



Nicholas Jenson and the Rise of Venetian Publishing in Renaissance Europe

Martin Lowry

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This book tells the story of how printing came to Venice, and how the most commercially advanced power in 15th century Europe exploited the new invention to disseminate the scholarship of the Renaissance. Within forty years of Gutenberg's invention, and despite having no tradition in printing, Venice had become responsible for nearly twenty percent of books published in Europe, and had almost driven the German pioneers out of the upper levels of the market. The early chapters examine the values and careers of the men who backed the first printers. Martin Lowry's attention then turns to the printers themselves, particularly to the Frenchman Nicholas Jenson, the most influential publisher and printer of the age. The author analyses Jenson's design techniques and his quest for customers and describes the uneasy transition from manuscript to printed page. Today, venetian typefaces of the 1470s remain the basic currency of learning.

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