

*MUSEUM  
PLANTIN -  
MORETUS*







*G R O U N D*  
*F L O O R*



## WELCOME

Welcome to the Plantin-Moretus Museum. This was the home and workplace of Christophe Plantin and the Moretus family. For 300 years books were the heart and soul of this place, and they still are.

Who lived here? Who worked here? What exactly did they print? What kind of knowledge and ideas travelled from the house to the four corners of the world, beyond the frontiers of Europe?

Downstairs you will meet Christophe Plantin: forefather, businessman, manager, humanist\* and printer. Upstairs you can have a close look at the beautiful books that were printed in this house, from richly illustrated bibles to simple almanacs.

Here and there you will see reproductions of books that were printed on the premises. They are for you to pick up and enjoy. We wish you a pleasant visit.

\* From A to Z  
Humanism? Folio or quarto? What is a breviary? A number of terms need to be explained. At the back of the visitor guide you will find a glossary.



## THE GOLDEN COMPASSES

A 17th-century traveller describes the houses of wealthy Antwerp citizens as *'...solid and constructed with good materials. They are beautiful too because they are built in long and straight lines. The entrance gates are adorned with carvings and in the gardens there are sculptures.'* The Plantin-Moretus Museum is an example of such a solid and well-built house belonging to an affluent Antwerp family. It contains more than 30 rooms. The scale model gives you an idea of the dimensions.

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### BUILT FROM SCRATCH

Christophe Plantin builds his business in Antwerp from scratch. Being a young entrepreneur he invests every penny he earns into his company. Plantin's successor, son-in-law Jan I Moretus, adopts the same approach: the business always comes first.

From the third generation onwards, there is money available for other things. Grandson Balthasar I Moretus renovates the house and turns it into a prominent urban mansion. The building and its interior decoration have to reflect the family's status. The three state rooms are indeed nothing less than a luxurious 3D calling card.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The painting above the chimney is titled *De leeuwenjacht* (The Lion Hunt). Hunting is a pastime of the upper classes and a successful entrepreneur is keen to identify himself with it. A hunting scene shows power, tenacity, courage and perseverance: qualities that are of the utmost importance for any entrepreneur.

## HALL OF FAME

By displaying portraits in an elegant drawing room, the Moretus family adopts an aristocratic style of decoration. To the right of the door leading to drawing room 1 you can see Balthasar I. He commissioned most of these portraits from his friend Peter Paul Rubens. The subjects are members of the family and close friends.

Here are forefather Christophe Plantin and his wife Jeanne Rivière. Further on there are portraits of Jan I Moretus and his wife Martine Plantin, and Jan's parents, Jacobus Moerentorf and his spouse Adriana Gras. This hall of fame contains portraits of family friends too: humanist and linguist Justus Lipsius, the inventor of the atlas Abraham Ortelius and Benedictus Arias Montanus, the editor of Plantin's polyglot Bible. Also in this room are portraits of Petrus Pantinus, negotiator between the court and the publishing firm, and Gaspar Gevartius, humanist and municipal secretary in Antwerp.

## CABINETS WITH SECRET DRAWERS

Not only the portraits, but also the cabinets next to the chimney tell us something about the inhabitants. An art cabinet is a piece of luxury furniture. You can use it to file papers or store small valuable objects like jewels, coins or exotic items, which is precisely why this kind of cabinet often has hidden drawers or a false base. Art cabinets were a typical Antwerp export product but they evidently also decorated the state rooms of the local elite.

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## GLOBES

Later on these parlours will also boast globes, as symbols of knowledge and science.



## FATHER PUTS HIS FOOT DOWN

Christophe Plantin (1520–1589) arrives in Antwerp from the French city of Tours at the age of 30. He founds a printing firm and names it *Officina Plantiniana* (The Plantinian Publishing Firm). Plantin is the forefather of the nine generations who live and work on these premises.

Plantin is married to Jeanne Rivière. They have six daughters and one son. Daughters Marguerite, Martine, Catharine, Madeleine and Henriette survive to adulthood.

The Plantin-Rivière family puts the company before everything. The daughters are properly schooled so that they can help out with proof-reading or in the linen and lace trade also run by Plantin. When his daughters marry Plantin keeps a keen eye on the demands of his company. Three of his five sons-in-law work for the Plantinian Press and another one is a lace and linen trader.

In a letter, Plantin writes the following about his daughters:

‘Above all I have taught my daughters to fear, honour and love God, His Majesty the King and all our Magistrates [*the city council*]. I have also taught them to assist their mother with the household tasks. I arranged for the four oldest, according to their age and place



in the family, to learn how to read and write properly, so that between the ages of four or five and twelve, they were able to assist with proofreading in any language or any alphabet. In their idle time and depending on the amount of free time available I organised sewing lessons for them so that they were capable of making shirts as well as collars and handkerchiefs or other merchandise for the linen trade. During all that time I observed them carefully, so that I could decide for which future job they would be eligible.'



## FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

This portrait gallery showcases 300 years of family history at a single glance. All these men and women lived and worked in this house. Each generation is also represented by a book selected from its rich collected works.

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### GENERATION 1

CHRISTOFFEL PLANTIJN

(ca. 1520 – 1589)

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JEANNE RIVIÈRE

(ca. 1520 – 1596)

Jeanne Rivière is Christophe Plantin's wife. She comes from Normandy, but nothing much is known about her. Plantin hardly ever mentions Jeanne in his letters. *'She loved her husband and was very capable at handling things concerning the family and household matters'*, writes family friend Justus Lipsius about Jeanne.



## GENERATION 2

MARTINE PLANTIJN  
(1550-1616)



Martine is Plantin's second daughter. At 13 she starts to work in the lace shop owned by her father, and eventually she is put in charge of the business. When she is 20 years old she marries Jan Moerentorf. They have 11 children. Martine will become the matriarch of the Moretus family.

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JAN I MORETUS  
(MOERENTORF)  
(1543-1610)



At the early age of 14, Jan Moerentorf is employed by Christophe Plantin. Plantin is quick to appreciate the qualities of his young collaborator: his knowledge of languages (Dutch, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French and German), his levelheadedness and, above all, his loyalty. Jan becomes Plantin's right-hand man, later on his son-in-law and eventually also his successor.

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MADELEINE PLANTIJN  
(1557-1599)



'*She is the brightest among my daughters*', Plantin comments on Madeleine, his third daughter. Madeleine is proofreader for the polyglot Bible. In a letter Plantin muses about the fact that she works within the firm and is involved with '*things that are in gener-*

*al reserved for men only*'. But when she is 15 Madeleine marries Gilles Beys and together they move to Paris.

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GILLES BEYS  
(1542-1595)

Gilles Beys comes from a well-to-do family in Breda. He marries Madeleine Plantin. *'A headstrong man, and his father-in-law had to deal with this character trait many times during his life'*, is the description given by one of Plantin's friends. Beys is in charge of Plantin's bookshop in Paris, but they argue and matters come to a head. As a consequence, Gilles Beys and his family live in poverty for many years.



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FRANCISCUS RAPHELENGIUS  
(Frans van Ravelingen)  
(1539-1597)

Raphelengius is a native of Lille. He studies in Cambridge and Paris and works as a proofreader for Plantin. Plantin arranges a marriage between Raphelengius and Marguerite, his eldest daughter. Raphelengius collaborates on the polyglot Bible and writes the first ever Arabic dictionary. He is appointed as professor of Hebrew at the University of Leiden and is also manager of the Plantinian branch in the town.



## GENERATION 3

## MELCHIOR MORETUS

(ca. 1573-1634)



Melchior is the second son of Jan I and Martine Plantin. He takes his vows as a priest and is the first in a long line of clerics in the Moretus family. But Melchior suffers from mental ill health and is cared for at various locations in Brabant and Flanders. When he dies, his brother Balthasar I writes: *'He died more happy and more holy than he had lived.'*

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## BALTHASAR I MORETUS

(1574-1641)



Balthasar I is Jan I and Martine's third son. He is paralysed on the right side of his body. Is this why he leads a secluded life? He receives a humanist education, and is an intellectual and a poet. Peter Paul Rubens is a friend from his school days and together they create the beautifully illustrated baroque book. Under his management, the printing office thrives.

JAN II MORETUS  
(1576-1618)

Jan II is the fourth son of Jan I and Martine. He works in the printing office for ten years, without being paid (as did his brother Balthasar). It is only after putting a request in writing to his father that he receives some kind of compensation: books, for him to sell on. Jan II is solely occupied with the business side of the company.

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MARIA DE SWEERT  
(1588-1655)

Maria de Sweert is the daughter of an Antwerp merchant. She marries Jan II and together they have six children. Maria is the mother of Jan III and Balthasar II. She is widowed at the early age of 30. Although she is officially a member of the management team after her husband's death, she never actually assumes a role in the business.



## GENERATION 4

JAN III MORETUS  
(1610-1663)



Presumably, this is a portrait of Joannes (Jan III) Moretus, brother of Balthasar II. Because he suffers from a mental illness, he is not eligible for taking over the management of the family firm.

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BALTHASAR II MORETUS  
(1615-1674)



Balthasar II is the second son of Jan II and Maria de Sweert. When his father dies, his uncle Balthasar I takes care of him and arranges his education. At the age of 26 he becomes manager of the printing business. Balthasar II is obsessed with making lists. Every year he draws up an inventory of his possessions and when he dies he leaves 32 versions of his will.

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ANNA GOOS  
(1627-1691)



Anna Goos is a descendant of a wealthy family. When she is 18 she marries Balthasar II, 12 years her senior. They have 12 children, six of whom take religious vows. Anna is in charge of the publishing firm for seven years. She is a dynamic businesswoman who manages to guide the firm through a major financial crisis.

## GENERATION 5

BALTHASAR III MORETUS  
(1646-1696)

The son of Balthasar II and Anna Goos, Balthasar III Moretus is educated at home. His mother teaches him to read and write and his father instructs him on the technical and economic aspects of the trade. He completes his education with a trip to Italy. Balthasar is at the head of the firm for more than 20 years. He marries Anna Maria de Neuf. A long-cherished dream is fulfilled during his lifetime: the Moretus family is raised to the peerage.

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ANNA MARIA DE NEUF  
(1654-1714)

Anna Maria de Neuf is 19 when she marries Balthasar III. They have nine children. After Balthasar's death, she is solely in charge of the printing business for a while, and this in difficult times. The family fortune, however, grows quickly from now on. When she dies Anna Maria leaves 760,000 guilders. A workman's monthly wages at this time is 15 guilders.



## GENERATION 6

BALTHASAR IV MORETUS  
(1679-1730)



Balthasar IV is the last Moretus to be trained as a printer. He is 17 years old when his father Balthasar III dies. Balthasar IV is closely involved with public life in Antwerp. Among other things, he holds an important position in the support of poor relief. Balthasar IV invests more and more of the family's capital in property, mortgages and bills of exchange.

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ISABELLA JACOBA  
DE MONT (DE BRIALMONT)  
(1682-1723)



Very little is known about Isabella Jacoba de Mont. She marries Balthasar IV at the age of 20. They have eight children but sadly five of them die very young. Her sons Balthasar V and Simon François are not attracted to the printing business and sell their shares to their uncle, Jean-Jacques.

JEAN-JACQUES MORETUS  
(1690-1757)

Jean-Jacques is the first member of the family to hold a political mandate: he is appointed an alderman. When Balthasar IV dies Jean-Jacques is left in charge of the business. He is also active in finance, trading in luxury goods and investing in business with the Far East. Jean-Jacques is married to Theresia Mechtildis Schilders. At his death he leaves two million guilders in his will.



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THERESIA MECHTILDIS  
SCHILDERS  
(1696-1729)

Theresia Mechtildis Schilders belongs to one of the wealthiest families in Antwerp. She marries Jean-Jacques Moretus when she is 20. They have nine children and she dies at the age of 33. Her role in the history of the printing business is largely unknown. Through her children, the fortune of the Schilders family, which amounts to approximately three million guilders, comes into the hands of the Moretus family.



## GENERATION 7

FRANÇOIS-JEAN MORETUS  
(1717-1768)

François-Jean Moretus studies philosophy and law. He marries Maria Theresia Borrekens and together they have 13 children. Just like his father he is very involved in the world of finance but he also takes part in the printing business. True to his status, François-Jean commissions the construction of the stately front section of the building on the Vrijdagmarkt.

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MARIA THERESIA BORREKENS  
(1728-1797)

Maria Theresia Borrekens is a descendant of wealthy nobility. She marries François-Jean Moretus. When her husband dies at an early age, she becomes head of the printing business and remains so for 29 years. It is her dream to leave a thriving business to her children, but the decline of the firm has set in for good.

## GENERATION 8

The museum possesses no portraits of the children born to François-Jean Moretus and Maria Theresia Borrekens. The Moretus family is living in tumultuous times immediately after the French Revolution, with Napoleon occupying the country. There is hardly any activity in the printing office.

## GENERATION 9

EDWARD MORETUS  
(1804-1880)

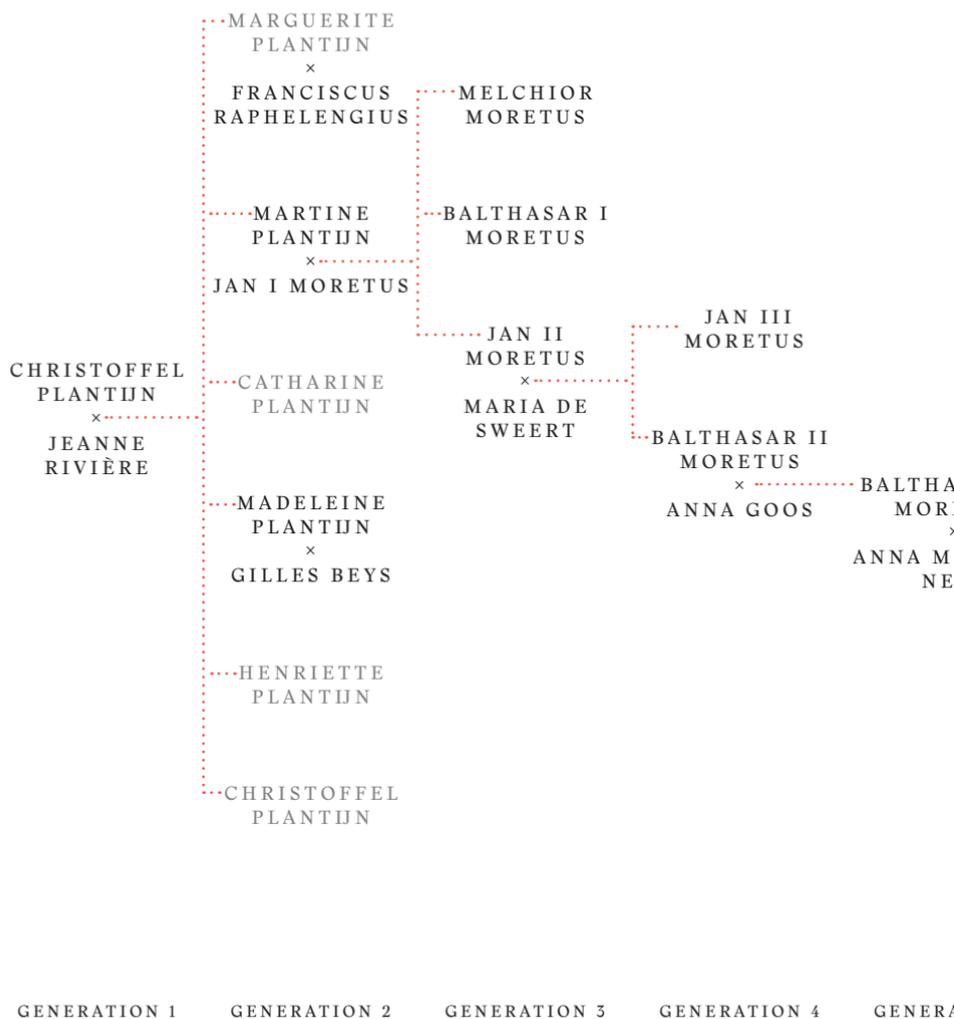
Edward Moretus is the grandson of François-Jean and Maria Theresia Borrekens. He is the final manager of the *Officina Plantiniana*. The very last book to be published is a breviary of Saint Francis. Three centuries after Christophe Plantin bought the house, Edward sells it, and its contents, to the city of Antwerp. The city turns it into a museum.

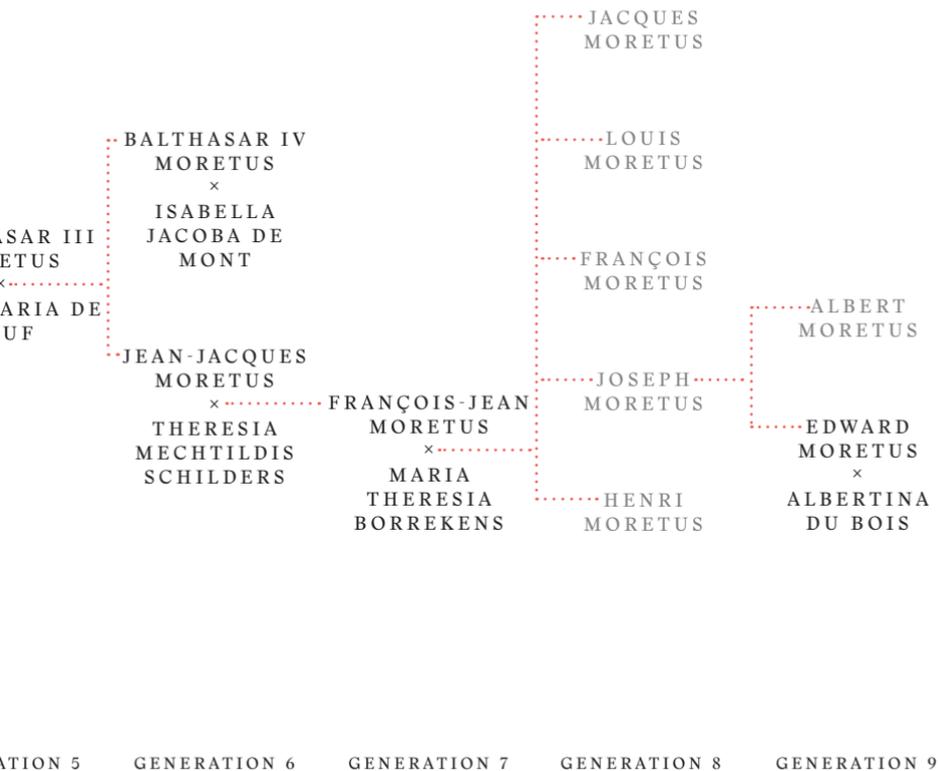
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ALBERTINA DU BOIS  
(1803-1891)

Albertina du Bois belongs to high nobility. In 1827 she marries Edward Moretus and they have five children. Soon after their marriage the couple move to the Hof van Moretus in Ekeren.







## BLOW YOUR OWN TRUMPET

Above the chimney hangs a painting titled *Labore et Constantia* or *Through Labour and Perseverance*, Plantin's motto. This work illustrates the qualities of the Plantinian House. Integrity, an enterprising spirit, perseverance, wisdom and financial acumen are represented by Greek and Roman gods and goddesses. Hercules uses a compass while a seated Constantia looks on. When even the gods are associated with your business, you must be really special.

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## REFINED

In the drawing room of a wealthy family music has its rightful place. Music is generally played by the young women of the house. This is a very special double instrument: a combination of a harpsichord and a virginal. Only four of these are known in the world today.

## OUTSIDE DRAWING ROOM

Splendid courtyards like this are hard to find and therefore it has been a tourist attraction for many centuries. Queens and princes loved to visit here.

The façades are adorned with busts of some of the company's managers. The garden was planted according to 16th-century style. Plantin would certainly recognise the plants. He owned a garden himself on the outskirts of the city and befriended the most prominent botanists of his time.

## THE BOOKSELLER

When you are a printer of books you also want to sell them. This is where it all happened. Historically, books were sold without bindings; you had to go to a bookbinder to do this for you. Plantin dispatches orders and deliveries from here. The largest market is organised through an international distribution network of book traders who meet twice a year at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

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## FORBIDDEN BOOKS

The Index of Prohibited Books was imposed by the Catholic Church from 1559 until 1966. In 1569, Plantin printed the copy of the index that you can see hanging on the wall. The index was compiled by Benedictus Arias Montanus, the editor of Plantin's polyglot Bible, and includes some titles published by Plantin.

The index consists of three columns: the names of authors all of whose books are forbidden, the names of authors some of whose books are forbidden, and forbidden books by writers unknown.



## A NOSE FOR BUSINESS: PLANTIN THE BUSINESSMAN

Plantin lives and works in challenging times. Daily life is determined by religious upheaval. War is always beckoning. Nevertheless, Plantin succeeds in building up a booming business. He expands his company, with branches in Paris and Frankfurt. In Leiden he even sets up a second printing office.

Plantin does not stop at being a printer and publisher. He also sells maps, prints and globes. He furthermore owns a flourishing lace business, in which his daughters have important roles. These activities supply him with the necessary finance to keep the publishing company going.

Plantin's success story is also a story of fall and rise. He gets into trouble with the authorities and one day his possessions are sold at a public auction. On another occasion he has to pay large amounts of money to mutinous Spanish soldiers in order to save his personal belongings. He also has to deal with the inevitable debtors, deliveries that get lost, shortages of money and many business disputes.

In his own words:

'With hard work, perseverance and patience one is able to surmount any hardship.'



## PAPER OR PARCHMENT?

As an investment, Christoph Plantin builds three houses in the Heilige Geeststraat. The coach house is also transformed into a private residence. Plantin rents the houses out. He really needs the income. In this house, the Houten Passer (The Wooden Compasses) tapestries from Oudenaarde are hanging on the walls.

Pretend that you are a customer: sit down at the table and leaf through the pages of the sample book. Which material is the most delicate? Choose the nicest paper. Or do you prefer parchment?

## DO IT YOURSELF

Touching is definitely allowed! The printer will gladly show you how the process worked back then, and he will also help you to do it yourself! If there is nobody to assist you, watch the films, which will tell you how books were printed, decorated and bound. Put on a costume and make a selfie while standing at the copy of the old printing press. You are invited to leave a message in mirror writing on the letter wall, or you can fold a quire, design your own letter or make a bookmark with an embossing stamp.



## BUSINESS BEFORE PLEASURE: PLANTIN THE MANAGER

Around 1575 Plantin's business is at its peak. To keep the 16 printing presses running more than 50 people are constantly at work. In addition there are the shop assistants, the household staff and the many regular suppliers. Plantin is in charge of a huge business with an enormous production.

People work hard, but they also complain, argue, swear and even get into brawls. Written agreements – *ordonnances* – regulate the working conditions. These lay down the responsibilities of the labourers and the manager alike. People who break the rules have to pay a fine, in beer or in cash.

Being in charge of a company means you are never carefree, as is conveyed in a letter written by son-in-law Jan I Moretus:

'I expect my father-in-law's return from Paris today. We have learned that he was still in good health in Ghent, which is actually always the case when he is travelling. When he is at home with us he can barely enjoy good health because of the daily sorrows and misery.'



## TYPESETTING ERROR

The correctors are seated at the oak table near the window. They carefully read the proofs that are made between the process of typesetting and the actual printing. Pagination, punctuation, accents, spellings, abbreviations, fonts: not one error escapes their all-seeing eyes. The corrector is assisted by a lector. The lector reads the proof aloud while the corrector implements the corrections.

The corrector is a scholar. He will know Dutch and French, but often also Spanish, Italian, Greek and Latin, and sometimes Hebrew and Aramaic (once the most important language of the Middle East) too. As religious works become an important part of the company's production, more and more priest-correctors are engaged.

## HARD CASH

In his office, the manager writes letters, keeps the books and counts his money. Apparently Plantin was satisfied with this rather small office. The decoration on the walls bears witness to the good fortunes of their owner. Gold leather was a luxury product. This wall covering consists of leather sheets adorned with patterns in relief to which silver leaf and yellow varnish have been applied.

International trade results in a variety of coins. Traders have a special coin book where they can look up the value of their own and foreign coins. The value of a coin is determined by the amount of precious metal it contains. This is why tradesmen always have their own weighing scale.

## HOUSE FRIEND

This is the *friends room*, a guest room, which the Moretus family called the *Lipsius Room*. Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) is one of the best-known humanists of his day. This was his study when he was on one of his many visits to the house.

The painting above the chimney depicts a typical humanist scene. Lipsius – wearing a fur collar – is explaining a classic text to two of his pupils. Painter Peter Paul Rubens is looking on. The painting also features a bust of the Roman philosopher Seneca.

Seneca is the symbolic father of this company and his portrait hangs next to the chimney. Seneca is pictured shortly before his death. He is a stoic: someone who perseveres with equanimity, during difficult times and even when facing death.



## PERSEVERANCE AND EQUANIMITY: PLANTIN THE HUMANIST

Plantin has been schooled in the book trade, but on the whole he remains a self-taught man. He earns his living as bookbinder and later on as printer/publisher. But there is more to the man than meets the eye. Plantin has strong beliefs. He is convinced of the social relevance of books, the importance of schools and education, of science and of Greek and Roman authors.



This is how he becomes acquainted with prominent scientists and intellectuals. He corresponds extensively with some of them, in French, Latin, Spanish and Italian. Plantin knows people all over Europe. He is a networking wonder.

Plantin is a religious man, just like his contemporaries. But he is also someone who tries to keep his feet on the ground, with perseverance and equanimity.

One of his friends writes about him:

'Never before in my life have I met a man who combines so many talents and goodness in one person, or who better knows and applies virtuousness. Every day I discover something new that I can recommend, but I am particularly touched by his great modesty and his patience towards his colleague printers. They envy him, but he keeps treating them in a correct way, although he could cause them great damage. This is not a man of flesh and blood; this is a purely spiritual human being. He does not contemplate eating, drinking or resting. He lives for his job.'

## LEAD LETTERS

The shelves in this room contain the type cases. Each type case contains all the letters in a particular alphabet in a given font and size. From here the typesetter collects the type case he needs for a particular printing job. On the bottom shelves the reserve stock is stored. At the end of his life Plantin possessed no less than 90 different fonts.

## PRINT PRINT PRINT

We have now entered the heart of the business. The printing room consists of two parts: on one side the type cases and on the other the printing presses.

The typesetters take the lead letters from the type case in the right order and assemble them into a complete line. The different lines are put together into a column or a page, known as a 'forme', which can be printed onto a sheet of paper. Afterwards the letters are returned to their type case, ready for the next printing job.

The printers place the forme in the press and ink it. The sheet of paper is then inserted. The printers roll the carriage into position and when the bar is pulled a printed sheet is produced. This is repeated some 2,500 times a day.

Right under the statue of Mary you can see the two oldest surviving printing presses in the world. They are more than 400 years old. In other words, it is quite possible that Plantin himself saw them at work. In any case, they have led a very eventful life.



## PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: PLANTIN THE PRINTER

Plantin arrives in Antwerp around 1550. At that time the city is enjoying an economic and cultural boom. There is a substantial group of wealthy Antwerp citizens. They desire luxury products, and that includes books. The city of Antwerp is the place to be for an ambitious craftsman.

Plantin's reputation as a printer is well-established. He publishes bestsellers along with high-quality books. The design of his books is unequalled. Plantin keeps up to date with the new letters available on the market, which means he can offer his clients a wider range of letter types than his competitors.

But Plantin's success did not arrive all by itself. About his life as a printer he writes:

'The printer's trade is a real abyss, a deep pit. You have no other option than to work very hard and steadfastly. You must constantly throw everything which the abyss demands into the gaping hole, or else it will swallow and destroy its master and all his acquaintances.'





*T O P*  
*F L O O R*



EX OFFICINA  
PLANTINIANA

Plantin writes to Pope Gregorius XIII,  
9 October 1574:

‘Above any other region I chose to live in the Netherlands and in particular the city of Antwerp. I thought that no other city in the world offered more advantages for doing the craft that I was about to embark on. I considered it very important that at the time trade transport was well organised there and that the materials we needed for the workplace were available in abundance because they arrived in the city from everywhere. A great number of craftsmen were living in the city, ready to be trained for any kind of craftsmanship within a short amount of time. It was also clear to me that precisely this city and this region were blossoming under the Spanish king because of the cultivation of the Catholic religion. Last but not least, the eminent Catholic University of Louvain was close by, so I would be able to publish books for the greater good written by scholars from every branch of science.’

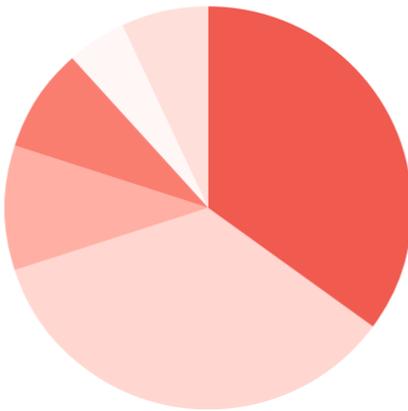
## THE PLANTINIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Plantin is the founder of one of the largest publishing-printing companies of his time. The activities of the *Officina Plantiniana* during the 16th and 17th centuries coincide with a period during which scholars from the Low Countries played an extremely significant role in the development of Western thinking.

Plantin mainly prints religious and humanist works. Bible editions, liturgical books and theological treatises dominate the company's production, but he also publishes classical authors, treatises on canon law and civil law, and history books.

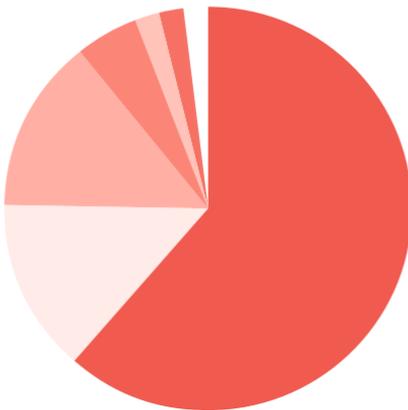
There are considerably fewer scientific publications. Plantin prints pamphlets and decrees for different government institutions, which provide him with a steady income.

### WHICH BOOKS DID PLANTIN PUBLISH?



- 35% Religion
- 35% Humanism and literature
- 10% Science
- 8,5% Governmental printed publications
- 4,5% Pamphlets
- 7% Other

### IN HOW MANY LANGUAGES DID PLANTIN PRINT?



- 62% Latin
- 14% Dutch
- 14% French
- 5% Greek
- 2% Spanish
- 2% Hebrew
- 1,8% Other (German, Italian, English, Old Syriac, Aramaic)

## FROM WRITER TO READER

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BOOKS:  
A STORY FROM  
WRITER TO READER

When a book finally finds its way into the hands of a reader, it has been through many stages. The publisher has come to an agreement with the author about the overall costs. He then has to decide on the kind of paper, the typeface, the illustrations, the number of copies, and so on. Once printed, the book must be sold to as many people as possible. You can read all about this process in the section 'from writer to reader'.

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## OLD LANGUAGES, NEW LANGUAGES

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### KNOW YOUR CLASSICS

Humanists study old Bible texts and classical writers. Over the centuries these texts had been copied repeatedly, allowing mistakes and misunderstandings to creep in. In order to ascertain the original versions, the humanists compare the different manuscripts.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 learned refugees arrive in Europe with their books and bring with them their knowledge of Greek and other languages. This results in a boost of language studies.

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### COLLEGIUM TRILINGUE

In 1518 Erasmus founds the Collegium Trilingue. Aspiring humanists are immersed in language courses in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. The education system in this college is based on a critical study of language and eventually leads to a more correct interpretation of the original Bible texts.

C. CORNELII TACITI  
HISTORIARVM  
ET ANNALIVM LIBRI  
QVI EXSTANT,

IUSTI LIPSII  
Studio emendati & illustrati:  
Ad Imp. Maximilianum <sup>II</sup> I. Aug. P. F.

EIVSDEM TACITI LIBER DE  
MORIBVS GERMANORVM.  
IVLII AGRICOLÆ VITA.  
INCERTI SCRIPTORIS DIALOGVS DE  
ORATORIBVS SVI TEMPORIS.

*Ad C. V. Ioannem Sambucum.*



ANTVERPIÆ,  
Ex officina Christophori Plantini,  
Architypographi Regij.  
M. D. LXXIV.



## JUSTUS LIPSIUS

*Joost Lips*

° Overijse, 1547

† Louvain, 1606



Lipsius is one of the most celebrated humanists of his time. He is a student at the University of Louvain where in due course he will become a professor. Lipsius also teaches in Lutheran Jena and in Calvinist Leiden. His favourite classical authors are Tacitus and Seneca, and he believes that the ancient texts tell us something about the present.

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*'Moribus Antiquis'*

'According to the classics'

Justus Lipsius



A BOOK THAT WAS  
THOUGHT TO BE LOST

In *Germania* Tacitus describes the traditions and customs of different Germanic tribes. Germanic scholars of the 15th century were aware that such a book had once existed, but they thought that it was lost for good. Imagine their joy when in 1455 the original text was unexpectedly rediscovered in a German convent. Since then *Germania* has been an important source of inspiration for German nationalism.

## BIBLICAL LANGUAGES

*HEBREW* - Hebrew is the language of Judaism and it is a Semitic language. The Aramaic languages – Syriac, Arabic and Assyrian-Babylonian – also belong to this group of languages.

*ARAMAIC* - Jesus probably spoke Aramaic, also called Chaldean, a language related to Hebrew. The Aramaic text in the Biblia Regia is printed in the same alphabet as the Hebrew text.

*OLD SYRIAC* - Old Syriac is the language of Christianity in the Middle East. It is a form of Aramaic written in a particular handwriting that is related to Hebrew. Old Syriac was spoken in the region of present-day Syria.

*ARABIC* - Humanists regard Arabic as a daughter language of Hebrew. For a better grasp of the Hebrew Bible texts, they study Arabic. Arabic is also an important language for trade with the East.

## RAPHELENGIUS IN LEIDEN

Plantin's son-in-law Raphelengius is a real linguistic talent. Thanks to his efforts, the University of Leiden will be the first in the Netherlands to organise a course in Arabic. Plantin has good reason to be proud of him: '*[He] knows Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac and Arabic. Anybody who enters into a private conversation with him will confirm that he is an expert [...].*' From 1585 onwards Raphelengius is in charge of the printing office in Leiden. He specialises in printing languages from the East with the appropriate typeface.

### FROM WRITER TO READER

.....

### THE AUTHOR AND HIS PUBLISHER

The relationship between author and publisher can be a bumpy one. Writers blame the printer for leaving too many mistakes in the published text. Erasmus fumes at second-rate printers '*for whom the profit of one miserable gold coin is more important than the interests of the entire science of literature*'. But even for a high-quality printer like Plantin it is not easy to print without mistakes, although that is what he aims to do.

.....

## FASCINATING LANGUAGE

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**DID ADAM SPEAK  
ANTWERP?**

Joannes Goropius Becanus, one of Plantin's business partners, is convinced that 'Antwerp' is the oldest language in the world. He presumes that the city of Antwerp was founded by descendants of the biblical character Noah. They did not take part in the construction of the tower at Babel, so God did not punish them with a gibberish language. They were free to go on speaking their pure language, which developed into Dutch and later on into the Antwerp dialect. Therefore, Diets or Duyts (d'outs=the oldest) is the oldest language, not Hebrew.

Becanus is widely criticised for this opinion. Nevertheless, his work is groundbreaking because he looks for connections between languages. In this way he contributed to the origin of comparative language studies. His approach is also new in that he thinks that languages are not merely a means of gathering knowledge or of receiving information but that they are worthy of research for their own sake.

## STANDARD DUTCH

Resistance against the Spanish oppressor is a stimulus for the growing interest in the native language in the Netherlands. Awareness of a national identity is slowly taking shape, but there is no such thing as a uniform language in the Netherlands yet. The local Brabant dialect dominates written language. Antwerp is the centre for the study of the Dutch language.

---

### *HIEROGLYPHS*

Becanus also studies Egyptian hieroglyphs, but he does not succeed in decoding them. This is not achieved until the 19th century, and is thanks to the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. This stone carries the same text in Egyptian hieroglyphs, Demotic script and Greek.

ETYMOLOGICVM  
TEVTONICÆ LINGVÆ:  
SIVE  
DICTIONARIVM  
TEVTONICO-LATINVM,

PRÆCIPVAS TEVTONICÆ  
LINGVÆ DICATIONES ET PHRASES  
Latinè interpretatas, & cum aliis nonnullis linguis  
obiter collatas complectens:

*Studio & Opera*

CORNELII KILIANI DVFFLÆI.

Opus Germanis tam superioribus quàm inferioribus,  
Gallis, Anglis siue Anglosaxonibus, Italis, Hispanis,  
& aliis lectu perutile.

*Quid hîc præstitum sit, Præfatio ad  
Lectorem docebit.*

Editio tertia, prioribus auctior & correctior.



ANTVERPIÆ  
EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA,  
Apud Ioannem Moretum.

M. D. XCIX.



## CORNELIS KILIAAN

*Cornelis Abts van Kiele*

° Duffel, 1528/1530

† Antwerp, 1607



For 50 years, Kiliaan works as proofreader in the Officina Plantiniana. The widower and his three children also live in the house on the Vrijdagmarkt. When Plantin plans to publish a dictionary of Dutch, he asks Kiliaan to be his collaborator. Dictionaries will become Kiliaan's life's work.

---

*'You, inhabitant of the Low Countries,  
whoever you are,  
If you love the Dutch language,  
then love Kiliaan too.'*

Ode by Lipsius for Kiliaan



THE FIRST  
DICTIONARY OF  
THE DUTCH LANGUAGE

Kiliaan is the first scholar in the whole of Europe to bring comparative language study into practice. He wants to include every language that is spoken in the Netherlands. He considers the Brabant dialect as the 'true' language of the Netherlands. Whenever he uses non-Brabant words, he carefully notes down their place of origin: Flanders, Holland, Zeeland, Frisia, Guelderland, Gulik.

## OFF TO SCHOOL

## LEARNING LANGUAGES

Historian Lodovico Guicciardini is thoroughly impressed by the high degree of language knowledge in the Netherlands: *'There are a lot of people here who have never been outside their country but who still manage to speak foreign languages, mainly French [...]'*. Foreign languages are taught using books full of conversations about daily life. Children are encouraged to read, to learn by heart and to translate. Schools employ female teachers as well as male. In 1576 the Antwerp guild for schoolteachers has 70 female and 88 male members.

---

JUSTUS LIPSIUS DRAFTS A STUDY  
SCHEDULE FOR BALTHASAR I  
MORETUS

6 AM	Rise, pray, wash.
Morning	Read speeches or read Cicero's philosophical texts. Write a letter, a poem or a short speech.
Afternoon	Read Suetonius or another historian. Short walk. Study Greek texts for one hour and copy Greek sentences. Short walk. Read Homer or another poet. Read <i>'Letters to Atticus'</i> . Write a text.
After the evening meal	Read <i>'Orator ad Brutum'</i> by Cicero or read another author.
9 PM	Pray to God. Go to bed.

HOMERUS, OPENING  
LINES OF THE ILIAD  
(1,1 - 7)

*'The wrath sing, goddess, of Peleus's son, Achilles, that destructive wrath which brought countless woes upon the Achaeans, and sent forth to Hades many valiant souls of heroes, and made them themselves spoil for dogs and every bird; thus the plan of Zeus came to fulfilment, from the time when first they parted in strife Atreus's son, king of men, and brilliant Achilles.'*

μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος  
ούλομένην, ἣ μυρὶ Ἄχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε,  
πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν  
ἠρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν  
οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι, Διὸς δ' ἔτελείετο βουλή,  
ἔξ οὔ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε  
Ἄτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.

FROM WRITER TO READER

.....

WHO IS PAYING?

It is of course tempting for a publisher to make several reprints of a successful book, like, for example, the Greek school grammar book by Clenardus. As a rule, publishers only invest in the publication of a new book when they are certain they will not lose any money in the process. That is why they often demand a financial contribution from the author. Only the happy few do not have to do this. At best, the author will receive a few copies of his own book. Best-selling author Justus Lipsius, on the other hand, is given as many free copies of his books as he wishes.

.....

## BOOK BY BOOK

Balthasar I Moretus and subsequent generations collected books out of personal interest. This resulted in a private library with a humanist character: high shelves, lecterns, busts and globes.

Plantin also buys books, as work tools for the correctors when they are working on new publications.

The big library serves as a chapel for a while. The Moretus family and their employees attend mass here before they start their daily work.

All the books from the library can be consulted in our reading room. We not only are a museum, but also a scientific library.

## LETTER BY LETTER

Casting type is usually contracted out to specialised firms. Nevertheless, Balthasar I Moretus installs a type foundry. The furnace was only used at intervals however, between 1622 and 1660 and later on from 1736 until 1760. The stone floor reduces the risk of fire.

In the 16th century each typeface is given its own name, often after the designer, like 'Garamond' or 'Van den Keere'. The names 'Jolie' and 'Nonpareille' refer to the aesthetic quality of the letters. Other letter types, such as 'Bible' and 'Cicero', indicate the texts in which they feature.

## FROM WRITER TO READER

.....

## EXCLUSIVE FONTS

Usually the publisher decides on the format, the font and the kind of paper. Plantin is extremely careful about obtaining the right typeface. At the beginning of his career he has to work with letters that are also frequently used by his colleagues. But soon enough Plantin uses more exclusive fonts from French designers like Garamont and Granjon, so he can outdo his Antwerp competitors. He introduces a wide variety of French letters in the southern Netherlands.

.....

## SCIENCE IN FULL GEAR

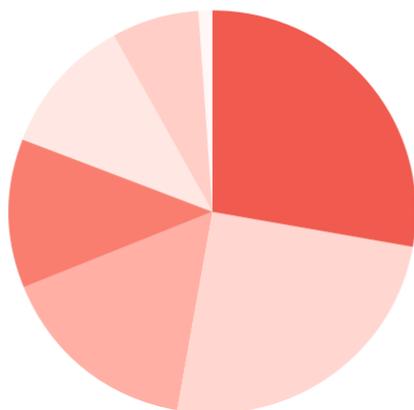
In the 16th century there are several rather different approaches to science. Cartographer Mercator and mathematician Gemma Frisius for instance are disciples of the cosmographical approach. The entire world can be classified according to the principles of mathematics and natural science. They want to understand and classify the world in relation to the divine creation. Mathematician Stevin and botanist Dodoens practice science from an empirical angle: they experiment, they enumerate data, they arrange and they classify. Occultism, alchemy and astrology are also regarded as branches of science.

---

### WORTH KNOWING

The American dollar is introduced in 1792. Thomas Jefferson wants to divide the currency using the decimal system. For his reasoning he refers to Stevin's *De Thiende*. He succeeds: 1 dollar is 100 cents,  $\frac{1}{4}$  dollar is 0.25 cents.

## WHICH SCIENCES DID PLANTIN PRINT?



28%	Geography
25%	Medicine
16%	Natural science
12%	Astronomy
11%	Botany
7%	Mathematics
1%	Military science

### FROM WRITER TO READER

.....

## DESIGN

The progress of science is a challenging stimulus for the layout of books. Printers have to look for new ways of typesetting than they have used for Bibles and other books. In the 16th century printers structure their texts by applying different fonts and sizes. They use paragraphs and white spaces between the various parts of the text. Some authors, including Vesalius, prefer to decide for themselves how the text should be laid out.

.....

DE  
T H I E N D E

Leerende door ongheloorde lichticheyt  
allen rekeningen onder den Menschē  
noodich vallende, afveerdighen door  
heele ghetalen sonder ghebrokenen.

*Beschreven door SIMON STEVIN*  
*van Brugghe.*



TOT LEYDEN,  
By Christoffel Plantijn.

M. D. LXXXV.



## SIMON STEVIN

° Bruges, 1548

† Den Haag/Leiden, 1620



Stevin is a mathematician and an inventor. He designs mills, sluices, dredgers and even a land yacht. In the field of physics he is the inventor of the law of the inclined plane. Thanks to the decimal description that he introduces in his book *De Thiende*, calculations are considerably simplified.

---

*'Wonder is no wonder'*

Simon Stevin



## THE DECIMAL SYSTEM

Stevin's decimal system works as follows: A number before the comma is marked with the sign ①. Each tenth part of a single unit is marked with the sign ②. The tenth part of a single unit from the first tenth is marked with the sign ③. You can go on like this with every number after the comma.

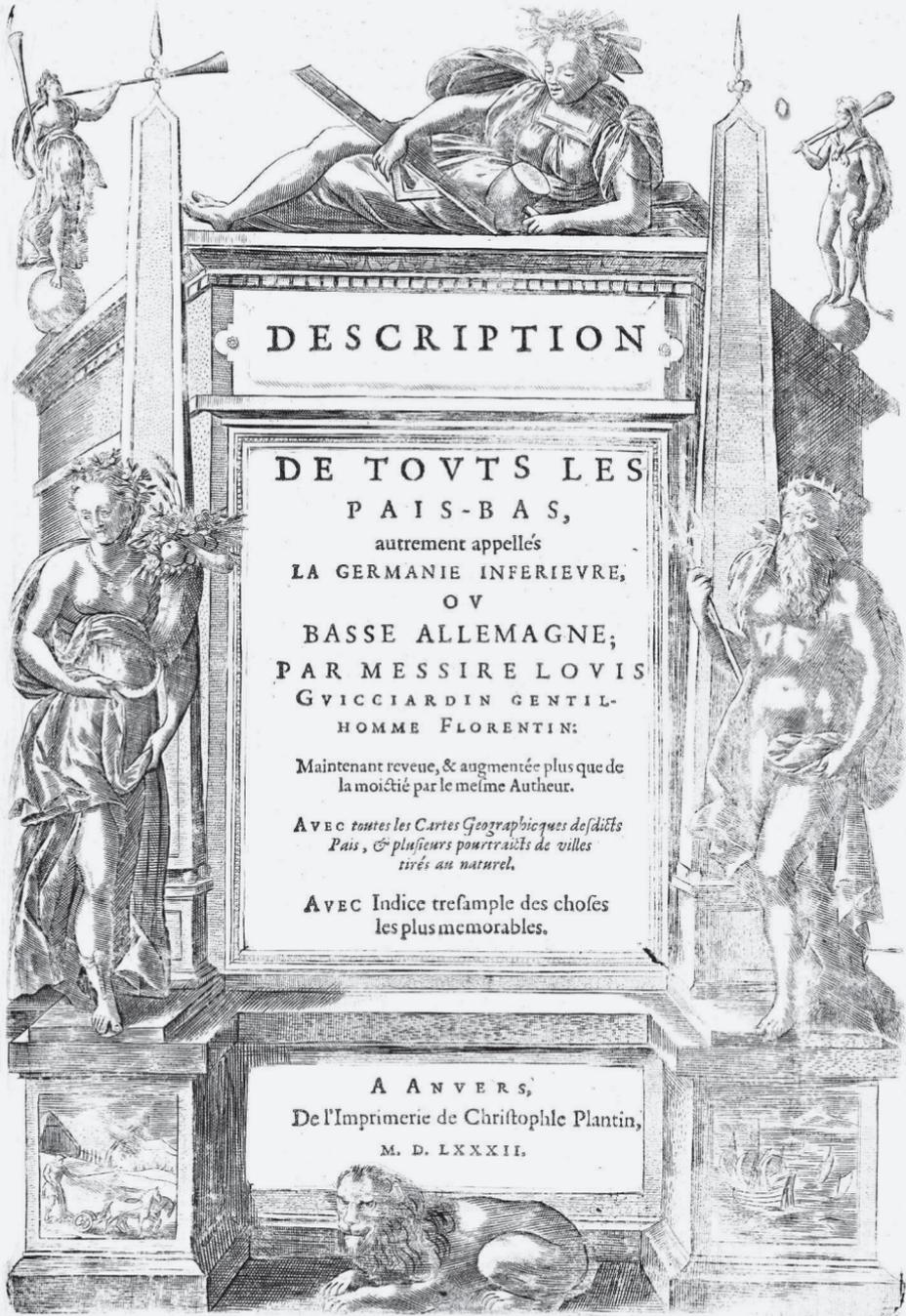
His notation 8①3②1③7④2⑤5⑥ is nowadays written as 8,375

A decimal sum:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \textcircled{0} \textcircled{1} \textcircled{2} \textcircled{3} \\
 3 \ 2 \ 3 \\
 11 \ 7 \ 6 \ 2 \\
 \hline
 14 \ 9 \ 9 \ 2
 \end{array}$$

You can also write it as follows:

$$3,23 + 11,762 = 14,992$$



DESCRIPTION

DE TOVTS LES  
PAIS-BAS,  
autrement appelleés  
LA GERMANIE INFERIEVRE,  
OV  
BASSE ALLEMAGNE,  
PAR MESSIRE LOVIS  
GVICCIARDIN GENTIL-  
HOMME FLORENTIN:

Maintenant reveue, & augmentée plus que de  
la moitié par le meisme Autheur.

AVEC toutes les Cartes Geographiques desdits  
Pais, & plusieurs pourtraicts de villes  
tirés au naturel.

AVEC Indice trefample des choses  
les plus memorables.

A ANVERS,  
De l'Imprimerie de Christophle Plantin,  
M. D. LXXXII.

## LUDOVICUS GUICCIARDINI

*Lodovico Guicciardini*

° Florence, 1521

† Antwerp, 1589

Guicciardini is an Italian merchant who works in the Antwerp branch of the family business from 1541 onwards. He will live in Antwerp until his death. His career takes a new turn when in 1552 he starts writing, an activity that, according to Guicciardini himself, brings in more money than his job as a merchant.

---

*'When you read this description you will immediately see the great beauty and nobility of the wondrous Netherlands without having to leave your house.'*

Guicciardini



MAKE  
THE EFFORT

In this book Guicciardini describes every town in the Netherlands. Plantin sometimes finds it hard to execute the accompanying maps. Ortelius comes to the rescue and puts maps from his *Orbis Terrarum* at Plantin's disposal. Because of the war Plantin is unable to acquire the views of Tournai and Cambrai for the first editions. The cities of Leiden and Utrecht support Plantin financially to enable their city maps to be included.



*Opus nunc denuo ab ipso Auctore recognitum, multisque locis castigatum, & quamplurimis  
 nouis Tabulis atque Commentarijs auctum.*



## ABRAHAM ORTELIUS

*Abraham Ortels*  
 ° Antwerp, 1527  
 † Antwerp, 1598



Ortelius is the inventor of the modern atlas. He is the first to collate all the maps of the then known parts of the world in the same format. He acquires his material from his wide network of contacts. History and cartography go hand in hand with Ortelius: he studies the history of Rome and at the same time he maps it.

---

*‘You deserve to be praised because you have selected the best description of every region and you have put them all together in one book. The book is not too expensive and we can take it with us, wherever we go.’*

Mercator to Ortelius



THE FIRST  
ATLAS

Ortelius revises maps by comparing them with each other. The information on the maps is standardised by using the same demarcation lines for rivers, coasts, lakes, frontiers, mountains, roads, etc. The international distribution of the atlases adds to the dissemination of his technical and graphical innovations.

FAN OF SENECA  
AND CICERO

The cartouches on the world map by Ortelius illustrate his desire for peace and harmony as well as his indifference towards worldly splendour.

He cites Seneca

‘Is this the little dot which is divided among so many nations by fire and sword? How utterly ridiculous are the limitations of common mortals?’

and Cicero

‘What kind of human activities can be of any importance in the eyes of a man who is focused on eternity and who knows how vast the universe is?’

FROM WRITER TO READER

.....

YOUR OWN CHOICE  
OF COLOURS

To make them more beautiful and understandable, colours are often used for prints and maps. Plantin does not employ people on a permanent basis for this kind of work. Cartographer Ortelius commences his career as ‘afsetter van carten’ (colouring maps) for Plantin. A significant number of Plantin’s atlases are sold in colour and the rest are ‘white’. A coloured map costs twice as much as a ‘white’ one.

.....

## MORE MAPS, MORE KNOWLEDGE

An atlas by Ortelius from 1570 is only half the size of an atlas from 1598. The number of maps that Ortelius includes in his books is growing spectacularly. His first atlas contains 53 maps; eight years later the number has grown to 117. Even after his death his atlas is still printed and maps continue to be added. The 1612 edition has 167 maps. Because customers were able to buy loose maps and add them to the atlas they already possessed, many of the preserved copies of *Orbis Terrarum* are unique.

---

### WORTH KNOWING

Ortelius is the first to observe that, judging by the shape of their coastlines, America, Africa and Europe were once joined. He presumes that earthquakes and tidal waves tore them apart.

---

### WORTH KNOWING

On 16th-century maps the part of the Niger that flows through Mali is represented as a tributary of the Nile. In fact, they are two separate rivers. The real course of the river Nile will be a mystery for centuries to come.

## THE LAST HOUR

Balthasar I Moretus dies at home on 8 July 1641 at 10 o'clock in the morning. His passing away is a poignant event for the family but it is also an appropriate occasion on which to display the social position of the Moretus family. Regarding costs for the funeral, money is no object.

Convents, religious orders and poor relief receive generous donations. Staff members, doctors, the parish priest and sexton are paid for their services. Mourners, bell-ringers, musicians, bakers, crockery suppliers, tailors and eulogists are hired to add pomp and circumstance to the funeral service. Painter Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert is commissioned to make two paintings, one of which is titled *Balthasar I on His Death Bed*.

The funeral costs 3,400 guilders. The monthly wages of an unskilled labourer at the time is 15 guilders.

## SICKNESS EXAMINED

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ENGRAVINGS  
IN MIRROR IMAGE

Pieter Huys engraves the copper plates after the illustrations in Valverde's book. He has to do it in mirror image, but he forgets to mirror a number of the illustrations. For example in the illustration of the heart, the coronary artery or aorta appears to have been drawn on the right side, whereas its correct place is on the left. Readers comment on the mistake and Plantin decides to have a new plate engraved. Is it out of frugality that he uses the old and the new plate in subsequent editions?

---

WORTH KNOWING

To protect himself the plague master uses herbs. Juniper berries are good for preventing infections and tansy drives away flees and lice. Of course these herbs also help to conceal the stench.

V A L E R I I  
C O R D I D I S P E N -  
S A T O R I V M ,  
S I V E  
P H A R M A C O R V M  
C O N F I C I E N D O R V M  
R A T I O ,

A  
P E T R O C O V D E B E R G O Pharmaco-  
poeo Antuerpiano, plus quadringentis erro-  
ribus liberata atque vindicata:

A D I E C T O

*Valerij Cordi nouo libello, aliisque paucis post  
praefationes annotatis.*



A N T V E R P I Æ ,  
E x o f f i c i n a C h r i s t o p h o r i P l a n t i n i .

M . D . L X V I I I .

## PIETER COUDENBERG

° Antwerp, 1517

† Antwerp, 1599

Coudenberg is a pharmacist and a botanist. He runs a pharmacy in Antwerp and is the very first person in Europe to lay out a private botanical garden. Botanical gardens are usually part of a convent or a university. Coudenberg introduces many new plants because of their medicinal properties.

---

*'He was an expert in his field, a scholar and a close friend of Plantin the printer. When the city of Antwerp was besieged, he assisted the poor who were ill and he prepared a recipe to fight off the plague.'*

Anonymous



## ON PRESCRIPTION

Coudenberg's *Dispensatorium* is translated in France, the Netherlands and Italy, and is reissued well into the 17th century. In the 17th century the city of Antwerp makes it compulsory for pharmacists and doctors to use the *Dispensatorium* when prescribing or making medicines. The work will remain a standard until the 19th century.

## Recipe

'For the stimulation of breast feeding: take green fennel leaves, and make an extract with wine or water. Encourage the woman to drink it, during meals and as often as you see fit and you will see that she will have plenty of milk.'

## A MAP OF NATURE

---



### CAROLUS CLUSIUS

*Charles de L'Écluse*

° Atrecht, 1526

† Leiden, 1609

Clusius studies law and medicine but he becomes famous through his botanical works. He travels throughout Europe to collect plants. He describes them, grows them and studies them.

In 1593 he is asked to go to Leiden and install a medicinal garden. You can still visit this garden today.

. . . . .

#### Montanus to Clusius

'I wouldn't want you to let the years go by like an olive tree, I would prefer you to be like a fig tree and carry fruit twice every summer.'

## MATHIAS LOBELIUS

*Mathias l'Obel*  
° Rijsel, 1538  
† London, 1616



Above all, Lobelius is a doctor. But together with Dodoens and Clusius he is a member of the 'botanical trio' of the 16th century. He improves the work of his predecessors and classifies plants according to their exterior characteristics. Thanks to this classification his work will be a milestone in the history of plant classification.

## Lobelius

'Although the climate in Flanders is less suited for the cultivation of a number of plants, the care of the inhabitants is so intense, that nowhere in the world you will find a plant that is not grown here.'

REMBERTI  
DODONAEI  
MECHLINIENSIS  
MEDICI CÆSAREI

STIRPIVM HISTORIAE  
PEMPTADES SEX.

SIVE  
LIBRI XXX.



ANTVERPIÆ,  
Ex officina Christophori Plantini.  
M. D. LXXXIII.

## REMBERTUS DODONAEUS

*Rembert Dodoens*  
 ° Mechelen, 1517/18  
 † Leiden, 1585



Dodoens is the personal physician of Emperors Maximilian II and Rudolph II. He writes medicinal books but is particularly famous as a botanist. In his *Cruydtboeck* from 1554 he lays down the foundations of botany. He also includes non-medicinal plants, which is entirely new. He is one of the most highly regarded botanists of his time.

---

*'I've written the herbal book in Dutch.  
 I hope that it will invigorate the love and  
 devotion of herb lovers.'*

Rembert Dodoens



EXPENSIVE  
 PLANTS

For the 1,309 illustrations in Dodoens's herbal book Plantin reuses woodblocks he had already employed for works by Dodoens, Clusius and Lobelius. Woodblocks are much cheaper than copper plates but, nevertheless, the cost of a book with so many illustrations rises quickly. We know that a copy with 2,178 illustrations cost 8 guilders, and a coloured version 113 guilders. An unskilled mason's daily wages were half a guilder.

## DRAWN FROM LIFE

Illustrators of herbal books take inspiration from living or dried plants. During his travels Clusius also makes rough sketches of plants and receives drawings from people he befriends. He prefers to sit next to the illustrator so that he can give instructions. This reduces the inaccuracies considerably. When Clusius is abroad and not directly with the illustrator, for instance, and therefore has to write letters containing instructions about the illustrations, the end result is less satisfying.

## FROM WRITER TO READER

• • • • •

## FINE, FINER, FINEST

Publishers in the 16th and 17th centuries use woodcuts, etchings or engravings for book illustrations. Woodblocks are cheap and do not wear out easily. Moreover, text and woodblock illustrations can be printed together. Engravings are more expensive and have to be printed separately, but they allow for delicate nuances between black and white, and finer lines. Trendsetter Plantin resolutely opts for quality. Valverde's anatomical book is the first publication in which he uses engravings. Other publishers follow suit.

• • • • •

## PRECIOUS HERITAGE

Because it is impossible to properly regulate the temperature in this room we show high quality reproductions. This way we do not harm the precious original works.

We take care of:

638 manuscripts

25,000 books printed before 1800

The most complete collection of printed matters by Plantin and Moretus in the world.

10 tons of letters

5,000 stamps

20,000 matrices

The most impressive collection of typographical materials from the 16th century.

791 design drawings for copper engravings

3,000 copper plates

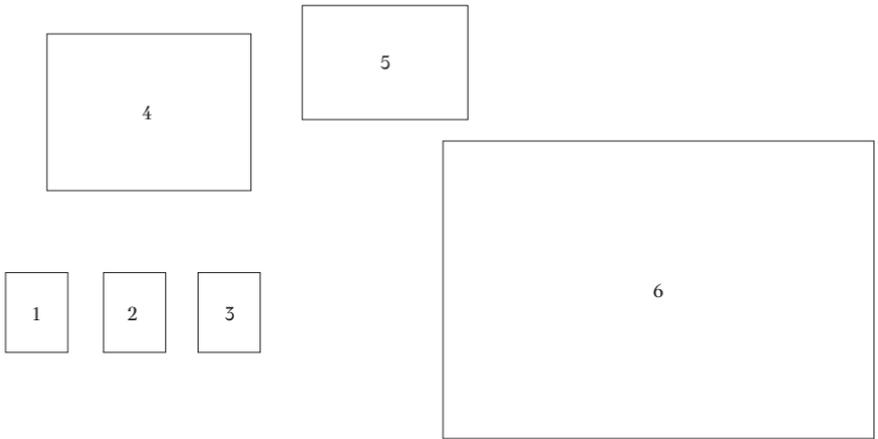
13,000 woodblocks

80,000 prints and drawings

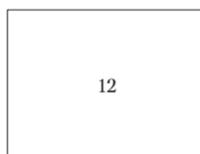
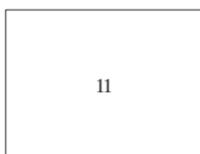
The Print Room is one of the 50 most prestigious in the world.

160 metres of archives

1,382 registers, 990 bundles, 187 packages and more than 1,385 pieces of text on parchment. Recognised by UNESCO as 'Memory of the World'.



- 1 *Three Dancing Men*, workshop Jacob de Gheyn II, 1595-1596
- 2 *Masked Couple and blindfolded Cupid*, workshop Jacob de Gheyn II, 1595-1596
- 3 *Masked Couple and Lute Player*, workshop Jacob de Gheyn II, 1595-1596
- 4 *Leo Belgicus*, Jopannes van Doetecum II, 1598
- 5 *Alpine Landscape*, van Doetecum brothers after Pieter Brueghel I, 1553-1558
- 6 *The Battle of the Amazones*, Lucas Vorsterman I after Peter Paul Rubens, 1623



- 7 *Europa*, Gregorius Fentzel after Maerten de Vos, ca. 1650  
 8 *Africa*, Gregorius Fentzel after Maerten de Vos, ca. 1650  
 9 *Asia*, Gregorius Fentzel after Maerten de Vos, ca. 1650  
 10 *America*, , Gregorius Fentzel after Maerten de Vos, ca. 1650  
 11 *The Battle between Scipio and Hannibal near Zama Regia*,  
 Cornelis Cort after Guilio Romano, 1567  
 12 *The Antwerp Ommeganck of 1685*, Gaspar Bouttats, 1685

#### Side wall

*Harbour View of Antwerp*, anonymous, 1515-1521

#### Next room

*Map of Antwerp*, Virgilius Bononiensis, 1565

## STYLISH

In 1692 the Moretus family is ennobled and bestowed with the title of esquire. It is a happy event, which demands an appropriate lifestyle, as exemplified by this luxurious drawing room featuring French gold leather, porcelain carrying the family crest, a clock in Louis XV style and family portraits.

# ON MAN, POWER AND SOCIETY

---

## FOR KING AND CITY

Plantin succeeds in securing privileges (agreements) for printing the commandments of the different political factions. He cooperates with the States General of the Netherlands, the Duke of Alva, Francis of Anjou and the Spanish King Philip II.

Of Plantin's overall production, 8% is from printing for the authorities and 4% from printing pamphlets.

---

### WORTH KNOWING

Festive printing is often interspersed with games. An annual or chronogram is actually also a jigsaw with numbers.

Add up all the capitals that could as well be a Roman number, and you will find the right date.

*Tip*

M=1000	L= 50	I or J= 1
D= 500	X or W= 10	Y= 2
C= 100	V or U= 5	

*o fac (br)iles.*  
3

LA  
MAGNIFIQUE, ET SUM-  
PTVEUSE POMPE FVNEBRE FAITE AVS OBSEQVES,  
ET FVNERAILLES DV TRESGRAND, ET TRESVICTO-  
RIEVS EMPEREVR CHARLES CINQVIE' ME, CE-  
LEBRE'ES EN LA VILE DE BRVXELLES LE  
XXIX. IOVR DV MOIS DE DECEMBRE  
M. D. LVIII. PAR PHILIPPES ROY  
CATHOLIQUE D'ESPAL-  
GNE SON  
FILS.



A ANVERS,  
De l'Imprimerie de Christophe Plantin:  
M. D. LIX.  
AVEC PRIVILEGE.



## A MAGNIFICENT FUNERAL PROCESSION

Charles V dies in Spain on 21 September 1558. At that moment his son Philip resides in the Netherlands. This is why he organizes a magnificent funeral procession along the streets of Brussels on 29 and 30 September 1558. Thanks to this picture book everyone can experience the funeral procession of Charles V, even from the comfort of their home. The work is sold as a roll or as a book, in the five languages of Charles V's empire: Dutch, French, German, Spanish and Italian.

## WAR ON PAPER

The media is a much-feared weapon in the rebellious Netherlands. Ideas and news travel fast and on a large scale. Political and religious debates are increasingly intertwined. Heresy becomes a symbol of rebellion and war. The political pamphlet plays an essential role in political life.

Franciscus Hogenberg is well known for his drawings about the political situation in France, the Netherlands and the German empire. He leaves the Netherlands because he becomes a Protestant.

## FROM WRITER TO READER

. . . . .

EVERYBODY WANTS A  
PUBLIC CONTRACT

From 1579 onwards Plantin has a public contract with the city of Antwerp. He is licensed to print every municipal announcement. His successors manage to keep the contract until 1705. Public contracts are a lucrative business. They provide a steady source of income for a long period of time and it saves the publishers from having to sell what they have printed. Even if the profits do not amount to much compared with the total budget, every penny counts.

. . . . .

## ALMANACS

At the start of his career Plantin prints thousands of almanacs every year, including one written by physician Nostradamus. Travelling salesmen compete with the printers and booksellers for the market in almanacs.

Explanation of the signs in the Almanac printed at the *Officina* in 1576.

- |    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| ⚔  | good day for blood letting     |
| ⚔  | better day for blood letting   |
| ⚔  | the best day for blood letting |
| ⚔  | good day for taking medicines  |
| ♁. | good sowing                    |
| ♁. | good planting                  |
| ♁. | annual market                  |
| ♁. | horse market                   |

*Signs of planets and aspects*

♄	Saturn	♁	Dragon's head
♃	Jupiter	♏	Dragon's tail
♂	Mars	♌	Conjunction
☉	Sun	♍	Opposition
♀	Venus	□	The fourth aspect
☿	Mercury		
☾	Moon		

*Zodiac signs*

♈	Aries	head
♉	Taurus	neck
♊	Gemini	arms and hands
♋	Cancer	chest
♌	Lion	heart
♍	Virgo	intestines
♎	Libra	kidneys
♏	Scorpio	loins
♐	Sagittarius	thighs
♑	Capricorn	knees
♒	Aquarius	shins
♓	Pisces	feet

## BOOKS FOR WOMEN

The widely accepted opinion in the 16th century is that reading is a dangerous activity for ordinary men and women alike. In his book *L'institution de la femme chrestienne* (*The education of the Christian woman*), the influential pedagogue Vives elaborates on the subject. He thinks that the Bible, the classical philosophers and Christian poets are acceptable reading matter in the education of young women, but that novels of chivalry (or romantic stories) should be avoided.

His pioneering work is very successful. At the request of Peeter Heyns, Plantin publishes a French translation in 1579. Heyns wants to use it at his school for girls in Antwerp.

### FROM WRITER TO READER

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## MORE BOOKS FOR MORE PEOPLE

Thanks to the invention of book printing, books are no longer a luxury for a small elite of noblemen, clergymen and humanists. Many more people can afford to buy a book now. The Bible is a bestseller, but song books, almanacs and popular travel stories are also widely read in the average home. People are increasingly reading on their own and in silence, whereas in the past texts used to be read out loud.

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RELIGIOUS WORKS

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LITURGY  
AND PRAYERS

The cardinals present at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) decreed that all prayer books and liturgical works should contain standardised texts. All editions should follow the model printed in Rome according to papal instructions. Replacing all the works that this rendered obsolete was to be a gigantic undertaking. Printers who could obtain a contract for these newly standardised editions would have guaranteed earnings for a long period. Plantin was among this happy few.

## BIBLES

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FROM HEBREW  
TO GREEK ...

What we now regard self-evidently as 'the Bible' had a long history of composition. It begins with a number of Hebrew texts that Christians call the Old Testament. Around two centuries before Christ, a group of 70 Jewish scholars from Alexandria produced a Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures.

... TO LATIN ...

Partly on the basis of the Greek translation, Jerome, one of the Church Fathers, produced a Latin translation known as the Vulgate. During the Council of Trent the cardinals decreed the Vulgate the authoritative version of the biblical text.

... TO 1943

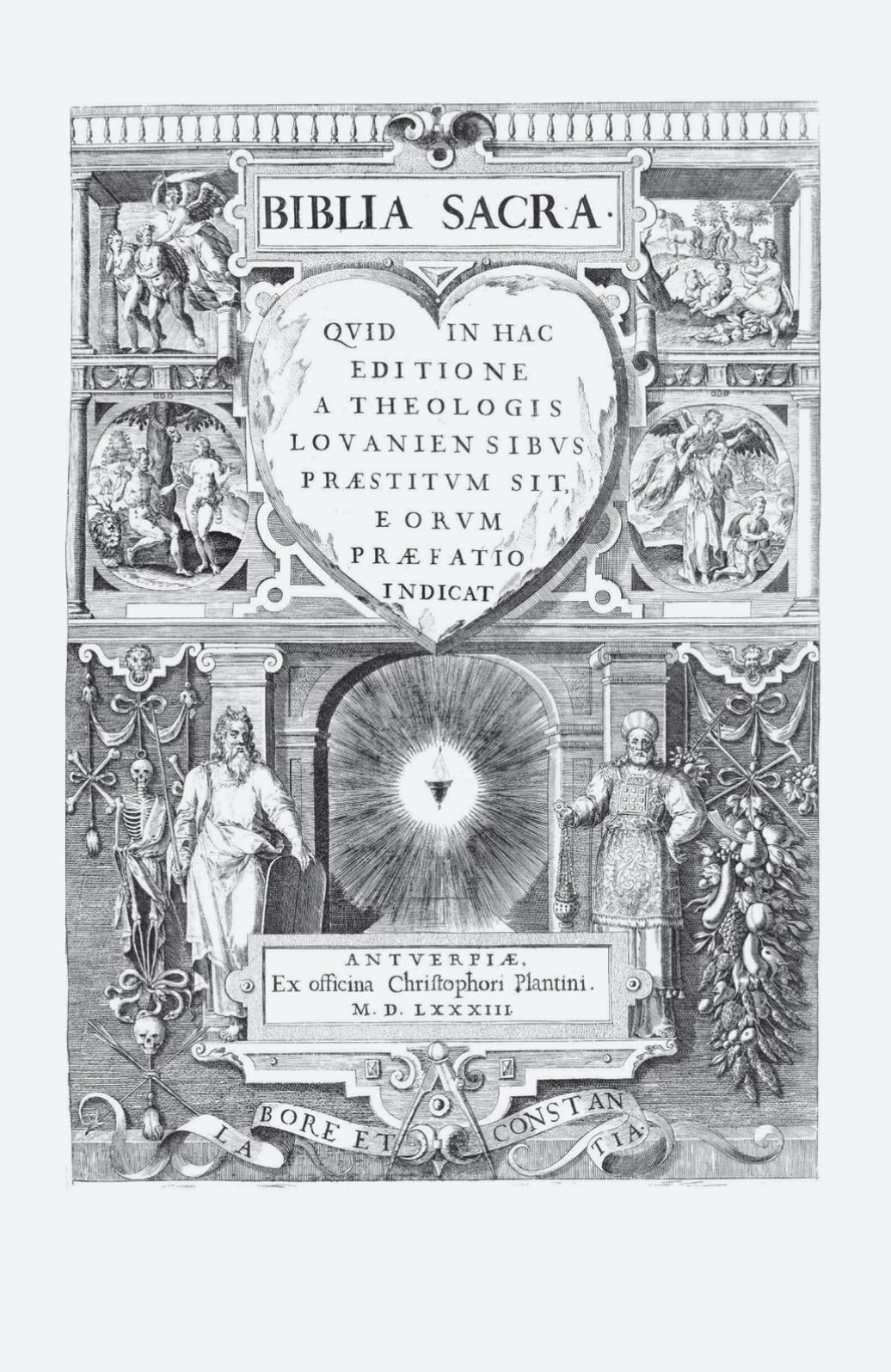
Pope Clement VIII had a revision of it printed in 1592, which remained in use into the 20th century. Only in 1943 did Pope Pius XII write an encyclical allowing biblical scholars to base their work on texts in the original languages with considering the Vulgate.

ANTOINE PERRENOT  
DE GRANVELLE

Plantin owed much to Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle (1517-1586), archbishop of Mechelen and councillor to Margaret of Parma. Later King Philip II sent him to Rome. There Granvelle was an enthusiastic ambassador for Plantin, landing him the contracts for the printing of the new liturgical works north of the Alps. Granvelle was, furthermore, able to prevent a rival Antwerp publisher from obtaining permission to print liturgical books. The cardinal also put Plantin in touch with Italian scholars and artists.

## SUCCESSFUL EMBLEM BOOKS

In the late 16th century, emblem books were the height of fashion. They combined text and image to illustrate a point memorably. The images helped the faithful to interpret and meditate upon sacred texts. One of the most influential of these works was the *Evangelicae imagines* by the Spanish Jesuit Hieronymus Natalis. The first edition was brought out in 1594 by the rival publisher Martinus Nutius. In 1605 Joannes II Moretus and his brother-in-law Theodore Galle bought up the left over prints and the surviving copper plates and used them to produce new editions.



BIBLIA SACRA.

QVID IN HAC  
EDITIONE  
A THEOLOGIS  
LOVANIENSIBVS  
PRÆSTITVM SIT,  
EORVM  
PRÆFATIO  
INDICAT

ANTVERPIÆ,  
Ex officina Christophori Plantini.  
M. D. LXX XIII

LABORE ET CONSTANTIA



## LUXURY BIBLE

This Bible is richly illustrated with 94 engravings that Plantin had previously used to illustrate his *Biblia regia*, Arias Montanus's *Monumenta salutis humanae* and editions of the divine office. By reusing copper plates, Plantin could reduce the expense of producing luxury editions, increasing his profit margins. Many churches bought this work.

## EXPORT TO SPAIN AND LATIN AMERICA

In 1570 Plantin was appointed typographer royal to King Philip II of Spain. A year later he was commissioned to print large numbers of breviaries and missals for Spain and the Spanish colonies. Over five years Plantin delivered about 18,000 breviaries, 17,000 missals, 9,000 books of hours and 8,000 other works for a turnover of about 120,000 guilders.

From 1575 the war in the Low Countries ended exports to Spain. It was only in the early 17th century that Plantin's heirs were able to resume production. From then on deliveries to Spain and the Americas became ever more important to their business. From the last quarter of the 17th century the *Officina Plantiniana* printed only works of this sort.

## THE GUTENBERG BIBLE

The 36 line Bible is a monument in printing history as well as one of the museum's most precious treasures. It was believed to have been printed by Joannes Gutenberg himself. The bible had been presented to the Antwerp Augustinian monastery in 1515. Because the monks sympathized with the protestants the monastery's belongings, including this bible, were sold at public auction. We don't know how the bible finally ended up in Plantin's library. This copy was delicately finished off with beautifully drawn initials.

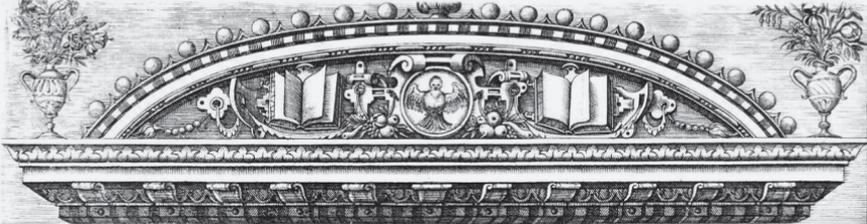
## FROM WRITER TO READER

. . . . .

ONE BOOK,  
TWO PERMITS

Charles V decides that publishers need two permits for every new publication, regardless of the subject: an approbation from the clerical authorities and a privilege from the secular authorities. The privilege has the advantage of protecting publishers against reprints by others, because it forbids competitors to print the same work for a certain period of time. Especially for lucrative publications like the Bible and prayer books, privileges are of the utmost importance.

. . . . .



BIBLIA SACRA



HEBRAICÆ,  
CHALDAICÆ,  
GRÆCE, &  
Latine



PIETATIS CONCORDIÆ. 1540, II

PHILIPPI II. REG. CATHOL. PIETATĒ,  
ET STUDIO AD SACROSANCTĀ  
ECCLESIAŒ VSVM

CHRISTOPH. PLANTINVS EXCVD. ANTVERPIÆ.

BENEDICTUS  
ARIAS MONTANUS

*Benito Arias Montano*

° Fregenal de la Sierra, Extremadura, 1527  
† Sevilla, 1598



For five years, eleven hours a day, the theologian Arias Montanus coordinated the publication of the *Biblia regia*. To Philip II he wrote: ‘*More is done here in a month than in Rome in a year.*’ Montanus and Plantin became close friends. After Philip II recalled him to Spain in 1575 to develop the Escorial library, he continued to correspond with Plantin and with Joannes Moretus.

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*‘Christopher Plantin, justly famed for the printer’s art, which gives life to all other arts. His strong intellect and admirable knowledge, his diligent labour and effort, his accuracy in everything. All praise falls short.’*

Montanus’s preface to the *Biblia Sacra*



BIBLIA REGIA,  
THE KING’S BIBLE

In the 1560s Christopher Plantin planned a new edition of the polyglot bible that had been printed in Alcalá (Spain) between 1514 and 1517. To pay for the project he applied to King Philip II of Spain for financial support. In exchange for a subsidy the king sent his chaplain Benedictus Arias Montanus to Antwerp to keep an eye on things. Monta-

nus wanted to produce a new scholarly edition of the Bible, establishing the original text as closely as possible.

After five years of hard work, Montanus and his collaborators had finished their job. It was time to apply for papal permission to publish. Pope Pius V hesitated to give his blessing. Montanus travelled to Rome to plead the case there, but by the time he arrived Pius V had died. His successor, Gregory XIII, granted the project his approval.

#### FROM WRITER TO READER

• • • • •

#### FROM SOBER TO GILDED

Once the pages of a book are printed, the ‘vergaerders’ or ‘assembleurs’ (assemblers) put them in the right order. After that the client composes and finishes his book according to his own taste and his financial means. He can choose a cover in parchment or leather. Then there is the option of decorating the cover with embossing stamps. If the buyer wants real luxury, he chooses a gilt stamped cover. Rich collectors have their family crest printed on the cover, or they may choose gilded ridges. In this way, one book can wear many different coats.

• • • • •

## WORLDWIDE FAME

Plantin printed a total of 1,200 copies on paper and another 12 on parchment. These last were for the King of Spain, the Pope, and other influential individuals. The work went around the world. In India (1580) and in China (1603) the Jesuits promoted this Bible as the summit of European scholarship.

. . . . .

## OPPOSITION FROM SPAIN

Montanus did his best to translate exactly what was in the source text, so that the reader was given access to the true Word of God. Not everybody was happy with his ideas. The Spanish Inquisition alleged that he had insufficiently respected the authority of the Vulgate, but could not build a strong case against him. The most they could prove was that he had made some slips.

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 WORTH KNOWING

One copy of this 8-volume bible weighs 48 kg, including bindings, and comprises 1,788 sheets of paper. For all 1,200 copies this comes to over 2,100,000 sheets.

FROM WRITER TO READER

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## THE COLLECTOR

Just like his fellow printers Plantin prints catalogues of the books he publishes, but they also contain books by other publishers, which he can deliver. He takes the catalogues with him to the Frankfurt Book Fair because they are a very good promotional tool. Books do not only end up in private libraries owned by merchants and scholars, but also in the libraries of convents, rich collectors and monarchs.

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To conclude your visit, have a look at the dining room on the ground floor, on the right-hand side of the staircase.

## LIGHT, AIRY AND COMFORTABLE

In the middle of the 18th century François - Jean Moretus commissions the construction of a new front section for the house facing the Vrijdagmarkt. It will be the culmination of two centuries of building and renovating.

Behind the stately façade there are rooms in the style of the day: luminous, airy and comfortable. Family life is centred on this part of the house and especially this dining room. Wall decorations with scenes from rural life are very popular at the time.

You have now reached the end of your tour.  
Please feel free to write in our guest book.  
We would really like to know what you thought  
of your visit.

Please do not forget to put your guide back  
on the shelf. The cover is yours, if you want to.

In the museumshop you can find a wide range  
of books and souvenirs.

We wish you a safe journey back and hope  
to see you again soon.

## A

**Antiphonarium**  
Choir book with song prayers for Catholic worship.

**Approbation**  
An approval for printing granted by the church authorities.

**Aramaic**  
A language related to Hebrew; also called Chaldean.

## B

**Breviary**  
Book with prayers that a cleric has to say every day. The breviary of the Catholic Church is called *Breviarium Romanum* (from the Latin *brevis* meaning 'short').

**Brotherhood**  
An organisation of Catholic laymen who worship a particular saint, for example the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## C

**Canon**  
Clergyman who is a member of the chapter (board) of a cathedral or a convent.

**Carolus guilder**  
Coin from the era of Emperor Charles V (1500–1558), named after the Emperor.

**Catechism**  
Overview of the Catholic teachings in the form of questions and answers.

**Civilité**  
A font that resembles a gothic script letter used by French poets. Often used in school books.

**Copper engraving**  
Imprint of a picture, cut in a copper plate.

**Cosmography**  
Term from the 16th century used for the all-encompassing science that classifies the global characteristics of the universe: the skies as well as the Earth. Comprises contemporary astronomy, geography and geology.

**Council of Trent**  
Gathering of Catholic religious leaders in Trento, Italy (1545–1563), with the aim of bringing an end to corruption within the Catholic Church and providing an answer to the threat of Protestantism.

### Cradle book

Book from the early stages of printing, before 1501. Called incunable after the Latin expression in cuna meaning 'in the cradle'.

## D

### Devotional work

Religious work for personal worship, aside from the official liturgy.

## E

### Emblem

Drawing full of symbols accompanied by a short and concise text, also called 'a drawing with some talking'. Emblemata have their origins in the 16th century.

### Etching

Printing technique where a metal plate is covered with a waxy ground into which a drawing is scratched, and then an acid is applied to 'bite' into the revealed metal.

## F

### Folio

Book format, abbreviated to 2°, where a sheet of paper on which 2 pages of text are printed on each side, is folded only once and thus makes 4 book pages.

## H

### Hours

Prayers that are said or sung at fixed moments during the day.

### House of Love

Mystical religious society founded by Hendrik Niclaes, which pleads for religious tolerance. Some of Plantin's business partners are members of this group.

### Huguenots

French Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries.

### Humanism

Humanists were inspired by the culture and literature of Antiquity. They based their ideas on human reason and attached great importance to education and schooling (from the Latin *humanitas* meaning 'humanity').

## J

### Jesuits

The Society of Jesus, often abbreviated as S.J. and better known as Jesuits, is a religious congregation of the Catholic Church founded in 1534 in Paris by Ignatius of Loyola.

## L

### Licence

Permission granted by the secular authorities to print and sell a certain book, or a type of book, for a limited period of time.

### Liturgical

Everything associated with a church service.

### Liturgy

Sequence of prayers, actions and hymns that make up a church service.

## M

### Manuscript

Text written by hand.

### Missal

Collection of texts for use during church services.

## O

### Octavo

Book format, abbreviated to 8° (from the Latin octo meaning 'eight'), where a sheet of paper is folded in 8 and thus makes 16 book pages.

### Officium

Book of prayers from the Latin Officium (meaning=duty, service).

### Old Syriac

A kind of Aramaic with its own script, which is remotely related to Hebrew and was spoken in present-day Syria.

### Ordonnance

Law, rules, regulation.

## P

### Philologist

Someone who specialises in the study of language.

### Print

Imprint made with a graphic technique using a woodblock or a copper plate, for example.

## Q

### Quadrant

Measuring instrument in the form of a quarter circle, for determining the height of the sun and the stars above the horizon.

### Quarto

Book format, abbreviated to 4° (from the Latin quarto meaning 'four'), where a sheet of paper is folded in 4 and thus makes 8 book pages.

## S

### States-General

Assembly of representatives of the States or ranks of the Seventeen Provinces in the Netherlands.

St Bartholomew Night  
Slaughter of French Protestants in Paris on the night of 23 August 1572.

## T

### Typography

Printing with loose, metal cast and reusable letters.

## V

### Vicesimo quarto

Small book format, abbreviated to 24° (from the Latin meaning '24th'), where a sheet of paper is folded until it makes 24 book pages.

## W

### Wood cutting

Imprint of a picture, cut lengthwise from the trunk.

### Wood engraving

Imprint of a picture, cut crosswise from the trunk.





D/2016/0306/96

*Texts for the newly refurbished  
Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp*

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