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QUINTUS ASCONIUS PEDIANUS. *Asconii Paediani Expositio in .III. orationes M. Tullii Cic[eronis] contra C. Verrem et in Orationem pro Cornelio. In orationem contra C. Antonium, et L. Catilinam. In orationem pro M. Scauro. In orationem contra L. Pisonem. In Orationem pro Milone atque harum rerum omnium index. Victorini comentarii in libros M.T.C. de inventione & Georgii Trapezuntii in Orationem pro Q. Ligario.*

[Venice, In aedibus Aldi et Andreae Asulani Soceri, December 1522]

8vo, [11] - 283 - [1] ff. [signatures: \*3 (missing blank folio \*4), \*\*8; a-z8; A-M8; N4], in Latin, printed in italic letters, Aldine dolphin-and-anchor device on title and on verso of last leaf (Device, see Fletcher, 1995, 5a). Bound in a limp vellum binding made up from a twelfth-century folded parchment leaf with text disposed on two columns, text copied in caroline minuscule. Dimensions: 105 x 160 mm.

First Aldine edition of this classical commentary on Cicero's speeches intended for the pedagogy of youths. This exemplar is especially notable for its fine contemporary binding, composed of a twelfth-century leaf from Saint Augustine's *Tractates* written in a neat Caroline miniscule.

**PROVENANCE**

1. Published in Venice, after Aldus's death in 1515, with the modified address: "House of Aldus and of Andrea Asulani" [colophon reads: VENETIIS IN AEDIBUS ALDI, ET ANDREAE ASULANI SOCERI MENSE DECEMBRI M.D. XXII (1522)].
2. Added inscription, by a sixteenth-century hand: "Philippi l[i]c[et] Zabironis Candidi Ravennae gens." This copy was likely owned by a certain Philipp Zabirow, citizen of Ravenna.

**TEXT**

[Title-page]: ASCONII PAEDIANI EXPOSITIO / IN III. ORATIONES M.TULLII / CIC. CONTRA C. VERREM et / In Orationem pro Cornelio / In Orationem contra C.

Antonium, & L. Catilina[m] / In Orationem pro M. Scauro / In Orationem contra L. Pisonem / In Orationem pro Milone atq[ue] harum rerum omnium index / Victorini comentarii in libros M.T.C. de inventione & / Georgii Trapezuntii in Orationem pro Q. Ligario.

[Prefaces]:

f. \*2-\*2v, Dedicatory Epistle from Gian Francesco d'Asola to Francesco Contarini: *Franciscus Asulanus Francisco Contareno M. Antonii filio s.d.*; incipit: "Nihil mihi ex hac mea librorum corrigendorum...".

f. \*3, Gian Francesco d'Asola to the Reader: *LECTORI*; incipit: "QUALESCUNQUE habere potuimus damus hos Asconii Commentarios...".

ff. \*\*1-8, INDEX ASCONII PEDIANI.

[Text]:

ff. 1-94, Quintus Asconius Pedianus, *Commentarii in orationes Ciceronis*;

ff. 94v-235, Marius Victorinus, Commentary on Cicero's *De Inventione*, *M. Fabii Victorini expositio in Primum [Secundum] Rhetoricon Ciceronis librum*;

ff. 235v-283v, Georgius Trapezuntius, *Expositio in orationem M. Tullii Ciceronis pro Q. Ligario*;

f. 283v, [colophon]: VENETIIS IN AEDIBUS ALDI, ET ANDREAE ASULANI SOCERI MENSE DECEMBRI M.D. XXII.

This exemplar is the first Aldine edition of the classical commentary on Cicero's speeches by Asconius Pedianus who was a native of Padua (Adams, A-2054; Cataldi Palau, pp. 197-198 and 634-635; Renouard, p. 96; STC Italian, p. 59; UCLA, 188). Another edition of these popular Commentaries on Cicero was issued by Paulus Manutius in 1553, himself an important Cicero scholar. The first incunable edition of Asconius' Commentaries on Cicero's speeches was published in Venice, c. 1477, by H. Squarzaficus for Johannes de Colonia (see STC Italian, p. 58; Goff, A-1154). There were two other editions, also published in Venice, c. 1498 and in 1519 (see STC Italian, p. 59). The text of Asconius Pedianus's Commentaries on Cicero's Orations came to light in 1416 among a number of important manuscripts discovered by Poggio Bracciolini at the monastery of Saint-Gall.

Asconius Pedianus comments on seven Ciceronian speeches: *Contra Verrem* (in four parts), *Contra Pisonem*, *Pro Scauro*, *Pro Milone*, *Pro Cornelio*, *Contra Antonium et Catilinam*. This Aldine edition also contains Marius Victorinus' commentary on Cicero's *De inventione*, followed by a commentary on Cicero's *Pro Ligario* by George of Trebizond (1395-

1486). The former was a teacher of grammar and rhetoric in the fourth century, converted to Christianity; the latter attempted to connect the Greek rhetorical tradition (especially Hermogenes, but also Aristotle and Dionysius of Halicarnassus) with the Latin tradition (Cicero, Quintilian, Marius Victorinus).

Little is known about Asconius Pedianus: "The picture of Asconius which emerges, is that of a cultivated gentleman, living in the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods, probably involved in public affairs, but devoting his leisure hours to study [...] and writing down the fruits of his researches into the antiquity, literature and the history of Rome" (see Marshall, 1985, p. 32). It seems that the Commentaries on Cicero's speeches were ostensibly written for his sons, which affirms the intrinsic didactic purpose of the work: "Perhaps the sons should be thought of as in their late teens when they had assumed the *toga virilis*, moved into the third level of their education (the rhetorical school), and begun that practical training in public affairs..." (Marshall, 1985, pp. 33). During this tertiary level, the main subject studied was rhetoric with the high ideal of Cicero. Asconius composed these commentaries in a simple style, accessible to youths, offering rhetorical forms of speech and historical *exempla* to be used in speeches of one's own.

Aldus Manutius (c. 1452-1515), the third great name in the first decades of printing after Gutenberg and Caxton, was a true scholar-printer, devoted to the classics of Greece and Rome. He was active as a printer in Venice from February 1494 until January 1515. He published a remarkable body of work in Greek, including 31 "editiones principes." His Latin output was even more extensive and aimed at scholars, with "pocket" editions for students and scholars, such as the present edition. Aldus' son Paulus Manutius (1512-1574) was a Latin scholar himself (specializing in Cicero) and expanded the Venetian business known for its editions printed in the famous italic letter. Paulus worked also in Rome during the 1560's mainly as the publisher of books related to the Council of Trent. Paulus' successor, his son Aldus the Younger (1547-1597) continued printing in Venice but left towards the end of his life to work for the Vatican Press in Rome.

Related printing dynasties also took part in the Aldine Press, especially Andrea Torresani from Asola (1451-1528), Aldus's father-in-law, who had started printing in Venice some twenty years before the Aldine venture. Following Aldus's death in 1515, the shop was run by André d'Asola and his sons, until Andrea's death in 1528. Andrea's successors eventually opened a "Bouticque d'Alde" in Paris. Among the sons of Andrea d'Asola, Gian Francesco was particularly active in operating the Aldine imprint. Born c. 1495/1498, Gian Francesco was Aldus's brother-in-law and saw to editions in keeping with the Elder's tradition between 1517 and 1529 before Paulus Manutius was of age to run the Press. Annaclara Cataldi Palau devoted an important study to Gian Francesco who was the actual intellectual force behind the enterprise (see in particular Cataldi Palau, 1998, chapter entitled *Vita professionale di Gian Francesco d'Asola*, pp. 69-75).

Gian Francisco d'Asola dedicated this edition to Francesco Contarini, described as an adolescent in the dedicatory epistle. Francesco Contarini was the son of Marc'Antonio Contarini (1485-1546), but except this very little is known (On the importance and plethora of information to be found in Gian Francesco's dedicatory epistles, see Cataldi Palau, pp. 149-156. It is an accepted fact that the author of the dedicatory epistle was most often the person actually in charge of the entire edition; on Francesco Contarini, see p.197). It is interesting that the Commentaries on Cicero by Asconius Pedianus are dedicated by Gian Francesco d'Asola to a young adolescent, reinforcing the pedagogical purpose of this work.

## BINDING

The parchment used for the binding preserves an excerpt from Augustine, *Homelies (or Tractates) on the Gospel of John (In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus centum viginti quatuor)*, tractatus 54: *Ab eo quod ait Jesus: Qui credit in me, non credit in me, sed in eum qui misit me. . .*

The text is copied in a round well-spaced twelfth-century caroline script in two columns, likely of Italian origin, and begins: "[...] quidam vero non crediderunt, nec poterant credere, eo quod occulto...ubi intelleximus eum doctrinam suam dixisse Verbum Patris quod est ipse...Qui credit in me inquit non credit in me id est in hoc quod videt sed in eum qui [misit me]"

Augustine of Hippo's *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, in all 124 commentaries on the Gospel text, were composed in 418-419: only four complete copies dated earlier than the tenth-century are known to exist. Our excerpt, taken from Tractate 54 comments John 12, 44-50: *Quae ego loquor, sicut dixit mihi Pater. . .*

See *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina. Sancti Aurelii Augustini In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV* (Turnhout, 1990), pp. 458-463; Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 35; Retig, J (transl.). *The Fathers of the Church: St. Augustine Tractates on the Gospel of John 28-54*, Catholic University of America Press, July, 2002; A list of the oldest manuscripts can be found in Ruth J. Dean, "An Early Fragment of a Manuscript of St-Augustine's Sermons on the Gospel according to Saint John," in *Journal of Theological Studies*, XXXV, 1935, pp.114 et sq.]. On the reutilization of medieval parchment in bindings see Perani, M. and C. Ruini, *Frammenta ne pereant: recupero e studio dei frammenti di manoscritti medievali e rinascimentali riutilizzati in legature*, Ravenna, Longo, 2002.

## LITERATURE

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[Ahmanson-Murphy]. *The Aldine Press. A Catalogue of the Ahmanson-Murphy Collection of Books by or relating to the Press in the Library of the University of California*, Los Angeles, Berkeley, 1991 [UCLA].

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Marcon, S. and M. Zorzi, *Aldo Manuzio e l'ambiente veneziano, 1494-1515*, Venezia, Il Cardo, 1994.

Marshall, B. *A Historical Commentary on Asconius*, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1985.

Renouard, A.A. *Annales de l'imprimerie des Alde*, Paris, 1835 [Renouard].

## ONLINE REOURCES

On Aldus Manutius (Exhibition at Brigham Young University / Harold B. Lee Library):  
<http://library.byu.edu/~aldine/aldus.html>

On Augustine's *Tractates*:  
<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/EIAnt/V5N1/tractatus.html>