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Aldus Manutius and the world of Venetian publishing

Whenever we undertake the study of Aldus Manutius (ca. 1450 – 1515) the feeling that we are dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants is unavoidable. This is not said for form's sake, as centuries of scholarship on the subject have produced wonderful studies which are invariably stimulating, regardless of the times one rereads them.¹ Yet, some questions regarding the factors responsible for Aldus' success amid the highly competitive world of Renaissance printing, remain only partially resolved. In this context, it is useful to reconsider the history of his activities from three different points of view: first, the Aldine firm as a centre of innovation, second, the reactions of his competitors to these innovations, and third, the extraordinary capacity of Aldus, the man and humanist, to construct a diversity of networks.

Although Aldus has always been regarded as the prototype of the scholar-publisher, that is, the independent innovator who creates his own mission and goals and follows them enthusiastically, it is clear that much of his success resulted from his ability to form networks of agents stemming from a variety of social and economic strata, but all endowed with various types of expertise and skills and linked in a cooperative process of innovation. This process is what David Lane, the theorist of innovation, has called a series of generative relationships represented by groups, whose actions produce something which one of their members could not have produced alone: an unforeseeable outcome resulting from the interaction between two or more individuals.²

The roots of innovation

¹ The standard point of departure is Antoine-Augustin Renouard, *Annales de l'Imprimerie des Alde, ou Histoire des trois Manuce et de leurs éditions*, 3^e édition (Paris: Renouard, 1834) pp. 461-481, together with the important collections of documentary sources compiled by Ester Pastorello, *L'Epistolario Manuziano. Inventario cronologico-analitico, 1483-1597* (Florence: Olschki, 1957) and *Inedita Manutiana. Appendice all'inventario* (Florence: Olschki, 1960). The articles of Carlo Dionisotti (collected in the volume *Aldo Manuzio umanista e editore*, Milan: Edizioni il Polifilo, 1995) opened a new era in the field of Aldine studies, especially in regard to Aldus's connection to Pietro Bembo. The well-known monograph by Martin Lowry (*The World of Aldus Manutius*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1979) reached a wider audience than scholars of Aldus alone. Important contributions have come in recent decades from Greek scholars, philologists of Italian literature, book trade historians and librarians. The best recent catalogue of the output of the firm is without doubt the catalogue of the Ahmanson-Murphy collection. Also linked to the unforgettable personality of Franklin David Murphy is the volume published in his memory *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance Culture*, a collection of highly innovative essays written to mark the Aldine quinqucentenary of 1994 (Florence: Olschki, 1998).

² David A. Lane, 'Complexity and Innovation Dynamics', in *Handbook on the Economic Complexity of Technological Change*, ed. by Cristiano Antonelli (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), pp. 61-81.

The life of Aldus before he moved to Venice is not a mere antecedent to his extraordinary career as a publisher, but a period during which he developed principles which in time lead him to find and spread the knowledge of the Classics to an intellectual elite eager to participate in the Humanism renewal. The roots of the Aldine enterprise are to be found not so much in Rome, where he studied, but in the courts of Emilia-Romagna in the Po valley. When he arrived in Venice he had spent the previous years between Ferrara and Carpi, under the patronage of Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola (1463 - 1494), who seems to have been responsible for his principal employment as “Professor Grammaticae” to his nephews, the Pio brothers. Alberto (1475-1531) and Lionello (1476-153?) were little more than infants when Aldus arrived in Carpi in about 1478. They had lost their father and their highly educated mother, Caterina Pico (1454 – 1501), was forced to leave them when she married the marquis Rodolfo Gonzaga (1452 -1495) in 1484. Aldus was treated like a member of the family, given a large house facing Pio’s residential palace and in 1480 Carpi’s citizenship and tax exemptions. Aldus did not continuously reside in Carpi but when he travelled he invariably took the two princes along: to Ferrara in 1481, Mirandola, with Pico in 1482, and possibly Venice in about 1487. In a novel teaching technique he had them use original sources, for which a knowledge of Greek in addition to Latin was necessary. This approach provided the princes with a direct link with the wisdom of the ancients which he felt would enable them to find moral and political models essential for the development of elevated ethical and culturally accomplished character traits. Books, he believed, were fundamental tools for future rulers, seen as authentic philosopher-princes who, thanks to the philosophy and science found in the models of Antiquity, would learn how to resolve conflicts, not by resorting to violence but to dialogue and intelligence. In addition to the discipline of individual study, Aldus introduced discussion sessions between him and his students, which he viewed as central to an ongoing pedagogic process. Thus, education was not to be seen as limited to a single period of one’s life but through individual effort and interactions with others as a continuous process. In this way, Aldus and the young princes under his guidance came to form an indissoluble bond.

Aldus came to feel at home in Carpi and even brought his two sisters to live with him there and when he moved to Venice, his interests in Carpi were looked after by Lionello Pio. Lionello signed himself “filius” (son) in his letters to Aldus and, in 1498, endowed him with a large estate,³ the income of

³ The gift of land (comprising approximately 29 hectares) is mentioned in a letter from Lionello Pio to Aldus written on 23 February 1498, in which Lionello also writes that the gift will help Aldus understand how much Lionello loves him, perhaps even more than Aldus already thinks he does; see Paolo Manuzio, *Lettere copiate sugli autografi esistenti nella Biblioteca Ambrosiana* (Paris: Giulio Renouard, 1834), pp. 335-336.

which was intended to support the running of the Academy (see below), for which Aldus was also promised various rooms in the castle at Novi, where Lionello had been living since 1497.

The near paternal relationship between Aldus and the Pios continued throughout their life and represented a source of assistance and unfailing support for him. The twelve editions which Aldus dedicated to Alberto as a “new Maecenas”,⁴ [Fig. 1] his invitation to Aldus to transfer his printing and publishing activities and the Academy to Carpi and his steadfast financial support testify to the profound friendship and spiritual affinity Alberto felt towards Aldus. It culminated in 1504 when he was allowed by Alberto to add the family name of Pio to his own and use the family coat of arms. From that time on Aldus signed himself Aldus Pius Manutius Romanus. It is far from surprising then, that in his last will and testament he made arrangements to be buried in Carpi and wanted his family to return to live there after his death.⁵

The Aldine enterprise as a place of innovation

Greatly enriched intellectually by his experiences at Carpi, Aldus arrived in Venice at the end of 1489 and was immediately able to establish a relationship with several highly educated bibliophiles and members of the aristocracy, such as the Barbaro and Bembo families and the historian Marin Sanudo (1466 – 1536).⁶ He also began to frequent the city’s printing and publishing circles in search for partners, brave enough to share the risks of a yet untried printing enterprise: the publication of as comprehensive a list as possible of classical Greek texts, beginning with the scientific and

⁴ The term is used by Aldus in the dedication to Aristotle’s *Organon*, 1495 (ISTC ia00959000, GW 2334). See also Luigi Balsamo, ‘Editoria e mecenatismo Quattrocento e Cinquecento: il caso di Aldo Manuzio e Alberto Pio’, in *Produzione e circolazione libraria in Emilia: studi e ricerche* (Parma: Casanova, 1983), pp. 101-132.

⁵ Information on Aldus as tutor to Alberto Pio and on their relationship can be found in Cesare Vasoli, *Alberto III Pio da Carpi* (Carpi: Comune di Carpi, 1978); Hans Semper, *Carpi. Una sede principesca del Rinascimento* (Dresda, 1882), ed. by Luisa Giordano (Pisa: ETS, 1999); Cesare Vasoli, ‘Alberto III Pio’ in *L’immagine del principe. I ritratti di Alberto III Pio nel palazzo dei Pio a Carpi*, ed. by Manuela Rossi (Carpi: Comune di Carpi, 2008), pp. 13-54; *I libri belli: Aldo Manuzio, Carpi e la xilografia*, ed. Manuela Rossi and Enzo Di Martino (Carpi: APM, 2015).

⁶ The Barbaro and Bembo families and Marino Sanudo possessed what were some of the finest private libraries in Italy and owned manuscripts which Aldus used as inspiration and as copies for his own editions. Poliziano saw Aldus in Barbaro’s house in July 1491, where he had gone for the christening of Cornelio Onorato Marcello, son of Alvise, brother Ermolao Barbaro (Ida Maier, *Le manuscrits d’Ange Politien*, *Travaux d’Humanism et Renaissance*, 70 (Geneva: Droz, 1965) p. 211). On Barbaro’s library, see Fabio Vendruscolo, ‘Per la biblioteca di Francesco ed Ermolao Barbaro: cinquant’anni dopo’, in *Griechisch-byzantinische Handschriftenforschung Traditionen, Entwicklungen, neue Wege* (Greek manuscripts: From the past reaching out to the future), ed. by Christian Brockmann, Dieter Harlfinger, and Stefano Valente (Berlin; Boston: de Gruyter, in print. There is much information on Alberto Pio and Aldus in the *Diari* of Marin Sanudo, but the most memorable of Sanudo’s notes is on the death of Aldus and his funeral in February 1515: “In questa matina hessendo morto zà do zorni qui domino Aldo Manutio romano, ottimo humanista et greco, qual era zenero di Andrea d’Asola stampador [...] ordinò il suo corpo fosse portato a sepelir a Carpi” (*Diari*, XIX, 4125).

philosophical works [Fig. 2]. The program would get under way five years later with an authentic landmark of early printing and publishing, the collected works of Aristotle.⁷ Aldus had found two men willing to join him in the enterprise: the printer Andrea Torresani di Asola (1451 – 1529),⁸ whose daughter he would marry in 1505, and a financial partner, the nobleman Pier Francesco Barbarigo.⁹ The Torresani-Barbarigo partnership was unusual for two reasons. Firstly, the firm was named after Aldus Manutius, whose partnership share was no more than one tenth of its capital. Secondly, since every privilege obtained from the Senate was requested in his name and granted to him, Aldus was the sole owner of all the inventions and innovations derived from the press. This, at first sight imbalanced arrangement, reflects the importance of Aldus position as the only partner who had the right contacts to obtain the Greek manuscripts the firm wished to print and the ability to develop the intellectual environment necessary to make its ambitious projects possible.

The Torresani-Barbarigo partnership was not the only association that Aldus was able to build around his project. The network of collaborators which was to prove indispensable to the Aldine enterprise consisted of eminent Greek scholars, who edited the works brought to press, manuscript collectors, who provided the texts upon which Aldus and his editors worked and a group of enthusiastic students of Greek, who supported him in his crusade to disseminate the Classics.¹⁰ The number of these collaborators is so large that only a few may be identified among those to whom Aldus dedicated his

⁷ Analysis of Aldus's Greek production in Martin Sicherl, *Griechische Erstaussgaben des Aldus Manutius: Druckvorlagen, Stellenwert, kultureller Hintergrund* (Paderborn; München; Wien; Zürich: Schöningh, 1997).

⁸ Despite the plethora of studies on Aldus, the figure of Andrea Torresani has remained somewhat in the shade, as noted by Ennio Sandal, 'Per Andrea Torresano: a proposito di un libro recente', in *Intorno al Polifilo: Contributi sull'opera e l'epoca di Francesco Colonna e Aldo Manuzio*, ed. by Alessandro Scarsella (Venice: Biblion – Centro Studi sul Libro Antico, 2005), pp. 201-216. Sandal reminds us that the patrician Marin Sanudo defined Torresano "grandissimo ricco", hugely wealthy. We know for certain that Torresani was a partner in the so-called Company of Venice, the major publishing partnership in Venice in the fifteenth century (Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance*, Library of the Written World. The Handpress World, 26 (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 30-31; Roland Hissette, 'Des éditions d'Aristote-Averroès produites par Lorenzo Canozi (1472-75) et Andrea Torresano (1483)', *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*, 2012, 105-122). He was not only a book merchant but also dealt in barrel hoops: Tullia 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. by R. Ridolfi (Florence: Olschki, 1969), pp. 165-186: 178.

⁹ Pier Francesco Barbarigo, son of the late Doge Marco and nephew of the then reigning Doge Agostino, was from 1495 to 1499 partner of Aldus. See Ester Pastorello, 'Di Aldo Pio Manuzio: Testimonianze e documenti', *La Bibliofilia*, 67 (1965), 2, 163-220: 167.

¹⁰ A group portrait of the scholars around Aldus, who carried through the revival of Greek studies, can be found in Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius. Business and scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979). See also Ambroise Firmin-Didot, *Alde Manuce et l'Hellénisme à Venice* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1875) and Deno John Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice: Studies in the Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to Western Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1962). The Florentine component of this scholarly ambience is traced in Piero Scapecchi, 'Tra il giglio e l'ancora', in *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance Culture: Essays in Memory of Franklin D. Murphy*, ed. by David S. Zeidberg (Florence: Olschki, 1998), pp. 17-30.

editions.¹¹ As a group they evolved into a formally established circle of scholars, which at the beginning of the 16th century, took under his leadership, the name of the “New Academy”.¹² Until then, such a complex organization was entirely unknown in the world of printing where publishers had, at most, been able to obtain support for their initiatives from religious institutions or by involving university academics in specific printing projects. Aldus’s networks made up by a complex set of frameworks within which his great cultural projects could be realized, were a radical departure from this haphazard systems. The very idea of setting up an academy embodies his visionary approach to book production, not merely as a private commercial enterprise, but as a cultural initiative which acquired, on account of its significance, a public dimension worthy of public support and funding.

But the most extraordinary and fruitful of all the generative relationships established by Aldus, was the one he formed with Pietro Bembo (1470 - 1547), a man of letters twenty years his junior.¹³ The Aldine press began publishing in 1495, with the edition of a grammar by Constantine Lascaris (1434 – 1501?),¹⁴ whose text in manuscript was brought to Aldus by Bembo. Bembo had also written a short work, *De Aetna* (On Etna) where he related for his father some of the experiences he had during a trip to Sicily [Fig. 3]. It was published by Aldus in 1496, probably as a ‘privately printed’ edition not destined for commercial distribution as it was never included in the printed catalogues of books for sale issued in the following years.¹⁵ Until a few decades ago, when the only surviving copy of a brief composition printed in Italian called *Sogno* (Dream) was discovered, *De Aetna* was believed to have been Bembo’s first printed work. *Sogno* was dedicated by Bembo to one of his life-long friends, Girolamo Savorgnan (1466 – 1529).¹⁶ Undated, it was probably printed before Bembo left Venice for

¹¹All his dedications, together with prefaces and introductions, are published in *Aldo Manuzio editore: Dedicche, prefazioni, note ai testi*, introduction of Carlo Dionisotti; ed. and transl. by Giovanni Orlandi (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1975), 2 vols.

¹² Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius*, chapter V; Stefano Pagliaroli, ‘L’Accademia Aldina’, *Incontri triestini di filologia classica* 9 (2009-2010), 175-187. There is no scholarly consensus on the exact date of the Statute of the Academy, which survives in a unique copy in the Vatican Library (Stamp. Barb. AAA.IV.13): some scholars have dated it to 1500, others not before 1502.

¹³ On Pietro Bembo, the best starting point is Carlo Dionisotti, *Scritti sul Bembo*, ed. by Claudio Vela (Turin: Einaudi, 2002). The relationship between Aldus and Pietro Bembo has been fully treated in Cecil H. Clough, ‘Pietro Bembo’s edition of Petrarch and his association with the Aldine Press’ in *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance Culture: Essays in Memory of Franklin D. Murphy*, ed. by David S. Zeidberg (Florence: Olschki, 1998) pp. 44-80.

¹⁴ Constantinus Lascaris, *Erotemata*, Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1495 (GW M17107; ISTC il00068000).

¹⁵ Pietro Bembo, *De Aetna dialogus*, Venice: Aldus Manutius, Romanus, 1496 (GW 3810; ISTC ib00304000). The typeface of this book is one of Aldus’s and Griffo’s masterpieces, the so-called Bembo type. Elisa Curti, ‘Pietro Bembo. “De Aetna”’, in *Pietro Bembo e l’invenzione del Rinascimento*, ed. by Guido Beltramin, Davide Gasparotto, and Adolfo Tura (Venice: Marsilio, 2013), pp. 106-109.

¹⁶ Pietro Bembo, *Sogno*, [Venice: Johannes and Gregorius de Gregoriis, de Forlivio, about 1492-94] (ISTC ib00304100). The only extant copy (Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense) has been digitized and freely available online (http://digitale.beic.it/BEIC:RD01:39bei_digitool2956245). Elisa Curti, ‘Pietro Bembo. “Sogno”’, in *Pietro Bembo e*

Messina in 1492. That it was not a publication intended for the book trade is proved not by its extreme rarity but because the famous Paduan book-collector Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535 – 1601),¹⁷ who decades later came into possession of a large part of Bembo's Paduan library, owned as many as sixteen copies of *Sogno*, likely abandoned by Bembo when he left for Rome, as a piece of juvenilia he had no interest in preserving.¹⁸

Following the monumental edition of Aristotle's works and its commentators, issued in about 1500, it became clear to Aldus's partners that the magnificent Greek folio volumes they were producing were selling too slowly to justify the investments they required.¹⁹ Aldus then started a radically innovative sort of publishing initiative. He aimed for a selective audience, one made up by publically active and sophisticated men, who might enjoy reading for pleasure and edification, whenever they had a spare moment from their work. Thus a series of books in octavo, designed for easy readability, printed in a new typeface, the italic, which Aldus thought more intimate and pleasing to the eye was born. It also included the new "classics" in the vernacular: Petrarch and Dante edited by Bembo, a choice which in itself was an extraordinary innovation that left a lasting mark in the history of the book and in the development of Italian literature.²⁰

Aldus wrote to Pietro Bembo in the dedication to the 1514 edition of his Virgil that he copied the format ("forma enchiridia") from manuscripts written in this small size he had seen in Bernardo

l'invenzione del Rinascimento, ed. by Guido Beltramin, Davide Gasparotto, and Adolfo Tura (Venice: Marsilio, 2013), pp. 94-96.

¹⁷ 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: [M. Welsler], 1607). Since this work was published, Pinelli's life has been seen as inextricably intertwined with his library, and the man himself has become the model ('typus') of the discriminating and erudite collector. 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, Angela 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, Delaware and London, 2007, pp. 39-68.

¹⁸ On Bembo's Roman library, see Massimo Danzi, *La biblioteca del Cardinal Pietro Bembo*, *Travaux d'Humanism et Renaissance*, 399 (Geneva: Droz, 2005).

¹⁹ Pier Francesco Barbarigo had died in 1499, but his heirs were still involved in the firm.

²⁰ The bibliography on the Aldine octavos and the Italic is now vast. A useful summary of the question is in Hans George Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies: Documentary essays on the life and work of Aldus Manutius* (San Francisco: B. Rosenthal, 1988), pp. 77-91. Among the most recent contributions: G. Frasso, 'Appunti sul "Petarcarca" aldino del 1501', in *Vestigia. Studi in onore di G. Billanovich* (Rome: Ed. di Storia e Letteratura, 1984) vol. 1, pp. 315-35; Martin Davies, *Aldus Manutius: Printer and Publisher of Renaissance Venice* (London: The British Library, 1995) pp. 42-50; Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The editor and the vernacular text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 48-55; Carlo Pulsoni, 'I classici italiani di Aldo Manuzio e le loro contraffazioni lionesi', *Critica del testo* 5, 2 (2002), pp. 477-487; Sandra Giarin, 'Petarcarca e Bembo: l'edizione aldina del *Canzoniere*', *Studi di filologia italiana* 62 (2004), pp. 161-193; Gino Belloni, 'Francesco Petarcarca. Le cose volgari', in *Pietro Bembo e l'invenzione del Rinascimento*, ed. by Guido Beltramin, Davide Gasparotto, and Adolfo Tura (Venice: Marsilio, 2013), pp. 150-152.

Bembo's (1433 – 1519) library.²¹ Pietro Bembo's degree of involvement in these two editions is interesting on two accounts: for one, he decided to protect with a printing privilege (asked by his brother Carlo) the textual version of Petrarch and Dante which was based on two autograph manuscripts in his possession,²² and for two, he chose, perhaps to convince Aldus of the commercial viability of the project, to enter into a business partnership with him as a way of contributing to the publishing expenses.²³ The high printing runs which were produced, ranging from 1,500 to 3,000 copies per edition, show that the strategy, which ultimately proved successful, was to produce books which would stay in the market for a long time as standard works and best editions of the texts that everybody read. It could be said that a new physical relationship between the readers and the volumes they held in their hands had been born.

Competitors' reactions to Aldus's innovations

The most striking evidence of the success of this new series of books was the development of fierce competition, involving illegal trade and non-authorized copies of Aldus's original octavo editions by the two leading firms in the Italian book industry, the Giunti and the Gabiano. Their response to Aldus's new book format is evidence of what a well-made and profitable editorial product it was. Of course, Aldus was no stranger to unfair competition to his Greek projects, but those initiatives had had limited commercial success²⁴ as, unsurprisingly, no major publishers wanted to compete with Aldus while the market for his books was restricted, in fact over restricted to a small intensely educated elite.

By contrast, the leading exponents of the book trade of the time understood very quickly the potential of this novel combination of new format and typeface for publishing the classics.²⁵ Contrary to some

²¹ "Adde quod parvam hanc enchiridii formam a tua bibliotheca ac potius iucundissimi parentis tui Bernardi accepimus. Hic ipse etiam paucis ante diebus quam haec scriberem, quosdam eadem forma libellos – quae est venerandi senis et iam unum et octoginta annos nati mira benignitas – statim rogatus mihi commodo dedit..." (Virgil, October 1514, f. a1v).

²² The privilege is recorded in Venice, State Archives, Notatorio di Collegio, Reg. 15, f. 42r (26.VI.1501).

²³ Cecil H. Clough, 'Pietro Bembo's edition of Petrarch and his association with the Aldine Press' in *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance Culture: Essays in Memory of Franklin D. Murphy*, ed. by David S. Zeidberg (Florence: Olschki, 1998), pp. 70-71

²⁴ Carlo Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio umanista e editore* (Milan: Edizioni il Polifilo, 1995), pp. 112-117. Elpidio Mioni, 'Calliergi, Zaccaria' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/zaccaria-calliergi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/zaccaria-calliergi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). Despina Vlasi, 'I Greci a Venezia: Una presenza costante nell'editoria (sec. XV-XX)', in *Armeni, ebrei, greci stampatori a Venezia*, ed. by Scilla Abbiati (Venice: Tipo-Litografia Armena, 1989), pp. 71-99.

²⁵ The Italic typeface had been created by the type founder, punchcutter, and type designer Francesco Griffo. See Paolo Tinti, 'Griffo, Francesco', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-griffo_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-griffo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

scholars' views on the inefficacy of the Venetian system of printing privileges, the history of the non-authorized copies of Aldine octavos actually confirms how efficient the protection it offered was.²⁶

In the field of privileges, Aldus's *modus operandi* was astute, even cunning.²⁷ For his Greek editions he sought to obtain a blanket protection for all the books he planned to publish. To get it, he invented what we might now call industrial privilege, a very different legal condition than the commercial privileges then granted. Industrial privileges were intended to protect new techniques of book production, so that all editions deriving from them were covered by the protection, thereby freeing the entrepreneur from the laborious and costly process of requesting a privilege for each edition, as was mandatory for commercial privileges. The first industrial privilege was requested by Aldus for his Greek types in 1496 [Fig. 4].²⁸ Later he requested one for his Italic typeface, but in this occasion he had to ask for it in an unprecedented scale as evidenced by the six different acts of privilege that have survived, three issued in Venice and three by the pope, the last of which was signed by the apostolic secretary Pietro Bembo.²⁹

While it was valid, a privilege gave legal backing to three fundamental elements of temporary monopoly in book production: the printing of the text, its importation and its sale in the Republic of Venice which is why counterfeiters producing copies in Brescia had to name Florence on the title-page as the place of publication. However, Venetian privileges were not valid beyond the Republic's confines and did nothing to prevent foreign reproductions, be it in Lyon or in any other of the Italian States, as was the case with the octavos issued by Filippo Giunti in Florence or by Gershom Soncino in Fano or Pesaro.³⁰ The privilege did forbid the import of copies identical to those protected by the privilege within Venetian territory and transgressors were severely punished as was the case of

²⁶ On the privilege system in Venice, see Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade*, pp. 195-257.

²⁷ The complete series of privileges granted to Aldus has been published in Hans George Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies*, pp. 139-156.

²⁸ The privilege is recorded in Venice, State Archives, Notatorio di Collegio, Reg.14, f. 137v.

²⁹ Two of the papal privileges, granted respectively by Julius II (27.I.1513) and Leo X (28.XI.1513), are known to have been advocated by Alberto Pio, who was at the time Imperial Ambassador to the Roman Curia (Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies*, pp. 153-156).

³⁰ William A. Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence: A Renaissance Printing and Publishing Family. A History of the Florentine Firm and a Catalogue of the Editions* (New Castle (DE): Oak Knoll Press, 2013); Angela Nuovo, 'La parte del volgare del catalogo di Gershom Soncino', in *L'attività editoriale di Gershom Socino 1502-1527. Atti del convegno (Soncino, 17 settembre 1995)*, ed. by Giuliano Tamani (Soncino: Edizioni dei Soncino, 1997), pp. 59-93.

Bernardo Giunti (1428 – 1550/51) who was sentenced to exile in 1507 for importing into the Republic 200 copies of books identical to a privilege protected Aldine.³¹

Beyond Venice the only available protection privileges could be issued by the Pope. It may have been thought that since he ruled over all Christian subjects, a privilege granted by him could be valid outside the borders of any particular state, in other words truly transnational. But such a prospect was an illusion, as Aldus well knew. His only remaining protection strategy was to turn directly to his readers, the constituents of the ideal Republic of Letters, the widest of all the networks he had built over many years of extraordinary publishing activities. He warned his readers against the defective imitations of his editions put in the market by unscrupulous competitors, asking them to reject them both on moral and material grounds.³² Of course, this could never be anything more than a moral exhortation and, at that, one which would never reach a wide public, but then he thought of introducing another form of protection which proved useful and powerful. That was the dolphin and anchor device originally taken from a Roman coin dating from the reign of emperor Titus and given to him by Pietro Bembo. From 1502 onwards this device began to appear in his books and endured as the distinctive sign of the Aldine press for generations to come.³³ Nevertheless, despite Aldus's strong and resourceful opposition, the Gabiano in Lyon **[Fig. 5a-5b]**,³⁴ and the Giunti in Florence continued to reproduce for many years books essentially identical to the originals. They also copied the idea of publishing books in series, with

³¹ Ester Pastorello, 'Di Aldo Pio Manuzio: Testimonianze e documenti', *La Bibliofilia* 67 (1965), pp. 163-220: 172; Scapecchi, 'Tra il giglio e l'ancora', pp. 23-24; Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence*, pp. 15-17.

³² *Aldus's Warning against the Printers of Lyon, Venice* (1503), on which see Joanna Kostylo, 'Commentary on Aldus Manutius's Warning against the Printers of Lyon (1503)', in *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)*, ed. by L. Bently & M. Kretschmer, <http://www.copyrighthistory.org> (2008).

³³ Harry George Fletcher has studied Aldus's device in depth: see his *New Aldine Studies*, pp. 43-59 and his *In Praise of Aldus Manutius: A Quincentenary Exhibition* (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library – Los Angeles: University Research Library, Dept. of Special Collections-UCLA, 1995), pp. 25-34. In comparison with other publishers in Venice Aldus adopted a device quite late.

³⁴ Information on the Gabiano family can be found in Corrado Marciani, 'I Gabiano, librai italo-francesi del XVI secolo', *La Bibliofilia*, 74 (1972), pp. 191-213; Paolo Veneziani, 'Il libraio al segno della fontana', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 1999, pp. 242-66 and Mario Infelise, 'Gabiano, Baldassarre da', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/baldassarre-da-gabiano_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/baldassarre-da-gabiano_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). More recently: Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade*, pp. 71-80, 165-170, 313-314 and Eadem, 'Selling Books in the Italian Renaissance: The Correspondence of Giovanni Bartolomeo Gabiano' in *International Exchange in the Early Modern Book World*, ed. by Matthew McLean and Sarah Barker (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 59-79. For the Gabiano in Lyon, see Henri Baudrier, *Bibliographie Lyonnaise: Recherches sur les imprimeurs, libraires, relieurs et fondeurs de lettres de Lyon au XVIe siècle*. 12 vols. (Lyon: Brun, 1895-1921), vol. 7, pp. 1-245, 449-450. On the so-called Aldine counterfeits: David J. Shaw, 'The Lyons Counterfeit of Aldus's Italic Type: A new chronology', in *The Italian Book 1465-1800: Studies presented to Dennis E. Rhodes on his 70th Birthday*, ed. by Denis V. Reidy (London: The British Library, 1993), pp. 117-33 and William Kemp, 'Counterfeit Aldines and Italic-Letter Editions Printed in Lyons 1502-1510: Early Diffusion in Italy and France', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*, 35/1 (1997), pp. 75-100. The Ahmanson-Murphy collection includes a remarkable number of these "Lyonese Contrefactions", see *The Aldine Press: Catalogue of the Ahmanson-Murphy collection of books by or relating to the press in the library of the University of California, Los Angeles, incorporating works recorded elsewhere* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 503-524.

a perfect understanding of all the innovative aspects of the original Aldine concept. Indeed it was precisely the plagiarized idea of publishing books in serial form by Aldus competitors which further increased the success of this new type of book, disseminated the use of the Italic type throughout Europe and made older formats and designs look out of date. It may be said that even Aldus opportunistic rivals helped to spread the impact of his innovations in the book trade.

Aldus Manutius' networks

In reconstructing Aldus's networks, it is useful to look again at documents which have not been properly interpreted and may yet provide meaningful information. Among the more interesting of these are Aldus's last wills and testaments of which he wrote three: the first in Venice in 1506, the next in Ferrara in 1511 and some weeks before his death the final one in Venice in 1515.³⁵

Aldus's wills are an important venue to track the development of his family circle. In 1506 his sole heir was his father-in-law Andrea Torresani,³⁶ who in 1511 was replaced by his eldest son, Marco Manutius. In the last will of 1515, his three sons (female children did not inherit) Marco, Antonio and the youngest, Paolo, who was only three, were named as universal heirs. His wife's inheritance also changed. In 1506, Maria had been married to Aldus for one year and was pregnant with Marco, their first child. To her he left, in addition to the restitution of her dowry (460 ducats) as mandated by Venetian law, a substantial legacy of 500 ducats for her maintenance until she happened to re-marry. The return of the dowry is also stipulated in the wills that followed. In the one of 1511, in addition to it and 100 ducats she is also to keep all her jewelry and garments, whereas in the last the dowry is the

³⁵ There are notable formal differences between the testaments. Only the last was dictated in the presence of a notary; the preceding ones were written by Aldus himself and presented to a notary only afterwards. As a consequence, only the last one is in Latin, while the first two are in Italian. Recently, Tiziana Plebani drew attention to the fact that the original of the two first testaments (1506 and 1511) were also signed by Aldus with his wax seal bearing the depiction of his device, the anchor and the dolphin (Tiziana Plebani, 'Il sigillo ignorato: Aldo Manuzio, la sua impronta e l'attenzione strabica degli storici', *Engramma: La tradizione classica nella memoria occidentale*, 132 (2016), http://www.egramma.it/eOS2/index.php?id_articolo=2730). Although interesting, this fact alone should not be seen as peculiar or significant in itself, as though Aldus's device had a specific emblematic meaning that the testator wished to express in that solemn moment. In the course of my researches on the book trade in Renaissance Italy, I have come across letters from other publishers of the period, which were sealed in the same manner, using a wax seal bearing their device. Furthermore, as above-mentioned testaments were only presented to the notary at a later date, the seal wax served as additional evidence of the authenticity of the document. Each of Aldus's wills was discovered by different scholars and they have been sparsely published. The only complete publication of all three is to be found in Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies*, pp.160-172.

³⁶ Aldus married Maria Torresani during carnival time in 1505 (Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies*, p. 28).

sole item, though it formally recognizes her role as *administratrix* of the family property answerable only to herself, until her children reach 25 years of age.³⁷

We can infer from his wills that Aldus wanted his family, who in his view would have no reason to live in Venice after his death, to settle in Carpi. He was not keen in planning for a Manutius publishing dynasty while his children were young, and it is apparent that he believed that publishing books had been only a phase in his life and that this activity should remain in the hands of the man who was the firm's book trade professional, Andrea Torresani. He foresaw a future in philological studies for his children and therefore in teaching, not in the book business.³⁸ Unlike other printers and booksellers he left no directives for a continuation of his business by his immediate family as, for instance Bernardino Stagnino (active 1483 – 1538) did,³⁹ but indicated that, after a careful inventory of his assets, his heirs' portion should be liquidated. Nor, *a fortiori*, did he make provision for his young sons to be trained as printers, similar to the apprenticeship the Pavese bookseller Damiano Turlini (active 1549-1569) stipulated for his son, still a minor, forcing him to move to Venice in order to learn the techniques of book production and the book trade at Vincenzo Valgrisi's (15..– 1572?) shop.⁴⁰

Another important indicator of Aldus's wealth and status is the amount of dowry he bestowed on his daughters. It is worth noting the notable respect and caring which Aldus repeatedly and without exception showed for the women of his household. In 1506, he set aside 1,000 ducats as a dowry for any daughter who might be born to him and his wife. In 1511 he had two daughters, Letizia and Alda (possibly twins), for whom he provided a dowry of 500 ducats each, showing that he had not increased the ducat amount available for his daughters' dowries since 1506. In the last will, he bestowed only one dowry of 600 ducats for Alda, as Letizia had already died. Comparison may be made between Aldus' dowry stipulations and those of other publishers as recorded in their wills or other documents.⁴¹ Among

³⁷ In the testament, Maria is defined "prudens et optima ac honestae vitae", a woman of impeccable reputation.

³⁸ His main preoccupation, as expressed in his 1511 will, was that his son Manutio would receive a thoroughgoing education in "bone lettere et boni costumi" from some erudite teacher (Aldus names his friend Battista Egnazio).

³⁹ See for instance the printer Bernardino Stagnino's 1538 will, where he orders his heirs to continue in the book trade "fina che si poia far", for as long as possible: Stefano Pillinini, *Bernardino Stagnino: Un editore a Venezia tra Quattro e Cinquecento*, Materiali e ricerche, Collana della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Venezia, Nuova serie, 7 (Rome: Jouvence, 1989), pp. 109-110.

⁴⁰ Anna Giulia Cavagna, 'Mappa e tipologia delle migrazioni di tipografi-editori. Riflessioni metodologiche: il caso di Pavia e Genova nel XVI secolo', in *Mobilità dei mestieri del libro tra Quattrocento e Seicento: Convegno internazionale, Roma, 14-16 marzo 2012*, ed. by Marco Santoro and Samanta Segatori, Biblioteca di paratesto, 8 (Pisa-Rome: Serra, 2013) pp. 278-282: 278.

⁴¹ For dowries in Venice see the studies of Anna Bellavitis, e. g. 'Dot et richesse des femmes à Venise au XVI^e siècle', *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*, 7, 1998, pp. 91-100; *Famille, genre, transmission à Venise au XVI^e siècle* (Rome: École française

the earliest printers in Venice, Nicolas Jenson (1420 - 1480) became wealthy enough to provide, in 1480, his three daughters with dowries of 600 ducats each, while Johannes de Colonia (d. 1494), the first substantial merchant-entrepreneur in the Venetian book world, was able to give his only daughter, Girolama, a dowry worth 3,000 ducats. Another fifteenth-century printer, Paganino Paganini (1450 – 1538) took Cristina, daughter of the German bookman Franz Renner, as his wife with a rich dowry of 1,800 ducats;⁴² though his son, Alessandro, had to content himself with a dowry of 700 ducats when he married the daughter of the printer Giorgio Rusconi (active 1500 – 1522). But when we assess the dowries of Aldus principal competitors, the figures are impressive. Giovanni Bartolomeo Gabiano (active 1520s) gave a dowry of 2,000 ducats to each of his three daughters.⁴³ Tommaso Giunti (1494 – 1569) gave his daughter Francesca Lucrezia a dowry of 4.000 ducats when she married Aldus Manutius jr,⁴⁴ and Andrea Torresani’s son Federico a dowry of 5,000 ducats for each of his two daughters , the same amount that Pietro Bembo intended to give to his daughter Elena.⁴⁵ Thus dowries of several thousand ducats, comparable to those of some Venetian noblemen, were within the reach of successful men in the book trade, though still not at the level of a Venetian merchant with a transnational business who could afford dowries in the 12-15,000 ducats range.

We can conclude that Aldus never became as rich as the most successful members of the book trade in Venice. Yet we can infer from the text of his wills that the resources of which he could dispose were never only material but imbued of a high social and cultural significance within the context of the society he was living in. The social horizon of his relationships is simply incomparable with that of any other publisher of the period.⁴⁶ The executors of his wills are not other printers or publishers or

de Rome, 2008); and ‘La dote a Venezia tra medioevo e prima età moderna’, in *Spazi, poteri, diritti delle donne a Venezia in età moderna* (Verona: QuiEdit, 2012), pp. 5-20.

⁴² Nuovo, *The Book Trade*, pp. 24, 30 and 75. See also the general considerations in Catherine Kikuchi, ‘Les Femmes dans le milieu du livre vénitien, fin XV^e -début XVI^e siècle’, in *Acteurs sociaux en situations*, (Paris: Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2014), <https://humanisme.hypotheses.org/575>. For the date of the death of Johannes de Colonia, see Christian Coppens, ‘Giovanni da Colonia, aka Johann Ewylre/Arwylre/Ahrweiler: The Early Printed Book and its Investors’, *La Bibliofilia*, 116 (2014), pp.113-119.

⁴³ Corrado Marciani, ‘I Gabiano, librai italo-francesi del XVI secolo’, *La Bibliofilia*, 74 (1972), pp. 191-212.

⁴⁴ Horatio Brown, ‘The Will of Thomaso Giunti’, *English Historical Review*, 6 (1891), pp. 154-161; Paolo Camerini, ‘Il testamento di Tomaso Giunti’, *Atti e memorie della R. Accademia di scienze lettere ed arti in Padova*, 43 (1927), pp. 191-210 and 205-206; Francesca Pitacco, ‘La repromissione di dote di Francesca Lucrezia Giunti e la bottega veneziana di Aldo Manuzio il Giovane’, *Miscellanea Marciana*, 16 (2001), pp. 217-238.

⁴⁵ Corrado Marciani, ‘Il testamento, e altre notizie, di Federico Torresani’, *La Bibliofilia* 73 (1971), pp. 165–78. The amount of the dowry for Elena was fixed by Pietro Bembo in his first testament of 25 November 1535 (Vittorio Cian, *Un decennio della vita di M. Pietro Bembo (1521-1531). Appunti biografici e saggio di studi* (Turin: Loescher, 1885), pp. 201-202).

⁴⁶ Rosa Salzberg, ‘“The Richest Man in Italy”: Aldo Manuzio and the Value of Male Friendships’, in *Practices of Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Megan Cassidy-Welch, Peter Sherlock (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 177-198.

merchants as was usual with his colleagues in the trade, but men and women from the nobility, the ruling class or social elite. Among these, the Pio princes, Alberto and Lionello figure most prominently and also Lucrezia Borgia (1480 – 1519), duchess of Este in the wills of 1511 and 1515.⁴⁷ In his last testament, Aldus added as executor, Giambattista Spinelli Count of Cariati (d. 1522), a patrician nobleman from the highest echelons of the Southern Italian aristocracy and Ambassador to the Emperor in Venice.⁴⁸ At a slightly lower rung in the social hierarchy, Venetian noblemen, humanists and book collectors were named as executors in Aldus's wills. Among the more notable figure aristocrats such as Niccolò Zorzi (16th century),⁴⁹ Daniele Renier (1476 – 1535), a mathematician and student of Hebrew whose manuscripts were used by the press,⁵⁰ Paolo Canal (1481 – 1506?), an accomplished Greek scholar, member of the Aldine Academy and deeply interested in religious renewal,⁵¹ and humanist-scholars collaborating with the press like Niccolò Leonicensi (1428 – 1524), Battista Egnazio (ca 1478 -1553) and Giovan Battista Ramusio (1485 – 1557).⁵²

⁴⁷ Some information on Aldus's relation with Lucrezia in H. George Fletcher, 'Manuscript corrections in the Aldine Strozzi', in *The Books of Venice - Il libro veneziano* ed. by Lisa Pons and Craig Kallendorf (Venice: Biblioteca nazionale Marciana; La Musa Talia; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2008) pp. 191-206.

⁴⁸ Mauro Santoro, *Giovanbattista Spinelli conte di Cariati e duca di Castrovillari alla corte dell'imperatore Carlo V* (Cosenza: Editoriale progetto 2000, 2008). Only a few months before, Aldus dedicated his 1514 edition of Petrarch to Cariati's secretary, Desiderio Curzio, mentioning their erudite conversation at Spinelli's house.

⁴⁹ While Niccolò Zorzi, a nobleman of Paduan origin, was close to Aldus, his son Bernardo was also a close friend of Federico Torresani, who nominated him as the executor of his wills, and of Paolo Manuzio, who dedicated to him his 1534 edition of Valerius Maximus. See Annaclara Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola e la tipografia aldina: La vita, le edizioni, la biblioteca dell'Asolano* (Genoa: Sagep, 1998), pp. 325-326.

⁵⁰ Daniele Renier was a nobleman from Verona, member of the Aldine Academy, 'tribus linguis edoctus' according to the Aldine dedication in the edition of Thucydides (1502). He had a significant political career starting in 1484 when he was appointed 'visdominus' of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, and culminating in his election as a Senator and Procurator of St. Mark. Renier's patronage of the anchor and dolphin firm obviously continued after the death of Aldus, as Federico Torresani dedicated the edition of the Bible, in February 1518 to him.

⁵¹ Fernando Lepori, 'Canal, Paolo', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/paolo-canal_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/paolo-canal_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. by Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas Brian Deutscher (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1985-1987), vol. 1, pp. 257. In 1506, Canal was not only named as an executor but also witnessed the will.

⁵² On Leonicensi, see Paolo Pellegrini, 'Niccolò da Lonigo' and on Egnazio, Elpidio Mioni, 'Cipelli, Giovan Battista or Battista Egnazio', both in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, ([http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-da-lonigo_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-da-lonigo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) and [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-battista-cipelli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-battista-cipelli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)). Egnazio, a member of the Aldine Academy, was for over fifty years linked to Aldus and his heirs, editing and correcting many editions. He was the teacher of Paolo Manuzio and convinced him to follow in his father's footsteps. The humanist, geographer and travel writer Giovan Battista Ramusio was chancellor of the Republic of Venice and secretary of the Council of Ten. See Massimo 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: Einaudi, 1978-1988); Andrea Del Ben, *Giovanni Battista Ramusio cancelliere e umanista: Con l'edizione di quarantacinque lettere a Pietro Bembo (ms Ambrosiano D 335 inf.)*, (Trieste: Edizioni Goliardiche, 2005); Fabio Romanini, «*Se fussero più ordinate, e meglio scritte...*»: *Giovanni Battista Ramusio correttore ed editore delle Navigazioni et Viaggi* (Rome: Viella, 2007); Margaret 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: Cambridge

Finally, there is yet another detail, until now overlooked by scholars in Aldus's wills. It lies in the use of the descriptive epithet "mio compare" or in Latin, "compater meus", attached to many of the names of the individuals mentioned above. This term does not have, as many scholars have assumed, a generic meaning like "my dear and intimate friend", but refers instead to a form of social kinship between a man and his child's godfather.⁵³

The institution of baptismal godparents dates from the early Church and implies a symmetrical relationship: the father and godfather of the child call each other *compater* or in Italian *compare*. During the Renaissance and beyond, the role of godparent often brought people of a different social class together and the spiritual bond so generated was a fundamental way of reinforcing networks of social alliances. It implied an obligation of mutual respect and a reciprocal undertaking not to inflict damage on each other. During the baptismal ceremony, a godfather publically accepted his social duty to help the child's family as a quasi-member of it.

In Venice the relationship of being *compatres* is frequently found among the early printers, who were all foreign immigrants, as Aldus was and, as such, had no longstanding family ties where they lived and worked. It is evident that formalization, ritualization and publicity were used by entrepreneurs in general and publishers in particular to establish trust with their associates, at a time when institutions protecting businesses and trades were either lacking or unreliable. In other words, publishers, like all other 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.⁵⁴ As an example, Nicolas Jenson (1420 – 1480) appointed his long-time partner Peter Ugelheimer (1439 – 1488) as his *compater* and executor of his will,⁵⁵ and Pietro Aretino (1492 – 1556) being *compater* to the painters Sebastiano del Piombo (1485 – 1547) and Titian (? 1488/90 – 1576) is a reminder of how important these spiritual relations were in the history of cultural ties in the Renaissance.

University Press, 2013) pp. 152-172. For a succinct reference: Massimo Donattini, 'Giovanni Battista Ramusio', in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, ed. D. Thomas-J. Chesworth, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014), vol. 6: 'Western Europe (1500-1600)' pp. 528-537 and Idem, 'Ramusio, Giovanni Battista', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-battista-ramusio_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-battista-ramusio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

⁵³ John 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*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973), pp. 129-143; Guido Alfani, *Fathers and Godfathers: Spiritual Kinship in Early Modern Italy* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2009).

⁵⁴ Guido Alfani-Vincent Gourdon, *Entrepreneurs, Formalisation of Social Ties and Trustbuilding in Europe (14th–20th Centuries)* (Milan: Università Bocconi, 2010) <http://www.dondena.unibocconi.it/wp25>.

⁵⁵ Nuovo, *The Book Trade*, p. 31.

The list of Aldus's "compatres" is impressive, and changes over time, as his wills show. In 1506 his "compatres" were his tailor, Marco da Capodistria, and the workers at his press - Jacomo Tedesco the letter-founder and the punch and type cutter Pietro Cafa.⁵⁶ It was an obvious attempt to ensure his press workers' allegiance, following the painful experience when his previous punch and type cutter Francesco Griffio had left him after designing the Italic typeface. In addition, Aldus had a *compater* among the Venetian patriciate, the above mentioned Niccolò Zorzi. In his second will, in 1511, he was in Ferrara and since he could not rely on the same network, included as executor his *compater* Battista Egnazio, humanist scholar and one of the most loyal collaborators of the press.

Aldus last will includes a much larger number of *compatres* to act as executors including Battista Egnazio, Daniele Renier, Domenico Pizzamano, Giovan Battista Ramusio, all humanists and scholars. Evidently, during his final years, his network's kinship was continuously growing and note must be made that only the *compatres* who were willing to act as executors are mentioned in his wills.⁵⁷ Two of these had also been dedicatees in his editions: Giovan Battista Ramusio and Pietro Bembo. While there is evidence that the famous geographer and humanist Giovan Battista Ramusio was godfather to Aldus' youngest son Paolo, we only know that Bembo was his *compater* because of the dedication wording of the 1514 Virgil edition and, even so, there is no information regarding who, among Aldus's sons was his *figlioccio* or godson.⁵⁸

Even less is known about the relationship, perhaps dating from his final years, as godparents between Aldus and his principal editorial collaborator, the Cretan philologist Marcus Musurus (1470 – 1517),⁵⁹ not even the baptism of which child prompted it. After editing the Aristophanes (1498) and the *Epistolae diversorum philosophorum, oratorum, rhetorum* (1499), Musurus had left Aldus in 1499 to edit the *Etymologicum Magnum* for Zacharias Kallierges (active early 1500s) and Nikolaos Vlastos

⁵⁶ A skilled technician, born in Capo d'Istria, Cafa left Aldus in 1510 and went to Pesaro, where he started to collaborate with the printers Gershom Soncino and Niccolò Zoppino, and subsequently moved to Rimini. Around 1512 he was back in Venice, probably working for the Aldine press again. See Maria Moranti, 'Cafa, Pietro', in *Dizionario degli editori, tipografi, librai itineranti in Italia tra Quattrocento e Seicento*, ed. by Rosa Marisa Borraccini (et al.), Biblioteca di Paratesto, 10 (Pisa-Rome: Serra, 2013), 3 vols, vol. 1, pp. 205-207; A. Nuovo, 'La parte del volgare', 71-72; Nando Cecini, 'Cafa, Pietro', in *Dizionario dei tipografi e degli editori italiani: Il Cinquecento*, ed. by Marco Menato (et al.) (Milan: Editrice Bibliografica, 1997), pp. 228-229; Giuseppe Dondi, 'Cafa, Pietro', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-cafa_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-cafa_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

⁵⁷ For instance, Philippus Mora Cyulanus (Fülöp Csulai Móré), a former student in Padua, ambassador of the King of Hungary in Venice was one of the 'compatres' of Aldus, as the dedication to him of the 1513 edition of Cicero's *Epistolae* shows, but he is never mentioned among Aldus's executors.

⁵⁸ The dedication starts with the title: "Aldus Pius Manutius Petrum Bembum Compatrem a secretis Leonis X. Pont. Max. salvere iubet".

⁵⁹ Paolo Pellegrini, 'Musuro, Marco', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marco-musuro_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marco-musuro_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); Luigi Ferrieri, *L'Italia degli umanisti: Marco Musuro*, Europa Humanistica, 17 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

(active 1499 through early 1500s), an initiative in direct competition with Aldus's projects.⁶⁰ It may be assumed that Aldus felt that securing Musurus as a godfather would result in a more stable relationship with this, his most indispensable collaborator. The dedication to Musuro of the *Lexicon* of Hesychius (August 1514) reveals not only the relationship as godparents between Aldus and Musuro,⁶¹ but also an equal one between Musuro and Gian Giacomo Bardellone (1472 – 1527) of Mantua, the scholar who had lent his manuscript, the only one known to exist at the time, for this *editio princeps*.⁶² Musuro and Bardellone were *compadres* which might explain, better than other previously proposed hypotheses, the latter's willingness to share the manuscript with the Aldine press.

When compared to blood relationships, the spiritual kinship of being *compadres* is limited because it normally cannot extend into the next generation and, as such, is not a family relationship. But every rule has exceptions, and exceptions were numerous in the Manutius' family. Giovan Battista Ramusio's son, Paolo, became much later, *compater* to Aldo jr as godfather to his daughter Paolina. Thus the Ramusio and Manutius families were related as *compadres* over two generations and Paolo Manuzio made strenuous efforts to ensure that his descendants had the best godparents by keeping alive the crucial relationship of his family with the Pios by asking Cardinal Rodolfo Pio (1500 – 1564), Lionello's son, to become the godfather to his son Ottavio.⁶³

These spiritual kinships within the Manutius family constitute a form of continuity which helped to preserve, over several generations, the system of network protections and patronage initiated by Aldus. His son Paolo and his grandson Aldo, very different individuals, working in very different times and in commercial decline, not only were able to build their lives around his name and reputation, but relied as far as they could on the remains of his unique network of social relationships.

⁶⁰ C. Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio editore*, pp. 114-118; Konstantinos Staikos, "The Printing Shop of Nikolaos Vlastos and Zacharias Kallierges: 500 Years from the Establishment of the First Greek Press", *La Bibliofilia* 102 (2000) pp. 11-32.

⁶¹ Though Aldus had in fact stated since 1513 that Marcus Musurus was "compater meus carissimus" in the text of the dedication of Cicero's *Epistolae* (Ferrieri, *Marco Musuro*, pp. 310-316).

⁶² On Bardellone, a cultivated scholar from Mantua who had studied in Padua, see Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola*, pp. 198-200; Ferrieri, *Marco Musuro*, pp. 174-178.

⁶³ See for instance his 1559 letter to Rodolfo Pio, published in H. George Fletcher, 'Paulus Manutius "In Aedibus Populi Romani": The Campaign for Rome', in *Aldus Manutius and Renaissance culture*, ed. by David S. Zeidberg (Florence: Olschki, 1998), pp. 287-321: 317-319, with the list of the illustrious godfathers he succeeded in obtaining for his son Ottavio. Rodolfo Pio, appointed cardinal in 1536, was a patron and collector, and the owner of a magnificent library. See Christiane Hoffmann, *Kardinal Rodolfo Pio da Carpi und seine Reform der Aegidianischen Konstitutionen* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1989); *Alberto III e Rodolfo Pio da Carpi collezionisti e mecenati: Atti del Seminario internazionale di studi, Carpi, 22 e 23 novembre 2002*, ed. by Manuela Rossi (Carpi: Museo Civico, 2004).