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978-0-521-85276-0 - Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe

Karen L. Bowen and Dirk Imhof

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CHRISTOPHER PLANTIN AND ENGRAVED BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

This is an interdisciplinary study of Christopher Plantin's pioneering role in the production and distribution of books with engraved and etched illustrations in sixteenth-century Europe. Using the rich archival sources at the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Belgium, Karen Bowen and Dirk Imhof examine the artists who worked on these illustrations, the types of illustrations that appealed to specific markets, and the technological, cultural, and economic constraints under which Christopher Plantin operated as he ventured into this new area of publishing. They demonstrate how Plantin's innovations led to a revolutionary change in taste for book illustrations, and place his work within the broader context of the European book trade of the late sixteenth century and Antwerp's political, economic, cultural, and religious history. This is a major contribution to the history of the book, art history, and the economic and social history of early modern Europe.

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DIRK IMHOF is the curator of rare books and archives at the Plantin-Moretus Museum of Antwerp.

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We gladly extend this prefatory word of thanks to the many friends and colleagues who have generously supported our work on this book during the past years. Unmissable in this regard are: the staff at the Plantin-Moretus Museum – who brought up more books and documents to the museum’s reading room than any of us would care to count – friends who found the time to read and comment on the drafts of our text, and librarians throughout Europe and the United States, who patiently sent us ever informative responses to each of our queries. We would also like to mention Dr. David McKitterick in particular, for his great support of this project from beginning to end. Finally, we are also indebted to both the Historians of Netherlandish Art and the College Art Association for their generous financial support of this book. Our warm thanks to you all.

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Karen L. Bowen and Dirk Imhof

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MATTERS OF NOTATION AND ABBREVIATIONS

MEASUREMENTS

All measurements are given in millimeters, with height preceding width.

SPELLING

The spelling of words in transcriptions has often been “normalized” as follows:

the use of u and v and of i and j has been altered according to contemporary norms; standard abbreviations, such as \bar{u} (for “um”), have been written out in full.

CURRENCY

Unless noted otherwise, all of the sums of money in the cited records from Christopher Plantin’s business were noted in florins (= fl.), which is another name for Carolus or Brabant guilders. The following equivalencies are relevant here:

1 florin (fl.) = 20 stuivers (or patards) (st.); where 1 stuiver = 4 oorden

6 florins = 1 Flemish pound (“groten Vlaams”) (£) = 20 schellingen (sh.) = 240 deniers (d.)

2 florins = 1 Spanish “escus,” or “escudos”

Owing to ever fluctuating rates of currency, it is difficult to give a current (modern) value for this currency. Rather, often the most effective means of putting these values in some sort of perspective is by comparing them with contemporary wages or the purchasing power of certain groups of people. For examples of such comparative figures, see Scholliers 1976. For a more detailed list of monetary values, as well as weights and measures, in different regions in Flanders, see Vandewalle 1984.

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NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

BOOK FORMATS AND PAPER

The format of a book is an indication of its size with regard to the size of the original sheet of paper used to print it. It is determined by the number of times the original sheet has been folded (and possibly cut) in order to form the individual leaves of the book. For a more detailed discussion of the identification of book formats, with accompanying diagrams of the possible lay-out of the pages, see, e.g., Gaskell 1972, pp. 80–107. The following standard book formats are cited here:

- folio* (f° or 2°) = two leaves or four pages per sheet of paper;
- quarto* (4°) = four leaves or eight pages per sheet of paper;
- octavo* (8°) = eight leaves or sixteen pages per sheet of paper;
- duodecimo* (12°) = twelve leaves or twenty-four pages per sheet of paper;
- sedecimo* (16°) = sixteen leaves or thirty-two pages per sheet of paper;
- vigesimoquarto* (24°) = twenty-four leaves or forty-eight pages per sheet of paper;
- trigesimosecundo* (32°) = thirty-two leaves or sixty-four pages per sheet of paper.

In the sixteenth century, paper was typically sold by reams or quires (usually “rames” and “mains,” respectively, in the Plantin archives), where one ream of paper usually (among Plantin’s purchases at least) comprised 500 sheets or 20 quires of 25 sheets each.

CITATION OF RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Whenever possible, we have attempted to give not only the full title of each work cited, but also at least one general reference to it and/or reference to at least one known copy of it. No attempt is made to give an exhaustive list of either the known copies of particular books or the reference works in which specific editions are discussed.

The following abbreviations are used for the frequently cited collections housing the works discussed here. All other collections are cited in full in the notes. The collection number of the given book is cited within parentheses immediately following the reference to the collection.

BL	London, The British Library
BN Madrid	Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España
BN Paris	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BS Munich	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek
KB Den Haag	The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek
KBR	Brussels, The Royal Library, Rare Books Department
KBR PK	Brussels, The Royal Library, Print Department
KULG	Leuven, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Maurits Sabbebibliotheek
MPM	Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus
MPM PK	Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Prentenkabinet
ONB	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
RG	Antwerp, Universiteit Antwerpen, Bibliotheek van het Ruusbroecgenootschap

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NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

RUG	Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Kostbare werken
SAA	Antwerp, Stadsarchief
SBA	Antwerp, Stadsbibliotheek
UL Utrecht	Utrecht, Universiteit Utrecht, Centrale Bibliotheek

REFERENCES TO PRIMARY SOURCES IN THE PLANTIN-MORETUS MUSEUM OF ANTWERP (MPM)

The vast majority of the archival documents and other primary materials cited here are preserved in the Plantin-Moretus Museum of Antwerp. References to these items typically consist of the following: the abbreviations MPM (for the Plantin-Moretus Museum) and then Arch. (for archive), or M (for manuscript), or KP (for copper plate), or Tek (for drawing), and then a number. The full title of each archival document or manuscript is given in the bibliography.

Usually one of three basic systems was used to identify the pages in the archival documents in the Plantin-Moretus Museum:

- 1 conventional (modern) page numbers (reflected in the notes here by the abbreviations p. or pp.);
- 2 a standard folio system, whereby a number (e.g., 20) was noted only in the upper right corner of the right-hand page and that page is then identified as “fol. 20 recto” (or abbreviated as fol. 20r) and the subsequent page (the back of the first) as “fol. 20 verso” (or abbreviated as fol. 20v); or
- 3 an accounting system, whereby one number (e.g., 100) was written in the upper corners of both pages in a single opening of a “debit–credit” balance, i.e., the recto of the right-hand leaf and the verso of the preceding leaf. In this case, we refer to the right and left sides of the single opening, with the following abbreviations: e.g., fol. 100 rht (for the right side) and fol. 100 lft (for the left side).

FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS FROM SECONDARY LITERATURE

Corr.: M. Rooses and J. Denucé, eds., *Correspondance de Christophe Plantin*, 9 vols. (Antwerp: De Groote Boekhandel-'s Granvenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1883–1918); and M. Van Durme, ed., *Supplément à la correspondance de Christophe Plantin* (Antwerp: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1955; reprint Kraus, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1968).

Holl. Dutch & Flemish: refers to one of the numerous volumes (listed in full in the bibliography) of the series: F. W. Hollstein, *Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, c.1450–1700* (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger, 1949–c.1964; Amsterdam: Van Gendt & Co., 1974–1987; Roosendaal: Koninklijke van Poll, 1988–1994; Rotterdam, Sound & Vision, 1995–2004; Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: Sound & Vision, 2005–).

M-H (followed by a number): catalogue entries from Marie Mauquoy-Hendrickx's, *Les estampes des Wierix*, 3 vols. in 4 parts (Brussels: The Royal Library, 1978–1982).

M-H Wierix: refers to one of the preceding volumes.

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New Holl. (followed by artist's name): refers to one of the numerous volumes (listed in full in the bibliography) of the series: *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, 1450–1700* (Roosendaal: Koninklijke van Poll, 1993–1994; Rotterdam: Sound & Vision, 1995–2004; Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: Sound & Vision, 2005–).

PP (followed by a number): catalogue entries from Voet, PP (see below).

Voet, GC: Leon Voet, *The Golden Compasses: The History of the House of Plantin-Moretus*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Vangendt & Co.; London; Routledge & Kegan Paul; New York: Abner Schram, 1969 and 1972).

Voet, PP: Leon Voet, *The Plantin Press (1555–1589): A Bibliography of the Works Printed and Published by Christopher Plantin at Antwerp and Leiden*, 6 vols. (Amsterdam: Van Hoeve, 1980–1983).