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The emergence of Antwerp as a printing centre

From the earliest days of printing to the Reformation (1481–1520)



When we think of the early days of printing in Antwerp, naturally the almost iconic figure of Christopher Plantin (c. 1520–1589) and his famous firm *The Golden Compasses*, one of the most prolific print shops in Europe during the second half of the 16th century, come to mind.¹ But at the same time, one risks overlooking the important role played by the predecessors of this renowned printer, the pioneers who created the right conditions for the emergence of this golden age of the printing industry in Antwerp. This article is dedicated to them and aims to illustrate their activities from the establishment of the first Antwerp printing presses until the 1520s, a pivotal period corresponding with the first phase of printing history. After a short introduction, I will first look at Antwerp book production and its design, then I will examine some attempts to delineate parts of the city dedicated to the printing industry, and, finally, I will consider the relationship between printers and the guild of St. Luke, the guild in which other Antwerp book craftsmen were registered.

The start of Antwerp's typographical adventure

One should always bear in mind that printing was introduced into the Low Countries less than twenty years after Gutenberg's invention. The earliest confirmation of this dates back to the year 1473, both for the north and for the south of the region (i.e., the later Dutch Republic, and what is henceforth referred to as the Southern Netherlands). By including dates in the colophons of their first books, the workshops of Nicolaus Ketelaer (fl. 1473–1474) and Gerardus de Leempt (fl. 1473–1491) at Utrecht, and Joannes de Westfalia (fl. 1473–1503) and Dirk Martens (c. 1446–1534) at Aalst each unwittingly permitted both cities to bestow upon themselves the honorary title of cradle of the printing press in the *pays de par deçà* ('The lands over here', i.e., the Low Countries).² Within a decade, the technique

1 On Plantin, see the article by Karen L. Bowen in this issue. Abbreviations used in this article: HPT = W. & L. Hellinga, *The fifteenth-century printing types of the Low Countries*, (2 vols.), Amsterdam, 1966; ISTC = *Incunabula Short-Title Catalogue* (www.istc.bl.uk); NAT = W. Nijhoff, *L'art typographique dans les Pays-Bas pendant les années 1500 à 1540. Reproduction en fac-similé des caractères typographiques, marques d'imprimeurs, gravures sur bois et autres ornements employés pendant cette période*, (3 vols.), La Haye, 1926–1935; NB = A.

Pettegree & M. Walsby, *Netherlandish books. Books published in the Low Countries and Dutch books printed abroad before 1601*, Leiden 2011.

2 The earliest dated works are: Dionysius the Carthusian, *Speculum conversionis peccatorum*. Aalst, [Joannes de Westfalia & Dirk Martens], 1473, 4to (ISTC id00248300; NB 9855); Petrus Comestor, *Historia scholastica*. Utrecht: Nicolaus Ketelaer & Gerardus de Leempt, 1473, 2o (ISTC ip00459000; NB 24123).

spread throughout the major cities of the Burgundian Netherlands: Aalst (1473), Utrecht (1473), Bruges (1473?), Louvain (1473?), Brussels (1475), Delft (1477), Deventer (1477), Gouda (1477), Zwolle (1478), Nijmegen (1479), Oudenaarde (1480), Ghent (1483) and 's-Hertogenbosch (1484).³

Antwerp's typographical adventure started at the beginning of the 1480s with the printing of Simon van Venlo's *Boexken vander officien ofte dienst der missen*, a short devotional handbook on the office of the Mass reproduced by the press of Mathias van der Goes on 8 June 1481.⁴ After a somewhat hesitant start, the Antwerp printing industry began to take off and by the end of the 15th century the city had become one of the main printing centres in the Low Countries. By this time, Antwerp had only two northern rivals, namely, Deventer and Zwolle, where the schools of the Brethren of the Common Life were responsible for the emergence of a clientele very eager to read. Within twenty years, the Antwerp printers would succeed in ousting their competitors and making their city the print capital of the Low Countries. This predominance was due to the city's flourishing economy and the presence of a wealthy merchant class ready to provide the printers with the capital necessary to finance their enterprises.⁵

Between 1481 and 1520, the number of printing shops continued to grow, reaching a peak around 1510 when the city had more than ten active printing shops. By 1520, book production in Antwerp had reached close to 800 titles with a total volume of some 11,000 sheets. The most productive typographer of this period was certainly Henrick Eckert van Homberch, who, from 1500 till 1520, published more than 150 books consisting of c. 4,200 leaves. Other printers of notable importance in the early 16th century were Govaert Bac (†1517), Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten (c. 1476–1559), and Willem Vorsterman (†1543). By 1520, Bac and Hillen had printed about 130 books and Vorsterman more than 90, all with an average of 8.5 sheets of paper per book. The careers of Hillen and Vorsterman really took off after 1520: Hillen published more than 600 books in total and Vorsterman about 400.

3 About this subject, see, amongst others: A. Vincent, 'La typographie en Belgique au xv^e siècle' in *Histoire du livre et de l'imprimerie en Belgique des origines à nos jours*, 1, Bruxelles, 1924, 55–90; G. Colin & W. Hellinga (eds.), *Le cinquième centenaire de l'imprimerie dans les Anciens Pays-Bas* [exhibition catalogue], Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, Bruxelles 1973; A. Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, libraires et éditeurs belges des xv^e et xvii^e siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle*, Nieuwkoop 1975; M. van Delft & C. de Wolf, *Bibliopolis. Geschiedenis van het gedrukte boek in Nederland*, Zwolle 2003, 11–54; J.M.M. Hermans, *Zwolse boeken voor een markt zonder grenzen 1477–1523: met een Catalogus van de verschenen edities en gegevens over bewaard gebleven exemplaren*, 't Goy Houten 2004; A. Pettegree, 'Printing in the Low Countries in the early sixteenth century', in G. Kemp & M. Walsby, *The book triumphant. Print in transition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, Leiden/Boston 2011, 3–25; R. Adam, *Imprimeurs et société dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux et en principauté de Liège (1473–ca 1520)*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Université de Liège, 2011; H. Meeus, 'Printing in the shadow of a metropolis' in B. Rial Costas (ed.), *Print culture and peripheries in Early Modern Europe: a contribution to the history of printing and the book trade in small European and Spanish cities*, Leiden/Boston 2011, 147–170; X. Hermand, E. Ornato & C. Ruzzier, *Les stratégies éditoriales à l'époque de l'incunable: le cas des anciens Pays-Bas*, Turnhout 2012.

4 15TC 1500529100; NB 28000. On this edition, see: E. Cockx-Indestege, *Mathias van der Goes en het Boexken van der officien ofte dienst der missen van Simon van Venlo: vijfhonderd jaar boekdrukkunst te Antwerpen*, Antwerp 1985.

5 About the economic situation in Antwerp at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, see: H. van der Wee, *The growth of the Antwerp market and the European economy (fourteenth-sixteenth centuries)*, 2, The Hague 1963, 89–142; R. Van Uytven, 'Politiek en economie: de crisis der late xvde

What was printed in Antwerp?

Religious works dominated Antwerp book production at the time: no fewer than 400 titles representing a total volume of 6,200 sheets. Most frequently reproduced were small devotional texts in the vernacular – Dutch – often anonymous, such as the *Gulden litanie vander passie Jhesus Christi* and the *Devote meditatie op die passie ons lieve heeren*, both, as the titles indicate, encouraging the reader to meditate on the passion of Christ. The numerous reprints of such texts emphasise the growing predilection for these books. Publications relating to the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary also found a certain audience amongst the population of the Low Countries, as well as with the members of the cult of St. Anne.⁶ Furthermore, the publication of certain theological treatises should be noted, including some by both medieval and contemporary authors, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventura, Girolamo Savonarola and Adrian of Utrecht (the future Pope Adrian VI). In addition to these upholders of orthodoxy, there are also fewer than ten Lutheran publications. Antwerp printing shops clearly contributed greatly to the satisfaction of the spiritual needs of both priests and laymen by maintaining the provision of liturgical and paraliturgical texts. These included numerous books of hours according to the Uses of Rome, Liège, Utrecht and Salisbury, and psalters and breviaries according to the Uses of Liège, Utrecht and the Congregation of Windesheim.⁷

In quantitative terms, secular texts came second with more than 300 publications, representing about 3,450 sheets. Medieval romances – often translated from French into Dutch and adapted to suit urban bourgeois values – were particularly successful.⁸ These would include, for example, the *Historie van de ridder Parijs en Vienne*, the *Histoire van Sandrijn ende Lansloot*, as well as the *Historie van Seghelijn van Iherusalem*, the latter, anonymous text, having been wrongly attributed to the poet Loy Latewaert.⁹

However, Antwerp printers did not focus solely on vernacular languages but also, for example, on large quantities of textbooks for the study of Latin. In addition to traditional

eeuw in de Nederlanden' in *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 53 (1975), 1097–1149; H. van der Wee & J. Materné, 'De Antwerpse wereldmarkt tijdens de 16de en 17de eeuw' in J. Van der Stock (ed.), *Antwerpen: verhaal van een metropool 16de–17de eeuw*, Ghent 1993, 19–31.

6 About this cult and its uses by the Habsburg authorities: P.-M. Soulier, *La confrérie de Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs dans les Flandres 1491–1519*, Bruxelles, [1912]; A.-L. Van Bruaene, *Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden*, Amsterdam 2008, 53–76; S. Speakman Sutch & A.-L. Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: devotional communication and politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries (c. 1490–1520)' in *Journal of ecclesiastical history*, 61 (2010), 252–278. Two centuries later, the Marial cult was used again, this time by the Habsburg dynasty, which is confronted with the difficulty of maintaining its supremacy in the Spanish Netherlands, that suffer from ceaseless wars and local, sectional

claims, cf. A. Delfosse, 'La Protectrice du Pays-Bas'. *Stratégies politiques et figures de la Vierge dans les Pays-Bas espagnols*, Turnhout 2009.

7 The Congregation of Windesheim is a branch of the order of the Canons regular of St. Augustine which name came from its first monastery, located in the north of the Netherlands. This congregation is an offshoot of the Brethren of the Common Life.

8 About this subject, see especially: H. Pleij, 'La littérature dans les villes aux xv^e et xvi^e siècles', in J. Van der Stock (ed.), *La ville en Flandre: culture et société 1477–1787* [exhibition catalogue], Bruxelles 1991, 171–182; ld., 'Le bas Moyen Âge et le temps de la rhétorique', in H. Stouten, J. Goedegebuure & F. van Oostrom, *Histoire de la littérature néerlandaise (Pays-Bas et Flandre)*, Paris 1999, 71–155.

9 L. Willems, 'Latewaert (Louis)' in *Biographie nationale*, 11 (1890–1891), 418–419.

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 pius nullus unq̄ viderit. Ipa itaq; maria deuote inue
 cans gl'osam v̄ginē de. vii. dolorib; in Abbenbroeck. vo
 tū emisit eadē visitare cū cereis. huiliter postulās ab illo
 dolore liberari. Quo voto cōpleto illicito creus ē meliora
 tū r̄ p̄stine restitūtū sanitati. Sed post modicū rēporis pi
 formiter similis morb; vnā manū ei; iuasit. que p̄tunc
 cogitās r̄ sibi p̄suadēs hoc p̄uenisse ea de causa q̄ sacer
 doti suo hoc miraculū nō r̄uelasset. r̄ hec mētere uoluēs
 eadē gl'iosa v̄ginē in Abbenbroeck de. vii. dolorib; iuo
 cās promisit illud miraculū manifestare et cōtinuo ma
 nus ei; est sanata. Quo pacto dca vidua me sacerdotem
 accessit. qui similia miracula scribere p̄sueui. narrās ad
 longū illud qd̄ sibi accidisset. roganq; vt iter alia velim
 ista inserere et r̄p̄ifidelib; ad laudē virginis gl'iose ma
 nifestare. ¶ Que ōnia p̄ Ruerēde vt scripsi de manda
 to dñor̄ meorū r̄ p̄fratrū. v. Ruerende p̄nitati notifico
 ad quod faciendū et si mandatū non haberē. mea tamē
 cōscientia vrget me. quod oculis meis p̄sonaliter vidi et
 verū reperi in lucē producere. multis tamē miraculis
 omittis q̄ nimia p̄licitatē scribendi requirūt. Hec pro
 nūc cōmemorās. nō solū ob affectionē et deuotionē dicte
 p̄fraternitatis. sed qm̄ scio saluatori n̄ro eiusdēq; gl'ose m̄ri
 v̄ginis mariemirū i modū acceptā esse r̄ grā f̄fidationē r̄
 erectiō; h̄mōi p̄frnitatis. Cui; origo et p̄ncipalis causa est
 p̄nitatis. v. Ruerēda et instyutio p̄ Illustissimū p̄ncipē
 n̄m iuuenē r̄ inocentē. ad quā eundē v̄ris sacris moni
 tionib; r̄ p̄dicationib; salutarib; iduristis. Auxiliāte deo
 Que huiliter deprecor vt vobis grām tribuat. ipm̄ i simi
 lib; causis r̄ ōnib; dicitib; et p̄cipue i iusticia instituendi
 et deinceps p̄tinuādi / et informādi ad honorē dei ac sola
 cū subleuamēq; suor̄ subditor̄. Et Abbenbroeck xx. febr.
 A. a nati. M. cccc. xcvi. Cōp̄tū p̄ me h̄ericū licēns



Fig. 1 Miracula confraternitatis Septem dolorum beatissime Virginis Marie, [Antwerp:] Henrick Pietersz. die Lettersnider, [c. 1500], 4to, fol. 8v (Royal Library Brussels, Inc A 1364-65 (2)).

texts such as the *Doctrinale* by Alexander de Villedieu and the pseudo-Catonis *Disticha*, there were more recent works, such as the *Gemma vocabulorum*, the *Lilium grammaticae* by Willem Zenders de Weert, and the *Introductorium iuuenium in grammaticam opusculum* by Joannes Despauterius.

Furthermore, through their selection of texts, Antwerp printers created a climate favourable for humanism and for the propagation of Renaissance ideas. At first, this happened timidly but then, from the years 1510 to 1515 onwards, more definitely. Classical texts revised by the humanists, as well as texts edited by those representing the new *respublica literaria*, appeared on the market. These classics included, notably, the *Dialogi* by Lucian in a translation by Erasmus and with a commentary by Nicolaus Buscoducensis, Plautus's *Aulularia*, completed (*perfectus*) by the Bolognese scholar Antonio Cordo Urceo, as well as Vergil's *Bucolica* and his *Georgica*, with commentaries by Hermannus Torrentinus. More modern texts included the grammar books by Niccolò Perotti, the *De duobus amantibus* by Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Francesco Filelfo's letters, and works by members of Antwerp humanist circles, such as Pieter Gillis, Jan Coster van Brecht, and of course Erasmus, who entrusted seventeen of his own manuscripts to the Antwerp presses.

Some printers called upon the advice of erudite proofreaders before taking publishing decisions. The first one to do this was Gerard Leeu (1445/50–1492), a printer who specialised in school books, didactic romance and devotional works – mainly written in Dutch. In 1489, he tried launching himself into the publication of humanist texts. Following the advice of Jacob Canter, a bright young spark from a humanist family from Groningen, Leeu decided to print Petrarch's *Secretum*, Poggio's *De nobilitate*, and a commented edition of the *Centones Vergilii*, a versified text by Vergil, edited by Proba Falconia in the 4th century. Here, this typographer from Gouda proved himself to be a true originator, for his editions of Petrarch and Poggio are both *editiones principes*. But Jacob Canter's departure to Italy put the publishing of humanist texts by Leeu to an end, only emphasising the importance of his influence on the printer's editorial decision making.¹⁰

For humanist printing in the Southern Netherlands, the central figure is without doubt Dirk Martens, who, after returning from Italy in 1473, announced in the colophon of one of his editions that he intended to bring the elegance of the Venetians to his Flemish compatriots (*Qui Venetum scita Flandrensibus affero cuncta*).¹¹ After numerous efforts, Martens managed to realise his dream and turned his printing shop into one of the main centres for the diffusion of humanism in the Low Countries. Although he spent only about fifteen years of his 55-year career in Antwerp, it was in this city that he laid the foundations of his career as a humanist printer,¹² for it was here the *typographus* met Erasmus, who con-

10 The ties between the family of Jacob Canter and Leeu were not expanded over time. In 1491, the Antwerp typographer published the *Epitoma grammaticae* by Jacob's brother Andreas, who was enrolled in the University of Cologne (H. Keussen, *Die Matrikel der Universität Köln*, t. 2, Bonn 1931, 300, n. 411.16).

11 See the colophon in Baptista Mantuanus, *De vita beata*. Aalst: Dirk Martens, 1 October 1474, 4to, fol. 28v (15TC:ib00095900; NB 28217).

12 Dirk Martens travelled much during his career and was active in three different cities: Aalst (1473–1474 / 1486–1492), Antwerp (1493–1498 / 1502–1512) and Louvain (1498–1502 / 1512–1529). About this typographer and the notion of a humanist printer, see our book co-authored by Alexandre Vanautgaerden: *Dirk Martens et la figure de l'imprimeur humaniste (une nouvelle biographie)*, Turnhout 2009.

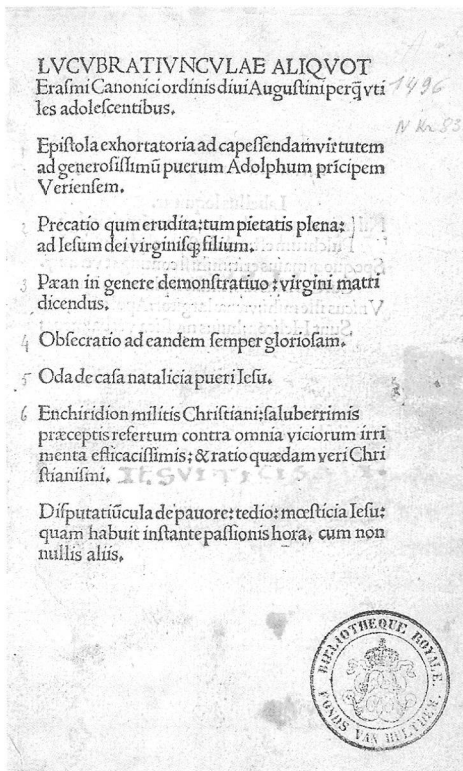


Fig. 2 Erasmus, *Lucubratiunculae aliquot*, Antwerp: Dirk Martens, 15 February 1503, 4to, fol. 1r (Royal Library Brussels, Inc A.1.496).

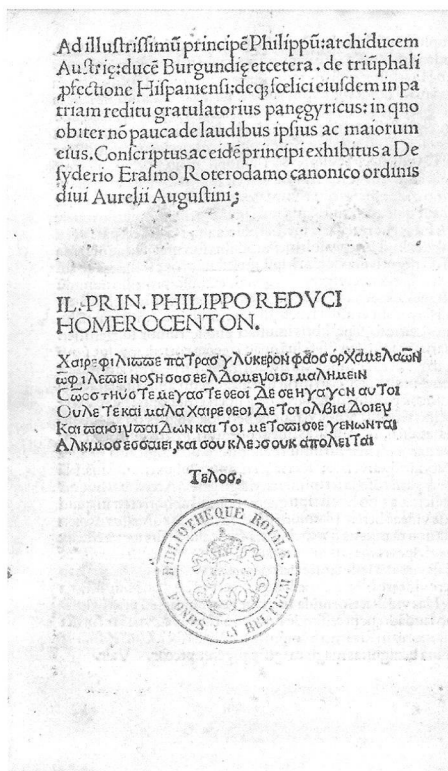


Fig. 3 Erasmus, *Panegyricus ad Philippum*, [Antwerp: Dirk Martens, 1504], 4to, fol. 1r (Royal Library Brussels, Inc A.1.500).

tracted him on 15 February 1503 to publish his *Lucubratiunculae aliquot*, a volume of over a hundred leaves containing one of his most important treatises, the *Enchiridion militis christiani* (1503), which was translated into English by the young William Tyndale and printed in 1533/1534.¹³ This collaboration would leave an indelible mark on Martens’s career, although Erasmus’s fame was not yet that of the future author of the *Moria encomium*. The Dutch humanist was still relatively young, in search of patrons and trying to approach the court of Burgundy.

One year later, Martens printed the address delivered on 6 January 1504 for the festivities organised by the States of Brabant to celebrate the return of Philip the Handsome from his first sojourn in Spain. During this period, Erasmus had also published *De praecellen-*

13 NB 11220; NK 835; Adam & Vanautgaerden, *Thierry Martens*, 211, no. 71; for the English translation, see W.A. Pollard & G.R. Redgrave, *A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English books printed abroad, 1475–1640*, London 1976–1991, (2nd ed.), no. 10479 and no. 10480.
 14 NB 1135; NK 120; Adam & Vanautgaerden, *Thierry Martens*, 210, no. 68.

15 NB 25852. Traditionally, historians see the beginnings of the collaboration between Dirk Martens and Pieter Gillis in the period 1503–1504 when Gillis as proof-reader should have worked closely together with the typographer during the preparation of the edition of Erasmus’s *Lucubratiunculae* and the *Panegyricus* of Philip the Handsome, while the Dutch humanist was

tia potestatis imperatoriae, a text written by Jacob Anthoniszoon. Between the lines of Erasmus's preface, one can read that the author had asked him to help him find a printer.¹⁴ Shortly afterwards, the Dutch humanist left his native country only to return in June 1516, when he assumed his role as councillor to Charles v. He remained until October 1521, when he left the Low Countries for the last time for Basel, taking advantage of the occasion to renew his contact with Martens. This caused Martens's career to take off (like a sort of 'Erasmus firework'). Martens's workshop, which had been moved to Louvain in 1512, printed about a hundred books in only four years, the equivalent of two thirds of his total previous output. Erasmus was responsible for half of it, including a number of important *princeps* editions, notably of the *Paraphrases* and some apologetical texts. Erasmus's devotion to the humanist was all the more impressive because the printer was by now an old man in his seventies.

In Antwerp, Martens began consulting erudite men on a regular basis – a crucial step in his career – not only on the subject of printing but also for advice about his publishing strategy. Pieter Gillis, city clerk and a close friend of Erasmus, inaugurated this important turning point in Martens's professional life: on 4 May 1510 Gillis edited a collection of letters by Angelo Poliziano, which was printed by Martens.¹⁵ During the years following this publication, Martens started to build around him a circle of competent humanists, often working closely together on projects, united by both their ideas about philology and their views on friendship. The final confirmation of Martens's status as a pre-eminent humanist printer took place when he was in Louvain, with his acquisition of new trilingual types, enabling him to print in the three sacred languages of Latin, Greek and Hebrew.¹⁶ Furthermore, he had the honour in December 1516 of printing the first edition of one of the most important works in western civilisation: the *Utopia* by Thomas More.¹⁷ The publication of this quarto book reveals the friendship circle (Erasmus, Pieter Gillis, Thomas More) in which Martens now moved and which, in turn, helped him to achieve his humanist dream: quality printing for better living.

Dirk Martens's importance is not limited to humanism. He was also one of the first printers to publish, as early as 1493, the letters of Christopher Columbus relating his voyage of discovery to the Indies, a text that appeared shortly after the explorer's return.¹⁸ Colleagues of Martens also published stories of the exploration of the New World. Willem Vorsterman, for example, printed in 1504 the *Mundus novus*, a fundamental work by Amerigo Vespucci.¹⁹ In addition, travel literature from the Middle Ages seems to have been popular in Antwerp, as is confirmed by the production of the Dutch 1494 publication of John Mandeville's *Itinerarius* by Govaert Bac.²⁰

reviewing the proofs in Martens's printing shop. Cf. J. De Le Court, 'Gillis (Pierre)' in *Biographie nationale*, 7 (1880–1883), 780–783; M.A. Nauwelaerts, 'Pieter Gillis' in *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 2, 99–101. However, there is no positive element corroborating this hypothesis, neither in the works cited, nor in Erasmus's correspondence. See also: Adam & Vanautgaerden, *Thierry Martens*, 75–76.

16 *Ibid.*, 50–71.

17 NB 21636.

18 ISTC ic00761500; NB 436221.

19 NB 30695, NK 4055.

20 ISTC im00162300; NB 20344.

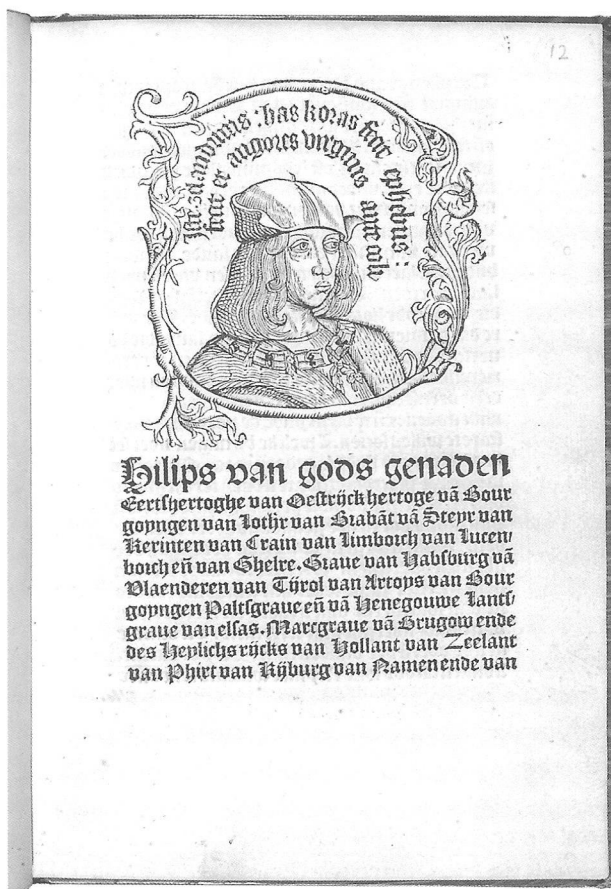


Fig. 4 *Keure van Zeeland*, [Antwerp: Govaert Bac, c. 1496–1499], 4to, fol. 12r (Royal Library Brussels, Inc A 1.462).

Compared to the body of religious texts, those on law, medicine, philosophy and the sciences formed a minority between 1481 and 1520, with fewer than 30 books on these subjects, consisting in total of about 1,450 printed sheets. With regard to legal publications, the printing of typically voluminous academic compendiums was completely abandoned in favour of small, practical books intended for daily use. Most often printed in these categories were notarial treatises and the *Casus papales, episcopales et abbatiales*.

Civil authorities were also able to take advantage of the presence of printing presses to facilitate the diffusion of legal texts. The first ordinance entrusted to a printer directly by the central authorities of the Low Countries was the *Keure van Zeeland*, a former constitution of Zeeland, repeatedly petitioned for by the cities and the nobility of Zeeland, and promulgated

21 ISTC ik00019500; NB 31930.

22 About this issue, see: H. Enno van Gelder, 'Les plus anciens tarifs monétaires illustrés des Pays-Bas' in *Centennial volume of the American numismatic society*, New York 1958, 239–272; P. Cockshaw, 'Les textes monétaires imprimés sous le règne de Philippe le Beau (1482–1506)' in *Villes d'imprimerie et moulins à papier du XIV^e au XVI^e siècle. Aspects économiques et sociaux*, Brussel 1976, 165–196.

23 About the currency politics of Philip the Handsome, see: H. Enno van Gelder, 'De muntpolitiek van Philips de Schone 1482–1494' in *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch genootschap voor munt- en penningkunde*, 38 (1951), 42–54.

24 B. Kruitwagen, 'De incunabeldrukker en lettersteker Henric Pieterssoen die Lettersnider van Rotterdamme (c. 1470–1511)' in *De gulden passer*, 1 (1923), 5–43; HPT,

– i.e., put into effect by formal public announcement – by Philip the Handsome in April 1496.²¹ This publication, first printed by Govaert Bac, was followed by numerous re-editions.

Although edicts and tariffs listing the value of currencies circulating in the Low Countries had been printed before the *Keure van Zeelandt*, the initiative to do so had, up to this point, come from the urban authorities rather than from the prince and his entourage.²² However, by 1520, seventeen texts relating to the monetary policy of Philip the Handsome and six more concerning that of Charles v, which appeared either in the form of broadsheets or as small octavo booklets, had been printed.²³

The rate of publication in the fields of philosophy, sciences and medicine is very low. Among the authors printed, we could mention Aristotle, Peter of Spain and his treatise on logic, William of Salicet and his *De salute corporis* and Pseudo-Albert the Great's *Liber aggregationis* – a blend of philosophy, medicine, and natural sciences that is impossible to categorise – and to which were added the *De mirabilibus mundi*, the *Parvum regimen sanitatis* and the *Quaestiones naturales philosophorum*. The latter was published six times by Govaert Bac. The popularity of books on healthy living, including herbal treatises, was, however, somewhat limited with fewer than a dozen editions.

Astute merchants that they were, Antwerp typographers opted for quick selling books in small formats, dealing with religious and moral matters, demonstrating their excellent understanding of market expectations. Their target public was made up of the Flemish and Brabant urban bourgeoisie, important consumers of these kinds of texts. Indeed, the fact that a large proportion of the books were in Dutch (48%) clearly indicates that the targeted public was local.

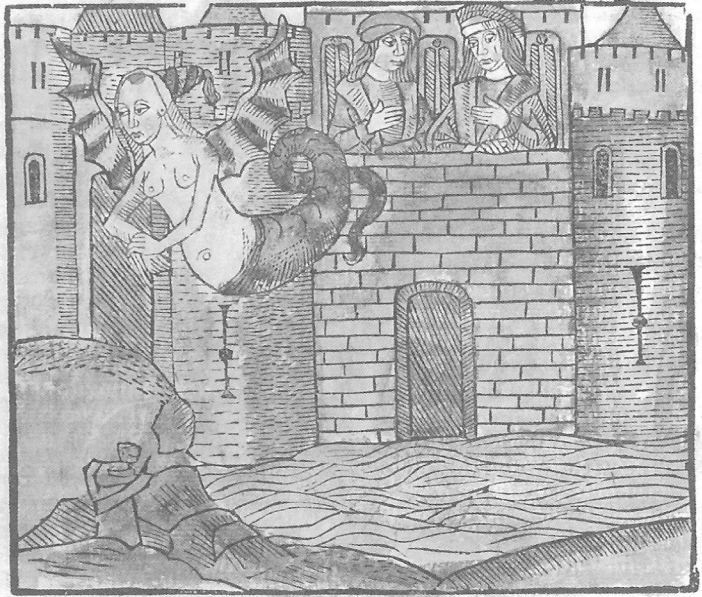
Book design: types and illustration

For the production of their books, these Antwerp printers primarily used types cut by Henrick Pieterszoon die Lettersnider (c. 1470–c. 1511). This punchcutter supplied almost half of the printing shops active in the Low Countries and his typefaces remained in circulation until the period 1550–1560.²⁴ Their success can be explained by their resemblance to a particular script much in fashion in this region, namely the gothic script developed by the Brethren of Common Life for the copying of manuscripts. Henrick Pieterszoon die Lettersnider came from Rotterdam and began his career in the service of Gerard Leeu in 1489. However, their collaboration terminated due to a tragic event in December 1492. During a scuffle over the punchcutter's intention to start his own business, Leeu received a serious head wound and passed away after two days in agony.²⁵

²¹ 95–101; H.D.L. Vervliet, *Sixteenth-century printing types of the Low Countries*, Amsterdam 1968, 20–21.

²⁵ Brussels, State Archives, Rekenkamer, 12904 (July–December 1493), fol. 172r–172v. Edition and comments in: HPT, I, 71–72; W. Hellings, 'Gérard Leeu' in *Cinquième centenaire*, no. 139. The Leeu's employees, deeply affected by the accident, have paid tribute to their master in the colophon of *Cronycles of the londe of England* pub-

lished in 1493 after the tragic event (ISTC ic00481000; NB 11139): 'Enpremyd in the Duchye of Brabant, in the towne of Andewarpe, in the yere of owr Lord .M.CCCC. XCIII, by maistir Gerard de Leew, a man of grete wyse- dom in all maner of kunnyng, whych nowe is come from lyfe unto the deth, which is grete harme for many a poure man. On whos sowle God almyghty for hys hygh grace have mercy. Amen' (fol. 108v).



Doen melusine opter venstre
 stont nam sy orlof aē hē al-
 lē al weenede. eñ sprack tot
 raymondijn ald⁹. Siet mijn lieue
 vrient hier syn twee goudē ringen.
 daer af dat het ghesteente van sulc
 ker machten. alsoe langhe als ghij
 oft uwe oorpe na vdaer af enē hebt
 soe en suldi in gheenē velde oft stry-
 de veruallen oft verflaghen wordē
 op dat uwe sake recht veerdich sij.
 noch oeck die ghene diese ouer hem
 hebbē en sullen van gheentre wape

nen steruen Doen hi die vā haer ot
 fanghen hadde begonst sy te such-
 tene eñ groot melbaer te makēne.
 eñ ouer siende die plaetse sprac sy al
 dus O suete plaetse eñ contreye ick
 hebbe in vso vele recreacie ende so-
 laes ghehadt. alle mijn gheluc van
 deser werelt is hier geweest. hadde
 god verhoedt dz ic doch aldus niet
 verraden en hadde geworden He-
 lazen men heeft mi vrouwe ghehe-
 ten eñ alle dz ick beual dat was ge-
 daen. nu en sal ick niet meer verfel

Fig. 5 Jean d'Arras, *Histoire de la belle Mélusine* [Dutch], Antwerpen: Geraert Leeu, 9 February 1491, 20, fol. 15v (Royal Library Brussels, Inc B 1.369).

The typographic activity of Henrick Pieterszoon die Lettersnider was, however, fairly limited. Only about a dozen publications have been recorded, many of which survive only as fragments. Most are poems and brief devotional texts in Dutch. Lettersnider also printed a monetary ordinance of Philip the Handsome. Obviously, his publications were restricted by his main activity, that of punchcutter. Indeed, most of the publications by Pieterszoon were conceived as advertisements for his main job. In 1504, he moved from Antwerp to Rotterdam, where he stayed for five years before moving to Delft where he ended his days. As a punchcutter supplying many Antwerp printers, Henrick Pieterszoon die Lettersnider had great influence on the design of their products and endowed them with a particular regional appearance.

Without going so far as to dethrone blackletter, which was still favoured by both printers and their customers, the use of other kinds of types nevertheless increased from the 1520s onwards.²⁶ Willem Vorsterman offers a perfect illustration of this.²⁷ His first work set in roman type came off the press in 1522; it was Jacob Probst's *Anathematizatio*.²⁸ Three years later, italics appear in his publication of Erasmus's *De contemptu mundi epistola* (1525).²⁹ Vorsterman completed his collection of typographical tools with a Greek alphabet in 1530, and a Hebrew one in 1533. These types were used for the first time respectively in Joannes Placentius's *Catalogus omnium antistitum Tungarorum* and Joannes van Campen's *Interpretatio omnium psalmodum*.³⁰ In this period, the bastarda type also appeared again, a typeface that was popular in the 15th century in works printed by William Caxton (1415/24–1492) and Colard Mansion (†c. 1484), active in Bruges.³¹ It was mainly used during the period 1525–1535 by the Antwerp printer Martin Lempereur (c. 1500–1536).³² Another stylistic innovation appeared in the second half of the 16th century with the introduction of civilité type, inspired by French humanist script.³³

The engravers to whom the Antwerp printers turned for the illustration of their books have all remained anonymous. Most of them probably originated from the same area. Often their 'names' came from their place of activity, or perhaps from the typographers with whom they collaborated, or even from the bibliophiles who 'discovered' them. 15th-century wood engravings are typically characterised by the presence of much hatching with short, fat, pointed lines drawn very close to each other, touching the outlines. After a while, the technique faced a period of decline. Although the majority of the engravers contented themselves with roughly copying the work of their predecessors, some of them

26 Vervliet, *Sixteenth-century printing types*, 62–67, 70–74.

27 About Vorsterman's types, see: NAT, II, 7–9, pl. I–XXXV;

Vervliet, *Sixteenth-century printing types*, T 4, T 6, T 14,

T 17, T 20, T 30, T 47, R 10, R 12, R 14, R 28, and It 5.

28 NB 2599B.

29 NB 1139G.

30 NB 25653, 4028.

31 HPT, I, 21–24, 28–29, and 53–54.

32 Vervliet, *Sixteenth-century printing types*, 51–52, B 1–2, B 4–7.

33 H. Carter & H.D.L. Vervliet, *Civilité types*, Oxford 1966; Vervliet, *Sixteenth-century printing types*, 52–53. See also: R. Jimenez, *Les caractères de civilité. Typographie et calligraphie sous l'Ancien Régime*, [Gap] 2011.



Fig. 6 Vanden navolghingen Christi, Antwerp: Henrick Eckert, 28 September 1505, 8vo, fol. 1r (NK 2011; Royal Library Brussels, Inc A 1540).

such as the Master of the Passion Delbecq-Schreiber, distinguished themselves; his technique stands out because of his dexterity and true mastery of the play of light and shadow.³⁴

Antwerp rapidly became the main centre for illustrated books in the Low Countries and Gerard Leeu was without doubt the most prolific printer of them, with more than 850 different woodblocks used in the books he produced. He collaborated with anonymous engravers, whose names came from their place of activity: from the First and Second Gouda

34 W.M. Conway, *The woodcutters of the Netherlands in the fifteenth century*, Cambridge 1884; A.-J.-J. Delen, *Histoire de la gravure dans les anciens Pays-Bas et dans les provinces belges des origines jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle*, 1, Paris/Bruxelles 1924; 2 (1), Paris/Bruxelles, 1934, 11–77; Id., 'L'illustration du livre en Belgique des origines jusqu'à la fin du xve siècle: III. Les incunables typographiques' in *Histoire du livre et de l'imprimerie en Belgique. Des origines à nos jours*, II, Bruxelles 1930, 83–115; E. Cockx-Indestege, 'De passie Delbecq-

Schreiber, houtsneden in drukken 1500–1550' in *Ons geestelijk erf*, 63–64 (1989–1990), 245–278; I. Kok, *Woodcuts in incunabula printed in the Low Countries*, (4 vols.), Houten 2013.

35 Conway, *The woodcutters of the Netherlands*, 32–73; Delen, *Histoire de la gravure*, I, 86–102; Id., 'L'illustration du livre en Belgique', 106–114; Kok, *Woodcuts in incunabula*, passim.

36 The most famous case illustrating this practice is without doubt Hartmann Schedel's *Liber chronicarum*

Woodcutters, to the Master of Haarlem and the First Antwerp Woodcutter. Leeu also obtained many other engravings from colleagues such as Jacob Bellaert (fl. 1483–1486) from Haarlem, or Heinrich Knoblochtzter (c. 1445–1500) from Strasbourg. As evidence of his good relationships with certain other printers, Leeu did not hesitate to lend them woodblocks, as, for example, he did with Johann Koelhoff (†1502) in Cologne and Arend de Keysere (†1489) in Ghent. After his death, his collection of woodblocks was dispersed amongst several printers, such as, in Antwerp, Adriaen van Liesvelt (fl. 1494–1500), Dirk Martens, Roland van den Dorp (†c. 1500) and Henrick Eckert, as well as the Zwolle-based Peter Os van Breda (fl. 1480–1510).³⁵ Leeu is a perfect example of a printer who used all available means to get hold of the materials required to illustrate his editions, and, in contrast to some others, he never resorted to using less competent engravers who would simply copy woodcuts that appeared in the publications of competitors.³⁶

Printers' settlement in the city

Antwerp typographers clustered around other craftsmen, forming a community dedicated to the production and the sale of printed books at the heart of the city, in the immediate vicinity of the Collegiate Church of Our Lady.

Unlike miniaturists or bookbinders, printers often inserted their address into the colophons of the books they published. In the case of Antwerp, colophon study confirms the existence of an area dedicated to the printed book south of the Collegiate Church of Our Lady, in a triangle formed by the *Kammenstraat* (Breweries Street), the *Steenhouwersvest* (the Stone-Cutters Rampart) and the *Lombaerdeveste* (the Lombards Rampart), with a particular focus on the *Kammerpoort* (the Breweries Gate). More than 75 percent of the printers who worked in the city before 1520 could be found in this area.³⁷ The concentration of these printers not far from the collegiate church can be easily explained by the presence of the *Onze-Lieve-Vrouwepand* (Market of Our Lady), which had been the nucleus of the trade in paintings, sculpture, altarpieces, books and engravings since 1460.³⁸

Other artisans of the book also lived in and around these streets. Unfortunately, the data are too fragmentary for us to know exactly the extent to which they predominated in this urban space. However, we have located at least three binders, two just outside the *Kammerpoort* and the third in the *Steenhouwersvest*. On 13 November 1520, Adriaen van Hoelwyck sold his house situated '*buiten de Cammerpoort*' (outside the Breweries Gate)

published by Koberger (ISTC is00307000): the c. 2,000 woodcuts of the Koberger's edition were reproduced by the Augsburg printer Johann Schönsperger in 1497 (ISTC is00308000).

37 Printers settled in these streets: Govaert Bac, Adriaen van Berghen, Symon Cock, Jan van Doesborch, Henrick Eckert, Mathias van der Goes, Michiel Hillen, Adriaen van Liesvelt, Dirk Martens, Thomas van der Noot, Henrick Pieterszoon, and Willem Vorsterman (Adam, *Imprimeurs et société*, 2, 309–310).

38 W.H. Vroom, *De Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-kerk te Antwerpen. De financiering van de bouw tot de beeldenstorm*, Amsterdam 1983, 78–91; F. Vermeylen, *Painting for the market. Commercialization of art in Antwerp's Golden Age*, Turnhout 2003, 24–27; K. Van der Stighelen & F. Vermeylen, 'The Antwerp Guild of St. Luke and the Marketing of Paintings, 1400–1700' in N. De Marchi & H.J. Van Miegroet (eds.), *Mapping markets for paintings in Europe, 1450–1700*, Turnhout 2006, 189–208.

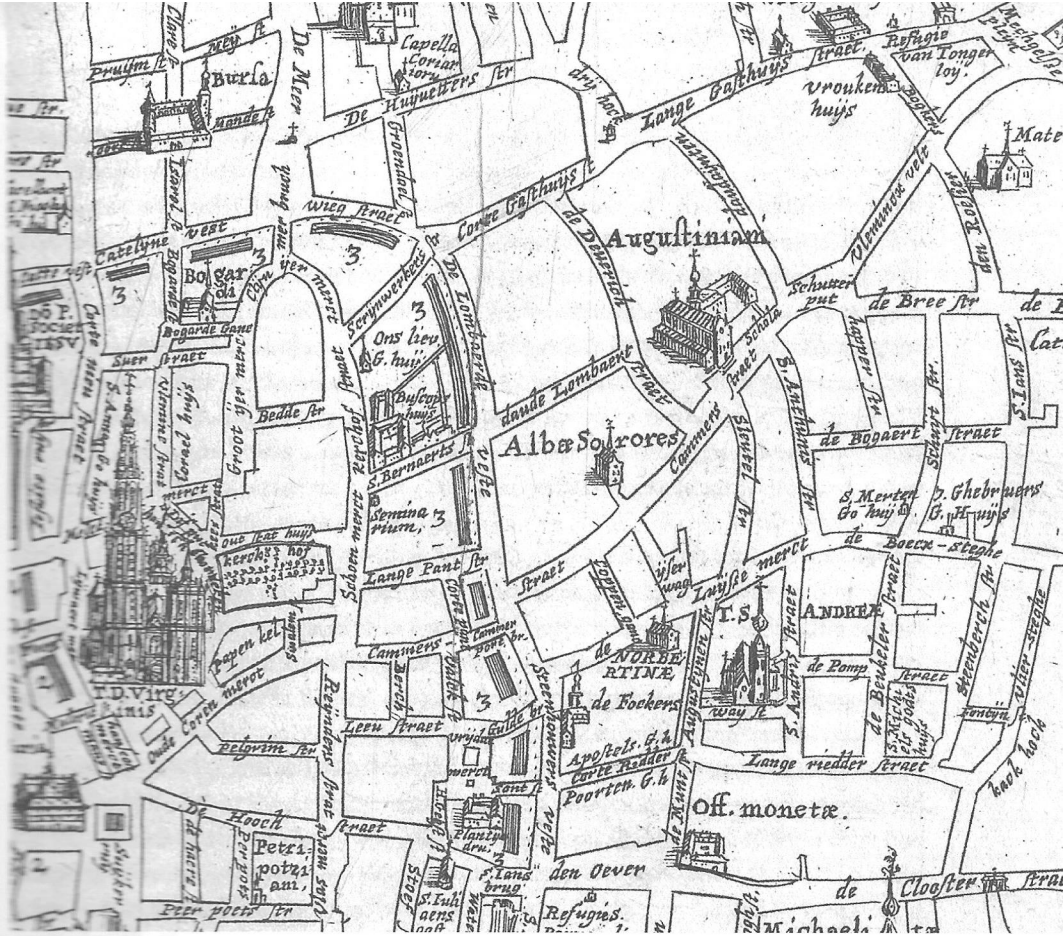


Fig. 7 Jacques Le Roy, *Antverpia constructionis eius primordia et incrementa*, [Antwerp: s.n., 1678], 330 x 485 mm (Royal Library Brussels, CP, xxxi Anvers – 1678 – LeRoy – III 3006).

to his colleague Jan Gast.³⁹ In 1509, one Master Goswuin lived in the Steenhouwersvest.⁴⁰ In the same area, there was also the widow of the bookseller Willem Houtmaert († c. 1515) who established her residence ‘*byde cammerporte*’ (next to the Breweries Gate). She was the sister of Jan van Driel (fl. 1494–1529), bookseller, calligrapher, illuminator, and book-binder, who lived not far from the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwepand.⁴¹ Several engravers had installed workshops in this area⁴² as had other businesses not related to book production: for example, we know that, in 1503, Govaert Bac’s neighbour was a baker named Ghysbert van Bouwele.⁴³

39 Antwerp City Archives (henceforth: Antwerp CA), SR 157 (1520), fols. 128v–29r. A book bound by Adriaen van Hoelwyck in 1528 is kept in private hands (P. Verheyden, ‘Een band van Adriaen van Hoolwyck’ in *Tijdschrift voor boek- en bibliotheekwezen*, 5 (1907), 39–41). Unlike his colleague, Jan Gast joined the guild of St. Luke and was admitted as master in 1503 (P. Rombouts & T. Van Lerius, *Les ‘Liggenen’ et autres archives historiques de la gilde anversoise de saint Luc*, (2 vols.), Antwerpen 1864–1876, 1, 63). He hosted the printer Jan Severszoon from Leiden during his stay in Antwerp in 1527 (Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs*, 200).

40 This information was discovered in a note written by Gerard van der Scaeft (†1536), abbot of the Premonstratensian abbey of Averbode, in his copy of Jacobus Faber Stapulensis’s *Quincuplex psalterium* held now by the University of Liège (Jacobus Faber Stapulensis, *Quincuplex psalterium. Gallicum. Romanum. Hebraicum. Vetus. Conciliatum*. Paris: Henri Estienne, 1509, 20, fol. 4r; Liège, University Library, Th 590). Master Goswuin, admitted to the guild of St. Luke in 1492, worked on some occasions for the Abbey of Averbode and also received 35 s. for the binding of a choir book that belonged to the church of Our Lady in Antwerp. See: W.H.J. Weale, *Bookbindings and rubbings of bindings*



Printers and the guild of St. Luke

Too few to organise themselves into a guild of their own, printers turned to guilds that other professions of the book had already joined. Though in Venice the Senate had imposed the creation of such a guild in the middle of the 16th century (1548–1549), the first guild of printers in the Low Countries appeared only in the 17th century.⁴⁴ An ordinance of 1662 established a corporation of printers and booksellers in Brussels. Members then enjoyed

⁴¹ in the National Art Library, South Kensington Museum, London 1894, LXII; P. Lefèvre, 'Transcriptions, enluminures et reliures de manuscrits liturgiques aux xv^{me} et xvi^{me} siècles' in Archives, bibliothèques et musées de Belgique, 12 (1935), 8–24 (no. 30); Rombouts & Van Lenus, *Les 'Liggeren'*, 1, 44.

⁴² Antwerp CA, SR 147 (1515), fol. 93r; Rombouts & Van Lenus, *Les 'Liggeren'*, 1, 59; Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs*, 59 and 98–99.

⁴³ J. Van der Stock, *Printing images in Antwerp. The introduction of printmaking in a city. Fifteenth century to 1535*, Rotterdam 1998, 60–71.

⁴⁴ Antwerp CA, SR (1502), fol. 116v.

⁴⁴ H.F. Brown, *The Venetian printing press 1469–1800. An historical study based upon documents for the most part hitherto unpublished*, London 1891, 83–91; J. Kostylo, 'Commentary on Johannes of Speyer's Venetian monopoly (1469)' in L. Bently & M. Kretschmer (eds.), *Primary sources on copyright (1450–1900)*, 2008 (www.copyrighthistory.org).

a monopoly on the printing and the sale of books in the capital and it was henceforth prohibited for anyone who was not a member of the guild to sell printed books. The recruitment of members was subject to strict formalities: preliminary admission by the Council of Brabant had to be followed by a four-year apprenticeship with a master residing in Brussels. The guild was placed under the jurisdiction of the Council of Brabant.⁴⁵

In Antwerp, typographers joined the guild of St. Luke. Founded in the late 14th century, it embraced a number of different crafts (including painters, sculptors, goldsmiths and glaziers, as well as book artisans such as scribes, illuminators, and bookbinders).⁴⁶ The guild was directed by two deans, elected for a period of one year. According to one of its oldest regulations, no one was authorised to practise a profession under its supervision unless he possessed or acquired citizenship (*een poertere moeten worde ofte poertere sijn*).⁴⁷ A foreigner wishing to obtain this status had to pay a fee after pledging allegiance to the Duke of Brabant in the presence of the *schout* (sheriff) and the aldermen of the city.⁴⁸ This right also included legal exemptions and tax privileges.⁴⁹

The guild of St. Luke tried to extend its sphere of influence over the printers as it had previously done over the illuminators. A trial of the printer Adriaen van Liesvelt (fl. 1494–1500) versus the guild shows this very clearly. In 1495, Van Liesvelt was accused before the aldermen of the city of using oil and varnish – that is to say, materials pertaining to the painter – for his own illustrations and should therefore affiliate himself with the guild. In his defence, the printer replied that he used neither colours nor brushes, but only paper and ink. In the end, the guild's case was dismissed and Van Liesvelt was able to continue his activities without any interference.⁵⁰ This trial had serious consequences for the guild since it made it formally possible thenceforth for anyone to exercise freely the art of printing, on the condition that they did not interfere with the activities of the illuminators. Despite this relative independence, more than half of the typographers active in the city before 1520 affiliated with St. Luke's guild.⁵¹ Indeed, the printers Govaert Bac and Jan

45 J.-B. Vincent, *Essai sur l'histoire de l'imprimerie en Belgique, depuis le xv^{me} jusqu'à la fin du xviii^{me} siècle*, Brussels 1867, 77–80, 190–93; A. Vincent, 'La typographie bruxelloise aux xvii^e et xviii^e siècles' in *Histoire du livre et de l'imprimerie en Belgique*, Bruxelles 1925–1926, IV, 12–14.

46 J.B. Van der Straelen, *Jaerboek der vermaerde en kunst-ryke gilde van sint Lucas binnen de stad Antwerpen*, Antwerp 1855; Rombouts & Van Lerijs, *Les 'Liggeren'*, vol. I, I–VII; J. Van der Stock, 'De Antwerpse Sint-Lucasgilde en de drukkers-uitgegevers: "middeleeuws" achterhoedegevecht of paradigma van cultureel-politieke machtsverschuivingen?' in J.M.M. Hermans & K. van der Hoek (eds.), *Boeken in de late Middeleeuwen. Verslag van de Groningse codicologendagen 1992*, Groningen 1994, 155–165; Van der Stock, *Printing images*, 27–57; Van der Stighelen & Vermeylen, 'The Antwerp Guild of St. Luke', 189–208; M.P.J. Martens & N. Peeters, 'Artists by numbers: quantifying artists' trades in sixteenth-century Antwerp' in M. Faries (ed.), *Making and marketing: studies of painting process in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Netherlandish workshops*, Turnhout 2006, 211–222.

47 Van der Straelen, *Jaerboek*, 2.

48 G. De Longé, *Coutumes du Pays et duché de Brabant. Quartier d'Anvers*, I, Bruxelles 1870, 274–275.

49 De Longé, *Coutumes du Pays et duché de Brabant. Quartier d'Anvers*, I, 274–295.

50 Antwerp CA, *Vonnisboek 1232 (1494–1502)*, fol. 22r. Edited in: Van der Stock, 'De Antwerpse Sint-Lucasgilde', 162–163, nos. 1–2.

51 Dates of Antwerp printers' registrations: Govaert Bac (1493), Adriaen van Berghen (before 1505), Symon Cock (1557), Jan Dingelsche (before 1532), Henrick Eckert (1520), Mathias van der Goes (1487), Gerard Leeu (1485), Jacob van Liesvelt (1536) and Willem Vorsterman (1512) (Rombouts & Van Lerijs, *Les 'Liggeren'*, I, 37, 39, 45, 63, 76, 94, 117, 127, and 203).

52 Rombouts & Van Lerijs, *Les 'Liggeren'*, I, 83, 108, 117, and 142.

53 On the chambers of rhetoric and especially the one of Antwerp, see: H. Liebrecht, *Les chambres de rhétorique*, Bruxelles 1948; E. Coornaert, 'Les chambres de rhétorique en Flandre' in *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 114 (1970), 195–200; A.-L. Van Bruaene, *Repertorium van rederij-*

Dingelsche (fl. 1500–1532) served as dean in 1515 and 1532, respectively; and Willem Vorsterman fulfilled the same function in 1527 and 1542.⁵²

As well as defending the professional interests of its members, the guild of St. Luke actively participated in the propagation of the urban culture of the Low Countries. From 1480, the guild hosted the Chamber of Rhetoric named the *Violieren* (Gillyflowers).⁵³ The Chambers of Rhetoric (Dutch: *rederijkerskamers*) were confraternities devoted to the production and performance of vernacular poetry and plays in the Low Countries during the 15th and 16th centuries. They were also integrated into political culture. The *factor* – the lead poet and playwright – regularly participated in competitions organised either in Antwerp or in neighbouring towns to defend the honour of his chamber. When travelling, the *factor* was usually accompanied by the Prince of the chamber (a sort of patron of the arts), by members of the guild, and by representatives of the local authorities.⁵⁴

These events were thus an opportunity for printers to develop special relationships with their fellow citizens and to build relationships outside the city walls. For example, Govaert Bac and the painter Jan de Beer as deans of the guild, played an active role in the organisation of the Joyous Entry of Archduke Charles in Antwerp on 12 February 1515. The celebration lasted more than ten days, from 9 to 22 February, and included numerous ceremonies, banquets, tournaments, and plays.⁵⁵ A few months later, on 22 July, the two deans travelled to Mechelen for a regional rhetoric competition escorted by members of the city council, eight knights and the Prince of Rhetoric Benedictus de Opitiis, organist of the Collegiate Church of Our Lady from 1511 until 1516.⁵⁶ The procession consisted of more than 600 people, all marching in identical costumes. Thanks to its magnificence, Antwerp won the prize for the most beautiful entry.⁵⁷

The guild of St. Luke gave printers an opportunity to integrate themselves in the urban associative network. Additionally, the sharing of community experiences allowed them to embrace a sense of identity, which was not strictly related to geographical origins.

lerskamers in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden en Luik 1400–1650, art. De Violieren (www.dbnl.org/tekst/bru-0002repe01_01); Id., 'A wonderfull tryumfe, for the wynting of a pryse: guilds, ritual, theater, and the urban network in the Southern Low Countries, ca. 1450–1650' in *Renaissance quarterly*, 49 (2006), 374–405; Id., 'Om beters wille'. *Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden*, Amsterdam 2008.

54 The details of the movements of the *Violieren* until 1520 are given in: Rombouts & Van Lerijs, *Les 'Liggenen'*, 1, 39, 43, 45, 47, 49, 52, 56, 59, 63, 65, 68, 72, 80, 83, 91, and 96.

55 P. Génard, 'Joyeuse entrée et inauguration de l'archiduc Charles à Anvers, en 1515' in *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*, S. 4, 1 (1873), 387–406; L.P. Gachard, *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, 2, Bruxelles, 1874, 14.

56 Benedictus de Opitiis composed the hymn, which was printed in August 1515 by Jan de Gheet (NB 23164), in honour of the Joyous Entry of Charles V in Antwerp. He left the Low Countries for the court of Henry VIII in 1516. He later returned to settle on the Continent in

the region of Ulm where he died in 1544; see P. Verheyden, 'De drukker en de componist van het Maximiliaan-boek' in *Antwerpsch archievenblad*, S. 2, 3 (1928), 268–282; G. Persoons, *De orgels en de organisten van de Onze Lieve Vrouwkerk te Antwerpen van 1500 tot 1650*, Brussel 1981, 63–64.

57 Rombouts & Van Lerijs, *Les 'Liggenen'*, 1, 83–84. After the death of Govaert Bac, Jan de Beer filed a lawsuit against the widow of the typographer. He asked her to present the accounts of her husband and to settle the debts owed to the guild for the Joyous Entry and the travel to Mechelen (Antwerp CA, *Vonnisboek* 1235, fol. 139v; D. Ewing, 'Some documentary additions to the biography of Jan de Beer' in *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, (1983), 93–98). The burden of dean could be extremely expensive and sometimes other deans had to pay in order to clear the accounts. In 1499, for example, Heynderic Scilleman and Heynderic van Wueluwe discharged the debts of their two predecessors Jan Snel and Merten van Doornick, deans in 1494 (Rombouts & Van Lerijs, *Les 'Liggenen'*, 1, 55).

In summary, the late 15th and early 16th centuries represented an undoubtedly prosperous period for Antwerp printers who fully appreciated the opportunities of the book market, as their prosperity indicates. These craftsmen found their place in the urban landscape of Antwerp with other craftsmen already involved in the book industry. They opened their printing shops in the close vicinity of booksellers and workshops of binders. Joining a professional guild, like the guild of St. Luke, helped the printers to take part in the socio-cultural life of Antwerp and also, more widely, to integrate into the society of the city. These pioneers, from diverse origins, laid the foundation for a community whose structures would continue throughout the Ancien Régime. They also prepared the conditions for the emergence of the Golden Age of Antwerp typography.

There is still much research to be done on the history of printing in Antwerp. One of the most promising fields is certainly the study of the place of printers in urban society. Indeed, until now book historians have concentrated mainly on reconstructing aspects of Antwerp book production (lists of titles printed, census ...) and printers' individual biographies. Bibliographers have developed very useful research tools, but they have neglected the social aspects and have not yet answered the following question: how did the first Antwerp printers integrate themselves into the socio-economic structures of this city? The handpress book industry is after all an urban phenomenon that cannot be considered independently of its environment and the people who engaged in it.⁵⁸

58 Translation: Liz Baird and Goran Proot.

SUMMARY

In this article Renaud Adam examines the printing industry in Antwerp, from its origins to the Reformation, that is, the period from the early 1480s until 1520 which constitutes the first historical phase of printing. It offers a brief journey through this pioneering era of Antwerp printing, a period on the border between medieval and modern times in which chivalric romances and other fabulous tales found themselves sharing the printing presses with the writings of Erasmus and Christopher Columbus.

COMPTE-RENDU

Dans cet article, Renaud Adam s'est penché sur le monde de l'imprimerie à Anvers, des origines à la Réforme, soit du début des années 1480 à 1520, ce qui correspond à la première phase historique de l'imprimerie. Il propose un bref voyage à l'époque des pionniers de l'histoire de l'imprimerie anversoise, au cours d'une période cruciale à la lisière du Moyen Âge et de l'époque moderne où se sont côtoyés les romans de chevalerie et autres récits fabuleux ainsi que les écrits d'Érasme et de Christophe Colomb.