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Clemons, G. Scott, and H. George Fletcher, *Aldus Manutius: A Legacy More Lasting than Bronze*. New York: The Grolier Club, 2015. 351 pp. Edition of 500 copies. Hardcover (ISBN: 9781605830612).

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Just over five hundred years ago, on February 6th, 1515, Aldus Pius Manutius, the greatest printer of the Italian Renaissance, died at his home in Venice. To this day, his legacy pervades how we write and read, from our use of punctuation in expressing thoughts, to the widespread use of pocket-size books. The years leading up to the quincentenary of Aldus's death in 2015 have been extremely rich in conferences and proceedings, lectures, outreach activities, and exhibitions throughout the world. This remarkable anniversary was remembered in his native Bassiano and his adopted home in Venice, in London and Madrid, Uppsala and Lisbon, and well beyond the Old Continent, from Los Angeles to Tokyo, and Australia to Canada.

Few institutions in the world could have been more directly involved in the 2015 celebrations of the legacy of Aldus Manutius than The Grolier Club in New York. The Club's activities included a free exhibition, which is documented through the present volume, as well as a colloquium showcasing the most recent research on Aldus. The namesake and patron of the Club, French patron of the arts and perhaps the greatest bibliophile of all time, Jean Grolier de Servières, enjoyed a durable and crucial relationship with the Aldine firm. His loyalty and support of the press had substantial influence over the dissemination and collectability of Aldine imprints throughout Europe. It is through the example of the great bibliophile that The Grolier Club furthers its endeavours to promote and encourage the study and appreciation of books. With the exhibition, *Aldus Manutius: A Legacy More Lasting than Bronze*, the Club took the opportunity to return to its own roots as well as celebrating a great milestone for the study of the history of the book.

From the time of their production, Aldine editions outdid most of their competition in collectability and prestige. Aldus was one of few printers and publishers regularly named in early modern inventories and booklists (his first name "Aldus," and its vernacular forms "Aldo" and "Alde" were universally understood in the book world), whilst most of his contemporaries went unnamed. The fortune of the firm endured, and today Aldine editions remain among the most prized Renaissance books in antiquarian auctions worldwide. If this fact stands as a legacy of Aldus's exceptional work, it also means that a staggering number of such volumes are held in private hands, and generally beyond reach of scholars and the

broader public. This catalogue offers rare access to a few of these private collections, namely those of G. Scott Clemons, Thomas Kimball Brooker, H. George Fletcher and Roland Folter. Items were also lent by notable American institutions, namely the Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum, Princeton University Library, the Clark Art Institute, and Columbia University Library. The Grolier Club itself provided a number of items, including the iconic painting representing Aldus and Jean Grolier that visitors encounter at the entrance to the Clubhouse.

The editors of the catalogue include a variety of items that create a portrait of the Aldine firm and its enduring legacy. The evolution of the Aldine press and its production are carefully represented. Many “firsts” are included, such as St. Catherine’s *Epistolae*, the first instance of italics in print (no. 25, pp. 88–89), and Pietro Bembo’s *De Aetna* (no. 20, pp. 78–79), the first book to adopt the semi-colon in print. Various copies described and illustrated in the catalogue represent the firm’s most distinctive practices, both intellectual and material. The displayed copy of Musaeus’s *Opusculum de Herone & Leandro* (no. 3, pp. 40–41) contains manuscript corrections made during production (similar examples found at nos. 20 and 21, pp. 78–81), which are telling of the firm’s attention to detail and desire to produce texts that were as correct as possible. But form and aesthetics were just as important as content. The copies described as nos. 47, 33, and 78 (pp. 134–135, 106–107 and 200–201 respectively) showcase three important practices in the customization of print: the first printed on blue paper, the second on vellum, and the third on large paper. Many of these practices, later to become common in European print culture, were pioneered by the Aldine press.

As well as highlighting patterns of production, items in the catalogue also indicate distribution, the use(s) and reception of Aldine editions through the centuries. A copy of the 1501 Vergil (no. 26, pp. 90–91), completed in April, was purchased as early as 26 August 1501 in Padua for 3 *marcelli*. Similarly, a copy of the 1501 Horatius (no. 30, pp. 100–101) was bound and illuminated for Bolognese senator Mino Rossi, who died in 1503. This date serves as the *terminus ante quem* for the completion of such a lavish copy.

Significantly more expensive than most printed books, Aldine editions did not always sell as readily as hoped, and some titles remained available in the firm’s catalogue for years. In at least one case we know of an edition bought out by a competitor and re-issued under a new title page. Old sheets of the *Pretiosa margarita novella de thesauro, ac pretiosissimo philosophorum lapide* by Pietro Bono were purchased by Venetian printer Giordano Ziletti and ‘recycled’ some ten years later (no. 84, pp. 214–215 and no. 85, pp. 216–217, respectively). Aldus was the first to produce proper catalogues of his books, intended for

circulation to customers and featuring wholesale prices—an innovation allegedly due to the constant requests of available titles, which he was far too occupied to satisfy on an individual basis. The practice was retained and implemented by his heirs. In order to boost sales and clear the warehouse of old books, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century the Aldine firm incorporated a priced list of available titles to their new imprints. These catalogues follow the movement of stock in the last twenty years of the business. *Aldus Manutius* features many relevant examples (nos. 103, pp. 254–55; 109–12, pp. 266–73), reproducing lists that contained volumes dated as early as the 1520s (p. 270).

Many items described in this volume showcase the great variety of readers and owners who engaged with Aldine editions, both at the time of their production and in later centuries. Aldines were prestigious for their scholarly content, and therefore highly prized by contemporary intellectuals, but they were also collected as status-symbols. Accordingly, the catalogue represents both precious bindings and illuminated copies, and functional volumes in temporary bindings. Often, the copies displayed enable better insight into well-known collectors of the past; for instance, no. 5 (pp. 44–45) displays a copy of the *Institutiones Graecae Grammatices* from the library of Benoît Le Court. A few volumes from this illustrious Lyonnese collection from the early sixteenth century are listed in the admirable resource *Numelyo* (<http://numelyo.bm-lyon.fr/>), based at the Bibliothèque Municipale in Lyon. Other examples appear every so often on the antiquarian book market, and the copy exhibited at The Grolier Club stands as a representative of such occurrences. An even more illustrious provenance is found at no. 114 (pp. 278–279), a copy of Herodotus previously owned by Erasmus. Two notes in Erasmus’s own hand (written on the last verso and reproduced at p. 279) testify to the important place Aldine editions often occupied in intellectual exchanges. Similarly, the two-volume Homer of 1517 labelled no. 120 (pp. 290–291) is heavily annotated by German reformer Philipp Melanchthon, who later donated the work to Martin Luther.

Contemporary fifteenth- and sixteenth-century bookbindings further demonstrate the geographical distribution of Aldine editions, such as the unmistakably German pigskin binding covering the 1571 *De bello Gallico* by Julius Caesar (no. 99, pp. 244–245), dated 1576. Images of beautiful French bindings are also reproduced in the catalogue, most notably a copy of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* owned by Jean Grolier, bound by royal printer Goussier Estienne, and featuring the owner’s pledge “et amicorum” (no. 24, pp. 86–87). The 1534 edition of Valerius Maximus features a mid-century Parisian binding, in the typical interlacing-ribbon style (no. 80, pp. 206–207). This copy retains the hand-coloring of the

individual ribbons in white, red and green, which is so often lost from volumes of this period due to general wear-and-tear. The gold-tooling on French bindings was introduced through binding styles imported by Jean Grolier and other bibliophiles with Italianate inclinations, and is therefore intertwined with the circulation of Aldine editions.

Imitators and forgers played an important role in the consumption of Aldine editions; such practice testifies to the impact of the firm on its competitors, as well as the reading public. The Lyonnese counterfeits occupy a well-deserved chapter in the history of Aldine fakes. No. 52 (pp. 146–47) is the only item reproduced from a non-US collection, but it makes a very important integration: it is the famous *Monitum* issued by Aldus in condemning the Lyon counterfeits of his pocket-size editions and advocating the purchase of the original editions (courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France). Nonetheless, the practice endured for a few years, with copies successfully distributed throughout Europe. One particularly fine example, in a binding crafted by Nicholas Spierinck in Cambridge, stands witness to the dissemination of these pirated editions (no. 58, pp. 158–160).

This limited selection of this volume's highlights indicates its value as an instrument of discovery and exploration, not only for scholars of the Aldine press, but for all who are curious to learn more about Renaissance books. One of the great features of the book is its accessibility, regardless of the reader's level of interest and proficiency. It also makes for an excellent teaching tool (indeed, I have already successfully put it to this purpose). In addition to the exhibited items and their description, *Aldus Manutius* contains two essays by H. George Fletcher, both expressing the mission and interests of The Grolier Club, as they concern the relationship of Jean Grolier with the Aldine press. They serve as an appropriate introduction to the volume, all the more so given the dedication to the late Anthony Hobson, who passed away just before the opening of the Aldine quincentenary, but worked tirelessly throughout his life to further our understanding of Renaissance book collecting, and especially of Jean Grolier.

This volume is a labor of love and dedication. Its contents and remarkable quality make it an excellent purchase for any research library interested in the true extent of the Aldine legacy. Five centuries after Aldus's death, his books continue to be prized and collected. The first readers of Aldines were humanists and scholars eager to take part in the firm's proceedings with great intellectual generosity. They included Niccolò Leonicensio, who graciously lent his manuscripts to the firm, and Marc-Antoine Muret, who proofread the new editions sheet by sheet, sharing insights and corrections. Modern collectors of Aldines still share the same ideals. This exhibition made available to the public a vast number of volumes

from private collections, shared with great generosity. Some of these volumes, from the library of T. Kimball Brooker, were personally collected and driven from Chicago to New York by curator and President of The Grolier Club, G. Scott Clemons. The closing remark of the volume's preface, "to Dr. T. Kimball Brooker, whose generosity with his collection and his insight make him the embodiment of Jean Grolier's *et amicorum* motto," stands witness to the continuity in the fortune of Aldine editions then and now.

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