

Tracing Lost Editions of Parisian Printers in the Sixteenth Century: The Case of Jean Bonfons and his Widow Catherine Sergent

by

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IN THE INTRODUCTION to their *French Vernacular Books: Books Published in the French Language before 1601*, Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby and Alexander Wilkinson warn scholars about the quandary of lost editions, explaining that:

Around twenty thousand books in this bibliography are known only from one surviving copy; it may therefore readily be believed that many have disappeared altogether. Losses would have been highest among ephemeral classes of literature, such as broadsheets, or small books that might have been used to destruction, such as school books and primers.¹

This statement is crucial for anyone who wishes to study the complex economy of print business in Europe during the *Ancien régime*. It also raises two questions: do modern bibliographies accurately reflect what was published during that era? And, as a corollary, do survival rates distort our

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¹ FB, p. ix. The issue of lost books is discussed in: Goran Proot and Leo Egghe, 'Estimating Editions on the Basis of Survivals: Printed Programmes of Jesuit Plays in the Provincia Flandro-Belgica before 1773, with a Note on the *Book Historical Law*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 102 (2008), 149–74; Jonathan Green, Franck McIntyre and Paul Needham, 'The Shape of Incunable Survival and Statistical Estimation of Lost Editions', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 105 (2011), 141–75; Neil Harris, 'The Italian Renaissance Book: Catalogues, Censuses and Survival', in *The Book Triumphant. Print in Transition in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. by Malcolm Walsby and Graeme Kemp (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 26–56; *Lost Books. Reconstructing Pre-Industrial Europe*, ed. by Flavia Bruni and Andrew Pettegree (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Alexandra Hill, *Lost Books and Printing in London, 1557–1640. An Analysis of the Stationers' Company Register* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

perception of early-modern book production? These questions go beyond the strict framework of bibliometry, problematizing our understanding of the production and the distribution of ideas and culture in early-modern Europe.

For the present article, focusing on the Bonfons, a sixteenth-century Parisian family, the above issues are central because the survival rate of their publications is very low and the number of lost editions is high.² Jean Bonfons' activities are poorly documented; most of his editions are undated. He first settled as a bookseller on the Île de la Cité in 1543, 'en la rue Neufve Nostre Dame a l'enseigne de saint Nicolas', a street in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame that featured many bookstores.³ He succeeded his father-in-law, Pierre Sergent, as owner of the venture in 1547 and remained in that position until his death in 1568.⁴ His widow Catherine Sergent then took over the company until her decease four years later. Their son Nicolas—married to Catherine Ruelle, daughter of the Parisian bookseller Jean Ruelle—set up his own book business in 1571 before succeeding his mother a year later. Nicolas was still in activity in 1618 and died in March 1628; his wife followed him on 14 June, the same year. His son Pierre assisted him from 1597 to 1607, until he obtained public office in Pontoise.

The activities of Jean Bonfons and his widow covered a period of thirty years. They published roughly 160 to 170 titles in all, of which two thirds are estimated to survive in one or more copies.⁵ Specializing in medieval romances, they also published songbooks, drama, religious literature (mainly devotional and hagiographic works), legal ordinances and practice books. Nicolas Bonfons extended the catalogue to more modern authors, including

² On the Bonfons, see: Philippe Renouard, *Documents sur les imprimeurs, libraires, cartiers, graveurs fondeurs de lettres, relieurs doreurs de livres, faiseurs de fermoirs, enlumineurs parcheminiers et papetiers ayant exercé à Paris de 1450 à 1600 recueillis aux archives nationales et au département des manuscrits de la bibliothèque nationale* (Paris: H. Champion, 1901), pp. 18–19; id. *Répertoire des imprimeurs parisiens, libraires, fondeurs de caractères et correcteurs d'imprimerie, depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie à Paris (1470) jusqu'à la fin du seizième siècle* (Paris: M. J. Minard, Lettres Modernes, 1965), pp. 42–43; Destot; Annie Charon, 'Jean Bonfons, libraire parisien, et l'illustration des romans de chevalerie', in *Le livre et l'image en France au XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1989), pp. 57–74; *Artus de Bretagne. Fac-similé de l'édition de Paris, Nicolas Bonfons, 1584*, ed. by Nicole Cazauran and Christine Ferlampin-Acher (Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1996); Stéphanie Rambaud, 'Bonfons, famille', in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du livre*, ed. by Pascal Fouché and others, 3 vols (Paris: Cercle de la Librairie, 2002–2011), 1, 361; Roméo Arbour, *Dictionnaire des femmes libraires en France (1470–1870)* (Geneva: Droz, 2003), p. 84; Sergio Cappello, 'La double réception du *Chevalier doré* (Denis Janot 1541; Denis de Harsy, 1542; Jean Bonfons, s.d.)', *Studi francesi*, 159 (2009), 535–48; id. 'Les éditions d'*Artus de Bretagne* au XVI^e siècle', in *Artus de Bretagne. Du manuscrit à l'imprimé (XIV^e–XIX^e siècle)*, ed. by Christine Ferlampin-Acher (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015), pp. 153–86.

³ Stéphanie Rambaud, 'Libraires, imprimeurs, éditeurs. Les Treppeler de la rue Neuve-Notre-Dame à Paris', in *Raconter en prose: XIV^e–XVII^e siècle*, ed. by Paola Cifarelli and others (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017), pp. 109–20.

⁴ A notarial deed, dated 11 May 1568, mentions Catherine Sergent as the widow of Jean Bonfons (Renouard, *Documents*, p. 18).

⁵ Source: Destot and USTC.

Gilles Corrozet, Antoine Du Verdier or Mateo Alemán. As many leading booksellers in Paris, the Bonfons rarely printed their books themselves, instead delegating the printing tasks to subcontractors whose names rarely appear on their title-pages or colophons. Jean Bonfons mainly worked with the printer Pierre Ratouere.

Here, we shall focus our attention on the lost production of Jean Bonfons and his widow. Previous research on this topic was conducted in 1977 by Arlette Destot in her unpublished Master's thesis.⁶ She relied mainly on old auction catalogues, such as that of Ambroise Firmin-Didot (1878), and on the very valuable source, *Manuel du libraire* of Jacques-Charles Brunet (1860–1865), which gathers information from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sale catalogues.⁷ Research for this article recovered further titles in François de La Croix du Maine's *Premier volume de la bibliothèque* (1584) and Antoine Du Verdier's *La bibliothèque* (1585),⁸ two exceptional sources that are believed to be the first ever short-title catalogues of French printed production.⁹ The list was completed in the context of the French Vernacular Books project—based at the University of St Andrews—through study of diverse kinds of sources including the catalogues of the Frankfurt Fair, Indices of Prohibited Books, and recording payments for individual editions.¹⁰ These records can all now be found on the database Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC), an extension of the French Vernacular Books project.

There remains a remarkable source, however, that has never been investigated for the completion of the Bonfons' bibliography: the archives of the Commission of the Index of Prohibited Books of Antwerp, printed in 1570. Its making took place in troubled times. Indeed, in the years 1565–66, the Low Countries were shaken by a vast politico-religious revolt directed against Philip II. In response to the uprising of parts of the population, the king established the so-called Council of Troubles, a special court active from 1567 to 1576. Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, duke of Alba and the governor general of the Low Countries, led this institution in its early years.

⁶ Destot, pp. 129–66.

⁷ *Catalogue des livres précieux manuscrits et imprimés ... Belles-lettres — histoire. Table alphabétique des noms d'auteurs et des ouvrages anonymes, suivie de la liste des prix d'adjudication* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1878); Brunet, *Manuel du libraire*.

⁸ François de La Croix du Maine, *Premier volume de la bibliothèque* (Paris: Abel L'Angelier, 1584), 2^o (USTC 1739); Antoine Du Verdier, *La bibliothèque* (Lyon: Jean d'Ogerolles for Barthélemy Honorat & Thibaud Ancelin, 1585), 2^o (USTC 1606).

⁹ On the use of these two sixteenth-century bibliographies for tracing lost editions, see Alexander S. Wilkinson, 'Lost Books Printed in French before 1601', *The Library*, vii, 10 (2009), 188–205.

¹⁰ The list is described in FB, p.x.

The repression was tremendous. The number of victims was close to 10,000. The population renamed this court 'the Council of Blood'.¹¹

The Council of Troubles had a very close look at the production and distribution as well as at the ownership of books. One of its most famous measures was the compilation and publication of three Indices of Prohibited Books (1569, 1570, 1571), which reproduced and completed the Tridentine Index (1564), which itself reproduced and completed the Louvain Index (1546, 1550, 1558).¹² One of the ten rules governing the application of the Tridentine Index allowed the local inquisitors and bishops to extend it, as they wished. For this reason, the Duke of Alba made Benito Arias Montano responsible for a catalogue of prohibited books specifically for the Netherlands. The Spanish orientalist was present in the Low Countries to help Christopher Plantin with the impression of the famous *Biblia sacra*. At the beginning of the year 1569, Plantin, having been granted a privilege, published the first Index of Antwerp, i.e. the Tridentine Index with some additional names and titles censored by Montano.¹³

Following this publication, the Duke ordered Councils of Justice to search for prohibited books in all bookstores and printing offices of the Low Countries. On 16 March 1569, inquisitors, theologians and police officers visited bookshops unannounced, to seize suspected books and submit them to the examination of local authorities. The lists of authorized and prohibited books found in the bookstores visited were sent to Brussels. In September, Alba instituted a commission of censors under the authority of Montano. Their work was completed on 3 October 1569. They established a catalogue, which was added as an appendix to the Tridentine Index published at the beginning of 1570 by Christopher Plantin.¹⁴ The State

¹¹ Alphonse Verheyden, *Le Conseil des Troubles* (Flavion-Florennes: Le Phare, 1981); Solange Deyon and Alain Lottin, *Les casseurs de l'été 1566. L'iconoclasme dans le Nord* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires de Lille; Westhoek: Editions des Beffrois, 1986); Gustaaf Marnet and Hugo de Schepper, 'Conseil des Troubles (1567–1576)', in *Les institutions du gouvernement central des Pays-Bas habsbourgeois (1482–1795)*, ed. by Erik Aerts, Michel Baelde and Herman Coppens, 2 vols (Brussels: Archives générales du Royaume, 1995), I, 470–78; Aline Goosens, *Les Inquisitions modernes dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux (1520–1633)*, 2 vols (Brussels: Presses de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, 1998), I, 114–21; Henry Kamen, *The Duke of Alba* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 75–105; Caroline Payen, *Aux confins du Hainaut, de la Flandre et du Brabant: le bailliage d'Enghien dans la tourmente iconoclaste (1566–1576). Étude de la répression des troubles religieux à la lumière des archives du Conseil des troubles et des Comptes de confiscation* (Courtrai: UGA, 2013).

¹² On this, see Fernand Willocx, *Introduction des décrets du Concile de Trente dans les Pays-Bas et dans la Principauté de Liège* (Louvain: Librairie universitaire, 1929), pp. 140–48; *Index d'Anvers 1569, 1570, 1571*, ed. by Jesus Martinez De Bujanda (Sherbrooke: Centre d'Études de la Renaissance; Geneva: Droz, 1988).

¹³ *Librorum prohibitorum index ex mandato regiae catholicae majestatis, & illustrissimi ducis Albani, consilique regii decreto confectus, & editus* (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1569), 16° (USTC 411461).

¹⁴ *Index librorum prohibitorum: cum regulis confectis per patres a Tridentina synodo delectos, auctoritate sanctissimi domini nostri Pii IIII pontificis maximi comprobatus, cum appendice in Belgio ex mandato regiae catholicae majestatis confecta* (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1570), 8° (USTC 401447).

Archives of Belgium, located in Brussels, still preserve some inventories established in Hainaut, Flanders, Picardy and Brabant. These archives are exceptional. They offer something of a cross-section of the book market in the Low Countries on the eve of the Counter-Reformation.¹⁵ They could also be related to the enquiry made by the Congregation of the Index in Italy, between 1598 and 1603, into the books held by the Italian religious orders. These documentary sources are, quite rightly, considered as the 'greatest national bibliography of the Counter-Reformation'.¹⁶

The archives produced in the county of Hainaut are the most relevant for our investigation, due to their precision. They are gathered into a register that describes not only the authors' names and titles, but also the bibliographic addresses of the listed works, i.e. the places and dates of printing. As an example, we can quote the first entry of this document: *Synodus dioecesana Cameracensis Bruxelle apud Michaelem Hamontanum 1567*, which is the printed version of the decisions taken by the synod held in Cambrai in 1567 at the request of the archbishop Maximilian of Berghe.¹⁷ The care and rigour shown by the notary who drafted the document make it a first-class source for the study of the book market in Hainaut in the second third of the sixteenth century. Because the men who made the list worked directly from physical copies, we can assume that the references listed are largely reliable. One can certainly detect some incorrect references, as for example the *Caroli Siganii emendationum libri duo Venetiis apud Aldum 1557* which could not have been printed by Aldo Manuzio; in fact, his son Paolo printed it.¹⁸ The mistake here stems from the father's great fame. In any case, the number of incorrect references is minimal compared to the large number of entries in this document.

¹⁵ On these archives and their contribution to the book history, see Moreau, 'Catalogue des livres brûlés à Tournai par ordre du duc d'Albe', pp. 194–213; Henri Vanhulst, 'Les éditions de musique polyphonique et les traités musicaux mentionnés dans les inventaires dressés en 1569 dans les Pays-Bas espagnols sur ordre du duc d'Albe', *Revue belge de musicologie*, 31 (1977), 60–71; Gustaaf Janssens, 'Plantijndrukken in de Henegouwse boekhandel in 1569', in *Ex officina Plantiniana. Studia in memoriam Christophori Plantini (ca. 1520–1589)*, ed. by Marcus de Schepper and Francine de Nave (Antwerp: Vereeniging der Antwerpse Bibliophielen, 1989), pp. 349–79; Renaud Adam, Nicole Bingen, *Lectures italiennes dans les pays wallons à la première Modernité (1500–1630)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 61–71.

¹⁶ Giovanna Granata, 'On the Track of Lost Editions in Italian Religious Libraries at the End of the Sixteenth Century: A Numerical Analysis of the RICI Database', in *Lost Books*, pp. 324–44 (p. 326). See also Rosa Maria Borraccini and others, 'A proposito dell'inchiesta della S. Congregazione dell'Indice dei libri proibiti alla fine del 500', *Il capitale culturale*, 6 (2013), 13–45.

¹⁷ *Synodus dioecesana Cameracensis, celebrata 1567* (Brussels: Michiel van Hamont, [1568]), 4° (USTC 409987). Maximilian of Berghe is the first prelate of the Low Countries to introduce and implement the Tridentine decrees. On him, see Laura Hollevoet and Violet Soen, 'Le «Borromée» des anciens Pays-Bas? Maximilien de Berghe, archevêque de Cambrai et l'application du Concile de Trente (1564–1567)', *Revue du Nord*, 419 (2017), 41–65 <<https://www.cairn.info/revue-du-nord-2017-1-page-41.htm>>.

¹⁸ Carlo Siganio, *Emendationum libri duo. Quorum argumentum proximae pagellae indicabunt* (Venezia: Paolo Manuzio, 1557) 4° (USTC 856326).

The entire document contains entries for around 2,200 titles. The first section lists all the books found in Mons (around 1,600 titles), classified according to language and orthodoxy: around 750 books in Latin, the same in French and around one hundred books prohibited (sixty-nine in Latin and thirty-two in French).¹⁹ The committee at Mons was composed of four men: Jean Bonhomme, inquisitor for the Hainaut,²⁰ Pierre de Behault,²¹ licentiate in Theology (both canons of the collegiate church St Germain of Mons), Jean de Glarges, bachelor, and François Robert, alderman of the city of Mons. Unfortunately, the names of the booksellers visited are not mentioned. This information could have provided very valuable data on the situation of the book market in Mons.²²

Among the booksellers who were paid a visit, three are known from other sources, either as a result of their relationship with Christopher Plantin or for their role in the production of books: Claude Bronchin (*fl.* 1569–78), Jean Le Vivarier (*fl.* 1564–71), and Antoine Pissard (*fl.* ?1533–70).²³ The second section contains the ‘books coming from the city of Maubeuge visited in the city of Mons’ (‘livres venans de la ville de Maubeuge visités en la ville de Mons’).²⁴ It mentions the name of seven booksellers: Quentin Megus, Thomas de Lattre, Thomas Parisiis, Jehan Laxoce(?), Jehan Charles, Laurent Schorion and Andrien du Pont. There are around eighty books in Latin and in French, including six prohibited. The following section includes thirty books from Binche (one prohibited), with the name of six booksellers: Nicaise Foulon, Colin Taphin, Guillaume Desanter, Melchior Lapsin, Jehan Gilbaut and Jacques Desve.²⁵ The twenty-six books (one prohibited) from Bavay were examined in Jean Bonhomme’s own house in presence of Pierre de Behault, Jean de Glarges and Jacques Gielis, provost lieutenant of Bavay.²⁶ Only Fabien de Tourbes is mentioned as a

¹⁹ Brussels, State Archives, Council of Troubles, 22, fols. 11–69v.

²⁰ He was appointed in 1545: Alexandre Henne, *Histoire du règne de Charles Quint*, 10 vols (Bruxelles – Leipzig: Émile Flatau, 1858–60), ix, 68. He died on 16 April 1583: Léopold Devillers, *Chartes du chapitre de Sainte-Waudru de Mons*, 4 vols (Brussels: Royal Academy of Belgium, 1899–1913), IV, 212.

²¹ Son of Jean de Behault and Jacqueline de Bray, Pierre de Behault was born on 10 November 1546 and became canon in 1560. See Gilles-Joseph de Boussu, *Histoire de la ville de Mons* (Mons: Jean-Nicolas Varret, 1725), p. 347; Charles Poplomont, *La Belgique héraldique: recueil historique, chronologique, généalogique et biographique complet de toutes les maisons nobles reconnues de la Belgique*, 11 vols (Paris – Brussels: H. Carion – G. Adriaens, 1863–67), I, 487.

²² The visit made in Brussels at the same time gives the name of the eleven booksellers visited. Unfortunately, unlike Mons, the descriptions of the titles encountered are not as precise. On this case, see our contribution, ‘Men and Books Under Watch: The Brussels’ Book Market in the Mid-Sixteenth Century through the Inquisitorial Archives’, in *Buying and Selling. The Early Book Trade and the International Marketplace*, ed. by Shanti Graheli (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 303–21.

²³ Anne Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, libraires et éditeurs belges des XV^e et XVI^e siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1975), pp. 30, 125, 175–76.

²⁴ Brussels, State Archives, Council of Troubles, 22, fols. 70r–73r.

²⁵ *ibid.* fols. 73v–74v.

²⁶ *ibid.* fol. 75r–v.

bookseller; the names of the others are unknown, just quoted as ‘the other houses’ (‘les autres maisons’). The booksellers from Ath also received a visit, led by the inquisitor Jean Bonhomme, with Laurent du Pont (bachelor in theology and priest of Saint Julian), Pierre Toure (bachelor in theology and schoolmaster) and Arnold Nonsart (licentiate in law and priest of Saint Martin). They listed around 350 titles in Latin and in French, with a significant majority in French.²⁷ The booksellers names are also mentioned: Jehan Le Bon (also known for his relationship with Plantin),²⁸ the widow of Nicolas Loyseleur and the widow Pissart (their first names are not specified).²⁹ The emissaries sent by the Duke of Alba discovered fourteen prohibited books (ten in Latin, three in French and one in Dutch). In Le Roeulx, they visited two booksellers (Leuram? Ghobert and Colart Floyon) and examined sixteen books (fifteen in French and one in Latin).³⁰ For Enghien and Avesnes, around fifty and forty books are respectively mentioned in the document (forty-two in Latin, forty in French, and thirteen in Dutch).³¹ No forbidden books were found. The lists made by the Duke of Alba’s emissaries are not only interesting for the information they contain on the books in circulation in Hainaut, but also for the names of all those booksellers that were previously unknown.

The list ends with a short note written by the inquisitor Jean Bonhomme in which he explains the visits he made and, in an interesting comment, asks what he should do with the large number of Erasmus’ books he has found.³² Indeed, the most represented prohibited author is Erasmus. There are different editions of the *Colloquiorum* and of the *Adagia*, both banned by the Roman Indices, and other religious books, including the *Modus orandi Deum*, the *Novum Instrumentum* or Paraphrases of the Gospel of St John and St Paul’s epistles. The fact that booksellers settled in Hainaut still stocked so many titles by Erasmus is a clear indication of the high esteem in which the author was still held in the mid-sixteenth century, notwithstanding the condemnation of Rome and some other theologians. Even the University of Louvain had been reluctant to join in the official condemnation of

²⁷ *ibid.* fols. 76r–85r.

²⁸ Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs*, p. 22.

²⁹ The widow Pissart is mentioned in Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs*, p. 117. She was perhaps the mother of Jeanne Pissart who had married Jean Maes, first printer of the city of Ath (*ibid.* p. 144). Was she related to the Pissarts from Mons?

³⁰ Brussels, State Archives, Council of Troubles, 22, fols. 85v–86r.

³¹ *ibid.* fols. 87r–90r (Enghien), fols. 91r–92r (Avesnes).

³² ‘Et quid agere debeamus de libris suspectis et precipue Erasmi quos in magno numero domi retuinimus’ (*ibid.* fol. 93r). Regarding the reception of Erasmus after the Council of Trent in the Low Countries, see Adam Renaud ‘La fin du rêve? La circulation des œuvres d’Érasme après le Concile de Trente dans les anciens Pays-Bas et en Principauté de Liège’, *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique*, 114 (2019), pp. 315–50.

Erasmus.³³ That situation would change in the following years, as the works of Erasmus were eradicated by agents of the Counter-Reformation.³⁴

The analysis of the archive made in spring 1569 offers an opportunity to reconstruct Bonfons' catalogue and to explore the problem of lost vernacular print in early-modern Europe. As has been mentioned, the entire document contains entries for around 2,200 titles. Among these, 115 are related to the production of Jean Bonfons and his widow. This number should be reduced to eighty-seven due to the presence of duplicates. The name of Jean Bonfons is associated with fifty-four of them and that of his widow with thirty-three others. The USTC, Destot's master's thesis, Bechtel's *Gothiques* and old sale catalogues helped us to identify forty-nine different editions.³⁵ It is important to note that nine of these are not known through any surviving copy. Brunet's *Manuel* or book auction catalogues were used to identify them. There are still thirty-eight titles that remain unidentified.³⁶ In this light, the number of books printed for or by Jean Bonfons and his widow should be revised: from around 160 to 170 titles, it should be now estimated as rising to almost 200, with an average loss of around forty per cent. This is a low rate of survival,³⁷ a fact that can be explained by the nature of the books printed by the Bonfons, including a great number in vernacular prose literature or popular devotion.

French secular literature represents almost half of the books sold by the Bonfons to the booksellers established in Hainaut (forty-five per cent). There was a majority of medieval romances (twenty-eight per cent), including *Les quatre filz Aymon*, *Les conquestes du tresnoble et vaillant Geoffroy a la grand dent* or *L'histoire des deux nobles et vaillants chevaliers Valentin et Orson*. This substantial production indicates that, in the 1560s, such literature was still highly appreciated. The caesura of the 1530–40s, often viewed as representing a break with the medieval literary tradition, was not

³³ Guy Van Calster, 'La censure louvaniste du Nouveau Testament et la rédaction de l'Index érasmien expurgatoire de 1571', in *Scrinium erasmianum*, ed. by Joseph Coppens, 2 vols (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), II, 381–436.

³⁴ The situation was the same in Italy. Paul F. Grendler says about it: 'The Index and Inquisition also stifled Erasmian humanism in Italy, a repressive effect sometimes overlooked. The abundance of Erasmus's works discovered by the Inquisition pointed to their popularity, just as their destruction demonstrated the hostility of the agents of the Counter Reformation'; Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press (1540–1605)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 287. On this, see also Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Érasme hérétique. Réforme et Inquisition dans l'Italie du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1993).

³⁵ Thirty-two are thanks to USTC and seventeen to other bibliographical tools and early sales catalogues (further details are given in Appendices 1 and 2).

³⁶ See Appendix 3.

³⁷ Alexander S. Wilkinson estimates the average rate of loss for sixteenth-century French editions to be around thirty-one per cent ('Lost Books Printed in French before 1601', p. 201). For the mid-seventeenth century, David F. McKenzie gives the figure of one third of losses (David F. McKenzie, 'The Economies of Print, 1550–1750: Scales of Production and Conditions of Constraint', in *Produzione e commercio della carta e del libro, secc. XIII–XVII: atti della 'Veintitresima Settimana di studi'*, 15–20 aprile 1991 (Florence): F. Le Monnier [1992], 389–425 (p. 394)).

so abrupt as some have thought, at least not in Hainaut.³⁸ Beside these medieval works, one can find more recent books, including the French translation of Antonio de Guevara's *Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio* made by Nicolas de Herberay des Essarts. Some works in verse printed by of for the Bonfons were also offered for sale in Hainaut, including the complete works of Guillaume Coquillart and the anonymous compilation *Le recueil de tout soulas et plaisir et paragon de poésie*. There were also books to learn or improve a language: *Le dictionnaire des huict langaiges, c'est assavoir grec, latin, flamen, francois, espagnol, italien, anglois et aleman* and Pierre Durand's *Nouveau stile et maniere de composer, dicter et escrire toutes sortes d'epistres ou lettres missives*. Customers from the city of Mons interested in recent or universal history could find Jean Carion's *Histoire ou cronique de choses plus memorables depuis la creation du monde* translated by Jean Le Bond or Mario Equicola's *Apologie contre les mesdisantz de la nation françoise* translated by Michel Roté.

Religious works represent about a third of the total number of Bonfons' exports recorded in the list of 1569 (thirty-three per cent). One can find many devotional, hagiographic and spiritual texts, encouraging the reader to meditate on the life and the passion of Christ, the Virgin and other saints. These include anonymous works, such as *La passion de nostre sauveur Jesus Christ*, *L'exercice du cœur crucifie*, *La vie de madame Saincte Catherine de Seine* (sic) de l'ordre Saint Dominicq, *Le livre des Consolations contre toutes tribulations*, and treatises written during the middle ages, such as Ludolphus de Saxonia's *Vita Christi* (= *Vie de Jesus Christ*), Guy de Roye's *Doctrinal de sapience*, and Maurice de Sully's *Sermones de dominicis* (= *Exposition des Evangiles des cincquante dimanches de l'annee*). Counter-Reformation authors also appeared in the catalogue of the Bonfons,

³⁸ We studied the reception of medieval romances in Hainaut (15th–16th centuries) in 'La réception de la littérature médiévale en langue française dans le comté de Hainaut (xve–xvi^e siècle)', in *Les Lettres médiévales à l'aube de l'ère typographique*, ed. by Renaud Adam and others (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2020), pp. 105–24. More broadly, on the late reception of medieval romances, see Cedric E. Pickford, 'Les éditions imprimées de romans arthuriens en prose antérieures à 1600', *Bulletin bibliographique de la Société internationale arthurienne*, 13 (1961), 99–109; Laurence Harf-Lancner, 'L'illustration du Roman de Mélusine de Jean d'Arras dans les éditions du XV^e et du XVI^e siècle', in *Le livre et l'image en France au XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1989), pp. 29–55; Annie Charon-Parent, 'Jean Bonfons, libraire parisien, et l'illustration des romans de chevalerie', *Le livre et l'image en France*, pp. 57–74; Philippe Ménard, 'La réception des romans de chevalerie à la fin du Moyen Âge et au XVI^e siècle', *Bulletin bibliographique de la Société internationale arthurienne*, 49 (1997), 234–73; *Du roman courtois au roman baroque. Actes du colloque des 2–5 juillet 2002*, ed. by Emmanuel Bury and Francine Mora (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004); Stéphanie Ohlund-Rambaud, 'L'atelier de Jean Trepperel, imprimeur-libraire parisien (1492–1511)', in *Patrons, Authors and Workshops. Books and Book Production in Paris around 1400*, ed. by Godfried Croenen and Peter Ainsworth (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), pp. 121–41; ead. 'La Galaxie Trepperel à Paris (1492–1530)', *Bulletin du Bibliophile* (2007), pp. 145–50; Sergio Cappello, 'L'édition de romans médiévaux à Lyon dans la première moitié du XVI^e siècle', *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance*, 71 (2011), 55–71; id. 'Les éditions d'Artus de Bretagne', pp. 153–86; id. 'Les éditions de romans de Jean II Trepperel', in *Raconter en prose*, pp. 121–145.

including the Flemish Carmelite Adrien Du Hecquet, whose *Les enseignemens des paroisses* was sold in Hainaut.

The rest of Bonfons' Hainaut distribution is mainly related to vernacular popular sciences. The best-represented discipline is medicine, with eight titles (all in French). We can point out the very popular *Bastiment des receptes*—translated from Italian by Quillery de Passebrevé—Jean Goeurot's *Sommaire et entretienement de vie tres singulier de toute medecine et cirurgie*, Raoul Du Mont Verd's *Fleurs et secretz de medicine* and two texts translated from Albertus Magnus, *La propriete des herbes et plantes communes* and *Les secrets des femmes et hommes*. Other scientific disciplines listed in the 1569 inventory notably include agriculture (three editions), astronomy (two editions), geology (two editions), mathematics (one edition) and geography (one edition). The bookshops in Hainaut were also supplied with editions of music and books that can be classified in a wide variety of fields such as cookbooks, calendars and heraldic works.³⁹ To give some examples, the anonymous *Recueil de plusieurs chansons divise en trois parties, La manière de faire toutes confitures, avec la vertu et propriété du vinaigre* and *Le grand calendrier et compost des bergers* were stocked together with Bartolomé de Sicilia's *Blason des couleurs en armes, livrees et devise*.

The most popular editions from all disciplines (with three entries each) are *L'histoire de Pierre de Provence et de la belle Maguelonne*, *Le romant de Jean de Paris, roy de France*, *Les mots dorez du grand et sage Cathon* translated by Pierre Grognet, Guy de Roye's *Doctrinal de sapience*, and Jean de Venette's *La vie des trois Maries*. Fifteen other titles have two entries: *Le rommant de la belle Helaine de Constantinople*, *La destruction de Jérusalem*, *L'histoire de Robert le Diable*, *Le rommant de Richard sans paour*, *Le mystere de la pacience de Job*, *La vie de madame Saincte Catherine de Seine de l'ordre Sainct Dominicq*, *Le grand calendrier et compost des bergers*, *Le Bastiment des receptes*, Bonaventure Des Périers' *Joyeuses aventures et nouvelles recreations*, Raoul Du Mont Verd's *Fleurs et secretz de medicine*, Noël du Fail's *Propos rustiques de M. Leon Ladulphi Champenois*, Pierre Gringore's *L'adresse et Chasteau de Labeur*, Ludolphus de Saxonia's *Vie de Jesus Christ*, Maurice de Sully's *Exposition des Evangiles des cinquante dimanches de l'annee*, and Bartolomé de Sicilia's *Blason des couleurs en armes, livrees et devise*.

The list made in 1569 also shows the vitality of commercial exchanges between the Bonfons firm and the booksellers located in Hainaut. More than 110 titles recorded in this document—containing around 2,200 entries—bear their company name, which means that around five per cent

³⁹ Henri Vanhulst studied the circulation of musical editions in Hainaut through the lists made in 1569, see 'Les éditions de musique polyphonique', 60–71.

of all the books found by the emissaries sent by the Duke of Alba are related to the Bonfons. These exchanges seem to have been particularly intense when the widow Bonfons ran the company. The USTC records under her name fewer than forty editions. We found twenty-four of them in Hainaut, more than half of her production recorded in that dataset. The presence of all these Parisian ‘novelties’ underlines the speed of the exchanges between France and the Low Countries, as well as the desire of booksellers settled in Hainaut to have an up-to-date store.

The importance of exchanges with France, and more specifically with the Bonfons, might be explained by the commonality of language. The county of Hainaut is a French-speaking territory of the former Low Countries and was a promising market for printers specialized in vernacular works. It is important to note that the book business between France and the Low Countries benefited in the early 1560s from the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (3 April 1559), which marked the end of the sixty-five-year struggle between France and Spain for the control of Italy.⁴⁰ With this peace, French booksellers no longer risked seeing their books seized in the Low Countries, as had sometimes happened in the past. For example, one of the many consequences of the resumption of hostilities between the Low Countries and France in 1521 had been the seizure of Josse Bade’s books in storage in the bookshop of his Antwerpian colleague Willem Vorsterman.⁴¹

We don’t know if the Bonfons were dealing directly with the booksellers settled in Hainaut or whether they were passing through an intermediary. Bales, barrels, and other merchandise could be sent overland toward Hainaut by them. The books, handed over to professional transporters, could travel from Paris to their destination through Senlis, Péronne, Cambrai and Valenciennes, southern gateway to the county of Hainaut.⁴² The other option was to ship them from Rouen or Calais to Antwerp, whence they could be dispatched to Mons or other cities.⁴³ This mode of transport could be dangerous because of the high possibility of interception

⁴⁰ Bertrand Haan, *Une paix pour l’éternité. La négociation du traité du Cateau-Cambrésis* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010).

⁴¹ Brussels, State Archives, Chamber of accounts, 19.783, fol. 3r. An imperfect edition can be found in Alexandre Pinchart, ‘Livres saisis, en 1521, sur Jean Petit et Josse Badius, libraires à Paris’, *Bulletin du Bibliophile Belge*, 7 (1850), 391.

⁴² Charles Estienne, *La guide des chemins de France* (Paris: Charles Estienne, 1553), 8°, pp. 31–35 (USTC 41018); Émile Coornaert, *Les Français et le commerce international à Anvers fin du XV^e–XVI^e siècle*, 2 vols (Paris: Marcel Rivière et Cie, 1961), II, 204–202.

⁴³ Coornaert, *Les Français et le commerce international à Anvers*, pp. 212–34; Malcolm Walsby, ‘Plantin and the French Book Market’, in *International Exchange in the Early Modern Book World*, ed. by Matthew McLean and Sara Barker (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 90–97.

by pirates.⁴⁴ Christopher Plantin in Antwerp recorded various direct transactions with booksellers settled in Hainaut, but we do not find any copy of Bonfons' production in his accounting records.⁴⁵

One last question remains to be addressed, namely, the impact of book losses on our knowledge of Bonfons' production. First of all, we have seen that, with the help of the list made at the request of the Duke of Alba, we can partly close gaps in this area. This could help to bring about a fuller picture of the catalogue of Bonfons' books. Secondly, the procedure for identifying all Bonfons entries gives us some information about their editorial strategy and the importance of reprints. Indeed, we noted that at least fifteen lost editions attributed to Jean Bonfons or his widow were reprinted later either by their son Nicolas Bonfons or by him with his son Pierre Bonfons, such as Henri Campain's *Le desert de devotion* issued around 1573 or *Le rommant de Richard sans paour* around 1600.⁴⁶ Paradoxically, even if all editions of the Bonfons are not preserved, the content of the texts reproduced by them are known to us thanks to the numerous reissues. This finding makes us less pessimistic in our understanding of the transmission of French vernacular literature.

* * *

The Duke of Alba, when he asked inquisitors to visit all bookstores settled in the territories still under Spanish authority, certainly could not have imagined that he would be helping book historians, five centuries later, to reconstruct the catalogues of sixteenth-century printing houses and quantify potential losses. It may be impossible to achieve a comprehensive overview of what has been lost in the sixteenth century, but documents such as the 1569 inventories provide a new basis for the reconstruction of rates of losses of printed material. Our survey has enabled us to deepen our knowledge of the Bonfons' catalogue and to better assess the rate of its losses. Perhaps further research could help us to refine our vision of the production of these printers. Finally, we can state that the documents established at the request of the Duke of Alba are sources of primary importance, providing unique testimony about the book market of the former Low Countries in the mid-sixteenth century.

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⁴⁴ For an example of Christopher Plantin's misadventures in the Channel, see Walsby, 'Plantin and the French Book Market', pp. 91–92.

⁴⁵ For the transactions between Christopher Plantin and booksellers settled in Hainaut, see Marc Lefèvre, 'Libraires belges en relations commerciales avec Christophe Plantin et Jean Moretus', *De Gulden Passer*, 41 (1963), 1–47 (pp. 15, 34–36).

⁴⁶ USTC 14220, 56545.

APPENDIX 1

Bonfons' editions distributed in Hainaut recorded in USTC

In the listing which follows, an asterisk indicates a lost edition. The folio reference in parentheses after the USTC number is a reference to the inventory of bookstores in the county of Hainaut, in Brussels, State Archives, Council of Troubles, 22.

USTC 2034 (fol. 35v), 9033 (fol. 36v, 74r, 79v), 24960 (fol. 54r), 29430 (fol. 33v), 30465 (fol. 32v), 30471 (fol. 36r), 34066 (fol. 33v, 76v), 36008 (fol. 79v, 83v), 37624 (fol. 61r), 37875 (fol. 62v), 38293 (fol. 81r, 84r), 40075 (fol. 60v), 40772 (fol. 40v), 41777 (fol. 36v), 47618 (fol. 36r, 80v), 52719 (fol. 79v), 55137 (fol. 36v, 76v, 80v), 56400 (fol. 42v), 57526 (fol. 32v), 60289 (fol. 32v, 36v, 91r), 61307 (fol. 35v), 63193 (fol. 32v, 33r, 80v), 63226 (fol. 55v), 63258 (fol. 48v), 77170 (fol. 36r), 77289 (fol. 80r), 88318 (fol. 82r), 89790 (fol. 33v), 89791 (fol. 55v), 95201* (fol. 61r), 95318* (fol. 33v, 36r), 441559 (fol. 36r).

APPENDIX 2

Bonfons' editions distributed in Hainaut not recorded in USTC

In the listing which follows, an asterisk indicates a lost edition. The folio reference in parentheses after the imprint details is a reference to the inventory of bookstores in the county of Hainaut, in Brussels, State Archives, Council of Troubles, 22, with reference to other bibliographic tools.

- [1] Albertus Magnus, *La proprieté des herbes et plantes communes* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 16° (fol. 39r) (Brunet IV, 908; Destot, nr. 101)*.
- [2] *L'assaut de la mort à l'homme mondain, et les complaintes des trespasses estans en purgatoire* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 8° (fol. 42r) (Destot, nr. 42)*.
- [3] *Le Bastiment des Receptes traduit d'Italien en francoys* (trans. by Quillery de Passebrevé) (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 16° (fol. 36r, 83r) (Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, Nc 591).
- [4] Campain, Henri, *Le desert de devotion* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 8° (fol. 33r) (Destot, nr. 47)*.
- [5] *La destruction de Jerusalem* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 8° (fol. 83r, 91r) (Destot, nr. 47)*.
- [6] *L'exercice du cœur crucifié* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 4° (fol. 60v) (Destot, nr. 49).
- [7] *L'hystoire de Hercules* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 4° (fol. 60v) (Destot, nr. 3).
- [8] Lemoyne, Jean, *L'instruction de bien et perfaictement escrire tailler la plume et autres secretz pour se gouverner en l'Art d'Ecriture* (Paris: widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]), 8° (fol. 51r) (Destot, nr. 111)*.
- [9] *Le livre des Consolations contre toutes tribulations* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 8° (fol. 80v) (Bechtel C-582; Destot, nr. 78).
- [10] *La manière de faire toutes confitures, avec la vertu et propriété du vinaigre* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 12° (fol. 51v) (Destot, nr. 99).
- [11] *Le Mystere de la vie et hystoire de monseigneur saint Martin* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 4° (fol. 82r) (Destot, nr. 54)*.

- [12] *Lordonnance de la Confrarie du psaultier de notre Dame* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 8° (fol. 41r) (Destot, nr. 57).
- [13] *Recueil de plusieurs chansons divise en trois parties: en la premiere sont les chansons musicales, en la seconde les chansons amoureuses et rustiques: et en la tierce les chansons de guerre* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, 1556), 16° (fol. 83r) (Destot, nr. 87)*.
- [14] *Le romant de Jean de Paris, roy de France* (Paris: widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]), 8° (fols. 32v, 76v, 80v) (Bechtel J-116, Destot, nr. 25).
- [15] *Le Traicté des urines, et de la couleur d'icelles, selon la maladie que la personne peut avoir, & d'où elle procede, tant aux hommes, que aux femmes, pour en iuger a la voir* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 16° (fol. 45v) (Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, WZ 240 T766F).
- [16] *La tresplaisante histoire de Maugist d'Aygramont et de Vivien son frère* (Paris: widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]), 4° (fol. 60v) (Bechtel M-188).
- [17] *La vie et les gestes du preux chevalier Bayard, contenant plusieurs victoires par luy faictes durant le règne des roys de France Charles huictiesme, Loys douziesme et Francoys, premier de ce nom, tant ès Italiés, Naples et Picardie, que autres pays et régions* (Paris: Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]), 4° (fol. 60v) (Destot, nr. 24).

APPENDIX 3

Lost Bonfons' editions distributed in Hainaut

References are to lost editions known from the Hainaut inventory (Brussels, State Archives, Council of Troubles, 22).

- [1] Albertus Magnus, *Les secrets des femmes et homes* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 35v).
- [2] *L'art et practicque de Musicque* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 42r).
- [3] *Art et science de bien vivre et bien mourir* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 33r).
- [4] Artemidorus Daldianus, *Les jugemens astronomiques des songes* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 50r).
- [5] Bagnyon, Jehan, *La Conqueste du grand Roy Charlemagne* (Paris: widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]), (fol. 33r).
- [6] Brigitte, St, *Les quinze oraisons de saincte Brigide* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 42r).
- [7] Carion, Johann, *Histoire ou cronique de choses plus memorables depuis la creation du monde* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 61v).
- [8] *La Creation et Ornament du monde* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 78v).
- [9] Des Périers, Bonaventure, *Les joyeuses aventures et nouvelles recreations* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fols. 36r, 68v).
- [10] *La destruction de Jerusalem* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 32v).
- [11] *Les douze vendredis blancz* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 84r).
- [12] Du Hecquet, Adrien, *Les enseignemens des paroisses* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 45v).

- [13] Durand, Pierre, *Nouveau stile et maniere de composer, dicter et escrire toutes sortes d'epistres ou lettres missives* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 50r).
- [14] *Les faictz et prouesses du puissant et preux Hector* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 61r).
- [15] Fail, Noël du, *Propos rustiques de M. Leon Ladulphi Champenois* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fols. 36v, 50r).
- [16] Gringore, Pierre, *L'adresse et Chasteau de Labeur* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fols. 36r, 83v).
- [17] Guevara, Antonio de, *L'horloge des princes*, trad. by Nicolas de Herberay des Essarts (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 34r).
- [18] *L'histoire de l'enfant prodigue par personage* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 80v).
- [19] *L'histoire de madame saincte Anne* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 80v).
- [20] *L'histoire de Robert le Diable* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fols. 32v, 76v).
- [21] *Instruction de l'arithmetique* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 36r).
- [22] *Le livre de sagesse suyvant les auctoritez des anciens philosophes* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 91r).
- [23] *Le martyre amoureux* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 68v).
- [24] *Le mystere de la pacience de Job* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fols. 61v, 91r).
- [25] *Lucidaire de plusieurs questions* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 61r).
- [26] Maurice de Sully, *Exposition des Evangiles des cincquante dimanches de l'annee* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 35v).
- [27] *Medecines pour guerir les malades qui peuvent advenir aux chevaux* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 36r).
- [28] *Miracle de Saint Nicolas* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 36r).
- [29] *Ordinaire des chrétiens* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 33r).
- [30] Ovidius Naso, Publius, *Guide de l'art d'aymez* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 45r).
- [31] Raoul Le Fèvre, *L'histoire de Jason* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fols. 36r, 60v).
- [32] *La recreation et passetemps des tristes* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 68v).
- [33] *Le recueil de tout soulas et plaisir et paragon de poësie* (Paris, widow of Jean Bonfons, [1568–69]) (fol. 68v).
- [34] *La revelation ou pronostication du sainct prophete Esdras* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, 1559) (fol. 42r).
- [35] *Le rommant de Richard sans paour* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fols. 31r, 76v).
- [36] Signot, Jacques, *La division du monde* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, 1553) (fol. 39v)
- [37] *La vie de madame Saincte Catherine de Seine de l'ordre Sainct Dominicq* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fols. 61v, 81v).
- [38] *La vie de madame saincte Marguerite* (Paris, Jean Bonfons, [s.d.]) (fol. 33r).