

## The End of the Manutius Dynasty, 1597

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*Homo sine pecunia, imago mortis.*

With the death of Aldo Manuzio the Younger at fifty years of age in October 1597, the glorious name of the Manutius family disappeared from the world of publishing. The last heir to the dynasty died in Rome, suddenly, leaving a good deal of business unfinished and unsettled. While a large number of scholars have studied his grandfather Aldus, and to a lesser degree Paolo, there has been a lack of interest in the last figure belonging to the family dynasty, no doubt due to the fact that Aldo had a much weaker impact on the world of humanist culture.<sup>1</sup>

Since the *Annales* of Renouard, it has been clear that the material legacy of Aldo was located both in Rome and in Venice. He had brought his famous library with him to Rome when he accepted the position of professor of *Humaniora* at the university. Aldo had left Venice in 1585; but his firm and his bookshop, containing his large collection of books, was still active under the direction of his partner, Niccolò Manassi. Moreover, the Manutius family had apparently strengthened their connections with the Giunti family during the second half of the sixteenth century. Although there were moments of tension between the two firms (one of them concerned the struggle to gain exclusive use of the italic types), it is worth remembering that Tommaso Giunti generously lent his printing types to Paolo

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<sup>1</sup> The standard point of departure also for the younger Aldo Manuzio is A. A. Renouard, *Annales de l'Imprimerie des Alde, ou Histoire des trois Manuce et de leurs éditions*, Paris, 1834, pp. 461–81, together with the important collections of documentary sources compiled by E. Pastorello, *L'epistolario manuziano. Inventario cronologico-analitico, 1483–1597*, Florence, 1957, and *Inedita manutiana. Appendice all'inventario*, Florence, 1960. Numerous significant studies have, however, been published in recent years, including E. Russo, 'Manuzio, Aldo, il Giovane', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, LXIX, Rome, 2007, pp. 245–50; E. Russo, 'Un contratto nel registro di bottega di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane', *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia*, 66.4, 1999, pp. 5–20; F. Pitacco, 'La repromissione di dote di Francesca Lucrezia Giunti e la bottega veneziana di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane', *Miscellanea Marciana*, 16, 2001, pp. 217–38. Alfredo Serrai's study *La biblioteca di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane*, Milan, 2007 contains a detailed account of Aldo's life and works. Finally, there is L. Mancini, 'Aldo Manuzio il Giovane e la sua ammissione agli ordini sacri: documenti inediti', *Nuovi Annali della Scuola Speciale per Archivistici e Bibliotecari*, 29, 2015, pp. 27–43; I am grateful to him for his help and for our useful conversations. I would also like to thank Andrea Bocchi, Aldo Coletto, Christian Coppens, Laura Pani, Silvia Pugliese and Erika Squassina for their help in this research and Stephen Parkin for revising my text.

Manuzio during his first difficult period of activity in Rome, from 1561 to 1563.<sup>2</sup> The excellent relationship between the two families was sealed with the marriage of Aldo to Francesca Lucrezia (usually just called Francesca), Tommaso I Giunti's illegitimate daughter and the cousin of Luc'Antonio the Younger, the most successful of all the publishers and merchants in the powerful Giunti family. According to Tommaso's will, Francesca's dowry was worth no less than four thousand ducats.<sup>3</sup>

In the last few years, new information has become available on two aspects which are very important for our understanding of the final phase of the publishing firm. The inventory of Aldo's assets in Venice, drawn up as part of the legal restitution to the widow of her dowry, has been published, as has the inventory of Aldo's library, from the copy which was sent to Cardinal Federico Borromeo, the founder of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, so that he could choose which books he wanted from it.<sup>4</sup> Many items from the Aldine library can be found today in the Ambrosiana collections,<sup>5</sup> as well as the documents published in the Appendix, which shed new light on the subject. They originate from the private library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, the leading book collector in sixteenth-century Italy and a veritable *éminence grise* of the Italian scholarly world of the time.<sup>6</sup> Among his wide circle of friends, Pinelli had been very close to Paolo Manuzio, and he later tried to help and protect Aldo. Pinelli's manuscript library is a mine of information on an astonishing number of scholarly and cultural initiatives and events of the time for which he amassed and preserved all kinds of reports, private memoranda and correspondence. And it is thanks to some copies of a group of letters kept by Pinelli that we can understand how Niccolò Manassi tried to grapple with

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<sup>2</sup> A. A. Renouard, *Lettere di Paolo Manuzio copiate sugli autografi esistenti nella Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, Paris, 1834, p. 62, letter 26.

<sup>3</sup> H. Brown, 'The Will of Tommaso Giunti', *English Historical Review*, 6, 1891, pp. 154–61; P. Camerini, 'Il testamento di Tommaso Giunti', *Atti e memorie della R. Accademia di scienze lettere ed arti in Padova*, 43, 1927, pp. 191–210, 205–6; Pitacco, 'La repromissione' (n. 1 above), pp. 217–18.

<sup>4</sup> For the inventory of the assets, see Pitacco, 'La repromissione' (n. 1 above); and for the inventory of the library, see Serrai, *La Biblioteca* (n. 1 above).

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the inventory of the Aldine library, on which Serrai based his edition, is MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, I 100 inf. Cardinal Federico Borromeo bought part of the collection, including all the family letters published by Renouard in *Lettere di Paolo Manuzio*. The published version of these documents should now be revised in order to correct mistakes in transcription and typos in the printing; more importantly, the letters require a full commentary.

<sup>6</sup> The starting point for any study of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli is his biography, written by his younger friend Paolo Gualdo, *Vita Ioannis Vincentii Pinelli, Patricii Genuensis. In qua studiosis bonarum artium, proponitur typus viri probi et eruditi*, Augsburg, 1607. Since the publication of this work, Pinelli's life has been seen as inextricably intertwined with his library, and the man himself has become the model ('typus') of a discriminating and erudite collector. No modern monograph on Gian Vincenzo Pinelli's library exists. An excellent introduction to his library, especially its Greek manuscripts, is provided by Marcella Grendler, 'A Greek Collection in Padua: The Library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535–1601)', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33, 1980, pp. 386–416. For a general introduction, see A. Nuovo, 'The Creation and Dispersal of the Library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli', in *Books on the Move: Tracking Copies through Collections and the Book Trade*, ed. G. Mandelbrote et al., New Castle DE and London, 2007, pp. 39–68.

the disastrous situation of the firm and the family's assets in the first few weeks after Aldo's sudden death. The letters, written by Manassi, are addressed to the historian Paolo Ramusio.

### **Niccolò Manassi**

Niccolò Manassi is a vital figure in the history of the Aldine dynasty. His role can in some ways be compared to that played by Andrea Torresani in the days of the elder Aldus: in charge, and indispensably so, of the technical side of the firm's activities, although this consisted no longer, as with Torresani, in working with types and formats, but rather with the most effective commercial and managerial methods – not to develop innovative and far-reaching publishing projects but essentially to keep a firm with a famous but much faded reputation afloat.

Manassi was a Venetian citizen, but his family originally came from Scutari, in Albania.<sup>7</sup> His professional connections with Aldo date back to 1567;<sup>8</sup> they became formal partners in 1576, when Aldo drew up an agreement with him for the management of his bookshop and printing house in Venice. According to the contract, Aldo put up the entire capital investment, consisting of 294 bales of books, for a value (on which both parties agreed) of 3,528 ducats. The contract was renewed in 1577, then again in 1584 for a further decade; and it was certainly still in force when Aldo died in Rome.<sup>9</sup> At the beginning, Manassi seems to have been responsible for the commercial management of the firm, while Aldo concerned himself with the book production side. Later – it is not clear exactly when but certainly after Aldo left Venice – Manassi had the entire business under his control; he showed considerable creative flair for the bookselling business, more than he did for printing. He was the first bookseller to include a list of currently available editions as an appendix to new publications, thus transforming each new edition the firm produced into a vehicle of bibliographical information and publicity for the sale of stock.<sup>10</sup> The fall in the demand for

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<sup>7</sup> While Renouard knew of Manassi's existence, he was unaware of the true role he played in the final decades of the Manuzio dynasty (*Annales*, p. 476) and L. Dorez, 'Études Aldines IV: Alde le Jeune et Nicolò Manassi', *Revue des Bibliothèques*, 6, 1896, pp. 380–86. A somewhat condescending portrait of Manassi, yet one containing useful information, can be found in the preface by Ercole Cato to Charles Estienne's *Agricoltura nuova*, Venice, Aldo Manuzio, 1581 (*Edit16*, CNCE 18339). The recent studies of C. Marciani, 'Editori, tipografi, librai veneti nel Regno di Napoli nel Cinquecento', *Studi veneziani*, 10, 1968, pp. 471–2, 488–91; Russo, 'Un contratto' and Mancini, 'Aldo Manuzio il Giovane' (both in n. 1 above) are essential.

<sup>8</sup> As he himself declared in 1585 in a deposition under oath, adding that he had also known and frequented Aldo's father, Paolo Manuzio. See T. Gasparrini Leporace, 'Le Provanze di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane per essere ammesso nell'Ordine dei cavalieri di Santo Stefano', in *Contributi alla storia del libro italiano: Miscellanea in onore di Lamberto Donati*, ed. R. Ridolfi, Florence, 1969, pp. 165–86 (183).

<sup>9</sup> Russo, 'Un contratto', pp. 14–16 and Mancini, 'Aldo Manuzio il Giovane', pp. 5–7 (both in n. 1 above).

<sup>10</sup> R. Hirsch, 'The Art of Selling Books: Notes on Three Aldus Catalogues, 1586–1592', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia (Studies in Bibliography)*, 1, 1948, pp. 85–101 (repr. in R.

Aldine editions was linked to their well-testified loss of prestige in the opinion of contemporary readers. It should not surprise us, therefore, that Manassi resorted to some rather unprincipled methods to win back a share of the market. In 1589, he was tried by the Venetian Inquisition on the charge of being in possession of prohibited books.<sup>11</sup> The edition of Jean Bodin's *Démonomanie* in Italian can be largely attributed to Manassi's initiative; after various vicissitudes, the edition would be prohibited, resulting in a great deal of damage to the firm.<sup>12</sup> His ties with Aldo were strengthened by the fact that their partnership contract implied that Manassi was expected to live in Aldo's house, with the consequences we shall see below.<sup>13</sup>

### Paolo Ramusio

The recipient of Manassi's letters, Paolo Ramusio (1532-1600), was the only child of the humanist, geographer and travel writer Giovanni Battista, and was born on 4 July 1532.<sup>14</sup> His father had been chancellor of the Republic of Venice and secretary of the Council of Ten, in close contact with leading cultural figures of the time such as Pietro Bembo and Aldus Manutius the Elder.<sup>15</sup> Paolo Ramusio led a much more private life and never took on public responsibilities in the Republic. He was a collector not only of books, but of epitaphs and

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Hirsch, *The Printed Word: its Impact and Diffusion (Primarily in the 15th–16th Centuries)*, London, 1978). For a preliminary list of these catalogues, see C. Coppens, 'I cataloghi di editori e librai in Italia', *Bibliologia*, 3, 2008, pp. 107–24 (111, 120–21).

<sup>11</sup> Venice, State Archives, *Sant'Ufficio*, b. 64, f. 25<sup>r</sup>. See M. Valente, *Bodin in Italia: la 'Démonomanie des sorciers' e le vicende della sua traduzione*, Florence, 1999, p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> M. Valente, 'The Works of Bodin under the Lens of Roman Theologians and Inquisitors', in *The Reception of Bodin*, ed. H. A. Lloyd, Leiden and Boston, 2013, pp. 219–35. As late as 1595, Manassi still attributed the firm's commercial difficulties, after a period of substantial stability, to the damage caused by their inability to sell the 675 copies of Bodin's book, despite being willing to incorporate the corrections which the Inquisition had demanded. Moreover, he remained convinced that the man responsible for the ferocity of the attack on the book was the Jesuit Antonio Possevino: see letter from Manassi to Count Baldassare Castiglione (the nephew of the author of the *Cortegiano*) in M. Sermidi, *Le collezioni Gonzaga: Il carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588–1612)*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milan), 2003, pp. 200–202.

<sup>13</sup> This circumstance is rightly underlined by Mancini, 'Aldo Manuzio il Giovane' (n. 1 above), pp. 8–9.

<sup>14</sup> The best biography and bibliography of Paolo Ramusio is still E. Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane*, 6 vols, Venice, 1824–1853, II, pp. 330–35; VI, p. 627.

<sup>15</sup> M. Donattini, 'Giovanni Battista Ramusio e le sue *Navigazioni*. Appunti per una biografia', *Critica storica*, 17, 1980, pp. 55–100; G. B. Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, ed. M. Milanese, 6 vols, Turin, 1978–1988; A. Del Ben, *Giovanni Battista Ramusio Cancelliere e umanista: con l'edizione di quarantacinque lettere a Pietro Bembo (ms Ambrosiano D 335 inf.)*, Trieste, 2005; F. Romanini, 'Se fussero più ordinate, e meglio scritte...': *Giovanni Battista Ramusio correttore ed editore delle Navigazioni et Viaggi*, Rome, 2007; M. Small, 'Displacing Ptolemy? The Textual Geographies of Ramusio's *Navigazioni e viaggi*', in *Mapping Medieval Geographies: Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300–1600*, ed. K. Lilley, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 152–72. For a succinct account, see M. Donattini, 'Giovanni Battista Ramusio', in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, ed. D. Thomas and J. Chesworth, VI: *Western Europe (1500–1600)*, Leiden and Boston, 2014, pp. 528–37.

monumental inscriptions.<sup>16</sup> He was a scholar, skilled in various languages and a member of the Accademia della Fama (for which Paolo Manuzio served as a printer) in the class of ‘historians’.<sup>17</sup> In 1556, as an esteemed humanist and historian, Paolo Ramusio was commissioned by the Venetian Council of Ten to translate into Latin the *History of the Conquest of Constantinople* of Geoffrey de Villehardouin, written in Old French, *langue d’oil*. A manuscript of this work had been brought in 1541 to Venice from Brussels by Francesco Contarini, procurator of St Mark’s. This text was crucial for the history of Venice, since it was the only account of the Fourth Crusade in the thirteenth century, which was fought almost exclusively by the French and the Venetians. Paolo Ramusio devoted his whole life to the translation, but his *De bello Costantinopolitano* was only published in 1609, some years after his death.<sup>18</sup> Receiving such an appointment undoubtedly meant that the Serenissima placed complete trust in him, not only as a humanist scholar, but above all as a man who could be relied on to handle correctly such a sensitive matter for the image of the Republic in the light of its recent political rapprochement with the king of France.

The relationship between Ramusio and Manassi consisted in the spiritual kinship of godparenthood.<sup>19</sup> Giovan Battista Ramusio had been the *compadre* (or *compare*, in Latin *compater*) to Aldus, as godfather to Paolo Manuzio, while Paolo Ramusio was *compare* to Aldo, since he was godfather to Aldo’s daughter Paolina. The Ramusio and Manutius families had therefore been related as *compatres* over two generations.

The relationship of godparents was a symmetrical one: the father and godfather of a child called each other *compater*, in Italian *compari*. The institution of baptismal godparents had existed since the early Church. The role of godparent often brought people of different

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<sup>16</sup> Ramusio’s collection of Roman inscriptions was housed in Padua; see I. Favaretto, *Arte antica e cultura antiquaria nelle collezioni venete al tempo della Serenissima*, Rome, 1990, p. 171.

<sup>17</sup> On the Accademia Veneziana, see S. Graheli, ‘Strategies and Failures of a Renaissance Publishing Venture: The Accademia Veneziana and the Myth of Aldus’ in this volume and the bibliography cited there.

<sup>18</sup> Ş. Marin, ‘A Humanist Vision Regarding the Fourth Crusade and the State of the Assenides: The Chronicle of Paul Ramusio (Paul Rhamnusius)’, *Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica. Annuario*, 2, 2000, pp. 51–120; N. Zorzi, ‘Per la storiografia sulla Quarta Crociata: Il *De bello Costantinopolitano* di Paolo Ramusio e la *Constantinopolis Belgica* di Pierre d’Outreman’, in *Quarta Crociata: Venezia – Bisanzio – Impero latino*, ed. G. Ortalli et al., Venice, 2006, II, pp. 683–746; T. F. Madden, ‘The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade: Memory and the Conquest of Constantinople in Medieval Venice’, *Speculum*, 87, 2012, 2, pp. 311–44. Marisa Gazzotti (‘Studi cinquecenteschi su *La conquête de Constantinople* di Geoffroy de Villehardouin’, *Aevum*, 63, 1989, pp. 248–335) has shown how Ramusio’s work was followed and discussed in the circle of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, who wrote to his correspondents in France, Jacopo Corbinelli and Claude Dupuy, for their opinion on a number of doubtful matters.

<sup>19</sup> J. Bossy, ‘Blood and Baptism: Kinship, community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries’, in *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World. Papers read at the Eleventh Summer Meeting and the Twelfth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. D. Baker, Oxford, 1973, pp. 129–43; and G. Alfani, *Padri, padrini, patroni. La parentela spirituale nella storia*, Venice, 2007.

social classes together. The spiritual relationship of godparents was a fundamental way of reinforcing networks of social alliances. Being godparents implied an obligation of mutual respect, an undertaking not to inflict damage on each other. During the baptism, a godfather publicly accepted his social duty of helping the family of the godchild as a quasi-member of the family. The ceremony had a markedly public character: it took place in the presence of many people and was followed by feasts, which made clear to everyone that new ties were established and that a reconfiguration of networks had taken place.

It is not surprising that the use of this practice to strengthen networks of social protection can be found among entrepreneurs. While the role of marriage alliance in shaping trade and business networks has been the object of a vast amount of research (it is enough to think of all we now know about how marriage was used in the long-term planning of entrepreneurial dynasties), the way in which weaker ties such as godparenthood were used by merchants and businessmen has received little consideration.<sup>20</sup>

In Venice, relationships of godparenthood are frequently found among the early printers, who were all foreigners and therefore had no long-established family ties in the places where they lived and worked. They were acting in this way in order to strengthen business ties by adding ritual protection. The information can be drawn from testaments, since one of the duties of a godfather was to act as executor of the will for his *compare*. Aldus names numerous *compari* in his wills, among whom it is worth mentioning at least two: Pietro Bembo and Giovan Battista Ramusio. Over time, the desire to establish relationships which could be advantageous from a business point of view led publishers to make their bestselling authors and collaborators their *compari*. Examples include Pietro Aretino and Francesco Marcolini, Annibal Caro and Antonio Blado, Bernardo Tasso and Gabriele Giolito.<sup>21</sup> It is evident that formalization, ritualization and publicity were used by entrepreneurs and publishers to establish trust with their business associates, at a time when institutions to protect businesses and trades were either lacking or unreliable. In other words, publishers, like all the entrepreneurs, chose their business associates to act as godparents not because they were also friends and because they trusted them, but precisely because they *did not* trust them.

Given this background, it is perfectly logical that Manassi turned to Paolo Ramusio as Aldo's *compare*. Aldo had died intestate, and Ramusio was bound by his obligation to respect

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<sup>20</sup> G. Alfani and V. Gourdon, *Entrepreneurs, Formalisation of Social Ties and Trustbuilding in Europe (14th–20th Centuries)*, Milan, 2010, <http://www.dondena.unibocconi.it/wp25>.

<sup>21</sup> A. Nuovo and C. Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa nel XVI secolo*, Geneva, 2005, pp. 251–2.

the last wishes of his deceased *compare*. Manassi, therefore, urgently solicited Ramusio to protect, through his friendship with Giovanni Dolfin, the Venetian ambassador in Rome, the assets of the deceased man from any illegitimate claims and to make sure his wishes were respected.

### **Niccolò Manassi's Letters to Paolo Ramusio**

Five letters from Manassi survive among Pinelli's papers.<sup>22</sup> They were written by return of post at intervals of a fortnight between 10 November 1597, seventeen days after Aldo died, on 6 January 1598, by which time, we can assume, the main matter of this correspondence – Aldo's legacy – was heading towards exactly the outcome which Manassi in writing to Ramusio had hoped to prevent. In the consternation which followed immediately on Aldo's unexpected death, Manassi sent letters to no fewer than twenty-six different recipients, including the pope. He raises a number of different issues. He laments Aldo's death because he died intestate and because he did not have time to prove his worth fully. Indeed, we know that Aldo was working on several projects at the time of his death, including a historical and geographical description of all the Italian states for which he had asked – and on occasion obtained – financial support from various governments in the peninsula.<sup>23</sup> Manassi is dismayed that no one in Venice has shown any signs of grief at Aldo's death, even though he was a leading figure in the city's printing and publishing trade. He takes pains to remind Paolo Ramusio of his responsibilities towards his *comare*, Aldo's widow Francesca, who, to quote Manassi's words, now finds herself without her friend and without the hope she had placed in him, as well as without a substantial part of her dowry. Manassi declares that various people had reported Aldo's death to him; they had also told him that Aldo had fallen ill with a fever on Saturday 18 October, which he made light of, trusting in his strong constitution; instead, the fever killed him within four days. Only Lorenzo Gagliardelli, the famous physician in the service of Cardinal Girolamo Rusticucci, who had rushed to his

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<sup>22</sup> The letters are kept in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (G 171 inf), a miscellaneous volume from Pinelli's collection containing letters and other texts (mostly copies) by numerous authors (including Sperone Speroni, Friedrich Sylburg, Giovanni Botero, Fulvio Orsini, Carlo Sigonio and others). The volume also contains the well-known letter of 4 May 1600 from Tycho Brahe to Galileo Galilei: Galileo Galilei, *Opere*, ed. A. Favaro, X, Florence, 1900, pp. 79–80; see also M. Bucciandini, *Galileo e Keplero. Filosofia, cosmologia e teologia nell'Età della Controriforma*, Turin, 2003, pp. 86–7.

<sup>23</sup> The request for financial support was sent out systematically in the form of a printed letter to a large number of local administrations. See Renouard, *Annales* (n. 1 above), p. 228 (where the copy sent to the city council in Parma is recorded; the copy is today in Parma, State Archives, *Comune*, Autografi illustri, b. 4399, fasc. 31). A preliminary census of copies (and therefore of the local administrations which were the recipients of the request) can be found in Pastorello, *Inedita Manutiana* (n. 1 above), p. 490. A digital version of the copy sent to Bergamo can be seen in Edit16, CNCE 60472.

bedside, insisted that he confess to a priest, which he had done the evening before he died but without receiving extreme unction. Aldo had died sometime during the night between Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 October, and his lifeless body had been discovered by a servant at 11 in the morning. This means that we can date Aldo's death exactly to the 22–23 October, and not 24 or 28, as has on occasion been done.<sup>24</sup> Manassi complains about Aldo's limited fame or rather the good reputation he was – in Manassi's opinion – undeservedly denied, recounting various episodes in connection with this, but most notably mentioning that Aldo had been replaced as university professor by Giacomo Mazzoni, a well-known scholar of the time, at a salary of 1,000 scudi, as opposed to the 200 Aldo had received.

Manassi certainly knew that Aldo had left numerous debts at his death. He himself had lent him 190 ducats a few days before he died, and he was also aware that Aldo had received another 100 ducats from other sources. But Manassi was convinced that his debts did not amount in total to more than 500 ducats, as Aldo himself had told him in a letter, above all because he had recently almost completely lost his creditworthiness and was no longer able to take out large loans. What was news to Manassi – and something he disputed – was the existence of another debt previously incurred with the Camera Apostolica representing an advance of three years' worth of Aldo's salary, amounting to 500 scudi. As we know from other sources, shortly after Aldo's death, his library was sequestered. The library was the only capital asset which could be sold off to satisfy Aldo's creditors. But it was the library which was the point at issue for Manassi. Aldo had creditors in Venice, too, beginning with his widow, who had been waiting for many years for her dowry to be returned to her. How could the library be brought back to Venice? Manassi insisted that on 3 July 1596 Aldo had donated his entire 'studio' – in other words, not merely his library but his collection of books and objects – to the Venetian Republic. He therefore beseeched Ramusio to make every possible effort to convince Giovanni Dolfin, the Venetian ambassador to Rome, to make sure the donation went ahead, not merely because this would respect the deceased's own wishes but also, so Manassi declared, because it would reflect the glory of the Manutius family. He agreed to find a suitable place where the library could be housed and to pay for an inscription at his own expense in memory of the donor. We know from the ambassador's reports that attempts were indeed made to carry out Manassi's proposals. In his letters, Manassi even reports a conversation which took place in the papal curia between the ambassador, who was petitioning for the return of Aldo's library to Venice, and the pope,

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<sup>24</sup> According to Renouard, *Annales* (n. 1 above, p. 477), Aldo died on the 28 October; according to Russo, 'Manuzio, Aldo, il Giovane' (n. 1 above, p. 250), his death occurred on 24 October.



who acceded to the request with a kind of rhetorical sleight of hand, asserting that while he did not wish to leave the library to the Venetian Republic, he would willingly give it to the ambassador. The ambassador deftly replied that he would be pleased to accept the library on behalf of the Republic of Venice. It should be remembered that this whole episode took place at a time of heightened tension between the papacy and the Venetian Republic, in the wake of the Venice's resistance to the Index of Prohibited Books promulgated by Clement VIII in 1596.

As it turned out, this was not how the matter was concluded. The Republic turned down the gift, both because Aldo's act of donation had never been officially registered (there is indeed – as far as I know – no document of the kind in the Archivio di Stato in Venice) and also because it did not wish to accept the donation without the benefit of an inventory. In accepting the donation, in fact, the Republic would also have taken on Aldo's entire legacy, including all his debts, which according to Dolfin's calculation amounted in total to 2,000 scudi.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Library of Aldo Manuzio**

Information on Aldo's library is inconsistent. Manassi asserts in his letters that it is worth 15,000 scudi and that it includes not only manuscripts and an infinite number of printed books, but also miniatures, paintings, sculptures and natural objects. Taken as a whole, it was of such rarity that, according to him, not even 50,000 scudi would suffice to put a similar collection together. Various other sources speak of Aldo's fabled collection. Both his friend Angelo Rocca and Muzio Pansa say that there were, incredibly, 80,000 books in the library and that it had been brought to Rome at huge expense.<sup>26</sup> We know that after Aldo left Venice for good, he always took his library with him. From Venice to Bologna, from Bologna to Pisa, from Pisa to Rome, the library followed the course of his academic career. Simply to pay for the transportation of the library from Bologna to Pisa, Aldus had to borrow 600 ducats. In order to move the library from Pisa to Rome, the debt he took on was so large that the repayment was calculated according to 'centesima usura', or 'usura maxima' as the Latin expression had it – in other words, 1% interest on the sum borrowed was payable each month,

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<sup>25</sup> See his report of 22 November 1597 in G. Valentinelli, *Bibliotheca Manuscripta ad S. Marci Venetiarum*, I, Venice, 1868, p. 63.

<sup>26</sup> A. Rocca, *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*, Rome, Typographia Vaticana, 1591, pp. 402–3; Muzio Pansa, *Della Libreria Vaticana ragionamenti*, Rome, Giovanni Martinelli, 1590, p. 329.

making an annual interest rate of 12%, the highest rate of interest then permitted by law.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Aldo had to take on further expense to shelve and arrange the books once they arrived in Rome.

That he was prepared to pay such enormous sums shows that his hopes of improving his financial situation were firmly invested in the sale of his collection; and, as early as 1580, he was unsuccessfully trying to offer it to various prominent figures, starting with Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua.<sup>28</sup> This first episode is significant in helping us to understand the type of strategy which a book collector who was neither noble nor rich had to employ in order to donate his library to a member of the elite, with the assurance of a life annuity in return.<sup>29</sup> Aldo was still living in Venice when the Gonzaga ambassador Annibale Cappello wrote to his duke that, like a new Bessarion or Petrarch, Aldo would be honoured to move his library to the Mantuan court in exchange for a salaried post of about 400-500 scudi.<sup>30</sup>

During the negotiations, two descriptions of the library were sent to the duke, which both, quite naturally, were based on Aldo's assertions. According to Cappello, the library, which included Paolo Manuzio's books, comprised 36,000 books of the best quality, 'with no Bartoli or Baldi',<sup>31</sup> including unpublished manuscripts in Greek, Chaldean, Hebrew and Latin. None of these declarations is correct, as we shall see, while the number of books (36,000) appears far off the figure (80,000) which was later recorded by Angelo Rocca.<sup>32</sup> A second letter, written a few months later by another Gonzaga ambassador, Pompeo Strozzi (himself a collector),<sup>33</sup> after the usual generic praises of the library, specified that it contained not only the books which had belonged to Paolo, but to Aldus the Elder as well, a statement even more mendacious than those found in Cappello's account. In an attempt to speed up the

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<sup>27</sup> Renouard, *Annales* (n. 1 above), pp. 534–7, quoting Aldo's letter to Silvio Antoniano in September 1592 (see Edit16, CNCE 27736).

<sup>28</sup> D. Sogliani, 'Precisazioni sulla biblioteca di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane offerta ai Gonzaga', in *Gli archivi digitali dei Gonzaga e la cultura letteraria in età moderna*, ed. L. Morlino and D. Sogliani, Milan, 2016, pp. 69–80.

<sup>29</sup> Aldo's behaviour in this matter resembles in certain aspects Prospero Podiani's actions in the same years. For the huge library of this Perugian bibliophile and scholar, see *L'invenzione della biblioteca: Prospero Podiani, Perugia e l'Augusta: catalogo della mostra, 9 novembre–18 dicembre 2016*, ed. A. Bartoli Langelì and M. A. Panzanelli Fratoni, Perugia, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> MS Mantua, Archivio di Stato, *Archivio Gonzaga*, b. 1511, f. V, fols 496<sup>r</sup>–497<sup>v</sup>, 24 Sept. 1580.

<sup>31</sup> Books for practical use, such as the frequently printed law volumes by Bartolo of Sassoferrato and Baldo degli Ubaldini which were intended for professionals and jurists, would clearly be inappropriate for a prince with a disinterested love for 'Humanæ Litteræ'.

<sup>32</sup> That would mean that the collection grew by more than 40,000 books in ten years, which is clearly impossible. This is another reason why these figures should merely be considered as signifying a vast number of books.

<sup>33</sup> Pompeo Strozzi (1537–1582) was a collector of gems and works of art. Among other paintings and drawings, he owned three cartoons by Michelangelo; see G. Rebecchini, *Private Collectors in Mantua (1500–1630)*, Rome, 2002, pp. 141–7, 331–8.

negotiations, Strozzi added that Aldo was also discussing the donation of his library with Jacopo Boncompagni (1548-1612), the illegitimate son of Pope Gregory XIII, and with Francesco Maria II della Rovere, Duke of Urbino.<sup>34</sup> According to Strozzi, in Mantua Aldo was even willing to act not only as the librarian and curator of his own collection, but also give his services as a ducal printer, a role he was sure he could carry out with more honour than the other candidates for the post.<sup>35</sup>

In order to find out more about the library than what Aldo's expectations were and what his friends said about it, it is useful to read the correspondence of contemporary scholars and collectors. In this respect, a letter which the collector and bibliophile – as well as Farnese family librarian – Fulvio Orsini wrote to his close friend Gian Vincenzo Pinelli in Padua is very revealing. The two men address each other openly and frankly in their correspondence. In 1590 Orsini wrote from Rome:

Messer Aldus frequently comes to see me, making it clear that he has a great desire – indeed a need – to win the support of some lord. I will certainly try to do my best for him with Signor Don Duarte,<sup>36</sup> if his departure for Spain doesn't prevent it. I've seen his library, but I've seen nothing so far to whet the appetite, apart from a book of Provençal poetry. But there might be something, since he's not yet taken me into the sacristy [i.e., the inner rooms where Aldo kept the best part of his collections]. The long and the short of it is that the man is in great need and has nothing but his library, which it's true has a very large number of printed books, but only a few manuscripts, and among the few that I saw nothing to excite one. I thought of getting him to hand over those two manuscripts,<sup>37</sup> but on seeing how attached he was to every trifling thing he has, I decided to give up the attempt.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The negotiations with the duke of Urbino were still continuing in 1586: Pastorello, *Inventario* (n. 1 above), p. 291.

<sup>35</sup> In this period, after some early unsuccessful experiences, Francesco Bernardino Osanna was 'de facto' the ducal printer for the court and city of Mantua, although the title was only officially conferred on him in 1588: *Le cinquecentine mantovane della Biblioteca Comunale di Mantova*, edited by F. Ferrari, Florence, 2008, p. 172.

<sup>36</sup> Odoardo Farnese (1573–1629), second son of Alessandro Farnese and cardinal after 1591, used the Spanish form of his name until his ordination. Clearly Pinelli had asked Orsini to help Aldo as best he could.

<sup>37</sup> Probably the texts of Provençal poets which Orsini did not have in his own manuscript collection.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from F. Orsini to G. V. Pinelli dated 2 August 1590: MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 422 inf. [Messer Aldo è spesso da me et mostra desiderio grande, anche bisogno di apogiarsi con qualche signore. Non mancarò di aiutarlo col Signor Don Duarte, se l'andata di quel signore in Spagna non impedisce. Ho veduto la sua libreria, ma non vi trovo fin qui cose giotte, eccetto un libro de provenzali; ma potria essere, che non m'habbia menato ancora in sacristia ... La sustanza è che quest'uomo si trova in gran bisogno, et non ha altro che la libreria, la quale veramente è di gran numero di libri stampati, ma di pochi scritti a mano et in quelli pochi

Orsini's scathing judgements are confirmed in the dispatches sent by Giovanni Dolfin, mentioned above, who wrote that Aldo had died suddenly 'per troppa crapula' (in other words, because of various excesses, above all gluttony), without the sacraments and laden with debt. His assets had been seized by his creditors. His library 'was not so valuable as some have made out'.<sup>39</sup>

In 2007, Alfredo Serrai published a catalogue of the Aldine library, which had been sent to Cardinal Federico Borromeo many years after Aldo's death, when the library was in the hands of Aldo's nephews in Rome, who were trying to sell it off piece by piece.<sup>40</sup> To this catalogue, Serrai added the list of books, mainly manuscripts, which had been kept by the pope in compensation for the loss of the salary and other expenses which had been advanced to Aldo before he died, amounting to two chests of books, to a total value of 550 scudi. All in all, Serrai's edition includes 13,424 printed books and 412 manuscripts, far fewer than what was previously believed to be the case.

Almost nothing in the books listed in the library seems to be especially noteworthy (apart from their sheer number). The majority are Venetian or at least Italian editions in Latin and the vernacular, followed by French editions, from Paris and Lyon, and then by publications from Basel, Antwerp and Cologne – unremarkable contents, especially in the library of the last surviving exponent of a family which had been in the book trade for over a century. There are editions which no longer survive such as plays and other theatrical works or books on the plague which were published during epidemic outbreaks, though this kind of material would hardly have been 'appetising' to cardinals and bibliophiles in Rome. There were very few manuscripts, none of which came from the famous library of Aldus the Elder, frequented and admired in its day by Erasmus and Beatus Rhenanus. The Greek manuscripts had been inherited by Aldus's son-in-law Gian Francesco d'Asola, who had sold them to the

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non vi vedo cosa da far venire l'acqua alla bocca. Io avevo pensato di cavarli quelle due carte di mano, ma intendendo ch'egli stima tanto ogni cosuccia sua, me ne sono risoluto non farci altro...]. See also S. de Benedetti, *Gli studi provenzali in Italia nel Cinquecento*, Turin, 1911, p. 249.

<sup>39</sup> [Non era in tanto prezzo come scrivevano alcuni, see Renouard, *Annales* (n. 1 above), p. 479.] Until the rediscovery of Manassi's letters published in the Appendix, Dolfin's dispatches were the most detailed and reliable source of knowledge for the events which took place after the death of Aldo. Several passages from the dispatch dated 25 October 1597 were cited by Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane* (n. 14 above), III, p. 70 and re-used by Renouard, *Annales* (n. 1 above), p. 479. Other passages can be read in A. Pilot, 'Il divorzio di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane', *Ateneo Veneto*, 1, 1904, pp. 65–6, while other extracts from the dispatches dated 13 and 22 November are published in Valentinelli, *Bibliotheca manuscripta* (n. 25 above), pp. 62–5. Dolfin's accounts and the content of Manassi's letters converge for the most part, although the intentions behind them are obviously different.

<sup>40</sup> Serrai, *La biblioteca* (n. 1 above).

king of France about 1542.<sup>41</sup> Among the manuscripts from Aldo's library which the pope had requisitioned – obviously the cream of the crop – was the manuscript of Provençal poets which Orsini had seen. It is by far the most valuable item, valued at 20 scudi. In the field of Provençal philology, it is known as Codex A and is a significant textual witness for many of these poets (today MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 5232). The second most valuable manuscript, valued at 15 scudi, has the title *Inscriptiones veteres variae*, and is in ten volumes and six fascicules. This was by Aldo himself: from his early youth onwards, he had studied epigraphy and Latin inscriptions, and he had used the compilation for his work on Latin orthography.<sup>42</sup> The *Inscriptiones* too was an unfinished work, one which Aldo expected would bring him fame. Instead, it was incorporated into the much later *Inscriptiones antiquae* of Giovan Battista Doni published in 1731.<sup>43</sup>

Yet, it is possible to extract more information about the library from Manassi's letters. Asked by Ramusio on several occasions to provide more detail about the most valuable items in the collection, Manassi mentions three:

[1] *Adriani Fini contra hebreos* which is a rare book, [2] one ... of numbers printed printed in Paris, of which no other copy can be found, and [3] the *Decades* of Livy translated by Boccaccio and written in his own hand, which is certainly exceedingly valuable.<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify the second text named by Manassi. Pinelli kept only copies of the original letters received by Ramusio, and the copyist has not understood – and neither have I been able to – which work 'of numbers' printed in Paris was referred to here. The first item, however, is *In Iudaeos flagellum ex Sacris Scripturis excerptum* by Fino Adriano Fini, published by Federico Torresani, the brother-in-law of Aldus the Elder, in

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<sup>41</sup> A. Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola e la tipografia aldina: La vita, le edizioni, la biblioteca dell'Asolano*, Genoa, 1998, pp. 383–431.

<sup>42</sup> Serrai, *La biblioteca* (n. 1 above), p. 398. Aldo's collecting of stone inscriptions ('sassi') was a worry for his father Paolo from 1572 onwards, above all on account of the huge costs Aldo incurred in order to transport the stones back home: Renouard, *Lettere di Paolo Manuzio* (n. 2 above), p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> G. B. Doni, *Inscriptiones antiquae*, Florence, Regia Typographia, 1731. In this volume, the list of sources used in the compilation of the work begins with Aldo's collection (*Schedae Manutianae codices duo*). Very little research has been published on the manuscripts which can be traced back to Aldo; but see P. Radiciotti, 'Una bolla papale ritrovata: il papiro Tjäder † 56 nell'Ang. Or. 62', *Studi di egittologia e papirologia*, 1, 2004, pp. 139–45; and M. Koortbojian, 'A Little-Known Manuscript, an Unpublished Letter to Aldo Manuzio il Giovane, and a Long-forgotten Humanist-Antiquarian: Antonio Casario', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 46, 2001, pp. 133–52.

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix, letter 4.

1538, a bulky quarto volume of 1,200 pages (Edit 16, CNCE 19067).<sup>45</sup> It was a fiercely anti-Semitic work, intended to confute the Jewish religion and thus achieve the conversion of the Jews to Catholicism; and it might have aroused renewed interest in Rome, given Robert Bellarmine's highly favourable judgement on it a long time after the actual publication, when the book was no longer available (he called it a 'volumen magnum et egregium').<sup>46</sup> A kind of urban myth had even sprung up that the book's rarity was the result of the Jews buying up all the copies in order to destroy them, disproved, needless to say, by the fact that today over fifty copies survive in Italy in public library collections, where many religious and monastic libraries were eventually transferred.

It is the third text mentioned by Manassi which arouses most interest, an autograph manuscript by Boccaccio containing his translation of Livy's *Decades*. Such a manuscript does not appear in the various inventories of Aldo's library published by Serrai, not even in the list of items sequestered by the papal authorities, which, as we have seen, concentrated on selecting the best material from the collection; nevertheless, a manuscript certainly existed, even if it is still undiscovered. Already in the fourteenth century, there are reliable testimonies that Boccaccio had produced a translation of Livy. A 1503 Venetian edition of the *Ameto* mentions, without going into detail, such a translation, whereas Pietro Bembo in a letter addressed to Giovan Paolo Ramusio, Paolo's father, wrote more specifically of a single *Decade* translated by Boccaccio. Largely through the renown of Bembo's testimony, present-day scholars are agreed in attributing the translation of the fourth book, the text of which has survived, to Boccaccio; there are various manuscript copies and several printed Venetian editions.<sup>47</sup> But the autograph translation remains missing, despite the recent wave of studies on Boccaccio's personal library which has led to some important discoveries in the past few years both in Italy (his copy of Martial) and in the British Library (his copy of Paulus Diaconus).<sup>48</sup> It is uncertain whether the Livy manuscript was really a Boccaccio autograph. A

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<sup>45</sup> See G. Bertini, 'Il ritrovato ritratto di Fino Fini (1431–1519) proveniente dalla quadreria di Palazzo Farnese di Roma', *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 108, 1996, pp. 377–9. On Federico Torresani, see Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola* (n. 34 above), pp. 26–36 and 667–88, and C. Marciani, 'Il testamento, e altre notizie, di Federico Torresani', *La Bibliofilia*, 73, 1971, pp. 165–78.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Bellarmine, *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, Cologne, sumptibus Bernardi Gualtheri, 1613, p. 301.

<sup>47</sup> G. Billanovich, 'Il Petrarca, il Boccaccio e le più antiche traduzioni in Italiano delle *Decadi* di Tito Livio', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 130, 1953, pp. 311–77, and his, 'Petrarch and the Textual Tradition of Livy', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 14, 1951, pp. 137–208; G. Tantarli, 'Il volgarizzamento della quarta *Deca* di Tito Livio', in *Boccaccio autore e copista*, ed. T. De Robertis et al., Florence, 2013, pp. 125–7; L. Dell'Oso, 'Reopening a Question of Attribution: Programmatic Notes on Boccaccio and the Translation of Livy', *Heliotropia*, 10, 2013, 1–2, pp. 1–16.

<sup>48</sup> M. Petoletti, 'La scoperta del Marziale autografo di Giovanni Boccaccio in Ambrosiana', *Aevum*, 80, 2006, pp. 185–7; L. Pani, "'Propriis manibus ipse transcripsit". Il manoscritto London, British Library, Harley 5383', *Scrineum Rivista*, 9, 2012, pp. 305–25.

beautiful illuminated manuscript of the text of the first *Decade*, which entered the library before 1603, is preserved in the Ambrosiana. It contains an annotation which states that the manuscript comes from the library of Aldo and was copied by Giovanni (Giannino) Cattaneo in 1373.<sup>49</sup> In this instance, the manuscript is not autograph; but it is questionable if this is the manuscript to which Manassi was referring.

### **The Restitution of Francesca Giunti's Dowry**

We have seen that, first and foremost among the creditors whose demands needed to be met, was the daughter of Tommaso Giunti, Francesca, who had married Aldo in 1572 and whose dowry had to be returned. Women's property rights were held in higher regard in Venetian statutes than in those of many other Italian states. A dowry, which was a daughter's right and a father's duty, was a somewhat peculiar object, as it was the wife's property during her marriage, though it was her husband who possessed and managed it. Only when she became a widow could a woman have both the possession and the management of her dowry.

Protection of dowries was a fundamental principle and, to be sure that the deceased husband's family would return it, its value was often secured against immovable goods belonging to him or his family. According to the statutes, the restitution of the dowry had to be carried out starting with the sale of property from outside Venetian territory, especially estates where the husband did not live. The act of returning a dowry to a widow, however, was not done at the cost of ruining a family. The dowry system was based on the gap in time between sons and daughters' access to their inheritance. It could be said that the mechanism of the dowry system meant that a married woman received the inheritance from her father as an inheritance from her husband. The records of the *Giudici del Proprio* preserve inheritance claims by relatives of Venetians who died intestate. In these cases, women had to petition the courts to return their dowries. Many women had to deal with the *Giudici del Proprio*: to prove, by marriage contract or by testimony, the amount of their dowries (*vadimonium*) and wait for a sentence (*dejudicatum*). When the amount of the dowry had been proved, the judges gave their sentence quite rapidly.<sup>50</sup>

Francesca's actions to get her dowry back were entirely in conformity with the law. As early as 1585, when Aldo had left Venice for good and the couple had already been living

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<sup>49</sup> MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, C 214 inf. See G. Fogolari, 'La prima *Deca* di Tito Livio illustrata nel Trecento a Venezia', *L'arte*, 10, 1907, pp. 330–45.

<sup>50</sup> A. Bellavitis, *Famille, genre, transmission à Venise au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Rome, 2008; Linda Guzzetti, 'Dowries in Fourteenth-Century Venice', *Renaissance Studies*, 16, 2002, pp. 430–73; and ead., 'Separations and Separated Couples in Fourteenth-Century Venice', in *Marriage in Italy, 1300–1600*, ed. T. Dean and K. J. P. Lowe, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 249–74.

separately for some time, she had had the land belonging to Aldo in Carpi – given as a gift a long time before by Alberto Pio to Aldus the Elder – together with the property in Asola sequestered as security for her dowry. Both properties were outside Venetian territory, and her husband did not live in them. As Manassi pointed out in his letters, however, these properties did not amount to much.<sup>51</sup> Given that she was a member of the Giunti family, Francesca, who, as Manassi writes, had decided to resort to the courts, it is not surprising that she sought advice from the best legal talents in Venice, including the versifier and lawyer Valerio Marcellini and another lawyer, Ludovico Usper, who was a real celebrity of the day. She could have claimed what was her rightful due at least as early as Aldo's declaration, with a judgement from the ecclesiastical courts on 19 July 1596 that their marriage was null and void, since the sentence implied (what was already taken for granted in Venetian law) that Aldo was obliged to repay the dowry. But she abstained from this course of action, probably because she knew perfectly well that Aldo was in no condition to pay back anything. That there was an agreement between the two in this respect is suggested by Manassi's expression that with Aldo's death Francesca had lost her friend and the hopes she had placed in him. Rather than simply one of the many malicious rumours circulating in Rome against Aldo, it is true that he wanted his marriage annulled in order to be free to become ordained and obtain an ecclesiastical benefice.<sup>52</sup> In reality, nothing came of this plan, and Francesca, at the very moment Manassi was attempting to return the library to Venice, decided on her own account to take the initiative. As required by the law, she went to the *Giudici del Proprio* to deposit the *vadimonium* or valuation of how much her dowry was worth. It is striking that the registration of the *vadimonium* took place on 23 October, the very same day Aldo died. The registration was obviously backdated in order to speed up the procedure, which was indeed carried out very swiftly. Already by 1 November, a week after Aldo's death, the inventory of all the assets of the deceased had been drawn up against the sum owed to Francesca, amounting to 2,400 ducats against a dowry of 3,000 (as we have seen, the land in Asola and Carpi was already in Francesca's possession). All this was taking place while Manassi was writing to Ramusio in order to get the library returned to Venice. It is obvious that Manassi could not have been unaware of what Francesca was doing, above all since the two had been

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<sup>51</sup> As early as 1498, Alberto Pio had presented Aldus with the notably large area of one hundred 'biolche' of land in Carpi. Over time the area had been reduced in size because, when Carpi was transferred to the Estensi, some of the assets belonging to the Pio family and their household (to which Aldus belonged) had been confiscated. By the time of Aldo the Younger only a small amount of land can have remained. See T. Previdi e M. Rossi, 'Sulle tracce di Aldo a Carpi', in *I libri belli: Aldo Manuzio, Carpi e la xilografia*, ed. M. Rossi and E. Di Martino, Carpi, 2015, pp. 13–21.

<sup>52</sup> See Mancini, 'Aldo Manuzio il Giovane' (n. 1 above).



living together *more uxorio* for many years and had even had children. Thanks to the discovery of new documents, it is now certain that the same woman, Francesca Giunti, the illegitimate daughter of Tommaso, was first married to Aldo and subsequently to Niccolò Manassi.<sup>53</sup>

Manassi was therefore involved in the return of the dowry in a double sense. The transfer of the property of the entire Manuzio firm implied by the inventory involved himself as well as Francesca, since she must have brought the same dowry to her second marriage as she had to her first. Almost 15,000 books in the warehouse, including editions from the Manuzio press and others, had been inventoried. These included the remaining warehouse stock of the bookseller and publisher Ludovico Avanzi, whose shop had been acquired by Aldo in 1573 against the advice of his father Paolo, who – quite rightly – was of the opinion that Avanzi’s books were out-of-date and would be difficult to sell.<sup>54</sup> Fifty bales of miscellaneous books, evidently those which remained in the bookshop, were subsequently inventoried. To all this was added the furnishings in the shop, bindery tools and bindings which had already been prepared, all the woodblocks used in the two illustrated editions issued by the press, Caesar’s *Commentaries* and the *Catechisms*, both series dating from 1575–1576, the woodblocks of the devices used on the title-pages and, of course, the shop signs, one with a portrait of the elder Aldus and the other showing the sign of the anchor and the dolphin.<sup>55</sup>

The firm’s material resources were supplemented by its immaterial assets, including, above all, the publishing privileges which still had some time to run before they expired,

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<sup>53</sup> It was known to various scholars that both Aldo and Manassi had married women by the name of Francesca Giunti; but it was assumed, partly on the basis of documents published by Camerini (P. Camerini, *Annali dei Giunti*, Florence, 1963, II, p. 207) that these were two different women with the same name, a claim also made in my *The Book Trade in Renaissance Italy*, Leiden and Boston, 2013, p. 134, n. 74, which must now be corrected. The documents recently found by Lorenzo Mancini show that Manassi married Manuzio’s widow during the same weeks he was in correspondence with Ramusio; their marriage, too, was destined to be annulled in 1613; see Mancini, ‘Aldo Manuzio il Giovane’ (n. 1 above), p. 10. In any case, from 1610 onwards Manassi had had to restore moveable assets to Francesca, an indication that their relationship was difficult. Francesca’s will, written in her own skilful and fluent hand, shows that she was still alive in 1625 and living in the house of her nephew Giovanni Maria Giunti: MS Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Notarile*, 1221 (Pietro Pomponazzo, testamenti), n. 122, 28 febbraio 1635; cf. Camerini, *Annali*, II, pp. 328–9.

<sup>54</sup> Renouard, *Lettere di Paolo Manuzio* (n. 2 above), pp. 311–17.

<sup>55</sup> The complete inventory has been published by F. Pitacco, ‘La repromissione’ (n. 1 above), pp. 222–6, but somewhat unsatisfactorily. First of all, the document shelfmark given in the text is incorrect: it is not ‘ASV, *Giudici del Proprio, Mobili*, reg. 99, c. 82 v. e segg.’, but in *Giudici del Proprio, Mobili*, reg. 34 (n. 99), fols 82<sup>v</sup>–86<sup>v</sup> (my thanks go to Erika Squassina for checking this piece of information). Secondly, the number written in superscript after each title in the inventory does not refer to fascicules, but to printed sheets. This method of calculating the length of a book is commonly found in commercial documents of the period and invariably refers to books in unbound sheets, as they were stored in bookshops and warehouses. A correct interpretation of the commercial calculation for each title inevitably relies on the correct identification of the edition being inventoried, and some of these are inaccurate.

together with the commercially advantageous name and reputation of the firm: ‘inviamento della bottega, segno et nome da usarsi nelle stampe’, in other words, what we would call today not only the company but its trademark or brand. All this was legally due to Francesca Giunti, who in marrying Manassi was able to ensure that the running of the firm was in the hands of the man who in recent years had been its commercial director and manager as well as the principal partner.<sup>56</sup> Yet, it remains doubtful whether Manassi was really capable of following an independent line after the death of Aldo. Francesca’s powerful cousin, Luc’ Antonio Giunta (and his successors after his death) must have exercised considerable control over everything Manassi did. His cousin’s dowry, invested in the firm, could quite easily have been swallowed up a second time.

Thus, the story of the Manutius dynasty ended in bankruptcy. Aldo’s state of insolvency was deeper than even his partner Manassi realized. It was the result of Aldo’s mismanagement not only of his business, but of his entire life and his continual accumulation of debt.<sup>57</sup>

## Epilogue

It is certain that Manassi’s main plan had failed. He had tried to get Aldo’s library returned to Venice at the expense of the Republic in such a way that the Serenissima, in accepting the donation, would become Aldo’s legal inheritor and therefore repay his debts from the capital.<sup>58</sup> Manassi wanted to keep his control over the firm, its printing house and its brand,

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<sup>56</sup> That Manassi never became the owner of the firm can be inferred from the petitions which were sent on several occasions to various recipients with the request that the prohibition of Bodin’s *Demonomania* should not be made permanent (or, secondarily, that damages should be awarded to the printer of the book as Venetian law allowed). The petitions sent while Aldo was still alive are presented by Manassi, but supported and countersigned by Aldo; however, those sent in 1599 and 1601, after Aldo’s death, are presented by Francesca Giunti (who describes herself as ‘hora moglie di Niccolò Manassi’), with the artificial and specious argument that her dowry had financed the printing of Bodin’s work (contradicted in the letters to Ramusio, where Manassi declares that he paid for the translation out of his own pocket). This was all just an expedient devised to ward off prohibition and prevent the handing over of the copies to the Inquisition, and it is therefore misleading to describe Francesca Giunti as the true publisher of the work: M. Valente, ‘Francesca Giunti, editrice della *Demonomania de gli Stregoni* di Jean Bodin’, in *Donne, filosofia e cultura nel Seicento*, ed. P. Totaro, Rome, 1999, pp. 339–45.

<sup>57</sup> As far as can be ascertained, Aldo’s debts included: 500 ducats, according to Manassi, or 1,300–1,400 scudi, according to the Venetian ambassador, owed to unspecified creditors; 190 ducats lent to him by Manassi; 600 scudi owed to the Camera Apostolica; 2,400 ducats (or 3,000 according to the Venetian ambassador) owed to the widow for her dowry. In total, 3,190 ducats and about 2,000 scudi.

<sup>58</sup> As the ambassador Dolfin clearly states, for the Republic to accept the donation implied the obligation to repay Aldo’s Roman debts amounting to approximately 2,000 scudi (apparently unknown to Manassi and, in any case, disputed by him) even before paying ‘many more’ scudi for the cost of transporting the books to Venice. Moreover, as Dolfin also pointed out, the dowry still needed to be restored to Aldo’s widow, who was claiming 3,000 scudi on the basis of the value of the library: letter dated 13 November 1597 in Valentinelli, *Bibliotheca manuscripta* (n. 25 above), I, p. 63. Faced with such a large amount of debt to repay, Dolfin advised against the acceptance of the donation.

with himself as the manager acting almost as a proprietor, since it provided his income. He said so explicitly in his letters to Ramusio: in lieu of payment of the 190 ducats he was owed, he would willingly accept the equipment in the printing house, which he could then put to work in order to continue the glorious reputation of the Manutius firm. But such an achievement was certainly beyond his reach. It is enough to look at the last titles which were published while Aldo was still alive. They have nothing to do with the firm's traditional humanist and philological interests; instead, they were strongly connected in content to the Slav regions from which Manassi's family had originated.<sup>59</sup>

If, on the one hand, Manassi was unsuccessful in continuing the activity of the Aldine firm, as he certainly wished to do, it seems, on the other, that the Giunti had no involvement in the sale of the Aldine stock, which cannot have had much value for a publishing house which had no shortage of its own books to sell.<sup>60</sup>

It is certain that Manassi's activities encountered serious obstacles. Manassi himself reappears unexpectedly in an edition published in 1619.<sup>61</sup> The small book displays all the Aldine credentials with pride: the dolphin and anchor device on the title-page and the final leaf, the portraits of the three family members with the imperial version of the device as granted by the Emperor Maximilian,<sup>62</sup> the catalogue of books 'in stampa d'Aldo' which were on sale in the bookshop in Venice. It was as if the twenty years since the last edition had never elapsed. At the end of the book, there is, quite contrary to standard practice, a letter to the reader, signed by Manassi, in which he declares that readers will have been surprised that the 'così famoso nome e segni d'Aldo' ('the famous name and devices of Aldus') had been buried for several years. This had happened because Manassi had had to free himself from the 'monstrous plots, intended to put [him] out of business definitively' ('mostruose insidie, tendenti all'ultimo sterminio') devised by those who had least reason to behave with such malice. These menaces have now died down, Manassi continues, and, as a result, he has

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<sup>59</sup> See Vinko Pribojevic, *Della origine et successi de gli Slavi*, Venice, Aldo Manuzio the Younger, 1595 (Edit16, CNCE 27746), as well as Sophocles's *Elektra*, *tragedia*, 1597, and Tasso's *Aminta*, both translated into Serbo-Croat by Dominikou Zlataric (Edit 16, CNCE 27712). See also Renouard, *Annales* (n. 1 above), pp. 253–4.

<sup>60</sup> For example, in the stockbook of Bernardo Giunti in Venice, covering more or less the period 1600–1620 (MS Los Angeles, UCLA, Department of Special Collections, Collection 170/622), there are not enough Aldine editions forming part of the restitution of Francesca's dowry to support the belief that they had been assigned to Giunti's bookshop for sale. It should also be pointed out that the final leaves of the 1598 edition of *Elektra* published after Aldo's death by Manassi contain once more a catalogue of books available in the bookshop.

<sup>61</sup> Antonio Antoni, *Ragionamento spirituale per spiantare il banco hebreo e fondare un sacro monte di pietà*, Venice, Nicolò Manassi (al Segno d'Aldo), 1619. I would like to thank Silvia Pugliese from the Biblioteca Marciana for allowing me access to this extremely rare book, owned by the Marciana in two different copies (Misc. 1538.7 e Misc. 2683.18).

<sup>62</sup> Renouard, *Annales* (n. 1 above), pp. 509–12.

decided to ignore all other devices and print exclusively using the name and device of Aldus, supported by the law and by the fact that he had held the right to do so for many years in the past. This was Manassi's last message: once again, his projects failed to come to fruition, and this 1619 edition was his last book to appear with the Aldine device in Venice.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Later on, the Venetian bookseller Francesco Baba probably purchased Manuzio's stock from Manassi, since in 1629 he published one last book with the Aldine anchor in Venice in 1629 (Renouard, *Annales*, (n. 1 above), pp. 254-255: copies today at the John Rylands Library in Manchester and the Mazarine Library in Paris).

**Appendix: Letters of Niccolò Manassi to Paolo Ramusio (MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms G 271 inf.)<sup>64</sup>**

*Letter 1 (10 November 1597)*

Molto mag.<sup>co</sup> mio sig. oss.<sup>mo</sup>

La inaspettata morte dell'eccellentissimo signor Aldo Manutio, a me più caro che amato fratello, cotanto mi affligge che a pena mi trovo più fiato non che lena di scriver, con tutto che pur è bisognato scrivere la posta passata 26 littere a Roma, et quasi altre tante questa, dico questo affine che V. S. mi scusi se non ho, prima che all'arrivo della vostra, fatto quest'ufficio che dovevo verso di un tanto amico, et signore quale fu sempre V. S. verso esso signor Aldo. Io non mi doglio tanto della morte perché è comune a tutti, quanto della qualità di essa, et della perdita d'un tanto uomo in tempo che doveva pur mostrar da dovero il viso alla fortuna et, a confutatione di tanto emoli et inimici, dar saggio al mondo di qual sorte doveva esser la sua vocatione. Mi duole parimente la qualità della morte, poiché non ha avuto tempo di ordinare quello che tanto et tanto gli premeva, cioè per lo studio et cose di quello a lui tanto care, et con tanta stretta vigilanza raccolte, et custodite, et parimente per quella povera innocentina della sua figliuola Paolina,<sup>65</sup> della quale me ne pesa fino all'anima, amandola come faceva più che la pupilla degli occhi, et che ora vadi per avventura remenga con disonor del nome d'un tanto uomo. Di questo tanto me ne greva, signor Ramusio nostro, che non so trovar quiete né consolatione; et altro tanto et più fa questa misera et troppo perseguitata dalla cattiva fortuna la vostra madonna Francesca vostra Comadre,<sup>66</sup> la qual fuor d'ogni tempo si trova priva dell'amico, della speranza che in esso aveva, et di gran parte della sua dote, et perciò molto saluta V. S. et caldamente si raccomanda.

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<sup>64</sup> The texts edited below are, as far as we can speculate, copies of autograph letters written by a copyist who sometimes does not understand what he is copying. Nothing is known about the *usus scribendi* of Niccolò Manassi, therefore these letters cannot be emendated with the view of restoring the flair of the originals. I have tried to make sense of the texts where spellings can be aleatory and punctuation can be lacking. Accordingly, I have modernized accents and punctuation, I have joined or separated, following the modern usage, words that are separated or joined in the original texts. All editorial interventions have been made to facilitate comprehension.

<sup>65</sup> She was the illegitimate daughter of Aldo, bearing the same name as the daughter born to him and his wife in February 1575, and who died very young (by 1580 all Aldo's legitimate children were dead). This second Paolina was perhaps born in 1581 to one of Aldo's maids, but certainly in Venice, since in 1592 Aldo took her with him to Rome. Pastorello, *Epistolario manuziano* (n. 1 above), p. 294, states that she died before September 1595, though that is clearly not the case.

<sup>66</sup> Francesca Giunti, the divorced wife of Aldo, was Paolo Ramusio's 'comare', as the wife of his 'compare'.

Lo scriver mio tanto a Roma certo è per recuperarmi 190 ducati prestatigli pochi giorni avanti della sua morte,<sup>67</sup> et anzi che l'ultima sua lettera delli xi del passato scritta a me,<sup>68</sup> tutto il foglio pieno, molto contenta et allegramente come si può vederla, né mai da essa né da molte prima giudicarsi può qual uomo mortale; scrive dico 'ho ricevuto lettera di cambio delli 190 ducati ne' Ceoli,<sup>69</sup> e fattola accettare ne procurerò il pagamento, anzi l'ho consignata a creditori; 200 ancora io sarò poi un Paladino.<sup>70</sup> So che con voi non occorre sprone, et che senz'altro lo farete'. Certo questi mi preme assai,<sup>71</sup> presso tanti spesi nelle persecuzioni di questo malvaggio anno,<sup>72</sup> tuttavia vorrei aver perduto ben tanti et una mano et che l'amico fusse vivo, et in loco di lui morti certi natti in questo mondo solo per far ledame, umbra et numero.<sup>73</sup> Ma sa[l]lo Dio, et sa[l]lo insieme tutti coloro a quali ho scritto, da quali pur non ho eccettuato il Papa stesso, che ogni mio ufficio è stato suplicando per l'amor di Dio, et per scarico di quell'anima, a nessuno sia permesso di manometter qualsivoglia cosa di quello studio,<sup>74</sup> se prima per consolation di quell'anima non viene giustamente sodisfatto qualunque pretende, cominciando dalla dote della nostra madonna Francesca, et dal riponer in luogo quella povera fiolina,<sup>75</sup> che per onor di tanto padre non vadi di male, a me gli detti 190 ducati et così qualche altro debito, ché molti non possono essere perché, oltre che il pover uomo aveva quasi affatto perduto il credito et perciò non poteva far debiti grandi, a me per molte et molte lettere scrisse sempre che 500 ducati saldava ognuno.<sup>76</sup> Et però avendone avuti da me 190 et 100 da un'altra banda, che so io,<sup>77</sup> vedeti che ne adimandava 200 per riuscire, giusto le sue parole, un Paladino. Et non di meno, scrivono che la Camara ha bolato ogni cosa per 500 scudi dicono datti anticipatamente a conto della lettura,<sup>78</sup> il che non è vero, né [è]

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<sup>67</sup> In his letters to the people in Rome dealing with Aldo's inheritance, Manassi lost no time in claiming the 190 ducats he had very recently lent to Aldo.

<sup>68</sup> Aldo's last letter was written on 11 October 1597.

<sup>69</sup> The Cevoli or Ceuli/Ceoli, originally from Pisa, were merchants and bankers and were in charge of the customs house in Rome. Tiberio Ceoli owned a notable collection of statues, which was acquired by Scipione Borghese after Ceoli's death in 1605. See M. Van der Meulen, 'Ceoli (Cevoli; Ceuli), Tiberio', in *Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology*, ed. N. Thomson de Grummond, New York, 1996, p. 264.

<sup>70</sup> 'Another 200 ducats and I will be a paladin', i.e., a 'gentleman' in today's terms – in other words, I will be able to preserve my reputation unstained.

<sup>71</sup> I.e., 'This causes me much difficulty'.

<sup>72</sup> Manassi is probably referring to the difficulties arising from the censorship of Bodin's *Demonomania* (1592), which would only come to a conclusion in 1599, wholly to Manassi's disadvantage, with the total prohibition of the work.

<sup>73</sup> The expression 'ombra e numero' [lit. shadow and number] was proverbial in the sixteenth century to denote a man who was fit for nothing. 'Letame/ledame' ['dung?'] appears to be Manassi's own addition.

<sup>74</sup> 'Studio' here means the room where Aldo kept his library and collection of artefacts.

<sup>75</sup> Paolina.

<sup>76</sup> Aldo had therefore informed Manassi that his debts totalled 500 ducats.

<sup>77</sup> The source of this other loan was known to Manassi, but is not revealed in these letters.

<sup>78</sup> The Camera Apostolica, the financial department of the papal administration, had 'sealed' or, in other words, sequestered, all the assets because Aldo had received an advance of 500 scudi against his salary as a university

verità perché ben gli furono promessi per sollevarlo ma non mai concluso l'effetto, al solito delle vane speranze di preti. Et non ci essendo in Roma persona confidente per assorbir quella grandissima machina de libri,<sup>79</sup> coloro che molto tempo fa gli hanno l'animo addosso conciedevano così nefande operationi accioché per mezo loro, essi con poco di niente se ne restino patroni.<sup>80</sup> Nel fine, ho a tutti con ogni caldezza et viva carità racomandato gli Nepoti, figliuoli di sorella, che sono sette in numero, ne' quali quattro femine orfane di padre et di madre in assai povera fortuna.<sup>81</sup> Et [se] questo ufficio di pietà troverà in Roma altrettanta carità et disposition cristiana non ho dubbio nessuno che le cose del s. Aldo piglierano per avventura miglior verso morto, che vivo; poiché avendolo fatto intender della qualità delle scritture rare, miniature, pitture, sculture d'ogni fatta et cose naturali, oltre l'infinito numero de' libri, che il costo passa xv mila scudi,<sup>82</sup> dovrebbero pensarvi bene, procurar de averla con ragionevole sodisfatione a chi prettende, et cercar poi di conservarla.<sup>83</sup>

Io per ora non so, né posso imaginar di far altro, et mentre che aspetto risposta se da V. S. o da qualche altro mi sarà dato alcun lume più particolare, certo che non mancherò adoperarmi fino che averò fiato, a ciò che il caro amico si consoli di vedermi ardentissimo per lui così morto come fui anco in vita, senza però altro fine che di fare il debito del vero amico che ama anco dopo alla morte, et perché il suo vada, se sarà mai possibile, come ragion vorrebbe. Ma Dio voglia, come dice V. S., che bastino questi ufficii, dove sta la ragion in man di Preti?

Della qualità del suo male, et morte scrivono la settimana passata tre uniformi, i quali sono l'eccellente Tiberio Caretti causidico,<sup>84</sup> Gasparo Ruspa libraro<sup>85</sup> et il Prior d'Offida,<sup>86</sup> che per esser egli più particolare, voglio copiarvi le sue medesime parole. 'È capitata la longa lettera di V. S. qua in casa punto il giorno che la beata memoria del s. Aldo passò di questa

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professor. The 500 scudi were later discovered to be 600. Manassi denied that Aldo had ever received the advance, though he had asked for one and had been promised it.

<sup>79</sup> There were no clients in a condition to buy the library.

<sup>80</sup> Manassi expresses his fear that those individuals who in the past wished to acquire the library will take advantage of the fact that it is now sequestered in order to purchase it at a low price.

<sup>81</sup> These were the daughters of Aldo's sister Maria Manuzio, who had married into the Onori family; Gian Pietro and Paolo Onori had been persuaded by Aldo to use their mother's surname as early as 1596, since he wanted to ensure that the family name continued. Maria died a few months before Aldo, in July 1597.

<sup>82</sup> A summary description of the contents of Aldo's studio, valued at 15,000 scudi.

<sup>83</sup> Manassi's plan for the library is here announced for the first time. Aldo's studio should go to someone who was aware of its value; once his creditors had been paid off, the new owner should take on the responsibility of preserving the collection.

<sup>84</sup> Unidentified. A 'causidico' was a representative of the plaintiff and distinct from an advocate.

<sup>85</sup> Gaspare Ruspa (Edit16, CNCT 1667), publisher and bookseller active in Rome from 1590 to 1600. There is no other evidence of his relations with Aldo.

<sup>86</sup> From 1575 to 1613, the Prior of the Collegiata di S. Maria della Rocca in Offida (in the province of Ascoli Piceno) was Giulio Boldrini. There is no other evidence of his relations with Aldo. I am grateful to Lorenzo Mancini and Mario Vannicola, in charge of the archive of the Collegiata di Offida, for this identification.

vita che fu il mercoledì notte,<sup>87</sup> venendo io giovedì a X ore e mezza fuor d'ogni suo pensiero, poiché fidandosi nella sua buona complessione non volse mai tener conto d'una febre maligna, che in quattro giorni l'ha spedito.<sup>88</sup> Et fu così subito l'accidente, che a pena chiamato, ebbi tempo a mettermi una zimarra a torno per correr a raccomandarli l'anima, non vi si potendo trovar il parochiano,<sup>89</sup> et il dì medesimo lo feci confessare, ma come quello che li pareva d'essere il più ben complessionato uomo del mondo, poco stimando il pericolo della febre, tuttavia, teneva detto che non era niente il suo male, et che la mattina seguente si voleva levare, ma come ho detto non giunse il giorno che chiamato arrivai che stava sbasito nelle braccia del suo servitore'.<sup>90</sup>

Questa settimana poi dal fratello del sig. Colonello Pierconte<sup>91</sup> m'è stata resa una lettera di 25 del passato come quella di sopra dell'eccellente signor Lorenzo Gagliardelli,<sup>92</sup> medico del cardinal Rusticucci et per conseguenza del s. Aldo mediante la gratia di quel Prelato,<sup>93</sup> nella quale mi scrive di questa maniera: 'È piaciuto a Dio benedetto di tirare a sé il s. Aldo nostro, il quale burlando si ammalò sabato sera, et giovedì mattina a undici ore passò a miglior vita, a pena confessato per mia importunità, non credendo di aver male, come fu sempre suo costume'.<sup>94</sup>

I principali che ambiscono a quello studio intendo essere il Cardinal San Giorgio, che come Nipote del papa et avendo le cose del Vaticano [in] sua casa propria Dio sa ciò che si è

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<sup>87</sup> The night of 22–3 October.

<sup>88</sup> Aldo was therefore taken ill on Saturday, 18 October.

<sup>89</sup> The parish priest, who should have attended the dying Aldo.

<sup>90</sup> Aldo died on the night of 22–3 October and was found lifeless in the arms of his man-servant before dawn on 23 October. According to Pastorello, *Epistolario manuziano* (n. 1 above), p. 292, the date was 24 October, and on the same day at three in the morning Aldo was buried in the church of S. Maria in Traspontina in Rome. A memorial inscription used to exist in the church.

<sup>91</sup> Pierconte Gabuzi da Montalboddo, a colonel in the service of the Venetian Republic from 1572 onwards. He died in 1603: G. Colucci, *Antichità picene*, Fermo, 1796, XXVIII, pp. 43–5; P. Lanaro, 'Gabuzio, Pietro', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, LI, 1998, Rome, pp. 127–8.

<sup>92</sup> Information on the physician Lorenzo Gagliardelli can be found in the biography of the blessed Felice Porro da Cantalice, whom he assisted as a doctor and whose holiness and endurance of a painful death he witnessed at first hand: F. Marchese, *Vita del B. Felice capuccino da Cantalice*, Rome, 1621, p. 124.

<sup>93</sup> Girolamo Rusticucci (1537–1603), cardinal of Santa Susanna from 1570, secretary to popes Pius V and Sixtus V, Vicar General in Rome from 1588, was highly regarded within the Roman curia. On Rusticucci, a native of Fano, see H. H. Davis, 'A Rosary Confraternity Charter of 1579 and the Cardinal of Santa Susanna', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 48, 1962, pp. 321–42, as well as S. Bellavia, 'Il cardinale Girolamo Rusticucci e le sue committenze marchigiane', *Storia dell'arte*, 106, 2004, pp. 25–43 (25–30). Manassi's remark suggests that Aldo had sought a cardinal's patronage when he first moved to Rome and found it at last in the *familia* of one of the leading figures in the curia. Such protection also implied a control; those who opposed Aldo's wish to take holy orders wrote to Rusticucci in order to block the plan: Mancini, 'Aldo Manuzio il Giovane' (n. 1 above), pp. 16–17.

<sup>94</sup> Gagliardelli confirms that Aldo was able to make confession, after his doctor insisted, but was not in time to receive the last rites. In the concluding remark ('come fu sempre suo costume', 'as was always his wont'), it is hard not to read a moralizing censure of Aldo's heedlessness.



fatto sino a quest'ora.<sup>95</sup> L'altro è Monsignor Paolo Emilio Santorio nipote del Cardinal Santa Severina.<sup>96</sup> Ma l'III.<sup>mo</sup> Signor Paolo Paruta pretende che sia della Illustrissima Signoria,<sup>97</sup> stante, come ben sa la V. S., quella sua donazione fatta d'anno 1596 adì 3 di luglio et da noi negoziata,<sup>98</sup> non avendo egli testado,<sup>99</sup> né si trovando cosa in contrario, et credo che sabbato per decreto del Senato ne abbino scritto, et dato carico all'III.<sup>mo</sup> Ambasciator Dolfino,<sup>100</sup> il quale mi pare ricordarmi che sia grande amico di V. S., onde che vi prego per l'amore che portavate al signor Aldo scriverli una lettera caldissima, et molto particolar supplicandolo per l'agiuto nostro, et per la conservatione di quello che era la gloria dei Manutii, mostrando che questo sia interesse più che nostro particolare, per l'amico morto, per la Comadre,<sup>101</sup> per l'amore che portate a me, et per il giusto et onesto che si deve ancor verso i defonti, essendo ben assai con cinque o sei mille scudi aver quello che, oltre la gloria, costa più di xv mila e che non si farebbe altrettanto ne anche con 50 mila.<sup>102</sup> Il medesimo vorrei che V. S. facesse come da voi col signor Paruta raccordandoli come in quella donazione et V. S. et lui siano da quella benedetta anima ricordati,<sup>103</sup> et che per ciò vi pare di aver tanto interesse di ricordar al publico che per niente lasci andar in sinistro le cose tanto preziose d'un suo Cittadino, benemerito della patria, se non per altro per questo almanco, ch'è passato in proverbio tutte le cose eccellenti esser in stampa d'Aldo,<sup>104</sup> pregandolo insieme di voler protegger et far

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<sup>95</sup> Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini Personeni (1551–1610), son of Giulia Aldobrandini, who was the sister of Pope Clement VIII, and Cardinal Deacon of San Giorgio in Velabro from 1593. He was a friend and patron of Torquato Tasso, who dedicated to him several of his most important works such as the *Gerusalemme Liberata* and the *Discorso delle imprese*. See E. Fasano Guarini, 'Aldobrandini (Passeri), Cinzio', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, II, Rome, 1960, pp. 102–4.

<sup>96</sup> Paolo Emilio Santoro (Caserta 1560 – Urbino 1623), nephew of Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro, cardinal of Santa Severina; see S. Ricci, *Il sommo inquisitore: Giulio Antonio Santori tra autobiografia e storia (1532–1602)*, Rome, 2002. He was a respected historian and had been a friend of Aldo from his years in Pisa. An extract from his *Annales* was published in Aldo Manuzio, *Lettere volgari ... al molto ill. sig. Lodouico Riccio*, Rome, Santi and Co., 1592, pp. 86–93. Further proof of the bond between the two men can be found in Aldo's signing of the long dedication (to Cardinal Agostino Valier) of Santoro's *Vitae beatorum Apostolorum Petri & Pauli*, Rome, Antonio Zanetti, 1597 (Edit16, CNCE 38428).

<sup>97</sup> Paolo Paruta (1540–1598) was a leading politician and diplomat: he was Venetian ambassador to the Papal court from 1592 to 1595; in 1597, he held the highly important position of Procurator of St Marks. See G. Benzoni, 'Paruta, Paolo', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, LXXXI, Rome, 2014, pp. 482–7.

<sup>98</sup> Manussi refers to a donation of the library to the Venetian Republic registered formally by Aldo on 3 July 1596. No documentary evidence that he actually did so has as yet come to light.

<sup>99</sup> Aldo died intestate.

<sup>100</sup> Giovanni Dolfino or Delfino (1545–1622) was the Venetian ambassador in Rome at the time. He would later be appointed bishop of Vicenza and cardinal by Clement VIII in 1604. He was charged with looking into the assets of Aldo, a Venetian citizen living in Rome who had died intestate.

<sup>101</sup> The divorced widow of Aldo.

<sup>102</sup> Manassi was anxious that someone might buy the library for 5–6,000 scudi, much less than its real value. According to Manassi, such a collection, with its rarities, could not be put together for less than 50,000 scudi.

<sup>103</sup> This makes it clear that both Paruta and Ramusio had been named in the text of the donation of Aldo's library to the Venetian Republic.

<sup>104</sup> In actual fact, the quality of Manuzio's editions had been a matter of debate for years. An early example can be found in the letter which Gabriele Faerno wrote to Paolo Manuzio. In it, Faerno claims that Marc-Antoine

soddisfar subito tutti coloro che giustamente in qualche cosa pretendono da quest'anima,<sup>105</sup> acìo che resti consolata et godi della prottation d'un tanto signore anco dopo la morte. Fatte queste et altre opere, ch'a voi parerà, di vera pietà verso il caro amico che Dio ve ne ricompenserà, et io mi offero debittore in vita che vivo, oltre che ricuperando quanto devo io et la signora vostra Comadre, prometto che gli miei voglio spender con il consiglio di V. S. in far uno onorato (per quanto possano le mie forze) deposito in alcun luogo segnalato,<sup>106</sup> con epitaffio degno della gloria Manutiana, a perpetua memoria dell'affetion mia verso di quel nome, et per confusion de' maligni, Momi et Zoili che altro mai non fanno far che detrarre con ciancie,<sup>107</sup> et per far che il mondo conosca quale sia il vero amico. Il medesimo non mancherò di far con le stampe, in tutte quelle cose che mi verrà occasione per la gloria di tanto raro uomo pur troppo da me conosciuto, così Dio avesse permesso che egli avesse in tempo conosciuto me,<sup>108</sup> et prometto a V.S. che hora lo stato nostro non averebbe a chi invidiar perché saressimo ricchi et felici.

Altri direbbe, conforme il precetto cristiano, Dio perdoni a chi fu causa dei tanti travagli, che può aver in parte accelerato la morte di un tanto uomo, ma io mi trovo così confuso, et adolorato, che prego Dio me li faci veder in tale misero stato, che l'infelicità loro non abbino paragone, et sia poi chi si vuole et vivo, et del continuo prego Dio per la giustissima vendetta, la qual vederemo certo, et tanto più se forse ci fusse stato anche qualche intendimento alla sua morte.

Nessuno in Venetia altri che me ha mostrato segno di duolo nella morte di tanto uomo, né con le persone, né nelle botteghe con mio grandissimo dolore, essendo se non altro stato pur benemerito dell'Arte.<sup>109</sup> Io ho fatto quello che già tanto feci nella morte del proprio figliuolo, et parmi non aver fatto quanto merita, onde ho supplito et supplirò nell'avenire con farli et dirli, et farli fare del bene per l'anima sua, così Dio me ne conciedi la gratia, et mi farà degno, che alla mia morte abbia da qualche persona simil consolatione.

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Muret's edition of Terence published in 1555 is corrupt and accuses Paolo of deceiving young students who would buy Aldine editions because of their reputation and blaming him for the decline in the honour of the publishing house ('il detrimento dell'honor della vostra stampa'), no longer held in much regard by intelligent men ('il qual ... da qualche tempo in qua ... è scemato non poco presso gli homini intelligenti'): L. Ceretti, 'Critica testuale a Terenzio in una lettera del Faerno a Paolo Manuzio', *Aevum*, 28, 1954, pp. 522–51.

<sup>105</sup> I.e., all his creditors.

<sup>106</sup> If the library is returned to Venice, Manassi undertakes to find a suitable place in which to house it.

<sup>107</sup> 'Momi e Zoili': calumniators and detractors. Zoilos of Amphipolis was a malicious critic of Homer (Horace, *Ars poetica*, 499); Momus was the Greek divinity personifying blame and calumny. The proverbial expression was current in Italian until the nineteenth century.

<sup>108</sup> I.e., 'had he realised how loyal I was'.

<sup>109</sup> Thus, Aldo's death was not marked by mourning among printers and booksellers in Venice.

Piaccia a Dio ch'arivi in tempo l'Ambasciatore, che l'ingiustizia non rampini il meglio et massime gli scritti, et cose rare, che certo questo mi dà una gran disperatione.<sup>110</sup> Se'l signor Lelio fusse quell'amico vero che sempre fu stimato dal poverin del signor Aldo, et da noi, non ha dubio che'l saria ben che andasse a Roma;<sup>111</sup> anzi quando fusse stato tale forse che non sarebbe morto: ma più certo che non sarebbe partito alla patria, et però la signora vostra Comadre che si trova in grandissima tribolatione vi si raccomanda et prega di volerla aver in protetione contro la malvagità di tante insidie.

La *Demonomania* fu tradotta, a mia peticcione,<sup>112</sup> dall'Illustre Signor Cavalier Ercole Cato ora segretario del Sererenissimo di Ferrara,<sup>113</sup> il fratel del quale signor Renato Cato I. C. è quello che per la morte del signor Duca è stato questi giorni a condolarsi alla signoria.<sup>114</sup> Egli la tradusse in Ferrara, è gentiluomo compitissimo et mio singular signore, come mercé la sua bontà si può vedere nella prefation fatta a me nell'*Agricoltura* di Carlo Stefano.<sup>115</sup> È vivo et sano, ma vecchio,<sup>116</sup> poiché fu secretario del Cardinal Hippolito di Ferrara il vecchio, in quei tempi che andavano le guerre tra Carlo Quinto et il Re Francesco et che tutto il peso di quel Regno passava sopra le spade di quel Cardinale. Se qualcosa fa bisogno a V. S. che non fusse di molta briga mi darà sempre l'animo ottenerla dalla molta cortesia di quel signore; con questo fine restando con molto desiderio, che da V. S. Illustrissima mi vengi e comandato, e conservato nella sua gratia, gli bacio le mani.

Di Venetia, adì x. di Novembre 1597

V. S. M. M. S.<sup>re</sup> aff.<sup>mo</sup> et oblig.<sup>mo</sup>

Nic.° Manassi

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<sup>110</sup> Another allusion to the possibility of some powerful individual in Rome taking possession of the library and, in particular, the manuscripts, for a low price.

<sup>111</sup> Lelio Gavardo was born in Asola in the province of Mantua (then part of the Venetian Republic) in the second or third decade of the sixteenth century; he graduated *in utroque iure* and was ordained. A friend of Paolo Manuzio, when Aldo moved for a period to Asola in 1568, he and his brothers were employed to help with the management of the estates. Later, in 1578, Aldo named Lelio procurator for his estates in Carpi. He edited various books, both for Aldo and other firms; in 1588 he was appointed Rector of the University of Pisa, amid controversy but with the unflagging support of Aldo. His date of death is uncertain, though it is known he survived into the seventeenth century: M. Simonetto, 'Gavardo, Lelio', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, LII, Rome, 1999, pp. 711–12. Manassi clearly believes that Gavardo was the person who should have felt most obliged to come to Rome to defend the interests of the family.

<sup>112</sup> Manassi (without Aldo's participation) commissioned the translation and publication of Bodin's work. The first edition was published in Venice in 1587 (Edit16, CNCE 6518).

<sup>113</sup> Ercole Cato, who died c. 1606, was knighted in Venice in 1577 by the doge Sebastiano Venier. He was a man of letters and secretary to Duke Alfonso II d'Este a Ferrara: T. Ascari, 'Cato, Ercole', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, XII, Rome, 1979, pp. 391–2.

<sup>114</sup> Renato Cato had been sent in 1597 to Venice to ask the Senate to intervene in order to prevent the pope, on the duke's death, taking up arms against Ferrara.

<sup>115</sup> Ercole Cato had dedicated his translation of Charles Estienne's work, published in Venice in 1581 (Edit16, CNCE 18335), to Manassi himself.

<sup>116</sup> Ercole Cato would have been aged about 58.

Ho inteso dall'eccellente signor Fabio Paolini<sup>117</sup> che sia stato in luogo del signor Aldo fatto eletto del signor Giacomo Mazzoni da Ravenna con mille scudi di provisione,<sup>118</sup> et il povero signor Aldo serviva con 200, et pur dovrebbe valer più la reputation del nome, che quanto valor potesse avere il Mazzoni. Queste sono di quelle cose che fa benedir chi vive ritirato, et solo da per sé.

*Letter 2 (25 November 1597)*

Molto mag.<sup>co</sup> mio s.<sup>r</sup> oss.<sup>mo</sup>

In risposta della grata di V. S. de 7 stante feci risposta quanto occorreva intorno alla morte del nostro signor Aldo, che Dio abbia in gloria, et indirizzai le lettere conforme l'ordine vostro, non so mo' se vi saranno capitate sicuramente, che averò molto caro d'intenderlo. Et per questa mi occorre dire a V. S. che, lodato il Signor Dio, la libreria del signor Aldo beata memoria ritornerà in Venetia, poichè in virtù di quella donatione et di quanto scrisse il Senato all'Ambasciator Dolfino col mezzo che gagliardamente ha operato l'Illustrissimo Paruta, hanno dal Papa avuto gratia.<sup>119</sup> Anzi scrive esso Ambasciatore, per quanto intesi dal Clarissimo Signor Domenico Contarini,<sup>120</sup> che avendo a nome della Signoria ricercato, in virtù di quella donatione, che sua beatitudine volesse conciederli lo studio del signor Aldo,

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<sup>117</sup> Fabio Paolini, philosopher, orator and poet, was a professor of Greek in Venice and one of the founders of the Accademia degli Uranici. He was born about 1535 in Udine or Tricesimo and died in 1605. His brief ode (consisting of four pages) *In Obitum praeclariss.<sup>mi</sup> et summa spe maximae virtutis, iuuenis. Pauli Contareni*, Venice, Sub signo Aldi, 1599 was printed with Aldo's device and name despite the fact that he had died in the meantime. See F. Vendruscolo, 'Paolini, Fabio', in *Nuovo Liruti: Dizionario biografico dei friulani*, II.2: *L'età veneta, N-Z*, ed. C. Griggio et al., Udine, 2009, pp. 1922–5 (also available online: <http://www.dizionariobiograficodeifriulani.it/paolini-fabio/>).

<sup>118</sup> Jacopo Mazzoni (1548–1598) was a student in Bologna and Padua (where he was a pupil of the philosopher Federico Pendasio) and wrote a famous defence of Dante's *Commedia*. He also worked on a commentary on Plato's dialogues. Gregory XIII invited him to Rome in 1578, where he became involved with the reform of the calendar; he collaborated with Cardinal Sirleto and became a member of the Congregazione dell'Indice. He also collaborated on the edition of the works of St Ambrose in six volumes. He taught in Macerata and in Pisa. On 30 May 1597, Galileo addressed to him the celebrated letter in which he expressed his opinion of Mazzoni's *In universam Platonis et Aristotelis philosophiam praeludia*, Venice, 1597, as well as declaring Copernicus's theory to be 'much more probable' than the Ptolomaic model. Mazzoni was called to a chair at the *Studium Urbis* in Roma in 1597, but shortly after taking up the post had to accompany Cardinal Aldobrandini to Ferrara, afterwards going on an embassy to Venice. On his return, he fell ill and asked to be taken to Cesena, where he died on 10 April 1598. He therefore occupied only for a few months the chair which had been Aldo's, receiving a salary, at least according to what Paolini had told Manassi, five times higher than what Aldo had earned.

<sup>119</sup> This letter shows that Manassi thought that Aldo's library would return to Venice, thanks to Dolfino's efforts and the intervention of Paolo Paruta. In the event, this did not take place.

<sup>120</sup> A member of the noble Venetian family of the same name. No connection with Aldo Manuzio is known. He is named again later in the letters, as a patron of Manassi.

rispose: ‘non volevo darlo alla Signoria, ma volentieri lo daremo al suo Ambasciatore’, et esso stato così un poco replicò: ‘me ne fa gratia a me la Santità Vostra’; et il Papa rispondendo de sì, egli disse: ‘et io l’acetto a nome della mia Signoria’.<sup>121</sup>

Tornerà pur a Venetia così gran machina degna di grande amiratione, così volese Dio, che vi potesse tornar insieme l’accumulator di essa per consolation mia, et di tanti, et tanto veri amici, et a terror, et spavento dei tristi, et amici finti. Ho voluto darne conto a V. S. sicuro che vi sarà grato intenderlo, et perché all’arrivo di essa V. S. mi favorisca, che sia rimborsato cento et 90 scudi prestatigli al detto signor Aldo,<sup>122</sup> et così quanto la madonna vostra Comadre resterà avere per la sua dote.<sup>123</sup> Et quando a me non vorano dar dinari, piglierò di molte cose che sono apartinente all’arte della stampa, che niente hanno che far nello studio, da servirmene per gloria di quel nome il qual, se sarò favorito, cercherò di conservar con maggior riputatione che mai.<sup>124</sup> Con questo fine vi bacio le mani desiderando che V. S. mi comandi et scrivi se ricevete le sudette mie.

Di Venetia, adì 25 di Novembre 1597

di V. S. M. M.

S.<sup>re</sup> Aff.<sup>mo</sup>

Niccolò Manassi

*Letter 3 (10 December 1597)*

Molto Mag.<sup>co</sup> et mio sig.<sup>re</sup> oss.<sup>mo</sup>

Acciò che V. S. non dubiti che forse l’ultima sua gratiosa lettera di 29 del passato non fusse andata per la medesima strada di quella che doveva ricapitare il figliuolo del suo gastaldo, son risoluto assicurarla con queste poche righe.<sup>125</sup>

La libreria del signor Aldo beata memoria ancora sta bolata,<sup>126</sup> né si risolvono questi Signori volerla senza, come si dice, beneficio d’inventario.<sup>127</sup> Sarà dura cosa perché, oltre i

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<sup>121</sup> An account of a conversation which supposedly took place in the Roman curia between the pope and the Venetian ambassador. The fact that the pope was reluctant to make concessions to Venice is explained by the stormy relations between the two states during these years.

<sup>122</sup> Manassi already seeks the repayment of the 190 ducats he lent Aldo just before his death, as soon as the library passes into the possession of the Venetian Republic.

<sup>123</sup> Likewise, Manassi urges that Francesca Giunti’s dowry should be restored to her.

<sup>124</sup> In lieu of cash repayment, Manassi writes that he is willing to accept the firm’s printing equipment together with the Manutius device and undertakes to work to maintain the firm’s reputation.

<sup>125</sup> Manassi acknowledges receipt of the letter dated 29 November, given that his own previous letter had gone astray.

creditori che giustamente vi pretende sopra, c'è la figliuolina che pure bisogna salvarla, et quei tanti nipoti che non abbino ad esser riconosciuti di parte di quel molto che pretendeva et dimandava il loro zio, ma la dote della madonna Francesca Zonta, di V. S. figlioza, et Comadre, che non si può finora vederne il fine di niente nelli terreni di Asola, sarà ben ragionevole che prima venghi rimborsata.<sup>128</sup> Tutti questi hanno grandissimo bisogno del favor et consiglio di V. S. onde che pregano Dio che, tosto vi sbrigate della fabrica et venirvene alla Città,<sup>129</sup> dove, per l'amore che portavate al tanto caro et comune amico, spero che non solo me indirizzate a quelle cose far che possino esser di perpetua gloria a quel nome, ma ancora di riputatione et di comodo a quelli che sono romasti et massime nel vedere che questa omai troppo tribolata gentildonna ricuperi il suo, acciò che essa non si dia nell'ultima tribolatione. Siamo nelle mani del signor Valerio Marcellini,<sup>130</sup> mediante il consiglio dattone sopra ciò dalla signora Genevra Abbiosa, consorte del signor Camillo Maggi,<sup>131</sup> alla signora vostra Comadre, è gentiluomo da bene; ma alle piaghe incanranite ci vuole gagliardo medicamento. Et stimo che poco meglio sarebbe stato il signor Armano,<sup>132</sup> il quale pare esser restato con qualche disgusto verso di noi, né posso immaginarmi che venghi da altro che da qualche sinistro ufficio fatto dal signor Lelio Gavardo in ricompensa delle tante cortesie ricevute da questa Casa,<sup>133</sup> forse con animo di levarsi ogni difesa, et massime de Avocati ridurci a quel miserabil termine che aveva ridotto il povero signor Aldo, poiché finalmente gli aveva cavato dalle mani 4 mila scudi de beni da Asola con averne promessi solo mille, et sborsatone cento, che tanto se ne cavava di livello, et fitto della Casa ogni anno.<sup>134</sup> Così ridurci noi in stato tale

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<sup>126</sup> I.e., sealed or placed under sequestration.

<sup>127</sup> The Republic of Venice had no intention of accepting Aldo's library without benefit of inventory, since, in accepting the donation, it would become Aldo's legal heir and as a result liable for the repayment of his debts.

<sup>128</sup> Manssai lists Aldo's relatives who could expect to receive a part of the inheritance: his daughter and his nephews and, above all, his wife, whose dowry had to be restored to her first. The letter also confirms that Francesca Giunti ('Zonta', i.e., Giunta in Venetian vernacular) owned her ex-husband's estates in Asola, although their value was far less than the amount her dowry was worth.

<sup>129</sup> It is not known where Paolo Ramusio was at the time nor which building project ('fabrica') he was attending to.

<sup>130</sup> Valerio Marcellini (1536?–1602), a celebrated lawyer, versifier and novelist, the author of the *Diamerone*, was close to Francesca Giunti in Venice at this difficult time.

<sup>131</sup> Genevra Maggi Abbiosa exchanged verses with the well-known poet Celio Magno, with whom Marcellini is also known to have been in close contact.

<sup>132</sup> Tiberio Armano, born in 1537, a Venetian citizen and a lawyer who worked in the city, was one of the four sponsors who supported Aldo's unsuccessful request to join the Cavalieri di Santo Stefano; see Gasparrini Leporace, 'Le Provanze di Aldo Manuzio' (n. 8 above). Three letters addressed to him are included in the compilation of Aldo's *Lettere volgari*, Roma, 1592, pp. 12, 55, 186. In 1546–1547, Lodovico Dolce dedicated the edition of his comedy *Il Capitano*, Venice, 1547, 'Al virtuoso fanciullo m. Tiberio D'Armano', expressing pleasure at the boy's ability and the excellent education he was receiving.

<sup>133</sup> Probably an allusion to Aldo's manoeuvring to obtain the rectorship of the University of Pisa for Gavardo in 1588, as well as other favours not specified here but known to Ramusio.

<sup>134</sup> Apparently an obscure – in the absence of other documentation – allusion to some unlawful appropriation of the Asola estates.

che per non aver che difendere tanta ingiustitia esso andasse continuando di usurpare gli beni di questa povera gentildonna; uomini di questa fatta vogliono sustentarsi nome di vero amico.

Tanto dirò per hora, et bacio le mani di V. S.

Di Venetia, adi. X di Decembre 1597

di V. S. M. M.

S.<sup>re</sup> Aff.<sup>mo</sup>

Niccolò Manassi

*Letter 4 (23 December 1597)*

Niccolò Manassi a Paolo Ramusio

Dall'amorevole littera di V. S. vedo quanto le fusse grato intender dalla mia qualche particolare intorno alla libreria dell'Eccellente Signor Aldo beata memoria, per il che dirò per servirle anco di nuovo alcun altra cosa. Sta tuttavia sotto bolo,<sup>135</sup> et questa posta si attende dall'Illustrissimo Ambasciatore resolution ferma intorno alle pretentioni di là, perché in quanto a noi di qua spero che senza interesse del publico andaremo a segno del nostro credito con quello che si ritrovamo in mano et con gli beni di Asolo,<sup>136</sup> anzi ché sarebbe forse avanzato qualche cosa se non ci bisognasse acquistarli per la punta della spada, et farci di grandi spese. Ma il signor Lelio che faceva del fratello et del parente causa tutti questi disordini, volendo egli restar patrone con quattro soldi di quello che mai fu, né mai sarà suo,<sup>137</sup> onde questa povera signora Francesca vostra Comadre si trova molto tribolata et ha grandissimo bisogno della vostra protettione et del vostro consiglio perché, caso che vadino dietro strusiandola in litte, si risolverà voltarsi allo studio del già signor Aldo, et voler da quello il suo resto come porta il dovere.<sup>138</sup> Onde chi vi attende con grandissimo desiderio sapendo che da V. S. sarà favorita, et proteta, et massimamente presso l'Illustrissimo Paruta, sopra del quale ripossa tutto questo negotio, il qual mostra aver grandissimo desiderio che esso studio ritorni alla Patria,<sup>139</sup> onde per sgravarne il publico non ha dubio che con quattro

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<sup>135</sup> Aldo's library continues to be placed under sequestration.

<sup>136</sup> Manassi begins to realize that he will be repaid his own credits thanks to Aldo's possessions in Venice (i.e., the printing house and the library) and in Asolo.

<sup>137</sup> Manassi refers to Lelio Gavardo's attempts to take unlawful possession of the Asolo estates.

<sup>138</sup> A reference to a possible legal case which Francesca Giunti would have brought for the restoration of her dowry out of the proceeds of the sale of Aldo's 'studio'.

<sup>139</sup> According to Manassi, Paolo Paruta was the keenest advocate for the return of Aldo's library to Venice.

parole di V. S. favorirebbe la causa nostra contro questi grandi usurpatori di quei beni, tanto che facilmente saressimo pagati senza far più tanti consulti, né spender tanti altri scudi oltre quanti se n'è speso,<sup>140</sup> essendo ormai troppo chiaro che qualonque carta farà mai la donna, vivendo il marito sia sempre nulla, et de nessun valor et ce ne sono le migliara de casi segu ..., né si trova questa legge mai indebolita per la recision dei matrimoni, anzi al contrario esser sta' così favorevole, che dove non si è trovato beni liberi per soddisfarsi, ha tolto i fideicomissi, et fatti beni liberi, cosa che non può fare il Prencipe stesso se non forse di potentia assoluta.<sup>141</sup>

Oltre che ha tante lettere nelle mani del signor Aldo chiarissime in questo proposito, et del signor Lelio insieme, et copia di quello fu scritto ad essi che basterebbono quando non ci fusse la legge et la consuetudine;<sup>142</sup> et se ben gli nipoti mostrano volersi impedir, tuttavia che attendino pur se potranno cavarne dal Prencipe, perché il resto saranno ciancie et vanità,<sup>143</sup> et se altri forse, con poca coscienza, troppo ingordi di quel d'altri, come si lasciano intender, vogliono venir a turbarla, che per l'amor d'Iddio attendino a viver et pregar Dio che per gli peccati commessi non vengi volontà alla povera et afflitta Donna andar per disperatione a Magistrato tale che sa far giustitia grande contro gli inganatori, et basta.<sup>144</sup>

Non s'è però lasciato finora di farne consulti et con persone ecclesiastiche et secolari, et massime con il signor Usper et qualche altro più fastidioso,<sup>145</sup> né si mancherà farlo con gli altri ancora, et piuttosto andar consumando il resto che mai cieder con vergogna; et chi vorrà offender in qualunque modo questa Donna o la fama del signor Aldo sapino certo che io son qui rissoluto fin alla morte diffender l'uno l'altro con le facultà et con la vita et risentirmene di tal sorte che mostrerò segno dell'origine mia.<sup>146</sup> Però che si guardino ben bene et che

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<sup>140</sup> Obtaining professional legal advice was an expensive procedure.

<sup>141</sup> This complex sentence appears to signify that there was an absolute duty to restore Francesca's dowry, even if this meant having to infringe some conditions of the legacy. On the application of the fideicommissary law to libraries in Venice, see D. Raines, 'Sotto tutela. Biblioteche vincolate o oggetto di fedecommissario a Venezia, XV–XVIII secoli', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines (MEFRIM)*, 124, 2012, 2, pp. 533–50.

<sup>142</sup> Francesca has in her possession numerous letters confirming her right to the dowry, which would be sufficient proof of this right even in the absence of the Venetian laws and customs, which in any case provide for such restoration.

<sup>143</sup> The nephews' claims have no validity or force compared with Francesca's.

<sup>144</sup> Francesca is threatening, through Manassi, to resort to the law if other creditors claimed repayment before she, as Aldo's ex-wife, had been repaid. It is known that she had gone to the relevant magistrature ('Giudici del Proprio – Vadimonio') to ensure that her dowry was repaid out of the assets belonging to her ex-husband in Venice.

<sup>145</sup> Ludovico Usper, a leading lawyer of the period and an administrator of the confraternity of San Giovanni Evangelista. The inventory of his books survives: MS Venice, State Archives, *Giudici di Petizon, Inventari*, b. 342/7, n. 26, 25 febbraio 1601 m.v. (1602), listing no fewer than 253 volumes; see F. Ambrosini, *Paesi e mari ignoti. America e colonialismo europeo nella cultura veneziana (secoli XVI–XVII)*, Venice, 1982, pp. 18–19.

<sup>146</sup> Manassi came from a family which had included numerous military men.



pregino Dio darli intelletto. Quanto al signor Marcellino,<sup>147</sup> se ne siamo valse solamente nel far questi pagamenti perché sono cose che vano in forma et so ben ... ci bisognano instrumenti di [ill.] onde rendo tanto maggior gratie all'avvertimento di V. S. conoscendo da esso che ci ama et consiglia dal buon scena.<sup>148</sup>

Non manchi V. S. per niente di fornir prima la sua fabrica che partire, perché avendo tanta copia di buoni massari non deve avventurarli per niente, essendo molto difficile trovar persone di quel gusto che me lo dipingete: ma spedito che siate dopo le feste vi attenderemo con gran desiderio. Se io non avessi dubitato di spiacere, avrei l'altra mattina che favelai con il Signor vostro figliuolo sul Campo di San Zaccaria,<sup>149</sup> ricordatoli quel rovere che vi fa bisogno per fornire la fabrica, ma non osai di farlo.<sup>150</sup>

Ho trovate altre lettere del signor Aldo che conferma la donatione alla signoria, et altre nelle quali su bon proposito attesta costarle esso studio XV mila scudi, et io lo credo, et stimo molto più, onde al Prencipe non dovrebbe esser grave spenderne doi o tre mille, che più non credo che siano quando non venghi fatto inganno, come parmi intender dal sacrista, il quale scrive che la Camera intende voler non solo le provisioni intiere del salario dato già 3 anni al signor Aldo, ma le spese et parte limitate a lui, et doi servitori, che importerebbe più tre volte che la provisione.<sup>151</sup> Io son stato sforzato risponderli ch'ai pari del signor Aldo non era poco aver gratia che egli volesse sostener col suo nome quel titolo di sopra intendente alla stampa Vaticana non che esser corrector attuale di stampe, come questi meccanici, et che bisogna aspettar ch'egli risusciti a diffender le sue ragioni et mostrar se aveva fatto il suo obbligo, o no, come essi l'imputano, et che molti Prencipi averebbero avuto gratia dargli provisione per valersi del suo nome solo senza operare. Ho dettoli tutte queste cose perché questo sacrista, frate di Santo Stefano, aveva quel grado avanti del signor Aldo, et già soleva

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<sup>147</sup> The lawyer Valerio Marcellini.

<sup>148</sup> I.e. 'senno', good sense, wisdom.

<sup>149</sup> Girolamo Giuseppe (1555–1611), son of Paolo Ramusio, entered public service in 1577 and was employed on various foreign missions. In 1601, he published in Lyon the French text of the history of Villehardouin, on which his father had been working for a very long time; in addition, he left a *Storia o Cronaca di Casa Ramusio*, a manuscript in folio format which survives in the Biblioteca Marciana and has been a source for all those who have studied the history of the family such as Emmanuele Cicogna.

<sup>150</sup> Paolo Ramusio was evidently occupied outside Venice in the supervision of a building project. It would seem Manassi wished to offer Ramusio's son some oak timber for the building. The character and location of the building on which Paolo was working are not known.

<sup>151</sup> In Manassi's opinion, the doge (in other words, the Venetian Republic) in accepting the inheritance of Aldo's library, worth 15,000 scudi, should not be concerned about having to spend 2–3,000 scudi to pay back his creditors, even if, he goes on to add, the debts are not limited to the Camera Apostolica's advance of three years' salary to Aldo, but also include other sums such as the expenses for Aldo's two servants, which amount to about three times the advance salary (1,200 scudi, in reality, 1,300–1,400 according to Dolfin's dispatches). Manassi's objections to these claims are based on the usual special pleading that the Manuzio family enjoyed a special status and that their name in itself constituted an exceptional asset which deserved exceptional treatment (and remuneration).

essere correttore nostro et de altri de Venetia, et ora fatto sacrista pare ben a lui detraer alla fama di chi nella sua bassa fortuna gli faceva del bene,<sup>152</sup> sì come è stato del Leoni, che, dopo averli mangiato et recoverato in casa, non s'è vergognato detraerlo con versi degni di lui, ma indegni del signor Aldo.<sup>153</sup> Scrivono gli Nepoti aver mandato Paolina a Cingoli loro Patria, et sono tutte arte fatte usar da quei Cardinali, che pur vorrebbero con quattro baiocchi levarli di mano quello studio, et perché all'Ambasciator nostro non sia più ostacolo il ricordo di averne cura di quella fiolina.<sup>154</sup>

Dicono anco che il signor Ambasciatore mostrava segno di voler liberarli esso studio, avendo conosciuto che quella donatione manca delle debite solenità; ma io tengo che siano tutte arti, et così crede l'Illustrissimo Paruta, avendole seco conferite. Ma si dice però esser vero che Nostro Signore abbia fatto cavare XV volumi de i più scelti et metterli nella Vaticana,<sup>155</sup> fra questi stimo io che ci saranno *Adriani fini contra hebreos libro* che raramente si trova, uno ...<sup>156</sup> de numeri stampato a Parigi, che non si trova, et le *Deche* di Livio tradotte

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<sup>152</sup> This 'sacrista' is the celebrated Angelo Rocca (1545–1620), Augustinian, theologian, humanist and historian. He had worked as an editor for the *Tipografia Vaticana* in 1585, where he had had special responsibility for the edition of the Fathers of the Church and for the Vulgate. In 1604 he founded the *Biblioteca Angelica* in Rome. On 3 March 1595, he was appointed papal sacristan by Clement VIII. In 1575, Rocca was living in Venice in the monastery of S. Stefano and, while there, he collaborated closely with a number of publishers, including Aldo. As a sign of their friendship, Rocca wrote the most important account of the magnificence and value of Aldo's private library, in a sense publicizing it, in his work on the *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*. It was therefore difficult for Manassi to deny Rocca's assertions and turn down the requests from the Camera Apostolica which Rocca had formulated on their behalf. Therefore, he limited himself to vague complaints about ingratitude, citing the help which Aldo had given to Rocca when he was in Venice, while, naturally, failing to mention Rocca's exceptional gifts. The best available study of Rocca today is A. Serrai, *Angelo Rocca fondatore della prima biblioteca pubblica d'Europa*, Milan, 2009.

<sup>153</sup> Giovan Battista Leoni (1542–1613) was a man of letters who acted as secretary for various rulers before becoming, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Venetian Republic's righthand man in the control of the booktrade. The three-volume edition of his letters (*Lettere familiari*, Venice: Ciotti, 1592–1596) reveals the range of his social network and his role in the controlled diffusion of political information. He has been defined as an example of the kind of man who was able to '[move] easily between the antechambers of the powerful and the workshops of printers': F. De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice. Rethinking early modern politics*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 79–80. Manassi here refers to the biting sarcasm composition entitled *Memoriale al cardinal Aldobrandini in persona di Aldo Manutio*, which Leoni wrote to attack Aldo (the work can be dated to after Aldo's divorce, 19 July 1596). The text is published in Pilot, 'Il divorzio' (n. 32 above), pp. 70–72; see also Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane* (n. 14 above), V, p. 514. At the time when he wrote this text, which was probably as widely read in Rome as it was in Venice, it is likely that Leoni was in the service of the dukes of Urbino. See D. E. Rhodes, *Giovanni Battista Leoni, diplomatico e poligrafo: appunti biografici, bibliografia degli scritti, regesto della corrispondenza*, Manziana (Rome), 2013.

<sup>154</sup> With the transfer of Aldo's daughter Paolina, still a minor, to Cingoli, where her uncle Alessandro Onorio, left a widower after the death of his wife Maria Manuzio, had business interests and perhaps also lived, the need for the Venetian ambassador to concern himself with the situation regarding the heirs was greatly reduced.

<sup>155</sup> Before releasing the library for sale in order to raise money to repay Aldo's creditors, the pope had fifteen of the finest volumes from the collection sequestered and placed in the Vatican Library. The titles which Manassi lists immediately following this news are both manuscripts and printed books.

<sup>156</sup> The copyist has omitted words in the original, presumably indecipherable.

et scritte dall'istesso Boccaccio, opera certo rara; gli altri fin ora non posso immaginarmi, ma valerano tutti certo mille et forse più scudi.<sup>157</sup>

Non si trova in Venetia altre carte dei Cardinali che quelle del gr. con le armi dove non ci sono tutti, ho scritto sabbato a Roma, et subito avuta io la manderò;<sup>158</sup> in questo mentre baciandovi le mani et pregandovi comandarme vi auguro felicissime feste.

Di Venetia, adì 23 decembre 1591

Di V. S. M. s.<sup>re</sup> aff.<sup>mo</sup> et obligatiss.<sup>o</sup>

Niccolò Manassi

*Letter 5 (6 January 1599)*

Molto Magn. mio sig. oss.<sup>mo</sup>

V. S. intese quanto scrissi con la mia di 23 del passato et così dicono esser vero della figliuolina del già Eccellentissimo signor Aldo. Ma se si come credo tanto pesa alla bontà di V. S. questi disordini del caro amico et compadre, di gratia, perché non potendomi trovarmi presente non ci fate favore con littere et all'Illustrissimo Paruta et all'Illustrissimo Dolfino, acciò che illuminati con verità et ragioni facessero poi frutto di consolatione et al deffonto, et alli suoi amici con giustitia verso i suoi eredi et creditori, et con gloria del publico. Deh, ve ne prego, fatelo in buona maniera subito, poichè vedo i freddi volerli ancora trattenerne, e poichè Monsignor Illustrissimo Reverendissimo Cardinal Patriarca ha di novo più che mai tornato a perseguitarne con monitorij, io risolvo al tutto di abandonar la patria, affine di levarmi delle mani di tanti inimici, senza aver niuno che ormai ci diffenda di core.<sup>159</sup>

Da Roma questa posta non c'è nulla altro di nuovo, ma stanno le cose nel termine già scritto: onde che ancora sarebbe a tempo il far qualche buon officio, et certo nessuno può farlo meglio di V. S. amica et intelligentissima de studij, et informata del particolare volere dell'amico, et non ha dubbio che fra Prencipi non occorre nelle donationi di far quello che si

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<sup>157</sup> For a comment on the works listed by Manassi, see above, paragraph *The Library of Aldo Manuzio*.

<sup>158</sup> Reference to a broadside from the Roman series *Insignia nomina, tituli, cognomina, nuncupationes, patriae, &c. reverendissimorum dominorum dd. s.r.e. cardinalium nunc viventium*, of which many different editions survive (e.g., Edit16, CNCE 73367).

<sup>159</sup> Lorenzo Priuli, Patriarch of Venice from 1591 to 1600 and Cardinal Priest of Santa Maria in Traspontina from 1596. It is known that as early as 1596 he had ordered Manassi to cease co-habitation with Francesca Giunti, which had begun long before her marriage to Aldo had been annulled and during which the couple had had children: Mancini, 'Aldo Manuzio il Giovane' (n. 1 above), pp. 9–10. Since, however, Francesca had now been widowed and the adulterous relationship no longer applied, it is more probable that the pressures from the patriarch which Manassi mentions here were to do with his professional activities and were connected to the thorny question of the edition of Bodin's *Demonomania*.

usa far tra persone private. Et io lo so molto ben a costo di mia borsa, poiché avendo ad instantia del Signor Aldo tenuto qualche anno in casa un Antonio Militia alchimista, il qual aveva 100 volumi de libri d'Alchimia, la più parte manuscritti, con uno solo indice che serviva a tutti essi volumi, et erano dentro una grandissima cassa coperta di cuoio, questo uomo avendo inventato un bellissimo rame bianco, che con doi terzi di argento si averebbe potuto batter [*ill.*] quattro lire, se ne andò al Gran Duca Francesco, che fusse la cagione in xv giorni passò all'altra vita, et fu fatto dal Gran Duca molto ben custodir et sepelir. Et subito mandò in posta la chiave di quella grande cassa, con espresso ordine che immediate dal suo agente, in pena della sua disgratia, dovessimo dargliela, il che si fece allor allora, con tutto che fossimo creditori, affine di non correr qualche mala fortuna.<sup>160</sup> Voglio dir che i Prencipi vogliono dai privati ogni cosa a modo loro, onde tanto più è dovere che se ne vagliano, quanto che così ha voluto ordinar vivendo, et sano, chi per esser patrone poteva farlo.

Tanto è vero che scrive Bessarione per la sua donatione et quanto al resto de travagli sono i medesimi et più che mai, onde tanto più volentieri farò prova co'l mutar paese veder ciò che doverà esser un giorno di noi. Ma spero bene perché la stampa et nome d'Aldo sarà cara in ogni luogo et favorita da ogni Prencipe. Mi dispiace che queste nevi et freddo trattengi tanto V. S. in tempo che questa povera gentildonna di nostra Comadre ha grandissimo bisogno di favore. Essa vi si raccomanda, et attende la vostra venuta con molto desiderio et con altrettanto bisogno, et in tanto prega N. S. Dio per ogni vostro bene et si offerisce pronta insieme con me di servirvi in ogni occasione. Subito arrivato la carta del Cardinale che credo sarà la posta che viene, l'invierò a V. S.

Il Clarissimo Contarini Roncinetto, tanto mio caro padrone, avendo per antiguo privilegio conseguito dai Re di Francia in premio della virtù loro nell'armi l'insegne et scudo d'essi Re con gli tre gigli d'oro in campo azzurro, et sopra dello scudo l'elmo con quella visiera all'antica, et sopra d'esso per cimiero una zampa di leone, et volendo ora adoperarla in certe occasioni, desidera qualche motto da meterci sopra di esso cimier, che fosse grave, et degno di così fatto merito: onde io, che le sono servitore, ho preso baldezza di pregar V. S.

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<sup>160</sup> Antonio Milizia had been presented to the grand duke of Tuscany with letters from Aldo (February 1581) and had given the duke a corrected edition of the life of Cosimo written by Aldo (July 1582): Pastorello, *Epistolario manuziano* (n. 1 above), p. 306. A letter from Leonardo Salviati to the grand duke, dated 10 February 1584, tells of the sudden death of Antonio Milizia and his wish, recorded in writing, to leave his own books (which were in Aldo's keeping) to the grand duke. According to Salviati, it was a matter of the utmost urgency to make Aldo deliver the cases of books to the grand duke, since Aldo hoped to find among Milizia's papers the secret of how to produce gunpowder, a secret which Milizia had always refused to reveal. Aldo hoped to sell the secret to the Venetian Republic and to be rewarded by being granted noble status: see Leonardo Salviati, *Lettere edite ed inedite*, ed. Pietro Ferrato, Padua, 1875, p. 68; and Pastorello, *Epistolario manuziano* (n. 1 above), p. 290; Pastorello, *Inedita Manutiana* (n. 1 above), p. 529.

volermi far così segnalata gratia, et mandarlo quanto prima, et se sarà anche più di uno potrà far poi elettione di quello che gli tornerà più conto.<sup>161</sup> Mi perdoni V. S. questa briga, et mi faci tanto favore, che gliene averò molto obligo et in occasione sarò prontissimo riservirla, dove potranno le forze mie et in questo mentre gli bacio le mani et auguro ogni bene.

Di Venetia, adì 6 gennaio 1598

Di V. S. M. S.<sup>re</sup> aff.<sup>mo</sup>

Niccolò Manassi

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<sup>161</sup> Manassi asks Ramusio to write a motto which would be suitable for the emblem of the Venetian patrician Domenico Contarini, known as Roncinetto.