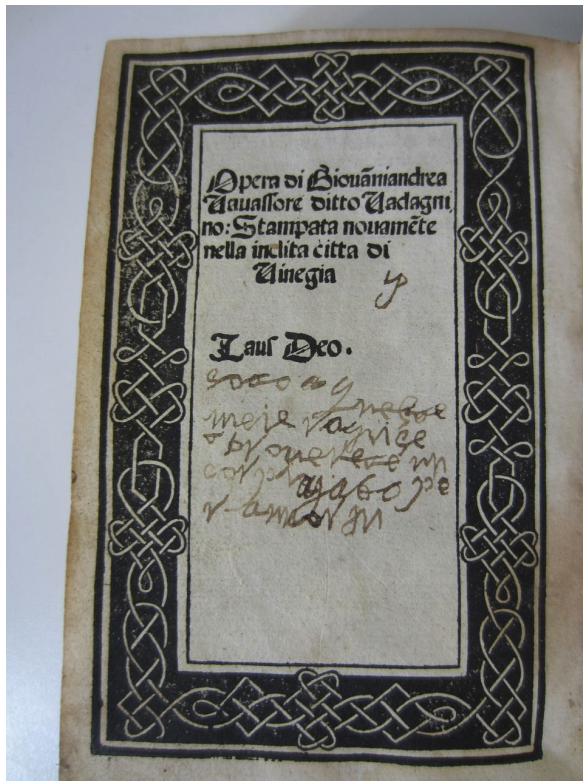


Fig. 8: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore or Florio Vavassore; Colophon for *Opera nova contemplativa*; undated; woodcut on paper with handwritten additions; 15 x 22 cm; Venice; Biblioteca Fondazione Querini Stampalia.



Fig. 9: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore or Florio Vavassore; alphabet sampler; in: *Opera nova universal intitulata corona di racami*; 1532; woodcut on paper; 24 x 30 cm; Venice; Biblioteca Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

themes would always be in demand. In fact, when Alvisé inherited the workshop upon Giovanni Andrea's death, included in its contents were two presses with moveable type and a series of devotional wooden blocks of *Santi* or Saints.

Though undated, it is likely that Giovanni Andrea produced the blockbook in conjunction with his half-brother Florio. Florio was active in Venice from 1530 until c.1545 and worked primarily on woodcut designs and prints, including a series of pattern books for lace and embroidery. Such books are a singularly fascinating, but relatively neglected, genre of book in the Renaissance, but do demonstrate the press' policy to appeal to all aspects of the book-buying market. Historians of Renaissance women have noted that their tasting in reading material was reasonably broad, ranging from pious and

devotional titles to advice books, stories, poems and romances that were chiefly, but not always, in the vernacular.[27] Alone among the output of the press, pattern books specifically address the female market, and provide instructions and examples for sewing, embroidery, and lacemaking. From small items such as chemises and handkerchiefs to much larger wall hangings and tablecloths, these books provided instruction and design for virtuous young girls and women sewing and embroidering items for their trousseau or home (fig. 9). Furthermore, the *Esemplario di lavori* (or 'Examples of Work') dating from 1530 encouraged young women and girls to "write with the needle" – perhaps alluding to the capacity of the pattern book to act as an educational tool that might supplement other forms of learning (fig. 10).[28] Several other titles produced by the press in the 1530s and 1540s

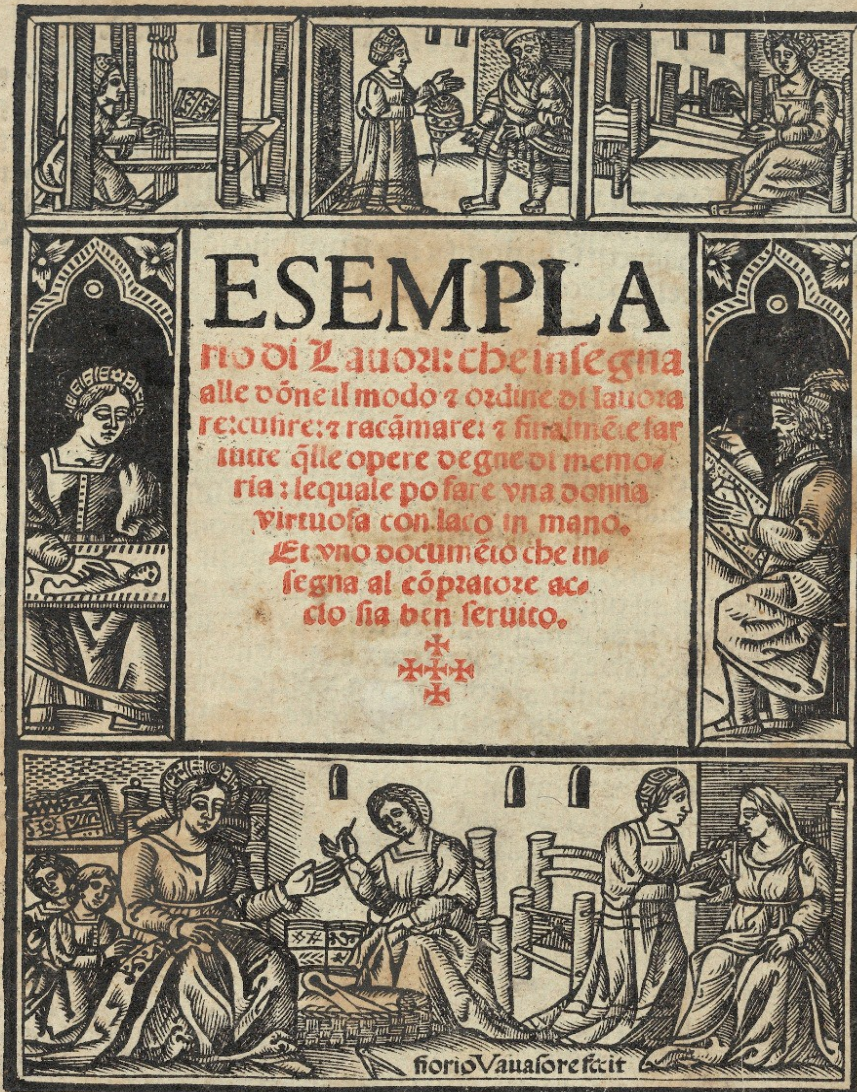


Fig. 10: Florio Vavassore; frontispiece; in: *Esemplario di Lavori*; 1 August 1532; woodcut on paper printed with black and red inks; 24 x 30 cm; New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art.

provided help and guidance useful to the Renaissance woman, including a volume on writing and replying to love letters, herbals containing remedies and recipes for lotions and medicines, and a translation of a German manual for midwives and pregnant women on safe childbirth and the raising of infants.

Whilst the policy of the workshop was simply to print titles that would sell – be they chivalric romances or self-help guides – Vavassore also produced titles that made the most of interest in contemporary events and happenings. During the years of the meetings of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) there was a steady rise in the number of devotional works published by the Vavassore workshop. Although some responded directly to the kind of discussions taking place there, still others respond to more immediate – and local – concerns. The workshop published a tiny sextodecimo volume of the *Miracles of the Virgin Mary* on 1 December 1549 to coincide with the feast days and celebrations occurring in that month.^[29] As well as the period of advent and the anticipation of the nativity, just a week after its publication were celebrations to commemorate the feast of the Immaculate Conception, one of the key themes explored in this illustrated text. Keen to outdo the competition, Vavassore was at pains to state that his edition had not only been newly revised and corrected, it contained seventeen additional miracles that could not be found in versions published elsewhere.^[30] An important symbol for Venetians and visitors alike, such accounts of the life of the Virgin could be used publically in the meetings of religious confraternities or in private homes.

Secular titles like the *Orlando Furioso* were not the only ones popular enough to be published and republished by the workshop. The *Speculum Confessorum* by Matteo Corradone was initially published by the workshop under Giovanni Andrea and Florio in 1535, with identical editions of the confession manual being reissued by the pair in 1536, 1538, and 1543. Vavassore went on to publish further editions of

Matteo Corradone's manual on his own in 1546, 1553, and 1564 – a year after the closing of the Council of Trent. A reliable seller prior to the council's meetings, Corradone's book found a larger and even more receptive market in the wake of Tridentine reform. No fewer than twenty-eight separate editions of the *Speculum Confessorum* are recorded in the Universal Short Title Catalogue, with twenty of these produced during or immediately after the meetings of the Council of Trent. In the wake of the reform, confession ceased being a public act, and instead began taking place in the privacy of the confessional.^[31] Manuals like Corradone's functioned as a 'mirror' for the examination of the self, addressing the faithful assisting them in the preparation of good confession. As Michael Cornett had argued, these were printed texts that served an oral purpose: by "reading the form of confession, or hearing it read aloud, penitents could recognize in the wide-range avowals of sin, in a voice that was to become their own voice, the sins they had committed, so that they could articulate them to their confessor."^[32] As well as practical guides for day-to-day devotion, Vavassore was responsible for the publishing of several devotional texts that were explicit in their support of the Reforming Catholic Church: Antonio Sebastiano Minturno wrote collections of poems about the meetings that occurred at Trent, as well as a volume of speeches given by the attending cardinals, while Girolamo Muzio outlined a counter-attack to the theses against Catholicism promulgated by Martin Luther during the Reformation.^[33]

A steady part of Vavassore's printing policy was the workshop's production of woodcut maps and city views. Twenty cartographic works survive, several of which were published – like the short wartime pamphlets in *ottava rima* – in response to the successes (and more often failures) of the Venetian forces in battles and sieges. Woodcut maps were usually printed over two, four, or six sheets of paper, though could sometimes be larger, and would have required the investment of a considerable amount of time

and money. Although some of the maps were copied from existing examples, others are of Vavassore's own design. Nonetheless, all of these cartographic works were cut into wooden blocks, printed from them, and sold at the workshop's premises. This is an unusually simplified method of map production in sixteenth-century Venice, as cartographic historians have largely argued that it was a much more complex, compartmentalized process. For Chandra Mukerji, the stages and individuals involved "were usually not stable parts of a single shop, but were linked by a common division of labor and labor process."^[34] The production and sale of one particular city view stands out from the rest of the workshop's cartographic oeuvre because of the circumstances of its production. Vavassore's woodcut view of *Trent* was both the first printed view of the city and was a high profile commission (fig. 11). In 1562 the treasurer of the Council of Trent, Antonio Manelli commissioned Vavassore to produce a bird's-eye view of the city of Trent in an attempt to "memorialize the event even before its closure."^[35]

There are at least three surviving copies of Vavassore's view of *Trent*, though Antonio Manelli's name appears only on the first version of the map (dated 1562). The reprint, issued the following year, instead includes the name of Pope Pius IV, leading Aldo Chemelli to suggest that the Prince Bishop Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo was in fact the real patron.^[36] As Bishop of Trent, Madruzzo's involvement in the production of city view is both entirely plausible and very sensible, for he would have been able to provide detailed local information of the kind necessary for the completion of the plan (even if the project had been funded by the Council itself). Additionally, the colophon of the 1563 edition suggests that it was not republished at the request of the treasurer but under the workshop's own initiative.^[37] As a key element of Vavassore's printing policy was his ability to respond quickly to demands for news about current events, the 1563 reissue was undoubtedly produced to exploit a broader market of ordinary

people interested in owning a momento of the Council of Trent.

Cartographic production did not, however, occupy the workshop for the entire duration of its activity. The map industry in Venice reached its peak in the years around 1566, by which point Vavassore had already been established as a designer, cutter, and publisher of cartographic prints for several decades. By the late 1550s and 1560s, the shopping thoroughfare between the Piazza San Marco and Rialto was buzzing with map shops, including those of Giovanni Francesco Camocio, Paolo Forlani, Niccolo Nelli, Domenico Zenoi, Michele Tramezzino, Ferdinando Bertelli, and Bolognino Zaltieri.^[38] Competition was intense, making the awarding of such a prestigious – and presumably lucrative – commission as the view of *Trent* one of the workshop's major successes. Perhaps because of the looming sense of competition, Vavassore's output of maps began to decline. The press under Giovanni Andrea's heirs ceased to produce maps and views, though it did continue to produce works which creatively combined image and text. Situated by this point in the bustling Frezzaria, Alvise and Giuliano traded as the "Workshop of Guadagnino" under the Sign of the Hippogriff – a nod to both the profit-focused mentality of their great uncle and the mythical beast that had featured in one of their bestselling titles, the *Orlando Furioso*.^[39]

The output of the 'posthumous press,' which operated in Venice from Giovanni Andrea's death in 1573 until 1593, remained for the most part unchanged. The mainstay of the press continued to be the issue and reissue of the most popular devotional and secular titles in the vernacular, but Vavassore's heirs began to intersperse complex and high-value Latin books in much larger formats than before. These represented considerable investment and sold fewer copies, but they also netted much higher profits.^[40] However, the press also came under much closer scrutiny than before. Vavassore himself had come under fire from the Venetian *Sant'Uffizio* or Holy Office during his lifetime, appearing



Fig. 11: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *Tridentium – Trent*; 1563; hand-colored woodcut on 6 sheets; 795 x 770 cm; Vienna; Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

before the Inquisition on counts of participating in heterodox discussions in his own workshop and those of his friends. On two occasions, Giovanni Andrea admitted to talking about the gospels with Simon, a pearl worker from the Bergamo; and discussing confession, the saints, and purgatory with the mask maker and second-hand clothes dealer Antonio Rossato, who was married to his favorite niece Samaritana.[41] By

the 1570s, however, the scrutiny of the Inquisition shifted away from Vavassore as an individual and to the family's workshop and its output. At the beginning of August 1571 the Holy Office compiled a list of prohibited printers, booksellers, and titles, listing Vavassore alongside such major publishers as Gabriele Giolito and Gironimo Scotto. Between August and October of that year, the Holy Office questioned twenty-seven bookmen from this list and demanded to know why they were still in possession of prohibited titles, or why their stores had escaped inspection. [42]

The Vavassore workshop was searched twice: the first inspection uncovered the *Dialogues of Pietro Aretino* (*Dialoghi dell'Aretino*) and a certain edition entitled “De Fisionomia” in great quantity.[43] On 23 August 1571 Dottore Giacomo Foscarini, the Inquisitor General, visited the *bottega* again to check that the aforementioned volumes had in fact been removed.[44] Foscarini found that copies of Aretino’s *Dialogues* remained, and identified two further bundles of fortune telling books and other verses. When the Inquisitor confronted Alvisè Vavassore, who had by this time taken over the day-to-day running of the shop, he insisted that he did not know that such volumes had to be removed, as he was frequently away at fairs and thus was “never in the shop.”[45] A fine of twenty ducats was paid soon after, officially resolving the matter, but the stifling presence of the Inquisition remained throughout the two decades of the press’ production under Alvisè and his sons. Furthermore, the newly established Guild of Printers and Booksellers also began to place restrictions on members of these trades. By increasing restrictions on the length of time apprentices and journeymen had to train, as well as initiating the requirement for them to pass examinations and pay matriculation fees and fines, the Guild effectively began to close off the trade to foreigners.

III. Outreach

One of the challenges of reconstructing the activities and fortunes of any minor publisher in the Renaissance is the difficulty of gauging the outreach of their press. Certainly, no account book has survived for the Vavassore workshop, so it has been necessary to piece together rather disparate archival evidence – in the form of personal testaments, parish records, and the accounts of trials by the Inquisition – with surviving publications in order to carve a window from which the workshop’s day-to-day activities in the Venetian lagoon can be viewed. A further hindrance has been the low survival rates of the

printed material issued by the press. The least well-survived items sold from the shop – single leaf prints, maps, and short pamphlets of the kind that were pasted on walls or carried in the streets – were probably also the most prolifically produced and sold. By contrast, more expensive, larger and longer tomes in the vernacular and in Latin have survived in disproportionately large numbers; giving us as a somewhat warped sense of the workshop’s output. Nonetheless, there are ways to judge the outreach and influence of Vavassore’s press, and the aim of this section is to examine in more detail the sale of his products both in the Venetian lagoon and beyond it.

Addressing the issue of the press’ outreach entails a return to the issue of networking and collaboration, for which Vavassore is an excellent advocate. In the Renaissance, the very existence of a publishers’ shop implies that the production and sale of goods were centralized in a single space. Publishers were known by the location or sign of their premises, with the sign functioning as both a distinguishing mark and a guarantee of quality for their goods. Printed works issued by the prolific vernacular publisher Gabriele Giolito, for example, were sold from his shop at the Sign of the Phoenix (located towards the Rialto on the famous Merceria thoroughfare) with each book or bundle of sheets bearing the mark of the phoenix.[46] Although Vavassore’s workshop was, at least initially, defined by its location at the *Ponte dei Fuseri*, it did not operate under the Sign of the Hippogriff until much later, when its premises were established in the Frezzaria. More important than the lack of a distinguishing mark or sign, however, is the fact that we know that Vavassore’s work was sold from a variety of different outlets. In the lagoon, his signature could be found in illustrated books and on unbound sheets sold by Paolo Danza from his shop at the foot of the Rialto, nearby on the *Riva del Carboni* at the shop of Alessandro Paganino, from the premises of Melchiorre Sessa and his partner Pietro de Ravani, and from various shops owned by Niccolò Zoppino.



Fig. 12: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *Christ Preaching*; in: Unknown Author, *Thesaurus spirituale vulgare in rima et hystoriato. Composto nouamente a diuote persone de Dio & della gloriosa Vergine Maria: a consolatione de li catholichi et deuoti christiani*; 24 September 1518; woodcut on paper; 15 x 22 cm (Giorgia Atzeni, *Gli incisori alla corte di Zoppino*, in: *ArcheoArte* 2, 2013, p. 321).

As a travelling performer, Zoppino had already worked in and established shops in his native Ferrara, as well as Bologna, Milan, Pesaro, Ancona and Perugia by the time he opened a shop in Venice in the parish of San Fantin.[47] Rather than settle in the lagoon, Zoppino continued to be exceptionally mobile and searched out other commercial opportunities, enrolling in the Florentine guild in 1536 to sell books in that city; and petitioning the authorities in Ravenna to open a bookshop there in 1542.[48] Although Zoppino and Vavassore were both immigrant printers, they took fundamentally different paths. Whilst Zoppino travelled extensively and performed in the streets and *piazze* of Northern Italy, Vavassore became firmly rooted in the Venetian lagoon and established a net



Fig. 13: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *The Triumph of Love*; in: Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere et Trionfi di messer Francesco Petrarca. Historiato et diligentemente corretto*; 4 December 1521; woodcut on paper; 15 x 22 cm (Atzeni 2010, *Gli Incisori*, p. 313).

work of professional contacts. Nonetheless, Vavassore was able to benefit directly from Zoppino's more adventurous pursuits. Working with Zoppino, Vavassore produced illustrations for a devotional thesaurus (fig. 12), a guidebook for pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land, vernacular translations of the songs of Petrarca (fig. 13), and wartime poems, among others – all of which found ready markets in the many satellite shops Zoppino had established across the peninsula.

Whilst the works illustrated by Giovanni Andrea for Zoppino found markets across the Italian peninsula, much of the output of the Vavassore press speaks directly to the needs of the Venetian market. Interest in the fortunes of



Fig. 14: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *The Birth of Hercules*; undated; woodcut on paper; 19.6 x 28.5 cm; Berlin; Kupferstichkabinett.

the Venetian forces during the “horrendous Italian Wars” peaked many times between 1494 and 1559, with anticipation for news and accounts of battles and sieges met by a flurry of pamphlets. In much the same way that street performers tried to outdo one another in providing the fastest and most accurate information, publishers in Venice raced to publish the first printed accounts of events occurring elsewhere across the city’s territories.^[49] The buyers of such poems – whether they purchased from shops, or through the hands of street performers on bridges and in squares – are a likely audience for some of the other items on sale in Vavassore’s shop at this time, including a chart forecasting the conjunctions, oppositions, and eclipses of the moon by the astronomer Camillo Leonardi. Issued on 14 April 1530 and comprising of just twenty-four



Fig. 15: Jehan Duhege; *The Birth of Hercules*; in: *Les douze triumphes de tresfort et puissant Hercule qui mist a fin tous les malvueillans*; date unknown; woodcut on paper; 24.6 x 22.4 cm; London; The British Museum.

leaves, Leonardi’s pocket-sized almanac included instructions on how to calculate the lunar month and the timing of eclipses, as well as containing the dates of religious festivals, prognostications, dietary advice, and tables featuring the most favorable days for carrying out bloodletting. Still other short devotional works were concerned with the commemoration of locally celebrated saints’ days, encouraging devotion to the Rosary, or providing a written record of sermons on the importance of ‘dying well’ during vicious outbreaks of plague. Works like these have survived today because they happened to be bound with more precious volumes, rather than because they were prized in their own right – these were practical volumes, bought cheaply, carried into the streets, and consulted often until they became too worn to

keep. Most importantly for this consideration of Vavassore's outreach, however, is that these books and pamphlets were largely intended for local consumption, and thus addressed local concerns. What is more, from a business perspective, pamphlets and short publications containing time-sensitive information (whether about the phases of the lunar cycle, or the fortunes of cities engaged in battles and sieges) were unlikely to be shipped out in trade vessels for fear that they would be redundant by the time they reached their destination.

By contrast, the workshop's graphic output reached far beyond the lagoon. A set of illustrative woodcuts of the *Labors of Hercules*, influenced by the literary descriptions of the twelve 'labors' that were disseminated widely in the Renaissance, represent a comprehensive account of Hercules' birth, life, and death. We know little about when they were published, and even less about whether they were cut to Vavassore's own designs. However, scholars have noted their lasting legacy as models for other sets of woodcuts and engravings of the *Labors of Hercules* produced elsewhere in Europe, aided by the inherent portability of print in the Renaissance. Vavassore's woodcuts of *Hercules* certainly did travel, because they directly inspired a set of woodcuts published somewhere in France by Jehan Duhege.^[50] In the *Birth of Hercules*, for example, there are clear similarities between the two woodcuts: Hercules' mother Alcmene is depicted giving birth in the foreground, whilst the hero himself strangles snakes in a wooden crib at the back; whilst the distinctive tiled floor, decorative scheme of the interior, and the text box in the left-hand corner have been copied by Duhege almost exactly (fig. 14 and fig. 15). Duhege's prints, in turn, appear to have provided the model for a series of woodcuts of the *Labors* produced by Denys Fontenoy in Paris between 1579 and 1583 (fig. 16). Giustina Scaglia's suggestion that Vavassore's woodcuts were used as the basis for the design of a wooden frieze at the castle of Vélez Blanco in Spain, and Malcolm



Fig. 16: Denys Fontenoy; *The Birth of Hercules*; in: *Histoire d'Hercule*; 1583; woodcut on paper; 33.6 x 22.4 cm; Paris; Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Bull's proposal that Albrecht Dürer's studio used Vavassore's selection of subjects and his designs as inspiration for their drawings for a set of twelve Hercules medallions, would certainly raise the profile and extend the outreach of the Vavassore workshop – but are exceptionally unlikely given the workshop's establishment in Venice some fifteen years after their creation.^[51]

Other aspects of Vavassore's graphic output were intended to appeal – if not entirely, at least in part – to an export market. The workshop was ideally located to stow its goods on ships leaving the Grand Canal for other ports, and during the sixteenth century Venice was still at the center of an extensive network of trade. In addition to single leaf prints, multi-sheet maps



Fig. 17: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *The Battle of Marignano*; c.1515; colored woodcut on eight blocks; 59.5 x 155.8 cm; Zurich; Zentralbibliothek.

also travelled well. An early representation of the popular *Battle of Marignano* – printed by Vavassore in 1515 on eight blocks – certainly attracted the attention of Venetian and non-Venetian print collectors alike (fig. 17). Ornately decorated in the style of the chivalric romance, this ‘map’ provides a sense of the dramatic success of the conquering Venetian forces outside Milan; and was clearly prized and cherished for that reason. The one remaining copy of the *Marignano* print has been richly colored with red, green, and yellow pigments, effectively transforming it into a work of art that could be framed, mounted, and displayed in much the same way as a painting.^[52] This was not the copy owned by major print collector Ferdinand Columbus, but there is nonetheless a record of his purchase of the *Marignano* print either in Venice, Seville or elsewhere.^[53]

Recent research by Genevieve Carlton on the display of maps in sixteenth century Venetian homes further suggests that Vavassore produced his cartographic oeuvre with a weather eye to the export market.^[54] The workshop’s view of Venice followed the established and successful bird’s-eye view model of Jacopo de’ Barbari, and depicts the city filled with galley

ships offloading and carrying goods, all of which had been spirited to the city by enthusiastic wind gods (fig. 18).^[55] With its focus above all on the city’s success in trade, it is perhaps unsurprising that Genevieve Carlton’s work has found that among the maps hung in Venetian *porteghi* and *studioli*, views of Venice rarely appear.^[56] Rather, their walls were decorated with maps of Venice’s territorial possessions, areas in the midst of military conflict, or cities which played host to crucial meetings or events – all of which could also be found inside Vavassore’s shop.^[57] Finally, the workshop’s publication of a portolan chart of the Eastern Mediterranean was unlikely to have been used or displayed in the Venetian *casa*. Navigation charts like this were designed for use on board ship, showing the names of islands, reeds, bays, headlands, harbors and sea towns along the trade route from Venice to Syria and Constantinople (fig. 19).^[58] The reach of an object like this was extensive, for navigational charts were intended for use many miles away from their original place of production.

The last decades of the Vavassore workshop’s activity indicate that Giovanni Andrea’s heirs were able to exploit another entry point into the market for printed material: book fairs. David Landau and Peter Parshall emphasized the importance of book fairs as the most likely place for dealers and publishers to exchange



Fig. 18: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *Tvtio il Mondo Tereno* or *The Known World*; before 1556; woodcut on one sheet; 52 x 37 cm; London; British Museum.

prints and books in large numbers. The Frankfurt Fair, which had existed since the thirteenth century, had by the sixteenth century become “a major clearing house for new publications as well as a place to buy stocks of paper, maps, prints, and many other commodities.”[59] Normally taking place in the middle of August for one month, this was the main event for European printers in the Renaissance who sought to acquire quantities of paper and to sell their publications, as well as for dealers to purchase and sell books and prints. There were, of course, many other minor fairs, and all had in common the fact that they allowed printers to sell books and bundles of prints to willing buyers.[60] We know from the extant archival evidence that Giovanni Andrea’s nephew and great nephews attended fairs to sell wares that had been produced in the workshop. In the publishers’ testament of January 1570, he states his concern that his nephew Alvisè had lost some of the firm’s money through poor management, and that “many times the children [Luigi and Giuliano, Alvisè’s sons and Giovanni Andrea’s great nephews] have lost merchandise going to fairs.”[61] What is more, during the Inquisitor General’s visit to the shop in August 1571, Alvisè

Vavassore was quick to excuse himself for not having removed copies of prohibited titles from the shop because he had been attending book fairs and had not been in Venice to do so.[62] Attendance at fairs, therefore, appears to have been a routine part of the workshop’s activity, though the success of such an endeavor rested heavily on the organization and careful management of those attending.

IV. Influence

In the veritable sea of publishers active in Venice during the sixteenth century, it is easy to see why the activities of a single, family run workshop such as that of the Vavassore might be overlooked. The sheer magnitude of the Venetian print industry at that time is overwhelming: editions published by over a thousand printers active in the city at some time between 1500 and 1599 have survived, with many more published by anonymous “silent printers.”[63] Among pioneers of the octavo format, Roman typefaces, music printing, and Hebrew texts, the workshop’s output appears, at first glance, to be relatively unremarkable. However, we must consider that – if Harris’ rules about the rates of survival for short, octavo works in the vernacular are to be believed – the surviving output of the press is incapable of revealing the whole story. Given the propensity for immigrant printers to establish new presses in Venice before going out of business within a matter of months, the longevity of the Vavassore workshop is both admirable and exceptionally useful to the historian of Renaissance print.

The printing policy of the press played a large part in its longevity. A willingness to adapt and to innovate, as well as to respond to changing circumstances and events in a timely and creative manner, allowed minor publishers like Vavassore not just to survive, but to thrive. Given that their activities ultimately contributed to the successes of the Venetian print industry – and that, in any given year, the vast majority of



Fig. 19: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *La vera descrizione del Mare Adriatico*; 1541 (second printing); woodcut on one sheet; 27 x 76 cm; Greenwich; Royal Maritime Museum.

people buying printed material in Venice bought from smaller shops or itinerant sellers – minor publishers have received surprisingly little scholarly attention. New work on Niccolò Zoppino, and my own work on the Vavassore press, is beginning to redress the balance, but interest in the activities of the former is still dominated by his position at the intersection between the worlds of oral and printed communication. Whilst Vavassore may not have been particularly innovative as a publisher, the inherent adaptability of the workshop – producing a variety of printed goods, in many formats, for many purposes, and at different price points – ensured that those interested in the latest publications would always have access to works they wanted to buy. Vavassore had no ‘target market,’ but instead issued printed material that could be used by men, women, and children for all sorts of purposes: as a vehicle for the latest news; a way to commemorate or commiserate the victories and losses of the Venetian forces; a means of expressing devotion; a learning aid; a means by which to create and decorate material objects; and as a way to experience other countries and cities without leaving the lagoon. The kind of

print published by Vavassore’s workshop occupies the middle ground between the expensive, high quality volumes produced by the industry’s major players and the ephemeral *fogli volanti* that cost very little but disappeared quickly – beginning, at least, to fill the gap left by the increasingly polarized study of print in Venice.

In terms of contemporary influence, the evidence suggests that Giovanni Andrea Vavassore was a popular and well-respected member of the printing industry – albeit formally a member of the Painters’ Guild – with an extensive network of professional contacts. With initial training as a woodcarver, his early activity was dominated by his production of woodcut prints and illustrations in collaboration with some of the more established members of the trade. Only when he had amassed both new skills and financial resources did the output of the workshop on its own account begin to evolve and multiply. This focus on collaboration is in some ways at odds with the long established historiographical argument of the inherent competition evident in the Venetian print industry. Whilst we might expect that a new printer (especially one who had migrated into the city) would seek assistance from more established members of the trade, it is clear that networks were a crucial factor to the workshop’s success and longevity across many decades.

Minor publishers worked together to refine their own skills, exploit the skills and contacts of others, and share resources on a day-to-day basis. This could be something as major as cutting large woodcut illustrations for inclusion in a new translation of the *Apocalypse*, or as minor as the passing of scrap paper between neighboring workshops for creative reuse.^[64] Vavassore stands out among his collaborators, however, for his workshop's longevity: whilst the shops of Matteo Pagano, Paolo Danza, and Niccolò Zoppino died with them, Giovanni Andrea's willingness to train his nephews and instill in them both a knowledge of the market and respect for the authorities, ensured that the workshop continued to flourish for more than twenty years after his death.

Vavassore's heirs made no attempt to establish their own reputation in the Venetian print industry, instead adopting his nickname "Guadagnino" as a guarantee of quality for the works they produced and sold in the Frezzaria at the Sign of the Hippogriff. Woodcut illustrations continued to play a key role in the press' output, and the titles issued by the press under Alvise and his sons Luigi and Giuliano echo closely those published decades before. Camillo Leonardi's advice of 1530 about the phases of the moon, religious feasts, and the importance of bloodletting are echoed in the *Lunario et pronostico* of the Bolognese astrologer Hercole della Rovere (1582); and the short poems in *ottava rima* issued by the early press during wartime find their parallel in a small octavo collection of *frottole* and songs. Though both the Venetian Inquisition and the Guild of Printers and Booksellers were monitoring the activities of printers more closely than ever before, we should be wary of making conclusions about how repressive the hand of the authorities actually was. Official searches and more extensive training for apprentices may have impacted on the day-to-day operations of the Vavassore workshop, but its production and output remained, for the most part, the same. The tastes of their market remained relatively unchanged from c.1515 to

1593, and the workshop's printing policy – simply to publish works with the capacity to sell – was consistent in response to it.

Beyond longevity, the Vavassore workshop's lasting influence is its ability to demonstrate the need for adaptability and ingenuity among Renaissance publishers. Though they are too often studied separately, printed books, pamphlets, maps and images were not created in isolation. The processes of designing, cutting, and creating impressions from wood blocks (or copper plates) – especially in the case of cartographical production, where historians have credited a different artisan with each distinct stage of a map's manufacture and sale – may now be considered quite separate from the printing of text, but the varied activity of the Vavassore workshop reminds us that, in actuality, images, illustrations and maps could be produced and sold by the same hands that operated presses and issued books and pamphlets printed using moveable type. Furthermore, it is clear that in Venice, if publishers could not produce their own images in-house, they could successfully outsource the design and cutting of woodcuts to someone else (as in the case in the collaborations between Vavassore and Zoppino, Sessa, and Danza) and benefit from durable, long-lasting woodcut blocks that could be reused to illustrate their texts time and again.

Vavassore's case has much to tell us about the role of the minor publisher in the Renaissance, and about the need to respond and evolve to the needs of the market in order to stay afloat in the competitive printing industry of Venice. In much the same way that the Venetian *poligrafi* survived by writing what people wanted to read, Vavassore thrived as a publisher by selling the kind of printed material customers wanted to buy.^[65] With books and pamphlets that appealed to men, women, and children, many of which contained images that were capable of transmitting the message of the text to those without the capacity to read themselves, Vavassore's shop served the needs of a varied

market comprised of locals and visitors to the laagoon. Located between the two hubs of Venice – the Piazza San Marco and Rialto – the family’s premises sold printed material to the artisans, unskilled laborers and apprentices who worked and lived in the area; at the same time exploiting its favorable location for cargo ships passing into both sides of the Grand Canal. As well as exporting goods for sale in other shops, members of the Vavassore family travelled to attend lucrative book fairs that enabled them to sell printed images, maps, and bundles of printed text to dealers and buyers alike. In the hands of print collectors, mariners and ordinary people, the prints, maps, charts and editions they produced in Venice found their way across the Italian peninsula, and to France, Seville, Constantinople, and many now unknowable destinations besides. Whilst some found their way into the workshops of later printmakers, the vast majority of Vavassore’s works were displayed, used, and eventually lost – leaving behind mere traces of the activity of one of Venice’s many minor, but not insignificant, Renaissance publishers.

Endnotes

1. Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius. Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice*, Ithaca 1979, p. 7.
2. Ibid.; Martin Lowry, *Venetian Printing. Nicolas Jenson and the Rise of the Roman Letterform*, Herning 1989; Martin Lowry, *Nicolas Jenson and the Rise of Venetian Publishing in Renaissance Europe*, Oxford 1991.
3. Rosa Salzberg, *Ephemeral City. Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice*, Manchester 2014; Rosa Salzberg & Massimo Rospoher, *Street Singers in Italian Renaissance Urban Culture and Communication*, in: *Cultural and Social History* 9:1, 2012, p. 9-26.
4. See note 2, and: David R. Carlson, *Nicholas Jenson and the Form of the Renaissance Printed Page*, in: Peter Stoicheff & Andrew Taylor (eds.), *The Future of the Page*, Toronto 2003; Salvatore Bonghi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito de’ Ferrari da Trino di Monferrato, stampatore in Venezia*, Rome 1890; and Angel Nuovo & Christian Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa nell’Italia del XVI secolo*, Geneva 2005.
5. The first dated work issued by Vavassore is a print (or “map”) of the *Battle of Marignano*, dated 1515. This includes the address of the workshop at the Ponte dei Fuseri in the central parish of San Luca.
6. The four *testamenti* are transcribed in Anne Markham Schulz, *Giovanni Andrea Valvassore and His Family in Four Unpublished Testaments*, in: *Artes Atque Humaniora. Studia Stanislaw Mosakowski Sexagenerio dicata*, Warsaw 1998, p. 117-125. Information about the marriages and births of the Vavassore family are found at the *Archivio del Storico Patriarcato* in Venice, under *San Moisè Battesimi* (b.1) and *San Moisè Matrimoni* (b.1).
7. For an overview of the impact of the Wars of the League of Cambrai, see Guido Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy. A Social and Cultural History of the Rinascimento*, Cambridge 2015; and Felix Gilbert, *Venice in the Crisis of the League of Cambrai*, in: John R. Hale (ed.), *Renaissance Venice*, London 1973, p. 274-292. On the depopulation of Bergamo and the Bergamasco, see Bortolo Bellotti, *Storia di Bergamo e dei Bergamaschi*, Bergamo 1959, chapters two and six.
8. Such measures were designed to battle the potential threats of contagion, crime, and heretical behaviour; see Monica Cojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice*, Baltimore 2001, p. 81-102.
9. On the concentration of printers and booksellers between the Piazza San Marco and Rialto, see David Landau & Peter Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470-1550*, New Haven 1994; Michael Bury, *The Print in Italy, 1550-1620*, London 2001, p. 170; and David Woodward, *The Italian Map Trade*, in: *idem, The History of Cartography. Volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance (Part 1)* Chicago 2007, p. 779.
10. There was certainly a general consensus among contemporaries that printers were rich: Marin Sano wrote that Nicolas Jenson was ‘*richissimo*’ in the 1470s, whilst historiography has long acknowledged the printing industry as a “boom industry” in late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venice. See Lowry 1979, *Aldus Manutius*, p. 8; Victor Scholderer, *Printing at Venice to the End of 1481*, in: Dennis E. Rhodes (ed.), *Fifty Essays in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Bibliography*, Amsterdam 1966, p. 75.
11. Joseph Wheeler, *The Sestiere of San Polo. A Cross Section of Venetian Society in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century* (PhD Thesis), Warwick 1995, p. 43.
12. For basic information about these workshops, see Fernanda Ascarelli & Marco Menato, *La Tipografia*

- del '500 in Italia, Florence 1989: for Nicolini, p. 354; and for Zoppino, p. 352-352. For the Bindoni, see Ilde Menis, *I Bindoni. Materiali storico-documentari per una ricostruzione biografica e annalistica* (Tesi di Laurea), Udine, 1992-3.
13. Ascarelli & Menato 1989, *La Tipografia*, 'Pagano' p. 383.
 14. On Danza, see *ibid.* p. 353; and on Melchior Sessa, who was a 'jobbing printer' active from 1505 to c.1562, see p. 327. On the practice of 'jobbing printing' see Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change. Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge 1979, Vol. 1, p. 59-60.
 15. Krystina Stermole, *Venetian Art and the War of the League of Cambrai (1509-17)* (PhD Thesis), 2007, p. 240.
 16. Illustrations by Vavassore graced the pages of wartime poems in *ottava rima*, most notably the famous *Guerre horrende de Italia. Tutte le guerre de Italia comenzando dala venuta di re Carlo del mille quatrocento novantaquatro fin al giorno presente* (Venice: Paolo Danza, 18 March 1534). Government laws printed by Danza have been preserved in the Marin Sanudo, *I diarii*, edited by Rinaldo Fulin et al, Venice 1879-1903: 50:140-141 and 306-307; and 58:107-114.
 17. Giovanni Andrea Vavassore's 1570 testament confirms that at the time of his death he had an apprentice called Bartolomeo working in his shop. The restrictions imposed by the newly established Guild of Printers and Booksellers on the length of time required to train, as well as close examination of new members of the trade, made it increasingly difficult for young artisans to join the trade. As an incentive for him to finish his training, Vavassore bequeathed Bartolomeo ten ducats on the condition that he completed his apprenticeship ("*ducatj diese a Bortolamio il qual sta cum noi compiendo il suo tempo*") Schulz 1998, *Four Unpublished Testaments*, p. 124.
 18. Ugo Rozzo's estimate not only fits well with surviving editions catalogued by the *EDIT16* project, it takes into account the potentially lost editions and printed ephemera excluded from the totals put forwards by Ester Pastorello, Paul Grendler, and Amedeo Quondam. Ugo Rozzo, *Linee per una storia dell'editoria religiosa in Italia (1465-1600)*, Udine 1993, p. 21-22; and Neil Harris, *Marin Sanudo, Forerunner of Melzi*, in: *La Bibliofilia* 95:1, 1993, p. 18-19.
 19. Harris argued that titles were fundamentally less likely to survive if they were smaller and thinner, or published in the vernacular. See *ibid.* p. 20-21; and Paul F. Grendler, *Form and Function in Italian Renaissance Popular Books*, in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 46, 1993, p. 451-485.
 20. Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy. Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600*, Baltimore 1989, p. 43-47.
 21. Robert Darnton, *First Steps Towards a History of Reading*, in: *idem, The Kiss of Lamourette. Reflections in Cultural History*, London 1990, p. 169.
 22. On street performers and sellers of print, see Rosa Salzberg, *Per il Piazza & Sopra il Ponte'. Reconstructing the Geography of Popular Print in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, in: Miles Ogborn & Charles Withers (eds.), *Geographies of the Book*, Farnham 2010, p. 111-132.
 23. Anton Francesco Doni, *A Discussion About Printing Which Took Place at I Marmi in Florence*, translated by David Brancalone, Turin 2003, p. 45.
 24. Marin Sanudo described printed poems selling for as little as one *bezzo* during the Wars of the League of Cambrai: 'era stampado una canzon si chiama: *La Gata di Padoa*, con una altra in vilanescho di Ponti: *E l'e parti quei lanziman*, qual, per non offender il re di Romani, cussi chome si vendevano un bezo l'una...' Marin Sanudo, *I diarii* 9:335 (22 November 1509). On the price of books and their relation to wages in Venice, see Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press*, Princeton 1977, p. 14, and Rosa Salzberg 2014, *Ephemeral City*, p. 20.
 25. Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic. The Canonization of Orlando Furioso*, Princeton 1991. Vavassore issued new editions of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* in varying formats in 1548, 1549, 1553 (two editions), 1554, 1556, 1558, 1559, 1562, 1563, 1566, and 1567.
 26. Roger Chartier focused attention on the dangers of equating 'popular print' with a lower class of readership in *Culture as Appropriation. Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France*, in: S. Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture. Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, Berlin 1984, p. 229-253.
 27. See, for example, Margaret King, *Women of the Renaissance*, Chicago 2008, p. 173.
 28. The full title of this work is *Esemplario di lavori: che insegna alle donne il modo et ordine di lavorare e cusire et racammare et finalmente far tutte quele opera degne di memoria li quali po fare una donna virtuosa con laco in mano. Et uno documenti che insegna al compratore accio sia ben servitor*. The workshop first issued the designs in Venice on 1 August 1532, and an identical edition was published dated 10 November 1540.
 29. Unknown Author, *I miracoli della gloriosa Vergine Maria hystoriati, novamente corretti, e in lingua toscana ridutti, Con diecisette miracoli aggiornati li quali non sono nelli altri*, Venice, 1 December 1549.

30. On the title page Vavassore states that his edition contains “*diecisette miracoli aggiornata li quali non sono nelli altri.*”
31. See John Bossy, *The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation*, in: *Transactions of the Royal Society* 25, 1975, p. 24.
32. Michael E. Cornett, *The Form of Confession. A Later Medieval Genre for Examining Conscience* (PhD Thesis), North Carolina 2011, p. iv.
33. Antonio Sebastiano Minturno, *Poemata Tridentina*, Venice 1559; idem, *Antonii Sebastiani Minturni episcopi Vxentini, De officiis Ecclesiae praestandis, orationes Tridentinae*, Venice 1564; and Girolamo Muzio, *L'antidoto christiano del Mutio iustropolitano*, Venice 1562.
34. Chandra Mukerji, *Printing, Cartography and Conceptions of Place in Renaissance Europe*, in: *Media Culture Society* 28:5, 2006, p. 656. See also Dennis Cosgrove, *Mapping New Worlds. Culture and Cartography in Sixteenth Century Venice*, in: *Imago Mundi* 44, 1992, p. 1-25; and David Woodward, *The Italian Map Trade, 1480-1560*, idem 2007, *The History of Cartography*, p. 773-803.
35. See Franco Cappelletti, *Imago Tridenti. Incisioni e libri illustrate dal VX al VXIII secolo*, Trent 1996, p. 48; and Simon Ditchfield, *Trent Revisited*, in: Guido dall'Oglio, Adelisa Malena & Pierroberto Scaramella (eds.), *La fede degli italiani*, Pisa 2011, p. 360.
36. Aldo Chemelli, *Trento nelle stampe d'arte*, Trent 1990, p. 92-96.
37. The colophon of the 1562 edition reads ‘Venetiis, Apud Io. Andrea Valvassorem, cognomento Guadagninum: Ad instatia Antonij Manelli Depistiarij S. Concilij Trident. 1562.’
38. Woodward 2007, *The Italian Map Trade*, p. 787.
39. Clemente Vavassore, brother of Alvise and uncle to Alvise and Giuliano, declared in his testament of 28 August 1576 that following the death of his brother, his two nephews would be his heirs in equal parts. See Schulz 1998, *Four Testaments*, p. 124. On the workshop under Giovanni Andrea's heirs, see Ascarelli & Menato 1989, *La Tipografia*, p. 363.
40. Among the surviving output of the press, ¼ of the books published between 1573 and 1593 were in Latin, with a ¼ of those being Folio editions.
41. These Inquisitorial accounts are available in the Venetian *Archivio di Stato*, *Sant'Uffizio* busta 7, fasc. 5, f.23v (November 1548) and f.16r-v (17 October 1548).
42. *Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, *Sant'Uffizio* busta 156, ‘Librai e libri prohibiti, 1545-71’ f.8v-r, 9 August 1571.
43. Ibid. f.15v. I have been unable to find a surviving edition entitled ‘De Fisionomia.’
44. Ibid. f.16r-17r, 23 August 1571.
45. “Essendo cosi, che io sto sempre in molo, et vado a diverse fiere, ne mi fermo in bottega non sapeva, che vu fussero dettj libri anzi dico seben sono in Venetia non vado quasi mai in bottega.” Ibid.
46. On the Giolito of Venice, see Bongi 1890, *Annali*, and Nuovo & Coppens 2005, *I Giolito*. On the use of distinctive printers marks, see Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance*, Leiden 2013, p. 142-163; and Neil Harris, *Italy*, in: Michael F. Suarez et al (eds.), *The Book. A Global History*, Oxford 2013, p. 433. Finally, on phoenix imagery made popular from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, see Enid T. Falaschi, *Valvassori's 1553 Illustrations of Orlando Furioso. The Development of the Multi-Narrative Technique in Venice and its Links with Cartography*, in: *La Bibliofilia* 77, 1975, p. 231-233.
47. The latest scholarship on Zoppino as a street performer and publisher is Massimo Rospoche, “*In Vituperium Status Veneti*”. *The Case of Niccolò Zoppino*, in: *The Italianist* 34:4, 2014, p. 349-361. See also Jeremy M. Potter, *Niccolò Zoppino and the book trade network of Perugia*, in: Denis V. Reidy (ed.), *The Italian Book, 1465-1800. Studies Presented to Dennis E. Rhodes on his 70th Birthday*, London 1993, p. 135-139.
48. Salzberg 2014, *Ephemeral City*, p. 79.
49. Massimo Rospoche, *Songs of War. Historical and Literary Narratives of the ‘Horrendous Italian Wars’ (1494-1559)*, in: Marco Mondini & Massimo Rospoche (eds.), *Narrating War. Early Modern and Contemporary Perspectives*, Bologna 2013, p. 79-98.
50. Jehan Duhege's prints are also undated, with the British Museum catalogue suggesting a date of c.1520s based on the activities of the publisher.
51. Giustina Scaglia presents a date of 1506 for the production of Vavassore's prints, whilst Malcolm Bull suggests that Vavassore's woodcuts were “produced in Venice at the beginning of the century.” See Giustina Scaglia, *Les Travaux d'Hercule de Giovanni Andrea Vavassore reproduits dans les frises de Velez Blanco*, in: *La Revue de l'Art* 127, 2000-1, p. 21-32; and Malcolm Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods*, London 2005, p. 101-102.
52. Evidence suggests that this was a normal practice, for members of the Painters' Guild made a formal complaint to the Venetian Senate in 1512 expressing their disquiet and frustration that hand-colored woodcuts were being glued to boards and sold as paintings. See Elena Favaro, *L'arte dei pittori in Venezia e i suoi statuti*, Florence 1975, p. 67; and Michelangelo Muraro & David Rosand, *Tiziano e la silografia del cinquecento*, Vicenza 1976, p. 47.
53. Ferdinand Columbus' vast print collection was begun in 1512, and the print is included in the cata-

- logue of his collection: Mark McDonald, *The Print Collection of Ferdinand Columbus, 1488-1539. A Renaissance Collector in Seville*, London 2004, Inventory Number 2815 2, p. 519-520.
54. Genevieve Carlton, *Making an Impression. The Display of Maps in Sixteenth Century Venetian Homes*, in: *Imago Mundi* 64:1, 2012, p. 26 and p. 36.
55. Vavassore's view of Venice includes a vernacular deictic inscription that reads: "as you see depicted here in the middle of a maritime lagoon... This city has an immeasurable number of people who come together from all parts of the world for trade."
56. Among the 2,200 inventories collected between 1497 and 1631, Carlton identified almost a thousand maps: 410 were world views, 321 landscape views, 97 regional maps, 70 city views, and 32 navigational charts. Among the city views, hardly any Venetian household in this study had a map of their own city. Carlton 2012, *Making an Impression*, p. 29.
57. Among the maps and city views on sale in the Vavassore shop were views of *Rhodes* (1522), *Constantinople* (undated, c.1520-1530) and *Trent* (1562, reprinted 1563).
58. The portolan chart was issued by the Vavassore workshop for the first time in 1539, and was reprinted in 1541. For a description see Derek Howse & Michael Sanderson, *The Sea Chart. An Historical Survey Based on the Collections in the National Maritime Museum*, London 1973, p. 39; and Mithad Kozličić, *G.A. Vavassore's "Tabella" – Technological Turning-Point in the 16th Century Nautical Cartography of the Adriatic*, in: *Informa-tologia* 32, 1999, p. 60-63.
59. Landau & Parshall 1994, *Renaissance Print*, p. 349.
60. On book fairs, see Nuovo 2013, *Book Trade*, p. 281-313; and Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, New Haven 2010.
61. "... et perche il ditto messer Alvise a magiato asaj faculta et si ritrova debetor asaj per li librij, et perche li figli le piu volte hanno perso le robbe che andavano alla fiere." Schulz 1998, *Four Testaments*, p. 124.
62. See note 45.
63. *EDIT16* records editions published by 1008 printers in Venice during the sixteenth century. On so-called 'silent printers' see Dennis E. Rhodes, *Silent Printers. Anonymous Printing at Venice in the Sixteenth Century*, London 1995.
64. Two maps by Vavassore – one a single sheet map of the world, and the other of the Italian peninsula – can be found on the verso of two sheets of a monumental eight-sheet woodcut of *The Procession of the Doge* published by Matteo Pagano between 1550 and 1560. David Woodward has thus noted that "maps were regarded as more expendable than other prints." Woodward 2007, *Italian Map Trade*, p. 780.
65. On the Venetian *poligrafii*, a group of "literary odd-job men" who "at times appeared closer to courtesans as a group than to any other subset of Renaissance culture," see Elizabeth Horodowich, *Language and Statecraft in Early Modern Venice*, Cambridge 2008, p. 188-197.

Figures

Fig. 1: Jacopo de' Barbari; *Bird's-Eye View of Venice*; 1500; woodcut on paper; 1345 x 2818 cm; Venice Project Center Historical Map Explorer. The waterways of San Moisè have been highlighted.

Fig. 2: Jacopo de' Barbari; *Bird's-Eye View of Venice*; 1500; woodcut on paper; 1345 x 2818 cm; Venice Project Center Historical Map Explorer. Boats on the Grand Canal at San Moisè opposite the Dogana da Mar.

Fig. 3: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *View of Rhodes* (f.1r.); in: Giorgio Falconetti, *El Lachrimoso lament chef a el gra Maestro de Rodi con gli suoi cavaglieri a tutti gli principi de la Christianita nela sua partita. Con la presa di Rodi*; undated; woodcut printed text on paper; 24 x 30 cm; Venice; Biblioteca Fondazione Cini.

Fig. 4: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *The Sack of Rome* (f.1r.); in: Anonymous Author, *La presa & lamento di Roma & le gra crudelta fatte drento: con el credo che had fatto li Romani, con un sonetto, & un successo di Pasquino. Novamente Stampato*; undated; woodcut and printed text on paper; 24 x 30 cm; Trent; Biblioteca comunale di Trento.

Fig. 5: Unknown Designer; woodcuts for Canto Ventesimo & Canto Terzodecimo; in: Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso di M. Lodovico Ariosto. Ornato di nuoue figure & allegorie in ciascuno canto. Aggiuntoui nel fine l'espositione de' luoghi difficili*; 1553; woodcut on paper; 6.5 x 8.9 cm; Reggio Emilia; Biblioteca Comunale A. Panizzi.

Fig. 6: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore or Florio Vavassore; *Water from the Rock*; in: *Opera nova contemplativa*; undated; woodcut with woodcut text on paper; 15 x 22 cm; Oxford; Bodleian Library.

Fig. 7: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore or Florio Vavassore; *Doubting Thomas*; in: *Opera nova contemplativa*; undated; woodcut on paper with evidence of hand-coloring; 15 x 22 cm; Venice; Biblioteca Fondazione Querini Stampalia.

Fig. 8: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore or Florio Vavassore; Colophon for *Opera nova contemplativa*; undated; woodcut on paper with handwritten additions; 15 x 22 cm; Venice; Biblioteca Fondazione Querini Stampalia.

Fig. 9: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore or Florio Vavassore; alphabet sampler; in: *Opera nova universal intitulata corona di racammi*; 1532; woodcut on paper; 24 x 30 cm; Venice; Biblioteca Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

Fig. 10: Florio Vavassore; frontispiece; in: *Esemplario di Lavori*; 1 August 1532; woodcut on paper printed with black and red inks; 24 x 30 cm; New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fig. 11: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *Tridentium – Trent*; 1563; hand-colored woodcut on 6 sheets; 795 x 770 cm; Vienna; Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

Fig. 12: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *Christ Preaching*; in: Unknown Author, *Thesaurus spirituale vulgare in rima et hystoriatu. Composto nouamente a diuote persone de Dio & della gloriosa Vergine Maria: a consolatione de li catholichi et deuoti christiani*; 24 September 1518; woodcut on paper; 15 x 22 cm (Giorgia Atzeni, *Gli incisori alla corte di Zoppino*, in: *ArcheoArte* 2, 2013, p. 321).

Fig. 13: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *The Triumph of Love*; in: Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere et Trionfi di messer Francesco Petrarca. Historiato et diligentemente corretto*; 4 December 1521; woodcut on paper; 15 x 22 cm (Atzeni 2010, *Gli Incisori*, p. 313).

Fig. 14: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *The Birth of Hercules*; undated; woodcut on paper; 19.6 x 28.5 cm; Berlin; Kupferstichkabinett.

Fig. 15: Jehan Duhege; *The Birth of Hercules*; in: *Les douze triumphes de tresfort et puissant Hercule qui mistafin tous les malvueillans*; date unknown; woodcut on paper; 24.6 x 22.4 cm; London; The British Museum.

Fig. 16: Denys Fontenoy; *The Birth of Hercules*; in: *Histoire d'Hercule*; 1583; woodcut on paper; 33.6 x 22.4 cm; Paris; Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Fig. 17: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *The Battle of Marignano*; c.1515; colored woodcut on eight blocks; 59.5 x 155.8 cm; Zurich; Zentralbibliothek.

Fig. 18: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *Tvto il Mondo Tereno or The Known World*; before 1556; woodcut on one sheet; 52 x 37 cm; London; British Museum.

Fig. 19: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore; *La vera descrizione del Mare Adriatico*; 1541 (second printing); woodcut on one sheet; 27 x 76 cm; Greenwich; Royal Maritime Museum.

Summary

In the increasingly polarized historiography of the printing industry of Venice, the workshop established by Giovanni Andrea Vavassore around 1515 offers a refreshing perspective on the role of the minor publisher in the Renaissance lagoon. Neither focused on a specific genre or format of book, nor interested in employing innovatory techniques of production, Va-

vassore instead emerges as a printing *poligrafo*: a man willing to turn his hand to the production of printed wares of every kind; a maker of prints and maps, as well as a publisher, printer, and seller of all types of edition.

Beginning with the formation of his press, this article follows Vavassore's journey to the lagoon and charts the establishment of his workshop. It also examines the process by which a new artisan might learn skills and amass contacts from other members of the printing trade. Rather than an inherently competitive trade, Vavassore's experience of printing in Venice stresses the importance of collaboration, cooperation, and networking. Working with other publishers, printers, mapmakers, and itinerant performers, he was able to establish an extensive and vibrant market for his printed wares both in Venice and beyond.

The printing policy of the workshop – chiefly, to print what sold, and make the largest profits in doing so – emerges as key to the success of the Vavassore over the course of eight decades. Through the examination of a series of graphic prints, maps, pamphlets, and editions, this article questions the contemporary outreach and lasting influence of one of Venice's many minor publishers in the Renaissance.

Author

Natalie Lussey is a recently graduated post-doctoral researcher on Venetian print in the Renaissance. Her PhD thesis at the University of Edinburgh was a focused cross-disciplinary study and catalogue of the workshop of Giovanni Andrea Vavassore, which addressed a wide range of issues from immigration to women's literacy, heresy and orthodox belief, and cartography and illustration. Firmly rooted within microhistory, her work draws together contemporary print with archival documents and material culture in an attempt to give a real sense of the experience of living and working with print in Renaissance Venice.

Title

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