

Printing as Architecture: Antonio Urceo Codro on Aldus Manutius

In his famous essay on the adage 'Festina lente', Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) characterized Aldus Manutius (c. 1450-1515), whose motto this was and who published the 1508 edition of the *Adagia* in which that essay first appeared, as building a library with no walls save those of the world itself: «Aldus bibliothecam molitur, cuius non alia septa sint, quam ipsius orbis»¹. This, of course, referred to the printer-humanist's mission – oft-stated in his own prefaces and now promoted by Erasmus – of producing good editions of Greek and Latin classics that they might proliferate throughout the republic of letters. Erasmus described the motto as «βασιλικόν, id est *regium*», the mission as «regio quodam animo dignum», and Aldus's ambitions as «pulcherrimis planeque regiis Aldi nostri votis», requiring only the support of some favourable god². The repeated emphasis on royal qualities continued in respect of library-building, once the preserve of princes, where Aldus was compared to his advantage with Ptolemy II Philadelphus, whose Great Library at Alexandria was nevertheless constrained by the palace walls³.

This article represents a deepened analysis of some points I addressed at the Seminario di Filologia "Giuliano Tanturli", and forms part of a cultural history of the Aldine Press. It was written at Villa I Tatti, where I benefited from the advice of Daniele Conti, Kathryn Blair Moore, and Michael J. Waters.

¹ *Adagia*, II.i.1, in ERASMI ROTERODAMI *Adagiorum chiliades*, Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1508, cc. 112^r-114^v: *ibid.*, c. 114^r; *Opera omnia* DESIDERII ERASMI ROTERODAMI, Amsterdam and Leiden 1969 – (= ASD), II.3, p. 18.

² ERASMUS, ASD cit., II.3, pp. 8, 16, 18.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 18: «Postremo quondam principum hoc munus erat, inter quos praecipua Ptolemaei gloria; quanquam huius bibliotheca domesticis et angustis parietibus continebatur».

I have written about other aspects of Erasmus's text in relation to Aldus Manutius elsewhere⁴. Based on the exposition of Aldus's motto and accompanying printer's mark, the celebrated dolphin and anchor, and then on a series of digressions expanded over almost twenty years on the ethics and morality of printing, the 'Festina lente' essay, written in its original form while Erasmus was in Venice working at Aldus's shop, is probably the most important source for understanding the cult of Aldus and what he stood for as this cult was promoted across Europe. But it is also in many ways a misleading text, or at least variously a tendentious and playful one. Erasmus gave the motto and the mark an illustrious and edifying pedigree by asserting that they had been associated with each other in Antiquity, and that they together had been adopted by the emperors Augustus and Vespasian respectively – neither of which claim is true. My reconstruction of the complex sequence of Aldus's own adoption of these showed on the contrary that they were taken up separately: the motto (in the Greek form, Σπεῦδε βραδέως) in 1498, the dolphin and anchor as a personal symbol in 1499, and the printer's mark – that is, the symbol transformed into a 'brand' – in 1502. Moreover, the visual features of the printer's mark revealed that its prototype was not a *denarius* of Titus, as Erasmus claimed (while confusing this emperor with his father), but a woodcut of a hieroglyph in Francesco Colonna's *Hypernerotomachia Poliphili*, which Aldus had published in 1499. Further evidence for this reconstruction was in the fact that Erasmus provides a sly reference to Aldus's real source. Claiming that, prior to its imperial adoption, the dolphin and anchor had begun life as an Egyptian hieroglyph,

⁴ See O. MARGOLIS, *Hercules in Venice: Aldus Manutius and the Making of Erasmian Humanism*, «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 81 (2018), pp. 97-126, and, for what follows, especially ID., *The Coin of Titus and the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, in *Aldo Manuzio. La costruzione del mito*, ed. M. Infelise, Venice 2017, pp. 58-68.

Erasmus suggests that he himself has seen evidence of this in an unnamed book, which he supposes to be excerpted from the (lost) works of Chaeremon of Alexandria (fl. mid-1st cen. AD), before describing the *Polifilo* image exactly⁵.

Part of the significance of these investigations into the background of Erasmus's text and Aldus's mark has been in the enhanced role that emerges for the *Polifilo*, at least from the perspectives of the histories of the book and of humanism, which have generally struggled to incorporate (or resisted incorporating) Colonna's work into studies of the Aldine Press for all but its evident importance as a masterpiece of typography. The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* of course has never lacked zealous defenders among historians of art and architecture, amongst whom it remains without a doubt the most famous Aldine publication, and a veritable source book, now as then, for artistic ideas and imaginings of antiquity in the Renaissance⁶. As an architectural treatise, the work presents an uneasy hybrid of Vitruvian-Albertian intellectualism and theorising crossed with impassioned ekphrases of Plinian architectural monstrosities, albeit delivered without Plinian moral censure⁷. These cacophonous voices and traditions cannot easily be reconciled, and probably should not be. That said, architecture, and perhaps especially the figure of the architect, are central to any understanding of the work. This is what made it so interesting

⁵ ERASMUS, *ASD* cit., II.3, p. 12: «Scrispsit his de rebus et Chaeremon apud Graecos, testimonio Suidae; cuius ex libris excerpta suspicor ea, quae nos nuper conspeximus, huius generis monimenta, in quibus etiam haec inerat pictura: primo loco circulus, deinde ancora, quam mediam, ut dixi, delphinus obtorto corpore circumplectitur [...] Quae si scite connectas, efficient huiusmodi sententiam: Ἀεὶ σπεῦδε βραδέως, id est *Semper festina lente*».

⁶ A scholarship so vast as to make impossible even providing a representative sample. The art history journal «Word & Image» has dedicated two special issues to it, in 1998 (14, 1-2) and 2015 (31, 2) respectively. A useful recent survey is A. E. MOYER, *The Wanderings of Poliphilo through Renaissance Studies*, «Word & Image», 31 (2015), pp. 81-87.

⁷ P. FANE-SAUNDERS, *Pliny the Elder and the Emergence of Renaissance Architecture*, Cambridge 2016, esp. pp. 17-21, 94-97.

to note that Aldus's motto, previously only associated with the *Polifilo* in the context of the hieroglyph, actually also appears to have been incorporated into a programmatic passage where Colonna's narrator enumerates in the manner of Alberti the moral qualities pertaining to the good architect⁸. The implication of this – that printing was understood to be in some sense like architecture – is a suggestive one, made all the more so by the work in which this implication appears. At the same time, Colonna is not a systematic thinker (to put it mildly), the chronology of adoption suggests that the allusion to the motto is a late interpolation in the pre-publication history of the text, and of course there is no direct reference in the text to Aldus Manutius, as an architect or otherwise, nor indeed to any other living person⁹. There is, however, one contemporary text in which the characterisation of Aldus as an architect is made explicit, and that shall be the focus of the present study.

* * *

It was Antonio Cortesi, the Bolognese humanist and professor better known as Urceo Codro (1446-1500), who defined Aldus Manutius by the name of architect. This occurred in a text published posthumously as *sermo primus* and subtitled *De metamorphosi humana in beluas*

⁸ MARGOLIS, *The Coin* cit., pp. 61-62, with reference to F. COLONNA, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Venice 1499, c. c2^r. The equivalent passage is in L. B. ALBERTI, *L'Architettura [De re aedificatoria]*, ed. G. Orlandi, Milan 1966, p. 855 (IX.10).

⁹ There is, however, a probable cryptic reference to the sculptor Tullio Lombardo (c. 1455-1532), in the form of an epitaph for a 'Sertullius' represented in a woodcut inspired by Lombardo's double portrait bust relief at the Ca' d'Oro (Venice, Galleria Giorgio Franchetti), which may feature a self-portrait: COLONNA, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* cit., c. r3^r. On this question, see G. POZZI AND L. A. CIAPPONI, *La cultura figurativa di Francesco Colonna e l'arte veneta*, «Lettere italiane», 14 (1962), pp. 151-69, 157, A. LUCHS, *Tullio Lombardo's Ca' d'Oro Relief: A Self-Portrait with the Artist's Wife?*, «Art Bulletin», 71 (1989), pp. 230-36, EAD., *Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture in Renaissance Venice, 1490-1530*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 51-66, and P. F. BROWN, *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past*, New Haven, CT and London 1996, pp. 241-43.

(*On the transformation of humans into beasts*), the *praelectio* or introductory lecture to an academic year beginning with a course on Aristophanes, followed by Terence, Euripides, and Homer¹⁰. Codro's *sermo* is a Menippean satire that, as we shall see, would never actually have been delivered in this precise and extended form. His theme, initially suggested by the *fabulae* of his authors, was how all human ambitions and activities, especially the intellectual ones, were no better than *fabulae* – now with the sense of fictions, even nonsense – themselves¹¹. Printers were not spared:

Impressores quoque librorum, sive βιβλιόπονοι [*sic*] fabulae sunt: nam praeter quod plerique eorum indocti sunt, alter alteri invidet et damnum inferre studet. Addunt praeterea operibus clarorum auctorum aliquas commentaciunculas vel Omniboni vel Pomponii vel aliqua ex dictis Codri excerpta ut opera fiant vendibilia, quae nunquam Pomponii nec Omniboni nec Codri fuere, et in illis tot sunt additiones diminutiones inversiones transmutationes litterarum vel syllabarum vel dictionum, ut barbarismos Donati vel Diomedis exemplis possint adiuvare atque replere¹².

¹⁰ My citations are taken from the *editio princeps*: CODRI *Orationes, seu Sermones, ut ipse appellabat. Epistolae. Silvae. Satyrae. Eglogae. Epigrammata*, Bologna: Giovanni Antonio de' Benedetti, 1502, cc. A3^r-E4^r (the year's programme at c. A3^r); there is also a modern edition with Italian translation: ANTONIO URCEO CODRO, *Sermones (I-IV). Filologia e maschera nel Quattrocento*, ed. L. Chines and A. Severi, Rome 2013, pp. 60-270. On this text, see W. S. BLANCHARD, *O miseri philologi: Codro Urceo's Satire on Professionalism and its Context*, «Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies», 20 (1990), pp. 91-122, and E. RAIMONDI, *Codro e l'umanesimo a Bologna*, Bologna 1950, pp. 150-65; also L. GUALDO ROSA, *Cortesi Urceo, Antonio, detto Codro*, in *DBI* 29, Rome 1983, pp. 773-78.

¹¹ W. S. BLANCHARD, *O miseri philologi* cit., p. 95.

¹² CODRO, *Orationes* cit., c. D1^r. Chines and Severi give βιβλιόπονοι, meaningless and otherwise unattested, with no comment: CODRO, *Sermones* cit., p. 176. Subsequent editions also offer βιβλιόπονοι/βιβλιοπονοι (Venice: Peter Liechtenstein, 1506, c. B3^r; Paris: Jean Petit, 1515, c. C4^r [fol. 20^r]; Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1540, c. G2^r [p. 51]); BLANCHARD, *O miseri philologi* cit., p. 109n, gives βιβλόποητοι.

[Printers of books are *fabulae* too. For, beyond the fact that most of them are ignorant, each envies and seeks to harm the other. Then, to make them sell better, they add to the works of famous authors some little commentaries by Ognibene da Lonigo or Pomponius Laetus, or something taken from the sayings of Codro (things which were never Pomponius's or Ognibene's or Codro's), and in those works there are so many accretions and depletions, inversions and conversions, of letters or syllables or words, that they can encourage and disseminate barbarisms from models of Donatus and Diomedes.]

At this point, however, Codro's diatribe is interrupted by another interlocutor, called *meus assectator*. For all that, he says, he recommends certain printers to whom the Greek language is much indebted:

«Quosdam tamen» inquit «summopere commendo, quibus plurimum lingua graeca debet; non artifices, sed artificum auctores ac, ut ita dicam, architectos doctos et multae probitatis viros: Lascarim Florentiae, Aldum Venetiis. His addo, quantum ad res Latinas spectat, Platonem Bononiensem»¹³.

The intervention rather suddenly concludes at this point, and Codro returns to his theme in his own voice.

The meaning and translation of this last passage require special comment. Codro's modern editors and translators render the phrase *non artifices, sed artificum auctores* into Italian as follows: «non sono raggiratori, ma creatori di artifici»¹⁴. The last word (artifices, tricks, etc.) is simply a mistranslation, confusing *artificum* (from *artifex*, Italian *artefice* [pl. *artefici*]) with *artifici[or]um* (from *artificium*, Italian *artificio* [pl. *artifici*]). They justify their

¹³ CODRO, *Orationes* cit., c. D1^r.

¹⁴ CODRO, *Sermones* cit., p. 177.

choice of *raggiratori* (swindlers, fraudsters, etc.) with reference to Virgil, where *artifex* has this negative connotation in reference to Ulysses (*Aen.* II.125, in Sinon's tale, as recounted by Aeneas to Dido) and Drances (*Aen.* XI.407, in the speech of Turnus)¹⁵. I will argue for a different source below; but, even on a strictly *prima facie* basis, this translation is not, in my view, ideal. In both cases, Virgil's usage is in the specific phrase *artificis scelus*. The translation obscures what is clearly (when read correctly) an intentional repetition on Codro's part: *artifices... artificum*; and sits oddly with the otherwise positive tone of the intervention and the reference to the trio's *probitas*. The words *auctor* and *artifex*, paired here, are likewise paired in the famous passage from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* concerning the revolving theatres of C. Scribonius Curio (d. 49 BC), where by the former the patron Curio is intended while the latter, subordinate, pertains to the actual builder¹⁶. Put into English, I would therefore prefer to render the passage as follows: «They are not craftsmen, but leaders of craftsmen, and even, if I may say so, learned architects and men of great moral principles».

Along with Aldus Manutius, the figures honoured in this way in the *assectator's* generous intervention are Janus Lascaris, likewise with respect to Greek studies, and the Bolognese printer Francesco 'Platone' de' Benedetti, with respect to Latin. This conjunction and these specific details can help us date Codro's text with greater accuracy. The *praelectio* was apparently given in 1494, but multiple factors argue in favour of seeing this passage as belonging to a slightly later addition. Janus Lascaris (1445-1535) published the Planudean Anthology of Greek epigrams, which was printed in Florence by the Venetian

¹⁵ In *ibid.*, p. 261n.

¹⁶ PLIN. *HN* XXXVI.24.118: «Quid enim miretur quisque in hoc primum, inventorem an inventum, artificem an auctorem, ausum aliquem hoc excogitare an suscipere an iubere?»

Lorenzo de Alopa in August 1494. It appeared in an elegant edition printed entirely in majuscules of Lascaris' design¹⁷. Aldus's first publications, however, appear in 1495, while his first significant yield – the first volume of the five-volume Aristotle edition containing the works on logic (*Organon*) – did not appear until November of that year. Thus in this respect the passage makes most sense if it were written after this point. Yet that is precisely when Lascaris left Florence for France to serve King Charles VIII (r. 1483-98), and by late 1496 Francesco de' Benedetti (fl. from 1482) was dead¹⁸. I therefore offer the very end of 1495 or early 1496 as the most likely date for this passage, albeit with some caution: the reference to Francesco de' Benedetti reads somewhat as an appendage (though the reference to Latin does balance nicely and justify the earlier reference to Greek); and the 1502 edition in which Codro's discourse first appeared was printed by Francesco's son Giovanni Antonio (there are no manuscript witnesses). In a dedicatory letter to the volume, dated 30 March 1502 and addressed to Jean Morelet du Museau, Jean de Pins (c. 1470-1537) claimed the book was already in the printer's shop when he stumbled across it, though that it was he who drove the project through¹⁹. At any rate, the fact that Lascaris

¹⁷ B. KNÖS, *Un ambassadeur de l'hellénisme. Janus Lascaris et la tradition gréco-byzantine dans l'humanisme français*, Uppsala 1945, pp. 56-63; A. PONTANI, *Le maiuscole greche antiquarie di Giano Lascaris. Per la storia dell'alfabeto greco in Italia nel '400*, «Scrittura e civiltà», 16 (1992), pp. 77-227.

¹⁸ E. GATTI, *Francesco Platone de' Benedetti. Il principe dei tipografi bolognesi fra corte e studium (1482-1496)*, Udine 2018. Lascaris was in Florence preparing an inventory of the Medici manuscript collection until October, then visited Venice where he met Aldus, and appears to have arrived at the court in Lyon in November: see KNÖS, *Un ambassadeur* cit., pp. 77-80, and N. BARKER, *Aldus Manutius and the Development of Greek Script and Type in the Fifteenth Century*, 2nd ed., New York, NY 1992, pp. 15-16.

¹⁹ JEAN DE PINS, *Letters and Letter Fragments*, ed. J. Pendergrass, Geneva 2007, pp. 55-58 (ep. 2). The humanist and (future) ambassador and bishop Jean de Pins had been a student of Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (1453-1505); Morelet is identified as a former student of Codro's, and is probably the person of that name who was a royal secretary to Louis XII (r. 1498-1515) in c. 1501-10. The letter was appended to Codro, *ORATIONES* cit., [annex] cc. 3^r-4^r, and

was no longer in Florence after late 1495 and was no longer involved in printing enterprises argues for a relatively early date, or at least for the reference to him and Aldus remaining unchanged. So too does the fact that, by 1498, Codro was also expressing criticism of Aldus's editorial accuracy – albeit in private, as it did not stop Aldus from dedicating the second volume of *Epistolographi graeci* to him in 1499²⁰. Much beyond 1495/6 it would have been strange regardless to speak of Aldus – who actually had his own printing enterprise (unlike Lascaris) and, by the time of Codro's death, had edited (unlike Francesco de' Benedetti) and published most of Aristotle, Aristophanes, Hesiod, and Theophrastus – in the same breath as the others.

What, then, is the significance of this first association of Aldus with architecture? Is this characterisation as an *architectus* merely a term of praise? Codro's modern editors have understood it as corresponding to what, in their interpretation, is a term of abuse (*auctor artificum*). Their interpretation is based on a particular usage of the word *artifex*, yet this is out of context with respect both to its purported Virgilian source and to the rest of the passage. We must begin by articulating what, precisely, an architect in Codro's formulation actually is. An architect is not presented as the holder of a technical and professional skill: rather, he is defined by holding a superior position in a social relationship. Though he is not an *artifex* himself, Aldus is an *architectus* because he is their *auctor* (leader, ruler, guide, etc.). In this sense, while indeed drawing on Pliny's Latin language and

does not appear in all copies of the first edition (though it appears in those subsequent). The work was edited by Filippo Beroaldo the Younger (1472-1518) and Bartolomeo Bianchini, and included another dedication, from Beroaldo to Antongaleazzo Bentivoglio, apostolic protonotary and son of Giovanni II Bentivoglio, ruler of Bologna. Evidently this entirely Bolognese project had a Bolognese dedicatee alone before de Pins's late intervention.

²⁰ c. 2A1^v; ALDUS MANUTIUS, *The Greek Classics*, ed. N. G. Wilson, Cambridge, MA 2016, p. 72.

also on his formulation, where the *auctor* is likewise held superior the *artifex*, it differs by equating the *auctor* with the architect, who, Pliny's usage implies, is a kind of *artifex* too²¹.

I should therefore like to suggest another source for Codro, which not only agrees better with Codro's usage than Virgil and more fully than Pliny, but which also would have resonated especially within the community of Greek-reading intellectuals to which both Aldus and Codro belonged. It comes from Plato's *Statesman* (Πολιτικός), and matches Codro's construction (*non artifices, sed artificum auctores*) almost exactly:

Καὶ γὰρ ἀρχιτέκτων γε πᾶς οὐκ αὐτὸς ἐργατικός ἀλλὰ ἐργατῶν ἄρχων²².

[Every architect, too, is truly not himself a worker, but a ruler of workmen.]

These words are spoken by the Eleatic Stranger, the dialogue's principal interlocutor, and are met by the agreement of Socrates the Younger. They fall early in the work, as the Stranger proceeds through *diairesis* to define the statesman and the science of rule. It is in this process that the concept of architecture becomes important. Etymologically, of course, and matching his description as a kind of ἄρχων, the title of architect denotes leadership or rule (ἀρχι-). Ἀρχιτέκτων is contrasted with ἐργάτης, which can be a capacious word, but it is clear from the context that the type of workman intended is that which maps nicely onto

²¹ Compare the passage about Curio's theatres (above, n. 16) with PLIN. *HN* XXXVI.24.102: «theatrum ante texerit Romae Valerius Ostiensis architectus ludis Libonis», where L. Scribonius Libo (cos. 34 BC; games in 50 BC), though not indicated by the title *auctor*, must be ontologically equivalent to Curio. See also FANE-SAUNDERS, *Pliny the Elder* cit., p. 20. In LIV. XLII.3.11 an expert in roofing is indicated by *artifex*: «tegulas relictas in area templi, quia reponendarum nemo artifex inire rationem potuerit, redemptores nuntiarunt.» Cf. Alberti's use of *auctor* to associate architects with writers, as argued by M. TRACHTENBERG, *Building outside Time in Alberti's De re aedificatoria*, «RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics», 48 (2005), pp. 123-34, 132-33; and further in ID., *Building-in-Time: From Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion*, New Haven, CT and London 2010, esp. pp. 85-95, including the claim (88) that «actual construction was... akin to publication, which made the text/design a part of public space and experience.»

²² PLAT. *Stat.* 259e.

ground shared with the distinct but likewise multivalent *artifex*. Plato clearly distinguishes the science of building or carpentry (τεκτονικήν) from that of the architect and equates the former with χειρουργία, manual art or handicraft, as both possessing science (ἐπιστήμη) inherent to their practice (πρᾶξις) and with it creating new things²³. Yet, instead of skill in χειρουργία, the architect supplies knowledge (γνώσις); his is an intellectual, or knowledge-related, science (γνωστική ἐπιστήμη), and fundamentally one of rule and command²⁴. Intellectual science as a whole is understood as ‘royal’ (βασιλικός), and the part in which the architect and indeed the statesman fundamentally share is that of directing (ἐπιτακτικόν) rather than judging (κριτικόν)²⁵.

I leave aside further discussion of the significance of this metaphor to Plato’s work in order to focus specifically on the vocabulary. His fine but intentional and consistent distinction between ἀρχιτέκτων and χειροτέχνης is developed further by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*, which would have a significant impact in later medieval Western Europe through its Latin translations, and where the two terms were rendered as *architecton/architector* and *artifex* respectively²⁶. But is not upheld in the translation of

²³ Ibid., 258de: «αἱ δέ γε περὶ τεκτονικὴν αὖ καὶ σύμπασαν χειρουργίαν ὡσπερ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν ἐνοῦσαν σύμφυτον τὴν ἐπιστήμην κέκτηνται, καὶ συναποτελοῦσι τὰ γιγνόμενα ὑπ’ αὐτῶν σώματα πρότερον οὐκ ὄντα.»

²⁴ Ibid., 259e-260a. See also M. S. LANE, *Method and Politics in Plato’s Statesman*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 139-46, L. LANDRUM, *Before Architecture: Archai, Architects and Architectonics in Plato and Aristotle*, «Montreal Architectural Review», 2 (2015), pp. 6-7, and J. HOLST, *The Fall of the Tektōn and the Rise of the Architect: On the Greek Origins of Architectural Craftsmanship*, «Architectural Histories», 5.1:5 (2017), pp. 4-5.

²⁵ PLAT. *Stat.* 259b-d, 261b.

²⁶ ARIST. *Metaph.* 981a: «διὸ καὶ τοὺς ἀρχιτέκτονας περὶ ἕκαστον τιμιωτέρους καὶ μᾶλλον εἰδέναι νομίζομεν τῶν χειροτεχνῶν καὶ σοφωτέρους»; *Aristoteles Latinus*, XXV.1-1^a, ed. G. Vuillemin-Diem (all volumes), Brussels and Paris 1970, pp. 6, 90; *ibid.*, XXV.2, Leiden 1976, p. 8 (see note); *ibid.*, XXV.3.2, Leiden 1995, p. 13. On its significance for contemporary architectural nomenclature, see N. PEVSNER, *The Term ‘Architect’ in the Middle Ages*, «Speculum», 17 (1942), pp. 549-62, esp. 559-61; also P. BINSKI, *Working by Words Alone’*:

Plato by Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), the authoritative edition of which was published in Venice in 1491 by Aldus's future business partner and (later) father-in-law Andrea d'Asola, where, in *Civilis, de regno* (that is, the Latin *Statesman*), carpentry is characterised by the title of *architectura*²⁷. Nor, for that matter, can Codro's Latin be said to derive from Ficino, who uses a different and less precise vocabulary: «Etenim architectus nullus manuum ministerio utitur, sed utentibus presidet»²⁸. Yet the significance of *Statesman's* architect to Ficino is evident from the *argumentum* with which he preceded the translation, in which he gives it a metaphysical slant owing more to the Neoplatonic tradition, reconciling the *una lex* of the architect over the workers with that of the One drawing people to itself²⁹. There is also a reappearance of Plato's ἐργάτης in one of the programmatic passages of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. The occasion is the narrator's encounter with a «perspicua

The Architect, Scholasticism, and Rhetoric in Thirteenth-Century France, in *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages*, ed. M. J. Carruthers, Cambridge and New York, NY 2010, pp. 14-51. The *editio princeps* of the *Metaphysics* was published by Aldus in 1497, but Codro certainly knew the Greek text in manuscript intimately, as his criticism of the mistakes in the third volume (also 1497) reveals; see letter to Battista Palmieri, Bologna, 15 Apr. 1498, in CODRO, *Orationes* cit., cc. S2^r-S5^r (S3^r): «Quid ergo dicemus, errasse ne Aristotelem? Minime. Impressores? Nequaquam, quoniam tale habuerunt exemplar, in quo hic error inveteratus erat ut ex antiquissima patet translatione.»

²⁷ PLATO, *Opera*, trans. M. Ficino, Venice: Bernardino Cori and Simone da Lovere, for Andrea Torresani, 1491, c. 71^r: «Que immo ad architecturam et manuum ministerium pertinent, scientiam innatam actionibus sortiuntur, corporaque ab illis effecta, que ante non erant perficiunt.» Cf. Alberti, *L'Architettura* cit., p. 2 (Prologue): «Non enim tignarium adducam fabrum, quem tu summis caeterarum disciplinarum viris compares: fabri enim manus architecto pro instrumento est.»

²⁸ PLATO, *Opera* cit., c. 71^r.

²⁹ *Argumentum Marsilii Ficini in Platonis librum de regno*, in PLATO, *Opera* cit., cc. 70^r-71^r, c. 70^r: «Fieri immo non potest ut tam diverse gentes per media tam diversa ad unum omnium communemque finem producantur nisi ab uno, per unam quamdam legem cunctos in unum pariter conducente. Quemadmodum neque fabri ministrique genere simul atque ingenio longe inter se discrepantes, materias ad modum varias ad formam unam edificii conferentes, in unum umquam commode congregabunt et construent oportune, nisi ab una quadam architecti unius lege regantur.»

porta», which description, he explains, will begin with its «più principali membri», only then moving on to «gli sui grati et pervenusti ornamenti»:

Perché ad lo architecto arduo più se praesta lo essere cha il bene essere. Questo è che ottimamente primo ad isso s'appertene: il solido disporre et nell'animo definire (come sopra dicto fui) dila universale fabrica, cha gli ornati, gli quali sono accessorii al principale. Dunque, al primo la foecunda peritia di uno solamente si richiede: ma al secundo molti manuali overi operatori idiote, *chiamati dagli Graeci ergati*, necessarii concorreno: i quali, come dicto è, sono gl'instrumenti dillo architecto³⁰.

[For, to the exalted architect, being comes before well-being. This is that, optimally, it belongs to him first to arrange the solid mass and determine in his mind (as I said before) the universal fabric, rather than the decorations, which are accessories to the principal matter. Thus, the first thing requires the fecund knowledge through experience of one alone; but for the second are needed many manual labourers or ignorant workmen – called ἐργάται by the Greeks – whom, as is said, are the instruments of the architect.]

The point of these references and comparisons is not to claim on such limited grounds the existence of clear links between Urceo Codro and Francesco Colonna, or to impose Ficinian Platonic theology on what is, fundamentally, a literary-philological (rather than philosophical) world and question, but rather to elaborate the context in which Codro's comparison of Aldus to an architect might have been read and understood. In short, it

³⁰ COLONNA, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* cit., c. c3^v (my italics).

would have been read in a way that accentuated its connotations of hierarchy and command. It put Aldus in the position where other political associations would be apposite. Respectable printing is like architecture because it is an intellectual science occupied with the rule and direction of others: at the very least, surely this renders both less outstanding and more significant Erasmus's insistence in 'Festina lente' on the royal (βασιλικόν) and imperial character of Aldus's enterprise, coupled with his own metaphor of princely building³¹.

* * *

What Francesco Colonna's antiquarian fantasies and Codro's conflation of a certain kind of printing with architecture and γνῶσις do share, however, is an intellectualising approach to artistic labour. One might even refer to its alienation, as the hand of the maker loses status and proprietorship vis-à-vis the mind of the thinker. While this is not surprising given the historical moment – after all, they share this general approach with contemporaries such as Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) and to an extent Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) – in the context of the Aldine Press it nevertheless represents a turning point in the ideology of printing. The master printers of the generation preceding Aldus had no qualms about advertising and celebrating their own workmanship and technical expertise. Nicolas Jenson was an *alter Daedalus*; the legendary craftsman, his forebear³². Aldus, lacking in that

³¹ Erasmus was in Bologna in 1506-07 and thus after Codro's death, but evidently knew his work and mentioned him in *Ciceronianus* as part of «totum Graecorum genus»: ERASMUS, *ASD* cit., I.2, pp. 664-65.

³² See colophons in CICERO, *Epistulae ad Atticum, Brutum, et Quintum fratrem*, Venice: Nicolas Jenson, 1470, c. s5^v: «Gallicus hoc Ienson Nicolaus muneris orbi / Attulit ingenio Daedalicaque manu»; and in QUINTILIAN, *Institutiones oratoriae*, Venezia: Nicolas Jenson, 21 May 1471, c. a1^v: «Magistri Nicolai Ienson Gallici alterius (ut vere dicam) Daedali, qui librariae artis mirabilis inventor, non ut scribantur calamo libri, sed veluti gemma imprimantur ac prope sigillo primus omnium ingeniose monstravit.»

expertise, only celebrated his scholarship, not his workmanship: the latter belonged, as he indicated in the prefatory epigram to his 1501 edition of Virgil, to people like his *grammatoglypta* or punchcutter, Francesco Griffo of Bologna, who had carved the new italic letters in which this revolutionary edition was printed throughout with his «daedaleis... manibus», his Daedalian hands³³. But the mission of restoring literature could not be entrusted to those. If people like Aldus were to be printers, printing itself had to become a liberal art. In such a project, the anti-manual, anti-banausic discourse running through ancient philosophy had its use; and architecture – whose *auctor's* hand was invisible in the work executed by the hands of others – recommended itself to the humanists' and the antiquarian's minds³⁴. This is the common thread that binds these two very different works, and them both to Aldus.

There is, of course, a caveat here: unlike Francesco Colonna, Urceo Codro is not really talking about architecture as an art. There is no sense – and this is perhaps surprising – that printing is architectonic due, for instance, to its nature as an art of structuring a page and building a book. His touchstones are not Vitruvius and Alberti, but Pliny (for language) and Plato – and that selectively: no sign of the architect as δημιουργός (craftsman, and specifically the divine craftsman) here³⁵. At the same time, his text interacts with concerns

³³ ALDUS MANUTIUS (?), *In grammatoglyptae laudem*, in VERGILIUS, Venice 1501, c. a1^v: «Qui graiis dedit Aldus, en latinis / Dat nunc grammata sculpta daedaleis / Francisci manibus Bononiensis.»

³⁴ On this discourse more broadly, see C. Lis, *Perceptions of Work in Classical Antiquity: A Polyphonic Heritage*, in *The Idea of Work in Europe from Antiquity to Modern Times*, eds. J. Ehmer and C. Lis, Aldershot 2009, pp. 33-68, and C. LIS AND H. SOLY, *Worthy Efforts: Attitudes to Work and Workers in Pre-Modern Europe*, Leiden 2012, pp. 11-53, 336, 370-79; also A. W. NIGHTINGALE, *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in its Cultural Context*, Cambridge 2004, pp. 118-27.

³⁵ Cf. the *deus artifex* in E. R. CURTIUS, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Princeton, NJ 2013 [orig. 1948], pp. 544-46; A. CHASTEL, *Marsile Ficin et l'art*, 2nd ed., Geneva

of Colonna's, which certainly does take its cues from those works, albeit in an unsystematic way. The implications of the association of Aldus with architecture, particularly in relation to the sculptural art of punchcutting, is a topic worth exploring further, and might indeed take the form of a *paragone* – but that is beyond my scope here.

Yet the relevance of architecture to humanist discourses at such a remove, if only one degree of separation, from the world of the art treatise is also instructive. The print revolution was revolutionary in part because it transformed the social, economic and cultural relationships between literature, labour, and ideas. If printers and humanists were thinking about themselves in relation to the arts, to what extent were artists and theorists thinking about printed books? If they were, they might have considered themselves to be pushing at an open door. «Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera»: to paraphrase the shade of Anchises, forging bronze was for other people³⁶. The humanists' task of making printing a suitable handmaiden to their lofty aims involved one of the most precocious and extreme social and intellectual distinctions between the arts in all Renaissance debates.

OREN MARGOLIS
University of East Anglia

1996, esp. pp. 65-72; and S. PRANDI, *Deus artifex: métaphore et variations, in Création, Renaissance, ordre du monde*, ed. C. Ossola, Turin 2012, pp. 21-40. See also M. J. B. ALLEN, *Marsilio Ficino's Interpretation of Plato's Timaeus and its Myth of the Demiurge*, in *Supplementum Festivum: Studies in Honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, eds. J. Hankins, J. Monfasani, and F. Purnell, Jr., Binghamton, NY 1987, pp. 399-439.

³⁶ VERG. *Aen.* VI. 847.