# Movable Type, Movable Printers:
# Printers and Typography as Agents of Cultural Exchange in Fifteenth-Century Europe

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## Table of Contents

# Chapter 1: Introduction

From its birth in Mainz in the 1450s, printing and the printers who implemented it spread rapidly through Europe, reaching Italy by 1465, Paris in 1470, the Low Countries by the early 1470s[1], Poland by 1473, and by way of Flanders England in 1476[2]. Printing was immediately a highly desirable technology, able to meet the fifteenth century's growing demand for books of all kinds[3] by mass-producing the codex form and all that could be included between its two covers. There already existed international markets in Europe for other goods that were traded abroad by merchants, but print functioned differently as a commodity. Whereas wool could be brought to the nearest port for export overseas and simply sold there, handed off to the merchant who would then travel to the next port and sell the product there, a printing press or a fount of type were not simply exchanged for a sum of a money in fifteenth-century Europe[4]. Printing entailed a crucial difference: its novelty required a very specific and very rare expertise, which meant that those who *exported* print from its home in Germany very often *went with it* to its new home in a new culture. These migrant printers and others engaged in the nascent printing industry brought more than just the physical technologies with them when they emigrated from one land to another.

How did migrant printers serve as agents of technological and cultural exchange in disseminating printing technology through Europe at the end of the fifteenth century? What was the result of a German printer moving to Italy and commissioning the cutting of types to be printed in books sold in Eastern Europe, or of an English diplomat acquiring a Flemish-made typeface in Germany? Printing and printers were perhaps the most significant agents of cultural exchange in Europe in the latter half of the fifteenth century, but this is too broad a subject to tackle in its entirety, and has been already addressed at various levels by other scholars.[5] Instead,

[1] This date is disputed by many; most scholars now attribute the 'Dutch prototypography' to between 1460-1470, moving the Low Countries up the list of earliest adapters of printing. See Lotte Hellinga, '1460 - 1585 - Inleiding', *Bibliopolis Handboek*, 2002, http://www.bibliopolis.nl/handboek.

[2] Andrew Pettegree, 'Centre and Periphery in the European Book World', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 18 (November 10, 2008): 102, doi:10.1017/S0080440108000674.

[3] *Ibid.*, 106.

[4] Zs. P. Pach, 'The Shifting of International Trade Routes in the 15th-17th Centuries', *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 3 (1968): 287–321; Pettegree, 'Centre and Periphery in the European Book World', 106.

[5] Among others, see A. E. B. Coldiron, *Printers Without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); A. E. B. Coldiron, 'Public Sphere/Contact Zone: Habermas, Early Print, and Verse Translation', *Criticism* 46, no. 2 (2004): 207–22; Cynthia J. Brown, 'Vroeg-Zestiende-Eeuwse Frans-Nederlandse Relaties: Pieere Gringores Enterprise de Venise En de Antwerpse Venegien', *Spiegel Der Letteren* 49,

this work will zoom in on *typography* specifically as the physical carrier and transmitter of the kind of cultural exchange discussed here. Indeed, in modern analytical bibliography, study of types themselves is key to many areas of inquiry, not least significant of which is the identification of individual printers and locations of printed texts. Because of these layers of information it carries, typography can be said to crystallize a cultural moment, encapsulating information about the printer that produced it, the environment in which it was produced and employed, and its function as a bridge between the text it conveyed and the audience for which the text was meant. A particular type and its employment within a text transmits fruitful information of this kind in its form and quality, its relation to other similar types, its use in other regions or time periods, its use by other (contemporary) printers, its capacity for being used as a header or title or other structural element, and its overall situation within a text or the corpus of a particular printer, place, or time.

Types "changed hands" and were sold or rented[6]. McKitterick points out:

> "Workmen took their skills from country to country (Germany to Italy and France in the fifteenth century; France and the Rhine valley to England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; the Netherlands to England in the seventeenth century; France to the Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example). Type-founding and paper-making were international businesses. From the 1450s onwards, printed books were international objects of merchandise, and therefore of reading."[7]

Thus in studying typography as a vehicle of cultural exchange in late medieval and early modern Europe, it is of interest to look at the movement of types that coincided with the movement of printers and the dissemination of the technology as a whole. Printing was from its

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no. 7 (2007): 197–211.Lotte Hellinga, 'The Bookshop of the World: Books and Their Makers as Agents of Cultural Exchange', in *The Bookshop of the World: The Role of the Low Countries in the Book-Trade 1473-1941*, ed. Lotte Hellinga et al. ( 't Goy-Houten, Netherlands: Hes & De Graaf, 2001), 11–29. Susan Roach, ed., *Across the Narrow Seas: Studies in the History and Bibliography of Britain and the Low Countries* (London: British Library, 1991).

[6] Leonardas Vytautas Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1976), 13–14.

[7] David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5.

inception a mobile technology transported by mobile technicians.[8] Indeed, the innovation itself was not the press—a technology that had been available in East Asia for some 600 years and was already used in the Mediterranean for pressing wine for some time[9]—but *movable type*. The innovation, type, itself mobile, was disseminated by equally mobile printers, whose mobility had an impact similar to that of the types they carried: mass distribution. By the end of the fifteenth century we see Venetian types used in England[10] and types modeled on the hands of Flemish scribes used in Spain[11]. Printing hubs like Antwerp and Venice drew typecutters and attracted an international reading audience that encouraged printers to be multivalent in their uses of typography[12], thus spurring on innovation and exchange in the use of type. Entire regions developed tastes for one family of type over another, which led to imported or foreign language texts in those regions being printed in recognizably alien texts, or by the same token exporting their own types to be used for the production of books of their own that were equally alien in other regions. Eventually, the exodus of typography and the diaspora of printers that carried it spread all over Europe to an effect that foreshadows and perhaps began the globalism and cosmopolitan cities of the 21st century and the digital age.

**Type worked as an agent of cultural exchange at three significant levels at the end of the fifteenth century: within cities, within nations or regions, and within Europe**. These three levels of movement yielded a pan-European identity of printing and the presentation of letters, a layered identity composed of the idiosyncrasies of the particular cities and regions within which types were exchanged before becoming assimilated into the continental European identity of print[13]. Viewing the mobility of incunabular type in this organized, three-level structure has implications for how we study fifteenth century typography: for example, what does it mean to have used an *Italian* type in a *Dutch* book? This thesis will in part raise the

[8] This case will be developed throughout this thesis Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice* discusses many of the migrant printers that came to Northern Italy from Germany; most of the works by Lotte Hellinga consulted here, including most notably her catalogue of *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, focus on the spread of printers and printing, largely to and from England and the Low Countries.
[9] Lotte Hellinga, 'The Gutenberg Revolutions', in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 209.
[10] Lotte Hellinga and Joseph Burney Trapp, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume III: 1400-1557* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 71.
[11] Wytze Hellinga and Lotte Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries* (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger & Co., 1966), 64.
[12] Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice*, 22.
[13] 'Continental' is meant here to refer to the entire geographic continent of Europe, including the British Isles.

question as to whether such a thing as an Italian type or a Dutch book even exists, or whether types, printing, and culture were too interwoven in early print to usefully distinguish any one from another.

Cities like Antwerp, Cologne, Venice, and Paris were already well integrated into not only the manuscript book trade but the larger world economy of late medieval Europe, and the renaissance in especially Antwerp and Venice stimulated these existing forces, propelling these and other cities into becoming the first major urban centers of printing. Venice alone was responsible for almost one eighth of all the books printed during the fifteenth century[14], and Antwerp was an international market that drew printers from all nationalities, producing texts in at least six languages, making it the heart of what Lotte Hellinga referred to as "the Bookshop of the World" in the fifteenth century.[15] Within such early global cities, founts of type, just as other commodities, traded hands; printers died and left relatives or apprentices to inherit their shops, or moved and sold off the typefaces less desirable for their newest destination, or commissioned types based on those of scribes or other printers in the same city. These practices gave cities both a local and cosmopolitan identity, drawing on the sum total of the cultural identities of the resident printers and their types.

The tidy names used to refer to late medieval and early renaissance regions now do not have such objective, well-defined referents as those of today's political states, and often under the arbitrary rule of one emperor or monarch over a geographically contiguous area with internally divergent histories, there were significant cultural differences within these "countries" or regions. When a printer moved from Gouda to Antwerp, he indeed stayed within the boundaries of the historically contrived "Low Countries", but in fact crossed an important cultural (and bibliographic) divide, leaving behind a deep local market for a broader cosmopolitan one with closer ties to England and France. Movement of types and printers within regions was stimulated by various push and pull factors between cities in these regions, and this exchange within cultural entities fostered both Europeanism and localism of printing, developing regional identities and contributing to the larger continental identity of early printing.

Mobility at its most extreme and perhaps most fruitful in terms of cultural and technological cross-pollination took place at the continental, European level. When a French scribe worked as

[14] *Ibid.*, 1.
[15] Hellinga, 'The Bookshop of the World: Books and Their Makers as Agents of Cultural Exchange'.

an apprentice in Mainz and then moved to Venice, he himself became, much like the types he would produce, commission, and use, a physical site of cultural interaction. When a German typecutter moved to Flanders and began producing Italian types, he infused his own German sensibility of letter forms and the Flemish bibliographic expectations of his surroundings surroundings into the Italian type, which was probably to be used for an international audience. This broadest level of migration—of printing, of printers, of types, of books—ultimately facilitated a pan-European identity of printing that would continue to develop throughout the early modern period.

The goal of the current thesis is to take the typography used and (in many cases) created by these innovative expat-printers of the late fifteenth century and use it as a lens through which to observe their impact on the processes of cultural exchange that coincided with dissemination of the technology of printing and fostered the beginnings of the transnationalism in Europe that characterizes much of the early modern period. The exchanges of typography and the cultural exchanges that coincided with them at the city, regional, and European levels together formulate what I am arguing to be a highly interwoven cultural identity of early printing in Europe. Typography in early print is the physical site of interaction between culture and print technology, and as such affords a unique opportunity to investigate the dissemination of culture that coincided with the spread of printing.

### *Typography and the Manuscript-Print Continuum*

The reading public of the fifteenth century – be it lay or clerical, popular or scholarly – had their reading habits primed by centuries of the manuscript book and its structure; indeed, it is unlikely that any fifteenth-century reader would have viewed a printed book as something inherently different than a manuscript, but rather simply a mass-produced version of a *book.*[16] Because of the printed book's inescapable kinship with the manuscript book and the influence

[16] Margaret M. Smith, 'The Design Relationship between the Manuscript and the Incunable', in *A Millenium of the Book: Production, Design & Illustration in Manuscript & Print 900-1900*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: Oak Knoll Press, 1994), 23–44. Smith argues that the relationship between the printed and manuscript book is one of *emulation*, in which print replicates many of the features of manuscript because of the practical constraints of the medium, rather than *imitation* or a conscious effort on the part of printers to deceptively replicate a manuscript aesthetic. Her argument asserts that readers at the time wouldn't have had the rigid conceptual division between manuscript and print common today, but would have rather seen one as an extension or adaptation of the other.

that its manuscript heritage had on typography as a disseminator of culture, typography's situation in the technological continuum between manuscript and print must be discussed.

Incunabular typography can be said to have two major sources of inspiration: fifteenth century scribes and German typecutters, the second group of which drew largely on (and sometimes coincided with) the first. Fifteenth-century typography was characterized by both continuity and innovation. Typecutters like Nicolas Jenson and Johan Veldener found themselves highly influential in their regions, designing typefaces for many printers, but scribes also contributed their weight to the design of typography. Early typefaces were based often on the hands of successful contemporary scribes, which often gave early typography a distinctive regional characteristic that easily identified it with the region or at least language in which it was produced; indeed, the typefaces of England's first printer, William Caxton, were almost certainly based on the hands of Colard Mansion and David Aubert[17], contemporary scribes of the Low Countries, and this early bond between printing in England and the Low Countries is part of what draws attention to the topic of study addressed in this paper.

"The first typographers – Gutenberg himself and the makers of type who worked under his direct influence – attempted to match the standards of manuscripts of their day by reproducing the scribal conventions which were familiar to their readers' eyes".[18] While it would have been an easy feat for a medieval scribe to implement multiple styles and sizes of text on a single page, the technological environment of early printing was much less accommodating to this. Where a scribe could use the same tools and the same amount of time, a printer must commission separate founts of type, an expensive and time-consuming feat. Early investments and innovations in type proved to be error-prone, producing typesets of various durabilities and qualities. According to Hellinga:

> "…before long, most printers began to work with more than one fount in order to distinguish titles, chapter headings, commentary, marginalia and the like, by varying the design and the size of the typeface. The gradations of emphasis in presenting a text and the extraneous matter that might accompany it were effects

[17] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 36–37.
[18] Hellinga and Trapp, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume III: 1400-1557*, 70. For a more nuanced view of this, see note 16 on the previous page.

that could easily be achieved by scribes, but in a printing house required considerable investment."[19]

Indeed, multiple founts of type proved to be completely necessary for the production of books intended for the literate audience of the fifteenth century. The manuscript book was a highly structured entity, with layers of physical and design features—such as headings, rubrication, *diminuendo*, and other aspects of *mise-en-page*—that articulated the meanings and structural functions of different parts of the whole to the reader, aiding the reader in unpacking and interpreting the information within.[20] One simple, static fount of type did not have this articulatory capacity on its own, which is why for most of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries we continue to see the phenomenon of "hybrid books"[21] and printed books heavily bedecked with manuscript features to support in this structuring of information.

Throughout the fifteenth and into the sixteenth century, different fonts and types became gradually more cheaply produced and more readily available[22], leading to what Frans Janssen calls a "typographic liberation movement"[23] that united many parts of production that had been previously divided in manuscript and incunable books. Among these were certain aspects of *ordinatio* and *mise-en-page* like rubrication and other applications of color that had previously been done by professionals outside the printing house. This had two important effects: 1) the

[19] *Ibid.*, 70–71.

[20] This view of an implicit structure to books and text is best summed up by Alan Galey et al., 'Imagining the Architectures of the Book: Textual Scholarship and the Digital Book Arts', *Textual Cultures* 7, no. 2 (2012): 20–42; Margaret M. Smith, 'Red as a Textual Element During the Transition from Manuscript to Print', in *Textual Cultures: Cultural Texts*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Orietta da Rold (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), 187–200; Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[21] Brown, 'Vroeg-Zestiende-Eeuwse Frans-Nederlandse Relaties: Pieere Gringores Enterprise de Venise En de Antwerpse Venegien'; Margaret M. Smith, 'Patterns of Incomplete Rubrication in Incunables and What They Suggest About Working Methods', in *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. L. L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills: Anderson-Lovelace, 1990), 133–145.

[22] L. Hellinga, 'Printing', in L. Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III: 1400-1557* (Cambridge, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 65–110, explains the gradual increasing availability of types and typecutters through the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, and F.A. Janssen, 'Nominated for the 'Best Book Designs' of the Year 1512', *Quaerendo*, 24, 3 (1994), 181–203, discusses this 'typographic liberation' in the context of early-sixteenth century book design. Hellinga's explanation is a tempered one that presents the increasing technical knowledge of print as a gradual evolution in which knowledge of typecutting would not likely be described as 'widely available' in the fifteenth century by most, whereas Janssen is more liberal in his interpretation. Alternatively, Smith, 'Red as a Textual Element During the Transition from Manuscript to Print' argues that such knowledge remained in fact severely scarce until the seventeenth century or later.

[23] Janssen, 'Nominated for the 'Best Book Designs' of the Year 1512', 183.

impracticality and expense of dividing a process meant for mass production between several different specialists, many of whom continued at the relatively slow, one-by-one pace of medieval manuscript production, meant that adding manuscript detail to a printed text gradually passed the point of diminishing returns as printing presses were able to more affordably integrate and automate the entire printing process, structuring printed books effectively without the aid of rubrication and other manuscript holdovers; and, more importantly, 2) the increasing availability and affordability of different typefaces, fonts, and sizes brought on by the dissemination of knowledge of foundering these materials and the rapidly increasing demand for them[24] meant that typographic features began to become the primary way of physically structuring the printed book. As physical and spatial differentiation of type became more practically executable, it quickly became a more efficient architecture for the navigation of the printed book.

While the early gap between supply and demand in typecutting expertise and the high price of a fount of type led to many one-type print shops, the need to structure the page visually, in the same way a manuscript would have been and thus the way that the literate public would have expected, led the most successful printers to invest in multiple founts of type. Indeed, a look at the texts produced by any successful printer in the fifteenth century will show that as their success increased so did the number of founts of type in their shop, and success and typography were closely related. Early startup printers or those in marginal areas often only worked with one or two founts of type (perhaps a body fount and a second for headings and titles), and in early incunabular printing this was true for printers in more urban areas as well, but as the fifteenth century progressed increasingly more multi-type books were produced. In short, if a printer wanted to maintain his business in a city that catered to multiple languages, genres, or formats of texts, it became absolutely necessary for him to invest in more types.

As will be demonstrated in a case study in the following chapter, it could be argued that Gerard Leeu's purchase of a Venetian type gave him what he needed in terms of capital to relocate his shop in Gouda to the cosmopolitan printing city of Antwerp, where his successes as a printer recursively allowed him to invest in yet more founts of type. Gerulaitis says,

> "A font of type was also basic, and certainly the most characteristic feature of a printing establishment in the fifteenth century. With the rapid proliferation of

[24] Hellinga and Trapp, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume III: 1400-1557*, 71.

> printing presses in this century, we might expect to find indications of a new enterprise devoted to the manufacture and sale of type, but Konrad Haebler, after a careful analysis of documents, categorically denies the existence of such an enterprise in the fifteenth century. This explains why, up to 1500, more than 2,000 varieties of type were cast, since each master printer had to produce his own fonts. Thus the delay that often occurred between a printer's settling in a city and the appearance of his first book is understandable."[25]

The migrant printers of the second half of the fifteenth century carried with them (many of them) the rare knowledge of a craft whose expertise would not come to be widespread until the end of the sixteenth century, and that craft is typecutting. Lotte Hellinga says that knowledge of typecutting was "a specialism in the hands of a small number of experts, whose skills were in great demand"[26]. The very few early experts in typecutting produced type for all of Europe during the incunabular period, and the exporters of type carried with them aspects of culture solidified in the type itself. The *technology* designed by (often foreign) producers was in itself a form, and its content would be largely defined by local customs and traditions, making typography the physical site of intersection between different cultures and between culture and technology; a German-designed font would be inspired by an Italian-style script, producing a culturally hybrid technology, and this technology may be used to produce a Latin liturgical text in France, adding yet more cultural contact zones in the use of such a type.

Thus typography – the physical founts of type that printers used to press the words onto the page – was as mobile as the printing press itself in fifteenth century Europe, and perhaps a more subtle carrier of cultural, regional, national, and even personal identity. It is for this reason that a survey of the spread of *typography* as a corollary of the spread of printing and the printers who executed it makes an interesting study of the cultural exchange embedded in this example of technological change. The examples and uses of typography engaged with in these thesis will aim to flesh out how printing and typography facilitated cultural exchange at the three levels mentioned above: the urban, the regional, and the European, and what the exchanges at these levels cumulatively say about the multicultural and European identity of early printing.

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[25] Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice*, 13.
[26] Hellinga and Trapp, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume III: 1400-1557*, 71.

***Geographic/Chronological Framework***

In the History of the Book, the fifteenth century in Western Europe is a natural chronological framework within which to study these examples of technological and coinciding cultural exchange during a time of textual revolution; if there ever was a moment of textual revolution reminiscent of the one we're experiencing today in the digital age, this must have been the introduction of printing in Europe in the late fifteenth century. This thesis necessarily takes as its subject of focus *incunabula*, or books printed in the fifteenth century. This is itself a well-defined but arbitrary term, designating a period that rigidly begins with the Gutenberg Bible around 1455 and ends at midnight on January 1 of 1501. Many of the concepts and trends discussed here will draw on their manuscript precursors and their continuation into the sixteenth century where necessary, but texts, printers, and types discussed will all belong to the bounds of the incunable period unless otherwise stated. That said, this thesis necessarily tangentially engages with and comments on the idea of a continuum between medieval and renaissance, manuscript and printing that is the subject of much work done notably by David McKitterick and others.[27]

While the chronological period justifies itself, it is necessary to look at the geographic areas to be examined and give a very brief overview of the early history of the printed book in these regions, as well as to introduce some of the key player expat printers whose careers and corpuses will be referred to throughout this thesis. The geographic focus of the analysis and examples used here will be mostly constrained to non-German examples, or where necessary German examples in comparison or contrast to others. This is because, when discussing type and printers as *mobile* entities, it is necessary to look at the areas of Europe that were "receivers of print" from Germany rather than the creation of the technology itself, which is necessarily a static subject. In studying the dissemination of typography, I will focus specifically on these migrations as they pertain to several of the regions that were the earliest "receivers" of printing: specifically, the Low Countries, Italy, and England.

Each of these three geographic regions had a different relationship to print and the printers who brought its technology. Northern Italy was one of the first regions outside the German Empire to begin printing and the new medium fit nicely into the context of the already strong-

[27] Most notable voices in this discussion are McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order 1450-1830*; Joseph A. Dane, *The Myth of Print Culture: Essays on Evidence, Textuality and Bibliographic Method* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

running Italian Renaissance, quickly elevating Venice to one of the first major centers of printing in Europe. Similarly to their southern neighbors, the Flemish cities integrated the new technology into the many successful business ventures that characterized the Northern Renaissance. England is perhaps the most distinct outlier; whereas Northern Italy and Flanders quickly adopted printing and did so more or less directly from the German tradition, English printing is largely mediated by its indirect inheritance through the Low Countries. However, as several of England's first printers learned the craft in Cologne and began printing in the Low Countries, discussions of early migrant printers necessarily include the early printers of England. Indeed, from another standpoint, Italy can be seen as the outlier or perhaps the 'control group' in this survey; while Germany, the Low Countries, and England formed part of the somewhat cohesive cultural spectrum of northern Europe and shared a 'genealogy' of print, Italy was separated by the Alps, and the German printers and typecutters who relocated there often *transplanted* the technology rather than *connecting* it to the German tradition.

Dissemination of printing didn't occur in a vacuum – it was physically and intellectually carried out by people, specifically the early printers and others involved with the fledgling printing industry. For this reason, substantial attention will be dedicated in this thesis to the early printers themselves; William Caxton, Johann Veldener, Johann and Wendelin von Speyer, Nicolas Jenson, Gerard Leeu, and the other enterprising expatriate printers of the late fifteenth century were the vehicles of the technological and cultural exchange that this thesis takes as its subject. Without their efforts – and in some cases that will be analyzed here, specific innovations, techniques, or texts – the cosmopolitan and far-spreading nature of early printing would have likely been something different altogether.

While the examples engaged with will be largely restrained to these three geographic areas, the underlying argument will necessarily drive these observations to less geographically-bounded perspectives, ultimately commenting on printing as a *European*, *cosmopolitan* phenomenon, thus while the "migrations of types" discussed here stem from fifteenth century examples in England, the Low Countries, and Italy, it is the goal that the arguments made are extensible to broader discussions of the dissemination of printing and typography in Europe.

### *Methodology*

This thesis will progress primarily in the form of a comparative review of literature regarding incunabular typography, focusing on the exchanges of typography at the city, regional, and European levels and primarily on the geographic areas of Northern Italy, the Low Countries, and England. Great emphasis will be placed on the "migrant printers" in and between each of these regions as agents of cultural and technological exchange. This thesis will conclude in looking at some of the impacts of such movement and what this says about the early dissemination of printing and the associated cultural exchange in late fifteenth century Europe. It is the hope that the large scope of the literature review and the conclusions drawn therefrom can be used to inform future work in the form of a large scale bibliographic or book historical study of the dissemination of printing in the fifteenth century.

With these guiding questions and the contexts and approaches that will frame them established here in the first chapter, this thesis will set out to elucidate the facilitation of cultural exchange and its fostering of a European identity of print at the three levels described above. The second chapter will analyze typographic and cultural exchange at the urban level, looking at the means and effects of such exchange within individual cities and engaging with Venice and Nicolas Jensen's venetian type as exemplary of these phenomena. The third chapter will look at the movement of types on the regional level, examining the various push and pull factors that facilitated typographic and cultural exchanges within broader political or cultural units and between cities within these units. This chapter will profile Gerard Leeu and the transition of his press, types, and texts from Gouda to Antwerp as a potent example of typographic and cultural exchange at the regional level. The fourth chapter looks to the broader pan-European movements of type as partly resultant of the same movement at the urban and regional levels but also greater than the sum of these parts. Chapter four will thus follow the movements of particular types and printers between cities and regions to trace typographic migrations across Europe, profiling William Caxton as an outstanding case of typographic and cultural exchange at the continental level. Finally, the fifth chapter will use these observations and analyses of the movement of type at the city, regional, and continental levels to formulate a conclusion about how the dissemination of printing and movable type corresponded to and fostered the dissemination of culture and ultimately a transnational European identity of printing and typography in the fifteenth century.

## Chapter Two: Typographic Exchange within Cities

The first of the three levels of mobility of type to be examined is the urban level, that of movements of typography within individual cities and the cultural exchanges that coincided with these technological exchanges. This chapter will survey several early printing hubs and eventually come to focus on Venice as the highlight of this phenomenon, profiling the German-trained French printer Nicolas Jenson and his work in Venice developing his famous international venetian type.

The early spread of printers and printing found itself a natural home in urban centers. By the Late Middle Ages, there were already several strong centers of not only commerce and trade in general but also the manuscript book trade; these cities as well as university cities made some of the friendliest early environments for the spread of print. What's more, such cities as Antwerp, Venice, Paris, and Cologne had a natural pull on their surrounding less urban areas and even other cities and areas nearby to draw those interested in working in the printed book industry. Cities like these became not only early cradles of printing but also—by virtue of drawing those involved in the book trade but also in general drawing immigrants from other cities and regions—early cosmopolitan environments for the kind of cultural exchange that was facilitated by early exchanges of books and types.

Urban centers of printing facilitated exchanges in typography and thus corresponding cultural exchanges in several key ways. One of the most straightforward has to do with the role of typecutters in early printing cities: well-established markets like those in Antwerp and Venice drew not only printers but also those who supported the industry, such as bookbinders, metallurgists, and typecutters. Early printing cities often had typecutters based in-city and catering to the printers in those cities, like Henric van Symmen in Antwerp, Aldus Manutius in Venice, or the unnamed "Gouda typecutter" who catered to Gerard Leeu and other printers in Holland.[28] These typecutters would provide different founts of type for different printers, but the individual founts of a typecutter's corpus are still in some way related to each other; modern bibliographic study often identifies the types of one particular typecutter as they were disbursed across cities or regions, thus showing that each typographer had some degree of personal flair with which he infused the founts he produced. Furthermore, highly successful types like Jenson's

[28] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 70.

venetian were the subject of envy by other printers, and thus typecutters were often hired to make close replicas of such founts.[29]

Type circulated within cities in other ways as well. Printers often sold off their own founts once they became more successful and purchased new ones; a startup printer may have purchased only one or two rudimentary founts of type, perhaps a roman and a gothic, and once they had raised enough capital to invest in a better fount, the older, inferior founts were sold off to other printers, normally in the same city.[30] Inheritance was also a popular means of disseminating type: when printers died, they typically left their presses and all their founts to heirs or apprentices to continue their work.[31]

When types circulated in these ways, they carried with them certain embedded cultural sensitivities. When Gerard Leeu died in Antwerp and another local printer acquired his oldest gothic type, what he gained was a very typically west Holland fount, based on local manuscript book hands of the region. When other Venetian printers copied Jenson's perfected venetian font, they copied a letter style influenced by a Frenchman familiar with the French manuscript book market, influenced by his training with printers in Mainz, and adapted to the Venetian and international markets, thus carrying with it at least three or four different levels of cultural perspectives that were then impressed into the pages of books produced by other printers, perhaps Spanish or Polish printers who also brought their own cultural frameworks to the production of books.

The end result of this was the creation of multiple and multicultural city identities. Books produced in Venice or Paris can often be identified as such, but what generates this *Venetian* or *Parisian* identity is the sum total of many cultural pieces. Antwerpian books were produced in a setting dictated by the tastes of the French-speaking Burgundian aristocracy and supplied by Flemish printers as well as many migrants from the northern Low Countries and Germany.[32] Early Venetian typography was almost exclusively produced by Germans[33]—with the very notable exception of Nicolas Jenson, a Frenchman—and from the start aimed to cater to quite a

[29] The example of Johan Veldener's expert copying of other typefaces will be discussed in the following chapter.
[30] Examples of this practice done by Jenson, Leeu, and Caxton are discussed later in this chapter, chapter three, and chapter four, respectively.
[31] See notes 58, 90.
[32] Chapter 3 will detail the migrant printers from the northern Low Countries, Germany, and elsewhere working in Antwerp.
[33] Horatio Forbes Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press, 1469-1800* (Amsterdam: Van Heusden, 1969), 28–29.

broad audience and sense of tastes beyond just Venice's city limits. This was reflected in typography: an Italian typecutter's interpretation of a gothic type is different than that of a scribe in Bruges, thus these cultural sensitivities were embedded in the types produced and used in different regions, and such large-scale exchange as took place in cities such as these contributed to an ever more mixed yet distinct local character.

A limited group of several European cities came to prominence in the printed book trade early in the incunable period, facilitating this kind of urban exchange of types between printers, and this small group of cities was responsible for a highly disproportionate amount of the output of all printed books in the fifteenth century. Andrew Pettegree refers to these cities as "a steel spine that ran along Europe's major trade routes from Antwerp and Paris to the north, through Cologne, Basle, Strasbourg and Lyon to Venice in the south. Within these printing behemoths was concentrated much of the investment capacity of the industry, and the most sophisticated mechanisms of financing, warehousing and distribution. These cities were the natural focus of projects that required substantial investment."[34] Of course the first of these cities was Mainz, though this quickly yielded to its more northerly and better geographically-situated neighbor Cologne, which to some extent became a sort of regional training center for northern printers and typographers in the fifteenth century.[35] Printing was present in Paris by 1470, where it quickly found a home in the preexisting market for scholarly texts and luxury manuscripts demanded by the university and the aristocracy, but also benefitted from the major commercial status of the city.[36] Antwerp quickly found itself home to a largely international market in the 1470s, situated between the German Empire, the northern Low Countries, England, and France, and thus came to cater to the largely multilingual market, but also drew on the heritage of the strong Flemish market for luxury manuscripts.[37] Bruges similarly remained a center of luxury books, though never developed the intense international pull of its neighbor to the east.[38]

In the south, Venice would become the trailblazer of not only Italian but all Southern European printing. The city-states of Northern Italy at the end of the fifteenth century, while also being the driving force behind the Italian Renaissance, together comprised one of the first centers of printing outside of Germany. Together Venice, Florence, and Rome constituted the cradle of

[34] Pettegree, 'Centre and Periphery in the European Book World', 104.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Ibid.*, 102–103.
[37] *Ibid.*, 103.
[38] *Ibid.*, 114.

the prolific Southern European printing industry, and Venice alone was responsible for almost one eighth of all the books printed during the fifteenth century.[39] Indeed there were many pull factors for potential migrant printers to bring their technology and businesses to Northern Italy, not the least of which was the economic stability of the area and the luxurious taste of the aristocracy. Many foreign printers furthermore decided to settle in Venice at least partly for the excellence of the paper and the ease and cheapness with which it could be obtained.[40]

The following case study profiles the development of Jenson's venetian type. It will begin by looking at the earliest printer-typecutters in Venice and their influence on Jenson's type, taking into account Jenson's own background and journey to Venice, and finally the uses of this type in Venice and how it rose to prominence.

***Case Study: Venice and Jenson's Venetian***

Venice was the earliest Italian center of the book trade, and indeed also the first center for typography. Brown says:

> "In the decade between the years 1470 and 1480, we find the names of no fewer than fifty typographers, many of them masters of first-rate importance, who were at work in Venice. Very many of these were Germans. A variety of reasons contributed to draw these Germans to the capital of the Republic. Her geographical position – her proximity to one of the great passes, the Brenner, which led right into the heart of Germany – and as consequence of this geographical position, the large and powerful colony of German merchants who frequented the city; the presence of the great German change, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, where every German had an opportunity for meeting his fellow-countrymen, for hearing and sending news, for dispatching and receiving goods – all these advantages tended to draw German printers to Venice upon their first arrival in Italy. At the first appearance of the art, printing society in Venice must have been largely German in character."[41]

[39] Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice*, 1.
[40] Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press, 1469-1800*, 24.
[41] *Ibid.*, 28–29.

Thus early Italian typography was highly German in character, though it over time evolved into perhaps the most locally-attuned feature of book printing technology; Italian type was recognizable throughout Europe and took on a certain prestige, and even printers in the north like Gerard Leeu paid large sums to acquire Venetian types especially.[42] Gutenberg's technology quickly took on the local flavor in the hands of the expat printers (and typecutters) who introduced it to Italy. The fifteenth century Italian typefaces employed by these early Venetian printers generally fall into two categories: gothic and roman. Gothic, used all over Europe, remained dominant in Germany throughout the period, while the roman types quickly came to be preferred in the Italian context, at least partly because of a humanist desire to recreate what they saw as a classical roman letter. Nicolas Jenson in Venice perfected the roman type, which will be discussed below.

Printing arrived in Venice in 1469 with Johannes de Speyer's edition of Cicero's *Epistolae ad* familiars,[43] and he, his brother Windelinus, and Nicolas Jenson together were some of Italy's first printers, the brothers De Speyer from Germany and Jenson a Frenchman. The three earliest Venetian printers used roman, gothic, and Greek types. Particularly Johannes and Windelinus de Speyer began with impressive roman types. The first roman types and those which are most similar to the ones used today were designed by the brothers Johannes and Windelinus de Speyer, two of the first German printers to migrate south to Italy. It is not known for certain where Johannes de Speyer learned the art of printing, though it seems somewhat likely that he could have worked in a printing shop, perhaps in Mainz, before moving to Venice.[44] In any case, either Johannes or Windelinus had working knowledge of printing technology before they arrived in Venice. After initial successes in Venice, Johannes de Speyer in 1469 obtained a five-year sole right to all printing in Venice, thus effectively establishing one of the first printing monopolies and likely deflecting other printers that would have moved to the city; indeed, in 1470 roughly a dozen new printers established presses in the other Northern Italian city-states, while Nicolas Jenson and Christopher Valdarfer were the only new names in Venice.[45] However,

[42] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 64.
[43] Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice*, 20.
[44] *Ibid.*, 21.
[45] *Ibid.*

the following year Johannes died, leaving his press and founts to his brother Windelinus who also quickly died within the year, reopening the Venetian market to other printers and new types.

Nicolas Jenson is the interesting outlier to the pattern of German printers and printers' apprentices coming to Italy, though he appears to have actually learned in Germany himself. Jenson was French, and was reportedly sent to Mainz in 1458 by King Charles VII "to learn the secrets of the new trade of printing", after which he apparently relocated south to Venice.[46] Why Jenson left Mainz for Venice is not known for certain, but it was certainly a logical choice; Jenson may have ridden on the coattails of the many German printers heading south, following them to an economically thriving area where "the nobles were rich, where learning had its home, where manuscripts were stored in abundance for printing to reproduce, where there was a public, both lay and ecclesiastic, ready to pay for these reproductions."[47]

In fact, these manuscripts have exerted an important influence on the typography of Jenson and his contemporaries. The manuscript tradition and a sensibility regarding what kind of scripts belonged to what kind of texts was a source of innovation. Because of such specific expectations, Jenson was pushed to invest in more than the simple but successful roman he had used for classical and vulgar texts; as Gerulatis points out in discussing the early development of Jenson's types, Jenson must have "felt obliged to produce a gothic letter for juridical and theological books, primarily because a reader who was accustomed to gothic letter in, say, legal manuscripts would be suspicious of a book printed in another script."[48] It is thus largely in an attempt to satisfy expectations of what script was appropriate to what text that Jenson so deftly experimented in typography. Jenson employed "two beautifully harmonious gothics" as well as a "celebrated roman"[49]. Most famously, his "venetian" type, based on the earlier roman of the brothers De Speyer, became renowned as not only one of the most perfect types used in Venice but throughout fifteenth century Europe.

According to Brown, "Neither John of Speyer nor Nicolas Jenson debased or altered their roman type; but this example was not followed by all their contemporaries in the art of printing. As the art spread and brought with it a demand for cheap books, the question of economy in space made itself felt as offering one of the principal means by which the price of books might

[46] *Ibid.*, 22.
[47] Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press, 1469-1800*, 11.
[48] Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice*, 15.
[49] Victor Scholderer, *Printers and Readers in Italy in the Fifteenth Century* (London: G. Cumberledge, 1949), 6–7.

be lowered. Roman type accordingly suffered changes. Under stress of this demand for economy in space, it underwent two modifications disastrous to its beauty; first, the loops of the letters were made oval instead of round; and, secondly, the strokes of the looped letters were allowed to encroach on a portion of the loop."[50] It was these skimping practices that allowed the types of the brothers De Speyer and more significantly Jenson to prosper.

After the death of the brothers De Speyer, Nicolas Jenson cut a new roman type based on that of the German brothers, and this type simply came to be known as "Jenson's Venetain" or just "venetian", renowned for its "beautiful face" and rapidly becoming the model for the Venetian and Italian typefaces that followed.[51] This "perfected roman type" was held in high regard by his contemporaries in Venice, and as we will see in the following chapters rose to international fame, spreading wide across Europe before the end of the century and serving as the standard form for many years to come.[52] Thus the German-trained French printer-typecutter produced in Venice one of the widest-reaching types in the fifteenth century, his venetian, which would also later become the basis for Veldener's later northern venetian.

Jenson became a strategic sharer of types when it came time to compete in the growingly challenging market of the Venetian print book trade. After a German printing company began to attempt to monopolize Venetian book printing in the early 1470s, Jenson was one of the only printers able to compete with them, though it was at first a losing battle. In 1473 Jenson began an association with fellow Frenchman Jacques le Rouge, whom he also allowed to use his types, including the successful Venetian, and this economic and typographic union appears to be what allowed Jenson to keep his business above water through the most competitive times in the Venetian book trade.[53] From 1476-1478 these two presses were responsible for nearly half of Venetian product (82 of 207 texts); in 1474 Jenson released only 3-4 editions to his German competitors' 18.[54] In 1474 Jenson incorporated two more German entrepreneurs in his business, teaming up and sharing types, and by 1476 Jenson's own output was finally more than that of the competing German company and any other press in Venice.[55] In this example, the feature separating the two rival printing companies was most distinctly Jenson's superior venetian type;

[50] Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press, 1469-1800*, 18.
[51] Scholderer, *Printers and Readers in Italy in the Fifteenth Century*, 6.
[52] Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice*, 15.
[53] *Ibid.*, 25.
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] *Ibid.*

it is the type that would have been used for the surge in religious and classical texts he produced in this period[56], and the Venetian reading public surely must have preferred his fine typography to the lesser alternatives available.

Thus the success of Jenson's perfected venetian type reaped benefits for not only his own press but for others with whom he worked, and the local esteem of this type helped propel it to international stardom throughout incunabular Europe. His temporary colleague Jacques le Rouge left Venice in 1479 in favor of Pinerolo, where he continued to print and use types modelled on those of Jenson.[57] When Jenson died he left his press and founts to one Peter Ugelheimer, presumably an apprentice or another printer who had been involved with his press, and thus his types continued to be used in the Venetian market and elsewhere.[58]

Venetian typography was dominated by foreign typecutters until Aldus Manutius, at the end of the incunable period, produced "a roman of much originality which later became a favourite model." It wasn't until the early sixteenth century that he produced his famous italic, blazing the trail for Italian typographers in Italy. [59] It is certainly worth noting that the typographic struggles that took place in fifteenth century Venice were primarily between German and French printer-typographers, with a remarkable lack of any Italian participants on the scene until Manutius's appearance at the end of the period. The gothic types produced by the brothers De Speyer continued to be influential among gothics in Venice for several years, and Jenson's venetian was held as the standard and ideal until well into the sixteenth century.

### *Conclusion*

The Venetian typography scene was highly multicultural from the start; with its early influences coming mainly from printers and typecutters from German and French backgrounds, adapting these backgrounds to produce types suited to the Italian and Venetian contexts, nearly every fount of type in fifteenth century Venice would have had a multinational heritage. This inherent multicultural condition of typography in this early printing powerhouse fueled the kind of cultural and technological exchange that took place in many of the incunabular printing

[56] *Ibid.*, 26.
[57] *Ibid.*, 27.
[58] *Ibid.*, 13.
[59] Scholderer, *Printers and Readers in Italy in the Fifteenth Century*, 8.

centers, with the many migrant printers becoming cultural transplants and their many founts of type frequently changing hands.

Through inheritance, buying and selling, copying, and shared ties through shared typecutters, the exchange of Venetian types fostered a distinct local character of its typography, one that was distinctly diverse. This exchange and diversity culminated in Jenson's famous venetian type, a roman so perfect that it was awarded the name of the typographically competitive city in which it was produced. It is worth asking what made Jenson's famous fount so "beautiful" and "perfect" as it was often described by his contemporaries. Could it be the right mix of various cultural aesthetics and a highly-skilled typecutter? Jenson's individual sensibility to fonts and what constitutes appealing letter would have certainly been rooted in the French manuscript tradition, and he later learned the arts of typecutting and printing at their origin in Mainz. After moving to Venice it appears that he began with several modest founts and eventually chose the roman type of the brothers De Speyer, transplanted Germans who had already lived and printed for several years in Venice, as the basis for one of the most successful types of the fifteenth century.

Jenson and his venetian contributed to typographic exchange within the city of Venice in the early 1470s when the market became competitive and he entered partnerships with other French and German printers in the city. Through this typographic showdown with his Venetian competitors, it is likely the perfection of his venetian that allowed Jenson's company to succeed, and after Jenson's death and the dissolution of the company, his types and others inspired by them were left in the hands of his apprentice and the three other printers with whom he had worked, propelling his venetian in its journey to European stardom. This type was key not only in Jenson's success as a printer, but also in exporting the Venetian typographic identity to the rest of the region and eventually Europe, quickly becoming a highly-desired international type that allowed Venice to participate in cultural exchange via typography at the regional and continental levels as well as the urban. In the following discussion on exchanges of typography within cultural regions, it will be seen that printers and typecutters in the Low Countries were also designing and using their own versions of Jenson's venetian and employing it in their own cultural, linguistic, literary, and economic milieu.

## Chapter 3: Intra-regional migration of types

The second of the three levels at which types and thereby culture circulated in the fifteenth century print world was the regional level, cultural units grouping several cities and centers of print together. This chapter will proceed to use the term "region" rather than "country", as this level of typographic movement refers not necessarily to political units but to cultural (and often linguistic) boundaries. Places like "the Low Countries" and "Italy" were not necessarily *countries* as we would conceive of the term today; most of the medieval Low Countries—encompassed by the modern-day Netherlands and Flemish Belgium—was part of the Burgundian Empire, while other parts were independent city-states and counties, just as most of Northern Italy was comprised of independent city-states, and the German Empire itself was a loose collection of semi-independent entities, most of which united by the common German language. Thus *intra-regional* cultural exchange refers to cultural cross-pollination within one entity, at the tier between local and continental. This chapter will discuss the several regions in which printing quickly rose to prominence in fifteenth century Europe, looking to the Low Countries for a case study in which Gerard Leeu's move from Gouda to Antwerp and the resulting spread of his typography underscores the role and the causes and effects of typographic exchange at the regional level.

The type of movement that was perhaps at the top of the cost-benefit curve for printers would have been movement within a region, transplanting from one city to another within a similar cultural and linguistic area. It is not uncommon in the incunable period to see the same names appearing in the colophons of several different cities in the same kingdom or linguistic or cultural area[60]; in theory, an Italian printer who had founts of type suitable for publication in Venice would have been just as well-equipped for the market of Rome or Florence. Similarly, a typecutter working in Bruges would have certainly heard the call and economic promise of opening his services to printers in Antwerp or Ghent. Regional markets were conducive to the dissemination of types, as they provided large markets for the few specialists in typecutting and printers without requiring drastic moves from them.

[60] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*. lists at least a dozen different individual printers and companies that show up in multiple cities throughout the region in the incunable period, some, like Veldener, moving multiple times and back and forth between the same locations, or others, like Leeu, maintaining presses in multiple cities simultaneously.

In practice, this was not exactly so simple, as different locales even within the same cultural region could have vastly different printing markets. For instance, a Florentine printer may have not had the range or quality of typographic material to meet the demand presented by Venice's much more cosmopolitan market, and thus wouldn't have been able to successfully move there without investing in more founts of type. Conversely, a Venetian typecutter may have had a hard time selling northern bastarda fonts to the local markets in Subiaco, as there would have been little demand for such tastes there. Nonetheless, language and regional taste in typography made for, at its broadest level, relatively easy transition of printers and types between different cities in the same region.

By the middle of the incunable period there were several big names in typography in any given region of print. Johan Veldener had perhaps the strongest reputation of all the typecutters in the Low Countries, having supplied types for at least 14 identified presses and likely many more unidentified in the northern and southern Low Countries[61] and even producing his own venetian fount that became widely used in the north[62]. Veldener's professional reach even extended to the British Isles, having provided Caxton with several founts of type[63]. Aldus Manutius is perhaps still today one of the most famous incunable typecutters, credited with inventing the italic type,[64] and Nicolas Jenson engineered the previously mentioned venetian that became the standard for most of Europe throughout the fifteenth century.[65] These master typecutters often provided entire regions of printers with founts of type needed to run their presses, and were sometimes asked to cast new founts based on the type of another printer or typecutter, facilitating the type exchange in their regions.

The Low Countries was probably the best example of intra-regional mobility of type in the fifteenth century. Figures like Gerard Leeu, Johan Veldener, William Caxton, Gerardus De Leempt, and others all released editions in multiple locations within the confines of the Low Countries, with many fonts carrying over between print shops and others coming into existence only once printers reached new markets. Further, Veldener especially is a figure that stands out as a prolific typecutter, and he sold his fonts to many in the Low Countries, including England's William Caxton, who spent many years in Flanders and Cologne. While there were several

[61] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 252.
[62] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 64.
[63] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 17-18.
[64] Scholderer, *Printers and Readers in Italy in the Fifteenth Century*, 8.
[65] *Ibid.*, 6.

interesting diasporas of type throughout the Low Countries, Veldener was likely the most prolific typecutter of northern Europe in the fifteenth century.

Late-fifteenth century Flanders was not only the home of the Northern Renaissance in Europe but also an important center for the book trade during and before printing. Throughout the fifteenth century it served as a hub of manuscript production and illumination, exporting many texts to England and France, and carrying a reputation for the finest illuminated manuscripts that led its products to be pursued by aristocrats in France, the Low Countries, and England.[66] It is largely the Flemish inheritance of the manuscript book world that empowers Flanders's transition into an important center of printing, with important transitional scribe-printers like Colard Mansion. Furthermore, as part of the Burgundian Netherlands for most of the fifteenth century, it was an important political middle ground between the feuding parties in the Wars of the Roses and less-than-friendly sentiments between England and France. Located at an important geographic junction between England, France, the rest of the Low Countries, and Germany, Flanders was an ideal disseminator of book printing technology and thus of typography and culture.

This political and bibliographic position made Flanders an important cultural contact zone between various regions of continental Europe and Britain in the fifteenth century, especially in terms of the dissemination of print technology. Flanders's geographic and political situation projected its reputation as a cosmopolitan city with a huge market for printing, especially multilingual printing and translation. As a city where the citizenry would have spoken Flemish Dutch on the street, where a French-speaking aristocracy ruled, and with important trade ties to the rest of Europe, the Flemish cities themselves were at the very least bilingual, and the book trade that found its home in them was highly multilingual. In fifteenth century Antwerp alone were Latin, French, Dutch, English, and German regularly printed, and throughout the other Flemish cities were even Low German, Italian, and other outliers to be found. This means that multilingual and multinational printing offered opportunities for printers that would not have been available in the Rhineland, France, or the Northern Netherlands, all of which catered to more monolingual local markets and produced only Latin books for export, making Flanders the place to be for printers looking to expand internationally.

[66] Pettegree, 'Centre and Periphery in the European Book World', 120.

One of the most notable facilitators of typographic exchange within the Low Countries was undoubtedly Johan Veldener. Veldener, of Wurzburg, Germany, shows up in the company of Ulrich Zell and William Caxton in Cologne in the late 1460s. Veldener's role in the Cologne printing industry is vague; some bibliographers credit him as the printer of several editions produced while he was certainly there, but this is not supported by any colophons or otherwise concrete evidence[67]. It is certain that he was producing type there; his type 1 derives from Cologne, as well as his first fount produced for Caxton.[68] Veldener must be viewed first as a typecutter and supplier of types and only secondarily as a printer or publisher.[69] He could also easily be argued to have been one of the most innovative of the early typecutters, integrating the German technology with his local surroundings in the Low Countries.

One of Veldener's greatest contributions to the typography of the Low Countries was his type 8, a venetian cut. Hellinga explains that, "By cutting his type 8 Veldener enabled printers in the Low Countries to adapt themselves to the new and widely accepted style without, as Gheraert Leeu had done at about this time, having to import type from Venice. From this time on the Venetian style makes an increasingly frequent appearance in books printed in the Low Countries."[70] While Leeu was using his hard-earned Venetian in Antwerp and Veldener was disseminating his type 8 far and wide, printers in other places than Louvain (where Veldener's press was located at the time) were working with related founts. By the end of the fifteenth century, there were several located and unlocated presses throughout the Low Countries using venetian fonts, all or most of which must have been either acquired from Veldener or based on his type 8.[71]

Another significant printer in the early Dutch printing milieu – though one with perhaps a less obvious impact on his contemporaries – is Gerard Leeu. Leeu first shows up in history in Gouda with the 1477 release of *Epistolae et Evangelia* in Dutch.[72] It is worth noting that Leeu's first imprint, and indeed everything that came off of his press for the first two years, was in the

[67] Hellinga, 'The Bookshop of the World: Books and Their Makers as Agents of Cultural Exchange', 12.
[68] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 17–18.
[69] *Ibid.*, 21.
[70] *Ibid.*, 64.
[71] *Ibid.*, 74–75.
[72] All particular information on Leeu's imprints come from the British Library's *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*, http://istc.bl.uk.

vernacular, in a time when Latin was the dominant language of the printing press. This embrace of vernacular printing can especially be seen in his time at Gouda: between 1477 and 1484, Leeu printed twice as many Dutch vernacular editions as Latin, compared to the standard incunable ratio of about 75% Latin and 25% vernacular.[73] Among his notable imprints here were the first known vernacular edition of the popular Late-Medieval *Gesta Romanorum*, his *Die geesten of geschiedenis van Romen* in 1481. He also issued the first French language text in the Northern Low Countries, an edition of the *Dialogus Creaturarum* in 1482,[74] and later in Antwerp would go on to print the first English book in the Low Countries after Caxton's departure.

***Case Study: Gerard Leeu's Type Diaspora***

Gerard Leeu's career as a printer is illustrative of typographic exchange within regions in the fifteenth century. The types he acquired and used each had particular cultural ties, be they local or foreign, and his move from a small local market in west Holland to a thriving international market in Flanders moved his types with him, eventually spreading his typography to the southern Netherlands, while he maintained typographic ties to the Gouda press and the Gouda typecutter with whom he had worked previously. As Leeu's types moved, producing for new audiences or coming into the hands of different printers, so did parts of the local culture they represented, contributing to the larger print culture of the Low Countries.

Antwerp's reputation as a cosmopolitan city with a booming book trade attracted many printers from the surrounding regions of the Low Countries and further abroad. The preexisting rich tradition of manuscript production and illumination, the multilingual and cosmopolitan milieu, and the presence of wealthy Burgundian book patrons created an opportunity that savvy businessmen such as the early migrant printers would have had trouble resisting. One printer who in fact did not resist the call of Antwerp was Gerard Leeu.

In late 1483 or 1484, Leeu left Gouda and moved to Antwerp in search of a broader and more cosmopolitan public. Blok and Mulhuysen say that Leeu's "entrepreneurial spirit sought new opportunities overseas"[75], making the international market of Antwerp the perfect location. While Leeu has no apparent connections with Germany or the early German printers, he

[73] Blok and Molhuysen, 'Leeu, Gerard'.
[74] Lotte Hellinga-Querido, 'De Betekenis van Gheraert Leeu', in K. Goudriaan (ed.), *Een Drukker Zoekt Publiek: Gheraert Leeu Te Gouda 1477-1484* (Delft: Eburon, 1993), 14.
[75] 'zijn handelsgeest zocht over zee nieuwe banen'. Blok and Molhuysen, 'Leeu, Gerard',

nonetheless falls under the category of "expat printers" by virtue of this move. Despite staying within the bounds of the medieval Low Countries, Leeu crossed an important cultural (and bibliographic) boundary within this area form the Northern to the Southern Low Countries, and his publications are in nearly all ways remarkably different between the two locales. From small-scale, mostly-vernacular printing in Gouda to the cosmopolitan and multilingual nature of the printing market in Antwerp, Leeu also remains typographically tied to other printers of his era, both migrant and fixed, and thus his corpus in many places illuminates interesting relationships between printers and regions.

In Gouda Leeu used five different typefaces, which he employed differently according to specific linguistic situations. One of his types was perceivably French in character and thus used to print French texts, while another acquired from Vienna toward the end of his tenure in Gouda was used only for classical texts in Latin,[76] but on the whole most of his types were said to have "a real Dutch cut".[77] His first type in Gouda was, similar to the types found in Delft then and before, based on the typical Holland gothic book-letter that was ubiquitous in the area. While Hellinga asserts that this type was "not, any more than its predecessors, a direct imitation of some particular script,"[78] it was in fact an imitation of a general local style of script. Whereas Veldener's first type produced for Caxton, for example, was based on the hand of Colard Mansion, Leeu did not specifically solicit a fount based on the script of a particular scribe, but he did—as pragmatism and sense would drive any printer to—select a type that was recognizable as belonging to the area in which it was used. This was a pragmatic choice and an understandable one; for three years Leeu published, with one single exception, exclusively vernacular books, aiming thus exclusively at the Dutch-speaking audience of the Low Countries.[79] Leeu's first type would have greeted such readers with familiarity.

Hellinga observes what she describes as the "dilettante appearance" of Leeu's type 1, pointing out that, "By 1477 experienced typecutters, even in this part of Europe, were no longer producing such founts. The dilettante quality relates, however, only to the cut of the letters. There is nothing to indicate that the matrices were not expertly justified."[80] This certainly plays

[76] Hellinga-Querido, 'De Betekenis van Gheraert Leeu', 18.
[77] 'een echt Nederlandse snit'. Blok and Mulhuysen, 'Leeu, Gerard'.
[78] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 36.
[79] *Ibid.*, 36–37.
[80] *Ibid.*, 37.

nicely into Leeu's narrative as a small-scale Gouda startup who later makes it big in the Antwerp printing market.

Leeu used his second typeface throughout 1478 without alteration, until the abovementioned Latin edition, the *Breviarium Trajectense*, for which the previously "extremely simple" typecase underwent a drastic enlargement. Hellinga describes the changes that Leeu's type 2 underwent to accommodate its first Latin text (and perhaps by extension his first attempt at reaching a wider audience):

> "At the very beginning of 1479, however, appeared the solitary Latin work mentioned above, the *Breviarium Trajectense*, CA 372. For this edition the typecase, hitherto of extreme simplicity, underwent a drastic enlargement. This was to be expected: Latin texts required the use of large numbers of contractions. As we shall see, however, the important thing is that the additions to the typecase were clearly the work of the typecutter responsible for type 2, whom we may also assume to have made type 1 by way of an initial experiment. Leeu continued during 1479 to print Dutch texts with this revised fount, but in 1480 his output changed character drastically. For a time it consisted mainly of works in Latin, and from 1480 onwards it was obviously aimed at a wider market than the Low Countries alone."[81]

It seems thus that as early as 1479 Leeu may have had his sights set on the international book market, and in preparation for such a career move began improving on his existing inventory while acquiring more. In 1482 or 1483 he decided to procure new types suitable for books designed for export,[82] investing further in his typographic inventory, and even appears to have travelled to Italy in 1483, after a year of no new books coming off his press, to acquire a high-quality Venetian typeface just before making the move to Antwerp.[83]

Leeu took three of the five typefaces he had used in Gouda since the reorganization of his business – gothic type 4, large venetica type 5, and small venetica type 3 – when he moved to

[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] Hellinga-Querido, 'De Betekenis van Gheraert Leeu', 18.

Antwerp, where he eventually acquired four more.[84] By taking his local west Holland type to Antwerp, he introduced to the larger cosmopolitan market of the southern Netherlands a piece of local taste from the north, which would later, by virtue of being the type of a successful printer, be popularized and become one part of the whole that made up the larger typographic scene of Antwerp. Furthermore, his introduction of a venetian – certainly not a type native to the Low Countries but one he nonetheless commissioned and used himself – was one of the earliest to surface in Antwerp.[85]

In Antwerp Leeu solicited different founts for different national and linguistic productions,[86] continued to print in multiple languages and for multiple publics, now with a noticeably greater Latin output than before (though still proportionally less than that of his contemporaries) alongside Dutch, French, English, and even Low German, as well as several multilingual or parallel editions, and he continued to use typography in purposely different arrangements for different languages. Furthermore, Leeu's newly acquired typefaces allowed him to rely more exclusively on his printing press and print technologies for structuring his books, using different sizes or fonts to signal different types of content or sections of the text, thus cutting out manuscript hangovers such as hand rubrication that were common in his Gouda imprints.

In December 1492 Leeu had an argument with his typecutter, an argument that ended with Leeu's death. Henric van Symmen, also known as Henric de Lettersteker, was an independent typecutter working in Antwerp during Leeu's tenure there, and it appears that Leeu attempted to contract the Lettersteker to work exclusively for him. Their argument appears to have escalated to a physical confrontation, resulting in the typecutter stabbing Leeu in the head with a piece of type.[87] Leeu died the next day, just months after his English counterpart and correspondent Caxton, and his last imprint, *The Chronicles of England*, was published posthumously in 1493.

During and after his life, Leeu's types and others modelled on them spread far and wide throughout the Low Countries. Jacob Bellaert of the Haarlem press used a type exactly matching Leeu's type 4;[88] indeed, based on the content of both printers' presses, it appears that the two may have had a close business relationship, but certainly Bellaert's fonts were all at the very

[84] *Ibid.*, 70.
[85] The venetian used by Johannes de Westfalia was the only earlier: *Ibid.*, 16.
[86] *Ibid.*, 70.
[87] Blok and Molhuysen, 'Leeu, Gerard'.
[88] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 73.

least reminiscent of those of Leeu, and his typographic construction of *mise-en-page* was also remarkably similar to that of Leeu.[89]

While the typographic relationship between Leeu's Gouda press and that of Bellaert in Haarlem is slightly ambiguous, that between Gerard Leeu and Claes Leeu is perhaps more direct. Despite sharing a surname, it is unknown whether the two were brothers or indeed related at all; what is known is that, when Gerard Leeu began his move to Antwerp in 1484, Claes was left behind in Gouda as custodian of the Gouda press. In the years that followed, Claes Leeu issued exclusively reprints of editions that had previously come off the Gouda press, identical in every detail of typography, with only the colophons changed. [90]

Henric de Lettersteker also produced types similar to Leeu's types 12 and 9 that he sold to, among less prominent printers, Mathias van der Goes and Jacob van Breda,[91] and the Gouda typecutter who appears to have provided Leeu with his first founts remained active in the area, resulting in a diaspora of Leeu and Leeu-reminiscent types throughout Holland in the late fifteenth century.[92] After Leeu's death, the three types he brought from Gouda were sold to other printers in Antwerp.[93] Leeu's ironic end, dealt his death blow by a piece of type, did not end his typographic influence on the Low Countries, with his types spread across the northern and southern parts of the region, perhaps more widely disseminated than anything else but the types produced by Veldener.

### *Conclusions*

Leeu's mobility fostered a mobility of nearly all the types he used and was associated with. Beginning in Gouda and mostly engaged with the local markets there, Leeu became a carrier of a local, *Hollandish* brand of typography, infusing his texts, also intended for this local market, with this Dutch quality. His acquisition of a venetian type from abroad was a nice compliment for the inevitable odd Latin work that he would be motivated to issue in Gouda, but further no such diversity of type was necessary for him.

Leeu fell victim to, or perhaps rather benefitted from, the push and pull factors that fostered most of the intra-regional migrations of printers and types in the fifteenth century. Eventually the

[89] Ibid.
[90] *Ibid.*, 74.
[91] *Ibid.*, 73.
[92] *Ibid.*, 70–73.
[93] *Ibid.*, 71.

call of broader international markets led Leeu to invest in more founts of type and to eventually relocate his press and his Gouda types to Antwerp, still certainly in the heart of the Low Countries but a different market and typographic environment altogether. The three types he brought with him contributed a more local element to his typographic inventory in Antwerp, a key element to any press in even a cosmopolitan market like Antwerp, as undoubtedly some amount of the books printed there would be intended for a local market; furthermore, his highly west Holland type 1 helped him maintain a competitive advantage in his home market. By the late 1480s, Leeu's types or types based on them could have been easily identified in Gouda, Haarlem, Deventer, and at least one other press in Antwerp (that of van der Goes). His ironic and tragic end led to a further dispersal of his types across Antwerp, including his valuable Venetian type, further diversifying and internationalizing the already cosmopolitan Antwerp market.

It is certainly because of this mobility of Leeu and his types that both the printer and his use of typography were able to have such a profound impact on incunabular printing in the Low Countries. Hellinga refers to Leeu as "the most original publisher in the Low Countries in the fifteenth century," not only for his printing and publishing but for his affinity with typography. Hellinga argues further: "It is also true in large measure of his ideas about what a book should look like, and his assigning of an important role not only to illustrations, but also to purely typographical means. The eleven founts used by him during his career, […] none of which he made himself, reflect therefore something of the character of this unusual personality."[94]

Leeu's story is exemplary of intra-regional migration of types. In some cases local markets dry up or become oversaturated with printers, and in others, as in Leeu's case, nearby markets offer irresistible promise to enterprising printers. When these printers moved intra-regionally, they would have rarely simply thrown their existing founts aside, as these were expensive and sometimes difficult to come by, thus the migration of local types helped build a regional identity, until by the end of the fifteenth century Gouda types could be found in Antwerp, Leuven types in Utrecht, Ghent types in Leiden, etc. Moreover, such mobility also necessarily participated in the city and continental levels of migration, as printers left founts to successors or sold them to others in the new cities in which they worked, which at least in the case of global markets like Antwerp eventually led to the issuing of texts for the European market.

[94] *Ibid.*, 73.

## Chapter Four: European Typography

The movement of types at the city and regional levels discussed above often culminated in trans-European typographic migrations in the fifteenth century, as this chapter will show. Already we have seen several examples of this, such as the French-born Nicolas Jenson who learned printing in Mainz, set up a press in Venice, and engineered a venetian type that came to be used across Europe; or Johan Veldener, German-born typecutter who worked with several expat printers in Cologne, moved to various cities throughout the Low Countries, and copied the best techniques found in Southern and Northern Europe to supply printers across the continent with high-quality types. This chapter will detail another figure that was closely associated with Veldener, William Caxton, and how the typographic exchanges in which he participated facilitated the larger cultural exchange taking place at the European level in early print.

While the exchanges taking place at the urban and regional levels had, as demonstrated above, a great impact on the dissemination of printing and the importation and exportation of culture that so often went along with it, the market of incunabular print was most importantly *European* and cosmopolitan from its beginning. "German printers brought the new art, already matured, across the Alps,"[95] says Brown in "The Venetian Press", referring to the earliest printing in Venice. Indeed, most of the earlier printers and typographers in the Northern Italian city-states were Germans who had migrated south to set up their own printing houses and profit from the quickly growing industry[96]. The early printers of the Low Countries were often Dutch or Flemish artisans who had learned in Cologne or other German cities, but notable exceptions like Veldener were similarly cultural-technological transplants. Most significantly, England's first printer, William Caxton, as well as his successor, Wynken de Worde, were European cultural hybrids, the prior an Englishman who spent most of his life in Flanders and learned printing in Cologne, the latter a tradesman of ambiguous German or Dutch origin who would employ Caxton's Flemish-inspired types after his death[97].

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[95] Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press, 1469-1800*, 1.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Various sources list de Worde as being potentially of Dutch or German origin, with several older works suggesting that his surname indicates an origin in Woerden in the southern Netherlands. The most up-to-date consensus seems to be that he was in fact German. See N. F. Blake, 'Caxton, William', *Oxford Dictionary of National Bibliography*, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/view/article/4963?docPos=2; Hellinga, 'Printing'.

These trans-continentally migrant printers and the types they carried were seemingly more the rule than the exception in the world of fifteenth century printing. As the technology and the demand for it rapidly took hold, printing became a profitable but competitive industry, with plenty of opportunities and incentives for those with the technical knowledge or the capital to invest to relocate. Andrew Pettegree, in his discussion of the "centre and periphery of European print", says, "The printed book plays a fundamental role in any presentation of the culture of European society in the centuries of the Renaissance and the Reformation. In all general treatments of the transition from the medieval to the modern, print emerges as one of the crucial determinants."[98] Indeed, printing itself can be seen as a globalizing force, and printers and typography the agents that carried it out.

The two broadest categories of types that moved and were traded across Europe were the roman and gothic.[99] Roman type was first used by two Germans, C. Sweynheym and A. Pannartz, when they printed Cicero's *De oratore* in Subiaco, a village in the suburbs of Rome, in 1465. These two men moved to Rome in 1467 and continued to print using a different version of the roman type, which later influenced the typefaces developed by others.[100] Early roman types were engineered primarily in Italy, by among others the brothers Johannes and Vindelinus de Spira in Venice, and more significantly Nicloas Jenson, also of Venice, who, as previously mentioned developed the early standard *venetian* font. Gothic was the other main family of international types in fifteenth century Europe, also referred to as "medieval international" for its currency in the manuscript tradition.[101] The medieval *textura*, *rotunda,* and *bastarda* scripts came down to the incunabular period, inspiring most of the early Gothic types.[102] While gothic fonts were certainly more prevalent in northern Europe, there were very few printers in the south who didn't own at least one gothic fount, used if nothing else for legal and liturgical texts.[103]

The internationalization of these fonts was catalyzed by the most migrant and impactful of printers and typecutters that disseminated printing and typography through Europe, leading to the emergence of several international types or families of type. The venetian, as mentioned, was

[98] Pettegree, 'Centre and Periphery in the European Book World', 101.
[99] Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth Century Venice*, 14–15.
[100] 'A Short History of English Printing, 1476-1898'. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20393/20393-h/20393-h.htm#Page_1> (1 July 2014).
[101] *Ibid.*
[102] 'Incunabula'. <http://www.ndl.go.jp/incunabula/e/glossary/glo_06.html> (1 July 2014).
[103] *Ibid.*

international in style, and because of this, versions of it can be found all over Europe in different versions in Italy, Spain, France, the Low Countries, and Germany.[104] This is the type on which Veldener's aforementioned type 8 was based, his high-impact type that provided northern Europe with a high-quality venetian and made it easier for printers to acquire such a type without having to travel to Italy or contract an Italian typecutter. Jenson's venetian can thus be said to be one of the earliest truly international, European types used in early print.

Hellinga says, referring to one of the early types of Johannes de Westfalia in Alost, "The *littera venetica* must have been an expensive type to buy. It was ten years before another printer—Gheraert Leeu in 1483—imported Venetian types into the Low Countries, just about the time, as it happens, that Veldener succeeded in manufacturing a fount in Venetian style."[105] De Westfalia, German-born and Italian-educated, further fostered the internationalization of especially Italian types while working in Flanders. According to Hellinga, he was not himself a typecutter, rather obtaining his thigh quality punches from others, especially from Italy. Indeed, his type 2 is a variant on Jenson's own venetian type 3. It is for these reasons that Hellinga says, "His method of production, characterized by standardization, his choice of types, and his use of them made Johannes de Westfalia the most Italian-oriented printer of his time in the Low Countries. His list of titles was of course determined by the culture of north-west Europe, where most of his books were sold. But he was in every respect the most modern of all the publishers of his time and region, not excluding Gheraert Leeu, Antwerp, and the two large-scale presses in Deventer."[106]

Perhaps most notably under this category of highly migrant and European-oriented printers was William Caxton and the coterie that surrounded him for much of the 1460s and 70s, including Johan Veldener and Wynken de Worde. Early in his life Caxton was apprenticed to a mercer who dealt in textile trading with Flanders, and through this apprenticeship Caxton first became involved in overseas affairs in the 1440s. By April 1465 he was governor of the English nation in Bruges.[107] In 1463 trade relations between England and Burgundy deteriorated and a restriction on the sale of English cloth in the lands of the duke of Burgundy was imposed. So in 1464 the English merchants left Flanders and settled in Utrecht. Caxton may already have been

[104] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 74.
[105] *Ibid.*, 16.
[106] *Ibid.*, 60.
[107] Blake, 'Caxton, William'.

governor at this time since he is referred to by name in the Dutch documents which gave the English merchants permission to trade there. While the English merchants traded from Utrecht, Caxton returned to Bruges to negotiate the end of the ban. A new treaty with Burgundy was finally agreed in 1467 and this was strengthened by the marriage of Charles, duke of Burgundy, to Margaret, the sister of Edward IV of England, in 1468."[108]

Caxton, himself a cultural transplant, having spent more of his life in Flanders than in England, was not only England's first printer but perhaps one of the most *pan-European* of the early printers. The types that he acquired from other culturally hybrid figures and locations – most notably Veldener – made their way through Flanders, to England, and eventually came back to influence the larger European market and the types it employed.

***Case Study: Caxton's Early Types***

The journey of early English typography begins in the fifteenth century Flemish luxury manuscript market, the source of the book-hand that inspired what would originally become Caxton type 1. Caxton went to Cologne in 1471, almost certainly with the express intent of learning the art of printing and investing in his own press, where he came into the company of, among others, Ulrich Zell, his likely first teacher; Johan Veldener, his first typographer; and Wynken de Worde, his apprentice and eventual successor[109]. It seems to be here in Cologne that Veldener crafted Caxton's type 1; Hellinga says that "It is more likely that Caxton left Cologne with that type in his possession than that he had it designed later."[110] Thus the beginnings of *English* typography were at every level multinational: Johan Veldener, a German printer who had spent time in the Low Countries, cut Caxton's first fount of type while both of them were in Cologne, and further what Veldener produced in this type was a Burgundian bastarda "astonishingly similar to the Flemish book-hand". This would be the fount that Caxton and Mansion would use together to produce Margaret's edition of the *Recuyell of Troy*, an early, rudimentary type that embodied the taste of the aristocratic consumers of the Flemish luxury manuscript market.

[108] *Ibid.*
[109] Hellinga, 'Printing', 78; Blake, 'Caxton, William'.
[110] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 24.

When Caxton arrived in Cologne, Johannes Veldener was then working as a punchcutter and typefounder in Cologne for Ulrich Zell.[111] In 1472 Caxton returned to Bruges with Veldener and probably Wynken de Worde,[112] his successor, and printed the *Recuyells of Troy*, the first work printed in the English language, in the first fount of type Veldener produced for him[113]. Hellinga's analysis of Caxton's type 1 points to it being one of Veldener's early productions, before he acquired the skill that made him one of the greatest typographers of the incunable period:

> "What at all events we can say of type 1 is that it gives the impression of being immature. The designer was unsuccessful in conquering the difficulties inherent in the creation of a new fount in a new style. In this exceptional case the forms of the written hand failed to group themselves sufficiently into verbal units, not despite the many ligatures but precisely because of them. It is therefore not surprising that Caxton himself so obviously found it not worth his while to take type 1 with him to England, so that his type 1 disappeared."[114]

Caxton and Veldener left Cologne at approximately the same time, presumably together, in late 1472 or early 1473. Caxton returned to Bruges where he had worked before as a diplomat, and Veldener appears to have gone immediately to Leuven. While Caxton and Veldener were both working in Flanders, Veldener appears to have designed another fount of type for Caxton: this one based on the hand of scribe-gone-printer and Caxton-collaborator Colard Mansion. While it cannot be conclusively proven that the first was designed by Veldener, it stands stylistically on its own, and there are no material links with other typefaces.[115]

When Caxton finally returned to England and set up shop in Westminster in 1476, he didn't leave the Netherlandish influence behind him. Caxton's time in the Low Countries and his learning of the craft of printing there have two important corollaries: 1) that Caxton learned printing in the context of its being a specifically Netherlandish (or at least *Continental*)

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[111] Lotte Hellinga and Wytze Hellinga, 'Caxton in the Low Countries', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 11 (1975): 19.
[112] Blake, 'Caxton, William'.
[113] Hellinga, 'Printing', 73.
[114] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 24.
[115] Hellinga, 'Printing', 73.

phenomenon, which he then brought back to England; and 2) that he made all of his early professional connections with Continental (almost exclusively Netherlandish) printers and booksellers. This means that it's largely necessary to view printing's onset in England as a more Continental or Netherlandish phenomenon, and that his network of Netherlandish colleagues helped to perpetuate this Flemish and Dutch influence on early English printing. This said, it is important to view Caxton's career in the milieu of not only its historical and political context, but of his contemporaries, especially those he met and worked with in Cologne and Flanders.

Caxton left for Westminster with type 2 and 3, both of which made by Veldener, and the imperfect type 1 fell into disuse.[116] After moving to Westminster, Caxton made improvements to his type 2, and later acquired several more founts, all purchased from the continent. [117] Caxton, as the father of English printing, introduced the English book world to the printed book, perhaps not immediately drastically different from the manuscript book that the reading public would have been used to, but different in its identity. The third volume of the *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* very handily frames the period from 1400-1537 as one of transition, rather than going with the more confining convention of breaking the period at 1450; in Hellinga's chapter on the beginnings of printing, she couches it in terms of the existing English book culture and the contemporary production of manuscript books in England as a highly nationalistic practice, despite the fact that the printed book would become a cultural phenomenon entirely imported from the Low Countries and Germany:

> "The character of book production in the British Isles had a strong national identity, long before the kingdoms became united. This was due to language, since there was a much higher percentage of vernacular texts, or texts with a specific English use - for example books of the common law - than was the average in other language areas. Production, however, was almost entirely dependent on materials, techniques and skills brought in from overseas, and it was a long time before English-born printers and booksellers outnumbered their

[116] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 23.
[117] 'A Short History of English Printing, 1476-1898'. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20393/20393-h/20393-h.htm#Page_1> (1 July 2014).

> colleagues who had come from abroad. Not until 1534 did legislation end the supremacy of foreigners in the book trade."[118]

However what Caxton—or perhaps more accurately, his typography—introduced to England was only in practice and at its simplest level something "English"; instead, the German-engineered types based on Burgundian manuscript hands belonged to the *European*, cosmopolitan identity of printing. It should be reinforced that, in the fifteenth century, England never produced its own typography, but rather imported it: "it was usually obtained from abroad through well-established relations with punchcutters and typefounders in France, Germany, and the Low Countries, and, where necessary, was adapted for printing the English language."[119] From the beginning of Caxton's shop in Westminster and those of his contemporaries and predecessors like Wynken de Worde, Richard Pynson, and the anonymous Oxford printer, the ubiquity of continental formats and typefaces was undeniable. Just as printing in itself could be characterized as a *German* phenomenon, England, on the periphery of the world of the printed book, had adapted this *Continental* phenomenon for its own use. However, just as in the Low Countries and Italy, the early English printers – all of whom were migrants – would adapt this *German* phenomenon to its local context to produce something both culturally unique and part of a greater European tradition. An interesting outlier in the genetic tree of typography descending from Mainz to Ulrich Zell in Cologne to Veldener and finally Caxton are the types used for the first three books printed in Oxford in 1478-9. These texts employed a type acquired in Cologne and used by other Cologne printers, resulting in books that are stylistically indistinguishable from many Cologne texts.[120]

Caxton's arsenal of European, international founts of type further disseminated through early English printing. The St. Alban's Press made use of his type 2,[121] and John Lettou and William de Machlinia in London were known to have used his type 3 at least once,[122] to name a few contemporaneous examples, and after Caxton's death in 1492, Wynken de Worde—himself an

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[118] Hellinga, 'Printing', 68.
[119] *Ibid.*, 71.
[120] *Ibid.*, 78.
[121] 'A Short History of English Printing, 1476-1898'. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20393/20393-h/20393-h.htm#Page_1> (1 July 2014).
[122] 'The Use of William Caxton's Type 3 by John Lettou and William de Machlinia', < http://www.bl.uk/eblj/1983articles/pdf/article5.pdf> (22 June 2014).

expat printer who had worked in Germany and Flanders and who maintained strong ties to both regions—inherited Caxton's press and typography. Indeed, de Worde continued his master's example by acquiring two more founts from abroad, these similar in appearance to several used in France at the time.[123]

Caxton's texts continued to reach international, European audiences after his death, and perhaps had even more significance posthumously in Flanders. Caxton's contemporary, Gerard Leeu, whom he had probably met in Gouda in the mid-1470s, [124] maintained a strong relationship with his fellow printer across the narrow seas, exchanging a series of English and Dutch translations between the two throughout the 1480s and early 1490s. After Caxton's death, Leeu produced a surge of English language texts from his press in Antwerp, likely trying to fill the gap in the market left by his colleague, who had had a virtual monopoly on printing in English. Leeu continued to produce many English texts from Antwerp for export to England until his own untimely death. Leeu's last imprint, *The Chronicles of England*, was published posthumously in 1493.

It is perhaps with the export of English language texts that this idea of European mobility of type reaches its most fulfilling level. When Leeu began to produce his surge of English language texts from Antwerp, it appears that he attempted to make an adjustment to one of his founts in order to make it more appropriate to print an English book:

> "Leeu had tried a similar experiment, but one that did not involve the cutting of new sorts, at the end of the previous year. This was the printing of a *Vulgaria Terentii in anglicanam linguam traducta,* CA 1644. The English text was set in type 5, and Leeu tried to approximate to English graphical convention for setting –nd, -ing and –ll by using sorts from the typecase of type 5 and giving them a special function. These experiments show that Leeu did not intend to limit himself to producing Latin editions for export outside the Low Countries."[125]

[123] Duff, Early English Printing, 8
[124] F J Bakker and J Gerritsen, 'Collecting Ships from Holland and Zeeland: A Caxton Letter Discovered', *The Library*, 5.1 (2004), 4.
[125] Hellinga and Hellinga, *The Fifteenth-Century Printing Types of The Low Countries*, 70.

What is interesting here is less Leeu's ingenuity and more Caxton's apparent influence. If Leeu indeed attempted to Anglicize one of his founts to better appeal to the English market, particularly by focusing on specific letter forms, he must have done this on the example of an English type, and given the relative outputs of Caxton and his contemporaries in the 1480s and the obvious links between Caxton and Leeu, it seems almost certain that Leeu's source of inspiration was indeed Caxton.

***Conclusion***

While "English printing" can thus be said to have begun with Caxton in Cologne in the early 1470s, and "printing in England" itself begins in Westminster in 1476 with a parallel English and Latin edition of the *Distichs of Catho* and slightly later his first edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, the phenomenon of "English printing" and more specifically English *typography* is clearly from its inception something of a pan-European nature. It is already generally accepted that the English book market before Caxton (and largely throughout the entire incunable period) was highly dependent on foreign presses for import.[126]

This mass importation of continental books certainly sets the stage for the development of printing as a largely continental phenomenon; with the only available examples coming from the Continent and modelling Continental production practices, the English reading public would certainly learn to expect such a kind of book, and thus this practice of import would have created a certain set of expectations as to what a printed book should look like.[127] Of course, these expectations would also be (perhaps even more strongly) conditioned by the millennium of manuscript examples that preceded it; it is highly unlikely that a distinction would have been made in this period between a "printed book" and a "manuscript", but rather is it much more feasible that books would have simply been viewed as *books*, and the printing press as a mass-producer of (manuscript) books.

Similarly, the early English reading public would have been conditioned from the beginning to prefer this Burgundian book hand that Caxton introduced, rather than perhaps a native English script. For England, on the margins of Europe throughout the middle ages, this would have been an interesting cultural introduction. Furthermore, the use of Italian or venetian typefaces would

[126] Hellinga, 'The Bookshop of the World: Books and Their Makers as Agents of Cultural Exchange', 16.
[127] Hellinga, 'Printing', 73.

have also introduced a new element to the melting pot of English typography. Yet still, as discussed above, Caxton did make improvements on and adjustments to his existing founts, gradually Anglicizing them and blazing the trail for English typography.

Printing has been thus far discussed as a German technology that was exported and traded, but by virtue of the kinds of exchanges that also took place at the city and regional levels, the technology rapidly became something of a *European* phenomenon as well. Indeed, the East had movable type from as early as the ninth century CE,[128] thus the identity of *European printing* does have other examples against which to be contrasted. The construction of this identity, I argue, comes from the motions of printers and types, the same motions that took place within cities and regions, putting German typecutters in the British Isles and French printers in Italy. This technological globalization fostered a coincidental cultural globalization in late fifteenth century Europe, one whose agent was typography.

If this line of argument holds true, then it appears that Caxton's typographical inventory comes full-circle in its pan-European journey after his death. Beginning in Cologne, at the hand of a German typecutter, modelled after Flemish hands, acclimated to English tastes, and later shipped back out to the Flemish—and highly internationally-oriented city—of Antwerp, Caxton's types (and in this case particularly, under their influence, Leeu's type 5) became truly international, European typefaces, just one fount participating in the growing Europeanization of typography throughout the incunable period.

[128] J. S. Edgren, 'China', in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 103.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

Printing entailed a crucial difference from other commodities traded in the fifteenth century: its novelty as a technology meant that it required specific and rare expertise to use it, meaning that as the technology itself spread through Europe in the fifteenth century, so did the specialists who knew how to use it. Over the course of the fifteenth century, this resulted in a mass migration within Europe, not of an ethnic or religious group but rather of a class of technicians working in the printing industry: printers and typecutters saw opportunities for engaging in the emerging industry all over Europe, so they transplanted their techniques and themselves all over the continent.

These migrant printers and others engaged in the nascent printing industry brought more than just the physical technologies with them when they emigrated from one land to another, but also brought aspects of culture by means of the book industry. Medieval Europe was rife with various centers of manuscript book production, some like Flanders known for furnishing aristocrats with luxurious romances, others like Paris engaged in the production of scholarly texts, but each with their own approaches to producing a book. When these book professionals were suddenly mobilized by the print rush in the late-fifteenth century, they moved from place to place but surely always kept the cultural sensitivities to which they had been attuned.

This had nowhere so potent an effect as in the typography of early printing. Printers and typecutters moved within cities, within countries and regions, and across Europe, and some like Veldener or Jenson made several stops before settling down. The argument presented by this thesis is that this pattern of serial migration carried with it unavoidable acts of cultural exchange that manifested themselves in the typography of incunable print; when a printer from west Holland brought a type based on the local book hand there and printed it in Antwerp for a foreign buyer, or when England's first printer used founts modelled on the hand of a Flemish scribe and produced by a German typecutter, that these various cultural identities and idiosyncrasies were embedded in the types and the books they came together to produce, ultimately fostering a strong pan-European rather than local or regional cultural identity in early printing.

The Venetian typography scene was highly multicultural from the start; with its early influences coming mainly from printers and typecutters from German and French backgrounds, adapting these backgrounds to produce types suited to the Italian and Venetian contexts, nearly

every fount of type in fifteenth century Venice would have had a multinational heritage. This inherent multicultural condition of typography in this early printing powerhouse fueled the kind of cultural and technological exchange that took place in many of the incunabular printing centers, with the many migrant printers becoming cultural transplants and their many founts of type frequently changing hands. Through inheritance, buying and selling, copying, and shared ties through shared typecutters, the exchange of Venetian types fostered a distinct local character of its typography, one that was distinctly diverse. This exchange and diversity culminated in Jenson's famous venetian, which was key not only in Jenson's success as a printer, but also in exporting the Venetian typographic identity to the rest of the region and eventually Europe, quickly becoming a highly-desired international type that allowed Venice to participate in cultural exchange via typography at the regional and continental levels as well as the urban.

In the Low Countries, Leeu's intra-regional mobility fostered a mobility of nearly all the types he used and was associated with. Beginning in Gouda and mostly engaged with the local markets there, Leeu became a carrier of a local brand of typography, producing identifiably Dutch texts. His acquisition of a venetian type from abroad was a nice compliment for the inevitable odd Latin work that he would be motivated to issue in Gouda, but further no such diversity of type was necessary for him until he relocated his press and his Gouda types to Antwerp. It is certainly because of this mobility of Leeu and his types that both the printer and his use of typography were able to have such a profound impact on incunabular printing in the Low Countries.

Not only his typography but Caxton himself remained a highly international figure in his career, with ties to other European printers, especially in the Low Countries, influencing his works and typography. His early types were made by Veldener, the German typecutter who worked in and drew on the hands of Flanders, and he maintained a long-lasting bibliographic relationship with continental printers like Leeu and a corresponding exchange of ideas, texts, and techniques across the narrow seas. Leeu's case is again made interesting in that he is not known to have learned printing in Germany, and because, while early English printing can largely be viewed as a Netherlandish phenomenon, several of Leeu's later works actually appear to exhibit an English influence. The situation of his and other texts in their cross-linguistic and intercultural milieus in the Low Countries has much to reveal about the construction of early printing in

England and the Low Countries and the relationship of both to German printing, and more generally the influences that early printing cultures had on each other.

Venice and Jenson's venetian were exemplary of the most successful and most potent kind of cultural exchange facilitated by the trading of types within cities. Basing his famous type on the models that came before him—those made by other foreign printers in Venice and certainly the others he had seen in Mainz and France—he combined expert craftsmanship with multicultural influences to cut one of the most successful types of the fifteenth century, to be later disseminated throughout Italy and finally subsumed into the greater European cultural-typographic identity.

Leeu's story is exemplary of intra-regional migration of types. In some cases local markets dry up or become oversaturated with printers, and in others, as in Leeu's case, nearby markets offer irresistible promise to enterprising printers. When these printers moved within regions, they would have rarely simply thrown their existing founts aside, as these were expensive and sometimes difficult to come by, thus the migration of local types helped build a regional identity, until by the end of the fifteenth century Gouda types could be found in Antwerp, Leuven types in Utrecht, Ghent types in Leiden, etc. Moreover, such mobility also necessarily participated in the city and continental levels of migration, as printers left founts to successors or sold them to others in the new cities in which they worked, which at least in the case of global markets like Antwerp eventually led to the issuing of texts for the European market.

William Caxton and the international inheritance of his types make perhaps the culminating case study for the phenomenon of movable type moving through Europe at these three distinct levels in the fifteenth century. Caxton's typographic genealogy begins with Veldener, moves to England, and then is exported back to the Low Countries by means of translation, his texts carrying with them German-made and Flemish-influenced types, but also types certainly influenced by Cologne and even Jenson's venetian. The final early 1490s exchange between Caxton and Leeu represents the effects of typographic and cultural exchange on the continental level: the production of books in different languages and types for the international market, replete with cultural and technological influences from the whole continent.

I have argued that type worked as an agent of cultural exchange at three significant levels at the end of the fifteenth century: within cities, within nations or regions, and within Europe. The examples used to illustrate this have in many ways been cumulative, tracing several threads of

cultural exchange in early print as they evolved along these three levels. All lines can of course be traced back to Mainz, where Gutenberg issued the first printed book and where French printer-typecutter Nicolas Jenson learned Gutenberg's craft, later exporting it to Venice where he modelled a "venetian" type – though, as I have argued, it is a French-German-Italian and later pan-European cultural hybrid, despite its name – on another local roman type engineered by two Germans. This same venetian would later be masterfully plagiarized by the prolific German-born and Flemish-professionalized typecutter of the north, Johan Veldener, who from Leuven would sell his successful imitation of Jenson's venetian to printers throughout Northern Europe. Before the success of his venetian type 8, Veldener would spark the beginnings of English printing by providing William Caxton with his first two founts of type, based on the hands of the Flemish scribes Colard Mansion and David Aubert; Caxton would later acquire other founts from Continental typecutters to use in his press in Westminster, and economic competition for the English-language book market would export his types back to Antwerp where Gerard Leeu would make adjustments to his own already culturally hybrid inventory for printing and dissemination across Europe.

### *Looking Forward*

It is the hope that the observations and conclusions offered by the work done here will be able to inform future work in the study of incunabula. The questions raised here all center around the national and international identities of printing and specifically type and how these identities changed in their movements around cities, regions, and eventually Europe as a whole. This should bring some scrutiny to bear on national or cultural descriptors like "English" or "Venetian" when talking about the early printed book.

Bibliographic research often uses types to date and locate texts, and while this is clearly useful for discovering static information about the production of a particular book, in itself it fails to take into account the different cultural layers that go into the production of any text. As was demonstrated in the analysis here, the beginnings of "English printing" were a combination of Continental features: the first English book began its production in Cologne and was printed in Bruges, using a type cut by a German cutter and based on a local Flemish hand. When speaking of Caxton's types as "English", it is certainly useful to identify that a text came off of

his press in Westminster, but it is also interesting and perhaps more productive to ponder what the effects of the Bruges bookhand-inspired font might have been on the English reading public or on relations between England and the Low Countries in the period.

While the large focus has been on problematizing the simplicity of the conception of early print in terms of national cultural identities, a secondary goal has been to elucidate the similarly problematic relationship between manuscript and print in terms of the script-type continuum and its bearing on similar questions of cultural identity. The significant influence of local scripts on the production of typography draws attention to the equally significant influence of the manuscript tradition of the fifteenth century on the production, transmission, and reception of the printed book at the same time. Early printers still worked within the well-established manuscript paradigms of design, resulting in a printed product that was more similar to its manuscript predecessor than different from it. This should call into question conceptions of printing and typography as distinct from the manuscript book, encouraging rather a view of incunabula as one phase in the continuum of manuscript and print.

This thesis has traced several stories of specific types and printers. Jenson's venetian type is a potent example of what happens when expat printers from throughout Europe interact, compete, and innovate, and this type could also easily be discussed on the levels of regional and pan-European movements, having, as was discussed, quickly gained significance even in the Low Countries. Johan Veldener is a figure that also appears on multiple levels of typographic exchange: similar to Jenson, he began cutting type under the cosmopolitan influence of other printers and printers-in-training in Cologne, and also went on to use the new technique to mix his own background with his surroundings and cut some of the most beautiful Flemish-influenced gothic types of the incunable period, even supplying England's first printer with his first type and extending his influence to the continental level. And Caxton himself certainly engaged in typographic and cultural exchange in several cities before becoming an important figure in the Low Countries and finally the world as the first English printer. These movements and exchanges of typography and culture – at the city, regional, and continental levels – resulted in the rapid internationalization of printing in fifteenth-century Europe, and while individual cities and regions in incunabular printing retained identifiable local color, the cultural identity of printing by the end of the fifteenth century was more cosmopolitan and pan-European than

anything else, the result of the innovation of movable type and the innovative movable printers that moved it and moved with it.

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