CHAPTER 9

Two Editors, Three Printers:
M.T. Cicero, *Orationes* Printed in Venice, 1471–1480

The three editions of Cicero's orations that are the subject of this essay are:

1. Edited by Ludovicus Carbo, Venice, Christophorus Valdarfer, 1471, 'praestante Mauro sub Duce Christophoro', i.e. not after 9 November, the date of Cristoforo Moro's death. fol. gw 6765.
2. Edited by Ludovicus Carbo, [Venice], Adam von Ambergau, 1472. fol. gw 6766.
3. Revised by anonymous editor, Venice, Nicolaus Girardengus, 10 March 1480. fol. gw 6767.

Two notes in two much-respected sources, both fundamental to the study of incunabula, sent me on a long, unplanned detour. First I was seeking to verify two statements, in Konrad Haebler's *Handbuch der Inkunabelkunde* and in the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, respectively, and to answer the immediate questions they raised. But then I was drawn into the phenomenon of the revision and improvement of a famous and much-read text as it went through successive reprints. Once it had appeared in print, a copy of a first or early edition could be used for annotation, correction, and repairs, and for bringing the text to a new level of completeness as far as available sources permitted. Cicero's *Orationes*, the text I followed almost by chance some way on its journey through Venetian printing houses, turned out to be a good example of how a critical process that had been going on for more than a hundred years was continued when the texts appeared in print. That such a process continued and may even have been stimulated by the wider availability of a text in print is sometimes overlooked on the all-too-easy assumption that with printing, reproduction of a printed text would be virtually an exact copy, barring the occasional error—the term 'printer's copy' apparently misunderstood as signifying mechanical copying.

A classical text—or in this case a set of texts—has its own long and tortuous history of survival and rediscovery. It is reflected in the two editions of Cicero's orations which almost simultaneously appeared in print: they represent two distinct branches in the textual tradition of the *Orationes* as they had developed in the hands of humanist scholars from the middle of the fourteenth
century on. One was the set of Cicero’s orations edited by Giovanni Andrea Bussi and published by Sweynheym and Pannartz in Rome in 1471;\(^1\) the other was the slightly smaller collection which announced itself as edited by Ludovicus Carbo and was published in Venice by Christophorus Valdarfer in the same year.\(^2\) Both versions were reprinted several times. A third version, edited by Guarinus Veronensis and published c. 1475 in Bologna by the printer of Barbaria, was independent of the other two and was not reprinted.\(^3\)

After its appearance in print, the first Venetian edition served as the basis for two subsequent editions. The copies of the first Venetian edition, which were successively annotated and adapted for use in two different printing houses, do not survive, but for the second book that resulted from such preparations, which was printed in Venice by Nicolaus Girardengus in 1480, it was possible to reconstruct to some extent the process of preparing a copy for reprinting while incorporating revisions. My point of departure was the process of production in Girardengus’s printing house, but I ended with a foray into the textual tradition of Cicero’s orations, guided primarily by the lucid studies of Silvia Rizzo.\(^4\)

The first note (actually a footnote) that sent me on this trail was made by Konrad Haebler to support his evidence for printing by formes. In his *Handbuch der Inkunabelkunde* he devoted a short chapter to the printing press.\(^5\) In the beginning of this chapter he stated that the structure of presses had not undergone radical changes since the very beginning of printing, or at least the earliest known images of printing presses, for which he quotes the device of Badius Ascensius.\(^6\) Haebler continued by distinguishing between the practices

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\(^1\) GW 6761, ISTC ic00541000.

\(^2\) GW 6765, ISTC ic00542000. The two branches in the tradition were distinguished by Silvia Rizzo, *La tradizione manoscritta della Pro Cluentio di Cicero* [Pubblicazioni dell’ Istituto di filologia classica e medievale, Università di Genova 57] (Genoa, 1979), where she indicated that the two earliest printed editions belonged to different branches (pp. 30, 47). See p. 236–237 below about the implications of Rizzo’s analysis for the printed editions.

\(^3\) GW 6764, ISTC ic00541600. A digitised facsimile of the copy at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, is available online.


\(^6\) Haebler states in his *Handbuch* that Badius Ascensius’s device was first used in 1499, but Badius's