

# Aldus Pius Manutius

Printer and Publisher

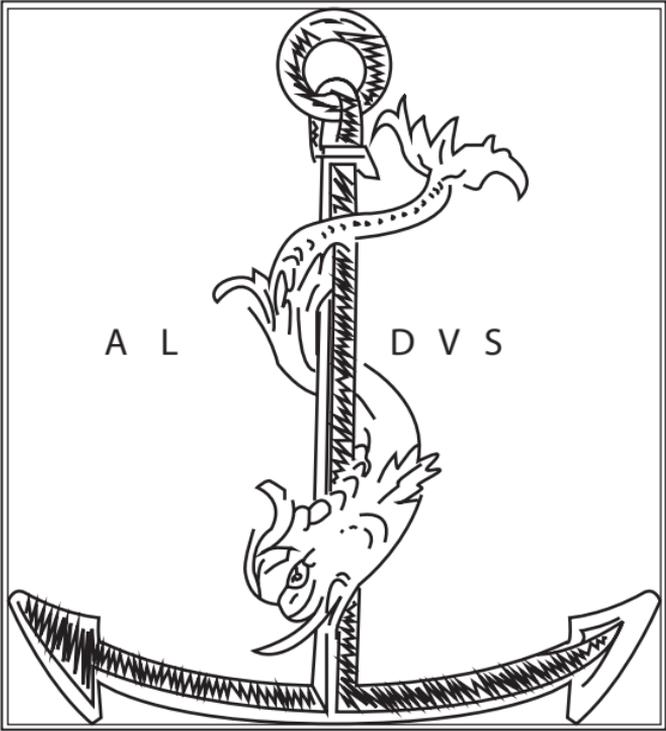


# Aldus Pius Manutius

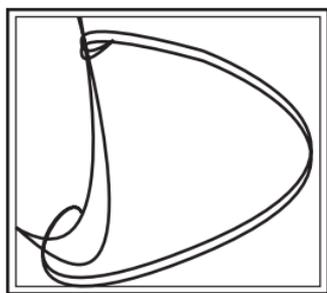
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uring the time of the early Renaissance Era, polymath Leonardo da Vinci once said "Learning never exhausts the mind." Da Vinci, especially being

known for his painting of the Mona Lisa, the Renaissance is described as a time the European world modernized from the Middle Ages with mass developments in many aspects of the arts. One of the newest forms of art to arise during this time period is typography, which was first introduced by Johannes Gutenberg, a founding father for developing the idea of printing and publishing in Europe in the late 15th century. Typography is the art of setting and arranging words and letters of a visible language which essentially is a useful tool in globalizing scripts through the use of a print medium. Preceding Gutenberg in printing and publishing and who created one of the most vital printing press during this era was Aldus Pius Manutius with the Aldine Press in Venice, Italy. Through the publishing of Greek and Latin works, Aldus

Manutius championed the idea of printing as a way to spread information and ideas during the Renaissance.

Aldus Manutius began the Aldine Press around 1490, working with many Greek scholars to publish mainly Greek works. Manutius is assumed to have been born near Rome in Sermoneta around 1450 (Oswald, 122). Manutius is also sometimes believed to be native to Bassiano, Italy because it is said Manutius signed his Greek works with a *Basianus* and his Latin works with a *Romanus*. Although his birthplace may be unclear, his printing and publishing helped influence the idea of record keeping information and ideas. Eventually, Manutius was preceded by his son Paul Manutius and then his grandson Aldus, the younger. Aldus Manutius was considered Aldus the elder and once all three had coiled away with time, the original works of the Aldine Press were put into museums and put away for safe keeping in Venice.

The Italian humanist, Aldus Pius Manutius, was one of the first printers and publishers to produce many great works from authors including Aristotle, Desiderius

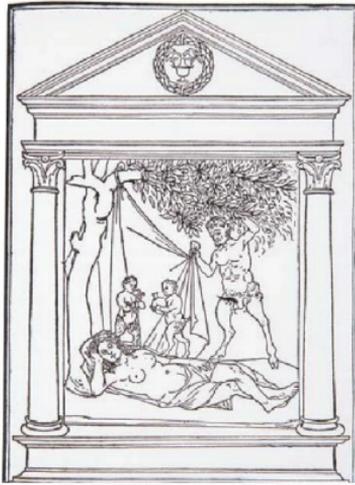
Erasmus, Francesco Colonna and many other great humanists from the Renaissance Era. Especially being known for his Greek classics, Manutius' edition of Aristotle was a series of five volumes published between 1494 and 1498 (Meggs, 100). The Greek philosopher Aristotle was a writer who introduced complex ideas of western philosophy. Manutius' publishing of Aristotle's work allowed philosophical ideas of logic, science and politics, mortality and ethics to be shared with the world drastically, influencing many new theoretical ideas about life during the Renaissance. Some of Aristotle's works published by the Aldine Press include the *Bion*, *Moschus*, *Theocritus*, and *Aristophanes*, which until the turn of the century; Manutius had the most printed copies of these works out in the public circulation (Oswald, 125). "Printing made it possible for the first time to publish hundreds of copies that were alike and yet might be scattered everywhere" Gorge Sarton, a Belgium historian and chemist, said although not all early copies of one publication were always completely identical (Eisenstein, 51).

The Renaissance began near the end

of the Hundreds' Years War, a series of conflict and fight for control over the throne of France for nearly a century. Desiderius Erasmus was a humanist and catholic priest who wrote an anti-war essay titled the Dulce Bellum Inexpertis, advocating pacifism. Aldus Manutius continued publishing and printing for about a twenty year period, a twenty year period which also included Venice being involved in four other wars (Oswald, 126). The Dulce Bellum Inexpertis was published by Aldus Manutius through the Aldine Press as a part of the Adages in Venice in 1508 (Dungen, 13). The Adages was one the greatest selling books published in the early 16th century with more than 150 copies printed and published (Dungen, 3). The Adages, also known as the Adagia, is a book of proverbs from the Greek and Latin languages. The publishing of the proverbs helped spread a since of wisdom throughout the people of Italy. Over the course of Erasmus's life, he modified and edited the Dulce Bellum Inexpertis along with the rest of the Adages, but due to strict absolute monarchies across Europe, some portions of these works were

always removed to help protect the public from gaining curved views toward religion. Essentially the *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis* helped promote a peace movement throughout Europe which helped unify different societies and push away the idea of fighting wars.

The printing and publishing of the Latin work *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* by Aldus Manutius is also one of the most profound publications and illustrations of the era originally developed by a monk of the Order of St. Dominic, Francesco Colonna (Oswald, 128). Being published in 1499, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* translates to *Poliphili's Strife of Love in a Dream* and is one of the very first books published with illustrations (Meggs, 101). The Greek tale is a romantic quest of a man in search for his love through a mystical world with rich scenery and extensive architecture. At the beginning of each chapter of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Manutius included very detailed, decorative initials that when arranged in chronological order spells the title and name of the author: *Poliam Frater Franciscus Columna Peramavit* (Oswald, 128). The initials used in this book



Illustrations from *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*

can be considered an influence to the creative process of graphic design to later develop and expand in the world of mass media. A picture from the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* also influenced the Aldine Press printers mark of a dolphin wrapped around an anchor (Meggs, 103). The publishing of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* really set the ground for some people's idea of love.

As Aldus Manutius published many works that influenced the thoughts of people during the Renaissance, he also introduced many Latin and Greek script appropriate for printing classical texts to the world of printing. The Aldine Press was run by Manutius with other Greek scholars including at one time Erasmus, his son Paul Manutius and Francesco Raibolini da Bologna (Morison 47). Bologna, who was known as Griffio, was a punch cutter and typeface designer who helped create Greek, Roman, Hebrew and the beginning italic types for the Aldine Press (Meggs, 100). The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* was the only published book by Manutius that included illustrations and was printed using the third Bembo roman type created

by Griffo. The type used in the Polophili is said to not be as superior as the Bembo type used originally in another great work printed and published by Manutius, the De Aetna, in 1495 (Morison, 49). The De Aetna is a Latin, written journey to Mt Aetna (Mt. Etna) in Sicily, Italy by Pietro Bembo was printed and published by Manutius. The Bembo type is considered one of the most sublime of roman types used by Manutius and was created by Griffo who gained influence for the type from roman inscriptions of mathematicians of the Renaissance Era (Meggs, 101).

Aldus Manutius is most worlds roundly known for the use of his Italic type, in which he was granted the exclusive right to printing this type by the Venetian Council for ten years (Oswald, 126). The Italic type was the first condensed type face in which the letters were set close together. Originally, the Italic type was called the Aldino type until pirates coming out of Italy began referring to the type as Italic (Oswald, 300). The Italic type created by Manutius was focused around creating sloping and cursive style letters to help condense the passage but yet still remain

clear. Italics also became a useful tool in emphasizing a word in a passage compared to leaving extra spacing around a word of more importance (Pottinger, 90). Manutius's Italic type did not include capital letters but rather roman capitals which would be separated from following lower case letters with a slim space (Pottinger, 90). The condensing of the passages was very important in printing passages in the small pocket books Manutius also invented.

Pocket books were constructed small enough for a reader to hold the book in one hand and to be able to fit it in their pocket when not reading (Oswald 126). Manutius sold his books at a low price and he had to distribute them by being a bookseller. The smaller size of the pocket books made selling the texts easier because Manutius could carry more around with him. Manutius created the small pocket books which helped move forward the idea of people being able to learn and read anywhere at any time. The small pocket books were also spreading ideas across Italy faster rather than waiting for people to come to Venice to learn from the works Ma

nutius was printing and publishing because he could print a mass amount for less cost.

Aldus Manutius changed the world of printing and publishing shortly after Gutenberg first introduced the process. Not only did Manutius help modify and enhance typography, but he helped really put in place a system to globalize ideas. Many of the works Manutius printed and published helped shape the Renaissance Era and really helped make this Era stand apart from the Middle Ages. The Renaissance Era was when the arts in every aspect began to expand and people really started to become interested in the world around them, when people subconsciously started to want to know more and began learning from a print world.

The mass growth of the production of books in the Renaissance Era also subliminally influenced more people to learn to read and write. The idea of literacy and being literate slowly became more important as more people wanted to be able to read these books. Without the printing and publishing of books there was really no reason for people to be able to read. Before the Renaissance

Era people who were able to read and write were called scribes and being a scribe was job title within a community. With the printing and publishing of books, Manutius ultimately created a print world that that took great ideas from the verbal world that could have been forgotten and transcribed through verbal passage, permanent.

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Aldus Manutius

Shannon Greener  
Bembo Regular and Bembo Italic  
Lokta Lotus Flower Maize  
Thai Banana Burgundy  
Mohawk Super Fine  
Tibetan Cloud Sage

