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MARTIAL, [*Opera Omnia*] (*Complete Works*)

In Latin, printed book on paper

Italy (Venice), Aldus Manutius, December 1501

*i + 192 + i folios on paper, octavo, original quire markings printed throughout, complete, watermark, letter A, similar to Briquet 7919 (Venice, 1503) and 7922 (Verona, 1515), collation (A-Z<sup>s</sup> &<sup>s</sup>), printed in Aldine italic type (UCLA, I<sub>1</sub> = 80), Roman capitals used for titles and at the beginning of lines, 30 lines per page plus headline and quire mark line (justification 120 x 65 mm), space for six-line capitals, guide letters visible, the space for the capital at f. A2 contains a box done in amateur penwork, underlining throughout, occasional marginal comments in two humanist cursive hands, two comments in Greek (at ff. P1v and X4), small tear at top of f. A6 and outer margin of f. D1 a few wormholes in final gathering (&) affecting two letters in the colophon (DI), otherwise good condition. Early Venetian brown leather binding, five tooled gilded knotwork diamonds arranged vertically, surrounded by gilded vine work tooling, linear and flower tooling on outer margins, edges gilded and stamped with lacework pattern, some chipping and worming near spine, spine in four compartments, some chipping at the top, good condition. Dimensions 161 x 100 mm.*

Part of Aldus Manutius's series of *libelli portatiles*, this book shows the care and study that Renaissance humanists put into copies of classical texts. The sixteenth-century binding with gold-tooling and gilt edges give it refined decoration, modest and elegant like the Aldine italic type within. Two Greek notes from a sixteenth-century commentator provide a glimpse into the learned activities of an early owner, who playfully contrasted Martial's epigrams with the *Anthologia Graeca* and the recently published Greek epigrams of Angelo Poliziano. This book is a prime example of how Renaissance book owners could combine scholarship with elegance in their cherished books.

## PROVENANCE

1. Printed in Aldus Manutius's shop at Venice in December 1501, as stated on f. &7. Aldus began printing classical authors in octavo format in April 1501 with an edition of the poetry of Virgil. This edition of Martial is one of the earliest Aldine octavos.

Aldus Manutius (c. 1449/1452 – 1515) began his career as a teacher of grammar but later became the foremost printer in Renaissance Venice. His editions of Greek, Latin, and Italian authors are highly valued for their typographical clarity and philological accuracy. Even within Aldus's lifetime his editions were highly sought after for their inherent worth and as collectors' items (which gave rise to many counterfeiters). Aldus was particularly successful with his *libelli portatiles* or *enchiridia* (portable or pocketbooks), like this book, which present philologically exact texts without a commentary or critical apparatus.

2. Likely owned by a Venetian Renaissance humanist who supplied the binding for this book in the sixteenth century. For similar knotwork and floral tooling found on other similar bindings, see Mazzucco, 1994, p. 163 [tool set "m"]; and, Hobson, 1989, pp. 60-

90. This owner is perhaps to be identified with the "ex libris Cajetani Colleli(?)" found on f. A1.

3. Some further penwork on f. A1 seems to contain letters ("vict / or" is legible near the bottom of the page), perhaps indicating another sixteenth-century owner. Some marginal comments and underlining also indicate that this book was read with care in the sixteenth century. Two notes in Greek suggest that at least one of the readers was well educated and current with the literary world of Renaissance Florence.
4. Purchased from William P. Wreden (1910-1995), an antiquarian bookseller, at Palo Alto in 1976 by T. Kimball Brooker. Thomas Kimball Brooker amassed one of the largest private collections of Aldine editions outside of Europe. Brooker joined the Grolier Club in 1962, served as president of the Association Internationale de Bibliophile from 2006 to 2013, and became an important American bibliophile and bibliographer. This book contains Brooker's bookplate on the front pastedown.

## TEXT

f. a1v, Pliny the Younger, *Epistola*, 3.21, incipit, "Audio Valerium Martialem decessisse... Ille tamen scripsit tanquam futura. Vale"; f. a1 titlepage;

ff. a2r-a5v, Martial, *Spectacula*, incipit, "BARBARA PYRAMIDVM sileat miracula Memphis... Hanc norint unam secula Naumachiam";

ff. a5v-&6v, Martial, *Epigrams*, incipit, "SPERO ME SECVTVRVVM IN libellis meis... Cristataeque sonant undique lucis aues. FINIS"; f. &7 colophon. ff. &7v-&8v, blank.

Martial (c.38-41 – c.101-104 CE) was born in Bilbilis, Spain and moved to Rome around 64 CE. He became well-connected in Roman literary circles and began to publish his books of epigrams in 86 CE. Martial's pen turned the genre of epigram into the canonical form we recognize today with its "set-up and punchline structure... a materialist focus on quotidian realities, the forthright use of obscene language, and a relaxed mood of carnivalesque festivity" (Roman, "Martial, Latin poet"). Like many classical authors, Martial and his poetry are first attested in the Middle Ages during the ninth-century Carolingian renaissance. After that point, there is a limited, but steady stream of manuscript transmission throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, especially in verse florilegia. Martial's poetry was first printed 1470-71.

The Aldine edition follows the canonical order of poems still found in modern editions of Martial, namely (1) the *De spectaculis*, i.e. poems commemorating the inaugural games of the Flavian Amphitheater in 80 CE, (2) twelve books of epigrams (*Libri epigrammaton*) published starting in 86 CE at a pace of about one book a year, as well as (3) a thirteenth (*Xenia*) and fourteenth book (*Apophoreta*) comprising distichs about food and gifts exchanged during Saturnalia, both published ca. 83-85 CE. This edition also contains an interpolated poem as the penultimate item in book four of the *Epigrams*, beginning "Rure morans quid agam...". The poem is often found in Italian manuscripts of Martial and is frequently attributed to Martial (see e.g. *Anthologia Latina*, no. 26; and, Reeve, 1983, p. 242 n. 27). The Aldine edition prefaces Martial's oeuvre with a letter of Pliny the Younger (*Epistles* 3.21) lamenting the death of the poet.

This copy of Martial was handsomely bound in goatskin and beautifully gold tooled with floral and knotwork patterns. The sixteenth-century owner clearly appreciated the originality and importance of the Aldine octavo aesthetic. The slim proportion of 1.6:1, rather than the usual 1.4:1 gives this book a slender and handsome aspect. Additionally, the Italic type, cut by Francesco Griffo (1450-1518) better reflected the kind of scripts used by Italian *literati* in Venice at the time. The USTC lists 53 known copies of the Aldine Martial not including the present volume. (USTC, 841150; UCLA, no. 47; *Aldo Manuzio Tipografo*, no. 49; EDIT16, 36108; Lugato, no. 49; Kallendorf, no. 41; Renouard, 30/7; Adams M689)

A learned Renaissance owner, perhaps the same as the one who provided the binding, frequently underlined portions of the text and also supplied sparse marginal comments in Latin, usually only a single word denoting a theme or topic in the text. Of greater interest are two marginal comments in Greek serving as commentary on Martial's poetry. The first occurs at f. P1v, where the commentator cites the *Anthologia Graeca* (first printed in Florence in 1493), 5.106.5-6: εἶδος ἔσανγύζων μοῦνον γλυκύ. τίς φθόνος ὅσων / δύσμορε, καὶ μορφὰς ἀθανάτων βλέπομεν. ("...only gazing at her sweet form. Why be jealous of eyes, ill-fated nurse? We are allowed to look on the forms of even the immortals." [trans. Paton, 1916]). This comment appears beside Martial 9.25.3-4: *Quod, rogo, quod scelus est, mollem spectare ministrum? / Aspicimus solem, sidera, templa, deos.* ("What, I ask, what is the crime in looking at your supple aide? We glance at the sun, the stars, temples, gods.") The second Greek comment at f. X4 belongs to the *Liber epigrammatum Graecorum* (ed. Pontani, 2002) of Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494), published between 1493-94 but written throughout his life. The commentator copies 5.10 (written in 1472 when Poliziano was only 18 years of age) and adds the word "life" to the beginning of the pentameter of an elegiac couplet: ζωή] πικρὰ ἄνευ γε φίλων ἐστὶ καὶ ἄμβροσίη. ("Life] is quite bitter without friends, ambrosia, too.") The Greek note appears next to Martial 12.34.8-10: *Si vitare velis acerba quaedam / Et tristis animi cavere morsus, / Nulli te facias nimis sodalem.* ("If you wish to avoid bitter things / and ward against the grievous stings of conscience / you should not make yourself anyone's friend too much.") In both cases, we gain a glimpse of a well-educated Renaissance reader interacting with Martial's text.

The Aldine edition of Martial is a prime example of the clean mis-en-page and scholarly commitment to philologically sound texts in small format that Aldus Manutius pioneered with his *libelli portatiles*. The sumptuous sixteenth-century goatskin binding and gold tooling reveals the high worth an early owner placed on the book. This copy of Martial contains some underlining and sparse comments in Latin, but also two comments in Greek that situate Martial within the broader context of ancient and renaissance Greek epigram, suggesting that this copy was owned by a sixteenth-century Venetian *literati*. Sitting at the intersection of refined literary taste and scholarly engagement, this book is an excellent example of the ways classical poetry was enjoyed and studied in the sixteenth century.

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