

# *Aldus Manutius: Scholar, Printer, Publisher*

## *A Quincentenary Celebration*

FOR THIS Chapin Library exhibition, which was on view in February and March 2015, we were pleased to welcome as guest curator Edan Dekel, Professor of Classics at Williams College. Professor Dekel prepared an introduction and label copy, as well as an address which was delivered at an opening reception. All of these texts are included here. All of the items on display, unless stated otherwise, were part of the foundation collection of the Chapin Library, given to Williams by Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869.

WAYNE G. HAMMOND, *Chapin Librarian*

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**A**LDUS Manutius was born around 1452 in Bassiano, a small town in the hills about sixty kilometers to the southeast of Rome. The vernacular form of his name was Aldo Manuzio, which itself may have been a standardized and shortened form of Theobaldo Mannuccio. In the humanist style of the day, he was known universally by the Latin form of his name. Aldus studied in Rome, where he held citizenship for his whole life, with Gaspare da Verona and Domizio Calderini, and then in Ferrara with Battista Guarino. By 1482 he was fluent in Latin and Greek and took up a post as tutor to the Pio de Savoia princes of Carpi, the nephews of his friend and former fellow student, the great philosopher Pico della Mirandola.

In 1490 Aldus moved to Venice with the express aim of setting up a publishing house to make available classical Greek works that had not yet been published in the original language. This was a decidedly ambitious undertaking; while a few grammatical works, psalters, and selections from

ancient texts had been published in the thirty-five years since Gutenberg had introduced printing with movable type to Europe, the only classical Greek authors whose work had already appeared in full were Aesop (Milan, c. 1478) and Homer (Florence, 1488, in the Chapin Library).

The influx of Byzantine refugee scholars after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, as well as the presence of the largest number of printers anywhere in the world, made Venice a natural site for Aldus' new enterprise. In 1495, just past the age of forty, he published his first book, and over the next twenty years he would issue about one hundred and twenty editions. His heirs carried on with his work, and his grandson and namesake issued the last book from the Aldine Press in 1597, just over a century after Aldus printed his first volume.

If, as has often been claimed, one of the central achievements of the Italian Renaissance was the reintroduction of the literary and scholarly works of ancient Greece in the original language, then Aldus was perhaps the single person most responsible for it. At the same time, he radically transformed the world of publishing by establishing scholarly editorial standards and issuing portable editions of Greek and Latin classics, the latter printed in his newly invented italic typeface. These achievements made Aldus the foremost scholar-printer in the humanist era, and one of the most influential publishers in history.

This exhibition honors the extraordinary work of Aldus Manutius on the five hundredth anniversary of his death. His legacy is nowhere better exemplified than in the Chapin Library, an institution devoted to the ideals of the liberal arts as practiced at Williams College in the tradition first established by Aldus and his humanist colleagues.

## Aristotle

*Works* [Volume 1]

Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1 November 1495

The first Greek folio published by Aldus was in many ways his signature achievement. Aldus began his enterprise in 1495 by printing an edition of Constantinus Lascaris' Greek grammar and two short books of Greek poems by Musaeus and the Byzantine writer Theodorus Prodrōmus. Those preliminary efforts could hardly have predicted the masterful combination of scholarship and printing technology on display here. The sheer difficulty of compiling and editing over thirty treatises of Aristotle from dozens of manuscripts, and then setting the complex Greek type, makes this edition one of the great feats of Renaissance publishing.

Aldus issued the first volume, comprising Aristotle's logical works, in 1495 and then four additional volumes in 1497–1498. In launching his program with the collected works of Aristotle – perhaps the most influential thinker of the ancient world – Aldus announced his aspirations for the revival of classical learning in spectacular fashion. By presenting the text without Latin translation or any of the vast accumulations of medieval scholastic commentary, Aldus urged his readers to return to the original source and interpret anew. The direct encounter with primary sources remains a central goal of the liberal arts education to this day, and the copious annotations in the Chapin copy show one reader's attempt to wrestle with the principles of logic at their origin.

## Theodorus Gaza, c. 1400–1475

*Grammatica Introductiva*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, 25 December 1495

Theodorus Gaza fled to Italy in 1430 when his native Thessaloniki was captured by Turkish forces. He was one of the chief proponents of Aristotle against Plato in the famous controversy raised at the Council of Florence in 1439, which played an important part in encouraging the Italian humanists

to study both philosophers more closely. In 1447 he was appointed the first professor of Greek at the University of Ferrara, and Pope Nicholas V invited him to Rome in 1450 to undertake a series of translations of Aristotle into Latin.

Theodorus exerted great influence over subsequent generations through his Greek grammar, written for his students at Ferrara but only published for the first time by Aldus in 1495. The first modern grammar to include a section on syntax, it remained the leading textbook for several decades. As the great humanist Erasmus, who introduced it to Cambridge University, later wrote in his *On the Method of Study*: “Among the Greek grammarians everyone assigns first place to Theodorus Gaza.”

Michel de Montaigne, who once owned the Chapin copy and whose signature appears on the flyleaf, was less impressed with Gaza's exacting pedagogical methods. In his essay *On the Education of Children* he disparaged the famous grammar, “in which the precepts are thorny and disagreeable, the words empty and fleshless, giving you nothing to catch hold of, nothing to rouse the spirits.”

## Theocritus, Theognis, Hesiod, *et al.*

*Poems*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, February 1496

First and second issues

According to his preface, Aldus produced this miscellany of ancient Greek poetry at the request of his old friend and teacher Battista Guarino, who especially wanted a text of Hesiod's *Theogony* for his Greek students. A selection of Theocritus' *Idylls* and Hesiod's *Works and Days* had been published in Milan around 1493 by Bonus Accursius, and Aldus included these and several other works that were popular with Greek professors at the time. The pedagogical motivation for this edition resonates strongly with the teaching of Greek at Williams College, where Hesiod's *Theogony* has long been a mainstay of the intermediate reading course.

The work was printed in two variants, the second with some additional material and a

different arrangement of a few stanzas. Among the poems included in both issues is the *Syrinx* attributed to the Hellenistic poet Theocritus. This is an ancient example of a *carmen figuratum* or visual poem, in which the line lengths are arranged to suggest the shape of the subject of the verses, in this case the syrinx or pipe of Pan. Aldus offered his own interpretation of the visual element by framing the poem within the outline of a pipe.

### **Book of Hours. Greek.**

*Horae Beatissimae Virginis*  
Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1497

The Book of Hours was a Catholic prayer book popular in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. It typically contained an abridged version of the canonical hours of prayer along with several other devotional texts or aids. The format and number of illustrations in a Book of Hours usually reflected the status and wealth of the owner.

Aldus' Book of Hours contains his own Greek translation of selected texts from the Latin Hours of the Virgin. This Greek rendition had no practical liturgical use, but it did fit well within Aldus' larger humanistic program. He had already incorporated Greek religious texts in his editions of grammatical works to educate young readers. By issuing a familiar devotional text in a relatively inexpensive and portable format, Aldus could expose the educated classes to the Greek language and perhaps encourage them to read classical texts as well. Appropriately enough for an edition of the Hours of the Virgin, the woodcut facing the first page of the text depicts the Annunciation.

### **Psalter. Greek.**

Venice: Aldus Manutius, c. 1498

Aldus ostensibly published the Book of Psalms as part of his program to make available familiar texts as teaching aids for the Greek language. But he treated the text with the same editorial reverence that he showed to classical works. This was only the

third edition of the Greek Psalms ever published, and its preface announced Aldus' intent to produce a polyglot version of the entire Bible. While he never realized this particular ambition, two years after his death in 1518 his heirs issued a complete edition of the Greek Bible, the first of its kind available to the public, preceded only by the famous Complutensian Bible, which had already been printed but not yet published. The Chapin copy features a hand-colored initial letter for the first Psalm and the coat of arms of its first Italian owner.

### **Prudentius, Prosper Aquitanus, Johannes Damascenus**

*Poetae Christiani Veteres* [Volume 1]  
Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1501

The *Poetae Christiani veteres* is a three-volume collection of ancient Christian poets. Aldus originally intended to restrict it to Latin writers, but he later decided to add certain Greek poets with his own accompanying Latin translations. As with the Book of Hours and the Psalter, Aldus' intent seems to have been to use religious texts as teaching aids. The first volume contains the complete poetical corpus of the Latin poet Prudentius, who was much admired in the Renaissance; the first edition of Saint Prosper of Aquitaine, a disciple of Augustine of Hippo; and the first edition of the Greek hymns of Saint John Damascene. The Chapin copy is open to the text of the latter with Aldus' own Latin translation.

### **Aristophanes**

*Nine Comedies*  
Venice: Aldus Manutius, 15 July 1498

Aldus' first foray into Greek drama was this edition of Aristophanes. The editor, Marcus Musurus, consulted several manuscripts to assemble the best available texts for the plays. Unfortunately, the manuscripts at his disposal only contained nine of the eleven comedies to survive into modernity, so this first edition of Aristophanes' works lacks

the *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*. Likewise, Musurus did not have access to the three most important witnesses to the textual tradition. He did, however, collate many valuable ancient Alexandrian scholia found in the manuscripts and included them in the margins of the text.

In the preface to the volume, Musurus describes Aristophanes' style as "the ideal guide to conversational Attic Greek," and Aldus adds that "nothing would more suitable for those desiring to learn Greek than these [plays]." This opinion may explain why Aldus chose to publish Aristophanes before any of the Greek tragedians. The Chapin copy is open to the first page of the *Frogs*, one of the "Byzantine triad" of comedies regularly studied in Byzantine schools (along with *Wealth* and *Clouds*), and therefore more stable in its textual transmission.

**Angelo Poliziano [Angelus Politianus],  
1454–1494**

*Collected Works*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, July 1498

Angelo Ambrogini, known by his nickname Poliziano, was one of the leading Florentine humanists. Already gifted with a prodigious talent for Greek in his early youth, he became professor of Greek and Latin at Florence, served as tutor to Lorenzo de' Medici's children, and was a leader in the Platonic Academy. Perhaps most significantly for the history of textual criticism, he was the first scholar to pay close attention to the relationship between manuscripts and to emphasize the need to reconstruct an original text. He addressed these topics extensively in his *Miscellanea*, a series of essays on criticism and philology.

This work is also notable for containing Aldus' first use of Hebrew type, which was also the first example of Hebrew type in Venice. Poliziano quotes the sixty-fifth Psalm in order to correct an error in the Septuagint translation. In 1501 Aldus would publish a brief Hebrew grammar, consisting of the alphabet and a few brief biblical selections. He also made plans for a polyglot Bible, of which only a trial

sheet was ever produced, with type printed in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

**Francesco Colonna, d. 1527**

*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*

[The Strife for Love in a Dream of Poliphilus]

Venice: Aldus Manutius, December 1499

Perhaps no book published in the Renaissance has occasioned as much debate as the *Hypnerotomachia*, often called in English *The Dream of Poliphilus*. The work is widely considered to be one of the masterpieces of early printing, achieving a near-perfect harmony of typography and illustration. But scholars have spent centuries arguing over the identity of the author, the artist who created the magnificent woodcut illustrations, and even the meaning of the work itself. Written in a bizarre hybrid of Latin and Italian (interspersed with Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic words), the work is an overwrought romantic fantasy which combines fable, history, architecture, art, alchemy, and mathematics in an obscure allegorical framework.

Francesco Colonna, the likely author, was a debauched Dominican friar. The work was purportedly written in 1467 but could not find a sponsor until 1499, when, as the dedicatory preface explains, Leonardo Crasso of Verona (an ironically appropriate name, as some have suggested) arranged for to Aldus publish it, "lest it should hide longer in obscurity." This commission partly explains the fact that the work lies so far outside Aldus' usual scholarly orbit. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly his finest typographic achievement, printed with great clarity in a revised version of the exquisite roman typeface cut for Aldus by Francesco Griffo and first used in 1496 for Pietro Bembo's *De Aetna*.

The *Hypnerotomachia* is also the only illustrated book that Aldus ever published. It contains 172 woodcuts illustrating the landscape, architecture, and characters that Poliphilo encounters in his dreams. These illustrations show a wonderful sense of movement, with some scenes spread across two pages and others depicted in successive panels that

achieve an almost cinematic effect. The Chapin copy is open to an illustration of the first of four triumphal processions that celebrate Cupid by honoring the women loved by Zeus. Europa rides on the back of a bull, recalling the form that Zeus took when he abducted the maiden. The elaborate trophies and standards carried by the participants show the author's fascination with the details of ancient Roman triumphs.

## **Vergil**

*Works*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, April 1501

With this book, Aldus launched a revolution in the world of printing. Aldus had devoted the first five years of his enterprise to printing classical Greek works and encouraging the broader study of the language. He had also developed an exquisite roman typeface which would have enormous influence for centuries. But neither of these important contributions transformed Renaissance printing as much as his introduction of small-sized editions of the Latin and Greek classics, which he called *libri portatiles* or "portable books." Books in this smaller octavo size (which had previously been used only for works of private devotion) could be carried in one's pocket, were less expensive, and were generally more available for everyday use.

Aldus also dispensed with the commentaries that often accompanied Latin authors. The simple, attractive format made the classics more accessible and overturned the usual practice of publishing learned works in large sizes. The small size was further made possible by another major innovation: the invention of italic type, a compact style which allowed the printer to compress his text into fewer pages. The typeface was modeled on the humanistic handwriting of the era – perhaps even Aldus' own hand – and was cut by the same Francesco Griffo who had produced the great roman typeface for Aldus.

This modest volume thus stands as one the most innovative books in the history of printing, and it is fitting that Aldus chose Vergil – the most widely read Latin author to this very day – to inaugurate the second phase of his remarkable publishing career. In keeping with the simple elegance of Vergil's own style, the Chapin copy features tastefully gilded initial letters for the three works therein: the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid* displayed here.

## **Juvenal and Persius**

*Satires*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, August 1501

## **Martial**

*Epigrams*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, December 1501

## **Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius**

*Works*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, January 1502

Aldus followed his landmark publication of Vergil with editions of four other Latin poets in the space of nine months. Three of those books are displayed here, with only the May 1501 edition of Horace absent from the Chapin collection. The beauty and accessibility of the Vergil are evident in poetic works across several genres, including satire, epigram, elegy, and amatory verse. The edition of Catullus is particularly important for its vast improvement over the texts that had been published in the fifteenth century, which was largely due to the efforts of the young editor, Girolamo Avanzi, who had embraced the critical principles advocated by one of Aldus' heroes, Angelo Poliziano.

## Thucydides

*Histories*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, 14 May 1502

## Herodotus

*Histories*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, September 1502

Even after the great success of his portable Latin classics, Aldus remained committed to producing first editions of Greek authors. While poetic texts would appear in the new octavo format, Aldus continued to issue major prose works in large folios. These two editions of the great Greek historians appeared within five months of each other. Aldus frequently employed editors to prepare his texts, but he was interested enough in both Thucydides and Herodotus to edit the texts himself from multiple manuscripts. The editions were designed as a matching set, using the same paper stock, printing types, and number of lines per page.

Thucydides was already widely admired by the Italian humanists, but Herodotus had long suffered from ancient charges of untrustworthiness. By championing Herodotus, whom he praised in the preface both for his contributions as an historian and his “sweet, candid, and flowing” language, Aldus set the stage for the recovery of the historian’s reputation in the sixteenth century. The Chapin copy of Herodotus was once owned by Ambroise-Firmin Didot (1790–1876), scion of the famous French printing family and author of the first scholarly work on the Greek connections in Aldus’ life and works.

## Francesco Petrarca [Petrarch], 1304–1374

*Le cose volgari* [Vernacular Works]

Venice: Aldus Manutius, July 1501

## Dante Alighieri, c. 1265–1321

*Le terze rime* [Divine Comedy]

Venice: Aldus Manutius, August 1502

First issue

Although the majority of the portable editions featured classical works, Aldus also staked a scholarly claim to the two greatest Italian poets, Petrarch and Dante. Indeed, after Vergil and Horace, Petrarch was the third author issued in the octavo series. This is not such a surprise, given Petrarch’s status as the father of humanism, but Aldus did not slavishly honor Petrarch’s preference for his own numerous Latin works. Instead, he issued a volume of the *Canzoniere*, the renowned sonnets and other verses written in Italian (as Aldus’ title for the volume highlights). The text was prepared by one of the most influential figures in the development of the vernacular Italian language, the scholar and poet Pietro Bembo.

Bembo also prepared for Aldus an edition of Dante’s *Commedia*, which appeared the following year. Applying unprecedented philological rigor to the text of Italy’s national poet – and working from an authoritative fourteenth-century manuscript that had originally been a gift from Boccaccio to Petrarch – Bembo swept away over a century of early humanistic emendation and corruption and majestically restored Dante to his own era. The result was one of the greatest achievements in Renaissance textual criticism, and a text that would be the basis for every edition of Dante until the late nineteenth century.

## Dante Alighieri, c. 1265–1321

*Le terze rime* [Divine Comedy]

Venice: Aldus Manutius, August 1502

Second issue

*Gift of Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869*

*Le terze rime* [Divine Comedy]

[Lyons: Balthazar de Gabiano?, 1502–1503?]

*Gift of Frances Bernard of Pittsfield, Massachusetts*

The instant success of Aldus’ portable editions led enterprising printers across Europe, and especially at Lyons, France, to counterfeit his italic typeface and issue their own octavo volumes. Aldus quickly acted to secure the first known copyright protections in history, but these legal barriers

proved no match for the sea of pirated editions that flooded the market. The printers at Lyons produced almost sixty counterfeit Aldines in twenty-five years, though they were generally shabby products printed with defective type on inferior paper. The Chapin's second copy of Aldus' Dante contains a stern warning to would-be pirates in its colophon: "Let anyone who would print this book with impunity, or sell it without our permission, beware." But as the Chapin's copy of this Lyonese counterfeit shows, the warning was not only ignored, but also removed from book, along with the rest of the colophon.

### **Sophocles**

#### *Seven Tragedies*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, August 1502

The first edition of Sophocles was also the first Greek text that Aldus issued in his new portable format. The typeface was likely based on his own handwriting, and its small size made it even more difficult to set than the complex Greek types he had employed for larger books. The edition contains all seven plays that survived in the medieval manuscript tradition; although it remained the best available text of Sophocles until the middle of the nineteenth century, it has subsequently been shown to be rather unreliable.

### **Euripides**

#### *Seventeen [Eighteen] Tragedies*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, February 1503

Aldus continued his program of first editions with a two-volume set of Euripides, containing eighteen of the nineteen surviving plays, with only the *Electra* missing. As in the case of Sophocles, the editors assembled the text rather unsystematically from the manuscripts at their disposal, but it remained the best edition available for the next two hundred years.

### **Homer**

#### *Works*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, after 31 October 1504

Sixteen years after the first edition of Homer had appeared in Florence (1488), Aldus published the second edition in two volumes as part of his portable library. The text largely reproduces that earlier edition, but with many important corrections of errors in that work.

### **Pindar, Callimachus, et al.**

#### *Works*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, January 1513

Aldus fled Venice in the spring of 1509 to escape the War of the League of Cambrai, and did not resume publishing until 1512. The first classical Greek work he issued after his return was this beautiful first edition of Pindar and selections from Hellenistic poets (Callimachus' hymns had first been published around 1496 in Florence). As for so many authors, Aldus' edition remained the basis for all editions of Pindar until the nineteenth century. This volume is especially distinguished for combining the octavo format with the large Greek typeface previously used only in folio editions.

### **Aesop**

#### *Life and Fables* [with various treatises]

Venice: Aldus Manutius, October 1505

This edition of Aesop's fables in Greek with facing translations in Latin also contains several treatises on fables and myths, including works by Lucius Annus Cornutus, Palaephatus, Philostratus, and Hermogenes. Aesop was the very first Greek author published (1478), and three subsequent editions appeared before 1505. It seems that Aldus issued this text primarily as an excuse to collect the various accompanying treatises, all of which appear here in their first editions. Perhaps the most unusual work included is Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica*, which

is the only reliable treatise on Egyptian hieroglyphs to survive from antiquity. The Chapin copy is especially notable for its contemporary wooden binding, complete with the original clasps to secure the volume.

## Plato

*Works*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, September 1513

This volume of Plato's collected works was the last of Aldus' first editions and one of his most important Greek books. As early as 1506 he had sought manuscripts in Florence from a collection recently acquired from the monastery at Mount Athos through the assistance of Lorenzo de' Medici. The task of preparing the text for publication was exceptionally difficult and time-consuming. Aldus edited the work with his frequent collaborator Marcus Musurus, who composed a hymn to Plato as a tribute to the Medici for their sponsorship of the project. Aldus himself added a long address to the new Medici Pope Leo X (the son of Lorenzo), in which he refers to "those other peoples in the Western Ocean whom the Spanish have discovered in recent years." The excitement over the recent discoveries in the New World must have awakened new interest in Plato's famous discussion of the lost continent of Atlantis in his *Timaeus* and *Critias*.

Plato was a fitting bookend to Aldus' great project of issuing Greek first editions, which began with the other chief philosopher of antiquity, Aristotle. If Aristotle represented the sheer breadth of what Greek learning could offer the humanists, then Plato epitomized the highest intellectual life to which they could aspire. The Chapin copy is open to part of the *Symposium*, where, as in the Chapin Aristotle, a former owner has copiously annotated the text in an attempt to engage with ancient theories of love at their most renowned source.

## Ovid

*Metamorphoses* [Works, vol. 1]

Venice: Aldus Manutius, October 1502

## Pliny the Younger

*Letters*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, November 1508

## Cicero

*Letters to Atticus, Brutus, and his brother Quintus*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, June 1513

## Lucretius

*On the Nature of Things*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, January 1515

*Gift of Samuel C. Brown, Class of 1933*

Aldus issued over thirty different editions in his revolutionary portable format. Although he began with poetry, he also printed excellent editions of key Latin prose authors, including the letters of Pliny and Cicero displayed here. Likewise, his three-volume set of Ovid's works is a particularly handsome companion to his initial set of five poetic octavos. The edition of Lucretius displayed here was the last volume issued in Aldus' lifetime. In the preface Aldus apologizes for the ill health that has prevented him from providing an even better text of Lucretius. As the colophon shows, the work was printed at most a few weeks before his death on February 6, 1515.

In appreciation of the remarkable innovation of the portable editions, Aldus' friend and colleague Erasmus wrote in his *Adages*: "Aldus toils so that his library shall be contained by no limits other than the world." This library without walls is one of the greatest achievements in the history of printing, and its influence continues to be felt five hundred years later.



### **Dolphin and Anchor: The Aldine Printer's Mark**

The dolphin-and-anchor emblem adopted by Aldus to mark his publications is undoubtedly the most famous printer's device in history. First used in 1502, it was copied and adapted for centuries, and it remains in use to this day as the mark of the Doubleday Publishing Company. According to Erasmus in his *Adages*, Pietro Bembo gave Aldus a silver denarius minted by the Emperor Titus (79–81 C.E.) with “a dolphin curving around and embracing the shank of an anchor” on the reverse – perhaps one very similar to the coin displayed here. While this motif was naturally appropriate for a publishing house in the great seaport of Venice, its chief significance to Aldus was as a symbol of the merger between graceful speed and steadiness, represented most succinctly in the ancient Roman proverb *festina lente* or “make haste slowly.”

A prototype of the dolphin and anchor appears in one of the woodcuts in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), but the printer's mark itself was first used in 1502 in the second volume of *Poetae Christiani Veteres*, displayed here. Unfortunately, the border was quite fragile, and Aldus soon revised the mark without a border. This became the standard version used by the press in its octavo editions for more than twenty-five years, as seen here in the Planudean Greek Anthology. In 1503 Aldus designed a larger version of the emblem for his folio editions, shown here in an edition of Lucian, which remained in use for over thirty years.

Original version of printer's mark:

**Sedulius et al.**

*Poetae Christiani veteres* [Volume 2]

Venice: Aldus Manutius, June 1502

Standard octavo version:

**Greek Anthology**

*Florilegium diversorum epigrammatum*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, November 1503

*Gift of Carroll A. Wilson, Class of 1907*

Original folio version:

**Lucian**

*Works*

Venice: Aldus Manutius, June 1503

**Coin: Emperor Titus**

Silver denarius, 81 C.E.

*Obverse:* [Head of Titus, right, surrounded by] IMP T CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG

*Reverse:* [Dolphin and anchor, surrounded by] TR P XI IMP XV COS VIII PP

*Collection of Edan Dekel*

**Cicero**

*De Oratore*

[Subiaco: Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, before 30 September 1465]

Although Aldus Manutius was undoubtedly the most influential publisher of ancient Greek and Latin texts in the Renaissance, he was not the first to print the classics. In 1465 two German printers named Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz set up the first printing press in Italy at the Benedictine monastery of Subiaco, fifty kilometers east of Rome. After producing an edition of Donatus' Latin grammar (of which no copy survives) as an advertisement, they issued the first classical literary work printed anywhere, Cicero's rhetorical treatise *De Oratore*. They subsequently published an edition of the Latin Christian writer Lactantius, which contains the first Greek ever printed. In 1467 they moved to Rome where they produced the first editions of several other Ciceronian works, Caesar, Vergil, Livy, Ovid, Lucan, and Pliny the Elder. The Chapin copy of the Subiaco Cicero is one of only two in the United States.

## Homer

### *Works*

Florence: Bernardus Nerlius, Nerius Nerlius, and Demetrius Damilas, 1488

The first classical Greek author to appear in print was Aesop (Milan, c. 1478), followed a decade later by this magnificent edition of Homer, edited by Demetrius Chalcondyles, an Athenian émigré who studied under Theodorus Gaza at Rome and later became professor of Greek at Florence, where his students included important figures associated with Aldus Manutius: Angelo Poliziano, Marcus Musurus, and Pico della Mirandola. In 1504 Aldus would issue the second edition of Homer (on display in the main gallery), largely basing his text on Chalcondyles' work.

## Lactantius *and* Tertullian

### *Selected Works*

Venice: House of Aldus and of Andrea of Asola, His Father-in-Law, April 1515

This octavo edition of two important early Christian writers was the first book published by the Aldine Press after the death of its founder, Aldus Manutius. The principal operator of the press from 1515 to 1529 was Aldus' partner and father-in-law, Andrea Torresani, with the assistance of his two sons, Gian Francesco and Federico. The text was edited by Giovanni Battista Egnazio, a well-known Venetian orator and literary figure who served as executor of Aldus' will. The work is especially important because its preface contains the first public notice of Aldus' death, which had occurred two months earlier. Egnazio's eulogy for his friend, translated here, emphasizes Aldus' reputation among his colleagues, his influence as a printer, and his tireless devotion to his work.

## Enea Vico [Aeneas Vicus], 1523–1567

### *Omnium Caesarum Verissimae Imagines ex Antiquis Numismatis Desumptae*

[Genuine Portraits of All the Emperors Taken from Ancient Coins]

[Venice: Paulus Manutius], 1554

The Aldine Press rarely published books with illustrations, and only three that featured copper-plate engravings. This is the second edition of the Latin translation of Enea Vico's *Imagini con tutti i riversi trovati et le vite de gli imperatori* (1548), a collection of imperial portraits from Julius Caesar to Domitian in medallion form over elaborate cartouches, with an additional sixty-two full-page plates, each containing twelve spaces for images of the reverse sides of coins or medals issued by those emperors. The Chapin copy is open to the silver coins of Titus, where the second image in the third row shows the inspiration for Aldus' famous dolphin-and-anchor printer's mark.

## Benedetto Bordone, 1460–1531

### *Isolario* [The Book of Islands]

Venice: [Paulus Manutius for] Federico Torresani, 1547

This is the first Aldine edition of Benedetto Bordone's famous atlas describing the islands of the world, using the same woodblocks as the earlier editions printed by Nicolo Zoppino (1528 and 1534, both also in the Chapin Library). The book contains some of the earliest printed maps of several regions, including the first to show the connection between North and South America. Bordone was much admired as a manuscript illuminator, miniaturist, engraver, and cartographer. Born in Padua and active in Venice from 1488 onward, he was a contemporary of Aldus and is thought by many scholars to have been the artist responsible for the extraordinary woodcut illustrations in the famous *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (on display in the main gallery). The Chapin copy is open to the magnificent

map of Venice, which details the major canals and landmarks in the city, while also providing a perspective of the lagoon and surrounding islands.

### **Pietro Bembo, 1470–1547**

*History of Venice*

Venice: Sons of Aldus Manutius, 1551

*Purchased on the Horace A. Moses Fund, in memory of Fred Schlosser, father of Leonard B. Schlosser, Class of 1946, and Alfred M. Schlosser, Class of 1951*

The scholar and poet Pietro Bembo was closely associated with many of Aldus Manutius' greatest achievements. Bembo's *De Aetna* was the first book printed by Aldus in the exquisite Roman type cut by Francesco Griffio; he prepared the groundbreaking scholarly editions of Petrarch and Dante that Aldus published in 1501 and 1503 (on display in the main gallery); and, according to Erasmus, it was Bembo who gave Aldus the silver coin of Titus that inspired the famous dolphin-and-anchor printer's emblem. Among Bembo's many Latin works was this history of Venice from 1487 to 1513, which was first printed by Aldus' son Paulus Manutius.

There are two known issues of the work. In one, the printer's name appears on the title-page along with the dolphin and anchor. The Chapin copy is the more unusual issue, where the name and mark have been replaced with the Hermes and Athena device of Gualtero Scotto, with whom Paulus apparently shared the printing.

### **Galen**

*Works* [Volume 1]

Venice: House of Aldus and of Andrea of Asola, His Father-in-Law, April 1525

*Gift of Carroll A. Wilson, Class of 1907*

The most substantial Greek work published by Aldus' successors was a five-volume first edition of Galen's corpus of medical writings. The massive work was compiled and edited by a large international team of scholars under the direction of Giovanni Battista Opizzoni, former professor of

medicine at Pavia, who was active in the movement to restore scientific knowledge through observation and through more philological approaches to classical authors. Although this work was a great editorial achievement that formed the basis for medical scholarship for decades, it is less successful as an example of effective Greek typography. The dense lines and absence of section divisions within individual treatises make for a wearisome reading experience, as the eye loses focus over the long measure.

### **Bible. Greek.**

Venice: House of Aldus and of Andrea of Asola, His Father-in-Law, February 1518

The preface to Aldus' 1498 edition of the Psalms in Greek (on display in the main gallery) announced his intent to produce a Hebrew, Greek, and Latin polyglot version of the entire Bible. Only a trial sheet was ever produced, but twenty years later his successors issued the first complete Greek Bible available to the public, comprising both the Septuagint and the New Testament. In addition to its importance as a substantial piece of religious publishing, this volume offers an approach to Greek typography that is quite different from the one adopted in the edition of Galen beside it. The text is divided into two columns on each page, a more elegant layout that makes the book much easier to read.

### **Baldassare Castiglione, 1478–1529**

*Il libro del cortegiano* [The Book of the Courtier]

Venice: House of Aldus and of Andrea of Asola, His Father-in-Law, April 1528

Baldassare Castiglione was a diplomat and courtier in the service of the Duke of Urbino. He wrote several minor poems and plays, but his most substantial piece of writing, *The Book of the Courtier*, became one of the most influential works of the sixteenth century. The book purports to be the report of a debate at the court of Urbino on

the question of what qualities make up the ideal courtier, with the last part of the discussion turning to a discourse on matters of love. Translated into six languages by the end of the century, Castiglione's work disseminated Italian manners and tastes across Europe, and the model it provided was still evident in the salons of eighteenth-century Paris. Castiglione claimed that he wrote the first draft in a few days but never found enough time afterwards to perfect the work as he desired. Parts of the book were already circulating in manuscript form by 1524; fearing that it would soon be pirated, Castiglione agreed to have the Aldine Press publish this first edition.

### **Catherine of Siena, 1347–1380**

*Epistole et orationi* [Letters and Orations]  
Venice: Federico Torresani, 1548

The death of Aldus' partner and father-in-law, Andrea Torresani, in 1529 led to a break between his sons, Gian Francesco and Federico, and the sons of Aldus, led by Paulus Manutius. After a long series of lawsuits that essentially shut down the press in 1536, both sides resumed printing activities under separate imprints, but with occasional collaborations. Federico Torresani issued works under his own name from 1538 to 1544 and then again from 1547 until 1560. This second period of activity began with an Italian translation of Ovid, Benedetto Bordone's *Isolario* (which was printed by for Federico by his cousin Paulus), and this edition of the letters of Saint Catherine of Siena, printed together with her twenty-six surviving prayers. The text of the letters largely follows Aldus' own edition from 1500.

### **Lorenzo de' Medici, 1449–1492**

*Poesie volgari* [Vernacular Poems]  
Venice: Sons of Aldus Manutius, 1554

After the settlement of their lawsuit with the Torresani family, the sons of Aldus resumed publishing under their own imprint. In reality, the

only son who played an active role in the press was Paulus Manutius (1512–1574), who was not yet three years old when his father died. He led the press for several decades and also became known as a leading scholar of Cicero, whose works he often published with his own commentaries. This edition of poems by Lorenzo de' Medici, also known as Lorenzo the Magnificent, reflects Paulus' continued commitment to publishing important vernacular works in the portable library, which had included Italian works since 1501, when Aldus first issued Petrarch's *Canzoniere* (on display in the main gallery).

### **Council of Trent**

*Canons and Decrees*  
Rome: Paulus Manutius, 1564

Paulus Manutius fulfilled his long-held ambition to live and work in Rome in 1560, when he was brought to the Eternal City under papal auspices to print various theological and secular works. Although he would return to Venice in 1570 after a series of unhappy episodes with local officials, he produced several important books in Rome. Among his many duties, Paulus was responsible for printing and publishing several works connected to the final session of the Council of Trent, including this official edition of the Council's decrees. The Chapin copy, which includes a handwritten certification of authenticity by the secretary and notaries of the Council, is open to the title page displaying the largest and most imposing version of the famous dolphin-and-anchor printer's mark.

### **Francesco Colonna, d. 1527**

*Hypnerotomachie, ou discours du songe de Poliphile*  
Paris: Jacques Kerver, 1546  
*Lent by the Library of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Robert Sterling Clark Collection*

This French edition of the famous *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* was translated by Jean Martin, who also rendered into French Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*

and Pietro Bembo's *Gli Asolani*. The woodcut illustrations, often attributed by scholars to either Jean Cousin or Jean Goujon, were based on the original edition but adapted to suit French taste. Although the work was somewhat popular in Italy, it had its greatest success in France, where it greatly influenced architectural sensibilities. The book is open to the same scene shown in the Chapin copy of Aldus' original version on display in the main gallery: the first of four triumphal processions honoring the women loved by Zeus, featuring Europa on the back of a bull.

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EULOGY FOR ALDUS MANUTIUS  
BY GIOVANNI BATTISTA EGNAZIO

*from the preface to the Aldine edition  
of Lactantius & Tertullian (Venice, 1515)*

WE HAVE recently received a severe wound [. . .] and, in the opinion of all, a very great misfortune in the death of Aldus Manutius. Nor truly does this affect me alone, who am deprived of the pleasant company of a close friend and a man most valued in our mutual dealings, but clearly it also affects all learned people and students of the liberal arts. We cannot help but be deeply moved again and again, all of us, by the death of a man so singular and extraordinary. This sorrow of ours is made greater by the fact that in such a scarcity of learned men and of good books – how great a scarcity is now made clear – a man both eminently learned and one who arose to serve literature at his own expense and labor has been taken away at a completely unsuitable time, so that he has left behind a sad longing in all for his erudition and singular industry.

In addition to this, the bitterness of sorrow is aggravated more seriously every day because he lived with all learned men in such a way that, since he never disparaged anyone nor objected to any praise of them, he always embraced and cherished all with incredible loyalty. Thus there is almost no one in all of Europe with even an ounce of education

who has not been touched by some remarkable benefit from Manutius. Thus I quite rightly grieve for him with those others, and think it should be mourned even more by all that such a man has departed this life, the equal of whose industry neither our own nor an earlier age has had. If it is remembered that even great cities have mourned the death of mediocre men, or even the loss of birds, and that with solemn rites the Roman people celebrated the funeral of a raven, who then will not feel pain when he thinks of this man, lost and dead, who almost single-handedly resurrected and restored lost literary works for which there had been little hope? [. . .]

But since not even to Aldus was everlasting life promised – nor could we hope this for any man – we have put an end to our sorrow, lest we seem to grieve more for our own inconvenience and loss. Indeed, he lived as long as he was permitted, and he lived with the highest reputation among all for honesty and erudition. Nor is there any nation so barbarous, so remote, within the borders of Europe today among whom the name of Aldus is not known and celebrated. Indeed, it is well known that many famous men came to Venice for the sole purpose of greeting and seeing this man, and also to offer him many gifts. Such a great and admirable city did not itself draw these men to survey it, but the fame of one man led them here, a man who exhorted others as best he could so that he might pursue his program of restoring the Latin and Greek languages.

Because he threw himself entirely, day and night, into the meditation of this [program], he was afflicted with a serious, long-lasting illness which he had contracted from too much work and too many wakeful nights. So he passed away, at an unsuitable time perhaps for himself, and certainly for us. Nor would an earlier time have been more appropriate, since long experience had made him most skilled, and he had prepared many works which, had he been able to polish and complete them, you would not ask for much nearer to perfection.

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A LIBRARY WITHOUT WALLS:  
ALDUS MANUTIUS AND THE LIBERAL ARTS  
ADDRESS AT THE OPENING RECEPTION  
FEBRUARY 17, 2015

IN THIS YEAR of the Book Unbound at Williams, when we celebrate the many ways in which people have created, preserved, and transmitted books and knowledge, I can think of no place on campus that better exemplifies the significance of that theme to the intellectual life of the college than the Chapin Library. And it is particularly apt that this first reception in the magnificently restored Chapin Gallery occurs in 2015, when we also celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the original conception of this rare books library by Alfred C. Chapin, Class of 1869.

This afternoon it is my great honor to offer some thoughts about the legacy and influence of Aldus Manutius in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of his death. But before I do so, I would like to extend my enormous gratitude to Bob Volz, the custodian of the Chapin Library, and the other outstanding staff members here, Wayne Hammond and Elaine Yanow, for all of the imagination, diligence, and consummate good taste that they have brought to bear in the planning and mounting of this exhibition.

There is no small amount of irony in holding an exhibition on Aldus Manutius in which all the books are imprisoned behind glass inside a building with a security perimeter. Although we remember Aldus for many extraordinary contributions to the history of printing, above all, he strove throughout his whole life to liberate books, whether by putting most of classical Greek literature into print for the first time; or by attempting to publish ancient works free from textual corruption and centuries of intervening scholastic encrustations; or perhaps most famously, by issuing Greek, Latin, and Italian classics in a revolutionary portable format that could fit in one's pocket, creating what we might call (to paraphrase Aldus' friend and colleague Erasmus) a library without walls. And it is no accident that he chose the great seaport of Venice, with its constant movement of people, capital, and

ideas, as the base of operations for his humanist project of liberation.

Aldus was born Aldo Manuzio, or perhaps Theobaldo Manuccio, around 1452 in the hill town of Bassiano, sixty kilometers outside of Rome. In the humanist style of his era, he always preferred the Latin form of his name, Aldus Manutius. He received a thorough humanist education first in the Eternal City and then at Ferrara, where he perfected his Greek and entered the intellectual circle around the great philosopher Pico della Mirandola. Around 1482, he took up a post as tutor to Pico's nephews, the princes of Carpi, who would eventually supply some of the funds for Aldus to launch his printing press, and he also worked as a private teacher for several other families, while still finding time to write a Latin grammar.

Finally, in 1490 he decided to move to Venice and launch a new career. He set for himself the lofty goal of printing for the first time all those classical Greek works that had not yet been published in the original language. This was particularly ambitious, since up to that point, only the works of Aesop and Homer had appeared in print. But it was a project that we might say Aldus was destined to achieve. Indeed, his birth around 1452 or 1453 auspiciously coincided with two definitive or catalytic events in the history of the European Renaissance: the invention of moveable type printing by Johannes Gutenberg, and the fall of Constantinople. The first set in motion a technological revolution that by 1490 had taken hold so firmly in Italy that Venice boasted the largest number of printing presses anywhere in Europe. Indeed, more than half the books printed in Italy before 1500 were produced in Venice. Likewise, the fall of Constantinople brought to Italy a massive wave of Greek refugees, including many leading Byzantine scholars, and by the 1490s the greatest concentration of them could be found in Venice.

Time does not permit me to provide a full account of how Aldus set up his press and began operations, but by 1495 he was ready to issue books: first a Greek grammar and two short poetic works, and then in November of that year, the first volume of what would be the complete corpus of Aristotle

(the first item in this exhibition). In terms of the labor involved and the excellence of the result, this edition, which eventually filled five volumes, was perhaps the most impressive feat of publishing in the fifteenth century, and had he done nothing more, Aldus would still be remembered as one of the seminal figures in the history of the printed book.

But over the next twenty years, Aldus issued thirty more books containing the first editions of anywhere from forty to sixty classical Greek authors (depending on how one counts), and in the years shortly after his death, his heirs would add another six volumes. In total, the Aldine Press produced the first editions of every major Greek classic except the aforementioned Aesop and Homer, the orator Isocrates, and Apollonius of Rhodes. And although Aldus relied on many valued scholars, editors, type cutters, and printing press operators, the conception and supervision of this extraordinary achievement was entirely his own.

But as impressive a technical feat as printing all that Greek was, Aldus' scholarly commitments made the achievement even more significant. Although we would not consider many of these editions to be excellent by modern textual critical standards, they were quite revolutionary at the time. Aldus believed in editing texts through the comparison of multiple manuscripts and the application of rigorous philological principles. These are the foundations of all subsequent work in textual criticism, and for many authors, Aldus' editions would remain the standard texts into the eighteenth, or even nineteenth, century.

But even more important was Aldus' commitment to the humanist principle of returning *ad fontes*, to the classical sources themselves, no longer obscured by inexact translations and layers of murky commentary. With only a handful of exceptions, which were nearly all works designed to improve aptitude in the Greek language itself, Aldus' editions presented the texts cleanly and simply on the page with no surrounding paratext of any kind. This was nothing less than an intervention into the reading habits of his audience. Aldus' texts invited, or even required, the reader to encounter

the original sources with clear eyes and to interpret anew.

That is perhaps the most important legacy that Aldus has bequeathed to the tradition that we continue to practice as the liberal arts. The engagement with primary sources of all kinds is the foundation of what we do as scholars, teachers, and students. Aldus set the classics free from their largely inaccessible manuscripts and he set the reader free to explore them without unsought mediation.

But he did not cease his liberating activities there. For the first six years of his enterprise, Aldus issued the classics in large folio and slightly smaller quarto editions. These were substantial books that required space to use, and they inevitably cost more than many scholars and students could afford. Along the way, he started printing Latin texts, including those by his humanist contemporaries, and he made several other important innovations: the development of one of the most influential roman typefaces in history; perhaps the most harmonious merger of text and illustration in any Renaissance book (the famous *Dream of Poliphilus*, on display here); and the first systematic use of syntactical punctuation in printed texts.

Then in 1501 Aldus overturned the world of printing by publishing an edition (on display here) of the premier Latin poet, Vergil, in a small, relatively inexpensive, octavo format that could easily be held in one hand or carried in one's pocket or satchel. Small-format books had been printed in the fifteenth century; indeed, even Aldus himself had produced a tiny Book of Hours in Greek (on display). But these smaller sizes had been exclusively used for private devotional works. With this edition of Vergil, Aldus launched a program of publishing secular and learned works of literature in a simple, compact, and affordable form. He called these volumes his *libri portatiles*, or "portable books," and over the next fourteen years, he would print forty-eight titles, including many first editions of the Greek classics and texts that would long be considered definitive of such Latin and Italian authors as Catullus, Martial, Petrarch, and Dante (all on display here).

To compress the texts into fewer pages, Aldus also developed an entirely new typeface for his Latin and Italian portable books, based on the cursive humanistic hand of the era, which eventually came to be called, and is still called, *italic*. By 1502 he was also marking his books with the most famous printer's emblem in the history of publishing, the dolphin entwined around an anchor, which to Aldus suggested the famous Latin motto *festina lente*, or "make haste slowly," an exhortation toward graceful speed combined with stability.

Indeed, that is precisely what Aldus' portable library enabled. A reader wishing to engage with the classics was no longer chained to a desk in a library. One could take Vergil or Cicero or Sophocles or Dante wherever work required or leisure allowed. A satchel full of these volumes made more information available to an individual reader than had previously been available to some institutions. If this sounds a bit like certain technological revolutions of the last quarter century, the analogy is apt. The library no longer had walls, and both the books and the knowledge contained therein were set free.

Aldus' great enterprise coincided with the first age of European exploration, and in the preface to his last Greek first edition, the collected dialogues of Plato (on display here), he even makes explicit mention of the recent discoveries in the New World. Aldus Manutius died on February 6, 1515, from illness largely brought on by his relentless work habits. In twenty years of activity, only interrupted for three years by war, he published approximately

one hundred and twenty volumes. Here in our own little hill town in the New World, perhaps not so different from Aldus' native Bassiano, the Chapin Library owns fifty-two of those volumes, as well another sixty or so books published by Aldus' heirs and successors, some in multiple copies.

And lest we fear that Aldus might be disappointed that subsequent ages have turned his books into museum pieces and all-too-expensive collectibles, I would point out to you that for almost one hundred years, the students and faculty of this college have had largely unfettered access to these volumes. But much more importantly, the humanist project of reviving Greek and Latin learning, in which Aldus played such an important role, gave birth to our own practice of the liberal arts, which, over the centuries, has expanded the notion of what a classic is in so many wonderful ways, while still grounding us in the fundamental habits of rigorous inquiry and attentiveness to the full scope of human experience.

And so I feel quite certain that Aldus would recognize us as worthy products of his great enterprise, perhaps even more so than the beautiful books that bear his name. Above all, Aldus believed that the great works of classical literature can liberate the mind from ignorance and free us from misunderstanding; they can anchor humankind in the steadfast wisdom of antiquity as we sweep ever forward like the dolphin across the waves. Thank you.

EDAN DEKEL