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ANOTHER PROMOTER OF THE 1582 'RASSETTATURA' OF THE *DECAMERON**

The problems facing the *Decameron* in Counter-Reformation Italy are well known to literary historians. In the third quarter of the sixteenth century, Boccaccio's 'cento novelle' received severe criticism from the Inquisition for its irreverent treatment of clerics and the church, and then for its questionable morality. It was listed in the Pauline *Index librorum prohibitorum* of 1559, and the ban was repeated in the Tridentine *Index* of 1564 'quamdiu expurgatae ab iis, quibus rem Patres commiserunt'.¹ There were several attempts to rescue a work of such importance for Italian literature and the Tuscan language, and to present it to Counter-Reformation readers in an acceptable form. The most notable examples are the revision of 1573, prepared by a committee of Florentine academicians (including Vincenzo Borghini) appointed by Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici, and that of 1582, prepared by Lionardo Salviati under the protection of Giacomo Buoncompagni, Duke of Sora, and Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici.² The circumstances leading to the 1582 revision, and Salviati's treatment of the text, have been ably documented and discussed by Peter Brown. However, the aim of this brief report is to present a document recently discovered in the Archivio di Stato, Florence, which offers new information on the revision and clarifies the motives for its preparation.

A brief outline of the chronology of the 1573 and 1582 revisions as established by Brown will set matters in perspective. The *Index* of 1564 admitted the possibility of an expurgated *Decameron*. Pius V issued a mandate allowing the 'deputati' of the Accademia Fiorentina to produce such a revision under the supervision of the Congregazione dell'Indice and the Maestro del Sacro Palazzo in 1571, although work on it had begun earlier. This revision was published in 1573 'Nella Stamperia de i Giunti' in Florence. Shortly after its appearance, 157 'censure' of the *Decameron* were issued by the Congregazione dell'Indice, and the work had to be staunchly defended by Vincenzo Borghini, Piero Vettori, and Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici. In 1578, Luigi Groto 'cieco d'Adria' approached Fra Paolo della Mirandola, the *commissario* of the Inquisition in Venice, for permission to produce another revision, and on 20 February 1579 he thanked Mirandola for having obtained such permission from Rome. Groto's revision was finally published in 1588. Meanwhile, on 30 July 1580 Giacomo Buoncompagni wrote to Grand Duke Francesco informing him that permission for a new Florentine revision had been granted in Rome, and a

* This study was prepared during my appointment as Fellow at the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Villa I Tatti, Florence, in 1984–85. I am most grateful to the Center for its support, to the staff of the Archivio di Stato, Florence, for their assistance, and to Paolo Rossi, Department of Italian Studies, University of Lancaster, for his advice.

¹ H. Reusch, *Die Indices Librorum Prohibitorum des Sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Nieuwkoop, 1961; reprint of the Tübingen edition of 1886), pp. 180, 255. See also Reusch, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Literaturgeschichte*, 2 vols (Aalen, 1967; reprint of the Bonn edition of 1883), I, 389–91.

² For the 1573 revision, see J. R. Woodhouse, 'Il Borghini e la rassetatura del "Decameron" del 1573. Un documento inedito', *Studi sul Boccaccio*, 7 (1973), 395–15. For that of 1582, see P. M. Brown, 'I veri promotori della "rassetatura" del "Decameron" nel 1582', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 144 (1957), 314–32; 'Aims and Methods of the Second "Rassetatura" of the Decameron', *Studi Secenteschi*, 8 (1967), 3–41; and *Lionardo Salviati: A Critical Biography* (London, 1974), pp. 160–82. The information on the genesis of the 1582 revision given below is taken largely from Brown, 'I veri promotori'.

few days later, on 9 August, Francesco appointed Lionardo Salviati to the task. It seems that such an appointment had been prearranged between Buoncompagni and Salviati, who was in his service, perhaps also with the mediation of Cardinal Luigi d'Este. Certainly, Salviati quickly set to work, asking the Grand Duke for access to key Boccaccio manuscripts on 14 August. However, there is evidence that other Florentines were competing for the task, at least to judge by a letter from Salviati to Francesco dated 10 December 1580, when he says that 'pare che ci fossero intrusi altri per intervenirci con esso meco: ma resteranno esclusi, et andrà innanzi l'ordine di V[ostra] A[ltezza]'.³ Nevertheless, according to Brown, Salviati completed his revision before May 1581, and *Il Decameron di messer Giovanni Boccacci, cittadino fiorentino, di nuouo ristampato, e riscontrato in Firenze con testi antichi, e alla sua uera lezione ridotto dal cavalier Lionardo Salviati* was eventually published, first in Venice 'Per li Giunti di Firenze' in August 1582, and then in Florence 'Nella stamperia de' Giunti' in October/November. Salviati's revision was poorly received, and few approved of his treatment of the text, which was far more extreme than that of the 1573 revision. Indeed, his harshest critics went so far as to accuse him of sacrificing his Tuscan literary heritage for cheap personal gain. Thus Traiano Boccalini harangued Salviati that 'ad istanza dei Giunti Stampatori di Fiorenza per avarizia di vinticinque scudi, avendo affrontato l'Eccellentissimo Sig[nor] Giovanni Boccaccio ec. gli diede molte ferite, colle quali lo deturpò, e lacerò talmente, che i suoi più domestici amorevoli, che dopo tanta calamità l'hanno veduto, affermano, non esser possibile riconoscerlo per quel Boccaccio tanto leggiadro, ch'era prima'.⁴ Salviati has since had few defenders, with the notable exception of Brown, who argues that Salviati's approach to the revision was to compromise with the Inquisition on the question of the morality of the *Decameron* in order to preserve intact as far as was possible what mattered most to sixteenth-century academicians, its linguistic purity.

In charting the genesis of the 1582 revision, Brown concerns himself with a search for its 'veri promotori'. Two possibilities had hitherto presented themselves: first, that the impetus came from the Inquisition, which was thoroughly dissatisfied with the 1573 revision; second, that it came from Grand Duke Francesco, either because he, too, was concerned with the work's morality or because he wished to promote a *Decameron* 'alla sua uera lezione' for the sake of Florence and also, presumably, his own reputation. Brown dismisses both possibilities. Although there are signs that the Inquisition viewed the 1573 revision less than favourably, he finds no evidence that this disfavour turned into a prohibition of its sale, thereby necessitating a second revision. As for the Grand Duke, he argues, and rightly so, that the documents demonstrate Francesco responding to a *fait accompli* rather than taking the initiative. Brown therefore suggests that the 'vero promotore' of the 1582 revision was Salviati himself, 'un privato cittadino che aveva tutti gli interessi di farsi concedere l'autorizzazione per una nuova versione dell'opera' ('I veri promotori', p. 322). The 1582 revision allowed Salviati to demonstrate his personal dissatisfaction with its predecessor, to pursue, indeed crown, his own philological

³ Brown, 'I veri promotori', p. 327. All quotations in this study are given as in the source, with abbreviations expanded within brackets.

⁴ T. Boccalini, *Pietra del paragone politico* (1614), quoted in D. M. Manni, *Istoria del Decamerone di Giovanni Boccaccio* (Florence, 1782), p. 658. According to Celso Cittadini, the amount involved was 2,000 piastres (see Brown, *Lionardo Salviati*, p. 176).

researches in the Tuscan language, and to reap financial gain in what for him were difficult times.

The case for Salviati instigating the 1582 revision for personal reasons is argued well and, as I shall show later, it may still stand with some modification. However, this case is weakened if it can be shown that the 1573 revision was indeed prohibited from sale by the Inquisition. Furthermore, there is another possibility for a 'vero promotore' of the revision: not the Inquisition, or the Grand Duke, or Salviati, but his printers, the Giunti of Florence. This is implied in Boccalini's critique of Salviati quoted above. A document recently discovered in the Auditore delle Riformagioni archive in the Archivio di Stato, Florence, and presented here in the Appendix suggests that the Giunti did indeed have a significant role to play.

The Auditore delle Riformagioni archive contains an extensive series of memoranda on civil petitions to the Medici court, and sometimes the petitions themselves. Included are requests from authors and/or printers and booksellers for printing licences and privileges of 'copyright'. These 'copyright' privileges were intended to prevent the pirating of printed publications and subsequent financial loss. Thus the archive is an important source for historians of publishing in Florence. The administrative machinery for handling such a petition can be briefly outlined as follows. A petition reaching the court would be sent for his comment to the *auditore*, in this period Paolo Vinta. The *auditore* would prepare a memorandum summarizing the petition and adding one or more paragraphs of supplementary information, noting legal or other precedents and offering any further details or recommendations which would enable the petition to be judged appropriately by the Grand Duke. This memorandum would be sent to a court secretary, in this case Giovanni Battista Concini, who would present it to the Grand Duke. The Grand Duke's decision would be noted at the foot of the memorandum in a signed and dated *rescritto*, and the memorandum would then be returned to the *auditore* for action. It is a somewhat cumbersome process, but one which, as a result, allows us to chart clearly the progress of the petition through the court administration. The supplementary information provided by the *auditore* can also prove invaluable in determining and evaluating the circumstances in which a particular petition arose.

The value of this administrative process becomes apparent in Vinta's memorandum of 4 September 1581 presented here, as the following summary with commentary will show. Sometime before 4 September, probably only a few days earlier, Lionardo Salviati petitioned the Grand Duke for a privilege that only he be allowed to publish his newly-expurgated version of the *Decameron*. Vinta attached this petition to his memorandum, but it is now lost. One such privilege had already been issued dated 9 August 1580 (it was eventually included at the front of the 1582 edition), but it seems that a situation had arisen wherein Salviati's rights to this version were being called into question.⁵ Vinta goes on to summarize an attached

⁵ There is some confusion over the date of the privilege included in the 1582 edition. On 9 August 1580, Grand Duke Francesco wrote to Salviati appointing him to revise the *Decameron* 'con ampla et libera facultà di correggere, et purgare detto libro con tutte quelle conditionj, et clausule, che piaceranno al suo discreto iudicio' (Archivio di Stato, Florence, Mediceo del Principato 254 (copies of letters from the Grand Duke, 23 April 1580–29 March 1581), f. 93^r; also quoted in Brown, 'I veri promotori', p. 323). The 1582 edition contains a differently-worded privilege from the Grand Duke similarly dated 9 August 1580, noting of Salviati that 'lui solo habbiamo eletto, e deputato a questo carico del ridurlo alla sua vera lezione, e così ridotto, con permission de' Superiori ecclesiastici farlo stampare dove, e da chi, e come più gli piacerà' (quoted in 'I veri promotori', pp. 320–21). Salviati was sent a copy of this privilege (bearing

petition from the Giunti, which is also now lost. The intent of this second petition is unclear, although it seems to have claimed the Giunti's right to print a revision of the *Decameron*. In May 1580, Filippo and Jacopo Giunti had sought a printing licence and privilege of 'copyright' from the Grand Duke for an expurgated version of the *Decameron* currently being prepared under the auspices of the Maestro del Sacro Palazzo in Rome.⁶ The editor of this version is unspecified, although it was possibly Luigi Groto, who had obtained permission from Rome to revise the *Decameron* in early 1579. The Giunti were granted the licence and privilege, but they failed to take advantage of it after discovering that this version had thirty *novelle* removed and thus was too imperfect. The printers then consulted with various Florentine academicians about preparing a new revision and made an informal agreement with Lionardo Salviati. The Giunti sought not only to act for the benefit of Boccaccio and the Tuscan language (perhaps there is also an element of Florentine pride at stake, given the intrusion of an outside reviser) but also to recoup their losses on the 1573 revision. This revision had been printed at their own expense and with the approval of the authorities, but even before its appearance the Giunti had been prohibited from selling it, on pain of excommunication.⁷ They may still have sold or distributed copies in the face of this ban, for exemplars of the 1573 revision do indeed survive, but the Giunti were unable to take full financial advantage of their investment.

The following section of Vinta's memorandum suggests why both Salviati and the Giunti were approaching the Grand Duke in this manner. The printers were offering Salviati a choice of one of three methods of payment for his work on the new revision: a lump sum of 200 scudi in two instalments; the forming of a joint company for publishing the edition, with profits divided equally once printing and distribution expenses had been defrayed; the payment of a royalty of two *carlini* (about one lira) for each copy sold. Given our incomplete knowledge of publishing finances in sixteenth-century Italy, this statement of three presumably current modes of payment to an author or editor is revealing. Indeed, the possibility of a formalized royalty system in operation at this early date is particularly significant. Salviati, however, was unimpressed by the Giunti's offer and seemed on the verge of

the date 9 August 1580) on 16 June 1581; see Archivio di Stato, Florence, Mediceo del Principato 256 (copies of letters from the Grand Duke, 1 April–30 November 1581), f. 54^r. It is not clear whether the privilege was first prepared in June 1581 and backdated to the date of Salviati's original letter of appointment, 9 August 1580, or whether Salviati had asked for another copy of an original privilege of 9 August 1580 that is now lost. Whatever the case, Vinta clearly considered that this privilege did indeed date from 1580, for what he calls the 'l[ette]ra pate[n]te' is the privilege and not the letter of appointment: note his wording, 'et li permette possa farlo stampare co[n] lice[n]tia de superiori Ecclesiastici, doue piu le piacerà'.

⁶ The request for the licence and privilege was relayed by Vinta on 18 May 1580; see Archivio di Stato, Florence, Auditore delle Riformagioni 13 (petitions to the court, 18 March 1578/79–27 December 1582), no. 95: 'Filippo, et Jac[op]o giunti. Espogano come il Boccaccio d'ordine di sua santità e stato ricorretto i[n] Roma dal m[aestr]o del sacro palazzo, et offerto loro p[er] stamparlo i[n] fior[enz]a[.] Onde supp[lica]no V[ost]ra A[ltezza] si degni dare loro licentia di metterlo alla stampa, et priuilegio ch[e] altri ch[e] loro no[n] possino stamparlo per anni diecj.' The *rescritto* granting the licence and privilege is dated 21 May 1580.

⁷ Further indication that the 1573 revision was indeed removed from circulation is offered in A. Rotondò, 'Nuovi documenti per la storia dell' "Indice dei libri proibiti" (1572–1638)', *Rinascimento* (ser. 2), 3 (1963), 145–211 (pp. 152–53), and see also J. A. Tedeschi, 'Florentine Documents for a History of the *Index of Prohibited Books*', in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, edited by A. Molho and J. A. Tedeschi (Florence, 1971), pp. 577–605 (p. 581, n. 11). Rotondò presents documents which reveal that in June 1573, officials of the Congregazione dell'Indice sought to prevent sales of the revision in Bologna.

dissolving his informal agreement with them. He had no wish to form a company, he thought 200 scudi too small an amount, and he claimed that a rival printer, Bartolomeo Sermartelli, was prepared to offer a royalty of two *giuli* (about 1½ lire) for each copy sold. It is not possible to confirm whether Salviati was justified in deeming 200 scudi a small amount for a publisher to pay an editor. However, no doubt he would have calculated that some 1400 copies of the edition would have to be sold for him to recoup this sum according to the Giunti's proposed royalty, and just over 1000 copies according to the alternative offer from Sermartelli. Presumably, Salviati had good grounds for believing that a significantly greater number of copies would in fact be sold within a reasonably short period. The proposed print-run of the edition must have been at least 1500 copies, if not considerably more.

At the date of the memorandum, this financial disagreement between Salviati and the Giunti remained unresolved, despite the efforts of Vinta and one maestro Geremia, probably Geremia da Udine, to reconcile the two parties. Indeed, their differences must have been considerable for the matter to be taken as far as the Grand Duke. Presumably, Salviati was hoping to use the present confirmation of his rights to the revision, granted by the Grand Duke in the *rescritto* dated 7 September, as a means of persuading the Giunti to increase their offer of remuneration. It is not clear what action the Giunti were threatening in return. Nor is it known how the dispute was resolved, although in the end the Giunti did print the revision. Nevertheless, Vinta prepared a new privilege for Salviati and sent it for the Grand Duke's signature and seal on 26 September.⁸

Paolo Vinta was a thorough administrator, and unless he was seriously misinformed it seems that his memorandum represents a reliable summary of the situation, and its contents do not conflict with the known facts. There are four key points: first, the 1573 revision was banned from sale; second, the 1582 revision was prompted by the preparation of a drastically-abridged version of the *Decameron* outside Tuscany; third, the initial idea for the 1582 revision came from the Giunti, who then negotiated with Salviati to take on the task; fourth, Salviati and his printers disagreed over payment for his work.⁹ Peter Brown's account of the genesis of the 1582 revision clearly requires some modification in the light of these new documents.

It seems that the 'vero promotore' of the 1582 revision was in fact the Giunti press, responding to the prospect of a heavily-censored version of the *Decameron* being prepared elsewhere, and anxious to recoup its losses on the prohibited 1573 revision. The financial importance of Salviati's revision is emphasized by the extensive set of 'copyright' privileges, covering much of the Italian peninsula and stretching into

⁸ Vinta's memorandum accompanying the prepared privilege is in Auditore delle Riformagioni 13, no. 205. It seems that Salviati waived his right to the usual share of any fines imposed for violation of the privilege, according to Vinta 'poi che il Cau[alie]re no[n] hà uolsuto partecipare'. The Grand Duke's *rescritto* 'Stà bene' is dated 28 September 1581. The privilege is no longer attached to the memorandum, but presumably it was the same as the statement of Salviati's 'copyright', in Latin, printed on f. [A]2^v of the 1582 edition and dated 8 September 1581.

⁹ This was not the first such dispute between Salviati and the Giunti. In 1576, Salviati sought a privilege for his commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, which he was planning to have printed outside Florence; see Archivio di Stato, Florence, Auditore delle Riformagioni 12 (petitions to the court, 13 June 1574–28 February 1578/79), no. 81: 'il supp[lican]te teme di non poter co[n]uenire co[n] li stampatori, ò, librari di Fiorenza, atteso che li Giunti uogliono troppo vantaggio, et li altri no[n] ha[n]no comodità et facilità di stamparla.'

Europe, which are listed in the 1582 edition. However, Brown's case for Salviati is not entirely lost. Once the Giunti had approached Florentine academicians with their idea of a new revision, it was up to Salviati to ensure that he would be appointed editor. In the face of competition, it is understandable that he should have sought the support of Buoncompagni and Cardinal d'Este. It is likely that their intercession was needed not only to secure Salviati's appointment but also to ensure that Rome would suppress or at least postpone the rival revision. Similarly, Salviati obviously hoped to make financial gain from the venture, and presumably he received more than the twenty-five scudi maliciously claimed by Boccacalini. Even if the impetus for the revision did initially come from the Giunti, it is clear that Salviati remained a prime mover in the affair. In the end, however, it matters little who the 'vero promotore' of the 1582 revision was. More important is the chain of events leading to its appearance, a chain that is clarified by the conscientious notes of a now-forgotten Florentine civil servant.

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APPENDIX

Archivio di Stato, Florence, Auditore delle Riformagioni 13, no. 202

Sereniss[im]o Gran Duca

Il' Cau[alie]re Lionardo Saluiati insiste che si distenda vn Priuilegio che co[n]tenga, come egli solo possa fare stampare il Boccaccio ne' feliciss[im]i stati di V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a ricorretto, et expurgato da lui in modo, che sodisfa' al s[an]to offitio, et à S[ua] Beat[udin]e Affermando hauernè la uoluntà, et concessione di V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a in uirtù del rescritto fatto sopra l'incluso suo supp[lica]to che dice sempliceme[n]te, A m[esser] Paolo Vinta, et d'vna l[ette]ra pate[n]te data sotto di 9 d'Agosto 1580. nella quale V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a elegge per l'emendatione del Boccaccio detto Cau[alie]re et li permette possa farlo stampare co[n] lice[n]tia de superiori Ecclesiastici, doue piu le piacerà.

Filippo, et Jacopo Giunti nell'inclusa supp[li]ca narrano, come del mese di maggio 1580. sendo stato loro offerto detto libro riuisto, et ridotto in Roma in buouessere dal Maestro del sacro Palazzo per stamparlo, Ricorseno à V[ostra] A[ltezza] per il Priuilegio per tempo di dieci a[n]ni, et q[ue]lla sopra vn mio referto, benigname[n]te rescrisse *Concedesi*, purchè si uedessi la lice[n]tia et beneplacito del s[an]to off[izio]. Soggiungano hora d'hauer tardato à far' l'intera spedizione del Priuilegio, perche intesano in quel Boccaccio del Maestro del sacro Palazzo essere state leuate tre[n]ta nouelle i[n] tutto, [f. 1^v] onde pareua loro restasse troppo imperfetto, et ne parloueno con varij letterati Fiore[n]tini, et particularme[n]te co[n] il detto Cau[alie]re Saluiati, quale si offerse d'operare che si riducesse in miglior termine: Vero è, che non si mostra sopra ciò conue[n]tione alcuna tra il Cau[alie]re et i Giunti, solo si uede per molte l[ette]re, che questa era stata pratica di detti Giu[n]ti, et cercauano di rifarsi del da[n]no, et interesse, che haueano patito sino l'a[n]no 1573. quando stampoueno il Boccaccio à loro spese co[n] le lice[n]tie de superiori, et no[n] fù prima stampato, che di nouo fu fatto coma[n]dame[n]to loro no[n] li uendessino, ò contrattassino i[n] modo alcuno sotto pena di excommunicatione, Et p[er]ò ha[n]no cercato, et per honore, et per utile della loro Bottega ristampare detto autore, et offerto per tal co[n]to al detto Cau[alie]re in ricompensa della sua fatica, et uirtù ò, scudi duge[n]to di co[n]tanti, cioè è, sc. 100. alla mano, et sc. 100. tra sei mesi, ouero di metterlo à compagnia, et darli la metà di tutto il Guadagno che facessino detratte le spese in stampare et uendere detto autore, ò finalme[n]te darli due Carlini p[er] libro che stampassino et uendessino: Alli quali partiti il Cau[alie]re risponde, che [f. 2^r] non uol entrare à tener co[n]to di Compagnie et uendite di libri, et lo sc. 200. li paiono pochi, maxime che dice trouare dal Sermartelli dua giuli per ciascun libro, caso che il Cau[alie]re ottenga il Priuilegio, et elegga poi lui p[er] stampator' del Boccaccio: Et se bene m[ae]str[o]

Geremia et Io ci siamo affaticati di concordare il Cau[alie]re co[n] li Giunti, Nondimeno no[n] ci è, uenuto fatto, come sino à hora harà V[ostra] A[ltezza] inteso da esso m[ae]stro Hieremia, Che è, qua[n]to posso dirle in q[uest]o fatto. Di Casa il dì 4 di Sette[m]bre 1581
Di V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a Ser[enissi]ma

[*rescritto*] S[ua] A[ltezza] ha co[n]cesso et co[n]cede Priuilegio al Cau[alie]re saluiati ch[e] p[er] x a[n]ni nessuno altri ch[e] lui possa sta[m]par' ò far' sta[m]par' Il Boccaccio ricorretto da esso Cau[alie]re
Gio[vanni] ba[ttista] co[n]cini 7 di 7^{te} 81
Jac[op]o Danj

Humil[issim]o seruo
P[aolo] Vinta