RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Department of Printed Books

Dutch Acquisitions

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BONARELLI DELLA ROVERE, Guido Ubaldo de, Count. Fillis van Scirus, herderspel . . . Vertaalt door Katharina Johanna de With. Nevens . . . andere gedichten van dezelve, etc. Amsterdam: Adriaan Wor, & de Erven G. onder de Linden, 1728.

If Guarini’s Il pastor fido and Tasso’s Aminta had conquered Europe with the fashion for pastoral plays, Bonarelli’s Filli di Sciro was not far behind in its success and in the number of translations it attracted. Katharina Johanna de With, who had translated Francesco Contarini’s La fida ninfa in 1719 and published it together with poems of her own, did not live to see the present work in print. It was edited after her death by her sister and a cousin, Henriëtte Elizabeth and Everardina Jacoba de With. They also added the remaining poems of Katharina Johanna. Contarini’s play had been translated into Dutch once before; this is the first appearance in Dutch of Bonarelli’s. Katharina Johanna was also a skilful poet in her own right, and this collection is accompanied by many appreciations by contemporaries. Each of the five acts of the play is preceded by an engraved illustration by Pieter Goeree, who also provided the additional engraved title-page, dated 1729. In this copy all plates are coloured by hand.


Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert (1522–90) was an important man in his time. He was a respected artist as well as a writer on many subjects which included philosophy, philology, theology, poetry, plays, and even a treatise on new ways of dealing with offenders which incorporates the idea of improving them through regular work. He translated Homer, Boethius, Cicero, Seneca, and Boccaccio, among others, and for his translation of Chateillon and his general stand for moderation, tolerance, and respect for the views of others, he brought upon himself the fiercest denunciations of Calvin and De Bèze. Many of his works had to be published anonymously, others remained in manuscript during his lifetime. He held high civic office
in the city of Haarlem and it was thanks to his intervention that the Catholics there were protected from the worst excesses of Protestant persecution. But he fell foul of official political and religious powers, and himself knew imprisonment and exile. In 1612 the printer Jaspar Tournay of Gouda, who had already published Coornhert's works separately, attempted a collected edition, but he had to give it up after only one volume. The present edition is the first, and still the only one which can claim to be almost complete. The editor was Cornelis Boomgaert, who may also have written the 'Life' at the beginning of volume one, still essential for any study of the man and his work. Others believe that this life was written by Coornhert's friend, the historian Pieter Bor. The publication by Colom does Coornhert proud. It is a beautifully printed work, illustrated with Coornhert's portrait by Christoffel van Sichem, with long passages printed in civilité. Each volume has the same emblematic title-page, of which the publisher has given some explanation in volume two. It reveals that some of the design is a rebus on Coornhert's name to which the form adopted in the title is already a pointer. Coornhert himself had not been averse to the use of rebuses in titles of his own works. The title-page we see here shows the author himself pointing to Virtue, who is traditionally dressed in rags, for she is little regarded. Between them hangs a chandelier full of candles ('vol kaerssen' = Volckertszoon) which also contains a heart ('hert') and has ears of corn hanging from it ('Coorn'). These rebus symbols are repeated in other parts of the engraving and other emblematic constructions are added, such as the mask of falsehood on which the figure of Coornhert is seen stamping, just as Virtue defeats death, represented by a skull. In fact, every detail has its meaning, and those which to us are least explicable have given rise to a great deal of speculation, which has so far not been wholly resolved. The production of this edition needed more time than the date given on the title-page reveals. Single works or smaller groups of works within it have their own title-pages and these are dated from 1629 to 1632.

C.107.ff.1.

GROOT, Hugo de. Witlegginghe van het Gebedt ons Heeren Iesu Christi, ghenaemt het Vader-ons, etc. Delf: by Bruyn Harmens Schinckel, 1619.

This meditation in verse on the Lord's Prayer is by Grotius, the famous lawyer who was also an historian, theologian, Latinist, and poet, and is dated 5 June 1619. Three weeks earlier, on 18 May, Grotius had been sentenced for his opposition to the victorious orthodox Calvinist faction to lifelong imprisonment in the grim moated fortress of Loevestein, to which he was transferred from his prison in The Hague on the evening of 5 June. The poem was therefore written in the expectation of this fate and is a moving testimony to his greatness of mind, especially the verses he managed to write on the lines 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them . . .'. He could not know then that his incarceration would end in March 1621 when his wife, in what was to become a legendary feat, smuggled him out of the fortress in a book chest. This copy is part of the first of three issues published in quick succession.

J. ter Meulen and P. J. J. Diermanse, Bibliographie des écrits imprimés de Hugo Grotius (The Hague, 1950), n. 121.

C.136.b.23.

JACOBSZ., Claes. Het boeck der ghesanghen. Inhoudende alle de Psalmen Davids, middengaders enige claech-liederen, gebeden, losangen, danck-liederen ende meer gestelijke liederen, de welcke ghesongen ende geoeffent werden onder de vereenichde litmaten der gemeenten Christi . . . Middsgaders: De belijdenisse des Christelijcken Gheloofs, etc.
A book of Psalms, hymns, and prayers compiled and published by Claes Jacobsz. for the use of Mennonite congregations. The followers of Menno Simons, usually classed with the Anabaptists, were a much despised and at times cruelly persecuted sect mainly in the Netherlands and north-east Germany. By the early seventeenth century they were still disliked but accepted and tolerated by the Calvinist majority, and their congregations flourished in many parts of the United Provinces, especially at Amsterdam and in the area to the north of it in what was then called the Noorderkwartier and Westfriesland, in towns like Hoorn and Enkhuizen, and in villages like Monnikendam and De Rijp. All their song-books are rare and this one is especially so. It consists of six subdivisions, each with its own title-page: (1) an instruction on the correct manner of singing Psalms and other hymns; (2) the Psalms in the translation of Petrus Dathenus, the version used by the Dutch Reformed Church; (3–5) groups of hymns and prayers taken from the earlier Mennonite Lietboeck of Hans de Ries, first published in 1582; (6) the Mennonite confession of faith as formulated by Hans de Ries and Lubbert Gerritsz., first published in 1610. Neither the compiler nor the various authors are named in the book. Except for the Psalms these are the earliest editions of these texts in the British Library.

Le Petit, Jean François. Nederlantsche Republycke, bestaende in de staten so generale, als particuliere . . . int breede beschreven, met alle hare steden . . . Geconfereert . . . met die van de Swyttersche Cantoenen, etc. Tot Arnem, by Iain Ianszen, 1615.

This atlas, which was edited by the author’s son and published posthumously, was the Dutch answer to Guicciardini, whose Descrizione di tutti i Paesi-Bassi, first published in 1567, had gone through many editions in several languages and was the standard work on the subject. In his dedication to the States General the author blames Guicciardini for his preferential treatment of Brabant compared with his neglect of the northern provinces; he also, quite rightly, declares that Guicciardini would no longer recognize such cities in the north as he had described, especially Amsterdam, which had developed far beyond its conditions of fifty years ago. The new description of the United Provinces will therefore be more just and more up to date. Amusingly enough, many of the views and maps used by the printer Jansonius at Arnhem for this book are the same which had already served for the first oblong edition of Guicciardini, also printed by Jansonius and published in 1613. The comparison with the Swiss cantons was new. The Dutch saw in them a model and a justification of their own rebellion from Habsburg oppression. There is an English edition in a translation from the French by Edward Grimeston, published in London in 1609, before the plates were available. It is a small quarto, unillustrated, and without the chapters on Switzerland (revised STC 15485; B.L. 794.e.19; T.801 (2)).

C.107.e.74.

Ordonnantie Sconincx . . . daerby zyne Majesteyt zynen provinciaelen Raedt van Vlaenderen restablieert ende erstelt binnen zynder stadt van Gendt. Douay: Jan Bogaerdt, 1585.

This decree was signed on 20 December 1584 on behalf of King Philip II of Spain at Beveren, the ancient castle of the Counts of Flanders, then owned by Duke Philip of Croye, now Beveren-Waas. With it the seat of the Council of Flanders was re-established at Ghent. This council, the highest judicial court in the pro-
vince, had been founded in 1386 and sat originally at Lille. After many vicissitudes it moved to Ghent in 1498 where it occupied the grim castle known as the Gravensteen, now a museum of medieval prisons and instruments of torture. By an earlier royal decree, of 16 December 1579, the Council had left the city, then in the hands of the Protestant rebels, who had declared a republic, insulted and molested the members of the Council, and impeded its work. The exile at Douai lasted until the beginning of 1585, after the reconquest of Ghent by Spanish troops under Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, late in 1584, had led to the decree issued on 2 March 1585 and published in this pamphlet. The Council was to remain at Ghent until its dissolution in 1795, with only one other and much shorter interruption during the French occupation in 1672. No other copy of this pamphlet is recorded.

1578/1562.