

# Chapter 8

## The Giunta's Publishing and Distributing Network and Their Supply to the European Academic Market



Andrea Ottone

**Abstract** This essay presents the Giunta publishing firm as a transnational network, highlighting its ideal center and peripheries. It describes the construction of a business model in conjunction with marketing channels and a consequent publishing plan intended to enhance the firm's reputation in a specific slice of the book market: the clergy and the high professions. At the center of this narrative are several instances of the Giunta endeavoring to commercialize Sacrobosco's *Sphaera*. I argue that, regardless of the eight known instances in which the Giunta family published Sacrobosco, the *Tractatus de sphaera* remained of marginal interest in the general publishing plan laid down by the firm.

**Keywords** Giunta publishing house · Johannes de Sacrobosco · Astronomical books · History of science · European book market

### 1 Introduction

Giunta publishing rapidly rose in the ranks of the late Renaissance European book market. The firm's strength was mainly based on the ability of its leaders to build a transnational network of production and distribution with branches in some of the most prominent hubs of the book trade in Catholic Europe.

The synergy between the various branches of the firm is represented in their shared use of the lily as a common trademark. The lily, a proud assertion of their Florentine origins, eventually became a statement of quality standards recognized by customers around Europe. This chapter will attempt to reconstruct the steps through which the Giunta built their organic network and the reasoning behind their choices. Further, it will describe the development of a common business model and a shared publishing strategy. This will elucidate the Giunta's approach to the publishing of Johannes de Sacrobosco's *Tractatus de sphaera* in the context of their business vision. Ultimately,

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the aim is to reconstruct a small fragment of the integrated infrastructure that granted the *Sphaera* a wide circulation during the early stages of print culture.

## 2 Building an International Network

The family's firm was started mainly under the initiative of Lucantonio (1457–1538) and Filippo Giunta (1456–1517). The first steps they took in the late fifteenth century reveal the non-local aspirations of their enterprise. The mastermind of the business strategy seems to have been Lucantonio, the younger of the two brothers, who, from the start, took on a leading role. He is the one who moved to Venice in 1477 with the intention of book dealing.<sup>1</sup> As late as 1485, Lucantonio's older brother Filippo would pursue the same profession in Florence (Pettas 2013, 4), thus creating the premises for a multi-centered project.

Lucantonio's relocation in Venice brought him in contact with an emerging industry and placed him in a propitious commercial position. This may be the reason why he often proved to be one step ahead of his brother. Lucantonio's first known publications are dated 1489 (Camerini 1962–1963, I, 59–62), whereas Filippo's first signed editions that we know of are dated 1497 (Pettas 2013, 223–224). The same year Lucantonio started publishing, his brother Filippo opened a stationery shop in Florence (Pettas 2013, 4–5), a synchronized move that should not be overlooked. Two years later, the two brothers signed a partnership consolidating what seems to have been a common project already (Camerini 1962–1963, I, 34–37). This laid the foundation of a polycentric firm with the Venetian branch progressively taking the lead. Lucantonio's swifter and greater professional achievements brought him to demand a larger share of the revenues, thus asserting a de facto leadership (Camerini 1962–1963, I, 35). This imbalance would continue in the decades to follow; with multiple branches flourishing below and across the Alps, Venice would remain the natural barycenter of the Giunta's transnational network.

Lucantonio's entrepreneurial talent, along with the initial vision, developed in the years to follow, as the firm experienced at least three visible stages of expansion in the continental market. The first instance of this thoroughly planned process came with the partnership signed in 1517 between Giuntino di Biagio Giunta (1477–1521) and his uncle, Lucantonio.<sup>2</sup> The four-year contract between the two secured a

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<sup>1</sup> His elder brother, Bernardo, accompanied Lucantonio to Venice, where he also entered the profession of bookdealer. However, his career would not take the same momentum as that of young Lucantonio (Camerini 1962–1963, I, 32). I would like to thank Carolin Strecker and Diane Booton for reading and commenting the first drafts of my paper. I would also like to share my gratitude to Gudrun and Reiner Strecker for the help they provided during challenging 2020 and beyond, when this work was still in the making.

<sup>2</sup> Giuntino's partnership with Lucantonio was preceded by a long stay in Venice, which is attested from at least 1507 by a small set of publications that carry his name (EDIT16, CNCT 1219). Giuntino may have trained in the profession under the supervision of his uncle, whose reputation was by then well established in the sector.

capital of 32,153 Venetian ducats. Giuntino contributed only 5,000 leaving the rest to Lucantonio, who clearly asserted his weight in the company. The stated purpose of the company was to have Giuntino “exercise in any approved merchandise...in Venice and any other place.”<sup>3</sup> A few elements are worth mentioning. Giuntino’s role in the partnership consisted in brokering business for Lucantonio, acting as proxy agent in an undefined commercial space. The merchandise of interest, one may assume, consisted mainly in books, but the loose definition of the commercial objective allows for the possibility that the company’s trade may have also comprised other merchandise if it proved profitable. Commercial diversification is a feature of the Giunta’s business model that would emerge more clearly and systematically on the eve of the sixteenth century (Tenenti 1957), as the Venetian book industry felt the bite of northern competition. However, the partnership with Giuntino suggests that this was a strategic vision already in place when Lucantonio first ventured into the publishing business. Networking and commercial expansion were also visible features of his vision. As far as this partnership goes, the geographic scope of the company was still limited to the Italian-speaking territories. Venice and Florence were already established hubs for the family. Iacopo di Francesco Giunta (1486–1547) settled in Rome in 1504, providing his family an important presence in the Papal State.<sup>4</sup> Giuntino Giunta, who originally had no solid settlement outside Venice, finally set up his base in Sicily, where he opened a bookshop in Palermo in 1517 (Camerini 1962–1963, I, 44), thus allowing Lucantonio and Filippo to stretch their peninsular network further south.

By moving deep in the periphery of the Viceroyalty of Naples, a state entangled with the Spanish crown, the Giunta were likely tightening their relationship with the Iberian market, a commercial area that had already fallen under the family’s interest. The presence of a Giunta in Spain can be traced back to 1514 when Giovanni (1494–1557)—later known by his Spanish name Juan de Junta—was active in Salamanca (Pettas 2004, 18) (Chap. 7). Juan’s relocation to Spain was followed by that of his brother Iacopo (1486–1547)—later known by his French name Jacques—who established himself in Lyon in 1520. Interestingly, Jacques’s move abroad also involved Lucantonio, who signed an *accomandita* contract with Iacopo.<sup>5</sup> The stipulated contract, as in the case of Giuntino, granted much freedom to Jacques in conducting his undertaking in Lyon. As in the case of Giuntino, Jacques had only loose obligations in determining the direction of his enterprise, which was explicitly oriented toward printed books but comprised “any other merchandise that would be

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<sup>3</sup> “...per exercitarsi in qualunche...mercantia venisse approbata...così in Vinegia come in ogni altro luogo dove detta compagnia distendesse...” (Pettas 1980, 304–308).

<sup>4</sup> Iacopo di Francesco Giunta is attested in Rome until 1531. The remaining known editions suggest that his publishing activity in Rome may have not been impressive (EDIT16, CNCT 1923). It is likely that Iacopo’s role in Rome was that of agent for Lucantonio and Filippo (Pettas 1974, 340). The Giunta quickly filled the gap left by Iacopo in Rome with Benedetto Giunta, who was active there from 1531 until 1548 (EDIT16, CNCT 746). In later times the family mainly resorted to contracted proxy agents (Tenenti 1957, 1034).

<sup>5</sup> On the *accomandita* system, see (Carmona 1964).

held adequate.”<sup>6</sup> The prime interest of the company was to conduct trade in Lyon, but it was explicitly stated in the contract that Jacques’s operational area could comprise the whole of France.<sup>7</sup> Some interesting analogies emerge with the case of Juan. Both brothers chose not to set their base close to the court of Spain or that of France. They instead established themselves at the center of key commercial networks, thus choosing mercantile resourcefulness over the comfort of serving modern state bureaucracies. In fact, Lyon, not Paris, was the seat of a prominent book fair serving France and beyond. Likewise, Salamanca and Burgos were a safe distance from Medina del Campo, site of a prominent national fair.<sup>8</sup>

From these initial moves of Lucantonio, it emerges that the firm’s ambition was to reach a wide market, albeit carefully confined to Catholic lands. What has been accounted thus far is the network that was built by securing the presence of a family member on site. A less visible network is that which employed occasional proxy agents. We know for a fact that the third-generation leader of the Venetian branch, Lucantonio junior (ca. 1535–1602), counted on a rather impressive web of representatives (Tenenti 1957, 136–139). These were mainly concentrated in northern Italy, but were also present in the rest of the peninsula and in at least one case across the Alps (Fig. 1).

Much emphasis so far has been put on how this commercial infrastructure could have benefited the Venetian branch, which appears to have been largely responsible for structuring and indirectly financing it. However, it is likewise true that the availability of such an integrated structure was a valuable asset for each node of the network. From this perspective, even in the absence of a formal contract of partnership, the cooperation between the branches of the Giunta would be granted by mutual convenience. One revelatory example of the clan-like mentality underlying the business held by the Giunta is linked to the papal privilege that Lucantonio senior earned in August 1530 to cover three works of theologian Tommaso de Vio (1469–1534).<sup>9</sup> These expensive editions were protected by a ten-year book privilege encompassing all of the Italian states, Germany, and France. Infringements of the standing privilege would have caused an automatic excommunication and a fine of 1,000 ducats. Sanctions for reprints or unauthorized commercialization, it was stated, would have applied to everyone except those who carried Lucantonio’s family name (Ginsburg 2013, 383).<sup>10</sup> Vatican privileges were costly instruments and strategic assets capable of regulating competition over a vast portion of the European market. In the interest of smoothing the circulation of his own imprints, Lucantonio Giunta considered the sharing of a papal privilege a matter of common interests.

<sup>6</sup> “...et in ogni altra mercantia come parra a decto Iacobo...” (Pettas 1980, 298).

<sup>7</sup> For a comprehensive account of Jacques de Giunta’s enterprise in Lyon, see (Pettas 1997).

<sup>8</sup> On Juan’s attendance to the fair of Medina del Campo, see (Pettas 1995, 3).

<sup>9</sup> The works in question were, (*Psalmi* 1530) and (*De Vio* 1530, 1531). Papal privileges were a luxury legal protection for transnational firms like the Giunta; their legal stipulations were valid everywhere in Catholic Europe due to the fact that they could be enforced, among other means, by excommunication.

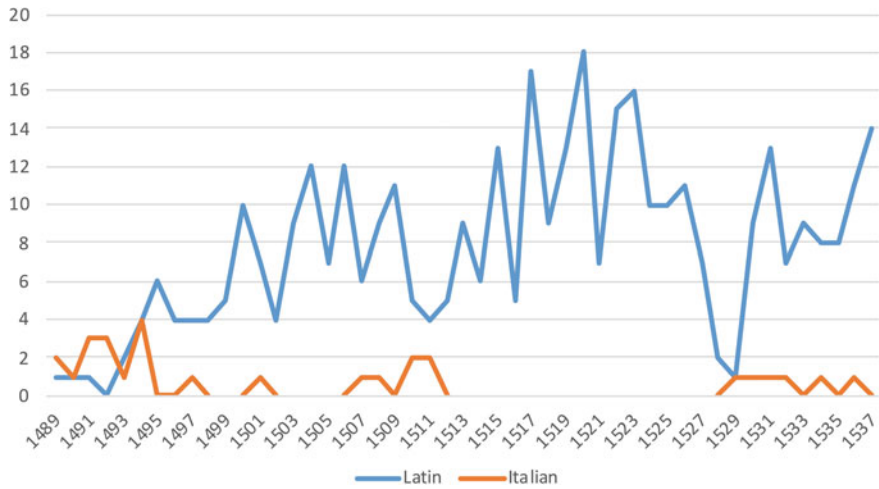
<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Professor Jane Ginsburg for sharing her data on papal privileges in this and several other occasions.



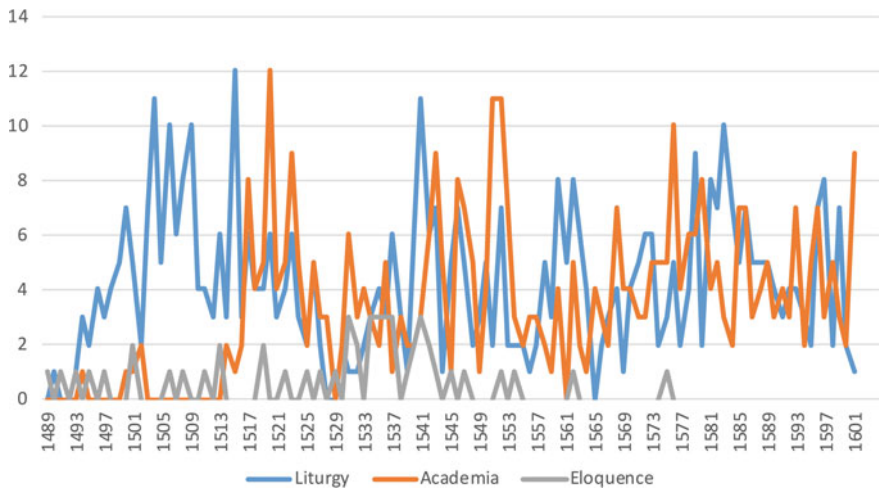
**Fig. 1** Diagram of the Giunta's transnational network. The red pins represent cities in which a Giunta family member would be present in place (years 1489–1602). Green pins mark out the presence of a proxy agent working for Lucantonio Giunta the Younger, third-generation leader of the Venetian branch. Author's plot

### 3 Sorting Out a Publishing Strategy

An operative business strategy for Lucantonio senior went hand in hand with his publishing plan. The former would not have worked without the latter and vice versa. Lucantonio's interest in a larger market is revealed in the progression of his output in both vernacular Italian and Latin (Fig. 2). During his first ten years of publishing activity, tighter contact with the local market would have been more of a necessity than a choice. However, his vocation toward a transnational market emerged rapidly, as the crossing of the two lines shows as early as 1493. These were the years when Lucantonio was in partnership with his brother Filippo. After this date, vernacular publishing became largely episodic for him, with a significant gap between 1513 (around when Juan de Junta moved to Spain, and 1528). The same



**Fig. 2** Diachronic distribution of the output by language for Lucantonio Giunta senior during the years 1489–1537. Data source (Camerini 1962–1963, I). Author's plot



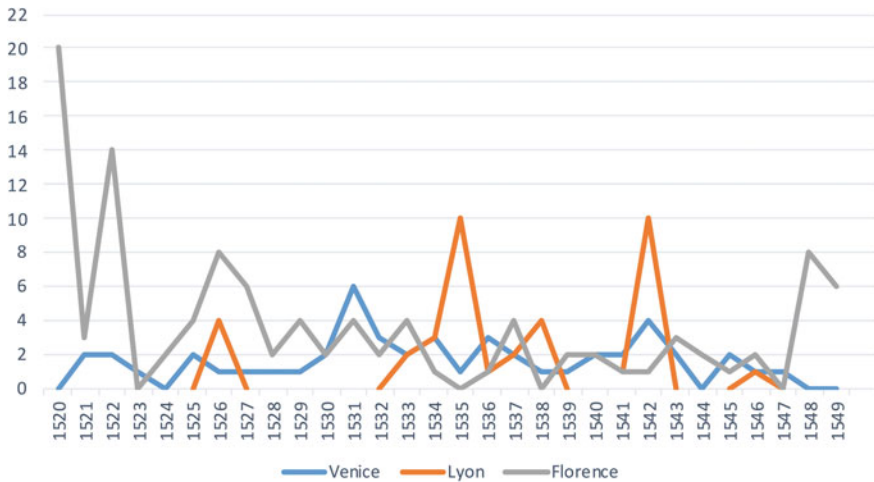
**Fig. 3** Diachronic distribution of the output by the three main literary genres for the Giunta of Venice (years 1489–1601). Data source (Camerini 1962–1963, I–II). Author's plot

correlation between the widening of the Giunta's commercial network and a realignment of their publishing strategy is visible when dissecting Lucantonio's output by literary genre, with particular reference to the three main categories of his publishing portfolio: liturgical literature, academic literature, and eloquence (Fig. 3).<sup>11</sup> These

<sup>11</sup> The taxonomy used in Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 follows a categorization of literary genres in use by the Giunta firm itself, as it will be detailed later. For this purpose, sales catalogues and

categories have been singled out to better represent three of the main commercial targets that a publisher of the time may have had in mind when drafting a publishing plan: clergy, high professions, and grammar-schools students or classic literature enthusiasts. From 1516 onward, the higher professions became a steady target of Lucantonio's publishing strategy, whereas in the previous decades they were virtually disregarded. By 1516, Juan de Junta was at least in his second year in Spain, Giuntino was on his way to Palermo, and Jacques would have opened the Lyon branch in 1520. Understandably, Lucantonio felt that in order to approach the high professions market he was required to build an adequate distribution network to make the project financially sustainable. This was due to the higher costs of production for academic editions, their slower sale, and the expectation of higher and less predictable transnational competition. From this perspective, the choice of both Juan and Jacques to follow the commercial routes of national and international fairs acquires a clearer meaning. Assuring a steady presence at fairs opened up the network to an even wider market.

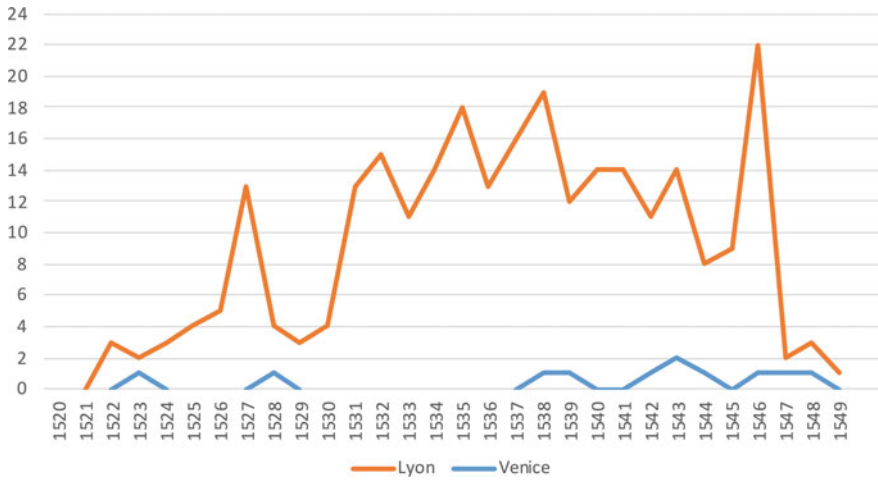
Lucantonio's publishing plan settled into a stable pattern soon after the 1520s (Fig. 3). Liturgical works went hand in hand with academic ones, one taking the lead over the other alternatively, roughly every decade. The pattern remained steady for the two generations to follow. Liturgical texts, a category that Lucantonio chose as his signature product from the beginning of his career, granted safe revenue. This was



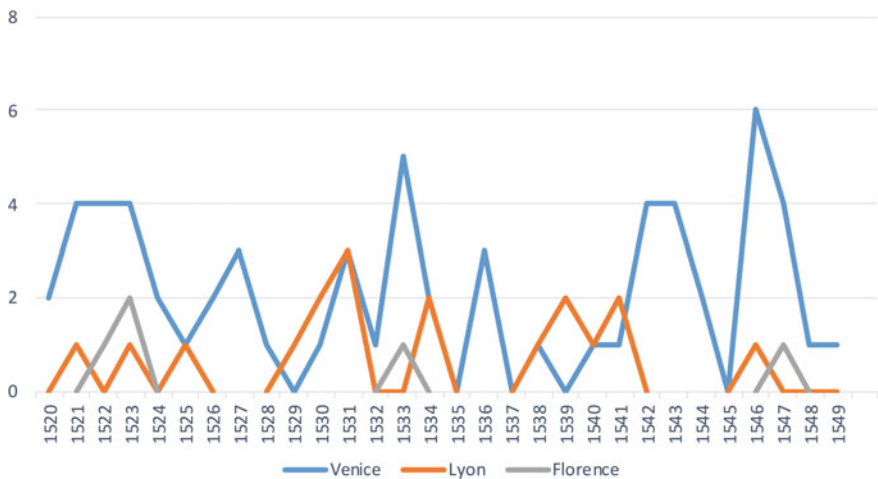
**Fig. 4** Comparative diachronic distribution of humanities works for the Giunta of Venice, Florence, and Lyon (years 1520–1549). Data sources (Camerini 1962–1963, I; Pettas 2013; USTC). Author's plot

other commercial documents have been used to retrieve the nomenclature in use at the time. This conservative approach relies on the idea that said literary categories corresponded to adequate commercial targets and well-identified readership typologies. In Fig. 3, the category of *academic literature* aggregates canon and civil law, medicine, philosophy, and scholastic theology.





**Fig. 5** Comparative diachronic distribution of works of jurisprudence for the Giunta of Venice and Lyon (years 1520–1549). Data sources (Camerini 1962–1963, I; USTC). Author’s plot

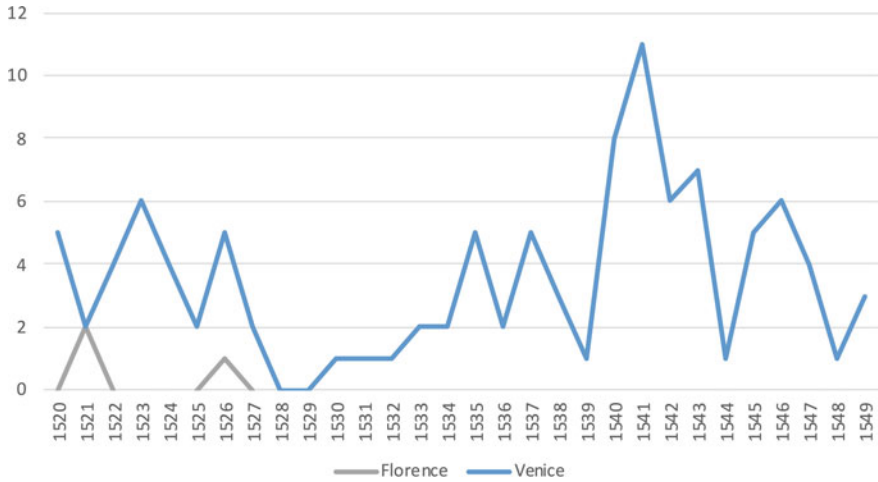


**Fig. 6** Comparative diachronic distribution of medical works for the Giunta of Venice, Lyon, and Florence (years 1520–1549). Data sources (Camerini 1962–1963, I; Pettas 2013; USTC). Author’s plot

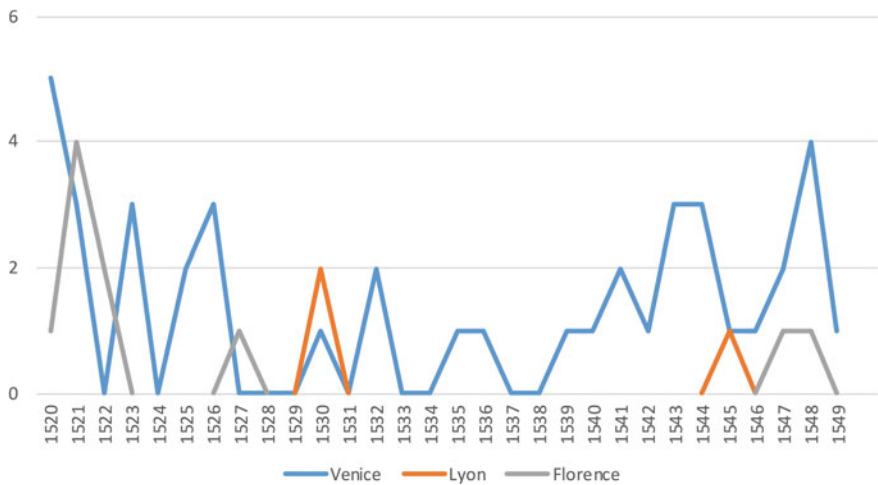
the benefit of serving a fairly predictable audience, reachable in the urban space of Venice and at short and medium distances in the rest of Italy. Liturgical texts granted a steady flow of income, making it easier to cope with the higher risks of academic publishing in the wide-open transnational market.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> On the role played by liturgical works in early modern publishing, see (Grendler 1977, 170).



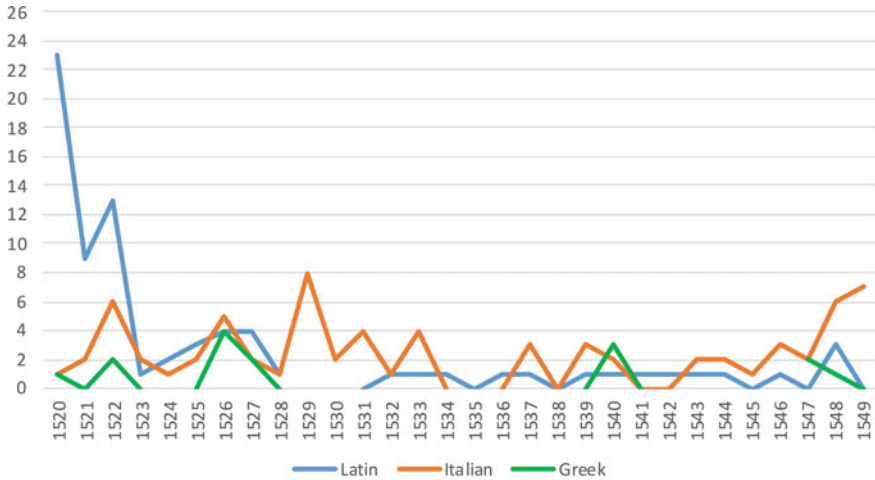


**Fig. 7** Comparative diachronic distribution of liturgical works for the Giunta of Venice and Florence (years 1520–1549). Data sources (Camerini 1962–1963, I; Pettas 2013). Author's plot



**Fig. 8** Comparative diachronic distribution of philosophical works for the Giunta of Venice, Florence, and Lyon (years 1520–1549). Data sources (Camerini 1962–1963, I; Pettas 2013; USTC). Author's plot

Works of eloquence remained a secondary interest for Lucantonio. This remained true when his heirs, Tommaso (1494–1566) and Giovanni Maria Giunta (d. 1569), led the Venetian branch between 1538 and 1566. The category virtually fades away during the tenure of Lucantonio junior between 1566 and 1601. Keeping up with the audience interested in Greek and Roman classics or contemporary humanists was, in fact, mainly the craft of the Giunta branch of Florence (Fig. 4).

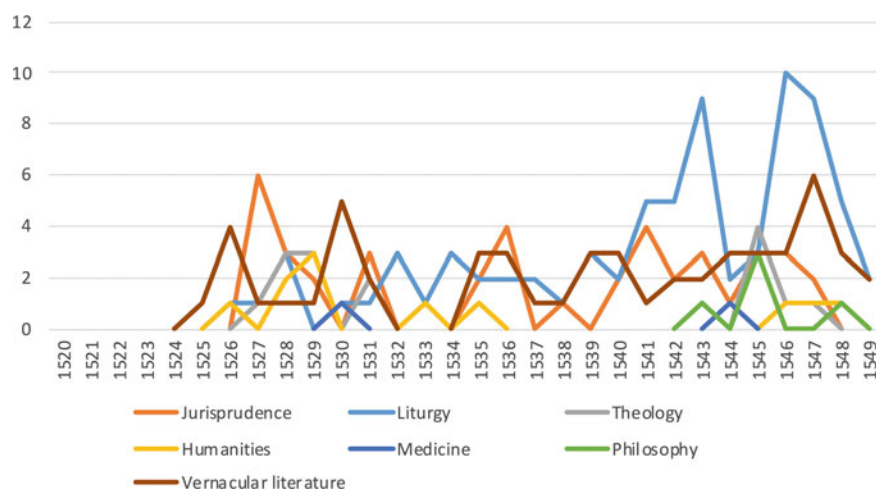


**Fig. 9** Diachronic distribution of published works by language for the Giunta of Florence (years 1520–1549). Data source (Pettas 2013). Author's plot

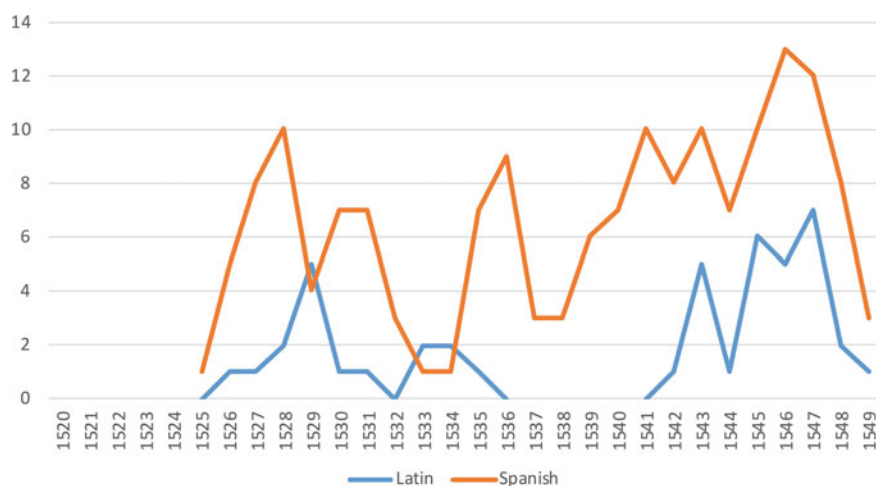
A key element that emerges by comparing the output of the various branches of the Giunta is an overall cohesive publishing strategy aimed at avoiding mutual competition. Overlaps between macro-categories such as jurisprudence, medicine, liturgy, philosophy, and the humanities were rare (Figs. 5, 6, 7 and 8).<sup>13</sup> An in-depth analysis of the overlaps reveals no significant intersections between authors. On the contrary, evidence suggests that each local branch chose to feed a specialized market, whereas the sum of the output of all branches provided a comprehensive and diverse commercial offering to the continental market. The Venetian branch maintained a more varied output specializing mainly in liturgical, philosophical, and medical literature. Legal works were instead the specialization of Jacques de Giunta in Lyon. Latin and Greek classics and vernacular works were the distinguishing feature of the Florentine branch. Lastly, looking at output by language, the Venetian and Lyon branches proved successful in approaching a transnational audience (with Jacques de Giunta showing virtually no interest in national languages), whereas the Florentine branch remained mainly anchored to a peninsular market (Fig. 9).

Juan de Junta's publishing portfolio was in contrast much more comprehensive (Fig. 10), showing significant overlaps with the literary genres explored by the other branches of the Giunta. In this case, however, competition was systematically avoided by publishing the vast majority of the editions in vernacular Spanish, thus restricting the market of reference mainly to Spain and, eventually, its colonies (Fig. 11). Aside

<sup>13</sup> Figures 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 only account for the output of the branches active in Venice, France, and Lyon. The Spanish branch is not accounted for, as its non-competition policy is indisputably proven by Juan de Junta's output being mainly in vernacular Spanish (see Fig. 11). In Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, whenever a branch is not shown it means that said branch did not visibly engage in publishing the literary genre in question.



**Fig. 10** Diachronic distribution of the output by main literary genres for Juan de Junta in Spain (years 1525–1549). Data source (Pettas 2004, 184–367). Author's plot



**Fig. 11** Diachronic distribution of published works by language for Juan de Junta (years 1525–1549). Data source (Pettas 2004, 184–367). Author's plot

from serving the Spanish-speaking market, Juan de Junta also operated as an outlet for the Giunta's network in the Iberian Peninsula, particularly for the Lyon branch.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Identifiable editions of Latin texts inventoried in 1556 in Juan de Junta's store in Burgos (Pettas 1995, 37–103) show that—aside from a justified 39% of acquisitions from Spanish publishers, and an expected relevance of Venetian editions (20%)—a large quantity of imprints came from France (16% from Paris and 5% from Lyon, whereas the growing market of Antwerp accounted for the 10% of identified provenances leaving a tiny 4% to Florence and 5% to other minor printing centers).

During the long activity of the Giunta in Europe (the Venetian branch closed in the second half of the seventeenth century), deals were made among family members, societies disbanded, and litigations arose.<sup>15</sup> Regardless of the understandable legal differences among members, evidence shows the persistence of a gentlemen's agreement of non-competition among the branches.

Naturally, everyone had an interest in keeping the publishing planning synergic rather than hostile. Likewise, it was in the best interest of all that each branch should hold steady for as long as possible to ensure optimal distribution channels for every member.

Moreover, in order to maintain a comprehensive commercial offering, the branches tended to specialize. A hypothesis worth proposing is that each branch felt safer in a specialization that would fit a *glocal* model of distribution. Each branch seemed to specialize in sectors that best represented the intellectual milieu of their own local market of reference. Competitive editions needed professionals and intellectuals capable of acting in the role of authors or editors. On the other hand, specializing in what best represented local demand also assuaged the risks of relying too much on a wide and competitive market. Hence, for example, the choice of the Giunta of Venice to specialize in medicine and Aristotelian philosophy to serve the Patavine school, or the effort of the Florentine branch to cater to the local humanistic tradition.

#### 4 Maintaining a Profitable Business: The Social Profiling of the Giunta's Customers Through an Assessment of Costs and Prices

Sale catalogues are luxury sources for book historians. Much can be inferred from them concerning publishing trends and prices.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, printed catalogues were advertising tools intentionally used by publishers to establish a dialogue with their audiences and to promote a controlled image of the firm. Such is the case for the sale catalogue published in Venice by Lucantonio Giunta junior in 1591 (*Index 1591a*),<sup>17</sup>

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The choice of isolating Latin imprints, leaving aside those in vernacular Spanish, reflects the status of transnational competition from the perspective of Juan de Junta's own book trade.

<sup>15</sup> The partnership between Lucantonio and Filippo Giunta ended in 1509 with an arbitration to reevaluate fair shares of the profits (Camerini 1962–1963, I, 37–43); likewise, arbitration was necessary to dissolve the contract between Lucantonio and Giuntino in 1521 (Pettas 1980, 37–43). A power struggle occurred in 1560 between the heirs of Bernardo Giunta to settle which of the five sons would lead the Florentine branch (Pettas 2013, 86). Patrimonial disputes arose as late as 1604 between various members (Santoro 2013, xxix, 205–207, 252).

<sup>16</sup> For a survey of the topic see (Coppens 2008; Ammannati and Nuovo 2017; Coppens and Nuovo 2018). On the applied methodologies, see (Ammannati 2018).

<sup>17</sup> A digitized copy of this earlier catalogue has been published in (Fratoni 2018, 99), which provides an example of how printed catalogues were used by individual collectors to orient their own acquisitions through the case of humanist scholar Prospero Podiani from Perugia.

which he reprinted in 1595 with marginal variation (*Index* 1595).<sup>18</sup> The dating of these sources is late compared to the data considered thus far, but in light of a substantial continuity in the publishing strategy of each branch of the firm, they may be considered equally representative, although only for the activity of the Venetian branch, which was, however, the epicenter of the Giunta's network.

Both catalogues group their listings in the following categories: humanities, philosophy, theology, medicine, astronomy, Greek works, civil law, canon law, ecclesiastical works, and vernacular works.<sup>19</sup> The sequence mirrors the *cursus studiorum* of the time quite beautifully, from bottom up. From grammar studies to the disciplines worth a doctorate, from works suitable to magistrates to those necessary to low and high clergy, the academic ranks and the social orders are all paid the proper tribute. Specialist-allied disciplines like astronomy and Greek are conveniently placed next to medicine. Liturgical texts stand out from the sequence of academic disciplines, but they literally occupy the center of the page as they are largely listed in the second of the three columns composing each broadsheet. Vernacular works for non-specialized collectors close the catalogue in a marginalized position, entirely compatible with the interest that the publisher shows toward this commercial target overall. Playing with hierarchies of arts and professions was part of the commonplace communicative strategies in a time when scholars such as Conrad Gesner (1516–1565) and Antonio Possevino (1533–1611) were redrafting the tree of knowledge. Commercial and scholarly taxonomies followed very different agendas, and the publishers interested in flirting with their audiences of reference knew how to use these taxonomies accordingly. They could even become erudite divertissements for Venetian booksellers like Bernardo di Bernardo Giunta (ca. 1550–ca. 1527), who noted on the opening page of his personal work book a common motto of the time: “Theology queen, philosophy lady, medicine servant.”<sup>20</sup>

One way to shift these categories, breaking the ideal order based on academic and social hierarchies is by taking into account the number of listings by category (see Table 1).

With an eye to quantities, it emerges clearly that ecclesiastical works were the chief interest of the firm. Nonetheless, products related to higher education (philosophy, theology, medicine, and law) made up 121 listings in the 1595 catalogue, thus proving to be an equally relevant focus for the company. Works of eloquence, astronomy, and Greek are a marginal digression in the Giunta's catalogue. Vernacular works are a notable presence, but not the strongest category advertised. It is worth noting the impressive presence of canon and civil law editions, which were scarcely represented in the output of the Venetian branch for the years 1520–1549. This is the characteristic that distinguished Lucantonio junior from all other leaders of the Venetian branch.

<sup>18</sup> A known copy of said catalogue is preserved at the YRL, Z233.G44G 448i 1595.

<sup>19</sup> *Libri humanitatis, Libri philosophiae, Libri theologiae, Libri medicinae, Libri de re astronomica, Libri Graeci, Libri iure canonico Libri in iure civili, Libri ecclesiastici nigri ac rubei, Libri volgari* (*Index* 1591a, 1595).

<sup>20</sup> “La theologia regina, la filosofia donzella, la medicina serva.” Bernardo di Bernardo Giunta, held a large bibliographic repertoire, now catalogued as the “Giunta publishing house stockbook” (YRL, Collection 170/622, f. 1r).

**Table 1** Number of listings per literary category in the Giunta 1591 and 1595 sale catalogues

Literary genre	Listings	
	<i>Index (1591a)</i>	<i>Index (1595)</i>
Ecclesiastical works	180	176
Medicine	34	37
Theology	25	23
Philosophy	21	20
Civil law	18	22
Vernacular works	19	20
Canon law	18	19
Humanities	5	5
Astronomy	2	2
Greek	2	2

Data source (*Index 1591a, 1595*)

The probable cause of this innovation can be found in the progressive decline of the Lyon branch of the firm, which was chiefly specialized in publications of interest to legal practitioners. With the Lyon branch declining in the late sixteenth century, Lucantonio took the initiative to fill the disciplinary gap by publishing law books in Venice (Ottone 2003, 72).

Prices provide invaluable information for reconstructing the ideal link between publishers and their audiences. In a standard sale catalogue, prices would be associated with a short but clear description of the product. An example from the Giunta 1595 catalogue might read as follows: “Roman Breviary. With Saint Laurence’s insignia and copper made illustrations. In 8°, ducats 1, grossi 12.”<sup>21</sup> The purchaser, either a wholesaler, an individual, or an institution, would know that the advertised item corresponded to an in 8° edition of the reformed Breviary with a special insignia on the titlepage, and copper-plate illustrations. All this would justify the price of 1 venetian *ducato* and 12 *grossi*. Seemingly, the exact same item was available with woodcut illustrations. This would have reduced the price by almost 1 *ducato*, bringing the total price to 18 *grossi* (*Index 1595*, f.1rc, no. 51). One was given the opportunity to negotiate between convenience and quality and get either the cheap product or the deluxe model. All prices in the Giunta 1591 and 1595 catalogues are displayed in *ducati*, whereas other Venetian catalogues of around the same period more often used *lire*. Most likely this was due to the fact that the firm privileged that currency in its own accounting. *Ducati* had the advantage of flattening big prices into small figures (one Venetian *ducato* at the time was worth six *lire* and four *soldi*). Whatever the cause may have been, it is fair to say that a knowledgeable customer who approached Lucantonio Giunta’s catalogue would have realized at a glance that the advertised merchandise was on average expensive.

<sup>21</sup> “Breu. Ro. Cum signo S. Laur. ac figuris in aere. In 8, D. 1, G. 12” (*Index 1595*, f.1rc, n. 50).

**Table 2** Average price per printing sheet per edition in *denari* (i.e., sub unit of Venetian lire)

Literary genre	Average price per printing sheet	
	<i>Index (1591a)</i>	<i>Index (1595)</i>
Greek	20.61	20.31
Ecclesiastical works	18.70	18.54
Canon law	15.23	18.49
Astronomy	13	17.22
Humanities	12.92	10.91
Medicine	12.81	12.35
Vernacular	12.53	13.24
Civil law	12.52	12.95
Philosophy	10.30	10.66
Theology	10.20	10.11

Data source (*Index 1591a, 1595*)

Links between product, value, and price were familiar to those who normally approached book sale catalogues at the time. Their awareness was based on routine contact with merchandise and a commercial commonsense that is now lost. In order to recreate such links at least in part, prices will be handled with a mechanical artifice of price per printing sheet. Printing sheets were the basic unit that both publishers and printers used to measure the extent and material investment of imprints; they calculated labor and wages on the basis of printing sheets per print run. Similarly, they estimated costs linked to the consumption of raw materials when planning a publishing endeavor. Ultimately, piled groups of unfolded printed sheets were also the raw product that customers saw stacked on display for sale (Nuovo 2013, 389–392). Thus, reducing prices to the unit of printing sheets not only allows for the leveling down of variegated commodities to a common denominator, but it also approximates the outlook that was most familiar to producers and sellers alike.<sup>22</sup> Table 2 proposes the breakdown of average prices per printing sheet of items listed in the Giunta 1591 and 1595 catalogues by literary genre. To ease readers' understanding, prices have all been reconverted to Venetian *denari*.

"Theology queen, philosophy lady, medicine servant" was a motto of the time. Yet the catalogue under scrutiny reveals an opposite hierarchy when parameters cross-reference prices and costs. Medicine took the lead over philosophy, which passed theology by an inch, but none of them could compete with all other categories, especially canon law and liturgical works. Higher prices per printing sheet were understandably determined primarily by the higher costs of production. These impacted the price for technical reasons. Hence, the high price of works in Greek, which was not only directed to a niche market but which also required specialized philologists, uncommon types, competent compositors, and proofreaders to produce them. In the

<sup>22</sup> Using price per printing sheet has become a common method within the EMoBookTrade project that most of the data in this section originates from.



case of astronomical texts, copious illustrations and diagrams were likely the reason behind the higher price per printing sheet. Liturgical texts often carried evocative and illustrative images and comprised music, which also implied higher costs. Moreover, liturgical texts, often referred to as “red and black imprints” in that they carried a main text in black and the rubrics in red, required an additional passage under the press. This doubled the effort and increased the risk of misprints, which resulted in waste that, ultimately, translated into additional costs. Furthermore, liturgical texts and canon law works, following the Council of Trent (1545–1563), came under tight quality control by Vatican institutions, which made them very cost-sensitive products. Moreover, in consequence of Rome’s policy of allocating papal privileges on reformed canonical texts (both canon law and liturgies), prices for these products toward the end of the sixteenth century became largely inflated.<sup>23</sup> Below medical books, whose cost was linked to illustrations, it is not surprising to find purely speculative literature, which would be richer in text than images and could thus drop the cost-price balance. Thus, on average, these occupy the lower positions.

A comparison between the Giunta 1591 catalogue and a sale catalogue printed in Venice by the Giolito in 1592 (*Indice 1592*) may assist us in understanding the way in which the Giunta catalogue stood out.<sup>24</sup> The average price in the Giunta catalogue is 18.86 *denari*, whereas the average price found in the Giolito catalogue published the year after is 13.87 *denari*. The Giolito 1592 catalogue has been selected not only due to its chronological proximity to the Giunta’s catalogue, but also because, unlike the latter, the former was primarily aimed at a localized market, as is revealed by its very heading in vernacular Italian and the imbalance between the twenty-six advertised Latin editions versus the 176 in vernacular.<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, the average price of the Giolito catalogue gets surprisingly close to the 12.53 average price per sheet that characterizes the vernacular section of the Giunta catalogue of 1591 (13.24 in the Giunta 1595 catalogue). The Giolito and the Giunta had different audiences, different geographic scopes, and different infrastructures of distribution, and the average prices advertised by the two firms reflect these structural differences. A structurally closer competitor of the Giunta at the time were the heirs of Girolamo Scoto (1505–1572). A comparison between the average prices of the products advertised by the Scoto around the same time is somewhat surprising. In their 1591 multidisciplinary catalogue the average price per printing sheet amounts to no more than 10.01 Venetian *denari*

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<sup>23</sup> Papal privileges, enforceable in all Catholic lands via automatic excommunication, created a regime of large monopolies that allowed grantees to set high prices for products that were legally sheltered from competition. The result was a general increase of prices for this literary genre (Mercati 1937; Grendler 1977, 169–181).

<sup>24</sup> It is worth recalling that the Giunta 1595 catalogue is a mere reprint of a 1591 catalogue, and that the advertised publications and related prices are substantially the same.

<sup>25</sup> “Copious index of all books printed in Venice by the Giolito up to the year 1592.” (“Indice copioso e particolare di tutti li libri stampati dalli Gioliti in Venetia fino all’anno M.D.XCII”), (*Indice 1592*). A known copy of this catalogue is held at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana under call number 193. D.443/1. The average price per printing sheet is based on data analysis made by Dr. Giliola Barbero in the context of the EMOBookTrade project. The catalogue is the object of an essay that she authored and to which I direct the reader for further details. See (Barbero 2018).

(*Index 1591b*),<sup>26</sup> some 4 *denari* less than the average price set by Lucantonio Giunta in his catalogue published the same year.

One aspect that does not easily emerge from the Giunta 1591 and 1595 catalogues is their internal chronology. By matching the listed editions with surviving copies, it is possible to reconstruct a chronological morphology of the catalogue. This allows speculation on the consistency of the Giunta's stock at the end of the sixteenth century. The aim is to highlight how fast the Giunta expected to exhaust their print runs. To better illustrate this aspect, it is useful to focus on scholarly literature alone, which emerged as one of the signature products of the Giunta—one that they chased with greater effort when designing their business model. In the 1591 catalogue (*Index 1591a*), fifty out of 118 listings ascribable to an academic target (medicine, philosophy, theology, Greek or Hebrew grammar, civil and canon law) would match editions that were thirty years old or older.<sup>27</sup> A similar figure, fifty-two out of 121 listings, emerges from the 1595 catalogue. The Giunta seemed overall able to cope with slow sales. The profit, based upon some of the signature products of the firm, was in fact expected to come within a considerably long timespan. The Giunta being conscious of the slow sales of most of their products seemed capable of measuring their profits even on a very long run. The capacity that the Giunta had in handling slow profits could be measured in their formidable access to credit during periods of severe financial difficulty.<sup>28</sup>

Prices per printing sheet derived from publishers' sale catalogues are especially beneficial in retrieving the perspectives of the book market professionals: publishers, printers, and sellers. Retail prices instead tell us the same story from a slightly different perspective; they reveal how much collectors or consumers—either individuals or institutions—were willing to take out of their wallets in order to access the product that mattered to them. An imperfect way to access this standpoint is by comparing average total prices (Table 3).

With some sensible exceptions, this view of the Giunta sale catalogue reestablishes in part the ideal hierarchy of literary genres and speculative disciplines. Theology goes above philosophy, which is still surpassed by medicine due to the design and technical features mentioned above. If theology is queen again, the true *imperatrix* is law, with civil law giving right of way to canon law. The higher professions take back the lead and, overall, the academic ranking seems to be reestablished.

<sup>26</sup> A known copy of this catalogue is held at Milan's Biblioteca Ambrosiana under the call number S.M.I.VII.3/6. The average price per printing sheet is based on data analysis made by Dr. Giliola Barbero.

<sup>27</sup> The theology section comprises an edition of Bernardus Claraevallensis' (ca. 1090–1153) *Flores* dated 1503 (Claraevallensis 1503).

<sup>28</sup> In 1553, the Venetian branch went through financial difficulties that led to a default. The already challenging situation was aggravated by a second incident in 1557 when a fire damaged the Giunta's print shop with a probable loss of part of their stock. The two joint incidents are accounted as hurtful memories in the will of Tommaso Giunta. For Tommaso Giunta's will, see (Camerini 1927). Both adversities resulted in a visible drop in the output of the Venetian branch, which nonetheless never hit zero and had resumed its normal course by 1560 (Ottone 2003, 69, Fig. 2). The quick recovery shows that, regardless of adversities, the Giunta were still considered fully viable through their longstanding cosmopolitan reputation. On the bankruptcy of 1553, see also (Pettas 1980, 92).

**Table 3** Average total price per edition in *denari* (i.e., sub unit of Venetian lire)

Literary genre	Total price	
	<i>Index (1591a)</i>	<i>Index (1595)</i>
Canon law	5545.55	5290.66
Civil law	3368.66	3129.65
Vernacular	2288.53	2078.55
Theology	1996.4	1951.65
Greek	1860	1860
Medicine	1503.97	1461.43
Philosophy	1174.9	1230.7
Humanities	1159.4	1159.4
Astronomy	1116	1116
Ecclesiastical works	1057.93	944.24

Data source (*Index 1591a, 1595*)

## 5 A Network of Information

The transnational infrastructure built by the Giunta over the decades granted them adequate opportunities to circulate their books, but it also exposed them to wider and wilder competition. In this respect, timely information on where the European market was heading was vital. Naturally, a capable commercial network as that available to the Giunta was fit to circulate information as well as merchandise. In this respect the Giunta's preference for cosmopolitan commercial hubs would allow them to feel the pulse of the European book market. International book fairs were places where dealers boasted their merchandise, made deals, consolidated alliances, and shared intelligence.<sup>29</sup> Having someone on your payroll in sensitive marketplaces who could browse stacks, acquire catalogues, and glean updated knowledge of what other European publishers were up to was a vital asset for entrepreneurs with transnational aspirations, such as the Giunta. We know for a fact that Venetian printers visiting the Frankfurt fair in the early seventeenth century would head back home carrying more than just merchandise. In fact, they would carry one or more copies of the fair's catalogue to hold on to or share according to convenience.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, proxy

<sup>29</sup> On the presence of Italian publishers at international European book fairs, see (Nuovo 2013, 281–314).

<sup>30</sup> In their pursuit of censorial policies, the Roman Congregation for the Index was often eager to acquire copies of the latest Frankfurt catalogue for investigative purposes. The Roman Curia would primarily refer to Venetian publishers knowing their equal interest in catalogues in their pursuit of commercial inquiries. In several instances the Congregation would trade sensitive material, such as certified emended texts or special dispensations, in exchange for recent catalogues shipped from Frankfurt. For instance, in July 1601, in exchange for a catalogue from the fair, the Congregation for the Index offered Venetian printers the certified copy of an integrative text of Martín Alfonso Vivaldo's *Candelabrum Aureum* alongside the authorization to emend and commercialize suspended texts by Giovanni Zabarella and Scipione Manzano (ACDF, Index, V.1, f. 140v). A similar give-and-take dynamic emerges in a letter dated November 1601 in which the Congregation promises

agents disseminated in sensitive spots were themselves part of an echelon of valuable information. For instance, given their activism in producing canonical texts, the Giunta of Venice were keen to maintain a steady presence in Rome and to pull the right strings in a space that merged commercial and political interests. It also helped them cope with the turbulence of post-Tridentine policies.<sup>31</sup> This form of soft insider trading was easy to gather even in a world in which communication was fairly limited. Furthermore, cosmopolitan publishing firms like that of the Giunta kept a tight epistolary connection among branches to coordinate strategies. Most of this is only visible through secondary evidence as surviving correspondence is very rare for Venetian printers. One of the rarest exceptions regards the Gabiano family from Monferrato, who, like the Giunta, were in control of a transnational network. One single year of epistolary correspondence in and out of Lyon in 1522 is sufficient to represent the level of detailed information that traveled among publishers around Europe.<sup>32</sup>

Ultimately, the productive capacity and the quasi-standardized mode of production introduced by the printing press opened the sector to a new level of competition, but it also provided useful tools to cope with it. Books were the only commodity of the time that carried durable information on producers, financiers, time, and site of production. If, on the one hand, the information carried on titlepages and colophons amplified the perception of the ongoing transnational competition, on the other, it also offered possible remedies.

Publishers' response to competition could be political; they could in fact seek institutional protection in the form of book privileges.<sup>33</sup> Response to competition

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to make progress in expurgating suspended Venetian editions of the *Roman Missal* only under the condition of receiving a newer copy of the catalogue (ACDF, Index, V.1. f. 144v and ACDF, Index, III.6, f. 298r). The censorial purposes that led the Congregation for the Index to acquire copies of the Frankfurt fair catalogues emerges clearly from an instance dated July 1602 (ACDF, Index, V.1, f. 163v). On their part, the Venetian printers had little to no interest in aiding the Congregation, as it could indirectly inhibit their traffic with Germany. They likely had even less interest in parting with such a good source of information; thus, they seemed to do that only when they could earn a sufficiently high favor from the Roman Congregation. Furthermore, at the back of their mind the Venetian printers must have had the thought that leaking such information could have benefitted their Roman competitors, who they had close to no interest helping.

<sup>31</sup> This emerges quite clearly from an incident that took place in 1601. Following a scandal regarding a number of corrupted editions of the *Roman Missal* printed in Venice from 1597 onward, Vatican authorities factually blockaded the commercialization of two vital products for the Venetian book industry: the *Roman Missal* and the *Roman Breviary*. Among Venetians, anxiety grew that behind the doctrinal reasons propelling the blockade could have been the hidden intent of favoring Roman publishers by granting them a commercial advantage on the production of key liturgical texts. In consequence, the Venetian guild kept their Roman competitors under tight watch, sending well-informed complaints to the Roman authorities (Ottone 2019, 312). When times were ripe, this detailed intelligence was used to build a case with the Venetian Senate and move the action at a diplomatic level (Grendler 1977, 247–250).

<sup>32</sup> Said correspondence is currently being published by Professor Angela Nuovo in a forthcoming volume to which I refer for further details.

<sup>33</sup> Privileges granted temporary monopolies on specific products and provided a commercial advantage to holders. They could be local, as in the case of privileges granted by most secular authorities,

could be tactical and manifest in the form of temporary partnerships.<sup>34</sup> Lastly, and most interestingly for the purpose of this section, competition could be approached and resolved strategically. Since the high monetary investment of publishing and growing competition resulted in high financial risks for publishers, the profession required more than just good instincts, it required planning and sound methods of market assessments. The book market was a dynamic and complex environment that needed systematization. The question of how early modern printers oriented their market strategies in a world of limited communication remains open. Evidence is limited.

A revealing source, however, emerges within the network of the Giunta family. Looking at the periphery of the Giunta's network, at an advanced stage of the firm's history one can find an early seventeenth-century manuscript once owned and, for the most part, compiled by Bernardo di Bernardo Giunta. He was a fourth-generation member of the Florentine branch. In the 1570s, he moved to Venice and remained active in the Serenissima until the late 1620s. His achievements in the publishing business were not impressive compared to the standards held by the leaders of the Venetian branch of his family. The golden age of his career coincided with a partnership he initiated in 1600 with Giovanni Battista Ciotti (ca. 1564–ca. 1635), an expat from Siena who established himself quite successfully in the publishing community of Venice.<sup>35</sup> Aside from his marginal publishing career, we know of Bernardo di Bernardo Giunta mainly due to a manuscript he began compiling in March 1600 and that he, and at least two other unknown compilers, continued augmenting for the following forty years.<sup>36</sup> The codex is now preserved at UCLA's Department of Special Collections under the call number *Collection 170/622*. The incipit states the identity of the owner and the year of creation of the manuscript, but reveals nothing of its nature and purpose. The manuscript consists of an extensive sequence

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or they could be transnational (or universal, at least theoretically), as in the case of privileges granted by the emperor, or even more so by the Pope. On book privileges in general, see (Nuovo 2013, 194–257); on a valid example of secular privileges, the Venetian system is paradigmatic—see (Squassina 2019); on universal papal privileges, see (Ginsburg 2013).

<sup>34</sup> Multiple publishers could team up to pursue joint editions. In doing so not only did they share the risks linked to the commercial venture, but they also limited local competition on specific products. An example worth mentioning is the Venetian *Societas Aquilae renovantis* (EDIT16, CNCT 90). This was formed in 1571 and lasted at least until 1608. Throughout the years it included some of the most prominent families of publishers active in the Serenissima. In the year 1584 alone, the society counted some fourteen members: Lucantonio Giunta junior, Filippo Giunta junior, Bernardo Giunta junior, heirs of Bernardino Magiorino, Francesco De Franceschi, Francesco Ziletti, Giovanni and Andrea Zenaro, Girolamo Zenaro, Damiano Zenaro, Felice Valgrisi, the heirs of Girolamo Scoto, Giovanni Varisco, and the heirs of Melchiorre Sessa senior. The society was devoted to financing large, expensive, and slow-selling editions of law books. On the *Societas Aquilae renovantis*, see (Nuovo 2013, 64–67).

<sup>35</sup> For a comprehensive account of Giovanni Battista Ciotti's activity, see (Rhodes 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Accounts of the relevance of this manuscript for book history and especially to topics pertaining the economics behind early modern publishing can be found in (Lowry 1991; Pettas 2004, 105–106; Nuovo and Ammannati 2017; Bruni 2018).

of bibliographic records: a first estimation counts approximately 11,555 entries scattered throughout 313 leaves (Nuovo and Ammannati 2017, 12). Data are organized into different logical categories. A large section gathers data following a taxonomy based on literary genres which, aside from a few exceptions, tightly mimics that of the Giunta catalogues of 1591 and 1595 discussed above (*Index 1591a, 1595*). A second section organizes largely the same data according to provenance and by publisher. The bulk of the data, I contend, was compiled between 1600 and 1604. A third section hosts, for the most part, later entries—mainly from 1608 onward. These entries can be largely attributed to the publishing output of Giovanni Battista Ciotti, in or out of his partnership with Bernardo Giunta. The various sections are conceived and organized to ease targeted searches and repeated browsing in accordance with different investigative aims. For the most part, the bibliographic records listed carry information on authors, titles, formats, and numbers of printing sheets. This standard is more or less consistent, but records are occasionally incomplete and carry, for instance, only sparse information (e.g., author and title, only author, or only title). For roughly half of the entries a corresponding price is provided. To facilitate quick data retrieval, leather tags were placed at the right margin of the leaves to single out macro-categories, such as literary genre, provenance, or publisher.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, sections of greater relevance carry letter tags to speed up alphabetical searches by author or title. Within each letter section, records are grouped by format (folio, 4°, 8°, or smaller). Clear signs of consumption are visible in the lateral tags, thus providing tangible evidence of frequent use during the active life of the manuscript (as expected for a tool that required considerable effort to be compiled). On the other hand, its extraordinarily good state of preservation and its fairly clean handwriting are evidence of the value that this tool had for its users.

To this day the source is catalogued by its holding institution under the label “Giunta publishing house stockbook” and so it is known to field scholarship. A systematic discussion of the inner features of the manuscript that conflict with the idea that this was a catalogue of books in stock is beyond the purpose of the present essay.<sup>38</sup> What is more pressing is to assert that, aside from other possible purposes that this manuscript may have served, evidence suggests that it was chiefly valuable in conducting empirical market research. This was likely aimed at catching profitable publishing endeavors or checking the viability of conspicuous acquisitions by assessing market risks or opportunities and avoiding the hazard of oversaturation.

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<sup>37</sup> Digital images of the manuscript with examples of such search tags are visible in (Ammannati and Nuovo 2017, 14–18).

<sup>38</sup> I am currently working on a comprehensive account of the evidence supporting a reassessment of the nature of the manuscript *Collection 170/60*, which is the object of an ongoing publication (Ottone forthcoming). First results and tentative hypotheses have been presented at the conference *Merchants, Artisans and Literati: The Book Market in Renaissance Europe* (University of California, Los Angeles, 1–2 March 2019) and during the cycles of annual colloquia at the Institut für Philosophie, Literatur-, Wissenschafts- & Technikgeschichte (Technische Universität Berlin, December 2, 2019). The aforementioned evidence has been gathered during two years of systematic examination of the empirical data recorded in the manuscript in the context of the EMOBookTrade project. Results of the ongoing data retrieval process conducted on the manuscript are being published in the online database EMOBookPrices.

The manuscript was in fact a tidy directory of information on the publishing portfolio of those who qualified as direct competitors (i.e., Italian publishers, mainly Venetian, or foreign publishers with greater influence on the Venetian market).

We have no evidence to assess how widespread the use of similar devices was among early modern book dealers. It is, however, hard to believe that Bernardo di Bernardo Giunta was the only publisher of his time compiling and using such a tool. In fact, it is rather difficult to argue that he was the first. A somewhat similar device is known to have been in use by the Plantine press in the years 1555–1593.<sup>39</sup> Sources of this kind are very rare in the already scanty remains of the private archives of early modern publishing firms. However, the two instances represented by the Plantin and the Giunta sources indicate some continuity. If one accepts the hypothesis that tools of this kind were largely in use among early modern publishers, a hypothesis may be that Bernardo junior learned this practice within the circle of the Giunta family, where he conducted his apprenticeship and made his early professional steps (Decia and Delfiol 1978, 6; Camerini 1962–1963, II, 447–448).

Arguably, large-scale publishing houses such as that of Plantin and Giunta could hardly keep themselves afloat in a growingly competitive market unless they had an effective method to predict its complex fluctuations. This level of awareness of the difficult harmony between demand and supply among early modern publishers shall not be overlooked. This is especially true when analyzing how publishers dealt with a popular work like Sacrobosco's *Tractatus de sphaera*.

## 6 The Giunta as Publishers of the *Sphaera*

Taking into account the prices habitually assigned to Sacrobosco's *Sphaera* may be helpful in placing it in the larger context of the book market of the time. A commercial profile of the text positions it within the general scope of the Giunta's publishing portfolio. Having already taken into account general prices per literary genre set by the Giunta of Venice between 1591 and 1595, it will be fruitful to compare them with prices of the *Sphaera* set elsewhere at around the same time. In 1591, the heirs of Girolamo Scoto had set a price of 120 *denari* in Venetian lira for their 1586, 8° edition (Sacrobosco et al. 1586).<sup>40</sup> The 1601, 4° edition of Clavius' commentaries to the *Sphaera* credited to Giovanni Battista Ciotti (Sacrobosco and Clavius 1601–1603) would instead go for 720 *denari* around the same year of its publication.<sup>41</sup> The price per printing sheet of these two editions amounted to 11.43

<sup>39</sup> MPM, M296. The manuscript is currently being investigated by Renaud Milazzo in the context of the EMoEuropeBookPrices. To his forthcoming publications I address for further details.

<sup>40</sup> For the price see (EMoBookPrices 9772).

<sup>41</sup> The price originates from YRL, Collection 170/600. The manuscript displays a dynamic internal chronology that makes dating each price rather complicated. My own conclusion is that the indicated price was set between 1603 and 1608 (EMoBookPrices 15272). The declared price was for a 1603 edition; however, evidence shows that this was in fact a reissue of a 1601 edition that carried shared credits for both Basa and Ciotti (Chap. 6)



*denari* for the former and 11.16 for the latter, thus justifying the higher total cost of Clavius' commentaries due to a higher consumption of raw materials and labor. A comparison with the average price per literary category found in the Giunta 1591 catalogue (Tables 2 and 3) shows that pricewise the *Sphaera Mundi* would sit in the lower ranks of the Giunta's publishing portfolio. With regard to the total price alone, the *Sphaera* falls below the average price of astronomy books (undoubtedly its category of reference), which in Table 3 occupies the bottom line. Taking into account the price per printing sheet, the two editions would fit the space between medicine on one side and humanities and philosophy books on the other. Much of this is probably due to material features. However, it is worth noting that in both cases Sacrobosco's text is assimilated with rather coherent epistemological categories. A possible explanation is that publishers, in the act of setting prices for specific products, among other variables, also took the social profile of the targeted audience into serious consideration.

Being a formative book useful to students entering higher education, the *Sphaera mundi* connected publishers to a large pool of users and collectors. This opened up wider opportunities for publishers in pursuit of yet unspecialized readers.<sup>42</sup> This, however, also exposed them to higher competition. Measuring competition is extremely difficult when lacking information on print runs and, therefore, on how many copies entered the market at a given time. One imperfect solution is to observe the behavior of publishers in regard to a specific work, with particular reference to the chronology of their reprints. For reasons functional to the argument being pursued, it will be useful to momentarily shift attention from the Giunta firm to one of their direct competitors in Venice, the Scoto family.

The Scoto, active from the late fifteenth to the first half of the seventeenth century, occupied a leading position within the Venetian community of publishers. However, their commercial infrastructure could not compete with that of the Giunta and their publishing portfolio was carved around this fact (Chap. 6). Over the years, the Scoto family had placed their name on at least eight editions linked to the Sacrobosco tradition. Ottaviano Scoto (fl. 1479–1498) placed an abridged version of the text on the market in 1490 (Sacrobosco et al. 1490) (Chap. 3). It was a 4° edition of the text curated by Georg von Peurbach (1423–1461) and Johannes Regiomontanus (1436–1476). Four years later, he sent out a commentary to the text by Gasparino Borro (1430–1498), also in 4° (Sacrobosco and Borro 1494). This ended Ottaviano's pursuit of readers and collectors interested in Sacrobosco. After his death in 1495 his heirs chose not to pick up this pursuit until 1518, when they proposed an in-folio edition of the full text boasting a plethora of commentators: Campano da Novara (1220–1296), Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420), Cecco d'Ascoli (1260–1327), Theodosius of Bithynia (ca. 160 BC–ca. 100 BC), Francesco Capuano di Manfredonia (1450–1490), Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1450–1536), Michael Scot (ca. 1175–ca. 1234), Robert Grosseteste (ca. 1175–1253), Johannes Regiomontanus (d'Ascoli et al. 1518a). Then nothing until 1562 when Girolamo Scoto seems to have found a new formula for

<sup>42</sup> The Sphaera Database (Sphaera CorpusTracer) counts fifty-four recurrences of works related the Sacrobosco tradition in Venice in the sixteenth century.

the market: an allegedly revised text with notes by Élie Vinet (1509–1587) and contributions by two more contemporary authors: Pierio Valeriano (1477–1560) and Pedro Nuñez (1502–1578). For this edition, Girolamo Scoto chose the 8° format (Sacrobosco et al. 1562a). This formula seems to have worked well. In fact, he proposed it again in 1569 (Sacrobosco 1569). One may assume that in the span of six years he had exhausted the 1562 print run and believed that a new one might have given satisfactory results. He was not wrong—in 1574 the heirs of Girolamo Scoto decided to reprint the same formula a third time (Sacrobosco et al. 1574). A fourth had to wait a much longer time (Sacrobosco et al. 1586), illustrating that the market for this product was in fact slowing. The 1574 reprint took some eleven years to exhaust; the 1586 reprint was still on the market five years later, as the Scoto family was advertising it in their sale catalogue in 1591 (*Index* 1591b). This would justify the family's choice to stop dealing the product for well over thirty years.<sup>43</sup> One piece of evidence worth mentioning in understanding the Scoto's attitude toward the publishing of the *Sphaera* is that none of the editions mentioned above claimed the coverage of a book privilege in or out of Venice. In their pursuit of the market for Sacrobosco's text, the Scoto family would have been engaged in open competition with nothing more than their reputation and their commercial channels as safeguards. On the other hand, none of the published editions may have met the criteria of undisputedly novel content, which was a prerequisite to earn a book privilege, at least in Venice.<sup>44</sup>

The experience that the Scoto family had with the *Sphaera* shows what may be a general pattern in attempting to commercialize a very popular product: it was necessary to test the market, build a reputation, then find the right formula and use it until it proved profitable. Girolamo Scoto may have been the one who found the right one in 1562; his successors, however, failed to recognize when the market was no longer willing to welcome the same formula years later. Endeavors in popular imprints had their upside, but they could also quickly show their limits. The Giunta must have come to this conclusion much earlier than the Scoto did. This is reflected by the publishing history of the Giunta in relationship to Sacrobosco's text:

*Textvs Sphaerae Ioannis De Sacro Bvsto.* (Impressio Veneta: per Ioannem Rubeum & Bernardinum fratres Vercellenses: ad instantiam Iunctae de Iunctis florentini, 1508 die VI mensis Maii).

*Sphaera mundi nouiter recognita cum commentarijs et authoribus in hoc volumine contentis.* (Venetijs: impensis nobilis viri domini Luceantonij de Giunta Florentini, die vltimo Iunij 1518).

*Sphaerae tractatus Ioannis de Sacro Busto.* (Impressum fuit volume istud in urbe Veneta orbis & vrbium regina: calcographica Luce Antonii Iuntae Florentini officina aere proprio ac typis excussum, 1531. Labente mense Martio).

<sup>43</sup> The last known edition of this kind that carries the family's name is dated 1620: see (Sacrobosco et al. 1620).

<sup>44</sup> On the treatment of "ordinary works" (*opere comunali*) in Venice's privileges system, see (Nuovo 2013, 213).

*Sphaera Ioannis de Sacro Busto cum commentariis Petri a Spinosa Artium Magistri, celeberrimique praeceptoris Salmanticensis gymnasij, aeditis.* Salmanticæ: excudebat Ioannes Iunta, 1550.

*Sphaera Ioannis de Sacro Bosco emendata.* Lugduni: apud haeredes Iacobi Iunctae, 1564 (Lugduni: excudebat Symphorianus Barbier).

*Sphaera Ioannis de Sacro Bosco emendata.* Lugduni: apud haeredes Iacobi Iunctae, 1567 (Lugduni: excudebat Symphorianus Barbier).

*La sfera di messer Giovanni Sacrobosco.* In Fiorenza: nella stamperia de Giunta, 1571 (In Firenze: appresso i Giunta, 1572).

*La sfera di messer Giovanni Sacrobosco.* In Firenze: nella stamperia de' Giunta, 1579 (In Firenze: appresso i Giunta, 1579).<sup>45</sup>

One general observation is that in the Giunta's publishing history of the *Sphaera*, chronology follows a dynamic geography. Within the Giunta's network, interest in the Sacobosco tradition migrates between different branches over the years. The first account is the 1508 Venetian edition. Although this is the epicenter of the transnational firm, one might actually be compelled to see this initiative as coming from the periphery of the network. The one primarily responsible for this publishing endeavor was the same Giuntino Giunta who we saw partnering with Lucantonio senior no earlier than 1517.

The two subsequent editions (d'Ascoli et al. 1518b; Sacrobosco et al. 1531) came instead as a direct initiative of Lucantonio, mastermind of the Giunta network. Two observations on the 1518 edition are worth considering. First, this edition arrived in the period when the Giunta's transnational network was still in the making, and therefore when their commercial scope was still limited but already comprised Florence, Rome, and Palermo as steady commercial hubs, and when Juan de Junta was consolidating his presence in Spain. Lucantonio was not yet targeting scholars and high professionals. Primarily he was still a medium-sized publisher concerned with a wide local market. Clues suggest that the 1518 Sacrobosco edition was primarily conceived to settle local unresolved issues. This in-folio gothic types edition was basically a specular copy of the one published by Scoto just five months earlier (d'Ascoli et al. 1518a), but of a slightly better quality.<sup>46</sup> The year of publication shall

<sup>45</sup> For the editions enlisted above see, respectively (d'Ascoli 1518b; Sacrobosco et al. 1508, 1531, 1564; Sacrobosco and Espinosa 1550; Sacrobosco and Danti 1571–1572, 1579).

<sup>46</sup> The Scoto edition displays the date January 19, 1518, whereas the Giunta claims the date of 30 June of the same year. The better quality of Lucantonio Giunta's product is particularly appreciable in the composition work with punctuation systematically followed by a fair blank space, which the Scoto edition does not provide with equal consistency. Moreover, the Giunta edition boasted Gerard of Cremona among its featured commentators. Indications of an ongoing competition between the two publishing houses may be visible in Lucantonio Giunta's choice to publish the commentaries of Ugo Benzi (ca. 1360–1439) to the fourth *Fen* of the first *Canon* of Avicenna in December 1517 (Benzi 1517b), after the heirs of Ottaviano Scoto placed Benzi's commentaries to the first *Fen* of the fourth *Canon* on the market in August of the same year (Benzi 1517a). Whatever issue they may have had, it must have been resolved by 1539 when the heirs of Lucantonio Giunta senior partnered with the heir of Ottaviano Scoto in the *Compagnia delli libri della Corona* set to publish costly law books (Nuovo 2013, 59; Nuovo and Coppens 2005, 86–91).

not go unnoticed. This aggressive move by Lucantonio Giunta toward the heirs of Ottaviano Scoto came after the Venetian Senate passed a law in 1517 that formally suspended all standing book privileges and imposed the criterion of absolute novelty to grant any in the future (Squassina 2019, 342). Thus, the time was right to play tricks on one's competitors and reposition yourself in the market. All considered, Lucantonio's reprint of Scoto's edition seems more a crude retaliation against a competitor than a genuine entrepreneurial or cultural choice, especially considering that this was an author he had never shown interest in, and an audience from whom he was disengaging in those very years. Lucantonio was hurting the Scoto family right where they had substantial interest (as their general publishing history of the *Sphaera* shows). He knew he could distract a good number of the Scotos' potential purchasers around the Italian states and beyond by proposing a better option.

The next time Lucantonio signed his name to a Sacrobosco edition seems to have been a more genuine choice. The 1531 edition was published when he had nearly completed restructuring his publishing strategy toward a more specialized professional audience, in light of the availability of an expanded commercial network. Lucantonio found motivation for feeding the market a Sacrobosco edition in the fact that, thanks to the editorial work of Luca Gaurico (1476–1558), he could cover the edition with a ten-year privilege granted by the Senate.<sup>47</sup> The 1531 edition is the last known Sacrobosco edition published by the Giunta of Venice. From that moment on, the Venetian branch, having settled its publishing strategy elsewhere, would no longer enter the competitive orbit of the *Sphaera mundi*. Instead, the Venetian branch chose to compete in a rather more specialized academic market.

Some twenty years passed before the Giunta chose to offer Sacrobosco to their network of users. This time the offer came from the Spanish hub. Juan de Junta, typically more inclined to publish in vernacular Spanish, proposed a Latin version of the text with the commentaries of the local scholar Pedro Espinosa (1485–1536) (Sacrobosco and Espinosa 1550), thus aiming at a *glocal* market. Relying on the fact that the Iberian market would rather count on foreign imports than local imprints (Chap. 7), Juan did not feel the urge to display a privilege on his edition.

Fourteen years passed after Juan de Junta's edition; then, in 1564, the *Sphaera* appeared again as an initiative of the heirs of Jacques de Giunta in Lyon (Sacrobosco et al. 1564), and namely of the then regent Florentine expat Filippo Tinghi (1523–1580). As far as the whole Giunta network was concerned, the Venetian marketplace must have felt saturated with the 1562 edition by Girolamo Scoto, whose path the heir of Lucantonio Giunta did not want to cross. France must have felt like a safer spot to commercialize the *Sphaera*. Again, the edition was sheltered by a book privilege, issued by the French king in 1563. The privilege was valid for seven years in the whole of France and protected the commentaries and the textual emendations of Carmelite theologian and astronomer Francesco Giuntini (1523–1590).<sup>48</sup> The editorial work

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<sup>47</sup> The privilege was in fact granted to Luca Gaurico, who had already declared his willingness to have his work published by Lucantonio Giunta in the petition; the privilege was approved by 144 senators with the contrary vote of only ten (EMoBookPrivileges 850).

<sup>48</sup> The privilege can be found on the back of the titlepage of the 1564 edition. Francesco Giuntini was a recent member of the Florentine community in Lyon, where he landed in 1561 to escape

of the fellow Florentine scholar (also an expat in Lyon) was the Trojan horse by which Tinghi hoped to enter the high competition surrounding Sacroboco. The royal privilege granted to the heir of Jaques de Giunta secured them an advantageous position in the wide French market, where the edition lured buyers with the newly revised version of a foreign scholar. It is unlikely that the edition was expected to reach the Italian peninsula due to the rumors surrounding Giuntini's heretical religious inclinations.<sup>49</sup> For the exact same reason, however, there must have been hope for a greater sympathy among the readers and collectors of central Europe—and Tinghi was not wrong about that. Giuntini's rendition of the *Sphaera* in fact raised the immediate attention of Antwerp publisher Jean Richard, as well as the heirs of Arnold Birckmann, who both published Giuntini's work in 1566 (Sacrobosco et al. 1566a, b) while the French privilege awarded to the Giunta edition still stood.

Tinghi's initiative to publish Giuntini's *Sphaera* was thoroughly planned, and was aimed at maximizing sales while maintaining an advantageous position in France. This is shown by the fact that, in the context of the first and only known print run of the 1564 edition, Tinghi thought to print a separate batch of copies with a postponed date of 1567. The purpose of doing so was to offer an alleged fresh reprint four years later, while the edition was still shielded for three additional years by the royal privilege. To prove profitable, this marketing strategy required some advance planning. Tinghi, or his advisers, felt they could measure the size of the two batches in order to have the first batch fully or adequately sold before the second was set to enter the market.<sup>50</sup> Once the privilege expired, the Giunta of Lyon did not experiment with the *Sphaera* again, although Francesco Giuntini's contribution to the debate on Sacrobosco would not prove marginal in the years to follow.<sup>51</sup>

The challenge of commercializing the *Sphaera* in the Giunta's network was lastly taken by the heirs of Bernardo Giunta in Florence. Their motivation was to attract a more popular audience by offering a new vernacular Italian translation of Sacrobosco's text. Interestingly, making the *Sphaera* more accessible to a general audience seems to have been a progressive trend in the Giunta's approach to the *Tractatus*. Hence, Lucantonio senior's 1518 in-folio, Gothic types edition (large formats and Gothic types were the standard layout of scholastic works) evolves to a more agile 8°

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persecution due to his alleged inclination toward religious heterodoxy. On Francesco Giuntini see (Ernst 2001).

<sup>49</sup> On the treatment of Giuntini's work by censorial authorities, see Sander (2018).

<sup>50</sup> This astute marketing strategy was not at all an invention of Tinghi; as far as Italian printers go, this technique has been largely documented for the Giolito (Nuovo and Coppens 2005).

<sup>51</sup> Francesco Giuntini is in fact the attested author of several sixteenth-century publications of the *Sphaera* issued in Antwerp and Lyon between 1566 and 1583; he would experience a brief seventeenth-century revival with two instances in 1610 and 1629, in Cologne and Salamanca, respectively (Sphaera CorpusTracer <https://hdl.handle.net/21.11103/sphaera.100357>). The idea of bringing Giuntini's work into the publishing portfolio of the Giunta of Lyon was likely Tinghi's personal initiative, which he replicated in several instances over the years (Rozzo 2007, 240). The disengagement between the Giunta of Lyon and the fortunate rendition of the *Sphaera* by Giuntini may have to do with the disengagement between the heirs of Jaques de Giunta and Filippo Tinghi from 1572 (Rozzo 2007, 247). The transnational aspiration of Giuntini's redaction of Sacrobosco is testified to by its circulation at the Frankfurt fair of 1578 (Chap. 6).

for a less erudite readership. As far as vernacular translations go, the Giunta initiative (Sacrobosco et al. 1571–1572) came some twenty years after that of Valerio da Meda and brothers, printed in Milan circa 1550 (Sacrobosco 1550). The text had experienced two previous Venetian imprints in vernacular Italian: a 1537 edition by Bartolomeo Zanetti (1487–1550), translated by Mauro da Firenze (1493–1556) (Mauro da Firenze 1537), and a 1543 edition by Francesco Brucioli (fl. 1541–1545) and brothers, featuring the translation of future apostate Antonio Brucioli (1487–1566) (Sacrobosco and Brucioli 1543). The short timespan between the two Venetian editions shows that there was a market for a vernacular edition of Sacrobosco which the Milanese brothers da Meda served again ten years later. No one, however, followed their example for the next twenty years, knowing that the market was saturated.

With a gap of two decades and a probable void created by the disgraced edition carrying the unfavorable name of Antonio Brucioli on the frontispiece, Iacopo and Filippo Giunta considered the time suitable for a new vernacular edition. On this occasion, they revived an old but unpublished translation by Piervincenzo Danti (1460–1512). The translation earned a privilege from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–1574), likely held by Danti's family.<sup>52</sup> A short sequence of editions, one printed in Perugia in 1574 and another by the Giunta in 1579, proves that the intuition of Iacopo and Filippo was not wrong. The fact that these editions were solely covered by the Grand Duke's privilege would suggest that Tuscany was the prime market for this work, whereas the rest of Italy was still considered something of a secondary market.

Following the 1579 reprint of Danti's translation, none of the branches of the Giunta found sufficient reason to engage in the competition surrounding the *Tractatus de sphaera*.

## 7 Conclusions

This essay attempted to offer a professional profiling of the Giunta firm, in an effort to illustrate their publishing style and commercial sensibility. It argues that the dynamic definition of the firm's publishing strategy cannot be easily disjointed from its general business plan. More specifically, I have described the Giunta's key vision of an organic network of distribution as the necessary infrastructure to sustain a consistent effort in specializing their publishing offering toward the higher professions.

These being the premises, the publishing history of the *Sphaera* was folded into the general scope of the Giunta's publishing vision. I contend that the Giunta had an episodic interest in engaging in the fierce transnational competition that emerged around the longstanding tradition of Sacrobosco's text during the late Renaissance.

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<sup>52</sup> The promoter of the edition was Piervincenzo Danti's nephew, Egnazio (Fiore 1986). The fact that a Perugian edition of 1574 also displays the same privilege (Sacrobosco and Danti 1574, 2) is consistent with the tenure of the privilege by the Danti family rather than by the Giunta.

Lucantonio Giunta senior, who has been described as the mind behind much of the Giunta's business plan and publishing strategy, proved interested in the *Sphaera* only after his associate Giuntino first experimented with the potential of this product in the Giunta's target market.

Lucantonio senior's first dealing with Sacrobosco falls under suspicion of having been more an unfair play toward the Scoto house (in the context of market warfare) than a genuine editorial initiative. This may limit sincere instances of interest from the Venetian Giunta to one edition (Sacrobosco et al. 1531)—and this choice originated principally in the possibility of earning a Venetian privilege to protect the investment. Later, the initiative came only from the periphery of the network, and almost only when motivated by textual innovations that might not only captivate the market but also secure the issuing of a book privilege and the consequent commercial advantage.

The categories *center* and *periphery* of the Giunta's wide network have been used to maintain that Sacrobosco quickly escaped the radius of the Giunta's primary interest. The firm, chiefly invested in building a reputation with the high professions and the clergy, did not prioritize the publishing of the *Sphaera*, finding the high competition that surrounded this product too risky, and the revenues too marginal to fit the general plan of the firm.

## Abbreviations

### *Digital Repositories*

EDIT16	Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche, Censimento nazionale delle edizioni italiane del XVI secolo. <a href="https://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web/edit-16">https://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web/edit-16</a> . Accessed 7 June 2021
EMoBookPrices	Early Modern Book Prices. Università degli Studi di Milano. <a href="https://emobooktrade.unimi.it/prices">https://emobooktrade.unimi.it/prices</a> . Accessed 7 June 2021
EMoBookPrivileges	Early Modern Book Privileges in Venice. Università degli Studi di Milano. <a href="https://emobooktrade.unimi.it/privileges">https://emobooktrade.unimi.it/privileges</a> . Accessed 7 June 2021
Sphaera CorpusTracer	Max Planck Institute for the History of Science. <a href="https://db.sphaera.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/resource/Start">https://db.sphaera.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/resource/Start</a> . Accessed 7 June 2021
USTC	Universal Short Title Catalogue. University of St. Andrews. <a href="https://www.ustc.ac.uk">https://www.ustc.ac.uk</a> . Accessed 07 June 2021



## Archives and Special Collections

ACDF	Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Vatican City
MPM	Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp
YRL	University of California, Los Angeles, Charles E. Young Research Library, Department of Special Collections

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- De Vio, Tommaso. 1530. *Euangelia*. Venice: Lucantonio Giunta I.
- Index librorum omnium qui Venetijs in nobilissima Iuntarum typographia usque ad annum MDXCI*. 1591a. Venice: Lucantonio Giunta II.
- Index librorum omnium tam ad principales scientias, nempe theologiam, philosophiam et iuris utriusque peritiam, Index librorum omnium tam ad principales scientias, nempe theologiam, philosophiam et iuris utriusque peritiam, quam ad quascunque alias artes et facultates cuiuscunque generis pertinentium, qui ad annum usque praesentem MDXCI editi extant atque habentur penes haeredem Hieronymi Scottii*. 1591b. Venice: Heirs of Girolamo Scoto.
- Indice copioso e particolare di tutti li libri stampati dalli Gioliti in Venetia fino all'anno M.D.XCII*. 1592. Venice: Giovanni Paolo Giolito De Ferrari & Nephews.
- Index librorum omnium qui Venetijs in nobilissima Iuntarum typographia usque ad annum MDXCV*. 1595. Venice: Lucantonio Giunta II.
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