



# Aldus Manutius

**DESIGNER'S FULL NAME:** Aldus Manutius (Aldo Manuzio)

**DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME:** N/a

**GENDER:** Male

**YEAR BORN:** 1449

**COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN:** Italy

**YEAR DIED:** 1515

**COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED:** Italy

## RACE | ETHNICITY | RELIGION | POLITICAL ALIGNMENT

N/a. Italian. Roman Catholic. N/a

## IF ANY OF THE ABOVE AFFECTED EITHER THE ARTIST'S LIFE EXPERIENCE OR WORK BECAUSE IT/THEY PROVIDED A CHALLENGE AT THE TIME, PLEASE EXPLAIN.

None of the above affected him, because the printing press had only been invented when Manutius was born. He was pretty advanced with the education that he received. Then he started his printing press with no issues or backlash from anyone or anything.

## DID THIS DESIGNER DO NOTABLE WORK IN FIELDS OTHER THAN WHAT WOULD TODAY BE CONSIDERED GRAPHIC DESIGN? EXPLAIN.

No.

## FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

His Aldine Press and printing copies of writers and philosophers works. His design layout when printing was different from anything seen before. He broke up the massive paragraphs of text into multiple paragraphs, created layouts that utilized white space and . He also introduced page numbers and punctuation.

## IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

Not particularly, but he did create an up rise in the book market. When books became available through printing, many people wanted to read and own them. The rise in book production also helped to spread knowledge and ideas around Europe.

## EXPLAIN THIS DESIGNER'S EDUCATION/TRAINING, INCLUDING ACADEMIC, APPRENTICESHIPS, AND /OR MENTORSHIPS.

He was from a good family and received a humanist education in Rome, Ferrara and Mirandola. He then moved to Venice and started his printing press.

## DID THIS DESIGNER PROMOTE A SPECIFIC IDEOLOGY IN HIS/HER WORK? EXPLAIN.

He wanted to spread the Greek language to a larger public, but he also printed Latin and Italian books. He truly wanted to make information available to those who wanted it through books.

## WHY IS THIS DESIGNER VIEWED AS ICONIC IN THE HISTORY OF GRAPHIC DESIGN?

He is known as being the first publisher with his printing press the Aldine Press. He created pocketbooks that were small and easy to

carry around.

#### IS THERE ANY OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KNOW ABOUT THIS DESIGNER?

No.

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#### JESSICA GATES:

#### STATE YOUR EDUCATED OPINION OF THIS PERSON AND THE QUALITY/IMPORTANCE OF HIS/HER WORK. EXPLAIN WHAT INFLUENCE - OR LACK OF INFLUENCE - THIS WORK HAS HAD ON YOUR OWN.

Aldus Manutius was “the leading figure of his time in printing, publishing, and typography” (Aldus Manutius 2019). Manutius founded the Aldine Press, one of the first publishing houses, where he printed many editions of classical writings by Greek and Latin authors and philosophers such as Dante and Petrarch. Another thing that he is well known for is the creation of pocketbooks. Pocketbooks were books that were small in size and easy to carry around, which was a revolution of this time period.

The lasting influence that he left in the History of Graphic Design was to help spread knowledge to the public through mass production of printed editions of great works. Books printed by the Aldine Press “were known throughout the world for their accuracy, beauty, the superior quality of the materials employed, and their cutting-edge design” (Smith 2019). Aldus Manutius was the inventor of the modern book by introducing new layouts, page numbers, using punctuation to separate sentences, and inventing the modern “italic font”.

It is said that when Manutius created pocketbooks that he truly created a new audience that appreciated this new invention. “For the first time, the book became a manageable, easy to carry, and relatively inexpensive object, therefore it became accessible to a larger audience comprised not only of scholars, but also of aristocrats and members of the upper middle class” (Smith 2019). Truly he created something that would evolve into the modern-day books that people can check-out from a library or buy at a bookstore to read wherever and whenever they please.

Manutius’s work influences me due to the fact that within typography we have the italic font and punctuation, but also how he created readable books with clean layouts giving adequate space to borders and breaking up large sections of text. I am a fan of printed books, the way the paper feels, how the words look printed on the page, and how the headings of new chapters are designed. I am partial to creating and designing things with clean lines and a nice flowing layout, and this breaking up of text began with the printing and editing of many classical writings by the Aldine Press. It is also interesting to think that without Manutius and his invention of punctuation, we would not write or create designs as we do today because without punctuation we would not make sense. Punctuation gives pauses to phrases, breaks up different ideas, and concludes the creative thought process. I am an avid reader and wouldn’t think too much about this, but with what I know now about Manutius and his impact to Graphic Design and printing it makes me think; “what if book pages didn’t have numbers” or “what if this was one massively long run-on sentence”. We know that the modern way of designing and creating was not even a possible thought during the 15th century. Manutius was a design innovator because he invented things that no one else thought about. His ideas were probably seen as different and not appreciated at first, but

then became so popular that we can't imagine the world without it.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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