

THE CAREER OF THOMAS FERRANDUS OF BRESCIA¹

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Thomas Ferrandus is interesting not only as an experimental printer of the fifteenth century, but also for what little we can piece together of his life as a teacher, minor author and priest. Like so many of his contemporaries, he lived from hand to mouth, felt perpetually sorry for himself, and is continually found lamenting his hard lot and his lack of money. But I do not share in Count Luigi Lechi's wholesale condemnation of Ferrandus as a fanatic and an utter failure: he repeatedly dismisses him as being merely a madman, which he was not. Rather do I agree with Monsignor Paolo Guerrini, who wrote in 1905 defending Ferrandus as a noble and honest pioneer in the art of printing, whose tireless efforts against all odds far outweigh his mediocrity as a scholar.²

¹ B.M.C.: *Catalogue of books printed in the XVth century now in the British Museum*. London, 1908 - . (Ten volumes so far published. The volume containing the incunabula of Brescia is vol. vii, published in 1935).

Baroncelli: Ugo Baroncelli, *Gli incunabuli della Biblioteca Queriniana di Brescia* (Catalogo). Ateneo di Brescia, 1970.

Goff: F.R. Goff, *Incunabula in American Libraries. A third census*. Kraus Reprint Co., Millwood, New York, 1973.

IGI: *Indice Generale degli incunaboli delle biblioteche d'Italia*. 6 vol. Roma, Libreria dello Stato, 1943-81.

GW: *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*. Leipzig, 1925-38; Stuttgart, Berlin, 1978- .

DBI: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Roma 1960- .

² On Thomas Ferrandus, see Mauro Boni, *Lettere sui primi libri a stampa di alcune città e terre dell' Italia Superiore* (Venezia, 1794), pp. lxxiv-xciii and p. cxxvii; G.J. Gussago, *Memorie storico-critiche sulla tipografia bresciana* (Brescia, 1811), pp. 16-20, 62-65, 118; L. Lechi, *Della tipografia bresciana nel secolo decimoquinto* (Brescia, 1854), pp. 83-91; R.A. Peddie, *Printing at Brescia in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1905), pp. 13-14; Paolo Guerrini, "Il primo tipografo bresciano", *Rivista di scienze storiche*, anno II, fasc. 2 (28 febbraio 1905), pp. 146-154; B.M.C., pt. vii (London, 1935), p. lii and pp. 962-3; *Storia di Brescia*, promossa e diretta da Giovanni Treccani degli Alfieri, ii (Brescia, 1963), 150, 175; iii (1964), 301, n. 1 and 703-4. In the *Storia di Brescia* he is indexed twice, once under FERANDO, Tomaso, and once as FERRANDO (o FERRANTE), Tommaso, apparently in error. According to Guerrini, art. cit., p. 147, n. 2, Andrea Valentini (1820-1909) wrote an article on Ferrando to be

Printing began in the North Italian city of Brescia in 1473, but there is evidence that Ferrandus was already negotiating for the setting-up of a press there as early as 1471. We know that his family originated from Treviglio, a small town now on the main railway-line about a third of the way from Milan to Brescia. But although all the authorities say that Ferrandus was born there (and the date of his birth must have been about 1440), the BMC has already described his father Giovanni as "a well-connected Brescian citizen", so that it seems equally possible that the family had moved from Treviglio to Brescia before the boy Tommaso was born. Nor do we know where he learned the art of printing: in Milan (where printing began in August 1471) or in Venice, since the types which he used in his first group of books in Brescia are of Venetian origin, while those of the second group are Milanese.³ But before he decided to be a printer, we know that in 1470 he was a *magister puerorum*, teaching boys in the 'Cittadella vecchia' or old city of Brescia.⁴ No doubt he taught principally Latin language and literature. There must have been some personal reason why he applied to Ferrara (where printing began in March 1471) for his first contacts with printers. On 17 October 1471, a contract was signed by two Frenchmen resident as printers in Ferrara, Andreas Belfortis and Statius (surname unknown, always known as 'Statius Gallus'), "pledging one or other of the partners to migrate to Brescia and print there for Thomas Ferrandus. Statius did in fact so migrate about a year later and the types used by him at Brescia closely resemble those of Belfortis".⁵ Thus we see that Thomas Ferrandus, aged about thirty, was already a

included in his *Biblioteca Bresciana*, which was evidently never published, cf. P. Guerrini, "Cav. Andrea Valentini" (with bibliography), *R. Accademia di scienze, lettere ed arti degli Agiati di Rovereto*, ii (1909), 271-284. For books attributed by R.A. Peddie to Thomas Ferrandus which are now either unknown or have been re-attributed to other printers, see *infra*, Appendix II.

³ Perhaps he never went to Venice, if he had types brought from Ferrara to Brescia, as seems most likely.

⁴ *Storia di Brescia*, iii, 301, n. 1, quoting from a document of 30 March 1470 in the Archivio Storico Civico, Brescia, *Liber provis.* 503, f. 215.

⁵ B.M.C., vii, p. lii; V. Scholderer, "Printing at Ferrara in the fifteenth century", *Gutenberg-Festschrift, zur Feier des 25 jährigen Bestehens des Gutenberg-Museums in Mainz* (Mainz, 1925), pp. 73-78, reprinted in his *Fifty Essays in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Bibliography*, ed. D.E. Rhodes (Amsterdam, 1966), pp. 91-95, especially at p. 92.

resident of Brescia in 1470 and by October 1471 was anxious to set up a printing-press. His name is, however, not found in a colophon until 21 May and 29 June 1473, when he completed the Statutes of Brescia, a book which today is by far the commonest and the largest of the products of his press. He may well not have been the first printer actually to print a book in the city of Brescia, but the second, for in the same year 1473 two editions of the classics were published there: a Virgil on 21 April and a Juvenal and Persius on 20 July. All we know of these is that they were commissioned by a priest named Pietro Villa and if anyone at all can be tentatively identified as their printer it is not Thomas Ferrandus but the German Georgius Butzbach, who with his brother Paulus had printed Dante's Divine Comedy at Mantua in 1472.

The productions of Thomas Ferrandus' press at Brescia fall neatly into two quite distinct groups, with a gap of about twenty years in between, during which he was obviously not printing. In the first group can be placed eleven books, the Statutes of Brescia being the only one actually to contain the exact date: all the others must be dated "circa 1473-75". They are all, with the exception of the Statutes, very rare indeed. Seventeen books in all may be attributed to his two periods of activity. Ten of these are recorded in Italy today, seven of them in the Biblioteca Queriniana at Brescia. The one library which has (to the best of my knowledge) the largest number of Ferrandus editions is the John Rylands University Library at Manchester with eight. The British Library has five, Goff records four in America, the Bodleian has only two, and Cambridge University Library only one. Of course, it is not possible at present to say how many there may be in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek at Munich or in the Vatican.

The first group

1. BRESCIA. Statuta. 21 May, 29 June 1473. fol. 310 leaves. Hain - Copinger 15003. Reichling 336. Oates 2615. BMC vii, 962. Proctor 6943. Goff S 709. IGI 2175.

Copies: London British Library; Cambridge U.L.; Manchester J.R.U.L.; Oxford Bodleian (very imperfect copy); Brescia B. Civica (two copies); Cremona B. Governativa; Mantua Seminario; Milan B. Ambrosiana; Milan B. Nazionale (Brera); Modena

B. Estense; Piacenza B. Comunale; Rome B. Nazionale; Rome B. Corsiniana; Rome Senato; Turin B. Reale (two copies); Verona B. Civica; Washington, Library of Congress; Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery.

Ferrandus complains bitterly of his thieving compatriots who pay him “per adulterinam modo, modo per tonsam monetam”, and reduce him to a state where he is dying of hunger. Lechi dismisses him as “uno di quei pazzi gloriosi”, which Fumagalli translates as “un lipémaniaque”. This harsh judgment is denied by Guerrini.⁶

2. BRESCIA. *Pacta daciorem civitatis Brixiae*. 178 leaves.

Catalogued by Reichling as part of (1) above; but obviously it was issued separately, as so many copies of the Statutes are without this part.

Lechi, p. 74, n°. 6. IGI 2173. Baroncelli 243.

Copies: Brescia B. Civica (five copies); Milan B. Ambrosiana; Lonato, Fondazione Ugo da Como.

3. ANTONINUS, St., Archbishop of Florence. *Confessionale Defecerunt*. 4°. 120 leaves.

Reichling 1446. IGI 624. Proctor 6944 A. BMC vii, 963. GW 2089. Goff A 794. Baroncelli 52.

Copies: London British Library; Brescia B. Civica; Asti Seminario; Turin B. Reale; New York Public Library.

4. AURELIUS VICTOR, Sextus. *De viris illustribus*. 4°. 28 leaves.

Lechi, p. 74, n°. 3. IGI 1084. Baroncelli 112.

Copies: Brescia B. Civica; Ravenna B. Comunale.

5. CECCO D'ASCOLI, L'Acerba. fol. 72 leaves.

Hain 4824. GW 6444. The GW believes that Statius the Frenchman printed this book for Ferrandus. BMC has already gone so far as to call Statius Ferrandus' manager; this can neither be proved nor denied. The book has the colophon “BIXIE [*sic*] THOMA FERnDO Autore”, which was his favourite method of

⁶ G. Fumagalli, *Lexicon typographicum Italiae* (Florence, 1905), p. 51. The word “lipémaniaque” does not appear in any of the standard French dictionaries: did Fumagalli, an Italian, invent it? There is no obvious Greek derivation for the first half of the word which is clearly intended to mean a madman. For the justification of Ferrandus, see Guerrini, art. cit., p. 150.

styling himself, as “author” rather than printer. This may indicate that Ferrandus was not the actual compositor of books which he published, but that he was himself responsible for their copy-editing.

Only recorded copy: Manchester J.R.U.L.

6. GIUSTO PALADINO. *Storia di Giusto Paladino di Francia*. 4°.

Known only from an imperfect copy in the National Library of Naples, consisting of the first 24 leaves. De Marinis 27 and pl. XXIV. IGI 4336.

De Marinis sent a photograph to Victor Scholderer at the British Museum in the 1930s, asking for his opinion as to the printer's identity. Scholderer replied that the book might have been printed either by Andreas Belfortis at Ferrara or by Thomas Ferrandus at Brescia, since their types are really indistinguishable. So this book remains doubtfully ascribed to Ferrandus.⁷

7. HOMER. *Batrachomyomachia*. 4°. 26 leaves.

The J.R.U.L. catalogue gives this book the imprint [Florence 1480], but it was Robert Proctor who first attributed it to Ferrandus at Brescia, saying that it is the first printed book to contain continuous passages in Greek. “The printing is extraordinarily bad. ... The roman type ... is identical with that of Thomas Ferrandus, an early but little known printer at Brescia, of whose work very few signed examples exist” (R. Proctor, *The printing of Greek in the fifteenth century*, London, *The Bibliographical Society*, 1900, pp. 83-4). Proctor dates the book “circa 1474”.⁸

Only recorded copy: Manchester J.R.U.L.

8. LUCRETIUS CARUS, Titus. *De rerum natura*. fol. 106 leaves.

Hain 10281. Reichling V. 178 (“c. 1475”). IGI 5865 (wrongly giving the date as “c. 1471”, which is too early by at least two years). For a full description, see Cosmo A. Gordon, *A Bibliography of Lucretius* (London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962, The Soho Bibliographies), pp. 49-50. Only three recorded copies: Florence

⁷ T. De Marinis, *Appunti e ricerche bibliografiche* (Milano, 1940), p. 27, n° 27.

⁸ See also Proctor, *ibid.*, pp. 170-1, pl. VII.

B. Laurenziana (wanting leaves 101-102); Manchester J.R.U.L.; Chantilly, Musée Condé. In his lengthy note at the end, Ferrandus complains that when he received a copy of the text of Lucretius, it was so full of errors that he hesitated to print it. This copy was clearly a manuscript, since there is no doubt that Ferrandus' edition is the *editio princeps*. Indeed, there was not another printed edition for perhaps another thirteen years, until Verona 1486. We can well imagine the difficulties of Ferrandus' task in printing the first edition of Lucretius.

9. PHALARIS. Epistolae. 4°. 56 leaves.

Printed on 1 September, but in which year the printer forgets to say. Probably 1473?

Hain-Reichling 12890. IGI 7688. Proctor 6944. BMC vii, 962. Goff P 551.

Copies: London B.L.; Oxford Bodleian; Manchester J.R.U.L.; Modena B. Estense; Annmary Brown Memorial Library, Providence, Rhode Island.

10. PRISCIANUS. De declinatione nominum. 4°. 16 leaves.

Text in Latin and Greek. No title or author's name.

Only recorded copy: Manchester J.R.U.L.

11. PROPERTIUS, Sixtus. Elegiae. 4°. 82 leaves.

Hain 13401.

Only recorded copy: Manchester J.R.U.L.

Guerrini mentions also a Terence printed by Ferrandus, but this appears to be an error, since nowhere in Ferrandus' productions can I trace any edition of Terence.

The type of the first group of his books is a roman measuring 116mm. for twenty lines, and described by BMC as a "purely Ferrarese face"; what particularly singles out a purely Ferrarese face from the Venetian faces which are its ultimate origin would not be easy to put into words.

About 1475 Thomas Ferrandus gave up printing to become a priest. Perhaps he had incurred too many debts as a printer; we do not know. What is certain is that in 1479 he became parish priest of Poncarale, a village near Bagnolo, a few miles due south of Brescia. Guerrini published the text of a document dated 7 September 1479, which he found in the *Atti della Vicaria* of Bagnolo, naming Thomas Ferrandus as "civis et clericus Brixiensis", and mentions another document in the parish archives

of Bagnolo, dated 7 October 1479, again naming him as priest of Poncarale.⁹

Just about the time when his first period of printing came to an end, Thomas Ferrandus published a small book of his own composition: a collection of epistles, addressed in the first instance to Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan. It is a quarto of ten leaves without imprint, but whereas GW 9804 attributes the printing to Ferrandus himself, IGI 3825 A (published in 1981) believes that the booklet was printed in Brescia by Henricus de Colonia and Statius the Frenchman, no doubt because the type is their 115 R. or 114 R. rather than the 116 R. of Ferrandus. Three copies are recorded: Chantilly, Musée Condé, Rome B. Nazionale and Henry E. Huntington Library in California.¹⁰ It seems to be the Chantilly copy which gave rise to Guerrini's out-of-date statement that the pamphlet is "one of the relics of the Library of the Louvre in Paris, to where it came from Brescia: Lechi p. 81 and p. 90". The GW is certain that this little book must be dated between January 1475, when Lodovico Sforza, as Duke of Bari, entered Brescia, and 26 December 1476, when Galeazzo Maria Sforza was murdered.

Perhaps even earlier than this, Ferrandus had tried his hand at editing a selection of Cicero's letters, with an Italian translation. Again this was printed anonymously, and the book has been attributed to the press of Antonius Zarotus at Milan: about 1474 according to Goff F 106, and about 1480 according to GW 6879. The two parts of the work are in 36 leaves and 40 leaves respectively. It is now so rare that only Yale University has a complete copy, while the Musée Condé at Chantilly has the second part only. The text ends: "Soto Thomaso ferando bressano imitatione", a phrase which is not quite grammatical, but clearly intends to say that Ferrandus in his Italian version is imitating the style of Cicero.

⁹ It was not at all unusual in the fifteenth century for priests to be printers: cf. the well-known examples of Bonetus Locatellus at Venice, Francesco Bonaccorsi, Lorenzo Morgiani and Bartolommeo de'Libri at Florence; while at Brescia itself another priest-printer was Baptista Farfengo. Priests, of course, knew Latin, an essential requirement for printing Latin books; but what may seem to us rather more unusual is that so many priests could master the technical skills needed for printing. Thomas Ferrandus did it the other way round: he was a printer six or seven years before he became a priest.

¹⁰ Goff F 105.

We must assume that throughout the 1480s Ferrandus attended exclusively to his parochial duties. Shortly after 11 February 1490, the date of the marriage of Giovanni Francesco II Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, and Isabella d'Este, Ferrandus published his "Oratio in nuptiis Marchionis Mantuani", a small quarto of four leaves, without imprint, but assigned to the Brescian press of Boninus de Boninis. Quite why he wrote this is not clear. He could hardly have known the illustrious pair personally, and there is little direct contact between Brescia and Mantua. Be that as it may, copies are today located in Milan B. Trivulziana, Venice, B. Nazionale, Chantilly Musée Condé, Sankt Gallen St. B., Dresden Landesbibliothek (wanting leaves 2 and 3), Yale University Library, University Library of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, and a copy at what the GW by an amusing slip calls "Cambridge (Mass.) Trinity C.": This is, in fact, the only copy recorded in Britain, and is indeed at Trinity College, Cambridge, England.¹¹ Guerrini misquotes the last words of the speech as "cuius mens est plurimum de parando codice sollicita", and adds the somewhat pathetic note: "Vi sarà senza dubbio un'esagerazione, la quale però presuppone sempre una ben triste verità". In fact, the true reading is: "cuius mens est plurimum de paranda lodice sollicita". Here the late Victor Scholderer, after noting Ferrandus' pitiful laments in his edition of the Statutes of Brescia of 1473, could not resist writing in the margin of B.M.C.: "cf. also his absurd remarks on his preoccupation 'de paranda lodice' at the end of a nuptial oration for the Marquis". *Lodix* is a very rare Latin word for a coverlet, blanket, or counterpane: Ferrandus is evidently complaining that he cannot even afford to keep warm in bed in winter.

We do not know whether Ferrandus gave up his priesthood or not after some fifteen years of the ministry; but the fact is that in 1493 he resumed printing, and although the B.M.C. cursorily dismisses the productions of this second phase as "two unimportant tracts", I have now raised this number from two to six, several of which are far from unimportant or uninteresting. This time the types he used were quite different from the one he had employed in the early 1470s, which is not surprising in view of the rapid development in type-faces over those crucial twenty years in typographical history. He now uses a roman of 83mm. of

¹¹ Goff F 107; Hain-Copinger 6970; Reichling 1731; GW 9805; IGI 3826.

Milanese design, and in one book only a large gothic. Four of the books are dated, all in 1493; the other two can probably also be assigned to the same year; and whereas several authorities have quoted dated books by Ferrandus of the year 1494, those authorities have been mistaken.¹²

The second group

1. GUARINUS VERONENSIS. Carmina differentialia. With commentary by Ludovicus Pretinus, otherwise known as Lodovico da Poppi. Printed in September 1493. 40 leaves. 4°.

Hain 10314 (giving the date wrongly as 1494). Reichling 970 (correcting Hain's error). IGI 4526. Baroncelli 590.

Copies: Brescia B. Civica; Venice B. Nazionale; Verona, Liceo Maffei.

The colophon names the printer now as "per d. Thomam Ferrandum", showing that he is a priest. No longer, as in the 1470s, does he use the phrase 'Thoma Ferrando autore'.

2. VIRTUTES. Virtutes psalmodum. Printed in October 1493. 18 leaves. 4°.

IGI 10334. Baroncelli 989. Lechi p. 52, n°. 5. Peddie 14.

Two copies in Brescia B. Civica are the only ones recorded.

3. VIRTUTES. Virtutes psalmodum. In Italian. 1493. 10 leaves. 4°.

Reichling 1848. IGI 10335. Baroncelli 990.

Only recorded copy: Brescia B. Civica.

4. VIRGILIUS MARO, Publius. Bucolica. [A selection.] [c.1493.] 16 leaves. 4°. Sig. A (a) B⁸. The only book printed by Ferrandus in a gothic type, which measures 117 mm.

Only recorded copy: Manchester J.R.U.L.

Copinger 6109. Copinger, *Incunabula Virgiliiana*. (*Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, ii (London, 1895), 195, n°. 115).

This edition caused considerable controversy and disagreement among bibliographers over a very long period of time, especially with regard to its dating. Some opinions are:

Panzer (1796): "Pertinet ad primordia typographiae, Brixiae,

¹² We find the erroneous date 1494 instead of 1493 in Hain 10314, Gussago p. 20 and p. 121. Although Reichling corrected Hain in this detail, the *Storia di Brescia*, iii. 704, has once again fallen into the old mistake.

per Thom. Ferrandum introductae". Panzer therefore thought it was *c.* 1473.

Dibdin (1814): "I incline to believe it to be among the very latest productions of the same press". Dibdin's verdict was *c.* 1493.

Brunet (1864): "Édition imprimée vers l'année 1480". This was a thoughtless remark, since Ferrandus was not printing at all between 1473 and 1493, as far as we know.

Graesse (1864-67): "Vers 1480 et non 1493". Graesse was always a copier of other people's ideas, and had no original theories of his own.

Copinger (1895): "This edition is printed in a remarkably rude character, and was probably one of the first books produced from this press". Thus Copinger's opinion was *c.* 1473.

But the most perplexing problem of all comes when we read what Mauro Boni wrote about Ferrandus' edition of Virgil's *Eclogues* in 1794.

Despite the utter contempt poured upon Boni by Dibdin, who says that Boni has a mistake for almost every word he wrote, nevertheless it is quite clear that in the case of the copy of Virgil's *Eclogues* which he describes in such detail, Boni must have seen the book; and the library in which he saw it was that of the Convent of the *Padri Camaldolesi* on the island of S. Michele in the Venetian lagoon. Founded in the tenth century, this monastery remained in the hands of the *Camaldoli Fathers* until 1810, when it was taken over by the *Friars Minor Riformati*. Boni clearly states that the Virgil, with Thomas Ferrandus' name in the colophon, was a quarto of 64 pages (that is, 32 leaves), signed a - d⁸.

The monastery is not one of the libraries covered by IGI. Investigations are under way to find out if the book still exists. If it is found, it will certainly be a unique item in the bibliography of the incunabula printed by Thomas Ferrandus. As we have seen, the Manchester J.R.U.L. copy has only sixteen leaves, signed a - b⁸, with the colophon at the end. Is it only half a book? This seems unlikely in view of the two books having the colophon on different leaves. Did Ferrandus print two different editions of the *Eclogues*, one with twice as much text as the other? Answers to these questions depend upon the lucky discovery of a Virgil incunable which Mauro Boni saw not later than 1794, but which seems to have since disappeared.

My own opinion on the dating of the book agrees with that of Dibdin and is thus the complete opposite to that of Copinger. I believe that it was printed about 1493.

While still on the subject of Virgil incunabula, we should note that both Fumagalli and Guerrini went seriously astray. Guerrini, in describing the Eclogues, gives us the following extremely perplexing footnote: "Il Fumagalli assegnerebbe quest'ecloghe—dedicate con gentile e riconoscente pensiero al mecenate sacerdote Pietro Villa—all'opera di un ignoto Gerardo de Lisa". But it is not with the Eclogues that Fumagalli was dealing; he knew that it was not the Eclogues which were dedicated to the priest Pietro Villa, but the Brescia edition of Virgil's *Opera omnia*, dated 21 April 1473, which has nothing to do with Thomas Ferrandus.¹³ Nor does either edition have any connection with the far from "unknown" prototypographer of Treviso, Udine and Cividale, Gerardus de Lisa, who never (as far as we know) went anywhere near Brescia. Guerrini only confuses still further the confusion first caused by Fumagalli.

5. RUFFO, Giordano. *Arte de cognoscere la natura de cavalli.*

"Fato stampare per messer Tomaso Ferante in citadella uechia, apresso al conte Piero da Gambara nela cita de Bressa: nel anno del Signore M....I del mese de Augusto". 32 leaves. 8°. Type: 83 R.

Only known copy: London, British Library, IA. 31020. This copy, bought by the British Museum about 1800 or earlier, was for many years catalogued in the General Catalogue with the date 1611, since at some early time a forger had scratched out most of the true printed date from the colophon, and written in by hand "MDCXI", which is obvious nonsense. There could be no point in trying to make a book look as though it were printed in 1611, when in fact it had every appearance of having been printed at least a century earlier. The present writer then decided in 1953 that

¹³ G. Fumagalli, *op. cit.*, p. 51: "Le premier livre connu avec date imprimé à Brescia est un Virgile: Brixiae Maronis opera impressa fuere presbytero petro uilla iubente die uigesimo primo aprilis M. cccclxxiii, dont on ne connait d'autre exemple que celui de la Speceriana. Il n'a pas de nom d'imprimeur, mais on le croit imprimé par ce GERARD DE LISA, flamand, qui venait de Treviso". Fumagalli imagined the connection with Gerardus de Lisa. Apart from the copy of this edition of Virgil in the J.R.U.L. (the Spencer copy), there is one in the British Library (IB. 31002), and one in Princeton U.L. (Goff V 156). In Italy there is only a fragment of four leaves in Brescia B. Civica (IGI 10186, Baroncelli p. 413, n°. 1008).

the true date had probably been 1504, and published a short article to that effect; but again changed his mind in 1983 when he finally decided that this book (of which no other copy has ever come to light) was indeed an incunable.¹⁴ It has now been dated [1493?] and will find a place in the forthcoming supplementary volume of B.M.C. containing accessions of Italian incunabula in the British Museum/British Library during the period 1935-1985.

It is interesting to note that the address, "in the Old City of Brescia", is the same as that of Ferrandus' teaching post of twenty-three years previously; and also that this is the only book whose colophon specifically links the printer with the name of a patron, Count Pietro Gambara.¹⁵

Another reason why the Ruffo edition of Ferrandus is most probably to be dated in 1493 is that it was almost certainly reprinted from the edition printed at Venice by Petrus de Quarengiis, of which the prologue of the translator, Frate Gabriele Bruno, is dated 16 December 1492 (B.M.C. v. 512, IA. 24146).

6. CICERO, Marcus Tullius. *Epistolae ad familiares nonnullae*. 32 leaves. 4°.

GW 6878. B.M.C. vi, 796 (IA. 26987). This shelf-mark now changed to IA. 31021.

The copy in the British Library is the only one recorded. Both the *Gesamtkatalog* and the British Museum Catalogue attribute this Cicero to an unidentified printer in Milan, Proctor having previously placed it among the books printed in Italy in an unidentified town. But as the type is exactly the same as that of the Ruffo, and as Thomas Ferrandus is named in the book, I have no hesitation in re-attributing it to Brescia and to Ferrandus' press. He is not named as printer, but as the maternal uncle of the young

¹⁴ D.E. Rhodes, "The British Museum's copy of a rare book from Brescia: a problem in dating", *Studies in bibliography* (University of Virginia), vi (1953-54), 231-2.

¹⁵ For details of the life of Count Pietro Gambara, see D.E. Rhodes, art. cit. in previous note. That he was a patron of literature, contributing to the cost of printing certain books, is shown by the dedication to him of two Brescia incunabula, both edited by Giovanni Britannico. The first is the *Achilleis* of Statius, 21 May 1485 (B.M.C., vii, 973 = IB. 31117), and the second is the splendid edition of the Arabic author Rhasis, *Liber Elhavi*, 18 October 1486 (B.M.C., vii, 975 = IC. 31128). Both books were printed by Giacomo Britannico.

editor of the text, one Cosmas Barignana, who is not otherwise heard of: what more likely than that he should ask his own uncle to print his work?

This is the end of Thomas Ferrandus' known activity as a printer. On 6 December 1497 Battista Farfengo printed at Brescia a small quarto of twelve leaves, which is now so rare that only the copy in the Biblioteca Comunale at Treviso is recorded (IGI 6371). This is the *Epistolae, orationes et epithalamium* of Bartholomaeus Mercantus (or Mercanda), edited by Michael Mercantus. Amongst other brief contributions in the book is one by Thomas Ferrandus, *Consolatio ad Michaelem Mercantum*, on the death of his son Bartholomaeus. It is from this that we learn that Tomasius Ferrandus was "brixianus Trivilio oriundus".

In a *Libro d'estimi* of the year 1498, Guerrini found the name of "Thomas Ferrandus miserabilis", "lo stesso che in un altro [libro] è soprannominato *Bibolino*, forse dalla sua mania per i libri".¹⁶ Was he "miserabilis" because he had no money? Was he living off charity? The poor man had certainly made no profit from his publishing, but nevertheless he continued to live on in penury for a few more years yet. Our last piece of information concerning his life comes in the form of another letter of his, this time published in a book by the distinguished humanist Marino Becichemo, a native of Scutari in Dalmatia (1468?—1526), who was teaching at Brescia from 1502 to 1508.¹⁷

The letter is printed on pp. lxxxix-xc of "Marini Becichemi ... In C. Plinium praelectio", published at Paris on 23 July 1519. In it he is described as "Thomas Ferandus Veteranus Grammaticus, cuius iudicium verentur omnes", which suggests that he was better remembered as a teacher of Latin than as a printer. He praises Ioannes Britannicus as one of the most learned men he has ever known.¹⁸

¹⁶ Quoted by Guerrini, *op. cit.*, p. 153, from the Archivio storico bresciano, located in the Ateneo di Brescia. The nickname is not "Bisbino", as misquoted by Lechi, p. 83.

¹⁷ See C.H. Clough, "Marino Becichemo", *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vii (Rome, 1965), 511-515.

¹⁸ For Giovanni Britannico, see Domenico Fava, "Giovanni Britannico e le sue *Regulae grammaticales*", *Studi e ricerche sulla storia della stampa del Quattrocento. Omaggio dell'Italia a Giovanni Gutenberg nel V centenario della sua scoperta* (Milano, 1942), pp. 131-143. Giovanni was the eldest of five brothers, of whom the best known are the two printers Angelo and Giacomo, the most

Can we date this letter at all accurately, apart from saying that it was obviously written between 1502 and 1508? It may belong to the year 1504, since in the letter Ferrandus congratulates Becichemo on his commentary on the letters of Pliny; and we know that it was in 1504 that this book was first published.¹⁹

This is the last scrap of biographical evidence concerning Thomas Ferrandus, who must have died aged about seventy, perhaps before 1510, thus escaping the horrors of the Sack of Brescia by the French in 1512. He had succeeded in publishing, or actually printing, sixteen, if not seventeen, books, most of which, as we have seen, are now among the rarest of Italian incunabula. He died in poverty as a lonely bachelor. His career is, like that of so many of the fifteenth-century printers, still full of mystery, gaps in our knowledge, and unexplained problems; but he is certainly one who, from what scrappy information we possess, comes to life as do few of his contemporaries. Eccentric he may have been, but he was not mad. Needless to say, by far the most important feature of his life is the books which he has left to us.

Monsignor Guerrini ends his account of Ferrando as follows:

“I Ferrandi avevano sepolcro gentilizio nei chiostrì degli Agostiniani di S. Barnaba (ora Istituto Pavoni) con questa iscrizione che ci fu conservata da antichi cronisti.

SEPUL. SPE. PETRI DE FERRANDIS
ET HIERON. EIUS FRAT.
MCCCCLXX.

Nel sepolcro dei suoi avi ebbe forse meritato riposo la salma di Tommaso Ferrando, che chiuse la sua vita nel primo decennio del sec. XVI”.

As a scholar and humanist, concludes Guerrini, Ferrando was most mediocre; but no one should ever try (as the biased Count Lechi did in such an exaggerated manner) to take away from him the honour and glory of having been the first native printer of

successful businessmen of their profession in fifteenth-century Brescia. Giacomo died in 1506 (not in 1518 or 1519 as stated by Ugo Baroncelli in *D.B.I.*, xiv (1972) 341): see the printed Venetian privilege in the Brescian Plautus of 29 November 1506; Angelo died in 1517, and Giovanni died at some time after 26 November 1518. Thomas Ferrandus must have known them well, although we have no evidence that he had business dealings with any of the Britannico family.

¹⁹ Isaac 13864: after 5 August 1504.

Brescia. With this final judgement we can only wholeheartedly concur.²⁰

APPENDIX I

Notes on the list of books attributed to Thomas Ferrandus in: Maurio Boni, *Lettere sui primi libri a stampa di alcune città e terre dell'Italia superiore*, Venezia, 1794, p. cxxvii.

- I. VIRGILII Aeglogae 4°. sine anno. Correctly ascribed.
- II. L'Acerba di Cecco d'Ascoli. f°. sin. an. Correctly ascribed.
- III. Propertii Monobiblos. 4° sine anno. Correctly ascribed.
- IV. Lucretius. f°. sine anno. Correctly ascribed.
- V. Phalaridis Epistolae. 4°. sine anno. Correctly ascribed.
- VI. Iuuenalis et Persii Satyrae. f°. sine. an.

Boni says that this has 156 pages, the imprint BRIXIE, and no signatures or foliation. If this is the edition now ascribed to Henricus de Colonia and Statius Gallicus, c. 1475 (B.M.C., vi, 964), it has 68 leaves, or 136 pages. "156" pages could be an easy error for 136. This edition is still given the imprint [T. Ferrandus] in the General Catalogue of the British Library; but B.M.C. is a more reliable authority.

- VII. TERENTII Comoediae. f°. sine anno.

No imprint. 200 pages, according to Boni, who thinks it is by the same printer as the preceding Juvenal. But there is only one edition recorded in B.M.C. (vi, 795: unidentified press at Milan) which has 100 leaves, the first and last blank, and which can therefore be said to have 200 pages. There is no Terence attributed by modern authorities to Brescia.

- VIII. Statuta Comunis Brixiae. f°. 1473. Correct.

- IX. Dacialia Comunis Brixiae. f°. 1473. Correct.

- X. A. Gellii Noctes Atticae. f°. sine anno.

M.T. Ciceronis orationes sine nota.

Boni quotes this Aulus Gellius from Maittaire, but admits that he has not seen the book. There is no recorded edition of Aulus Gellius without a complete imprint, and the only Brescian edition is by Boninus de Boninis, March 1485 (Goff G. 122).

For the Cicero, see *infra*, Appendix II.

- XI. P. Virgilii Maronis opera. f°. 1473.

²⁰ My sincere thanks are due to Mr. David W. Riley for all his patient help during my researches in the John Rylands University Library, and by correspondence.

This is not by Ferrandus, but by the anonymous "Printer for Petrus Villa".

XII. Iuuenalis et Persii Satyrae. f^o. 1473. As above, n^o. XI.

Thomasii Ferrandi Oratio in Mantuani Marchionis nuptiis. 4^o. sine ulla nota.

Printed by Boninus de Boninis (see above).

APPENDIX II

Books wrongly attributed to Thomas Ferrandus by R.A. Peddie, *Printing at Brescia in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1905), pp. 13-14.

8. n.d. CICERO. Orationes. (Manchester J.R.U.L.).

The J.R.U.L. catalogue says for this edition: "Emendatae et correctae per Guarinum Veronensem". There is only one edition: GW 6764. This is not Brescia, but [Bologna: Printer of Barbatia, Johannina, c. 1475], and the GW gives the Rylands location.

10. n.d. IUVENALIS et PERSIUS. Saturae. (Manchester J.R.U.L. ii. 962).

The edition of Juvenal to which Peddie is referring must be that which is now attributed to Brescia, [Henricus de Colonia & Statius Gallicus, c. 1475] (B.M.C. vii. 964 & IB. 31026a, 31026b).

16. n.d. THOMAS FERRANDUS. Epistolae latinae. (Lechi, 76, "Il solo esemplare che ci sia noto è a Parigi nella biblioteca del Louvre").

This is the edition which I.G.I. now attributes to Henricus de Colonia and Statius Gallicus (see above).

18 n.d. THOMAS FERRANDUS. In nuptiis illust. mant. march. oratio.

Printed by Boninus de Boninis (see above).

20. n.d. TIBULLUS. Carmina. (Gussago, 178, quoting Boni).

Gussago was not quoting from Boni's book of 1794, but from a subsequent letter by him, dated from Venice on 7 May 1811. The Tibullus which Boni had found was, in his opinion, of the "stessa forma, carattere, e segno della carta del Properzio". No edition of Tibullus attributable to Ferrandus is now known, and the edition which Boni had found may have been IGI 9656, 9657 or 9658: all three were printed in Venice.

21. n.d. SALLUSTIUS. (Gussago 178, quoting Boni).

Here again, Gussago is quoting from Boni's letter of 7 May 1811. He says that the book contained the colophon "Finis Brixiae Thoma Ferrando auctore". No such edition is now known.