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ALDUS MANUTIUS  
\* \* \*  
THE GREEK CLASSICS

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY  
N. G. WILSON



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πάσας τὰς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀρίστας βίβλους· καὶ ὄντως,  
εἰ δώσετε, δώσω, ὅτι οὐκ ἔχω ἐντυποῦν ἄνευ χρημάτων  
πολλῶν. Πιστεύετε τοῖς οὐκ ἀκινδύνως ἐμπειρασθεῖσι,  
καὶ πάντων μάλιστα οὕτως λέγοντι Δημοσθένει· 'Δεῖ  
δὴ χρημάτων, καὶ ἄνευ τούτων οὐδέν ἐστι γενέσθαι τῶν  
δεόντων.' Οὐ μὴν φιλοχρημάτως ἔχων, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῖς  
τοιούτοις ἀπεχθανόμενος ταῦτά γε εἴρηκα· καί τοι χρη-  
μάτων ἄνευ οὐ δυνατὸν εὐπορεῖν ὧν ὑμεῖς μὲν ὑπερ-  
βαλόντως ἐφίεσθε, αὐτοὶ δὲ πολλῶ μόχθῳ καὶ δαπάνῃ  
πεπονηκότες διατελοῦμεν." Ἐρῶσθε.

: III :

A

Ἄλδου Μανουκίου Βασιανέος εἰς φίλους.

- Ἰ Μουσάων φίλοι ἢδ' ἀρετῆς, καὶ ἐμεῖο φίλ' Ἄλδου,  
χαίρετ'· ἰδοῦ ὑμῖν διος Ἀριστοτέλης.  
Ἀντίκ' Ἀλέξανδρος καμμόνιος εἰς ἄρα κέινον  
καί τοι Ἰωάννης ἔσσειτ' ὁ γραμματικός.  
Ἐνδόξους τ' ἄλλους δώσω, φίλοι, εἴ ῥα φυλάσσει  
χρυσοῦν τ' ἢδὲ πολὺν μοι μίτον ἢ Δάχεσις.  
Ἐρῶσθε.

Greek books. If you give, I certainly will; I am unable to print without substantial funds. Put your trust in men engaged in an enterprise that is not without risk, and most of all in Demosthenes who says, "Money is needed, and without it nothing essential can be done."<sup>24</sup> I say this not as someone anxious to make money, but rather out of dislike for such people; yet without money it is not possible for you to have a good supply of what you particularly desire, and we for our part continue to work at with great toil and expense. Keep well.

: III :

Aristotle, *Organon*<sup>25</sup>

(November 1, 1495)

A

Aldus Manutius of Bassiano<sup>26</sup> to his friends.

- Friends of the Muses and of virtue, and friends of Aldus, I  
greetings. Here is the divine Aristotle for you.  
Immediately after him will be Alexander and Ammonius,  
and indeed John the Grammarian.<sup>27</sup>  
Other famous texts I will provide, my friends, if Lachesis<sup>28</sup>  
maintains a long golden thread for me.  
Farewell.

B

*Aldus Manucius Romanus Alberto Pio principi Carpensi s. p. d.*

- 2 Necessariam esse Graecarum litterarum cognitionem hominibus nostris ita iam omnes existimant, ut non modo adolescentuli, quorum iam maximus numerus, verum et senes aetate nostra Graece condiscant. Olim apud Romanos Catonem unum accepimus didicisse Graecas litteras in senectute; quod tanquam memorandum et scitu dignum cum plurimi doctissimi viri litteris prodiderunt tum in Catone M. Tullius his verbis: 'Qui si eruditus videbitur disputare quam consuevit ipse in suis libris, attribuito Graecis litteris, quarum constat eum perstudiosum fuisse in senectute.' Et in eodem: 'Quid, quod etiam addiscunt aliquid? ut Solonem in versibus gloriantem vidimus, qui se quotidie addiscentem aliquid, senem fieri dicit; ut ego feci, qui Graecas litteras senex didici; quas quidem sic avidè arripui, quasi diurnam sitim explere cupiens, ut ea ipsa mihi nota essent, quibus me nunc exemplis uti videtis.'
- 3 Nostris vero temporibus multos licet videre Catones, hoc est, senes in senectute Graece discere; nam adolescentulorum ac iuvenum Graecis incumbentium litteris iam tantus fere est numerus, quantus eorum qui Latinis. Et propterea Graeci libri vehementer ab omnibus inquiruntur; quorum quia mira paucitas est, ego adiuvante Christo Iesu spero me brevi effecturum, ut consulam tantae inopiae — nec tamen sine meo magno incommodo et labore et iactura temporis; sed succurrendum est studiosis bonarum litterarum. Et quanquam incidimus in turbulenta tempora et tumultuosa ac misera, quibus magis arma quam libri tractantur, tamen nisi facta bonorum librorum copia non conquiescam.

B

*Aldus Manutius of Rome sends warm greetings to Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi.<sup>29</sup>*

That a knowledge of Greek is necessary for men of our time is now so well recognized that not only the young, of whom there are a very great number, but in our generation the elderly are learning it. In ancient Rome, according to tradition, only Cato learned Greek in old age; as a memorable and important fact this was recorded by numerous men of learning and by Cicero in his *Cato* as follows: "If he seems to be more sophisticated in discussion than he was in his own writings, put it down to his Greek, which he is known to have been very keen on in his old age."<sup>30</sup> And from the same work: "Again, suppose they continue to learn. We see Solon making a proud statement in his verses and saying that he was learning something every day as he grew old — just as I have done, since I learned Greek in my old age, taking it up as avidly as if I had to satisfy a thirst that went back a long time, with the result that I acquired the factual knowledge which you see me now exploiting."<sup>31</sup>

But in our own day one can see many Catos, that is, elderly men learning Greek in old age; for<sup>32</sup> the number of adolescents and young people is now almost as great as that of students of Latin. And for that reason Greek books are much sought after by everyone. As there is a surprising shortage of them, I hope, with the help of Jesus Christ, to be able to remedy this great scarcity soon — not however without great personal inconvenience, difficulty and expenditure of time; but one must support students of literature. And although we have fallen on turbulent, violent and unhappy times, in which there is more use for armaments than books, still I shall not rest until a supply of good books has been provided.

- 4 Aristoteles igitur, Graecorum facile princeps—quanquam ait Cicero: 'Platonem semper excipio'—, in manus tuas, princeps indycte, et caeterorum studiosorum, ut doctrina primus, ita primo impressus prodit emendatissimus: hoc est logici ac dialectici Aristotelis libri, quod organon Graeci appellant (quod etiam ostenditur Graeco epigrammate comperto a me in antiquo codice, quod ideo in fronte libri imprimendum curavi), Latine instrumentum interpretatur. Est enim instrumentum ad omnes scientias pernecessarium: hoc enim genus et speciem cuiusque rei cernimus, hoc definiendo explicamus, hoc tribuere in partes, hoc quae vera, quae falsa sunt iudicare possumus, cernere item consequentia, repugnantia videre, ambigua distinguere.
- 5 Hos libros, Alberte princeps, tibi dicamus, tum quia es doctorum aetatis nostrae alter Mecoenas—nam ipse tibi quod Flaccus Mecoenati merito dixerim: 'O et praesidium et dulce decus meum': in mea enim hac dura provincia tua ope defensus sum maxime et adiutus, ita ut, si mihi debent, tibi aequae debeant necesse est studiosi litterarum Graecarum—, tum etiam quia novi te librorum Graecorum percupidum, quos ut tibi pares, nulli parcis impensae, imitatus Picum Mirandulanum avunculum tuum, hominem ingenio admirabili et summa doctrina, quem nobis mors invida nuper surripuit, comitem Hermolao Barbaro et Angelo Politiano, viris aetatis nostrae doctissimis, qui tres tanquam triumviri poterant cum antiquitate certare. Horum tu aemulus, docte adolescens, non dubito quin brevi sis plurimum profecturus. Nihil enim tibi deest: non ingenium, quo valde abundas; non eloquentia, qua tu praeditus; non libri nec Latinae nec Graecae neque Hebraicae disciplinae, quos tibi summo studio curaue perquisis; non doctissimi praeceptores, quos tu conductos habes multa pecunia. Incumbe

So Aristotle, the best of the Greeks by far—although Cicero 4 says, "I always make an exception for Plato"<sup>33</sup>—is now in your hands, distinguished prince,<sup>34</sup> and those of other scholars. Just as he is first on the score of his learning, so his first appearance in print is fully free from faults. These are Aristotle's books on logic and dialectic, which the Greeks call the *Organon* (which is also demonstrated by a Greek epigram I found in an early manuscript, which I therefore printed at the beginning of the volume); in translation it means "a tool," since it is a tool essential for all branches of knowledge. By means of it we distinguish genus and species, with it we explain by means of definitions, with it we divide into categories, with it we can judge what is true, what is false, see what follows logically, observe inconsistency, resolve ambiguity.

We dedicate these books to you, Prince Alberto. Firstly because 5 you are a new Maecenas to scholars of the present day—for I could deservedly address you, as Horace did Maecenas, as "protection, glory and joy for me,"<sup>35</sup> since in this hard profession of mine I have been greatly defended and helped by your resources. So if students of Greek are indebted to me, they must equally be indebted to you. Secondly because I know that you spare no expense in your eagerness to acquire Greek books, following the example of your uncle Pico della Mirandola, a man of wonderful intellect and great learning, whom cruel death recently took away from us.<sup>36</sup> He was a companion of Ermolao Barbaro<sup>37</sup> and Angelo Poliziano, leading scholars of our time, who as a kind of triumvirate could rival antiquity. In your emulation of them, as a young man of learning, I have no doubt you will quickly make great progress. You have everything you need: intellectual power in great abundance, eloquence, in which you are gifted, books for Latin, Greek and Hebrew studies, which you take great pains and care to acquire, learned teachers whom you employ at considerable expense.

- igitur, ut facis, bonis artibus; ego quidem tibi, siquid possum, nunquam deero.
- 6 Habes nunc a me libros Aristotelis logicae disciplinae. Habebis Deo favente et philosophicos tum morales tum physicos, et quoscunque ille divinus magister legendos posteritati reliquit, modo extent. Erunt deinde a me tibi et caeteris studiosis commentatores Aristotelis: Ammonius, Simplicius, Porphyrius, Alexander, Philoponus et Themistius paraphrastes. Imprintentur etiam grammatici, poetae, oratores, historici, et quicunque profuturi videbuntur studiosis consulturique periturae doctrinae et bonis litteris. Habeo complures coadiutores, viros doctissimos, quorum auxilio nostri libri exhibunt in manus hominum quam emendatissimi; in quibus est Alexander Bondinus, artium et medicinae doctor egregius ac doctissimus litterarum Graecarum, cuius est Graeca epistola, quam post meam impressam vides.
- 7 Haec diximus verbosius, ut gaudent qui bonis artibus ornari se concupiscunt, sperarentque sibi quam optime fore in posterum propter bonorum librorum futuram copiam, quibus, ut speramus, fugabitur tandem omnis barbaries: non enim puto esse hominibus tantam perversitatem, ut etiam inventis frugibus glande vescantur. Vale.

: IV :

*Aldus Manucius Romanus lectori s. d.*

- 1 Non sum nescius, studiose lector, hanc Apollonii Theodorique grammaticen visum iri tibi primo duriusculam atque insuavem,

So continue your study of good letters as at present; I shall never fail to help you in whatever way I can.

You are now receiving from us Aristotle's works on logic. If 6 God wills, you will have his works of moral philosophy and physics and whatever else that divine master left for posterity to read, provided that they are preserved. Then you and other students will receive from me the commentators on Aristotle, Ammonius, Simplicius, Porphyry, Alexander, Philoponus and Themistius the paraphrast;<sup>38</sup> grammarians, poets, orators, historians and all other authors who seem likely to be useful to students and to help endangered scholarship and literary studies. I have several assistants, men of great learning, with whose help our books will reach the public as free from error as possible.<sup>39</sup> One of them is Alessandro Bondini,<sup>40</sup> a distinguished doctor of arts and medicine, very expert in Greek, whose Greek letter you see printed after mine.

We have spoken of these matters at some length, for the enjoy- 7 ment of those who wish to excel in the liberal arts and hope to benefit greatly in due course thanks to the forthcoming supply of good books. By these, we hope, all barbarism will finally be swept away, since I do not believe that men are perverse enough to eat acorns after the discovery of grain.<sup>41</sup> Farewell.

: IV :

*Theodore Gaza, Introduction to Grammar  
Apollonius Dyscolus, On Syntax  
(December 25, 1495)*

*Aldus Manutius of Rome, to the reader.*

I am not unaware, studious reader, that this grammar of Apollo- 1 nius and Theodore will at first appear to you to be a trifle difficult

- given; it is to his essay *Ad Nicodem* 43, which cites Hesiod, Theognis, and Phocylides as good sources of advice on questions of ethics.
14. Aldus' past career had been as a tutor, initially perhaps in Rome, then in Ferrara and Carpi.
15. In the Vulgate, Job 5:7 reads, *Homo nascitur ad laborem*, "Man is born unto trouble."
16. The thought here is an adaptation of Sallust, *Catiline* 1.1.
17. A quotation, with some textual modification, from Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 11.2.6.
18. *de re dicere* literally means "to talk about the matter in hand," which is not exactly what Aldus meant to say, and so I have paraphrased.
19. This text serves as the colophon of the volume.
20. This is a note at the end of a supplementary bifolium and is followed by the list of misprints.
21. At this date the epyllion *Hero and Leander* was believed to be the work of one of the earliest Greek poets, who allegedly pre-dated Homer and Hesiod. It was Henri II Estienne and J. J. Scaliger who established that the poem is a product of the early Byzantine period; see A. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1993), 65, 691–92.
22. Similarities between Ovid and Musaeus can be explained as resulting from dependence on a common source of Hellenistic date.
23. *Heroides* 18–19.
24. *Olynthiac* 1.20.
25. The volume also contains Porphyry's *Isagoge* to Aristotle's logic (CAG IV.1).
26. Bassiano, about thirty-seven miles southeast of Rome, was Aldus' birthplace. The verses are not metrically impeccable. In the first line, Aldus elides the inflection of *φίλοι*, which is a breach of metrical rules; in the third line, the particle *ἄρα* is simply a space filler; in the sixth, the enclitic particle *μοι* eliminates the required diaeresis. Such faults are regularly found in humanists' attempts to compose verse in the meters of classical Greek, whereas they normally achieved a high standard in Latin.

27. The commentators named are Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. ca. 200 CE), Ammonius (fl. ca. 500 CE), and his pupil John Philoponus.
28. Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos were the three Fates who governed human life.
29. Alberto Pio (1475–1531) had been Aldus' pupil in the 1480s, and the two maintained close links right up until the publisher's death, as is shown by the dedication of several Aldine volumes.
30. *De senectute* 3.
31. Ibid, 26. Solon's verse *γηράσκω δ' αἰεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος* (fr. 18) is cited or alluded to by many ancient authors, also by Bessarion in a letter to Lorenzo Valla (letter 24, ed. L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist, und Staatsmann*, 3 vols. [Paderborn, 1923–42], 3:471). See Tosi, 1474–75 (no. 2035).
32. *nam* in the Latin does not create a logical connection with what precedes, and *etiam* seems to be required. Is this a *lapsus calami* on the part of Aldus or a misprint?
33. *Tusculan Disputations* 1.22.
34. *princeps* here creates wordplay not reflected in the translation; just above, the same epithet had described Aristotle.
35. *Odes* 1.1.2.
36. He had died on November 17, 1494. A fellow student of Aldus in Ferrara ca. 1480–81, he had given him hospitality at his court in Mirandola.
37. Ermolao (1453/54–93) was a member of an important Venetian family and made his name as a translator of and lecturer on Aristotle. He later worked on the Elder Pliny and Dioscorides. See E. Bigi in *DBI* 6 (1964): 96–99. With the benefit of hindsight, it is a little odd to see him classed with such an outstanding figure as Poliziano (1454–94), who however thought him his equal. For Poliziano's contribution to Greek studies, see Wilson 1972, 101–13.
38. This promise was only partly made good; in 1503 he issued Ammonius and some other texts, in 1504 Philoponus, and in 1514 Alexander of Aphrodisias.