



# THE ART OF THE WOODCUT IN EARLY PRINTED BOOKS

I. The Title Page: Borders & Devices

1477 - 1549



BY APPOINTMENT TO  
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
PURVEYORS OF RARE BOOKS  
& MANUSCRIPTS  
MAGGS BROS. LTD., LONDON

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Maggs Bros. Ltd. are pleased to present the first instalment of a series of short lists on the subject of woodcut illustration in the early printed book. These lists are intended as a broad survey of the use and evolution of the form across Europe from the fifteenth century onwards. So ubiquitous in early printing as to be frequently overlooked, woodcuts were employed in multitudinous and versatile ways by printers; from their own devices to decorative borders, geometric diagrams to illustrative vignettes, simple, decorative ornaments to sumptuous illustrations.

For this first instalment (which will be in two parts, arranged chronologically), we begin at the beginning, with the title page. The earliest extant use of a title on a separate page, preceding the text, was in 1463; thirteen years later Ratdolt, in Venice, printed the first decorated title border in woodcut (see [Item 1](#); Cole, 305). After Ratdolt, we see the variety of styles that developed across Europe in the decades before 1550. 'The first thirty years of the sixteenth century saw the greatest efflorescence in the history of the woodcut, both in single sheet designs and in book illustrations' (Griffith, 18). That is evident here. We move from the crude and copied cuts of Florence, and particularly Venice's thriving popular print market ([Items 5, 9, 13, 20](#)), to the elaborate designs of Graf ([Item 6](#)), Holbein ([11](#)) and Woensam ([15](#)) in Germany and Oronce Finé ([12](#)) in France. A book's title page became not only an eye-catching advertisement for its contents, but for its printer, too; we see the use of woodcut in the creation of printer's devices that ranged from the quasi-emblematic and instantly recognisable ([2](#)) to whimsical wordplay ([11](#)).

This delve into early relief printing reveals much about the early modern printing trade. The mixture of Italian, French and German titles here allows us to see the development of very distinct styles in different parts of the Continent. The reuse of woodblocks by printers and their exchange and transfer between printing houses gives an insight into the collaborative and truly international flavour of their trade, as well as the economic pressures of the market. It speaks to the rapid expansion of the print market in Europe in the sixteenth century and the need to produce 'vernacular' works that appealed to a popular audience. Above all, it is testament to the perennial power of image: whether crude or refined, repeated or unique, woodcuts became an indispensable accompaniment to the printed word.

*For a full description of each item, click on its title to be taken to the relevant page on our website. Click on item numbers in red to jump to the appropriate page in this list.*



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## ONE OF THE FIRST WOODCUT BORDERS EVER PRINTED

**I. PERIEGETES** (Dionysius) *Cosmographia sive de situ orbis habitabilis*. [transl. Antonius Beccaria]. Venice, Erhard Ratdolt, Bernhard Maler and Peter Löslein, 1477.

*First page with one-piece, white on black woodcut border (with lower portion of outer border supplied in facsimile), coat-of-arms painted at foot and initial supplied in gold, ornamental 5-line initials, white on black.*

4to. [41] ff (lacking final blank leaf). Eighteenth-century Italian vellum over pasteboard.

£5,000

This ornamental border was the innovation of Erhard Ratdolt (1442-1528), who was responsible for the earliest example of an ornamental title page in the year preceding. In this eye-catching design - so-called 'sgraffito' (Redgrave, 6), white tendrils snake around the edges of the page, set against a thick, black background that encloses the text. His initials employ the same bold conceit; 'both initials and borders...seem to have been executed by the same cutter, resulting in some of the most beautiful borders ever included in a printed book' (Laube, 54). Examples of Ratdolt's borders printed in red foreshadow the printer's later innovative and groundbreaking use of colour in woodblock printing (Landau, 180).

Eloquentissimi uiri domini Antonij  
Becharie ueroiensis prooemium in  
Dyonisij traductionem de situ orbis  
habitabilis ad clarissimum physicum  
magistrū Hieronymū de leonardis.



Ionisij alexandrini phi-  
losophi cū nup̄ ī libellū  
quendā cōcidissem : quē  
ipse hexametro uersu de  
ea parte orbis quē habita-  
bilis dicit̄: adolescēs ad-  
modū conscripserat. Mirū fuit mi Hiero-  
nyme q̄ mihi p̄ ceteris placuerit illi⁹ sūmi  
& excellentissimi uiri ingeniū. Cōsidera-  
bam enim ī hoc homine: nō ea quē ceteri  
solent singularia quedā & prestantissima  
munera iudicare/ qualia sunt: quē aut ad  
ualitudinem corporis p̄tinent: aut ad pul-  
chritudinē: aut quē ad eius dignitatis sta-  
tum & excellentiam sunt tradita: cum ea  
mihi uiderēt̄ eiusmodi esse: ut cū partim  
a natura proficiscant̄/ partim etiam a for-  
tuna: neq; magis ab humana opera pueni-  
rent /q̄ diuina quadā benignitate & celesti

a



PRINTER'S DEVICE AS EMBLEM – OR VICEVERSA

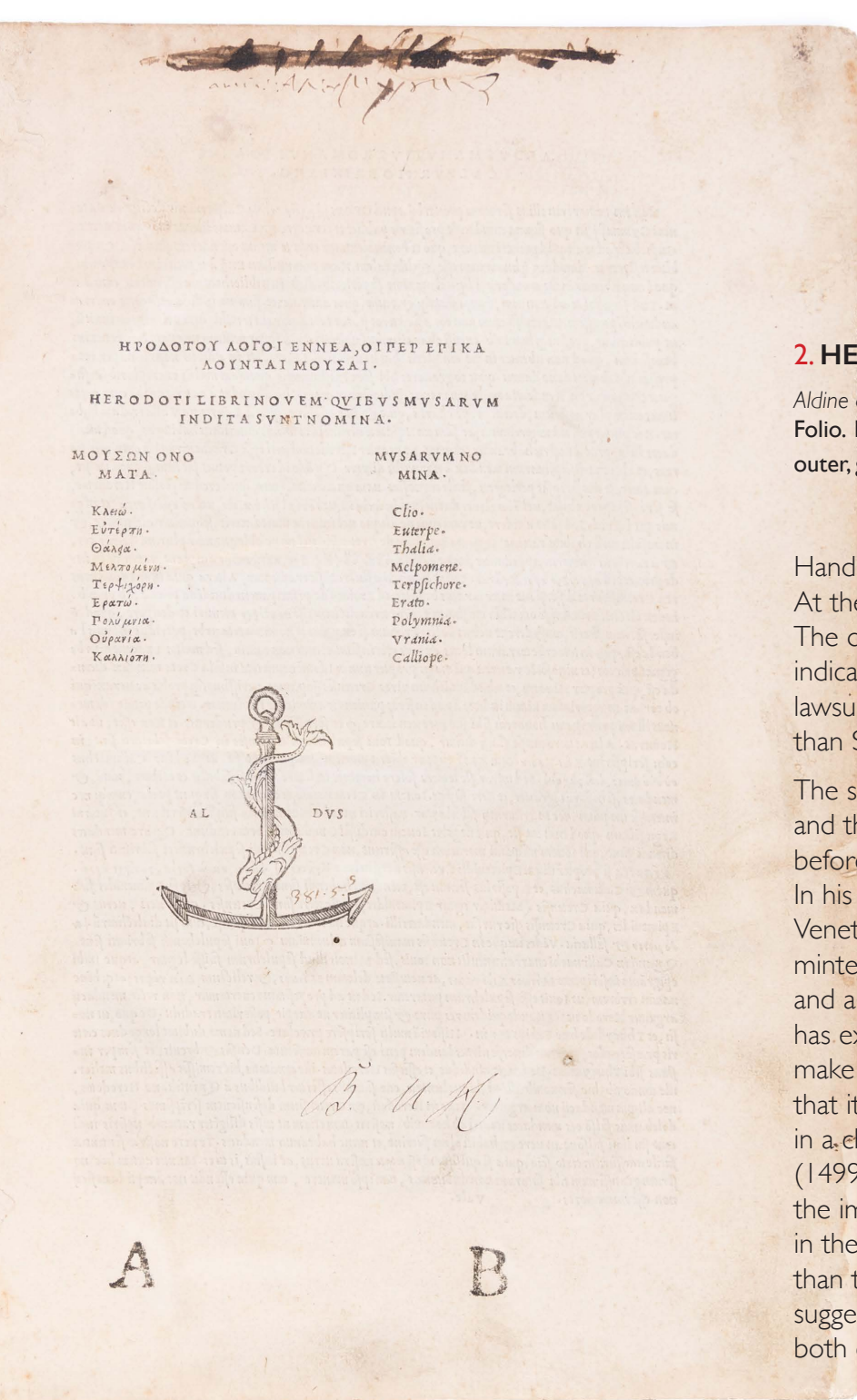
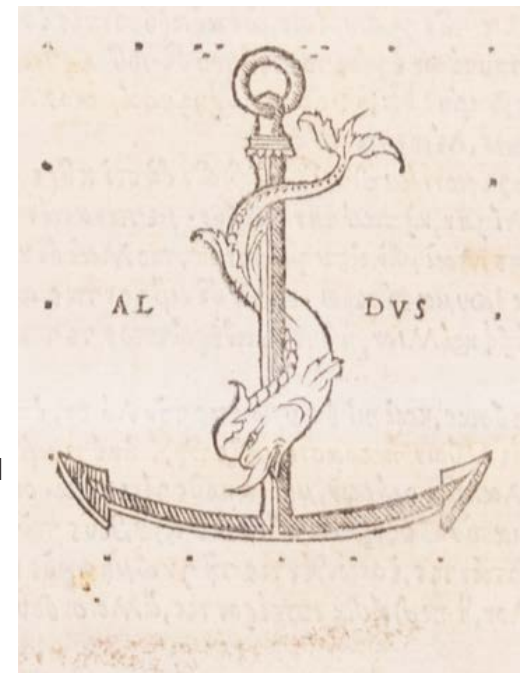
2. HERODOTUS Herodoti libri novem. Venice, in domo Aldi, September 1502.

Aldine device on title page (Fletcher's no.2a) and verso of final leaf (no.2). Initial spaces, all with guide letters. Greek type (Gk. 3). Folio. 140ff (unnumbered). Eighteenth-century Danish binding (in English style), mottled calf over pasteboard, with outer, gilt-tooled border and blind-tooled, polished calf panel.

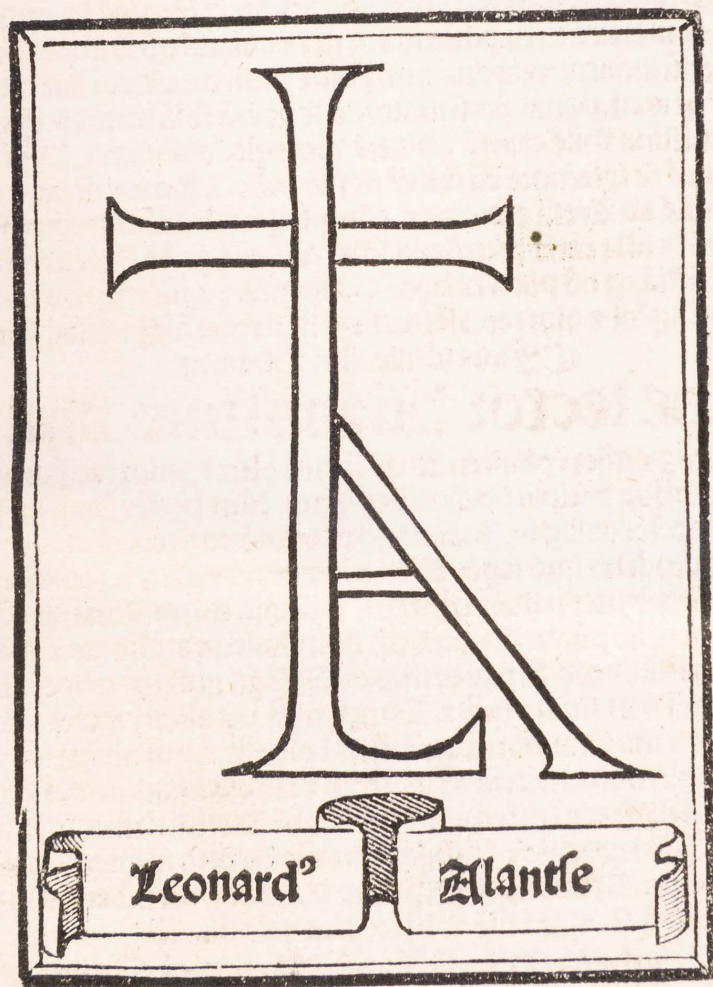
£30,000

Handsome editio princeps, featuring two versions of arguably the most famous of all printer's devices. At the time of printing, it had only been in use as the device of the house of Aldus for three months. The device on the title page is a later incarnation of that printed on the verso of the colophon, and indicates that the front signature was printed after the rest of the text was completed; delayed by a lawsuit, Fletcher suggests, over the summer of 1502 and printed in late autumn or early winter, rather than September, as stated in the register (Fletcher, p.46).

The symbol of the dolphin entwined around an anchor and the accompanying motto, 'festina lente', had a long life before it became the symbol of the Aldine printing house. In his *Adagiorum*, Erasmus recounts the gift made by young Venetian scholar Pietro Bembo to Aldus of a Roman coin, minted under Emperor Titus Vespasianus, with the dolphin and anchor device on the verso, and explained 'this symbol has exactly the same meaning as Caesar Augustus' motto, make haste slowly' (*Adagia* 1001). It was as a hieroglyph that it first appeared in a work printed at the Aldine press, in a chart of alchemical art in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499). It also played a crucial role in the development of the immensely popular genre of emblem writing. It appeared in the first emblem book, *Emblematum Liber* (1531); rather than the combination of energetic efficiency and diligence suggested by Erasmus, its author Andrea Alciato explained both dolphin and anchor as symbols of stability and security.







## PRINTING, BOOKSELLING AND THE WIDER WORLD

3. **SÜNZEL** (Fridericus) Collecta et exercitata Friderici Sunczel Mosellani. (Venice, Petrus Liechtenstein for Leonhard Alantsee of Vienna, 28 May 1506).

*Alantsee's fine large device printer's device on final recto, large white-on-black ornamental initials, printed manicules in the margins.*

4to. [152]ff (including the blank b4). Mid-16th century German or Viennese? binding of blind tooled calf over bevelled wooden boards.

**£5,750**

This device is one of the earliest iterations of that of Leonhard Alantsee (d.1518), the first bookseller in Vienna, together with his brother Lukas (d.1522). There are comparatively few examples of any version of the Alantsee device, due to the brothers' truly international approach to the business of printing and publishing. Frequently, reference to the Alantsee's role in book production is simply a line in the colophon, attributing expense or oversight to 'Alantse. Bibliopole viennensis' and the printing to someone else, somewhere else. They had a network of printers in centres all over Europe, including Adam Petri, Matthias Schürer, Thomas Anshelm, Johann Stuchs, the Giunta, as well as Hieronymus Vietor, one of the earliest Polish printers. The booksellers themselves, and not just their books, travelled too; in 1497 Leonard Alantsee brought some of the Aldine press' Greek editions from Venice to Vienna for sale. 'Alantsee told Manutius that in Vienna his books were met with enthusiastic reaction that included praise in prose and verse' (Nuovo, 118).





## A WOODCUT DESIGNER 'AT THE FULL HEIGHT OF HIS POWER'

**4. STAMLER (Johannes)** *Dialogus de diversarum gentium sectis et mundi religionibus*. Augsburg, Erhard Ogelin & Georg Nadler, 1508.

Fine full-page title woodcut (210 x 185mm) by Hans Burgkmair (repeated on verso), incorporating a xylographic titles showing the 'Sancta Mater Ecclesia' enthroned with a complex allegory depicted below her (see below), both woodcuts boldly and skilfully highlighted in red; initials, underlining and rubrication throughout in red.

Folio.[2], XXXII, [2]ff. 20th century binding using older vellum.

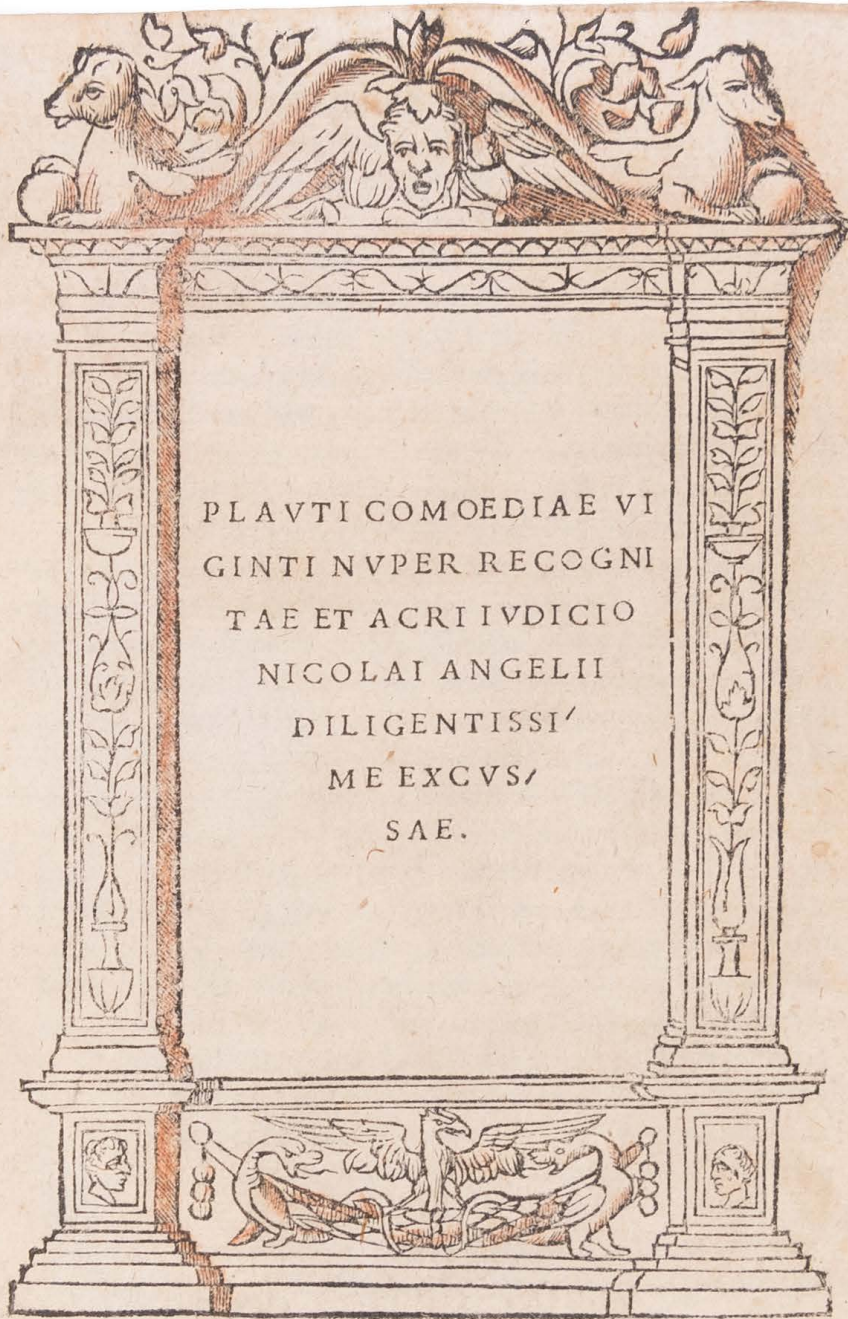
£5,500

First edition of Stamler's dramatic dialogue comparing the religions of the Tartars, Turks, Saracens and Jews.

Burgkmair's magnificent woodcut is an ambitious attempt to reproduce the ideas of the author graphically. It shows a seated female figure representing the Church with the globe as a footstool; she sits before a tent, surrounded by the banners of the Papacy and the Empire. The Pope and Emperor kneel before her and on a lower step sit four queens representing the four false religions, each bearing a banner with a broken staff. Below them are the figures of the disputants who take part in the dialogue: Dr. Oliverius, theologian, Balbus, historian, Rudolphus, a layman, Arnestes, an apostate, Samuel, a Jew, and Triphon, natural philosopher. In the lower left are the arms of Stamler and his initials, in the lower right Burgkmair's initials.

Hans Burgkmair (1473-1531) was the foremost woodcut designer of the early 16th century in Augsburg and became the chief designer for much of Emperor Maximilian's print projects. Rupe notes, "with the year 1508, which shows him at the full height of his power in separate woodcuts, Burgkmair's real period as an illustrator of books begins ... the frontispiece of Stamler's *Dialogus* shows an unusual delicacy of feeling in the rhythmical articulation and distribution of the masses and the way in which the difficult allegorical subject is controlled and visualized. (Rupe, p. 177).





## RECYCLING WOODBLOCKS IN CINQUECENTO ITALY

**5. PLAUTUS (Titus Maccius)** Plauti comoediae viginti. Florence, ex officina Philippi de Giunta, August, 1514.

*Title within partially coloured architectural woodcut border (Petras No.2), woodcut initials throughout, printer's device on verso of final leaf. Roman and Italic type.*

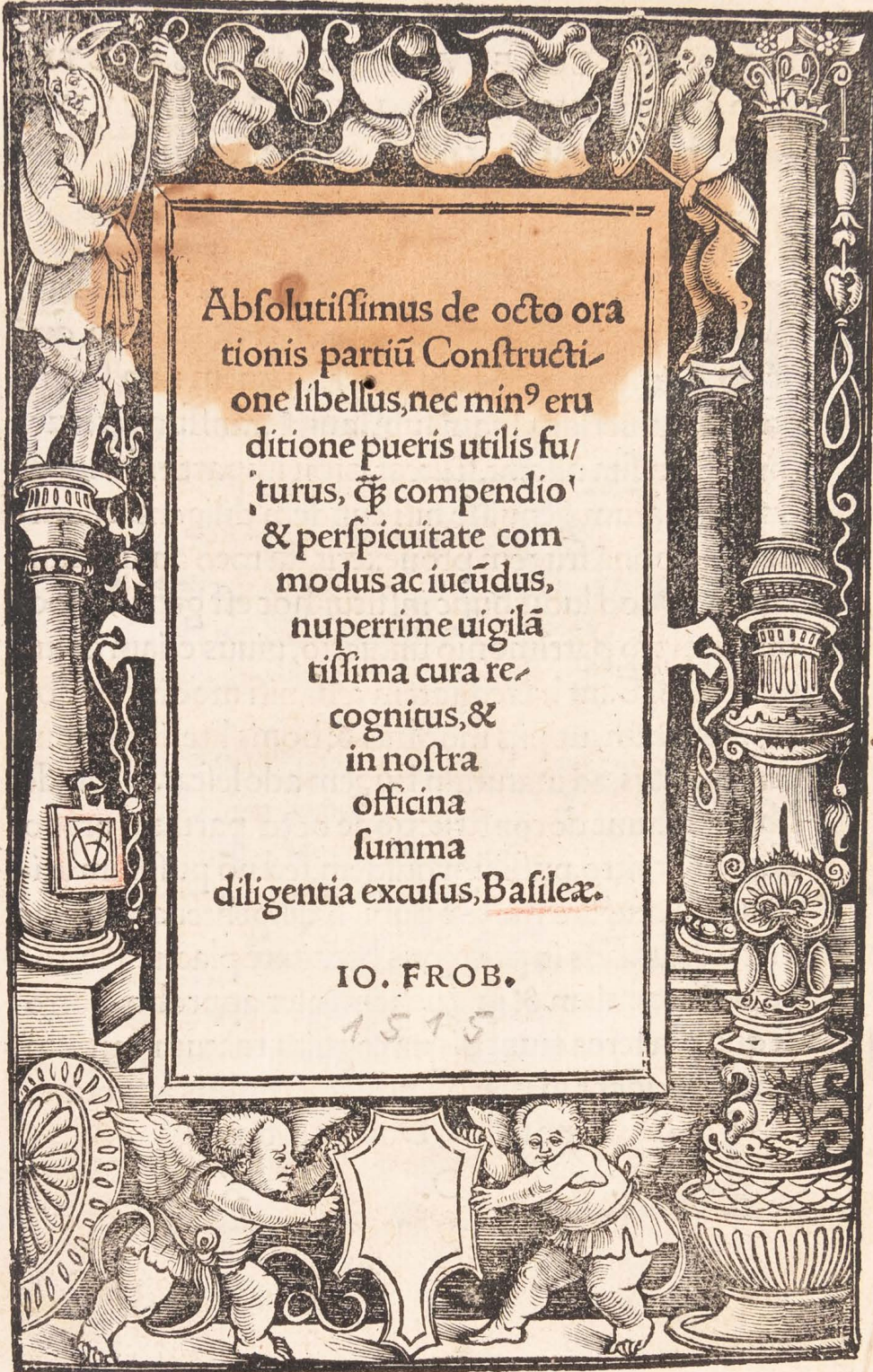
8vo. [8], 368ff. Vellum over pasteboard.

£1,500

The woodblock used for this border was used in seven other works from the Giunta press between 1514 and 1555 (Petras, p.127; border no. 2). Standard practice amongst printers, reusing blocks meant that texts could be printed quickly and easily without buying or having to wait for new blocks to be carved for every title. 'The fact that woodcuts copied woodcuts, were printed and disseminated in large numbers, and were possibly copied again and again, ... bore consequences for the dispersal of compositions and motifs'; it was an art form 'based predominantly on copying' (Schmidt, p.48). 'The same decorative woodcut borders were reused across very different genres of texts, from religious works to chivalric tales' (Salzburg, pp.21-23).

This design was also borrowed by other printers, who produced near-identical copies for their own editions up to more than ten years later. So far two variants have been found, used by two different printers - Kallierges in Rome, and Niccolo Zoppino in Venice; you can see it in [Item 9](#), below, Niccolo Zoppino's edition of Boccaccio's *Laberinto d'amore* (1522). Petras speculates that Kallierges had a copy of the block cut, after the original was acquired by the Giunta from Kallierges' failed press in Venice (Petras, p.127).





## THE DISTINCTIVE STYLE OF A RENOWNED WOODCUT ARTIST

**6. ERASMUS (Desiderius) [LILY (William)].** Absolutissimus de octo orationis partiū[m] constructione libellus, nec minus eruditione pueris utilis futurus...nuperrime uigilantissima cura recognitus. Basel: J. Froben (mense Augusto, 1515).

*Title-border by Urs Graf, woodcut device of Froben at end.*

4to. 22 leaves (of 24), blue sugar-paper wrappers, heavily annotated.

£2,500

This title border is in the distinctive style of prolific woodcut artist and engraver Urs Graf (1485-c.1527), with his monogram inscribed on a slate hanging from the left-hand column. Graf worked with Basel printer Johann Froben as early as 1510 (Sebastiani, 51), although was already established in his own right as a prolific and highly skilled woodcut artist (Hollstein II, pp.68-72; De Simone, p.146). 'The parallel lines he uses to model his figures are thinner than the outline contours, giving his forms a complexity that emphasizes physical dimensions' (De Simone, 146).

Just as the border in the previous item was reused and imitated by other printers, so Graf's was. It is based on a design by Albrecht Dürer for Willibald Pirckheimer's translation of Plutarch two years previously (Nuremberg, Peypus, 1513). In turn, the block for this border was reused by Froben and copied by other printers; a good example is the next item, **no.7**, Schurer's collected edition of fables printed in the same year.





FABVLARVM QVAE  
hoc libro continentur in  
terpretes atq; autho  
res, Sunt hi

Guilielmus Goudanus  
Hadrianus Barlandus  
Erasmus Roterodamus,  
Aulus Gellius  
Angelus Politianus  
Petrus Crinitus  
Ioannes Antonius Campanus  
Plinius Secundus Nouocomēsis

Aesopi Vita ex Max. Pla  
nude excerpta.

IN LIBERA ARGENTINA.

### SEEING DOUBLE: IMITATING URS GRAF

7. [AESOP] Fabularum quae hoc libro continentur interpretes atq[ue] authores sunt hi... In libera Argentina. [Strasbourg, Matthias Schürer, December 1515].


*Title within fine one-piece white-on-black woodcut border after Urs Graf.*

Sm 4to. [36]ff (last blank). 19th century marbled boards.

£3,000

This fine title border imitates that of Urs Graf, used by Froben in Basel only four months prior to this (see previous item, [no.6](#)). The composition of Schürer's border here is in reverse, and there are additional hidden details here; the half-concealed bird, clutching the column on the right, and the face peering out just above the base of the column on the left. The executor is unknown, though Schürer was known to collaborate with Hans Herman. Our copy corresponds to the VD online copy, which only has an imprint 'In Libera Argentina' on the title-page; another issue is known to also read 'apud Matthia Schurerium', and hold the initials 'M.S.' in the shield at the foot.





Martyrologium  
Viola Sancto  
rum.

VERNACULAR IMAGERY

8. [MARTYROLOGY]. Martyrologium viola sanctorum.  
(Strassburg, p[er] honestu[m] Matthia[m] Hupfuff, 1516).

*Fine, one-piece woodcut border to title, woodcut tail-piece at end of preliminaries, a couple of woodcut initials.*

4to. [6]ff. XCIXff. [1]f. (blank)., Antique-style panelled calf by B.H. Blackwell Ltd, Oxford. **£1,200**

Cavorting putti, a dragon, a fool, sylvari - bearing a shield with Hupfuff's monogram (Schmidt, no.2) - all against a densely crowded background of foliage and columns make for a busy scene. The artist is unknown, though the style is in keeping with that prominent in northern Europe in this period, not least the dense background, shading and elaborate, crowded compartments. This border appears on at least five separate works from Hupfuff's press in 1515 and 1516 and employs playful imagery and popular motifs familiar from contemporary illustration; for instance, the fool playing the bagpipes, themselves a symbol of folly, uselessness and poor judgement, can be found in Brant's *Narrenschiff*, an edition of which Hupfuff himself published in 1512. The wild man and wild woman, similarly, populate several early printers' devices and have been depicted in paintings and woodcuts by Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein, Martin Schongauer, among others.

Matthias Hupfuff printed over 140 editions of mainly popular, vernacular works in Strassburg between 1498 and his death in 1520 (Walker, 343). This dedication to the popular is reflected in the voluminous illustration in works from his press.



## WOODBLOCKS COPIED BY A VENETIAN SINGER-PUBLISHER

9. **BOCCACCIO** (Giovanni).      *Laberinto d'amore* di M. Giovanni Boccaccio. Venice: Nicolo Zopino e Vincentio suo compagno, 9 March, 1522.

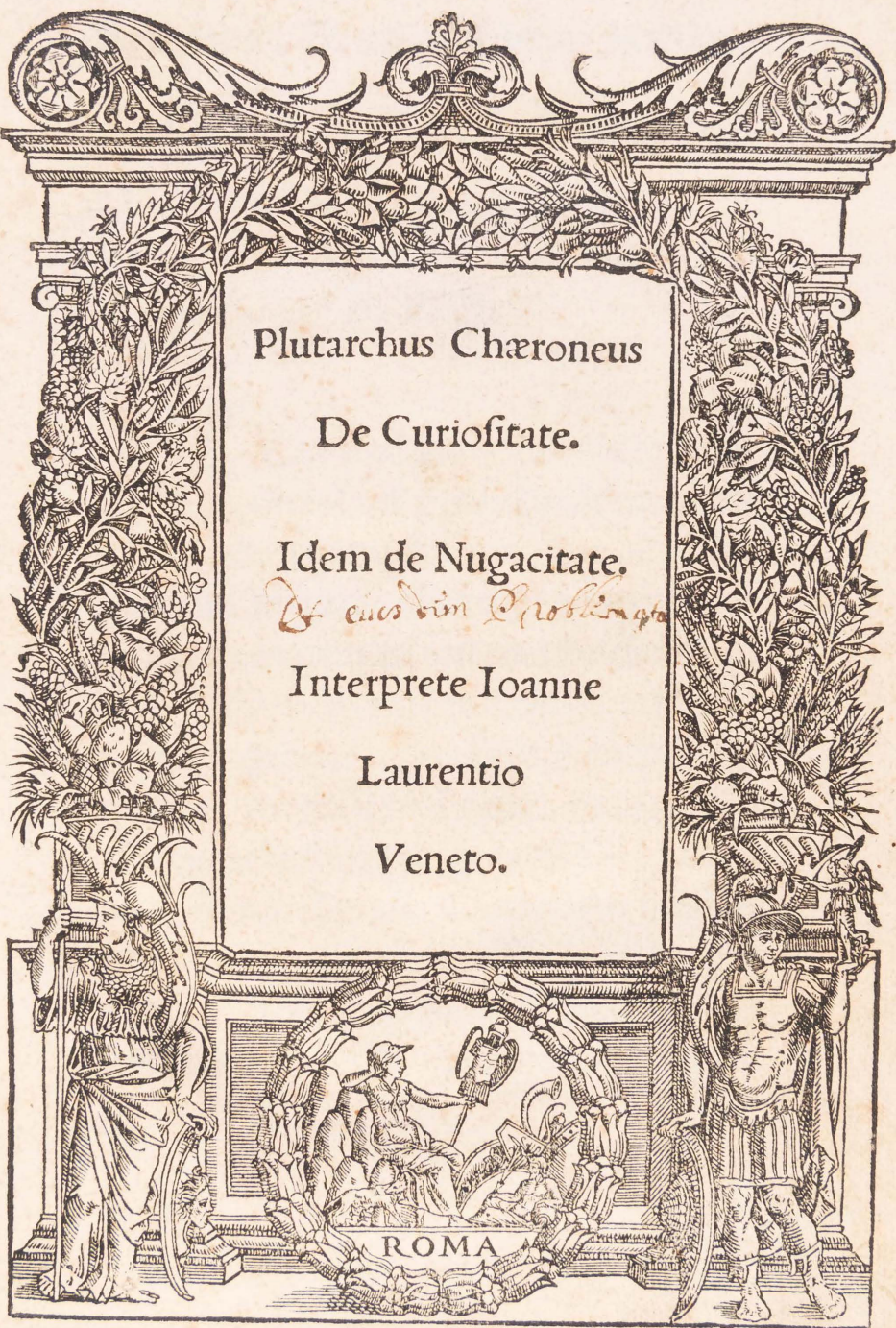
*Title within architectural woodcut border, woodcut initials.*  
8vo. 72ff. Half roan over paper covered boards.

£500

The woodcut title border here is a very close, and crude copy of that used by the Giunta press, depicted in [Item 5](#) (it would appear in later works, including Ariosto's *Cassaria*, 1525). Niccolo d'Aristotele ('detto Zoppino'; active 1503-44) 'used the prefaces of his works to trumpet his plan to publish numerous vernacular translations in order to cater to the great numbers of readers who could not read latin or Greek' (Salzburg, p.35). His focus on the popular and universally appealing – as well as, perhaps, the role of illustration and the impact of attractive printing upon a popular audience - might likely have been shaped by his parallel career as a street singer and performer, *cantastoria*, as well as printer (Rospocher; Degl'Innocenti, p.21).







**MARS AND MINERVA ON A WELL-TRAVELLED TITLE BORDER**

**10. PLUTARCH** De curiositate. Idem de nugacitate. Interprete Laurentio Veneto. (Rome: in aedibus F. Minitii Calvi, April, 1524). [With three other works].

*Title within one-piece woodcut border.*

4 works in 1 volume. 4to. 18th-century vellum.

**£1,500**

Printer Francesco Minizio Calvo had near-identical quarto and folio incarnations of this architectural title border, which depicts Minerva and Mars standing beneath an abundant garland of fruit and foliage, with Roma represented in the wreath at the foot, accompanied by the personification of the Tiber, to the right, and the accoutrements of war.

This, the quarto version, preceded the folio design, described as 'the finest of Calvo's border designs' (see Mortimer I, 121, 194, (II) 386). The printer evidently had good results with it; he used it almost 20 times in Rome and later in Milan, and both it and the folio version enjoyed renewed leases of life after Calvo ceased to use them. These borders would soon after reappear on the titles of Hebrew books, often reused, not only in Italy, but in locations as far apart as Venice and Salonika, and, in a copy in Cracow. At some point after 1540, Calvo, or whomever had possession of his typographical equipment, sold or provided these frames to the partners who established a Hebrew press in Sabbioneta, in the Duchy of Mantua' (Heller, 270-271).





COM

PENDIVM GRAMMATICAE  
Graecae Iacobi Ceperini, iam tertium de  
integro ab ipso authore & castiga-  
tum & locupletatum.

HESIODI Georgicon, ab eodem  
Ceperino breui Scholio adornatum, ubi  
dictiones & sententiae quaedam obscu-  
riores, atq; obiter Graecorum car-  
minum ratio declarantur.

EPIGRAMMATA quaedam le-  
pidiora uice coronidis adiecta.

TIGVRI apud Christophorum Fro-  
schouer. Anno M. D. XXVI.

WITH METALCUTS AND WOODCUTS BY HOLBEIN

**11. CEPORINUS** (Jacob) Compendium Grammaticae Graecae Iacobi Ceperini [...]. Zurich, Christoph Froschauer, 1526. (Bound with:) **[FIOCCHI** (Andrea)]. L. Fenestellae de magistratibus, sacerdotiisque Romanorum libellus [...] [Cologne, Hero Fuchs, 1527]. (And:) **CHRYSOLORAS** (Emmanuel). Emanuelis Chrysolorae, Byzantini, Oratoris Eximij, integrae Grammatices [...]. Basel, Johann Bebel, March, 1528.

First volume with metalcut border and Froschauer's device designed by Hans Holbein the Younger, second volume with title border by Anton Woensam, white on black initials in all three parts. Roman, italic and greek type.

3 works in one volume. 8vo. 198, [2]pp.; 88ff.; 76ff, 4(additional, blank)ff. Contemporary thin parchment over pasteboard, title inked on spine, remains of leather ties.

£1,750

Sammelband of Greek and Latin primers, with striking wood and metalcut borders and printers device. The title page of the first text, a compendium of Greek grammar is a metalcut after a design by Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543) first seen in Zwingli's *Der Hirt* (1524) by the same printer, and reused by him (see Zwingli, *De Vera et falsa religione*, March 1525). Swords, armour and the accoutrements of war run down the left-hand side, with musical instruments opposite on the right; below two satyr-like figures at the head, hiding amidst foliage, and at the foot a scene of Christ healing lepers.



וזהו בעץ שתול על פלגי מים



Omnis plantatio quam non plantauit pater meus coelestis, eradicabitur.

Omnis arbor que non fert fructum bonum, excinditur.

Κόπος σωματικῶν καὶ  
κατασκευαστικῶν ἐπιτοίχων  
καὶ τοῦ ἐκείνου τοῦ  
καὶ τοῦ ἐκείνου τοῦ  
καὶ τοῦ ἐκείνου τοῦ  
καὶ τοῦ ἐκείνου τοῦ

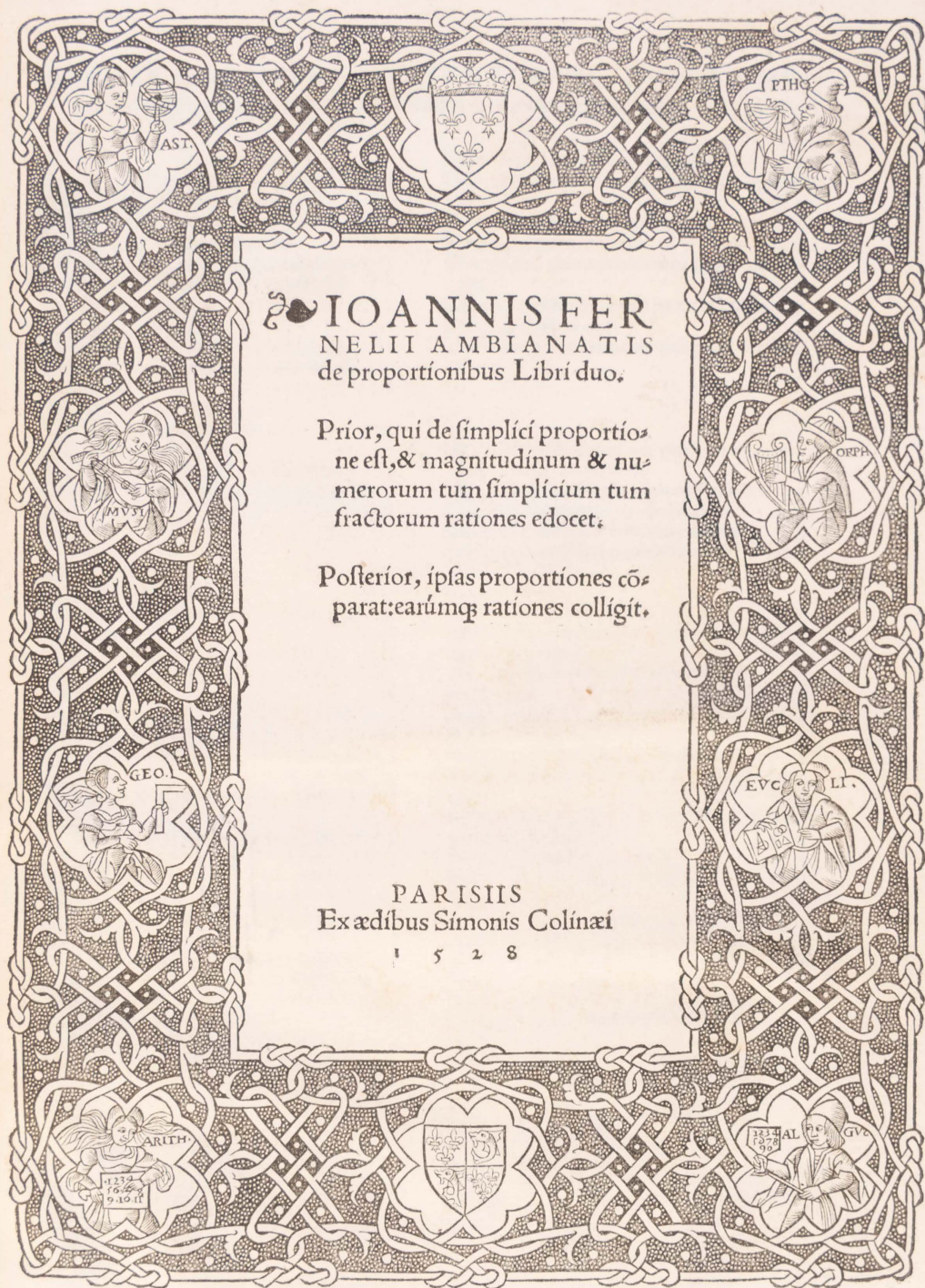


Holbein's artistic technique shaped the distinctive style of northern European book illustration in the opening decades of the sixteenth century, due not only to the quality of the design but the skill of his woodcutter, or *formschneider*, Hans Lützelberger (1495-1526). After Holbein drew his designs directly onto the blocks, Lützelberger would cut them according to his design (Harthan, p.91); it was him who cut the block for Froschauer's almost emblematic printer's device, present here on the verso of the final leaf of the first work, 'a playful allusion to [Froschauer's] name, 'frog in the watery meadow' (Winger, p.387).

Metal was also used for the printing blocks as an alternative to wood in this period - due to its durability - though 'from an inspection of a print it can be almost impossible to tell from which sort of block it was printed' (Griffiths, 29). The crisp, strong impression of the title page

of the second work demonstrates the detail and precision that could be brought to woodcut illustration. Unsigned, this border is attributed to Anton Woensam (active in Cologne, d.1541; see [Item 15](#)), with whom printer Hero Fuchs worked and is typical of his style (Merlo, no.447). The upper arch contains the half-figure of Lucretia, with dagger piercing her side; below is a landscape scene, with, Pyramus lying dead and Thisbe about to plunge a dagger into her chest. The border is in four parts, not unusual in itself, although the continuation of the design in the two column blocks either side suggests that this set of woodblocks were always intended to be used together. We have found no other work with this title border.





## A MATHEMATICIAN'S METICULOUS BORDER DESIGN

**12. FERNEL (Jean)** De proportionibus libri duo. Paris: Simon de Colines, 1528.

Title within a fine strap-work border, woodcut marginal diagrams, large initials on criblé ground.

Folio. ff. [4], 24. Antique-style calf-backed marbled boards.

**£4,750**

The striking title border used here by Colines has been attributed to mathematician and cartographer – and colleague of Fernel's – Oronce Finé (1494-1555). The interlacing vines, hedges, are typical of the woodcuts Finé designed (Oosterhoff; see also Mortimer, *French Books I*, nos 216, 229), and connect the arms of France, at the top, with eight cartouches; on the left, the quadrivium of astronomy, music, geometry and arithmetic and on the right significant practitioners of each – Ptolemy, Orpheus, Euclid and al Kwarizmi, 9th-century mathematician and inventor of the algorithm (Aujac, 34). It was used again by Colines - see, for example, his edition of Finé's own *Quadrans Astrolabicus* (1534).



Transito Vita Miracoli  
7 morte del glo-  
rioso Sancto Hier-  
onymo.



THE INFLUENCE OF *FOGLI VOLANTI*

13. [ANON]. Transito Vita Miracoli & morte del glorioso Sancto Hieronymo. [Venice, Bernardino de Viano de Lexona, 12 September, 1528].

Woodcut depicting St Jerome on title page (56 x 63mm), within simple typographical border; two decorative woodcut initials.

8vo. ff. CII, [1] (of 2, lacking final blank). Marbled paper over pasteboards.

£2,000

A very rare edition (only one copy found outside Italy, at the British Library) of the life and works of St Jerome (c.347-419), with an unattributed woodcut depiction on the title page of the saint kneeling in the desert in front of Christ on the cross, surrounded by common associated symbols – the lion, cardinal's hat and in his hand a stone, with which he was said to beat himself in penance. The woodcut is typically Venetian in style, more akin to those dating from the fifteenth century than the early sixteenth (Thompson; De Simone, p.35); although more sophisticated, the influence of the cheap, illustrated devotional chapbook, or *fogli volanti*, popular and widely sold in Venice in the sixteenth century can be seen here.



DIALOGO DEL TRISSINO  
 INTITOLATO IL CASTELLANO,  
 NEL QUALE SI TRATTA DE  
 LA LINGUA ITALIANA.



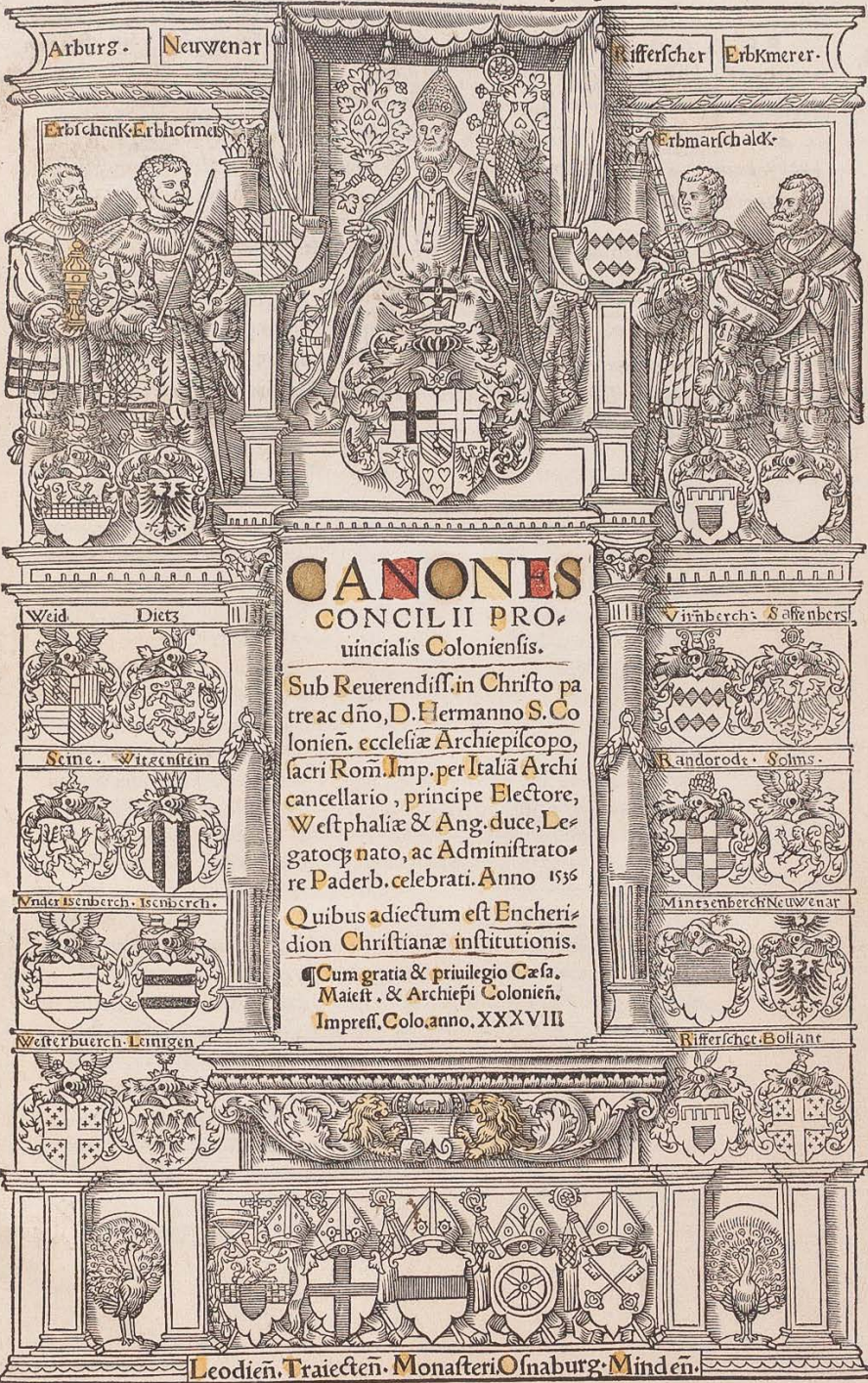
WITH THE DEVICE OF THE AUTHOR, BORROWED BY THE  
 PRINTER

**14. TRISSINO** (Giangiorgio) [Opera varia]. Epistola del Trissino de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte ne la lingua italiana. Vicenza, Tolomeo Janiculo, February, 1529. (With:) Dialogo del Trissino. Vicenza, Tolomeo Janiculo, 1529. (And:) La poetica. Vicenza, Tolomeo Janiculo, April, 1529. (Loosely inserted:) Epistola del Trissino. Vicenza, Tolomeo Janiculo, February, 1529. [First quire only].

3 works in one volume. Folio & 4to. [17]ff (of 18, lacking final blank); [20]ff ; LXVIII, [2]ff (final two leaves with errata list). 17th-century calf, red morocco label. **£4,500**

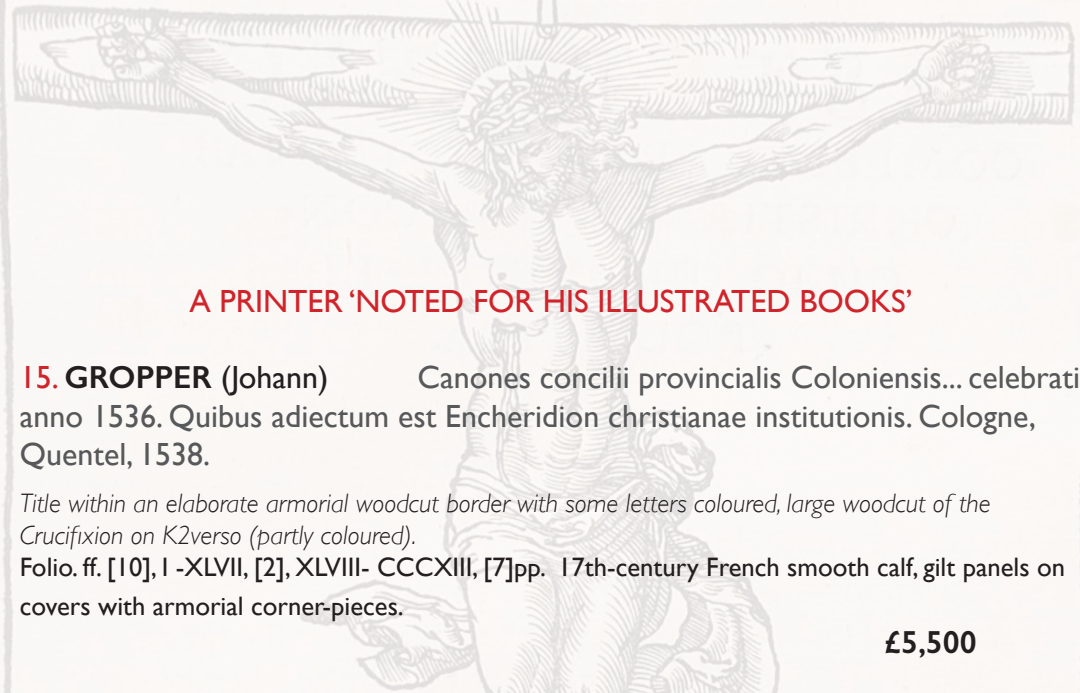
The ostentatious device that appears here on the title page and colophons of these works was the only departure made by Tolomeo Janicolo (fl. 1524-48) from the model set by Ludovico Arrighi, Trissino's previous printer: 'It represents Jason's Golden Fleece guarded by the dragon, and is surrounded by a Greek quotation from Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 'what is sought can be caught' (Morison & Johnson, 33). However, much like the typography, not even the device is Janicolo's own creation; it is Trissino's, borrowed from the iconography designed by the author for use by himself and his children. 'The golden fleece device was bestowed by Charles V as a symbol to Trissino to distinguish his branch of the family' (Castellani, 77); in the final years of his life Trissino signed off 'Trissino dal vello d'oro'.





SI QVIS SITIT, VENIAT AD ME ET BIBAT.

IESVS NAZARENVS  
REX IVDÆORVM



A PRINTER 'NOTED FOR HIS ILLUSTRATED BOOKS'

**15. GROPPER (Johann)** Canones concilii provincialis Coloniensis... celebrati anno 1536. Quibus adiectum est Encheridion christianae institutionis. Cologne, Quentel, 1538.

Title within an elaborate armorial woodcut border with some letters coloured, large woodcut of the Crucifixion on K2verso (partly coloured). Folio. ff. [10], 1 -XLVII, [2], XLVIII- CCCXIII, [7]pp. 17th-century French smooth calf, gilt panels on covers with armorial corner-pieces.

£5,500

The ornate, strikingly detailed woodcut on the title page and the stark depiction of the Crucifixion on the verso of K2 are unsigned, but have been attributed to prolific woodcutter and artist Anton Woensam von Worms (c.1493-1541), with whom Peter Quentel (d.1546) had a professional association; he also designed the printer's device (Davies, no.110) not present here. 'Peter was noted for his illustrated books', several of which used woodcuts by Woensam, 'who was the leader of the flourishing Cologne school of illustrators' (Winger, 208) and to whom forty five paintings and over 500 woodcuts have been attributed.

The extraordinary woodcut border on the title page depicts Hermann V, the Archbishop of Cologne, seated at the centre, flanked by Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I, and secular Electors Otto Heinrich of Bavaria, Johann I, Elector of Saxony; and Joachim I Nestor, Elector of Brandenburg. Quentel had a reputation for elaborately illustrated works, and an oeuvre which included a lavishly illustrated volume on embroidery and lace designs (*Eyn new kunstlich boich*, 1527; with title page also by Woensam). His father, Heinrich Quentel (d.1501) produced the first Bible in Low German with a stunning cycle of 113 woodcuts (Cologne, c.1478), 'with the exception of Dürer's Apocalypse, the most influential woodcut programme from Germany' (Price, 723).

SI QVIS PETIER. PATREM MEVM IN NO. MEO. DABIT VO



Hechery Spranger

ARTEMIDORIDAL  
DIANI PHILOSOPHI EXCEL  
lentissimi, De somniorum interpretatione,  
Libri Quinq; iam primum à Iano Corna  
rio medico physico Francoforden  
si, latina lingua con  
scripti.



BASILEAE ANNO M. D.  
XXXIX

WITH FROBEN'S ICONIC DEVICE

**16. ARTEMIDORUS** (Daldianus) De somniorum interpretatione. Basel, Froben, 1539 [mense septembri]. [with:] **GRATAROLI** (Guglielmo). De memoria reparanda. Basel, apud Nicolaum Episcopium iuniorem, 1554 [mense martio].

*Froben's caduceus device on title page and verso of final page in first volume; printer's device on verso of final page of second work, woodcut initials throughout, white on black in second work.*

8vo. 479, [1]pp.; 258, [6]pp. . Later vellum with yapp edges, titles in neat manuscript on spine.

£3,000

The title page of Artemidorus' work features Johann Froben's famous caduceus device, compared to a 'modern corporate logo' for its effectiveness as a marketing device (Sebastiani, 1). As recognisable and renowned as the Aldine dolphin and anchor, it was 'held in high regard as an achievement of humanist education' (Wolkenhauer, p.7). In Andrea Alciato's seminal work on emblematics, the *Emblematum Liber* (Augsburg, 1531), the Caduceus is listed and depicted under the title 'Virtuti Fortuna Comes', good fortune attendant on virtue. The caduceus, or herald's staff is that of the messenger god Mercury, who also represented 'eloquence, intellectual pursuits and financial success. The entwined serpents are a symbol of peace' (*Glasgow Emblem Project*). For Alciato himself the caduceus appeared to hold special significance; it was his personal device and is carved on his tombstone.



# COMMENTARII

DI M. GALEAZZO CAPELLA

DELLE COSE FATTE PER LA RESTI-  
tutione di Francesco Sforza Secon-  
do Duca di Milano.

TRADOTTE DI LATINO IN

LINGVA TOSCANA PER M. FRANCESCO

Philipopoli Fiorentino. Con priuile-  
gio Del Senato Veneto  
per Anni. X.



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VENETIIS.  
APVD IOANNEM GIOLITVM,  
DE FERRARIIS.  
M. D. XXXIX.

## DEVICE WITH AN EMBLEM FAVOURED BY ELIZABETH I

**17. CAPELLA** (Galeazzo Flavio) Commentarii . . . delle cose fatte per la restitutione di Francesco Sforza Secondo Duca di Milano. Tradotte di Latino in lingua Toscana per M. Francesco Philipopoli Fiorentino. Venice, apud Ioannem Giolitum de Ferrariis, 1539.

Woodcut Giolito device on title-page and verso of otherwise blank last leaf, fine historiated initials.

4to. [4]ff. LXXXVI [2] ff. 19th century half-vellum over boards.

£950

One of the most famous of all early devices, the Giolito impresa features a phoenix looking to the sun, with the motto 'semper eadem', 'ever the same', and 'vivo morte refecta mea', 'from my death I live eternal life'. The phoenix, representing immortality and renewal, had deep classical and biblical roots. It featured frequently in the burgeoning genre of emblem literature later in the century; in Theodore de Beza's *Icones* of 1580, it is depicted with a thinly veiled allusion to the persecution of Protestants and the enduring truth of their faith after martyrdom. Many printers in England, as well as the Netherlands, adopted a modified iteration of the phoenix as their device in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Elizabeth I of England adopted both the bird and the motto 'semper eadem' as her symbol.





**MASTER OF REINVENTION: ONE OF 35 DEVICES USED BY ESTIENNE**

**18. EUSEBIUS (Bishop of Caesarea)** [Greek title] *Ecclesiasticae historiae* [and other works]. Paris, ex officina Roberti Stephani, 1544.

*Estienne's basilisk device on title (Schreiber B1) and large olive-tree device on verso of last leaf (Schreiber 10). Numerous 9-line foliated and grotesque initials and headpieces. Folio. One volume bound in two. Folio. [4], 353 (i.e. 361, P5 blank); 181 [5] ff. 18th century English calf. £3,500*

Editio princeps, with two Estienne devices. The basilisk device on the title page (Schreiber B1) is the later of the two, adopted following Robert Estienne's appointment as the King's Printer in Greek and depicting a serpent coiled around an olive branch – his premises were at the 'sign of the olive' in Paris, and Schreiber draws a line between the olive tree, and the Greek for Estienne, 'stephanos', which means crown or wreath (Schreiber, *The Estiennes*, p.247-9); it is a tree traditionally associated with wisdom and learning.

That on the last leaf depicts the 'most universally familiar' of 35 incarnations of Robert Estienne's famous device 'which represents a barefoot, bearded figure at the foot of an olive tree, pointing up to it; several branches are falling off the tree, while several others have been grafted onto it; the motto appears printed on a swirling banner, partly wrapped around the lowest branch' (Schreiber, p.247; device no.10). The reference is from Romans xi. 20, 'noli altum sapere', be not high minded, or proud (Davies, no.239). Schreiber has suggested that the figure by the tree is that of St Paul (p.248-9), quoting a text which emphasises the importance of faith, and possibly hinting at Estienne's sympathies for the Protestant Reformation (Schreiber, *Hanes Collection...A Paper*). Mortimer, *French Books I*, 219.



Βασίλειος τῆ ἀγαθῆ κεφαλῆ τῆ ἀίχμητι.



ORATIONE DE LA PACE DI

• M •

CLAVDIO TOLOMEI.



Con Gratia, & Prohibitione del Sommo  
Pontefice, che nessuno possa stampare que  
sta opera, sotto la pena che in essa  
Prohibitione si contiene.



WOODCUTS AND NUMISMATICS

**19. TOLOMEI (Claudio)** Due orazioni in lingua toscana. Accusa contra Leon secretario, di secreti rilevati. Difesa. Parma: S. Viotto, 1 January 1547. (with:) Oratione de la pace. (Rome: A. Blado, March 1534).

2 works in one volume. 4to. ff. [24], errata corrected ink; ff. [44]. Contemporary vellum backed in the 18th century with marbled paper. **£2,500**

The woodcut impresa used on the title page of the second work, the *Oratione de la Pace* addressed to Clement VII, is after a Roman coin, fittingly depicting the altar of Concordia Augusta; a popular image in imperial Rome, the goddess appeared on numerous coins, beginning with the reign of Nero (Taylor, p.393). 'Coins lent themselves well to the newly developed technology of printing with woodcuts and engraved copper plates, and numismatic works are among the finest examples of sixteenth-century illustrated books...the imagery of ancient coinage permeated many aspects of Renaissance representation' (Stahl, p.230). It was, after all, a Roman coin featuring the dolphin and anchor motif that was said to have inspired the unmistakable device of Aldus Manutius (see [Item 2](#)).



WITH WOODCUT BORDER FROM A SELF-STYLED 'IMPRESSOR DUCALE'

20. GELLI (Giambattista). La Circe. Florence, (appresso Lorenzo Torrentino, 1 April, 1549).

*Fine one-piece architectural woodcut border, portrait of Gelli on verso of title.*

8vo. 266pp, [2]ff (lacking last of 2 final blanks). 18th-century vellum over paste-board.

£1,500

Rare first edition of one of Gelli's most influential works. 'The pages of Torrentino's best editions have a harmony and composition rarely achieved in Florentine printing of this century' (Biagiarelli, p.309), and this, Lorenzo Torrentino's (1499-1563) edition of *Circe*, is no exception, printed when the quality and quantity of his output was at its height. The title is enclosed in a handsome, one-piece architectural woodcut border, complete with cherubs and grotesques and used for a number of works from Torrentino's press (see Mortimer *Italian Books I*, 207, (II) 457). Prominently placed beneath the title are the Medici arms; Netherlands-born Torrentino (Laurens van den Bleeck) was invited to relocate to Florence from Bologna by Cosimo de' Medici in 1547.

On the verso of the title page is a portrait of the author, Gelli, first used by Torrentino the previous year in his editions of Gelli's *I Capricci* and *Sopra un luogo di Dante* (both 1548; see Mortimer, no.207).





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