A book of Prize and Praise

Born in Kortrijk in 1599, Joacob Vande Walle entered the Society of Jesus in 1617. He died in Antwerp in 1690 after leading a life devoted to faith and literature. A teacher of rhetoric and humanities, he was made prefect of studies. He influenced and put into practice the literary curriculum of the Catholic Latin Schools of Courtrai (where he sojourned from 1662 to 1689), Baule, Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, and Antwerp. He published many poems of praise in other poets’ books (our own Sarbiewski’s collection, first published in 1632 for instance) and signed his first poetry volume in 1656/1657. Written in heroic verse (dactylic hexameter), in imitation of Horace, or again in elegiac meter, his poems are versatile and virtuoso. He celebrates and calls for peace in a well-known and loved series of six pieces called “Olive Branch of Peace” and published in this very book.

While the volume is offered to Pope Alexander VII (1599-1667), all poems are lengthily dedicated to personalities of the Jesuit order, of the Catholic Church, and to fellow Christian poets. Reading the succession of poems thus gives the impression of browsing a list of names and functions for important priests, teachers, and writers of 17th century Flanders. Pious and sophisticated typographical flourons provide structure and ornamentation to this series of poems, each of them accompanying the praise of a patron. These specific qualities make the volume a perfectly appropriate prize, especially for a Latin School in Holland. This happens no later than the year of its publication, 1657 (in spite of our title-page bearing falsely the mention of 1656). The book will be reedited three times before 1669, all four publications done by Balthasar Moretus.

Our copy bears the bookplate of Alexander Bates, the grieving brother of William Bates (physician and surgeon), who inherited it in 1885. Formerly, as the inside cover attests, it was the prize book given to Donatus Akerboon, publicly bestowed in Amsterdam (1657) by the rector Adrianus Junius for good results and effort in grade 4. Hadrianus Junius was then the rector of the Latin School at the “Nieuwe Zijde” in Amsterdam (see C. L. Heessakkers, “The Amsterdam Professors and other Friends of Johannes Blasius”, in Las 9, 1982, p. 211). On the flyleaf, an anonymous and learned bibliophile compiled in French a short bibliography (essentially, references where to find mentions and praises for Wallius), in French.

Further reading:

In the vaults of the Special Collections of the University of Victoria, one can find some 13 titles (actually making up 11 books, one of them in two volumes) printed by the humanist printer Christophe Plantin (1520-1589) and his heirs (his widow, Joanna; Jan Moretus; his son-in-law 1543-1610, his other son-in-law Fransiscus Raphelengius 1539-1597, his daughter, and the sons of Joanna).

**Humanist Gifts**

Now considered as the emblem and perfection of humanist printing enterprises, the works published by Christophe Plantin express, in their diversity, in their quality, and in their quantity, the magnitude of tumults and achievements of the end of the 16th century. Particularly, the Map of Antwerp by Luigi Guicciardini (1521-1589), in the description of the Netherlands Antwerp: Plantin, 1587.

**The Seghers Collection**

What a better symbol could then be found for the libraries of the University of Victoria than the graft of Plantin’s works into the faraway and multicultural land of British Columbia. The first arrivals of these pages of Flemish history were brought by Charles Seghers (1589-1886), the second bishop of Victoria. He initiated the library now known as the Seghers Collection, which grew with the investment, donations, and donations into one of the richest collections of ancient books in western Canada. Charles Seghers was building a library for his vision: a Catholic seminar on the West Coast. He collected books coming from the collections he used as a seminarist in Louvain, at the American College. 48 titles in the Seghers Books are printed in Louvain, 17 in Antwerp, 36 in Mechelen (Malines), 24 in Brussels. Moreover, Charles Bishop dreamed of recreating a European Library in Victoria; he bought from auctions, booksellers, and friends as many books on traditional theology as possible imaginable. This collection was kept, continued, and augmented by his successors up until 1974, when the books were entrusted to the Special Collections as a permanent loan. More than a lifetime, Christophe Plantin, a man who has left behind a trove of “Plantiniana”: a tribute to tradition and memory. Except for the 1594 edition of Apuleius, all the works wearing the device and motto of Plantin are of Catholic content and show all proper permissions by the authorities of the Church. The Tridentine Cathechism, the commentaries to the Bible and to Thomas Aquinas, collections of poems by Jesuit priests... the collection presents a fine selection of Counter-Reformation writings.

Nevertheless, the edition of Apuleius and the various works and editions provided by Justus Lipsius attest to the scholarly activities of the Plantin’s presses: learned editions are published in Antwerp and in Leiden that seem impervious to religious conflict and set the foundations for modern philology.

**Labore et Constantia**

The printer’s device (a compass, wearing the motto Labore et Constantia: hard work and constance) seems to declare the sense of this tole, wonderment, precision and dedication to scholarship. Balance is to be found in between the open legs of the compass, and work is the only reliance. Last, but not least, the affirmation of constancy alludes to loyalty (as illustrated by the friendship between Justus Lipsius and the family), integrity, and faithfulness. Was it not as well the title of the first Neostoic treatise written by Justus Lipsius? An excellent motto for our libraries!


Plantiniani: Sons in Law

Johannes Moretus (1543 - 1610)

Known also as Johann Moerentorf, Joannes Moretus began working for Christopher Plantin in Antwerp in 1557 and married the second daughter of Plantin in 1570. Moretus and his children inherited the Antwerp publishing house in 1589 and continue expanding and modernizing the company. Many of the works we present today were printed by Johannes and by his sons Balthasar and Johannes. In 1576, Plantin and the Moretus family moved into a new printing house, the house and the company being called “De gulden Passer” (the Golden Compasses) by Plantin. At the time, the house was a classic example of Flemish Renaissance architecture; today, the house is the Plantin-Moretus Museum. After the death of Plantin in 1589, Moretus became the owner of the Antwerp printing company with his family, and stayed in close contact with the Leiden Raphelengius branch until 1641. Their correspondence mostly involved family matters, claims to Plantin’s publications in each branch, and commercial strategies of both printing houses. Settled in Leiden, Raphelengius was the printer for the university and published many seminal works from authors Donorium Litterarum. The Moretus clan was well-known for their love of maps, and they specialized in this field, a craft carried on by Balthasar Moretus, son of Johannes Moretus, after the latter’s death in 1610.

In the vaults of the Special Collections of the University of Victoria, one can find some 13 titles (actually making up 11 books, one of them in two volumes) printed by the humanist printer Christophe Plantin (1520-1589) and his heirs (his widow, Joanna/Jan Moretus his son-in-law 1543-1610, his other son-in-law Franciscus Raphelengius 1539-1597, his daughter, and the sons of Joannes).

**Humanist Grafts**

Now considered as the emblem and perfection of humanist printing enterprises, the works published by Christophe Plantin express, in their diversity, in their quality, and in their quantity, the magnitude of turmoils and achievements of the end of the 16th century in northern Europe. Twice in his lifetime, Christophe Plantin, a man who has consistently and unrestrainedly claimed to be an obedient Catholic, felt worried enough regarding Inquisition to flee into exile (from France to Brussels) or close down his shop. Indefatigably, he repeatedly raised property and possessions during the Spanish Fury (1574). The promoter and publisher of the Antwerp polyglot Bible, coordinated by Justus Lipsius, was building a library for his vision: a Catholic seminar on the West Coast. He collected books coming from the collections of ancient books in western Canada. Charles Seghers was the printer’s device (a compass, wearing open legs of the compass, and work memory. Except for the 1594 edition of Apuleius, all the books wearing the device and motto of Plantin are Catholic content and show all proper permissions by the authorities of the Church. The Tridentine Cathechism, the commentaries to the Bible and to Thomas Aquinas, collections of poems by Jesuit priests... the collection presents a fine selection of Counter-Reformation writings.

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Further reading in UVic Libraries:


And online http://library.uvic.ca/site/spcoll/physiologum/index.html.

**Plantinian: Sons in Law**

**Johannes Moretus (1543 - 1610)**

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Further reading:


Machielens, Jan. “(K)now (not) to Get Published” The Plantin Press in the Early 1590s” in Dutch Crossing, 34, 2 (July 2010), 99-114.
Franciscus Raphelengius (1539 - 1597)
Born Frans van Ravelingen in the town of Lunoy in northern France, Raphelengius started off working as a printer for Plantin, his father-in-law, and was one of the collaborators on the Antwerp Polyglot Bible, a task supervised by Benedictus Arias Montanus and published by Plantin in 1572. A strong believer in Calvinism, he continued Plantin's work in Leiden, the Netherlands, becoming the leader of the Leiden Officina Plantiniana after its relocation from Antwerp in 1583 and continuing this activity after Plantin's return to Antwerp in 1585. The official head of the Leiden Officina Plantiniana, which stayed active until 1613, he published around 900 works. Considered the University printer, he was naturally chosen in 1594 to publish the edition of Apuleius' works provided by Petrus Calvisius and Bonaventura Vulcarius, both members of the Leiden university. Raphelengius is well known for printing the first Arabic language dictionary, Specimen characterum Arabicorum, composed in 1595 and published in 1613 after his death. He is remembered as the faithful and skilled printer of the nascent university. Raphelengius is well known for his prowess. This privilege was granted in 1592, deemed valid for thirty years, and to be assigned to the printer of his choice:届毕业生. This same year, Balthasar Moretus was put on a new understanding of Stoic doctrines, and hence a Renaissance revival of ancient thought. An active citizen in the Republic of Letters, Lipsius maintained and wrote a vast correspondence.

Born in 1547 near Brussels, he studied with the Jesuits in Cologne, and then law and literature at the University of Louvain at the Collegium Tillingue, a humanist institution inspired by Erasmus. His classmates included Janus Douai (the future rector of the University of Leiden) and Martin-Antonio Delfio, among others. Lipsius was still early in his twenties at the time of the publication of Variae lectiones (a collection of philological comments and conjectures), in 1569, Antwerp.

Lipsius then traveled for his Academic tour throughout Italy, arriving in Rome and the Vatican Library. In 1570, he returned to Louvain to pursue his studies in Law, before fleeing the following year from the political and religious conflict in the region. After spending time in Liège, Dole, and Vienna, Lipsius applied to the Lutheran University of Jena, transforming his publically professed faith, from Catholicism to Lutheranism.

In 1574, Lipsius settled at Cologne, where he published the Tacitus (Antwerp, 1574), as well as Antique lections (Antwerp, 1575) From 1567-1577, he lectured at the Catholic university of Louvain, before converting and going to the newly founded Calvinist Leiden University from 1578-1591. There, he was a sought-after professor, and published many editions and treatises, including his celebrated De constantia (Antwerp, 1584).

Lipsius helped Christoph Plantin move to Leiden in 1583 by housing him and his family while they searched for a home. The humanist also played a role in getting Plantin hired as the university's printer. Pressured to choose a religious affiliation, Lipsius left the city, and after a brief sojourn, converted back to Catholicism and became a professor of history and Latin at the University of Louvain in 1592. He was replaced at Leiden University by Joseph Scaliger. Lipsius' "religious wanderings" were often called into question.

Justus Lipsius had a special relationship of mutual appreciation, cooperation, and good will with the Officina Plantiniana; his friendship and business relationship with the founder Christophe Plantin continued through the generations of this printer's heirs and their families both in Antwerp and Leiden. Plantin's eldest son-in-law Franciscus Raphelengius Sr. handled Lipsius' manuscripts in Leiden, which was convenient for Lipsius to make last minute changes or additions due to the proximity of the press. Plantin's second son-in-law, Johannes Moretus, printed his works in the 1580s, passing on this duties to his son Balthasar Moretus when needed. After Plantin's death in 1589, the king's privilege and protection against reprints ended, and cheaper, sloppier German editions of Lipsius' work began to surface. Not only did Lipsius understand this to be a threat to sales, but the errors and lesser quality of these copies threatened his fame and reputation as a humanist. After some serious preparation, Lipsius filed a petition for his own privilege not only to protect himself economically, but to defend his intellectual prowess. This privilege was granted in 1592, deemed valid for thirty years, and to be assigned to the printer of his choice—invariably, Moretus. This same year, Balthasar Moretus was Lipsius' live-in student for a period of a few months. Not only did Lipsius entrust his works solely to their presses, but he was often a welcome guest in the Plantin house; you can find in what's now the Plantin-Moretus Museum, the "Lipsius Room". Lipsius started out as a young author in his twenties under the protection of the Plantin Press, and then returned the favour as a famous scholar, using his privilege to help secure the interests of the Officina Plantiniana.

Further reading:
Balvain, Charles N. A Universal Biographical Dictionary: containing the lives of the most celebrated characters of every age and nation... to which is added, a dictionary of the principal divinities and heroes of Grecian and Roman mythology, and a biographical dictionary of eminent living characters. U.S.A.: S. Andrus, 1850.

Plantinian: Justus Lipsius, author and friend 1547-1606
This classical scholar, sometimes called the founder of Neostoicism, played an important part in the development of European thought in the 16th and 17th centuries. In his treatise De constantia, Lipsius establishes constancy as the most important virtue. Within this Stoic dialogue, Stoicism and Christianity are combined in a new philosophy intended to ease the effects of surviving the religious wars. Justus Lipsius produced a major critical edition of Seneca (De Constantia Libri Duo) as well as of Tacitus (Politiciam usque Civil) Doctrinar Libri Sex. In these two principal philosophical works, emphasis was put on a new understanding of Stoic doctrines, and hence a Renaissance revival of ancient thought. An active citizen in the Republic of Letters, Lipsius maintained and wrote a vast correspondence.
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Further reading:
Baldwin, Charles N. A Universal Biographical Dictionary: containing the lives of the most celebrated characters of every age and nation... to which is added, a dictionary of the principal divinities and heroes of Grecian and Roman mythology, and a biographical dictionary of eminent living characters. U.S.A.: S. Andrus, 1850.
Moreover, it begins with the distinction between the religious (and particularly the logic) with modern readings and concepts. To reconcile the Aristotelian system of philosophy (and debates and answers: the main object of the debates is all known knowledge presented as questions, objections, or proofs). Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1224-1274) is the leading theological writer of Plantin’s printing business. Written by the Spanish theologian Petro Serrano (?-1577), The Commentaries on the Book of Ezekiel was published together with The Comments on the Book of Leviticus in 1572. They were formally presented as separate editions, yet sold together. The two commentaries were recommended to Plantin by Anas Mantanus, editor of the Polyglot Bible; the printer agreed to publish the book in 1570. However, due to deficiencies in the original manuscript and the different (Latin) orthography, followed by proof-readers, the actual printing of the copies was considerably delayed and the author expressed his disappointment about this delay in several of his letters addressed to Plantin.

Dedicated to the Spanish king the book was part of the thousands of liturgical and theological works commissioned by Philip II in November 1570 (Philip also obtained for his library the entire 2,000 page Compendium of Theology, written by the Spanish theologian Petrus Serranus (?-1577), for its representational of its position towards science and theology. The copy in the Special Collections is part of the Seghers Collections and attests to long and constant use of the book. It is a well preserved reprint from 1572 with ornate initial letters at the beginning of each chapter. Bound in leather, the book has one-column pages with marginal references to the Bible and other authoritative texts and with line numbers on the side of the text. The frequent handwritten remarks and underlining in black ink in Chapter XVI indicate that one of its readers was interested in sacramental theology.

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Moreover, it begins with the distinction between the religious debates and answers: the main object of the debates is all known knowledge presented as questions, objections, authority on the Catholic Church. His Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1224 - 1274) is the leading theological printer a license from Rome, which ensured the later prosperity by Philip II in November 1570 (Philip also obtained for his thousands of liturgical and theological works commissioned Dedicated to the Spanish king the book was part of the address to Plantin.

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Further reading: The Plantin Press (1555-1589) vol. 5, p. nos. 2204 and 2205, 2080-2082


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Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1224 - 1274) is the leading theological authority on the Catholic Church. His Summa Theologiae or Compendium of Theology is a systematic compilation of all known knowledge presented as questions, objections, debates and answers. The main object of the debates is to reconcile the Aristotelian system of philosophy (and particularly the logic) with modern readings and concepts. Moreover, it begins with the distinction between the religious truth (revealed and sacred, accessible only through faith and grace) and profane truths (that science and logic, without conditions of religious beliefs, can explore). The Summa, for its achievement and clarity, became as early as the 14th century the basis of scholastic teaching and writing in Europe. In 1893, the Church officially adopted the doctrine of Thomism as representative of its position towards science and theology. Taught in Catholic universities, up until today, it was naturally part of Plantin’s regular repertoire: three editions were printed in Plantin’s printing shop within fifteen years. The displayed copy was printed in 1585 as a reprint of the 1575 edition. The dedicatory epistle and the foreword to the reader, written by Antonius Senensis, originally appeared in the 1569 edition; they were omitted from the 1575 edition and added again in 1585. This edition was printed in 1500 copies and sold at a price of six florins. The rather plain appearance of the book, excluding any decoration, its two columns pages and marginal references point to its intended use by theologians and students.

In the Seghers Collection, formally the Victoria Catholic Diocese Library, there are no less than 38 editions of the works of Thomas Aquinas. This one, being a Plantin, combines the tradition of the Catholic Church with the tradition of the Flemish missionaries sent from the American College in Louvain to British Columbia. A symbol for the Ulric Collections! Further reading: The Plantin Press (1555-1589) n° 2314 p. 2209.


This book sheds light on some of the delicious complexities of pre-modern authorship, shared and often fictitious. The primary texts it contains, namely Physiologus and Hymn on Palm Sunday, are ascribed to the fourth-century. Catholic theologian Saint Epiphanius, yet it is uncertain that he actually wrote them. The Physiologus, on the other hand, is a classical series of didactic animal descriptions that were originally written by an unknown author. Throughout the middle ages, a number of different writers, in addition to Epiphanius, were credited for its creation.

This book also brings attention to the complexities of religious conflict, and the world of sixteenth-century engravers. Its eye-catching images are the work of Pieter van der Borcht. Malines, the Dutch town where van der Borcht lived, was razed in 1572 by the Spanish Duke of Alva, who was intent on suppressing Reformist uprisings. Because of this, van der Borcht fled to Antwerp, where he and his family were welcomed into Plantin’s home. A significant number of Plantin’s illustrated books from 1564 onward, as well as a number of Plantin’s printer’s devices, boast the talents of van der Borcht’s hand. Many of the images found in Physiologus, made their way into popular emblem books, a genre of work which Plantin was particularly involved in. This genre, born with the work of Andrea Alciato published in 1532, combines enigma and interpretation, reading and conversing: a symbolic image, accompanied with a motto or a maxim, is explained by a poem and, sometimes, a prose paraphrase.

Plantin, as is suggested by their correspondence, was also acquaintances with Conalus Ponce de Leon, the editor, partial author, and commentator of this book. Ponce de Leon, was a close secretary to Pope Sixtus V, the same pope to whom the bible concordance included in this collection was dedicated. Further reading: Please visit the University of Victoria Library’s detailed and ongoing online study of Sancti Epiphanii ad Physiologum: http://library.uvic.ca/site/spcoll/physiologum/index.html.

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Martino Antonio Delrio, SJ. Syntagma tragiocdie Latine: in tres partes distinctum. [3 books in 2 volumes]. Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana, [his widow and Joannes Moretus], 1593. SC Seghers Collection PA6068 D34

Pius et Doctus

A Dutch politician and theologian of Spanish origin, Martino Delrio was born in Antwerp in 1551 and he died at Louvain in 1608. Having studied in Paris, Douai, Louvain (all Northern Catholic Universities of the time), he received the degree of Doctor of Law in 1574 at Salamanca. On his return to the Low Countries, he was appointed to various legal positions in the government of Brabant. The exhaustive treatise on civil law he published at that time attests to his renowned position in the government of Brabant. The son of Petrus Vulcanius, a friend of Justus Lipsius in the “Calvinist” University of Leiden (1593) when the latter returned to Louvain and to Catholicism.

During his time teaching in Liege, he assembled the material of his work, Disquisitiones magicae (Essays on Magic), the work for which he is chiefly known, not published until much later, in three volumes from 1599-1600 (Mainz, 1593). The Disquisitiones offered an authoritative summary of contemporary views about magic and witchcraft, and was meant in part to guide judicial tribunals. It achieved great success, was reprinted twenty times and is the second most popular book written on the occult (the “chain’s manual” Hammer of Spells, Malus, Malinfurcinum, being the most popular). A Lyons 1608 edition of this work is part of the Seghers Collection (BF 1600 D36 1608).

Our Plantinian edition of Latin tragedies for the students of the Low Countries. The son of Petrus Vulcanius, a friend of Justus Lipsius in the University of Louvain in 1578 and, as such, lectured several years on Apuleius (as the preface by Colvius explains). Born in Bruges, the first part of his career was spent in the turmoil that shook the Low Countries. The son of Petrus Vulcanius, a friend of Erasmus, he received an excellent education from the theologian and philosopher of religious tolerance, George Cassander. He studied medicine at the University of Louvain as well as philosophy and literature in Cologne. Only after years of wanderings from Catholic Spain, to Calvinist Geneva, he returned to the Netherlands in 1577. On the recommendation of William the Silent, Vulcanius became a secretary (and family tutor) for the burgomaster of Antwerp, Marinus van Sint Aldegonde, the theoretician and writer of the Dutch Revolt. In 1581, after the siege of Antwerp, he settled in Leiden, where he taught for 32 years. Petrus Colvius (1567-1594) was also born in Bruges and was the student of the former and wanted, for his first publication, to pay homage to a professor and a friend. The annotations by Vulcanius on the text and his comments are thus presented as a separate leaflet in the volume. Among other texts, it includes the Metamorphoses, or The Golden Ass, and the Apologia, Apuleius’ witty courtroom defense against the accusations of magic that were levied against him. It also includes a text no longer attributed to Apuleius: the De Mando, supposedly a Latin compendium summarizing a lost work by Aristotle.

Lucius Apuleius Platonicus (c. 123/125 – c. 130) was one of the favourite Latin authors of the Leiden humanists. This famous orator was born in Madaura, a Roman colony in Africa. Both well-educated (having studied at Carthage, Athens, and Rome) and well-travelled, he is remembered for his curiosity in other cultures and religious matters.

Apuleius wrote a vast array of works, including writings of astronomy, botany, erotica, fiction, history, hymns, mathematics, medicine, music, poetry, Platonic philosophy, and zoology. Such a versatile corpus was attractive both for teaching and for commenting: the work Metamorphoses is one of the first texts selected for a printed publication, and its success grew with the attached publication of commentaries by Beroaldo. After an editio princeps by Aldus in Venice, his works were constantly reedited and reappraised. They were bound to keep the attention of humanists, finding within them universal curiosity, religious caution, and unjust persecution recounted by Apuleius which echoed to their own times and preoccupations.

Bona Ventura Vulciunus (1538-1614), an important figure in Dutch Humanism throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, was appointed professor in Latin and Greek Letters at Leiden University in 1578 and, as such, lectured several years on Apuleius (as the preface by Colvius explains). Born in Bruges, the first part of his career was spent in the turmoil that shook the Low Countries. The son of Petrus Vulcanius, a friend of Erasmus, he received an excellent education from the theologian and philosopher of religious tolerance, George Cassander. He studied medicine at the University of Louvain as well as philosophy and literature in Cologne. Only after years of wanderings from Catholic Spain, to Calvinist Geneva, he returned to the Netherlands in 1577. On the recommendation of William the Silent, Vulcanius became a secretary (and family tutor) for the burgomaster of Antwerp, Marinus van Sint Aldegonde, the theoretician and writer of the Dutch Revolt. In 1581, after the siege of Antwerp, he settled in Leiden, where he taught for 32 years. Petrus Colvius (1567-1594) was also born in Bruges and was the student of the former and wanted, for his first publication, to pay homage to a professor and a friend. The annotations by Vulcanius on the text and his comments are thus presented as a separate leaflet in the volume. Among other texts, it includes the Metamorphoses, or The Golden Ass, and the Apologia, Apuleius’ witty courtroom defense against the accusations of magic that were levied against him. It also includes a text no longer attributed to Apuleius: the De Mando, supposedly a Latin compendium summarizing a lost work by Aristotle.

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4 Martino Antonio Delrio, SJ. Syntagma tragediae Latinæ : in tres partes distinctum. [3 books in 2 volumes]. Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana, [his widow and Joannes Moretus], 1593. SC Seghers Collection PA6068 D34

Pius et Doctus

A Dutch politician and theologian of Spanish origin, Martino Delrio was born in Antwerp in 1551 and he died at Louvain in 1608. Having studied in Paris, Douai, Louvain (all Northern Catholic Universities of the time), he received the degree of Doctor of Law in 1574 at Salamanca. On his return to the Low Countries, he was appointed to various legal positions in the government of Brabant. The exhaustive treatise on civil law he published at that time attests to his renowned knowledge of the matter. His Historia Belgica, though, expressed his despair over the contemporary disorders in the Low Countries. He arrived in Louvain just in time to save the library of his friend Justus Lipsius from the advancing Spanish troops. Disappointed by the war and religious conflicts in the Netherlands, he returned to Spain in 1580 and, at Valladolid, he entered the Jesuit order. During the following years, he held the chair of philosophy, moral theology, and Scripture at the Universities of Douai, Liege, Louvain, Graz, and Salamanca. The works of this polyglot scholar attest to his humanism and religious inspiration. Commentaries on classical Latin authors such as Claudius, Ennius, Florus, Livius, Seneca, or again the ancient geographer and historian, Solinus, predate his novitiate and his vows into the Jesuit order. After this learned beginning, he turned to annotations on Christian poets and erudite commentaries on Bible books: the Genesis, the Canticle of Canticles, or the Lamentations of Jeremiah. His treatise on various proverbial expressions from the Old Testament (Adagialia sacra Veteris Testamenti) can be read as the continuation of the Adagia of Erasmus (1501-1539), a great and already classic collection of the time. Similarly, Delrio taught at the Louvain University, conceived by Erasmus for the study of biblical languages and founded in 1517. His paroecyries and praises of the Blessed Virgin show, then, his docta pietas, learned piety, a concept created and defended by the humanists. A man of his time, he engaged in the debates of the late sixteenth century: the counter-Reformation, the desire for peace, the development of learning institutions, the annotated editions of classical and biblical texts. He took part in learned and religious quarrels against Joseph Scaliger, — the philologist and scholar who was to succeed to Justus Lipsius in the "Calvinist" University of Leiden (1593) when the latter returned to Louvain and to Catholicism.

During his time teaching in Liege, he assembled the material of his work, Disquisitiones magicae (Essays on Magic), the work for which he is chiefly known, not published until much later, in three volumes from 1599-1600 (Mainz, 1593). The Disquisitiones offered an authoritative summary of contemporary views about magic and witchcraft, and was meant in part to guide judicial tribunals. It achieved great success, was reprinted twenty times and is the second most popular book written on the occult (the "chat de "manual" Hammer of Spells, Malus, Maliszewski, being the most popular). A Lyons 1606 edition of this work is part of the Seghers Collection (BF 1600 D36 1608).

Our Plantinian edition of Latin tragedies for the students of Latin, theological knowledge, and social skills. This edition of the works of Apuleius bears on the title-page the names of both Bonaventura Vulcius (1538-1614) and Petrus Colvius (1567-1594). The latter was the student of the former and wanted, for his first publication, to pay homage to a professor and a friend. The annotations by Vulcius on the text and his comments are thus presented as a separate leaflet in the volume. Among other texts, it includes the Metamorphoses, or The Golden Ass, and the Apologia, Apuleius' witty courthouse defense against the accusations of magic that were levied against him. It also includes a text no longer attributed to Apuleius: the De Mando, supposedly a Latin compendium summarizing a lost work by Aristotle.

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Golden Ass, tragic yet comical legends have been spun around the means of his accidental death in 1594. A well-known and wide-spread anecdote has it that he was killed at the age of 27 years old, kicked by a mule in the streets of Paris. This unexpected and unusual death was alluded to in the epistle written by the young Janus Dousa, the first librarian of Leiden University Library, himself bound to an early death:

“I nunc Luci Asino nativum redde nitorem, Nata asino rumpat quo tibi mula caput.”

“Go now to Lucius Asinus the native splendor restore, As a mule born from an Ass broke in pieces thy head.”

The annotations of Petrus Calvius on Sidonius Apollinaris, a remaining manuscript at his premature death, were by Wavewein in 1598 in Lyons — a collective and posthumous collaboration attesting to the liveliness of the “Republic of Letters” at the University of Leiden. Our Apuleius edition was rescued several times before 1610, when it was no longer required reading for the Leiden students.

Franciscus Raphelengius, the manager of the Plantin house in Leiden, was the friend of Bonaventura Vulcanius as well as his printer for many other works. Further reading:


Leiden University

The first university in the Northern province of Holland was founded in Leiden by William, Prince of Orange (leader of the Dutch Revolt in the 80-year war) in 1575. It followed the model of the Academy of Geneva, which served as intellectual centre of the Calvinist education. By the early 17th century Leyden was well known for its excellent theology, science and medicine faculty. Famous scholars, such as Justus Lipsius, Joseph Scaliger, and Bonaventura Vulcanius were among its professors.

In 1581, Plantin was persuaded by his friend Lipsius to move to Leiden. His decision to make Leiden his home was considerably influenced by the imminent siege of Antwerp by the Duke of Parma as well as by his financial difficulties and his poor health. Moreover, among his Calvinist friends, Plantin found the intellectual company which was of great importance to him. On May 14, 1584 he became the official Printer of the University, a position in which he remained until his final departure from Leiden in August 1585. During this time in Leiden he printed about thirty books, several of which were written by Lipsius such as the De Constantia, a contemporary bestseller. His son-in-law Franciscus Raphelengius remained in Leiden, where the Presses ran up until 1641.

Leiden University

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The annotations of Petrus Calvius on Sidonius Apollinaris, a remaining manuscript at the University Library, himself bound to an early death: 

“A reprint of the 1570 edition of the Catechismus and various canonical texts defined by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), our copy of the collections of texts defining Catholic orthodoxy was the property of the Franciscan Brothers in Roermond; then in Nimigen, before joining the Utrecht collections and being rebound and restored. It contains the newly revised points of doctrines and sacraments that, in response to the Reformation, became known as part of the Counter Reformation. As the title of this work indicates, the Council of Trent, due to disputes and political interruptions, was actually three different councils, presided over by three different popes. From 1545-1547, it was led by Pope Paul (Paul III), from 1551-1552 it was led by Pope Julius II (Iulius III), and it finally convened under Pope Pius (Pius IV), who led it from 1559-1563. In 1564, the first collection of the council’s canons and decrees was published by Paulus Manutius in Rome, and since then, it has been printed and translated many times. This important Catholic publication is a reminder of the Plantin press’s multifaceted nature, and its tight ties to the contexts of its times. Although Christopher Plantin was once charged, arguably helped ensure the survival of the Plantin Press in the midst of Antwerp’s early seventeenth-century history as a Catholic stronghold. After the general title-page, the original preface written by Christophe Plantin is reproduced: it engages the readers to read the precise guidance provided by the Council and assures them of his own diligence and care in printing the text. The volume attests to the Catholic orthodoxy of our printer and his son-in-law Joannes Moretus. It is not part of the Seghers Collection, but makes a perfect fit with the biblical concordances and commentaries that were collected for the Catholic Diocese. 


Plantin Press was well accustomed to producing accredited Catholic documents. Printed in 1604, this edition of the Council of Trent’s canons and decrees was published by Jan I Moretus, whose association with Counter Reformation works


Lipsius, Justus. Opera omnia qua ad criticam proprie spectant… Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana, [the widow & sons of Joannes Moretus] 1611. SC Storage PA6141 A2L45 1611

The complete works (Opera Omnia) of Justus Lipsius were published four times: in Lyons, 1613; in Antwerp, 1614; in Antwerp, an official edition by Balthasar Moretus in 1637, of which the fourth volume includes an index meticulously compiled by Franciscus Raphelengius, and finally, in 1675, a fourth edition was published in Wesel. The copy displayed here is from Antwerp, 1614, and contains the first tome out of seven 4° volumes.

Although the publication was originally entrusted to Raphelengius’ press in 1586, our edition of the De recta pronunciacione latinae linguae dialogus is dated 1609 and is given its own title page within the larger book. This work is a treatise on the pronunciation of classical Latin, and is dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, an English poet and diplomat, friend of Lipsius, as a “professoral presentation to a foreign patron” (Donster 119). The treatise booklet was widely popular, and perhaps helped Lipsius’ respect for scholarly English noblemen become reciprocal.

The pronunciation of Latin was a topic of crucial importance for the community of humanists inspired by Erasmus: with the idea that Latin must be used in conversation as well as in writing for the establishment of a universal language, 16th century scholars tried to restore and revive the language in its classical stage, before it became “Church Latin.”

In both the volumes, we find the privilege that Lipsius obtained in 1592 and that granted permission to print his works only to Moretus. With this we are reminded, in the guise of an official form, of a personal declaration of friendship and loyalty to the Plantin family.


Search by Keyword!

Bible concordances are alphabetical lists of all the words in the bible, together with their references. Under the direction of Hugo de Sancto Claro in the mid thirteenth century, approximately five hundred Dominican monks compiled the first concordance of the Vulgate (the authorized version of the Latin bible). Although the bible, at this time, had relatively recently been divided into chapters, it did not yet contain verses. For this reason, Hugo and his team placed letters in the bible’s margins as referencing guides. Historically, there has been some debate regarding the degree of Hugo’s influence on the creation of verses – an invention which is now generally attributed to the printer Robert Estienne, in the mid sixteenth century. The concordance first met the printing press in 1470, in Strasbourg.

This edition of Hugo’s concordance was compiled in recognition of a late sixteenth-century pope who was personally invested in printing an improved version of the Vulgate (Sixtus V). Franciscus Lucas Brugensis (ed. 1619), the editor of this particular concordance, was a licentiate of the University of Louvain, and a master of biblical languages (Greek, Hebrew, and Latin). Plantin asked and encouraged him to write his recognized commentary on the New Testament. This acquaintanceship, and the Plantin press’s publication of the bible concordance, provide another indication of Plantin’s interest in biblical criticism.

Sarbiewski, Maciej Kasimierz, SJ. Lyricorum libri IV, Epodón liber unus, alterque Epigrammatum Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana, Balthasar Moretus, 1632. SC Storage PA8570 S45 163

The Sarmatian Horace

Born in Sarbiewski in 1595, Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski was, in his time and up until the 20th century, better known under his “nom de plume”: his Latin name Matthias Casimirus Sarbiewius. Celebrated by his contemporaries and historians of literature as “Europe’s most prominent Latin poet of the 17th century” (Jacobi), he kept the nickname crafted in his honour by Hugo Grotius: the Sarmatian Horace. A master in Latin metrics, learned parodies and virtuosic adaptations of classical verses, he entered the Jesuit order at the age of 19 and was immediately singled out as exceptionally brilliant. The pope Urban VIII asked him for a poetic revision of the hymns of the breviary. He was an acclaimed professor and scholar in Vilnius, so dear to the Polish king Ladislas V that he is said to have been his favourite travel companion.

The publication of his poems by Plantin is consistent with the Jesuit connection of the family of printers and also with their humanist tenure: all written in elaborate and difficult verses, the poems are addressed to various characters of Catholic Europe. We note the dedication of the collection to Urban VIII (1556-1644). Many Jesuit personalities, including Jacob Vande Walle (our number 11) sign praises for Sarbiewski’s poetry, which are reproduced at the beginning of the volume. The title-page is an engraving signed by Paul Rubens. It depicts in a natural sophisticated setting the infancy of the poet, Apollo, with his lyra, and a feminine allegory (the Church?), both crowned with laurel, show the title of the books and dedicate it, on a peculiar altar, to Urban VIII here represented by the three bees on his coat of arms.

This collection of poems is printed with all the due authorizations, form religious and civil authorities. These granted and legal permissions and privileges did not prevent pirated copies from being published and circulated all over Europe. Famous and appreciated, these poems were translated into English as early as. 1646.

Our UVic copy bears the bookplate of the Barony of Sinclair, showing its coat of arms and the motto “Tide sed Pugna”.

Further reading:


Lipsius, Justus. *Opera omnia qua ad criticam propriam spectant...* Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana, [the widow & sons of Joannes Moretus] 1611. SC Storage PA6141 A2L45 1611

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Sarbiewski, Maciej Kasimierz, SJ. *Lyriconum libri IV, Epodon liber unus, alterque Epigrammatum* Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana, Balthasar Moretus, 1632. SC Storage PA8570 S45 163

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Further reading:


Elsewhere :


10 Tacitus, Cornelius. Opera quæ extant: a Justo Lipsio postremum recensita, eisqve avctis emendatisqve commentariis illustrata... [Justus Lipsius ed.] Antwerp : Ex officina plantiniana, Balthasar Moretus, 1648. SC Seghers Collection PA6705 A2 1648

Acquired in Rome at the Libreria di Luigi de Romanis, as were many other books from the Seghers Collections, this edition of Tacitus’ works by Justus Lipsius is one of the gems of the Bishop’s library: probably bought during Charles Seghers’ sojourn in Rome in 1883, it is a luxurios re-edition of the first publication, by Lipsius, in Antwerp, 1574. The Roman historian (56–117), well known for his witty, perceptive, and concise narratives was a great favourite among humanist: many of his works had been recently recovered in Italy, but also his intellectual kinship with Seneca and his interest in Germany awoke numerous echoes with the Northern humanists in Louvain or Leiden, trying to define their history, their language, or their culture in other terms than Italian humanists.

Richly detailed with ornate initial letters and typographical fleurons, this large book is not destined to students but to the enlightened upper class, desirous of acquiring both beautiful objects and knowledge, that they could display in their library. The variation of printer’s devices, with different versions on the title-page and on the last page, is another proof of the care brought to this print.
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A book of Prize and Praise

Born in Kortrijk in 1599, Joacob Vande Walle entered the Society of Jesus in 1617. He died in Antwerp in 1690 after leading a life devoted to faith and literature. A teacher of rhetoric and humanities, he was made prefect of studies. He influenced and put into practice the literary curriculum of the Catholic Latin Schools of Courtrai (where he sojourned from 1662 to 1689), Bailleul, Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, and Antwerp. He published many poems of praise in other poets’ books (our own Sarbiewski’s collection, first published in 1632 for instance) and signed his first poetry volume in 1656/1657. Written in heroic verse (dactylic hexameter), in imitation of Horace, or again in elegiac meter, his poems are versatile and virtuoso. He celebrates and calls for peace in a well-known and loved series of six pieces called “Olive Branch of Peace” and published in this very book.

While the volume is offered to Pope Alexander VII (1599-1667), all poems are lengthily dedicated to personalities of the Jesuit order, of the Catholic Church, and to fellow Christian poets. Reading the succession of poems thus gives the impression of browsing a list of names and functions for important priests, teachers, and writers of 17th century Flanders. Pious and sophisticated typographical flourishes provide structure and ornamentation to this series of poems, each of them accompanying the praise of a patron. These specific qualities make the volume a perfectly appropriate prize, especially for a Latin School in Holland. This happens no later than the year of its publication, 1657 (in spite of our title-page bearing falsely the mention of 1656). The book will be reedited three times before 1669, all four publications done by Balthasar Moretus.

Our copy bears the bookplate of Alexander Bates, the grieving brother of William Bates (physician and surgeon), who inherited it in 1885. Formerly, as the inside cover attests, it was the prize book given to Donatus Akerboon, publicly bestowed in Amsterdam (1657) by the rector Adrianus Junius for good results and effort in grade 4. Hadrianus Junius was then the rector of the Latin School at the “Nieuwe Zijde” in Amsterdam (see C. L. Heesakkers, “The Amsterdam Professors and other Friends of Johannes Blasius”, in Lias 9, 1982, p. 211.) On the flyleaf, an anonymous and learned bibliophile compiled in French a short bibliography (essentially, references where to find mentions and praises for Wallius), in French.

Further reading:

An exhibition of Plantins’ editions presented by students of FREN 524
Monday, March 28, 2011

Hélène Cazes dir./ed. with the collaboration of Danielle Forster, UVic Libraries
Rare Books Librarian, the McPherson Library Special Collections team, Jean Saretsky, and the graduate students Erin Fairweather, Patrick Grace, Paul Smith, Zsofia Surjan, and Christa Hunfeld.

Part of the “Old Books in New Libraries” lecture series 2011 held at Mearns Centre for Learning, University of Victoria