In April 1980 the Department of Printed Books bought two extremely rare books, each of which adds a new town to our already very rich collection of sixteenth-century Italian imprints. While these books are not unrecorded, it is most unlikely that a copy of either of them has ever previously found its way into the British Isles, and few copies of each are known in Italian libraries.

1. Borgo Lavezzaro

Near the city of Novara, which is on the main line from Milan to Turin, is the small town or village of Borgo Lavezzaro, to which an ancient chronicler gave the following fanciful etymology: ‘In extremo agri Novariensis margine municipium est, Forum Lebuorum sive Lebetiorum, aut Lebetiorum credibile est a maioribus nostris vocatum. Hac aetate Burgum Lavizarium nominant; quod lebes vasis sit genus, ut scitis.’ Here in 1500 was born Gaudenzio Merula, who may have been descended from the family of the much more celebrated humanist Giorgio Merula (1431–94). For most of his life he was a teacher of grammatica, and lived in Milan from 1524, with shorter residences in Novara, Vigevano, and his native Borgo Lavezzaro. He was certainly living in Milan in 1534, 1537, and 1538. His friend and patron, Giovanni Battista Ploti, a lawyer of Novara, gave him a farm or villa at Borgo Lavezzaro, where Gaudenzio could write his books and study in peace. His Memorabilia is nowadays a very rare book, the earliest printed edition of which is that of Giolito at Venice in 1550. The first book of these memoirs is said to have been completed at his retreat in Borgo Lavezzaro in 1546, and there is even a rumour, to which I can find no foundation, that it was actually printed there. However, what is certain is that the short dialogue by Gaudenzio Merula entitled Terentianus, addressed to Giovanni Battista Ploti, was indeed printed at Borgo Lavezzaro shortly after the date of its preface, which is 31 May 1543. This is the book which the British Library bought in April 1980; and the only other copy known to me at present (I have not made a serious attempt to
locate other copies) is in the National Library at Milan, the copy which Butti studied in 1899.

The book is an octavo of 48 leaves, collating A-F. What strikes the reader immediately is the large and very unusual italic type in which much of the book is printed; the rest is in a small roman characterized by the frequent use of an initial Greek delta when \( d \) is the first letter of the word. There are also two woodcut capitals, an E on 5V measuring 30 mm. square, and an S on 3v which is somewhat smaller, about 23 mm. square. The author's preface ends: 'Ex Forolebtorum Pridie. KL. Iunij. M.D.XLIII.' The printer's colophon at the end reads: 'In Forolebtorum typis committebat Betacius Tortelius.'

The two types and at least one of the woodcut initials can easily be identified. They were the property of the Milanese printer Giovanni Antonio da Castiglione, who used the large italic, for example, in his edition of Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, printed in Milan 'nelle case di Andrea Calvo' shortly after 1 January 1542. The woodcut capital E is also found in this book on leaf 2v. I have found the same E in two other books in the British Library's collection printed by G. A. Castiglione: in the Bonaventura Castiglione, *Gallerorum Insbrum antiquesedes*, of April 1541, and in the Girolamo Cardano, *Supplementum almanach. Libellus alius de restitutione temporum et motuum coelestium* of 1538. The capital S has not been found in another book in the British Library, but several other letters occur frequently which clearly belong to the same alphabet.

The small roman type, with its characteristic delta, is used in the *Cortigiana* of Pietro Aretino, printed by Castiglione in 1535.

It has often been thought that these types and initials were the property of the well-known Milanese publisher Andrea Calvo, chiefly active between 1520 and 1542. But he was for the most part, if not exclusively, a bookseller and not a printer. In 1520 Alessandro Minuziano printed for him; in 1521 several books were printed at his expense by Giovanni da Castiglione (who cannot be proved to be the same man as Giovanni Antonio da Castiglione); and one book in 1521 was even printed on behalf of Calvo by a printer at Turin, Francesco Silva. There is no doubt of two facts: firstly, that Andrea Calvo was reasonably well off, as is suggested by the plural expression 'nelle case di Andrea Calvo'; and secondly, that by the 1540s the printer whom he employed most was Giovanni Antonio da Castiglione, one of whose compositors seems to have been Betacius Tortelius, or Betazzo Tortelli, whose name appears in the Borgo Lavezzaro colophon of 1543 and evidently nowhere else in print.

The large italic type which appears in this and other books published (i.e. paid for, not printed) by Andrea Calvo, derives ultimately from the designs of Arrighi, and has been copiously studied by the specialists.

We may well imagine that the printing press which produced the *Terentianus* in 1543 was set up specially in the house of Gaudenzio Merula at Borgo Lavezzaro; and we need pay little attention to the report of any other book having been printed there. After this curious episode in printing history, the printer no doubt soon returned to
his base in Milan, the printing shop of his master Giovanni Antonio da Castiglione. Gaudenzio Merula died on 22 March 1555. The new accession has been placed at C. 135.f.30.

2. Todi

The Department of Printed Books has also bought a copy of the printed statutes of Todi, the small town in Umbria where very few books were printed between 1549 and 1551. A folio of 165 leaves, the book was printed in parts, as is shown by the presence of blank leaves 37, 113, and 143, and by the collation, which is: \(+^{10} A^{8+1} B^{8} C^{10} D^{-M^{8}} N^{4}; O^{-Q^{8}} R^{6}; A^{-D^{4}} E^{6}\). There is some red printing, and there is foliation, numbering 131 and twenty (in roman numerals) for the final section, which is headed ‘Reformationes statutorum’ and was obviously added as a supplement. The colophon reads: ‘Impressum in Inclita Ciuitate Tudertina de mandato Generalis consilii eiusdem Ciuitatis procurantisibus Consulibus Collegii Aduocatorum, Procuratorum & Notariorum Ciuitatis per Petrum Mattheum Thesori de foro Sempronii. Anno Domini. M.D. XLIX. & Die. 16. Augusti dicti Anni.’ But although the colophon is dated 16 August 1549, the preface at the beginning of the book is dated 3 July 1551, and it is clear that publication was held up for two years while the supplementary matter was being prepared. The book is very badly printed and shows the most inexperienced presswork.

Pietro Matteo Tesori, native of Fossombrone, was first a bookseller at Orvieto, beginning his career there in 1533. The first certain date of printing at Orvieto is 1538, but the British Library has no example of a book from this press. Tesori worked there until at least 1542; and he is next found at Todi in 1549, where he had been called to print the present volume of the town’s statutes. In 1550 he probably printed a book by Tommaso Tudertino entitled *De arte sermocinandi*, which was once reported to Domenico Tordi by a native priest of Todi, Canonico Pirro Alvi, on the basis of a manuscript note, but without saying where a copy was to be found. It is possible that Tesori at Todi was also the printer of a little grammar book which has been in the British Museum since 1878, and of which I have never located another copy. The author of this is one Angelus Finus, a schoolmaster of Todi, whose preface is dated from there on 1 October 1554; the book bears no imprint. It was unfortunately omitted by accident from the *Short-title Catalogue of Books printed in Italy . . . 1465–1600*, published by the British Museum in 1958. The Finus, which has a woodcut of master and pupils on the title-page with the initials I.C. (unidentified), has nothing in common with the book of statutes, except that both are of an indescribably low quality of printing. The types are not the same, and the statutes contain no woodcuts or initials, except for the arms on the title-page (see below).

In 1546 Pietro Matteo Tesori was in Rome, where with the incomparably better printer Antonio Blado he was invited to go to Viterbo in order to set up a new press, no book having as yet been printed in Viterbo since its one and only incunable of ‘1488’ [1478]. But nothing came of this proposal, and for the reputation of the art of
printing in Viterbo it is perhaps as well that the town had to wait until 1568, when another printer, Agostino Colaldi, first set up his press there. Tesori's last commission was in 1558, when he was called by Duke Ottavio Farnese to go to the small village of Valentano to print the statutes of Castro and Ronciglione, a copy of which was discovered by Tordi in the Biblioteca Casanatense at Rome.

Of the Todi statutes of 1549–51, Domenico Tordi knew and studied the copy in the Biblioteca Nazionale at Florence. Now, however, no fewer than four copies have been placed in the Biblioteca Comunale at Todi itself, and one more in the library at Perugia; but perhaps not more than eight to ten copies have survived in all. As an example of thoroughly bad provincial printing this book can have few rivals; but a final note should be made of the rather striking woodcut arms, measuring 105 × 87 mm., which appear on the title-page. They show a large eagle with wings outspread, and on each wing is a small eagle in black. This is an attempt to illustrate the city arms of Todi (fig. 1).

The book has been placed at C. 135.h.6.

Fig. 1. City arms of Todi (woodcut). C.135.h.6


2 This is not in the British Library or the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; there is a copy at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

3 F. Barberi, Andrea Calvo, Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, vol. xvii (Rome, 1974), pp. 34–5. Andrea Calvo was a bookseller at both Milan and Pavia, but he is not even included as a printer by Caterina Santoro in her list, 'Tipografi milanesi nel secolo XVI', in Amor librorum. Bibliographic
and other essays. A tribute to Abraham Horodisch on his sixtieth birthday (Amsterdam, 1958), pp. 43-58; although she does once refer to Calvo as a publisher only, cf. p. 45.


5 D. Tordi, ‘La stampa in Orvieto nei secoli XVI e XVII’ [part I, to 1599], Bollettino della Regia Deputazione di Storia Patria per l’Umbria, vi (1900), pp. 183-230. For Tesori at Rome, see p. 197; for Tesori at Todi, pp. 200-2; for Tesori at Valentano, p. 206.

6 I am grateful to Mr. Jeremy M. Potter, who was the first, about ten years ago, to discover that this little book by Angelus Finus was missing from the British Museum’s Italian S.T.C.


8 The last volume of the catalogue of printed statutes in the Biblioteca del Senato, Rome, which should contain the heading ‘Todi’, has never been published, and I am informed by the librarian that it probably never will be. This library has the best collection in the world of Italian city statutes, and the British Library, perhaps, has the second best.

I am grateful to Dr William Montorsi, Librarian, for informing me that the Biblioteca del Senato owns a perfect copy of the Todi statutes.
Copyright of British Library Journal is the property of British Library Board 96. The copyright in an individual article may be maintained by the author in certain cases. Content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.