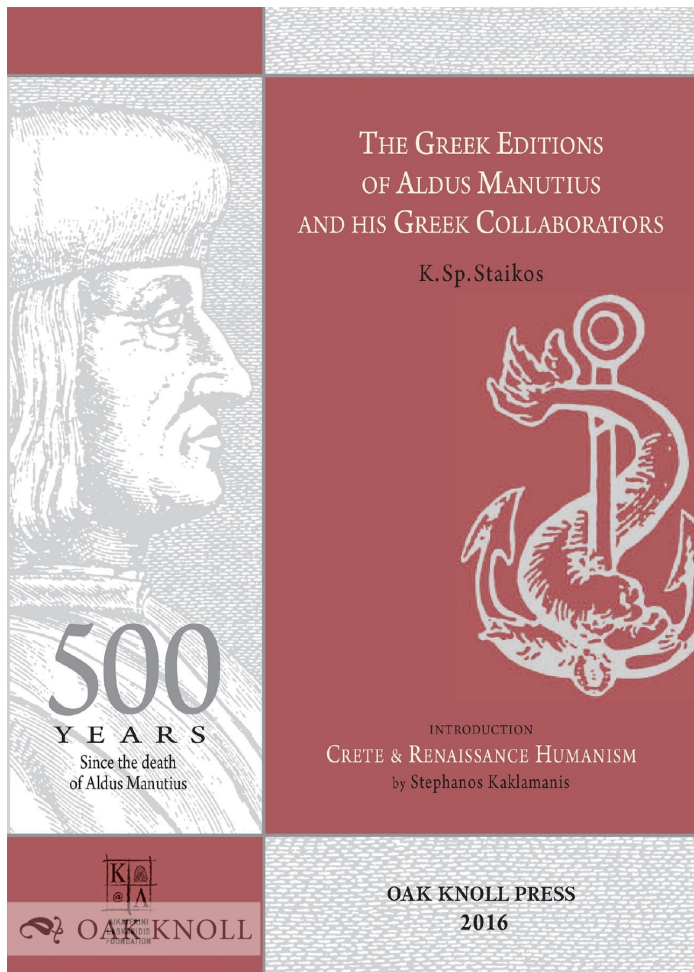


Konstantinos Staikos. *The Greek Editions of Aldus Manutius and His Greek Collaborators* (c. 1494-1515)



Konstantinos Staikos. *The Greek Editions of Aldus Manutius and His Greek Collaborators* (c. 1494-1515). Trans. Katerina Spathi. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2016. xv, 293 p., ill. ISBN 9781584563426. US\$ 65.00 (hardcover).

The recent unveiling of Simon Fraser University's online resource [ALDUS @ SFU: The Wosk-McDonald Aldine Collection](#) allows visitors to examine fully digitized versions of Latin, Greek, and Italian books printed by Manutius Aldus (1452-1515). A contemporary of Gutenberg, Manutius played a significant role in the development of early printing. Konstantinos Staikos's new volume, *The Greek Editions of Aldus Manutius and His Greek Collaborators* (c. 1494-1515), provides a visually stunning account of Manutius's Greek editions that should complement Simon Fraser University's website by allowing readers a chance to see images from these editions that may otherwise be out of immediate grasp.

Manutius was born in Venice at virtually the same historical moment as the Ottoman Turks' defeat of the Byzantine empire, and although he would not become an active printer until well after the fall of Byzantium, he grew up at a time during which the Latin West intermingled with the Greek East. As

Staikos reminds us, knowledge of Greek was an essential part of a humanist education (ix). Staikos seeks in this volume to “honour Aldus’s memory” and remember the role played by Aldus’s “Greek collaborators in this gigantic publishing project” (x); furthermore, he aspires to fill a void in studies of Manutius’s publications that have focused on paratexts, typefaces, and the printing machinery used to create them, but have not yet analyzed them from an aesthetic perspective (xi).

In the first section Staikos traces the rise in estimation of the Greek language from the Byzantine empire through early humanism’s attempts to imitate Greek in Latin compositions. Early humanists sought out Byzantine scholars to teach them Greek, and Staikos argues that Crete served as a nexus in the project of “recovery, collection, and transmission of Greek texts, from the Byzantine East to the Latin West” (7). As the Greek language was typically taught in private lessons, early Italian humanists travelled to Crete to learn it, and eventually Greek began to rival Latin in the estimation of humanists.

Despite the increased interest in the Greek language, some of Manutius’s contemporaries did not share the printer’s love of it. Lorenzo de Monacis, according to Staikos, considered Latin to be superior to Greek and did not believe endeavors to produce Greek editions would make any profit (16-17). Latin in fact had become the lingua franca in both public and private spheres (18). In *The Dialogic Imagination Four Essays* (ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981]), Mikhail Bakhtin refers to Latin as an “ideological language” (68), and it appears that even well into the continental early modern period Latin still held a more powerful linguistic position than Greek. Although early modern humanists embraced it, Greek was more of a sign of privileged learning opportunities than Latin, so Manutius’s choice to print Greek editions came with an inherently smaller readership in mind. Pierre Bourdieu’s claim that “taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier” (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984], 6) precisely describes Manutius’s endeavor, as his Greek editions appeared with built-in linguistic gatekeepers that denied access to readers without Greek reading knowledge.

The second section of this book provides a life of Manutius himself in addition to information about his collaborators, including Antonio Sabellico, Marcus Musurus, Ioustinos, Ioanis Grigoropoulos, Demetrios Doukas, and Ioannis Rossos. In this section Staikos also provides a brief summary of the very important development of Aldine typefaces. The volume also features images tracing the development of Manutius’s trademark dolphin printer mark, as well as numerous sample illustrations of initials and headpieces. The rest of the volume is devoted to a catalogue and bibliographical commentary on Manutius’s Greek editions, a total of 65 in all.

In 1928, book designer Jan Tschichold claimed that Manutius was the first to recognize that printed books had a “character of their own and were different from manuscripts” (*The New Typography: A Handbook for Modern Designers* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995], 18), and Staikos’s volume demonstrates this to be true. Manutius’s editions, and in particular those analyzed in Staikos’s book, anticipated the tradition of “Beautiful Books” as described by nineteenth and early twentieth-century Arts and Crafts movement socialists William Morris and Thomas Cobden-Sanderson. Cobden-Sanderson describes the Arts and Crafts movement as “an Ideal for Industrialism, or for the Labours of Production and Distribution, in big and in little, an Ideal which shall embrace, at once, the industrial life of the individual workman and industrial life as a whole” (*Cosmic Vision*

[Thavies Inn: Richard Cobden-Sanderson, 1922], 80). Similarly, in the first volume of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (trans. Ben Fowkes [New York: Penguin, 1990]), Karl Marx describes how early English print incorporated a system similar to “old manufactures and handicrafts” which advanced apprentices “from easy to more and more difficult work [. . .] through a course of teaching” until they became professional printers who had to be able to read and write; the printing machine, however, inaugurated working “14, 15, and 16 hours at a stretch, during several days in the week, and frequently for 36 hours, with only 2 hours rest for meals and sleep” (615). Literacy, in other words, ultimately, became divorced from the book making process.

Staikos’s book is itself a beautiful book, printed on high-quality paper stock with numerous high-resolution images, and it includes an acceptable amount of scholarly apparatus, ten pages of notes, and an eighteen-page bibliography. This volume will be undoubtedly useful for book historians and print culture historians, but also non-academic audiences with an appreciation for aesthetically pleasing books will also find its treatment of Manutius’s Greek editions unique in its consideration of them as material objects. Staikos’s volume preserves an important moment in the early development of print that should not be forgotten.

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Date Created

11/22/2017