

THE EARLIEST INDEX OF THE INQUISITION AT VENICE.

THE action of the Inquisition at Venice in issuing a catalogue of heretical books in 1554 was important not only in its effects on the history of printing in the Republic¹, but also as a step towards the compilation of the famous series of Roman Indices beginning in 1557². The catalogue itself was little more than an amended copy of one put out at Milan in the same year. Both are generally supposed to have shared the fate of two earlier Italian lists, those issued at Venice in 1549 and at Florence in 1552, and to have totally disappeared; for no trace of any one of them has been found by the bibliographers³. But all excepting the Florentine catalogue were soon reprinted by Piero Paolo Vergerio, and from his texts have been published anew by Reusch⁴. The Venetian list of 1554 had been previously reprinted by Joseph Mendham⁵ from what he believed to be the original, but what was in fact Vergerio's text.

The following note is concerned only with the Venetian book of 1554, the first that claims the authority of the Inquisition. Vergerio's edition was produced some time between 1554 and 1556, apparently from a German press; but it bears the imprint of the original, *Venetiiis apud Gabrielem Iulitum de Ferraris et fratres*, 1554⁶. He issued a second edition, likewise in Germany but with a Venetian imprint, in 1556, in which he distinguished such additions as he made by the use of italic type: Reusch places these within parentheses. Reusch also detected certain words in Vergerio's first edition which he believed to be his own insertions, and printed them within square brackets. Now there exists in the Bodleian Library a volume which appears to be a copy of the hitherto undiscovered original edition of 1554. It was purchased by the curators in 1858 for £2 1s. Without venturing to express an opinion on the typography, I may notice that on one leaf there is discernible a portion of the well-known Venetian water-mark of an anchor within an oval. That it is not Vergerio's first edition is evident from a comparison with Mendham's reproduction '*paginatim, lineatim*,

¹ Horatio F. Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press*, ch. xiv, London, 1891.

² F. H. Reusch, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher*, i 258, 268, Bonn, 1883.

³ Reusch, i 204; S. Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari*, i 445 f., Rome, 1890.

⁴ *Die Indices Librorum prohibitorum des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, pp. 148-175, Tübingen, 1886.

⁵ *An Index of prohibited Books*, pp. 68 ff., London, 1840.

⁶ Reusch, *Der Index*, i 209 n. 1; *Die Indices*, p. 143.

and *letter for letter, in facsimile,*' of the latter. The arrangement of the title-page differs entirely; the pages are numbered; *Franciscus Grisonius Justinopolitanus* is omitted at the bottom of p. 11, and *Theodorus Beza* at the end of p. 25; and, most important, the words *ex exemplari Venetiis excuso* are absent after the finis. In other respects the two books agree in substance, though the spelling and the misprints display many differences. But there is one interesting divergence. Reusch notices that the Milan catalogue of 1554, but not the Venice book of the same date (meaning of course in each case Vergerio's reprint), contains repeated citations of the Louvain Index¹. Now all these, and two others in addition, appear in the Bodleian volume, where the reference *Lova*, or *Louan.* is placed after the names *Ianus Cornarius medicus*, *Ioannes Sartorius*, *Iustus Menius*, *Otho Brunfessius Maguntinus*, *Paulus Fagius*, *Paulus Constantinus Phrygius*, *Petrus Artopous*, *Sebastianus Meyer*, *Stephani Doleti Cato Christianus et carmi.*, *Thomas Venatorius*, *Vincentius Obsopoeius*; and also after *Philotetus Ireneus* and *Theobaldus Billicanus*, where no such reference occurs in the Milan list. It should seem therefore that the original Venetian catalogue stood nearer to that of Milan than Vergerio's edition would lead one to suppose. That Vergerio should have omitted references which were non-essential to the purpose of the list need cause no surprise: Reusch, however, took it for probable², or even certain³, that they were insertions in the Milan list due to Vergerio.

It may be worth while to add, in order to save unprofitable enquiry, that the extracts *Ex Cathalogo librorum hereticorum inquisitionis Venetiarum* contained in John Bale's note-book in the Bodleian Library, but not printed in the recent edition of that manuscript⁴, are not taken from the Venice book of 1554, but merely selected and abridged from Vergerio's second edition of 1556.

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¹ *Der Index*, i 220.

² *Ibid.*, i 221.

³ *Die Indices*, p. 148 n.

⁴ *Index Britanniarum Scriptorum*, Oxford, 1902. See the preface, p. xv n. 2.