**BOOKS BOUND AFTER WHAT MANNER YOU PLEASE**

Until it is bound, a book is not ready to be read, but once bound, that first binding will carry clues as to where, when and at what expense it was prepared for reading, and possibly how it was sold. Some of this information may be accessible through inscriptions, bookplates, etc., but all too often these are not contemporary with the binding or belong to people lost to history. When this happens, the binding is all there is to provide this sort of contextual information. For bindings on Aldine editions, the situation is complicated by the long period through the sixteenth century during which the products of the press continued to be bought as new and then bound and subsequently, from at least the early eighteenth, by bibliophile collectors having their Aldines rebound in the latest fashion. This paper looks at a selection of contemporary or early bindings on Aldine editions, many from little known collections, to explore their variety and what they can tell us of the historical and commercial contexts within which they were made.

If there is a conventional view of what a contemporary binding on an early Aldine edition should look like, it will usually be Italian and include a cover of one of the recently introduced, imported, coloured goatskins, tooled in gold and often with gilt and gauffered edges and colourful secondary endband sewing[[1]](#footnote-1). Editions in smaller formats will typically be sewn on three alum-tawed sewing supports, those bound during Aldus’s lifetime almost always having split-strap double supports[[2]](#footnote-2) of white, alum-tawed skin, but there is a significant, if puzzling, distinction to be made between those copies that have wooden boards in the medieval tradition, even on octavos printed in Italic type, and those with paper boards of a sort only introduced into European bookbinding in the mid-fifteenth century (Hobson, 1989, Appendix 1). The choice between wooden and paper boards was not related to the size of the books, as both may be found on the octavo editions – but there is no question that the thinner, lighter paper boards of bindings such as that found on a copy of the 1514 Valerius Maximus (Fig. 1)[[3]](#footnote-3) give the book a more ‘modern’ feel and one very much in keeping with the pocket-sized format of the book and the new Italic type. A copy of the 1502 Sophocles now at Blickling Hall in Norfolk[[4]](#footnote-4) is covered in a brick-red goatskin of extraordinarily high quality and tooled in gold (Fig. 2), but retains beech-wood boards with the medieval Italian system of board attachment in which the slips of the three alum-tawed supports are nailed into external channels cut into the surface of the board. The edges are gilt and gauffered, but the gold leaf stops short of the endbands, a phenomenon which is discussed in more detail below.

The market for Aldine editions in decorated leather-covered bindingswas strong enough for some binders apparently to specialise in the making them, and the so-called Fugger Binder working in Venice in the mid-sixteenth century seems to have done good business in making them (Foot, 1978, pp. 312-5; Hobson, 1999, pp. 119-129). The five volumes of the 1525 Galen now in the library of the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai[[5]](#footnote-5) were bound by him in black, tanned goatskin over paper boards with simple but elegant tooling with an empty heraldic shield in the centre of each board (Fig. 3). The same empty shield can also be found on a copy of the *Florilegium* of 1550 now in Sir Richard Ellys’s collection at Blickling Hall, which must have been bound bound when more or less newly published (Fig. 4).[[6]](#footnote-6) The empty shield on the sides of both the *Florilegium* and the Galen suggest that these were books bound before sale with the intention that a customer could have had his or her own coat of arms inserted into them should they have so desired, and this in turn suggests that such bindings might have been commissioned for stock in a bookshop. Although the shield is quite decorative, it is hard to see why a private customer would commission a binding with such a feature if they did not intend to use it.

Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle was a significant client of the Fugger Binder, who bound many Aldine editions for him in coloured tanned goatskin with restrained tooling in blind and gold copy, with the characteristic purple panel on the fore-edge with the title in gold letters, such as the 1517 Musæus now at Blickling Hall (Fig. 5).[[7]](#footnote-7) This binding is rather different from those of the *Florilegium* and the Galen, as it and many other similarly-bound volumes were clearly commissioned by Granvelle and were all bound in a very similar style, and supplied to him by Gabriele Giolito from his Venetian bookshop in 1547 (Foot 1978, p. 315 and Hobson 1999, pp. 119-21). The Martial was therefore already some 40 years old when Granvelle commissioned this binding, and although it not now possible to know whether it was bound in some manner before this binding was made or whether it was still in unbound sheets when acquired by Granvelle, it is to be assumed that it would been in clean and as-new condition, if not actually unbound at the time of its acquisition. This long gap between the printing of an edition and its binding for a private owner is a recurrent phenomenon on Aldine editions, which continued to be bought and expensively bound many years after they were printed. The Galen, which was probably some 30 years old when bound by the Fugger binder, shows, if it was indeed bound for stock, that a bookseller could have assumed that there was a continuing market for such books. These three editions were bound in Venice, and, despite their varying formats, were all sewn on three supports, as were the earlier examples, but on the spines of each of them the Fugger binder added the false half-bands in between the sewing supports on the spines and the kettlebands[[8]](#footnote-8) at head and tail that were first found in Germany in the mid-fifteenth century (they were originally sewn single sewing supports and emphasised kettlestitches (Petersen 1975, p. 11, fig. IV)), and became very fashionable in Italy in the mid-sixteenth century.

Aldine editions were not only bought and bound Italy, but in other countries they will take on an entirely different appearance. Early in the sixteenth century in France they are more likely to have been covered in tanned calfskin, as the high quality goatskins favoured by the Italian bibliophiles did not reach France in any quantity until the 1530s. They will, in addition, have not only quite different decoration but a completely different structure from their Italian counterparts. Instead of a small number of quite substantial sewing supports (most often three, or less often four), we find on a copy of the folio edition of the Bessarion of 1516,[[9]](#footnote-9) a binding made for its first owner, Nicolas Maillard,[[10]](#footnote-10) with a structure consisting of 5 thin, double alum-tawed supports with a linked sewing technique that is typically French, and tooled in blind using four rolls, three of which have been recorded and ascribed to Paris (Gid 1984, vol.I, p. 177, no.198 and vol. II, plate 59, roll ENi, see Fig. 6). The use of tanned calfskin, a material almost never encountered as a covering material on books in Italy in the sixteenth century, continued in France right through the century, and approximately two decades after the Bessarion was bound, the French doctor Geoffroy Granger (Hobson 1956, pp. 280-1) had a copy of *Il Cortegiano* bound in Paris in ca 1540 in dark brown calfskin and tooled in blind, in the most up-to-date style, with arabesque tools, by the Fleur-de-Lys binder (Ilse Schunke’s Lilienmeister (Nixon 1965, p. 9; Pickwoad 1998, p. 86).[[11]](#footnote-11) Granger had his name tooled in blind towards the head of the right (back) side of the cover using the familiar humanistic tag ‘GRANGERII ET AMICORVM’, with the title in the same position on the left (front) side (Fig. 7). The binder used the same arrangement of paper and parchment endleaves favoured by Grolier (a fold of white paper sewn within a fold of parchment, followed by a separately-sewn bifolium of white paper, with the outer parchment leaf pasted to the inside of the board), and the book, as an expensively-bound folio, was sewn on six rather than five thin, double, alum-tawed supports with a linked sewing technique. The treatment of the endbands exhibits another very French technique used on higher quality bindings from the 1530s, in which the slips of the cord cores are untwisted, frayed out and pasted flat to the outside of the boards.

Another Aldine edition, in this case the first volume of the Aristotle printed in 1495, was also given a high quality French binding of the 1530s, covered in tanned calfskin and sewn on six thin, double, alum-tawed supports, and now in St Catherine’s monastery on Mount Sinai (Fig. 8).[[12]](#footnote-12) The binding is simply decorated, but beautifully made, and may be of a slightly earlier date than that on Granger’s *Cortegiano*, as the endbands are worked over cores of alum-tawed skin that were laced into the boards. In keeping with their relatively modest appearance, both of these books have purple and not gilded edges.

The Aristotle makes an interesting comparison with another copy of the same edition,[[13]](#footnote-13) also in a French binding covered in tanned calfskin, but of the 1560s, with the newly-fashionable smooth spine obtained by placing the sewing supports into recesses cut across the spine, that were first used in France to imitate the smooth spines of Greek-style bindings, hence their name in French, *grecques* (Fig. 9). These two copies show that although the editions of Aldus remain unchanged, their dress, as it were, changes with both fashionable and technical developments through the sixteenth century.

Aldine editions provided an opportunity to display a taste for classical cameos, and a copy of the 1502 Herodotus now in Blickling Hall,[[14]](#footnote-14) covered in dark blue, tanned hairsheep of a beautiful colour, but not as costly as goatskin, bears on each side a gilt impression of an oval intaglio cameo of a winged genius (Hobson 1989, p. 246, see Fig. 10). Although the cameo itself might be thought very Italian in design, the binding is unmistakably French and is once again sewn on six thin, double, alum-tawed sewing supports with linked sewing, which alone would indicate its French origins, even without the small arabesque tool in the corners of the inner frame that is also found on some bindings made for Jean Grolier (Nixon 1965, plate C, no.10).

Grolier had many of his books with elaborate decoration covered in tanned calfskin, but he also commissioned bindings in the high quality imported goatskins that had been used earlier in Italy, but unique amongst the surviving books belonging to him is a copy of the 1524 Aldine Herodian,[[15]](#footnote-15) still covered in hand-cut silk velvet, the covering material of choice for a wealthy patron before the introduction of imported goatskins, but which remained current for special copies, often for presentation (Fig. 11). Underneath the velvet, however, the structure remains the same, sewn once again, as an octavo, on five double, alum-tawed supports with linked sewing; it also has the frayed out slips of the cord endband cores pasted to the outside of the boards, the characteristic feature of high quality French bindings from the 1530s to the end of the sixteenth century. If therefore, this binding did not have the motto and signature of Grolier, its French origins would again have been identifiable through its structure.

It is easy to let these expensively-made and often heavily decorated bindings obscure the fact that many Aldine editions survive in much less elaborately decorated bindings, such as a copy of the Aldine Simplicius of 1527[[16]](#footnote-16) in an Italian inboard binding with a slotted spine, in which the sewing supports were first covered with independent band covers, usually, as in this example, of alum-tawed skin, with slots cut across the spine of the covering skin which fitted over the raised bands (Fig. 12). This process avoided the difficult task moulding the parchment over the raised bands, and can therefore be seen as a form of economy. This type of binding, apparently always with paper boards and covered here with a thin reversed parchment, was often used in northern Italy from at least the beginning of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth (Pugliese 2001, passim).

Wooden boards were also used in Italy from the late fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth century for relatively inexpensive inboard bindings with quarter coverings of blind-tooled brown, tanned goatskin, two of which are to be found in the library of the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai (Fig.13).[[17]](#footnote-17) Such bindings would appear to have been the typical of those made for everyday academic use, and one can be seen on the funeral monument by Antonio Rizzo of S. Lorenzo Giustiniani (d. 1456),[[18]](#footnote-18) who was bishop of Castello and first Patriarch of Venice. He was noted for his ascetic way of life and it is therefore suitable that he is depicted holding such a modest binding in his left hand. A third example, on another copy of the *Thesaurus Cornucopiae* of 1496, survives in the Cairo metochion of the monastery.[[19]](#footnote-19) This binding shares a feature with the Blickling Sophocles described at the beginning of this paper in that the decoration of the head and tail edges (a solid coat of a dirty-pink pigment) stops short of the ends of the edges, where they were covered by the endbands, indicating that this book, as well as the Sophocles, existed either as uncovered sewn bookblocks, possibly protected by some sort of inexpensive cover, but with cut edges and endbands, before the decision was made to add boards and covers to them.

Quarter bindings were also made in southern Germany at the same period (the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries), using either tanned calfskin or, more often, white alum-tawed skin (usually, but not always, pigskin) as the covering material. An example on a copy of the 1497 Iamblichus[[20]](#footnote-20) declares its German and especially southern German origins by its wide quarter spine of alum-tawed pigskin, extending over half way across the boards, the single sewing support situated in the middle of the spine, with two double supports on each side of it, an eccentricity of some German bindings of this period for which I can offer no rational explanation, and single sewing supports, or *Kapitalbünde*,[[21]](#footnote-21) at the head and tail of the spine (Fig. 14). The German origins of the binding are also revealed by the use of sewing supports made from cord, and not the skin materials that would be found in every other part of Europe at this time.

Another German binding, on the 1495 Theocritus,[[22]](#footnote-22) has a full cover of alum-tawed pigskin as well as *Kapitalbünde*. More significantly, the book has a sewing structure and method of board attachment that is certainly Bavarian, and may belong to a limited area around Munich, and is evidence of an Aldine edition arriving north of the Alps very soon after it was printed. The book is sewn on paired single cords,[[23]](#footnote-23) and the slips from these supports were attached to the boards by means of shaped and carved horizontal wooden plugs,[[24]](#footnote-24) driven over the frayed-out slips in channels cut into the outer surface of the boards (Fig. 15). Why any binder should go to such lengths to attach boards, it is hard to say, but they do locate the bindings on which they are found with great accuracy.

Aldine editions can be found in other northern European bindings with wooden boards, which were, of course, the standard bindings of their place and time. A copy *Scriptores rei rusticae*, of 1514 is in a Flemish binding with wooden boards covered in tanned calfskin with a blind-stamped panel in the centre of each side,[[25]](#footnote-25) while a copy of Niccolò Perotto, printed in 1513, is in a contemporary Cambridge binding by Nicholas Spierinck, also with wooden boards covered in tanned calfskin (Fig. 16).[[26]](#footnote-26) Even without the signed roll of the Cambridge bookseller Nikolas Spierinck, it would be possible to know that this binding was English from the use of tanned skin wedges[[27]](#footnote-27) to secure the sewing support slips (also, characteristically, made from tanned skin) into the exit holes drilled in the oak boards. The same technique was used to attach the oak boards of a binding on a copy of the 1514 Hesychios now in Northern Ireland.[[28]](#footnote-28) The first leaf was signed by John Fox, of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who died ca 1535, with the familiar humanistic tag ‘Sum Ioannis Foxi et amicorum’ (Pearson 1994, p. 25) and the binding is almost certainly Oxford work[[29]](#footnote-29) and executed soon after the book was printed. The use of cord for the thin double supports, a material otherwise unrecorded at this time in England, was most probably intended to reduce the size of the raised bands on the spine to the minimum, to reflect the smooth spines of genuine Greek style bindings (Pickwoad 2008, pp. 198 and fig. 11). Another unknown English binder, also using tanned skin wedges to secure thin cord sewing supports into oak boards, cut grooves into the edges of the boards (all that survive of this binding) as gesture towards what a Greek binding should look like, in a binding on the Aldine Plato of 1513.[[30]](#footnote-30) The evidence of the tanned sewing supports and cord endband cores left in the boards of the binding it would seem to have followed a typically English structural pattern, but the cover and any decoration it may have had are lost (Pickwoad 2008, pp. 198-9).

What these English binders were attempting, rather unsuccessfully, to imitate was the style of binding developed in the Byzantine world, which was characterised externally by a smooth spine obtained by unsupported sewing,[[31]](#footnote-31) projecting endbands created by cutting the bookblock to the size of the boards, (which allowed the endbands to be sewn to the head and tail edges of the boards as well as the bookblock),[[32]](#footnote-32) grooves cut in the edges of the boards and fastenings consisting of edge pins in the left board and usually triple interlaced straps with a metal pin clasp[[33]](#footnote-33) at the end attached to the right board. These were the bindings of choice for the sophisticated, Greek-literate (and wealthy) humanist scholars of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and the Greek editions published by Aldus were natural candidates for such bindings. A copy of the Aldine Gregory of Nazianzus of 1536, once the property of the Domus of San Niccolo di Tolentino in Venice and now in Sinai,[[34]](#footnote-34) is in an exactly contemporary Venetian Greek-style binding by a binder who also worked extensively for the Nicolini da Sabbio brothers, and bound books for them in the genuine Greek style for export to the orthodox east (see fig. 17).[[35]](#footnote-35) He also bound a copy of the Aldine *Psalterion* of ca 1498, some thirty-five years after it was printed.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Other owners seemed content to accept imitations of the genuine Greek-style bindings, commissioning what are now known as hybrid Greek-style bindings, which were more or less Greek in external appearance but are usually sewn on sewing supports in the western European style. A copy of the Aldine Plato of 1513, which was bound in Padua for Jacopo Zabarella, Aristotelian professor at the university of Padua (with his arms on the left side) some forty years after it was printed,[[37]](#footnote-37) is clearly sewn on four single raised sewing supports, with curious imitations of the genuine Greek-style projecting endband in which the slips of the board edges are replaced by pieces of wood over which the leather is moulded (Pickwoad 2008, p. 186-7). Curiously Zabarella had a genuine Greek-style binding from the same workshop on a copy of Aristotle printed in Basle in 1550 (Pickwoad 2008, p. 185-8).[[38]](#footnote-38) A copy of the Aldine Lucian of 1503[[39]](#footnote-39) was, despite being printed in Latin, bound in a hybrid Greek-style binding in Bologna some fifteen or twenty years after it was printed, in a shop that appears to have specialized in retailing Aldine and other Venetian editions (Hobson 1989, p. 158 and fig. 125). Here the binder approximated the smooth spine of the genuine Greek binding by sewing the gatherings to very thin cords and then lining the spine between them with transverse linings[[40]](#footnote-40) of tanned skin. A similartechnique was used on a German hybrid Greek-style binding on a copy of the 1504 Demosthenes,[[41]](#footnote-41) sewn on six thin, tightly-twisted cords laced and pegged into beech-wood boards in a very German manner. The binder was clearly unable to conceive of sewing the endbands to the boards, and secured each of the endband-core slips to the boardswith a nail (Pickwoad 2004, pp.192-3 and fig. 9).

The fashion for Greek-style bindings also travelled to France, where at first the manuscripts written and bound for the library of François Premier and subsequently Henri II at Fontainebleau under the supervision of its first librarian, Angelos Vergikios, had genuine Greek structures (Laffitte and Le Bars 1999, pp. 27-8 and Hobson 1989, p. 179). After that they were almost all hybrid Greek-style bindings, sewn on recessed sewing supports lying in *grecques* to create the all-important smooth spines. Perhaps the ultimate hybrid Greek-style binding is to be found on the copy of the first volume of the Aldine Aristotle printed on parchment for Aldus’s patron, Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi.[[42]](#footnote-42) This Venetian binding uses a traditional Italian structure, sewn on four broad, split-strap, alum-tawed sewing supports. The use of an exotic silk textile to decorate the projecting endbands also seems to be something of an Italian practice. The cameo profile bust of Julius Caesar may reflect his role as one of the learned rulers identified by Aldus (Hobson 1989, p.105 and fig. 84).

It comes as something of a shock to move from such luxurious bindings to the simple parchment covers that have escaped the hands bibliophile collectors and can still be found on Aldine editions. The early sixteenth-century laced-case binding[[43]](#footnote-43) in reversed goat or sheepskin parchment which survives on another copy of the first volume of the Aristotle shows this contrast very strikingly (Fig. 18).[[44]](#footnote-44) Although entirely lacking in decoration and often thought to be ‘all the same’, these simple bindings with parchment covers have within their structures and covers a great deal of information about where and when they were made. The use of a reversed skin for the cover of this example and the complex lacing pattern of the ties on the fore-edge are, for instance, both very typical of Italian work of the early sixteenth century, as are the three split-strap alum-tawed sewing supports. A copy of the 1526 Hippocrates now in the Sinai also has a reversed parchment cover,[[45]](#footnote-45) which also shows the characteristic scraper marks on the flesh side of the skin left by the knives used by Italian parchment makers. It was sewn on the three split-strap alum-tawed sewing supports that are so typical of Italian bindings of this period and which could easily have been used to attach wooden or paper boards if an owner had so desired. The popularity of early Aldine editions in later decades is also evidenced by examples in limp parchment bindings, such as the *Epistolae diversorum philosophorum* of 1499*[[46]](#footnote-46)* in a simple binding in a reversed parchment cover attached by the endband slips only. This binding cannot have been made before the mid-sixteenth century, because it was only then that Italian binders abandoned the process of lacing the sewing supports through the cover, relying instead on the endband slips alone (Fig. 19).

Parchment laced-case bindings on Aldine editions were not only made in Italy, and a copy of the 1525 Galen now in New York is in a French binding. [[47]](#footnote-47) Instead of having the book rebound, an economical French owner in the mid-eighteenth century had the spine covered in brown tanned goatskin over a piece of millboard cut to the height and width of the spine and tooled in gold. This has preserved for us a bookblock sewn in a very French manner, once again on five double, alum-tawed, sewing supports with linked sewing and with comb spine linings,[[48]](#footnote-48) newly introduced from Italy and here taken from a fifteenth-century manuscript (Fig. 20). The combination of two folds of new white paper and comb linings is typical of high-quality French bindings of the sixteenth century. The calf-parchment laced-case cover and the green silk primary-sewn endbands with front beads are also typically French and certainly not Italian (as mentioned above, bindings covered in calfskin at this period appear to be virtually unknown in Italy at this period and no recorded Italian binding of this period has a primary-sewn endband with a front bead). The three-hole lacing of the ties on the fore-edges of the cover are, however, more Italian and suggests that this book may have been bound in Lyon, where bindings sewn in a French manner can be found with such Italianate external features as the tie-lacing.

Laced-case bindings in parchment offered a less expensive option for the purchase of readable books, but there is a great deal of evidence to indicate that certainly within the booktrade and, it seems, to its clients also, books could be sold as sewn bookblocks without covers. Evidence for this can be found in a copy of an Aldine edition of 1551[[49]](#footnote-49) which survives as a sewn bookblock, and appears never to have been covered, sewn on three single supports made from rolled alum-tawed skin, of a type that was in common use in Italy by the mid-sixteenth century. The bookblock has cut edges and endbands, a feature of other Italian sewn bookblocks that have been identified. An inscription on the left free endleaf records that it was bought by *Julio Pellastrino Lappolo arretino* from *Eugenio Pisaurensi bibliopola* for 26½ grossi in February 1554, in a state that was ready to be given boards covered either in leather or parchment or a limp cover, neither of which for some reason was ever added.

Simple covers could be attached to sewn bookblocks by secondary tackets,[[50]](#footnote-50)as in a copy of the 1513 Aristotle *de Animalium*.[[51]](#footnote-51) Here the cover of reversed goat parchment has been attached to the three split-strap alum-tawed sewing supports by secondary loop-type tackets of alum-tawed skin laced through pairs of holes along the joints and twisted together under the slips.[[52]](#footnote-52) The slips of the sewing supports themselves have been pared at their ends, ready for insertion into wooden boards, indicating that the book was sewn as if for an inboard binding. The extensions of the transverse spine linings have been pasted to the outer endleaves, another common Italian practice that kept them out of the way for future use. The origins of this type of binding in the stationery trade are shown by the use of corner tackets of thin cord to secure the turn-ins at the outer corners of the cover.[[53]](#footnote-53) We cannot perhaps ever know whether this type of tacketed cover was intended to be temporary or permanent, but it would have been a choice available to an owner at any time after the purchase of the bookblock. A very similar binding can be found on a copy of the 1513 Plato now in Sinai,[[54]](#footnote-54) with an almost identical structure, but with the small difference that the ends of the loop-type joint tackets are twisted on the outside of the cover rather than tied under the slips, as on the Aristotle. [[55]](#footnote-55) By contrast, a copy of the 1516 Bessarion has secondary tackets on the spine in the form of saltire crosses (saltire tackets),[[56]](#footnote-56) a type of secondary tacket very rarely found outside Italy.[[57]](#footnote-57) What exactly the differences may mean is still open to question, but they at the very least suggest different binders. One of the most remarkable copies of an Aldine edition to have survived in a tacketed binding is the 1503 Euripides in the Rylands Library.[[58]](#footnote-58) It preserves its folded, beaten and uncut gatherings in almost the condition in which they left a bookseller’s stockroom. Sewn on only two split-strap sewing supports of thin, tanned goatskin, probably offcuts from a covering skin, with no adhesive on the spine and no endbands, with a reversed parchment cover secured by loop-type secondary tackets, it could easily be taken apart for rebinding.

Sometimes the structures contain evidence of attempts to secure the otherwise vulnerable parts of uncovered sewn bookblocks from damage. This applied particularly to the endbands, which might have been torn away by careless handling. In a copy of the Kalliergis *Etymologikon mega*, [[59]](#footnote-59)in the production and distribution of which Aldus Manutius was involved, the endband-core slips were secured to the nearest sewing-support slips by small endband-slip tackets of alum-tawed skin, only the remains of which survive.[[60]](#footnote-60) They indicate that it was always the intention to leave the book ready for the addition of boards if that was required. In this case, it was given a parchment cover (now lost), attached by transverse twisted secondary tackets.[[61]](#footnote-61) This might have been done for a bookseller to protect a very expensive book. One tacketed cover on an Aldine edition of 1504, [[62]](#footnote-62) was made from cartonnage, with a fore-edge envelope flap extending from the right side (Fig. 21).[[63]](#footnote-63)

Cartonnage was also used for the cover of an Aldine edition of 1543,[[64]](#footnote-64) but in this case, most unusually for an Aldine, for a longstitch binding, a medieval structure used in Italy on printed books from the1480s well into the nineteenth century, in which the gatherings were sewn directly through the cover. This structure managed to combine durability, ease of opening and rapid, and therefore cheap, production – an economy reinforced in this example by the lack of endleaves and the rapidly and rather crudely executed knife-cut edges (Fig. 22).

The conversion of sewn bookblocks with or without parchment covers, into bindings with boards and leather covers would explain the gilding of the head and tail edges of the 1502 Sophocles that stops short of the endbands (Fig. 2). In normal circumstances one might expect edges to be gilded from end to end, but if a bookblock was sold with endbands, such as a 1546 Aldine edition now in the Rylands Library[[65]](#footnote-65) in a plain laced-case parchment cover with primary-sewn endbands without front beads,[[66]](#footnote-66) this would not have been possible. After decorating the edges, the binder could add a secondary sewing in coloured silk with a front bead which would also cover the end of the edge decoration. The phenomenon of undecorated strips of head and tail edge under endbands is quite common in Italian bindings of this period. The extensions of the transverse linings in this binding are also pasted to the outer free endleaves, to keep them safe until they might be pasted to the inside of the boards of a more elaborate binding. Such a binding as first sold therefore preserves various options to be followed or not as might be required.

Aldine editions can also be found in parchment-covered laced-case bindings made in other parts of Europe. A Flemish example on an edition of 1541[[67]](#footnote-67) reveals itself as northern European by the use of calf parchment for the cover and as probably Flemish by the use of sewing supports of tanned calf. The absence of endbands is also typical of a Germanic/Flemish origin. A French example on an edition of 1521[[68]](#footnote-68) is covered in sheepskin parchment, indicating lower cost, but is further distinguished from the Flemish binding by being sewn on five thin, double, alum-tawed sewing supports with linked sewing, with endbands, the expensive structure seen on the octavos bound for Grolier. The disparity between the expensive structure and the cheaper covering material could be explained by the sale of books as sewn bookblocks, and, in this case, the choice of a cheap cover.

Laced-case bindings with covers of cartonnage appear to have been first made in around 1520, and become increasingly common thereafter. They are, however, in common with the longstitch and tacketed examples discussed above, not easy to find on Aldine editions, either because they were simply too cheap for the products of the Aldine press, or were more likely to be rebound. An unusual example survives on a copy of the 1534 Isocrates[[69]](#footnote-69) in which each of the sewing-support slips was laced through four holes punched in the cover (Fig. 23). In common with other early Italian examples of the type, the cover is of relatively thick cartonnage without turn-ins. A somewhat later binding can be found on a copy of the 1528 Sannazaro (Clemons and Fletcher, 2015, pp. 202-3).[[70]](#footnote-70) The cover of this octavo bookblock is made from a thinner cartonnage than the Isocrates and has turn-ins at head, tail and fore-edge, suggesting that it was not made before the mid-century. Those on the fore-edges extend over half way across the sides of the cover and appear to preserve the deckle edges of the sheet of cartonnage, while the turn-ins at head and tail are cut with a knife. This suggests that the cover was cut from across the centre of a full sheet, and that covers from either side of this central piece would have preserved deckled edges on either their head or tail turn-ins, a phenomenon often observed on such covers.

Another apparently unique example of a binding with a case-type cartonnage cover, which would appear to date from the first decade of the sixteenth century, can be found on a copy of the 1502 Statius.[[71]](#footnote-71) The thick cartonnage case has slots cut across the spine that fit over the two split-strap alum-tawed sewing supports, the slips from which were adhered to the outside of the cartonnage case, and were secured in place by a secondary cover of manuscript parchment waste (Fig. 24). If contemporary with the edition, and there appears to be no reason to think that it is not, then it is by some margin the earliest Italian laced-case cartonnage binding (albeit of a unique design) so far recorded, and here found on an Aldine edition. Unlike later examples, the structure is substantial enough to allow boards and leather to replace the cover.

I should like to finish this rapid and far from complete account of the wide variety of bindings that can be found on Aldine editions with the remarkable binding on a copy of the 1497 Hours of the Virgin Mary now preserved at Blickling Hall (Fig. 25).[[72]](#footnote-72) Sewn unsupported with laminated paper boards and an overall textile spine lining in the Greek or Islamic style, western-type endbands with primary and secondary sewing, punch-gilt decoration (*alla fiorentina*), gilt and gauffered edges, ties at head and tail as well as on the fore-edge and panels (one sadly missing) of tanned sheepskin embossed with an arabesque design inlaid into a cover of red tanned goatskin on a book printed in Latin for the Roman Catholic church, it seems to epitomize the international and spiritual connections of the city of Aldus Manuzius.

1. Definitions of the technical terms used in this paper can be found in the Ligatus Language of Bindings on-line thesaurus, where each term has its own URL, e.g.: http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/2536 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1626 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Valerius Maximus, *Exempla Quatuor et Viginti nuper inventa ante caput de omnibus*, Venice: In aedibus Aldi, et Andreae Soceri, 1514 (author’s collection) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ### Sophocles, *Tragaediae septem cum commentariis*, Venice: In Aldi Romani Academia, 1502 (National Trust, Blickling Hall)

   [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Galen, *Galeni librorvm pars prima,* Venice: in ædibvs Aldi, et Andreae Asvlani Soceri, 1525. The library of the monastery of Saint Catherine has at least 87 Aldine editions with another 30 in its Cairo metochion. These are not catalogued and have not been studied in recent times. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Florilegivm Diversorvm Epigrammatum in septem libros distinctum, diligenti castigatione emendatum. Cvi nonnvlla nvper inventa epigrammata in fine adiecta sunt, vnà cvm indice tam rervm quàm auctorum copiosissimo*, Venice: apud Aldi filios, 1550 (National Trust, Blickling Hall). See also Foot 2010, pp. 355-6 for a copy of 1541 Aldine octavo edition of *Il Cortegiano* bound by the Fugger Binder with the same empty shield. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Musaei opusculum de Herone et Leandro. Orphei argonautica. Ejusdem hymni. Oprheus de lapidibus*, Venice: In ædibus Aldi et Andreae Soceri, 1517 (National Trust, Blickling Hall) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1407 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Cardinal Bessarion*,* [*Qvae*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Qvae)[*Hoc*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Hoc) *In* [*Volvmine*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Volvmine) *Tractantvr.* [*Bessarionis*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Bessarionis)[*Cardinalis*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Cardinalis)[*Niceni,*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Niceni,) *&* [*Patriarchæ*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Patriarch%C3%A6)[*Consta[n]tinopolitani*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Consta%5Bn%5Dtinopolitani) *in* [*calumniatore[m]*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=ca%7C%7Clumniatore%5Bm%5D)[*Platonis*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=Platonis)[*libri*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=libri)[*quatuor,*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=quatuor,)[*opus*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=opus)[*uarium,*](http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=2/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=1016&TRM=uarium,) Venice: In Aedibvs Aldi, Et Andreae Soceri (Herzog August Bibliothek, 108 Quod. 2°) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Nicolas Maillard was a proctor of Rouen University and correspondent of Erasmus (Jame K. Farge (1980) pp. 296-301) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*, Venice: Aldo Romano & Andrea Asvlani suo Socero, 1528 (Herzog August Bibliothek, 9 Politica 2°) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Aristotle, *In hoc volumine continentur Porphyrii introductio siue uniuersalia. Liber unus. Aristotelis*, Venice: dexteritate Aldi Manucii Romani, 1495 (Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid. (National Trust, Blickling Hall) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Herodotus, *Heroditi libri novem qvibvs Mvsarvm indita svnt nomina*, Venice: in domo Aldi, 1502 (The National Trust, Blickling Hall). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Herodian, *Herodiani historiarum lib. VIII. græce pariter, et latine,* Venice: In ædibus Aldi et A. Asulani, 1524 (The National Trust, Blickling Hall) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Simplicius, *Simplicii* *commentaria in tres libros Aristotelis de anima*, Venice: in ædibus Aldi, et Andreae Asvlani Soceri, 1527 (Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Alexandri Aphrodisiei in topica Aristotelis, commentaria*, Venice: In Ædibvs Aldi, & Andreae Asvlani Soceri, 1513 and *Thesavrvs cornucopiæ. & Horti Adonidis*, Venice: in domo Aldi Romani, 1496 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. In the Basilica Concattedrale of S. Pietro di Castello in Venice [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Thesavrvs Cornucopiae*, Venice: in domo Aldi Romano, 1496 (The Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, Cairo Metochion). My thanks to Nicolas Barker for identifying this edition from the scanty photographic evidence available to me. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis Aegyptorum, Chaldæorum, Assyriorum etc.,* Venice: in ædibus Aldi, 1497 (University of Kentucky, PA 4220.A4. D40) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1406 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Theocritus, *Eclogæ triginta*, Venice: characteribus ac studio Aldi Manucii Romani, 1495 (Harvard University, Houghton Library, Inc 5549) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1477 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/3647 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Scriptores rei rusticae*, Venice: in ædibus Aldi, et Andreae Soceri, 1514 (Burghley House, E. a. 21) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Niccolò Perotto, *In hoc volvmine habentvr haec* *cornvcopiae, siue linguæ latinæ commentarij*, Venice: In ædibvs Aldi, et Andreae Soceri, 1513 (The National Trust, Chirk Castle). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/3679 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Hesychios of Alexandria, *Hesychii Dictionarivm*, Venice: in Ædibus Aldi & Andreæ Soceri , 1514 (Diocesan Library of Derry and Raphoe, D.II.e.4) [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The single hand-tool used on the cover is very badly worn, but would appear to be Oldham stamp 1064 (Oldham 1952, plate LX), recorded with roll SV.a(6) in Oxford in 1519. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Plato, *Omnia* *Platonis opera*, Venice: in Aedib. Aldi, et Andreae Soceri*,* 1513, from the library of the King Edward School in Birmingham and seen at Bernard Quaritch Ltd in July 2000. See also Pickwoad (2008), pp.198-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/3748 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1524 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/4436 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orationes novem elegantissimae*, Venice: in Aedibvs Haeredvm Aldi, & Andreae Asvlani Soceri, 1536 (Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai) [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. At least 8 copies of an edition of the works of St Basil printed by Stefano de Sabio in 1535 (St Basil, *Opera qvædam beati Basilii Cæsariensis episcopi*, Venice: per Stephanum de Sabio svmptv expensis vero D. Damiano Sancta Maria, 1535) and bound in this workshop have been identified in the library of St Catherine’s monastery, Sinai. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. *Psalterion*, Venice: en oikeia Aldou tou manoutiou, ca 1498 (The National Trust, Blickling Hall, ex Biblioteca Colbertina) [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Plato, *Omnia* *Platonis opera*, Venice: in Aedib. Aldi, et Andreae Soceri*,* 1513

    (Gennadios Library, Athens, GC2992 q B) [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Aristotle, *Aristotelis ... opera ... omnia. Per Des. Eras. Roterodamum*, Basel: Per Io. Beb. Et Mich. Ising, 1550 (Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai) [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Lucian*, Que hoc volvmine continentvr Luciani opera,* Venice: apud. Aldum, 1503

    (The National Trust, Blickling Hall) [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1680 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Demosthenes*, Demosthenis orationes duæ & sexaginta*, Venice: in aedib. Aldi, 1504 (Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, PA 3949 A2 1504 Aldine) [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. *Liber unus. Aristotelis*, Venice: de dexteritate Aldi Manucii Romani, 1495 (El Escorial, RBME, 54.IV.3) [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/4103 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Aristotle, *In hoc volumine continentur: Porhyrii introductio siue uniuersalia.* *liber unus. Aristotelis*, Venice: dexteritate Aldi Manucii Romani, 1495 (Municipal Library of Zagora, Greece) [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Hippocrates, *Opera omnia Hippocratis*, Venice: Aldus, 1526 (Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai) [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Epistolae diversorum philosophorum*, Venice: apud Aldum, 1499 (Worth Library, Dublin, N. 8. 16) [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Galen, *Galeni librorvm pars prima,* Venice: in ædibvs Aldi, et Andreae Asvlani Soceri, 1525 (New York Public Library, \*KB Galenus 1525) [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1255 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *In omnes de arte rhetorica M. Tvlli Ciceronis libros*, Venice: Apvd Aldi filios, 1551 (Monastery of Sargiano, near Arezzo) [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1565 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Aristotle, *Aristotelis De natura animalium. lib. ix*, Venice: In AEdibus Aldi, & Andreæ Asulani Soceri, 1513 (Rylands Library, Aldine 21) [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1566 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. ww.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1261 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Plato, *Omnia* *Platonis opera*, Venice: in Aedib. Aldi, et Andreae Soceri*, 1513* (Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai) [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1567 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1568 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Cardinal Bessarion, *in calumniatore[m] Platonis libri quatuor, opus uarium,* Venice: In Aedibvs Aldi, Et Andreae Soceri, 1516 (seen in Blackwell’s Antiquarian Bookshop, January 2015). The binding has been extensively repaired, but retains the original pattern of tacketing. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Avlide*, Venice: Apud Aldum, 1503 (Rylands Library, Aldine 69(1)). I am grateful to Randall McLeod for bringing this copy to my attention. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Etymologikon mega*, Venice: analomasi ... Nikolaou Vlastou tou kritos : kai dexiotiti Zachariou kalliergou tou kritos, 1499 (Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai) [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/3635 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1570. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1241 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. *[Theophrasti de historia plantarum. lib. ix]*, extracted from: Aristotle, *Aristotelis De natura animalium lib. ix* Venice: In domo Aldi, 1504 (Biblioteca Marciana, Rari v.178 56465). I am grateful to Claudia Benvestito for bringing this cover to my attention. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Pietro Sanudo, *Soli Deo honor et Gloria.* *Recens Lvtheranarvm assertionvm oppvgnatio*, Venice: apud Aldi filios, 1543 (Columbia University, Burke Library, Van Ess 189) [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. *Pretiosa margarita novella de thesavro*, Venice: Apvd Aldi Filios, 1546 (Rylands Library, Aldine 352 (1)) [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/3639 [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Paulo Giovio and Andrea Gambini, *Commentarii delle cose de Tvrchi, di Pavlo Giovio, et Andrea Gambini, con gli fatti, et la vita di Scanderbeg*, Venice: in casa de’figlivoli di Aldo, 1541 (Leiden University Library, 698 F 22: 4) [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Appollonius of Rhodes, *Apollonij rhodij Argonautica, antiquis una´, optimis cum commentarijs,* Venice:in aedibvs Aldi, et Andreae Soceri, 1521 (Leiden University Library, 1368 F 4) [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *Isocrates nvper accvrate recognitvs, et avctvs,* Venice: In aedibus haeredum Aldi Manutii, & Andreae Asulani, 1534 (Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai) [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Jacopo Sannazzaro, *Acti synceri Sannazarii de partu virginis, etc.*, Venice: in aedibus Aldi, et Andreae Asulani Soceri, 1528 (Collection of H. George Fletcher) [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Statius, *Sylvarum libri quinque*, Venice: in Academia Aldi Ro., 1502 (seen at Sokol Books, May 2012. I am grateful to Christopher Sokol for allowing me to examine this book) [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. *Horae beatiss. uirginis secundum consuetudinem romanæ curiæ,* Venice: [Aldus Manutius], 1497 (National Trust, Blickling Hall), right board [↑](#footnote-ref-72)