

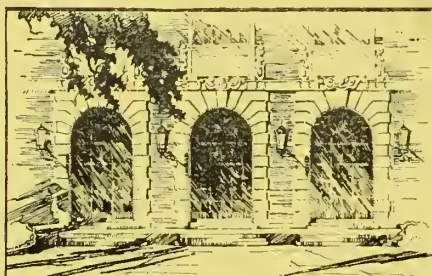
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16th and 17th Centuries

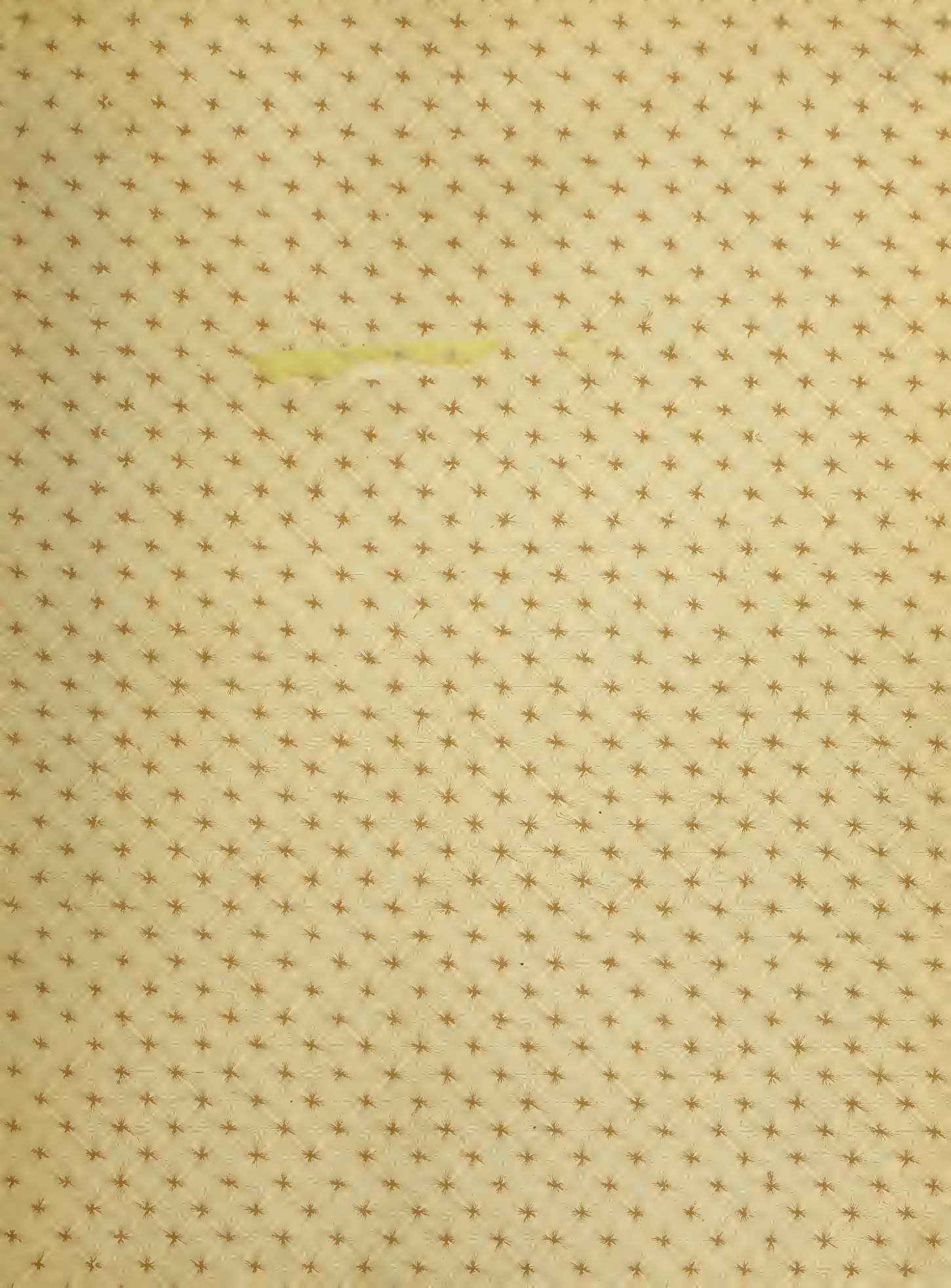
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THE DUTCH PRESS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

by

LORINDA BALLOU SPELTMAN

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

IN THE STATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

in the

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Bachelor of library science

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The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is followed by a detailed account of the various projects and the results obtained. The report concludes with a summary of the work done and the prospects for the future.


The work has been carried out in accordance with the programme of work approved by the Council of the Institute. It has been carried out in a most efficient and economical manner and has resulted in a number of important discoveries.

The results of the work have been published in a number of scientific journals and have been widely recognized by the scientific community. The work has also been of great value to the public and has helped to advance the knowledge of the subject.

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## THE DUTCH PRESS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Whether the art of printing was invented in Germany or in Holland, it is certain that it was practiced in the latter country during the fifteenth century, so that its history during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries deals, not with its origin, but with its development. This development was so affected by the condition of the country and the changes which it underwent, that a glance at the history of the time may aid in a full appreciation of the subject.

Though Holland is a very small country, hardly larger than the state of Maryland, it has been important throughout its history as a state. Its people have always had the same love for independence that Americans feel, In their schools they are taught to be intelligent as well as brave and a spirit of tolerance for all religious beliefs has ever been one of their chief characteristics.

During the sixteenth century Holland was the commercial centre, not only of Europe, but of the whole world; it occupied in the eyes of other nations somewhat the same position that England occupies today, but watchful as the Dutch were for all the advantages to be gained by trade and manufacture and for the adoption of every measure which might add to the resources of their country, they neglected no opportunity for progressing intellectually as well as materially. They excelled in all departments of learning and skill. Though they had so large a share of trade, they were far from being mere traders: they were intensely interested in the advancement of education and in all the issues of religion and politics. The heroic struggle which they made in throwing off the yoke of Spain describes



their character better than any thing else could do.

It is probable that in these centuries intelligence and cultivation were more widely diffused in Holland than in any country of Europe, unless, perhaps, Venice, Florence and a few communities of Italy be excepted.

Though the country is so small and off at one corner of the continent, it did not escape the changes made by the Reformation. As early as the middle of the sixteenth century the Dutch were already filled with the pervading spirit of the Reformation and the tolerance which they practiced made their country a refuge for all who fled from persecution elsewhere. Many of those who found this refuge in Holland were intellectual people and scholars and were able to add to her intellectual renown.

#### EFFECT OF THE REFORMATION ON THE PRINTING-PRESS

The Reformation was an intellectual revolution and the popular demand for information and instruction which developed at its very beginning did more than any other one thing to make the people realize the value of the art of printing and to understand its importance in educating the people and in keeping them in touch with the new ideas constantly being advanced. It is difficult to imagine how the Reformation could have been carried on without the aid of the printing press. The arguments presented by the reformers were given to the people in the form of books and pamphlets. This was the beginning of publishing material for popular circulation. The presses were kept busy with the preparation of these books devoted to the present issue and the great amount of work done affected in many ways the methods and conditions of publishing.

Up to this time, books had been printed in folios, quartos and large



octavos: now, however, in order that they might be given to the public quickly and cheaply, they were often issued in the form of pamphlets, "flugschriften", which were carried in the packs of peddlars into the market-places of towns and villages or from farmhouse to farmhouse, and thus they secured a wide distribution.

#### CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS

While one result of the literary activity of the Reformation was to popularize the printing press another was to develop the censorship of the press.

When printing was first invented the ecclesiastical authorities were enthusiastic in aiding its progress and many of the early printers were indebted to them for support and cooperation, but when the reformers used the press as a means of reaching the people with their arguments which were directed against the church, they soon found that it was their worst enemy and began to exercise their authority to an enormous extent. One of the forms which it took was the censorship of the press. This was practiced in various ways according to the country. In Holland, as in Germany, the censorship of the press began with the time of Luther.

In 1521, Charles V decreed that all books, before being printed, must secure the approval of censors appointed by imperial authority.

The first censors thus appointed were ecclesiastics.

At first the censorship seems to have referred only to works of theological heresy. The writings of Luther were placed under condemnation. All copies of his writings were ordered to be destroyed and any one convicted of printing, reading or selling them was adjudged guilty of treason. In 1529 the imperial authority went still further and forbade the printing of all books containing heresies and



ordered that no portion of the scripture should be published without first obtaining special sanction of the church.

Any one printing any book without the consent of the government was fined and later there was added to this fine the punishment of public exposure and branding with a hot iron or having an eye put out or having a hand chopped off. Later, the printers of condemned books were put to death and the fine for printing other books without authorization was raised from five to twenty florins.

In order to be a printer, besides being required to obtain imperial license, it was necessary for a printer to take the oath of conformity to the Church. The head of a printing-house was responsible for all work printed in his house whether it was done by his direction or without his knowledge.

Every six months each printer must furnish to the authorities a list of books in hand. A book frequently published at this time was an index telling what portions of the scriptures were condemned.

Booksellers suffered scarcely less than the printers from this censorship. They could open their packages only in the presence of censors. They were required to keep in their shops lists of books condemned and lists of books on hand. The penalty for failure to do so was one hundred florins. They were hanged or burned at the least infraction of political or religious propriety.

In 1626 printers and distributors of religious books were put to death.

In 1570 Philip II of Spain instituted the office of Prototypographer or supervisor of printing in the Netherlands. Printers must apply to the prototypographer for authority to print their works but before applying to him they must obtain a certificate of approval



from the bishop of their diocese or his prelate and from the local magistrate.

In the southern provinces of the country the printers suffered from these measures much more than did those in the northern provinces, and in tracing the history of printing it is easy to mark the changes which took place in transferring the literary centre of the country from the South to the North.

The kind of books that might safely be printed and the kind which the pending issues of the day demanded directly affected the nature of books printed during the centuries in question. The larger part of the reading of the sixteenth century was theological so the lists of earlier printers were devoted to editions of the Bible, either as a whole or in parts; the works of the Church Fathers and certain philosophical treatises which had been written a century earlier and the Greek and Roman classics. Very few writings of contemporary authors were published.

#### MENTAL REQUIREMENTS OF PRINTERS

The early printers were men of splendid attainments while the scholars of the time acted as editors, proof-readers, compositors and correctors. The reasons for these requirements are readily understood since the early books printed were often from the original manuscripts or from copies made from them by the monks and slaves, which would necessarily be faulty and need a great deal of revision and explanation. So editions must be compared, better readings suggested and the original meaning of an author hunted out of the obscure blunders of successive copyists. Then, too, the first works printed were usually church books and those not in the language of the people and the work put upon them by these men was necessary in order to



render them of use by the people. As the art of printing advanced the printers were able more and more to supply perfect copies for their workmen and the mental requirements of proof-readers and editors were reduced to correction of proof and criticism. A good example of this change may be seen in following the history of the house of Plantin-Moretus. Much of the work done by correctors was editing, translating rewriting and preparing copy, and even with all these editors and proof-readers the work was not always well done and errors are frequently found. Some of the most noted scholars of Holland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries connected with the history of printing either as printers, editors or literary advisers were: Nicholas Heinsius, Justin Lipsius, William Silvius, Arias Montanus, Francois Raphelengius and John Moretus, each of whom will be mentioned later in connection with the institution which he served. Besides these men, the scholars of the universities were ever ready to give their services in furthering the cause of education.

#### LEYDEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

The University of Leyden was established in 1575 and became at once one of the most influential centres of scholarship in Europe and remained so for two centuries. The scholars of the faculty were able to cooperate with the printers and publishers and thereby do much toward advancing the cause of higher education. It gave a great impetus to the printing and publishing business of the town.

In 1579 William Silvius was made the first printer to the University. Silvius was a scholar who before coming to Leyden had held the title of "Printer to the King" in Antwerp. He had been obliged to leave Antwerp on account of his sympathy with the Protestants. He held the post but a few months, dying in 1580.



After the death of Silvius, the post seems to have been vacant until 1584 when it was given to Christopher Plantin who also, had fled from Antwerp, though for reasons different from those which had exiled Silvius. Plantin held the post until November, 1585, when he returned to Antwerp, leaving his son-in-law, Raphelengius to continue the work at the University. Raphelengius added to his duties that of professorship of Hebrew in the University. He died in 1597 and was succeeded by his son Christopher who lived to fill the post only four years. He was succeeded the next year(1602) by Johannes Patius(Jean Paedts) but though he was retained a long time, he does not seem to have given entire satisfaction and in 1620 the place was given to Isaac Elzevir the grandson of Louis Elzevir who had come to Leyden in 1580.

Under Elzevir, the annual compensation was reduced from two hundred florins to fifty florins.

The agreement entered into with Elzevir was somewhat different from that entered into with the former printers. He was to hold one press always at the disposition of the faculty of the University and at certain seasons of the year two presses were to be thus reserved. The reason for the last condition is probably that these certain seasons were the times devoted to the printing of papers of instruction used in the class-room.

Elzevir was under obligations to secure the services of persons who were competent to supervise the text of any language required. These could be secured in most cases from among the members of the faculty. One copy of every work was to be deposited in the University Library. When, after the death of Erpenius, the Elzevirs obtained possession of his Oriental fonts, the University made a condition that this material should remain at Leyden at the disposition of the University



During the remainder of the seventeenth century the post of university printer was held by the succeeding members of the Leyden branch of the Elzevir house until 1712 when that branch of the house ceased to exist.

#### COST OF WORK AND MATERIALS

In the latter half of the sixteenth century the wages paid to workmen seem to us small, considering the work which they had to do. Frequently a volunteer offered his services as corrector and received no compensation. Such was the case with Arias Montanus in the house of Plantin.

A scholarly reader who had entire knowledge of three or four languages received about twelve florins a month. The value of a florin is reckoned at about \$1.60 in American money. There is a record of one of Plantin's compositors who agreed to prepare and oversee the work of six compositors for his board and sixty florins a year. The books of Plantin show that the average yearly earnings of expert compositors was 142 florins and of pressmen 105 florins. Authors and editors received comparatively little for their work. Sometimes they were required to contribute to the cost of printing. Many authors received but ten florins for valuable and salable books.

The work of designers and engravers was relatively cheaper. From four to seven florins was the price paid for designing and engraving a beautiful initial letter.

The materials of books were cheap. The paper ordinarily used came from France and cost from 74 to 78 sous a ream, according to weight and quality. The large vellum skins which Plantin used for his Royal Polyglot Bible cost less than fifty sous a dozen. The value of a sou is estimated at eight cents in American money.



The ordinary retail price of books was small. An ordinary text-book in an octavo of 320 pages was worth ten sous. A Horace of 11 sheets could be bought for one sou, a Virgil of 19.5 sheets for three sous, and of 38 sheets for five sous.

Books printed in the Greek text, those containing many illustrations and large quartos and folios cost as much as they do now.

#### DUTCH PRINTERS

In the early days of the republic Holland, and especially Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp held the printing houses of Europe, for in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries more books were published in Holland than in all the rest of the world. As many as 24 editions of the New Testament and 15 of the Bible had been printed in Holland before one copy of either was printed in England.

Until the last quarter of the sixteenth century Antwerp was the leading city of Holland in the art of printing. An entire quarter of the city was for a time given up to the work and though it suffered more than any other city in the Low Countries in the struggle against Spain, it still remained the great artistic centre of the North. Its printing houses rivaled those of Paris, Venice and Basle in the beauty of their productions.

Henri Eckert von Homburg was one of the earliest printers of Antwerp, the years during which he flourished covering the period of time from 1500 to 1509.

J. Grapheus published several works, the most noted of which is "Le Nouveau Testament de Nostre Saufleur Jesu Christ, translate selon le vray Text en Franchois", published in 1532. This was a duodecimo of 372 pages and was a rare impression of Le Fevre d'Étaple's Testament as it had been issued in 1530 by L'Empereur who



had obtained the license of the emperor and of the Inquisition.

Michael Hellenius, 1514-36, is an Antwerp printer who is especially interesting to Englishmen from the fact that in 1531 he printed an anti-Protestant work of Henry Pepwell who could find no printer in London who had sufficient courage to undertake it.

Jan Steels printed at Antwerp from 1533 to 1575.

William Silvius who has already been mentioned in connection with the University of Leyden printed at Antwerp from 1562 to 1579.

Theodore Janssen was a printer and author. In 1683 he printed at Antwerp a work on the Estiennes entitled "De Vitis Stephanorum". He did not remain in Antwerp but went to Stockholm where he established a printing house a few years after the Elzevirs had been invited by the Queen to do so.

David Martine was at Antwerp early in the seventeenth century and the name of J. Waesberghe is connected with both Antwerp and Rotterdam.

In 1601 William Blaeu greatly improved the old wooden presses. He is noted chiefly for the excellence and diminutive size of his books.

Huber Golz, 1563-79, is probably the most eminent of the Bruges printers. He is noted for his work not only as a printer but also as an author and artist. The "Fasti Magistratum et Triumphorum Romanorum" and a work in Latin on medals from the time of Julius Caesar to the Time of the emperor Ferdinand are two of his best known works.

Henry van den Dale is mentioned as a printer at Bruges from 1505 to 1506.



M. de Hamont is known as a printer and bookseller at Brussels from 1569 to 1577.

Velpius Rutger printed at Louvain 1553-80, at Mons 1580-85 and at Brussels, 1585-1614.

Thomas van der Noot was at Brussels about 1508-17.

Henri van den Keere was a bookseller and printer of Ghent from 1549 to 1558.

Thomas Erpenius (Van Erpen) was born in Sorkum, Holland. He studied at the University of Leyden, making a specialty of the Oriental languages. He traveled in England, France, Germany and Italy and in 1612 returned to Holland as professor of Oriental languages in the University of Leyden. He established a printing-press which he superintended in his own house and undertook at his own expense the production of a series of works of representative Eastern writers. He published an Arabic grammar and some other works in the Oriental languages, but his death in 1624 prevented the fulfillment of his plans.

Gottfried de Os (Govaert van Ghemen) began to print at Gonda in 1486, but in 1490 he went to Leyden where he printed for a short time, removing later to Copenhagen. Before he left Leyden he parted with some of his printing materials, type, initial letters and woodcuts, which came into the hands of Wynken de Worde and were used in England.

Jacob von Liesfeld in 1542 printed the first Dutch Bible.

In every country there are always one or more families who have been known as printers for successive generations. Holland is so fortunate as to have two such families, both belonging especially to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; those of Plantin and Elzevir. Both are so well known that it is a comparatively easy matter to gather a good account of their lives and works.



## CHRISTOPHER PLANTIN

Christopher Plantin was born at Mont Louis, near Tours, in France in 1514.

He was instructed in the art of printing under Robert Mace the king's premier, and for a time he served as an apprentice in Paris, but he was forced to leave Paris in 1548, so he went to Antwerp. At the time of his arrival there seems to have been no opening for him as printer, so he opened a shop in which he sold books while his wife sold linen in a neighboring shop.

To fill up his unemployed time, Plantin bound books and decorated jewel-boxes. At this work he prospered and soon gained a reputation as the most skilled decorator in the city, but he met with a serious misfortune which prevented his pursuing this occupation. He was encountered by a ruffian who mistook him for another and so dangerously stabbed him that he was hindered forever from using the gilding tools. Putnam suggests that had it not been for this a rivalry might have arisen between him and the artistic book-binders of Paris. He was forced to begin anew but it was more as a publisher than as a printer. He printed little books and almanacs which his wife sold.

In 1555 he began his work as a printer by the publication of a small volume entitled "Institution d'une Fille De Noble Maison" and in the same year he published "Flores de L'Anneo Seneca" which was translated into Spanish "with privilege of the magistracy". Established at Antwerp, he surrounded himself with most of the learned men of the time among whom was the scholar Justus Lipsius. He brought from France the celebrated type-founder, Guillaume Lebé and gave him an order for a special font of type.



He rapidly became the first printer of the Netherlands and the house which he established at Antwerp became celebrated among the printer-publishers of the century both for the importance of the work produced by its presses and for the length of its history as a business concern. It holds, too, an honorable place among the great publishers of the world.

Though Plantin may justly be considered one of the pioneers in the art of printing, his work was not so important, so difficult or so distinctive as that of Badius, Aldus, Estienne and Froben. At the time he printed his first book in 1555, the technical difficulties with which the earlier printers had had to contend had been in a measure overcome, machinery had been invented and improved upon, methods for the distribution of books had been arrived at, and the people had come to appreciate and desire printed books upon which they had a short time before looked with disfavor, and the scholars of the universities were ready to contribute their share toward the advancement of learning by doing editorial work: so though he may not be classed with the first printers either in point of time or in the class of work done by his presses, he is to be credited with a great work carried on in the face of difficulties which often threatened to ruin him financially. There were foreign and civil wars, the censorship of the church which prevented his entire choice in the matter of what he would publish, the faithless way in which King Philip II treated him, his own over-optimism and his frequent financial embarrassments, all of which contributed to his discomfort and almost failure at times. Some writers criticize him for making the literary merit of his books subordinate to personal gain, but whatever was his motive, his was a great work. He may fairly, both to himself and to



others of the same profession, be described as a great publisher. His mark is a hand emerging from the clouds holding a compass, one leg of which is at rest while the other describes a circle, in which is the motto "Labore et constantia", singularly descriptive of his entire life and work: a motto which he fairly earned the right to use. He seems to have gained his great reputation more by his superior executive ability and by the use he made of the means at his command than his educational advantages which were somewhat limited. He read, wrote and spoke French, Spanish, German, Flemish and Latin and had some knowledge of English and Italian. Though not a scholar himself, he knew how to select scholars as associates and workers in the undertakings which he planned.

Printers at that time were responsible, not only for their own work but for whatever was printed in their offices, and in 1562, just as Plantin was gaining recognition as a printer of superior merit, it was proved that a heretical prayer-book had been printed in his office. It had been printed by one of his workmen and entirely without his knowledge but he was obliged to flee from the country in order to escape being arrested. He went to Paris where he stayed twenty months. When it was safe for him to return to Antwerp his business had been destroyed and his press and property had been sold at auction to satisfy the demands of his creditors.

He was suspected of complicity in this matter of heretical printing but it was not proven against him. He made the ecclesiastical authorities his friends, overcoming all their prejudices and regaining their confidence. Friends had bought a part of his property which they restored to him and wealthy men lent him money with which he established a new printing-house and at the end of four years he had seven presses at work and employed forty workmen. He established



friendly relations with the authorities of the state and obtained from the city special privileges as a printer.

In 1568 Plantin finished the celebrated Polyglot Bible, his most celebrated work and the most important work ever issued in the Low Countries. "One of the great monuments as well of the erudition as of the publishing enterprise of the country." The Bible was printed in eight folio volumes. Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Chaldean were the languages used. Such a work had been planned by Aldus but he was not able to execute his plans. This one was planned upon a Spanish Bible but the Pope, Pius V, refused to allow it to be published on the grounds that it was dangerous to circulate the scriptures, so the publication was delayed until the time of Gregory XIII who approved of the work. After obtaining the privilege of sale in the different countries in order to insure its success, Philip II, in behalf of the Spanish government, advanced him funds and ordered the Bible to be printed. For five years forty workmen worked on the book. the work was supervised by Montanus and Raphelengius and eminent scholars of the University of Leyden. 1213 copies of the Bible were printed but they were not disposed of so rapidly as had been expected and in five yaers a great number of them were still in the hands of the publishers. The Spanish government had advanced the funds necessary for carrying on the work but before Plantin had realized enough from the sale of his books to repay the amount borrowed, they began to prosecute him in order to obtain payment. This nearly shut up his shop but he was able to withstand the storm.

Putnam, G: H. Books and their makers during the Middle Ages. 1897.  
2:263.



In recognition of his work in printing this Bible, Philip II appointed Plantin printer of all the church books for the Spanish provinces, and later he published liturgies and a psalter.

In 1567 Plantin and Paulus Manutius cooperated in the production of a series of eleven breviaries. This proved very remunerative.

In 1570 Philip II further honored Plantin by making him printer to the king. The same year he made him proto-typographer, ruler of all the printers of the province. This position greatly benefitted him both financially and influentially. Though he received no pay for his services, he was freed from the duty of lodging soldiers, and he could more easily obtain privileges for his own publications because there would be no question with regard to the propriety of the publications of the literary representative of the king. Then, too, this position brought him into correspondence with many of the great scholars and artists of the time and he was recognized as the foremost printer of the world. The king of France invited him to go to Paris and the Duke of Savoy offered to give him a printing house but he refused all invitations and remained in Antwerp, enlarging and improving his business till his printing house became one of the wonders of the literary world.

This was the time of his greatest prosperity. He had 22 persons at work and 200 crowns in gold was the amount paid daily to his workmen. He had branches also at Paris and Leyden.

In addition to the scholars who acted as editors for his works, Plantin employed a number of men of superior education: Raphelengius, who in 1565 had married Plantin's daughter Margaret, was his proof-reader. He was a Greek scholar, having been a teacher of Greek in Cambridge University. He edited many Greek works and the Hebrew Bible printed by Plantin. In 1585 he was sent by Plantin to



superintend the printing house which he had opened at Leyden and was soon appointed a professor in the University.

Kilanius(Kilian) was corrector for the Plantin house for fifty years. He began as compositor in 1558 at 5 patards a day, not more than \$2.40 a week in our money, and afterward became one of Plantin's most trusted proof-readers.

John Moretus(Jean Moret) was a man of distinguished literary acquirements. He married Plantin's daughter Martine and afterward became a trusty agent for his father-in-law, and later, keeper of his books and journals. He was the one who carried on the work after Plantin's death.

Giles Bey who married Plantin's daughter Madeline had come with Moretus from Venice. He was a man of very excellent education and wrote Italian and French. In 1567 he was sent to Paris to superintend the shop which Plantin had opened there.

It is said that Plantin was so fastidious about his work that he did not trust entirely to his ordinary proof-readers but used to hang up his proof-sheets which were undergoing correction and offer a prize for the detection of errors.

In 1579, Plantin bought from Lopez a building on Rue Haute and later he bought the garden. The garden bordered on one side on the Rue Ste. Erprit and on this street he erected three houses to which he gave the names Compass of Copper, Compass of Iron and Compass of Wood. To his principal house he gave the name Compass of Gold as this was the mark of the Plantin press.

Later he purchased two more houses adjoining his garden and though altered and partially rebuilt, they form the principal part of the present Plantin-Moretus museum.



In 1582, Plantin was greatly in debt and in order to escape his creditors, he temporarily transferred his printing office to one of his sons-in-law and went to Leyden. He purchased the establishment in which Louis Elzevir had begun work three years before and put Elzevir in charge of one of the presses.

Plantin was cordially received by the professors of the University of Leyden and was made its printer in 1584. He was the second to hold that office, his predecessor, Silvius, having died in office.

The annual salary paid was 200 florins.

Though efforts were made to induce Plantin to remain at Leyden in connection with the University, he returned to Antwerp in Nov. 1585 transferring his Leyden printing-office to his son-in-law, Raphelengius. He never was so active after his return to Antwerp as he had been before. The latter part of his life was an unceasing struggle with debt. To pay his debts he often had to sell his books at a sacrifice and it is said that sometimes he had to sell his tools

He died at Antwerp in 1589 at the age of 74 years.

He left a prosperous business to be divided between his three daughters. The first house at Antwerp employed seventeen presses even at the time when he was in trouble and there were branches at Leyden and Paris.

The principal establishment descended to John Moretus and he and his descendants continued it until recently, so that its history as a printing-house covers a period of 312 years. In the present day the house is used as a typographical museum.

Scribanius says "Alduses, Frobens and Stephenses are all eclipsed by the single name Plantin. If they were the stars of their own hemispheres, he was the sun, not only of Antwerp and Belgium, but of the whole world." All writers are not willing to give him so high a place



in the ranks but all agree in giving him great credit for his undaunted courage and tireless energy.

He deserves an honorable place among the great educators of his time, not for what he wrote but for what he caused to be written. He induced the scholars of the time to write books that he might print them. He had no standing among the scholars of his time but as a publisher he outranks all his contemporaries. He printed more than 1600 editions, many of which were works written at his request. He printed the works of Cicero and Caesar, the classics, parts of the Bible and all the church books used in the Spanish provinces.

His greatest production was 83 editions, in 1575, and the smallest was 24, in the year of the "Spanish fury", 1576.

His editions were not small: an ordinary edition was 1250 copies and his largest edition was 3900 copies of the Pentateuch in Hebrew. He refused to print books in small editions unless he was paid the cost of the work before it was begun. He sold very few single copies. His account books show that he sent large consignments of books to the Frankfort fairs.

Plantin was the first publisher to associate the work of the engraver on any large scale with typography. He printed books that were so elaborately illustrated and maps that were so finely engraved that it has been a cause of wonder as to how he could have disposed of them at sufficient prices to warrant their production.

He had his work done at small cost. His account books which may still be seen in the Plantin-Moretus Museum show that the average yearly sum paid to a compositor was 142 florins and to a pressman was 105 florins. Work began at five o'clock in the morning and we are not told when it ended. Plantin had some very severe rules



one of them was that the compositor who set three words or six letters not in the copy should be fined. Another rule was the prohibition of all discussions on religion and politics, but these seem very necessary when we consider the times and the different nationalities and political views of the workmen employed in the shop.

Plantin's immediate successor was his son-in-law, John Moretus, who was in turn succeeded by his two sons, Balthasar and John, on condition that the survivor should transmit the property to the child who should be the most capable of carrying on the work and, if there were no children, it should be left to the most worthy member of the family and the one who could best fulfill the conditions. This clause in the will, was repeated in the will of all the succeeding generations and may have been one of the reasons why the house continued for so long a time to exist so successfully.

The third generation, Balthasar and John, were very successful and made a considerable fortune. The fourth generation was represented by Balthasar III (1646-96). During this time and after, the work was confined to the religious books printed for the Spanish provinces and when in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the importation of foreign books into those provinces was forbidden, there was no longer any reason for continuing the work and the establishment began to be less used. For many years but a single workman was employed, but in 1865, when Edward Moretus of the eighth generation took possession of it, four workmen were employed: this, however lasted only two years.

After the death of Plantin few persons of distinction were attached to the publishing houses and under his descendants it changed somewhat. He had inspired authors to write that he might print their books, while his successors waited for authors to find



them, and the mental requirements of their editors and proof-readers were reduced to correcting copy and to criticism.

This may in part be due to the fact that the writers whose works they published were better able to supply copies which had not the same need of revision such as was given by the earlier editors and proof-readers.

In 1867, after an existence of 312 years, the Plantin press ceased work altogether. The house was offered by Joseph Moretus to the city of Antwerp for a museum for 1, 200,000 francs. In 1876 the deed was signed and in 1877 the museum was opened. It is especially valuable because it contains so much of the old furniture and has been made over so little to conform to modern fashions.

The building surrounds a central court which is ornamented with busts of Plantin, Justus Lipsius and seven members of the Moretus family. The printing offices, the room of Lipsius and the Bureau remain as they were left by Plantin's widow in 1596.

All of the woodwork in the door-ways, staircases and mantleplaces is delicately and artistically carved. On the walls of one room are old Flemish tapestries, and on another is gilded leather, while on the walls of the room of Lipsius is a tapestry of black Cordova leather richly covered with golden arabesque.

In the museum are found many family relics besides typographical treasures which have no direct connection with the Plantin family. There are seven portraits of different members of the family painted by Rubens. There are the collections of family china since the sixteenth century and an old piano with a copy of Rubens's Saint Cecilia on the cover.

In the press-room are seven presses, the two which Plantin himself used occupying a platform at one end of the room.



There are the business letters written by Plantin and his successors, their account-books, bank-books, catalogues, inventories and letters from artists, authors and celebrated men, seeming in a wonderful way to connect the past with the present.

In a room called the "Small Library" are found the odd copies of works which Plantin brought back as models, and books annotated by Kiel, Pulman and Montanus in preparing their work. There may be seen the Polyglot Bible printed upon vellum and comprising the Bible of Xantes Paginini, with the Plantin trademark, dated 1572.

In the room devoted to woodcuts and copper-plate engravings are 10,000 blocks used by different members of the family in illustrating their publications. Some of the principal artists employed by them were: Van der Borch, Erasmus Quellin, Arnold Nicolay, Antione Van Leest, Cornelius Miller and the Kampens.

The foundry in the second story is full of old utensils, furnaces, melting pots, moulds, cruets, spoons, bellows, tongs, pincers and lamps. On the wall are hung the rules of the printing house and in the desks on the sides of the room are specimens printed from the various types in all stages of perfection.

Besides the relics directly connected with the family are portraits of noted artists and scholars, three volumes of a manuscript made by Froissart in the 15th century for the Montmorency family, a Latin Bible printed at Bamberg in 1458 by Pfister, "Cicero de Officiis" on vellum printed at Mayence in 1466 by Fust and Gernsheim, "Aesopus" printed at Antwerp in 1486 by Gerard Leeu, the Bible of Cardinal Ximenes printed at Alcalá in 1517 by Brocario, editions from the Elzevirs, Estiennes and Aldines and impressions from the old German and Swiss presses.



It is especially fitting that this museum should exist in Holland and but for the business-like habits and methodical ways of Plantin-Moretus, the world of today would not be able so well to look back more than two centuries and see how the early printers produced such wonderful examples of artistic typography with machinery which, compared with the modern printing presses and linotype machines, seems crude and utterly incapable of producing any but the simplest kind of work.

#### THE ELZEVIERS

Louis Elzevir was brought up as a binder in a Flemish University in the town of Louvain but in 1580 when the Protestants were forced to endure persecution if they remained in Flanders he left with many others and went to Leyden which was at that time a centre for the literary activity of the country. In this town was the University which had been founded five years previous to Elzevir's arrival.

Elzevir began work as a book-binder for the students of the University and later added a shop in which he sold books. He was not successful at this and was obliged to sell his house but in 1587 he appealed to the authorities of the University for help and obtained from them permission to establish a small book shop within the limits of the University and to announce himself as the bookseller and later the publisher of the University. He applied himself to this work with such success that in a few years he had established the business on a firm foundation. His connection with the University brought him into correspondence with foreign countries and with all the cities of Holland which depended on Leyden for their foreign literature.



The first work published by Louis Elzevir as a private enterprise was an edition of Eutropius, 1592. In 1596 he published a chronicle of universal history, the complete works of Horace and a partial edition of Aristotle.

Louis Elzevir never mastered the art of printing, but had his works printed for him and it is not certainly known that he ever printed any of his works, but the selections for his publishing lists and for his consignments to the Frankfort fairs show that he had a good literary and scholarly ideal and a knowledge of the widening range of existing literature, He was a printer of Latin but of very few Dutch or French books.

Louis Elzevir died in 1617 and was succeeded by his oldest and youngest sons Matthew and Bonaventure who took the business in partnership. Louis and Josse, the second and fourth sons of Louis the elder were already established in bookshops in Utrecht and the Hague which were run in connection with the Leyden press.

Matthew and Bonaventure had assisted their father in his work during his lifetime and after his death were able to develop and greatly to extend their business. The form of imprint "ex officina Elzeviriana" dates from the time they took charge of the business. Isaac, the son of Abraham, was in the firm from 1617-25.

In 1622 Matthew died and was succeeded by his son Abraham and in 1625 Isaac sold his share to his two partners and withdrew from the partnership.

The years which followed were the most prosperous in the history of the Elzevirs. The condition of the country was becoming more prosperous and settled after the long period of wars and the religious discussions created a demand for books. The production of



the presses for the few years following were partly works of theology and partly the classics.

In 1625 the Elzevirs obtained possession of the printing press of Erpenius (Van Erpen) who was at that time the only printer in the Netherlands and one of the few in Europe who possessed any Oriental fonts and in 1625 they began the publication of a number of works in the Oriental languages. In the same year they began to publish the classics in the small sixteenmo edition which had been first used by Aldus Manutius in Venice, and obtained the privilege of printing them in the states. In 1629 they began their series of Latin classics with the publication of Horace and Ovid. In 1635 they issued their beautiful Caesar and Terence and Pliny. The Virgil of 1626 is a fine example of Dutch typography.

In 1641 they began with "The Cid" the series of contemporary French drama and in 1642 with the works of Regnier, a series of the chief monuments of French literature.

These two are the most important members of the Elzevir family.

In 1652, Bonaventure and Abraham both died and were succeeded by their sons, John and Daniel, who successfully carried on the work and maintained the reputation of their predecessors.

Their chief works are an edition of the "Imitation of Christ" and a Psalter which were not surpassed in beauty and excellence by anything which their predecessors had produced.

The firm of John and Daniel lasted only two years and a half when in 1655 Daniel withdrew and went to Amsterdam and entered into partnership with his cousin Louis who had established himself there in 1638. John lived a few years and carried on the business



very creditably. The most important of his works are the "Pharsale of Brebeuf" and the "Galerie des Femmes Fortes" by P. Le Moine.

John died in 1661 and his widow, Eva Van Alpen, placed herself at the head of affairs to continue them until the majority of her son. She confined her efforts mostly to the work done for the University and was able to sustain the reputation which the family had gained.

The "St. Augustine", published in 1675 is one of the most noted works issued from this press.

Under Abraham Elzevir who succeeded his mother in 1681, the press rapidly deteriorated, both in the amount and the character of the work done. The work was confined to the printing of university theses. In all, Abraham printed 23 books. He died in 1712 and the next year the printing office was sold at auction for the benefit of the creditors and a daughter left by Abraham. This was the end of the Leyden firm which had had an existence of 91 years, and had printed 938 books.

#### THE AMSTERDAM BRANCH

In 1638 Louis, grandson of Louis, the first Elzevir, established a book shop in Amsterdam and in 1641 he added to this a printing office. In 1655 Daniel withdrew from partnership in the Leyden office and entered into partnership with him. From this time the Amsterdam press began to excel in the quality of work done and rivalled that of Leyden. The series of publications issued from the Amsterdam press from 1655-75 was greater in number and importance than that issued from the Leyden press though some of the volumes issued from the Amsterdam office from 1661-71 bear the Leyden mark.

The most important works issued by this press were the "Corpus Juris" in 1663 and later the French text of the Scriptures



edited by Desmarets in 1669. The rarest of their publications is the "Pastissier François", 1665. In 1665 Louis died and for 15 years Daniel carried on the work alone and in spite of the most adverse circumstances he maintained the high reputation of the house. He printed in all 259 books.

After the death of Daniel in 1680 his widow, Anna Beerminch, continued the work for five months, after which time the presses were sold as there was no member of the family to continue the work.

Thus, in 1681, after an existence of 43 years during which 685 books were printed, the Amsterdam house ceased to exist.

#### THE UTRECHT BRANCH

In 1667 Peter Elzevir, grandson of the first Louis, established a book shop in Utrecht. Very little is known of this branch of the work except the legal documents which give to Peter Elzevir the privilege of establishing his office which existed until 1675, printing in all 10 books.

#### THE HAGUE BRANCH

The publishing house at The Hague was established in 1590 by Louis, the son of the first Louis. This was more of a book shop than printing house and it contained one of the most complete and best organized collections of scholarly publications in the northern part of Europe. In 1621 the work was carried on by Bonaventure and later by his nephews and their cousins. In 1661 the shop was closed and the stock removed to Amsterdam. During this time only 12 books had been printed.

In 1632 a branch house was established in Copenhagen. This was a book-store more than a printing office. The Elzevirs furnished books from their own printing houses and from Germany, Italy and



France.

When Daniel Elzevir was in Sweden in 1600 he received a proposition from Queen Christina to establish a printing and publishing house in Stockholm, as the Queen was ambitious to make her capital the literary center for the north of Europe but for some reason the proposition was not accepted. A few years later, however, such a house was established by Theodore Janssen of Antwerp.

The Elzevirs were the first publishers of cheap editions and thereby they aided in disseminating not only the new learning but all that the world knew at the time.

They were not scholars and did not gather around them scholars as Plantin, Aldus and the earlier ones of the great printers had done. Nicholas Heinsius was the most noted scholar employed by them. He was the friend and chief adviser for two generations of Elzevirs, and most of his works were published by them. He had studied at Leyden and afterward he filled in succession the chairs of Greek, History and Political Science in the University. He afterward had charge of the Library of the University.

The work done by the Elzevirs was more for financial success and a reputation for beautiful work than educational advancement. The beautiful and artistic fonts of type which they used and which added so much to the beauty of their work were designed by Christopher Van Dyke between 1630 and 1640. These were far in advance of anything that had been used in Europe.

They printed books of various character; Calvinistic theology, history, science, and many classics. It is for these classics that they are the most famous. They imitated Aldus in presenting the works of the classical writers in the 16mo editions and while the



paper is excellent and the type clear and regular and the arrangement of the book artistic, the work itself is inaccurate.

The Elzevirs were pirates and thought nothing of printing the works of others without troubling themselves to ask permission to do so. They often copied even the title-pages and names of the publishers. This method was disapproved by some of the writers whose works they took the liberty to use, while others seemed gratified at the compliment thus paid them. Balzac felt that he was to be congratulated in having his works appear in the neat, artistic volumes in which they were issued from the Elzevir presses and wrote to express his gratification and his hopes that they would be interested to publish in the same form an edition of his miscellaneous works.

The Elzevirs were not actuated by the high motives which had impelled the Aldines and the Estiennes; their object was neither the popularization of education nor the establishment of the freedom of the press; they were traders, first and last, and the energetic and business-like manner in which they conducted their affairs is noteworthy and commendable. They early recognized the advantage of advertising their work in the various countries of Europe and their ability to have an agent whose business it was to represent the firm in these countries was furnished by the number of members in the family interested in the work of printing. They were not content, like most of the Dutch printers, to limit their trade to their own country with an occasional consignment of books to the Frankfort fair, but within 15 years after the death of Louis, the founder of the family, they had a direct representative in nearly every one of the book-selling centres of Europe. On their travels to and from these foreign cities they watched, not only for a



market for their books but for texts and literary suggestions which they might utilize in some future publication. They seem to have been ambitious, wide-awake business men.

In 1622 they had a depot of supplies in Venice and later there was an agency in Florence which was then more of a literary centre than Venice. They had also important relations with England and published a number of books by English authors.

They issued catalogues for their retail houses that were so comprehensive and so well arranged that they served for many years after as models for the trade bibliographies.

The Elzevirs frequently published their books without dates and without signature to avoid getting themselves into difficulties with the authors whose works they printed without permission. This omission on their part makes it difficult to identify some of their books. At times they employed pseudonyms; those employed most frequently being "Jean Sambix" used by John and Daniel, "Jacques le Jeune" used by the Amsterdam firm and the favorite, "Nic Schouten". They frequently used the arms of the University of Leyden as a mark. They used many printers' marks. On the following pages is a table giving a list of the marks used by the different firms, giving the inclusive years of the various partnerships and the number of books published by each firm.

Twelve members of the family, representing five generations were engaged in the work of printing. Of these, the most noted are Louis the founder, his son Bonaventure and his grandsons Isaac and Daniel.



## MARKS USED BY THE ELZEVIRS

## THE LEYDEN PRESS

Louis Elzevir, 1583-1617 (102 books)

A hand with the device "Aequabilitate"

An angel with a book

An eagle (with 7 darts representing the 7 provinces of the Netherlands) on a cippus, with the inscription "Concordia res parvae sunt" (most frequent)

A book of music opened

Matthew and Bonaventure Elzevir, 1617-22 (71 books)

An eagle on a cippus

A book of music, opened

The hermit with the motto "non solus"

Isaac Elzevir, 1617-25

Two hands holding a cornucopia (rare)

An eagle on a cippus

The hermit

Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir, 1622-52 (514 books)

The hermit (most frequent)

The eagle on the cippus

The sphere, first appearing on the "Sphaera Johannis de Sacro-Bosco, 1626

The arms of the University of Leyden

A palm tree

Minerva with her attributes and the motto "Non extra oleas"



Jean and Daniel Elzevir, 1625-55 (55 books)

The sphere (frequent)

The hermit (frequent)

The arms of the University of Leyden

Jean Elzevir, 1656-61 (113 books)

The hermit

The sphere

The widow and heirs of Jean Elzevir, 1661-81 (48 books)

The hermit

. Two angels holding an open book

Of the books printed by this firm, some bear the imprint: "A Leide, chez Pierre Didier" and also "Ex officina Danielis et Abrahami a Gaasbeeck".

Abraham Elzevir, 1681-1712 (24 books)

The hermit (most frequent)

The arms of the University of Leyden; motto "Haec libertatis ergo"

The total number of books printed by the Leyden firm, 1583-1712 (129 years) is thus 938.

#### THE HAGUE PRESS

Louis Elzevir II, 1590-1621 (9 books)

Jacob Elzevir, 1621-36 (3 books)

A total of 12 books in 31 years



## THE AMSTERDAM PRESS

Louis Elzevir III, 1638-55 (231 books)

The sphere

Minerva (most frequent)

Louis and Daniel Elzevir, 1655-64 (150 books)

The sphere

Minerva (most frequent)

Daniel Elzevir, 1665-80 (60 books)

The sphere

Minerva

The Widow of Daniel Elzevir, 1680-81 (7 books)

Minerva

The sphere with the motto "Indefessus agendo"

The eagle with the motto "Movendo"

A total of 158 books in 43 years.

## THE UTRECHT PRESS

Peter Elzevir, 1667-75 (10 books)

The sphere

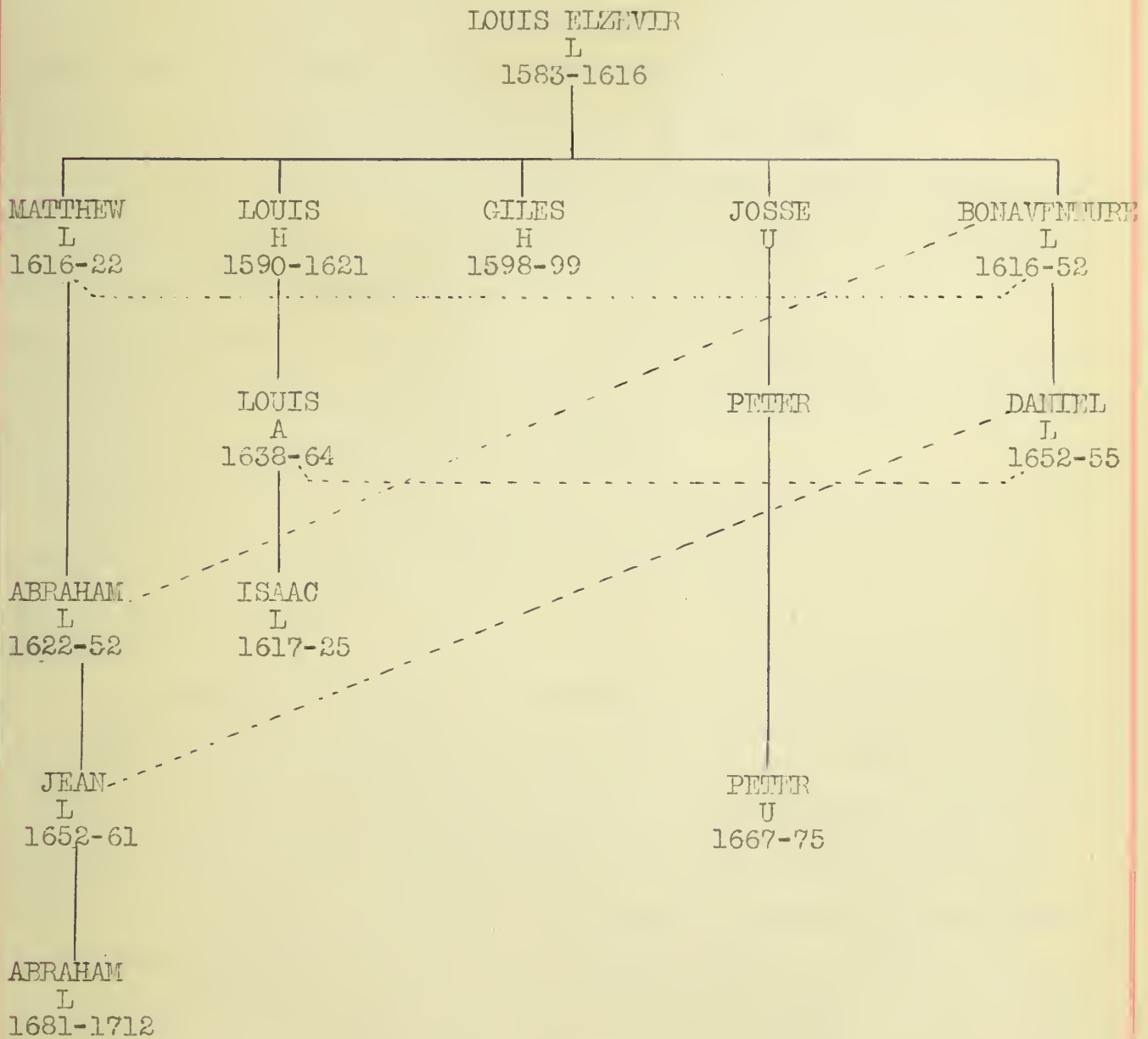
Minerva sitting under an olive tree with the motto "Pallas tra-  
jectina semper Augusta."

The hermit

The total number of books produced by the entire family during 129 years amounts to 1618 works.



## THE ELZEVIUS PRINTING HOUSES



## Explanations

Dates denote the years during which the printers flourished.  
Letters below names are initial letters of the place in which  
the printer had his press.



Book collectors are always anxious to add to their collections one or more of the collections of the Elzevirs. One must, however, understand that there are certain conditions with regard to dates and sizes which determine whether or not the book is a prize. In the small editions the right size is from 125 to 130 millimeters. Anything less than 125 millimeters may be discarded.

The good dates are from 1625 to 1680. Of these, 1625-55 must be from the Leyden press. These are the years during which that house was at the height of its prosperity and was doing its best work.

From 1655 to 1680 the books must be from the Amsterdam press. These are the years during which Daniel was in Amsterdam and the press was at the height of its power and reputation.

Bearing these facts in mind, it will be comparatively easy to form a good collection of really beautiful Elzevirs.

#### CONCLUSION

Thus, in following the history of the Dutch press during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we see a change from the old wooden hand press to improved methods; the emancipation of the press and the book-sellers' establishments from the supervision of the Church; the printing of works of contemporary writers; the introduction of smaller sizes in books; the adaptation of price and contents to the means of the poorer and less educated classes; and the change in the mental requirements of printers, changing the responsibility of the production of perfect literature from the printer to the author.

All these changes produced conditions that made improvements possible and formed the basis for our own modern methods, and above all, clearly demonstrated the fact that the condition of the press closely attends the intellectual condition of the country.



## QUESTIONS

1. What conditions in Holland favored the development of printing ?
2. What was the attitude of the Dutch toward learning ?
3. What influence had the University of Leyden upon the Dutch press ?
4. Discuss the censorship of the press.
5. Name some scholars who are connected with the early history of the Dutch press.
6. What change in the mental requirements of printers is noticeable after the sixteenth century ?
7. Characterize Plantin as a scholar, as a printer.
8. Characterize the Elzevirs as scholars, as printers, as men of business.



## READING LIST

ON

## THE DUTCH PRESS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Blades, William.

Pentateuch of printing with a chapter on Judges. Lond. 1891

Elliot, Stock. 14s .o.p.

Traces the development of printing from its origin.

Bouchot, Henri.

Christopher Plantin. (see Bouchot, Henri. (The) book: its printers, illustrators and binders from Gutenberg to the present time. 1889. p.155-60.)

Discusses the work of Plantin and the influence which the methods of engraving used by him had on the various European countries.

Bouchot, Henri.

(The) Elzevirs. (see his (The) book: its printers, illustrators and binders from Gutenberg to the present time. 1889. p.170-73)

Speaks especially of the most illustrious works of the Elzevirs.

De Vinne, Theodore Low.

(A) printer's paradise. (see Century magazine. June, 1888.

14:230-45.)

Description of the Plantin-Moretus museum.

Duff, Edward Gordon.

(The) Low countries. (see his Early printed books. 1893.p.119)

Speaks of printing in the 15th century as a preparation to the study of the later centuries.



Hensel, Octavia

Plantin-Moretus. (see Harper's magazine. Aug. 1890. 81:390-402.)

Very full description of a visit to the Plantin-Moretus museum, with a preliminary sketch of Plantin's work.)

Humphreys, Henry Noel.

History of the art of printing. Ed. 2. Lond. 1868.  
Quaritch. 63s. o.p.

Valuable as a preliminary to the study of the later history of printing.

Larned, Josephus Nelson.

(The) Elzevirs. (see his History for ready reference. 4:2593.)

Short sketch of the kind of work produced by the Elzevirs.

Putnam, George Haven.

(The) Elzevirs of Leyden and Amsterdam. (see his Books and their makers during the Middle Ages. 1897. 2:286-339.)

Based entirely on Willems, Alphonse. Les Elzevirs.

Putnam, George Haven.

(The) house of Plantin, 1555-1650. (see Putnam, G: H. Books and their makers during the Middle Ages. 1897. 2:255-85.)

A discussion of the work of Plantin and his successors.

Based on Rooses, Max. Christophe Plantin imprimeur anversois. 1883, which is the principal authority on the Plantins.

Roberts, W.

Printers' marks: a chapter on the history of typography.

Lond. 1893. Bell. 7s 6d. o.p.

Gives many printers' marks with frequent short notes about some of the obscure as well as the better known printers.



Slater, John Herbert.

(The) Elzevir press. (see his Book collecting: a guide for amateurs. 1892. p.62-73.)

A short but well-arranged and valuable sketch of the Elzevirs and their work.

Willems, Alphonse.

(Les) Elzevirs. Brussels. 1880. 25s.

#### LIST OF BOOKS ANALYZED

Bouchot, Henri.

(The) book: its printers, illustrators and binders from Gutenberg to the present time. N. Y. 1889. Scribner and Walford. 7.50

Duff, Edward Gordon.

Early printed books. Lond. 1893. Trubner. 1.50 (Books about books.)

Humphreys, Henry Noel. History of the art of printing. Lond. 1867  
Quaritch. 63s. o.p.

Larned, Josephus Nelson.

History for ready reference. 5v. Springfield, Mass. 1894-95. Nichols. 25.00

Putnam, George Haven.

Books and their makers during the Middle Ages. v.2, 1600-1709. N. Y. 1897. Putnam's Sons. 2.50

Slater, John Herbert.

Book collecting: a guide for amateurs. Lond. 1892. Sonnenschein.









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