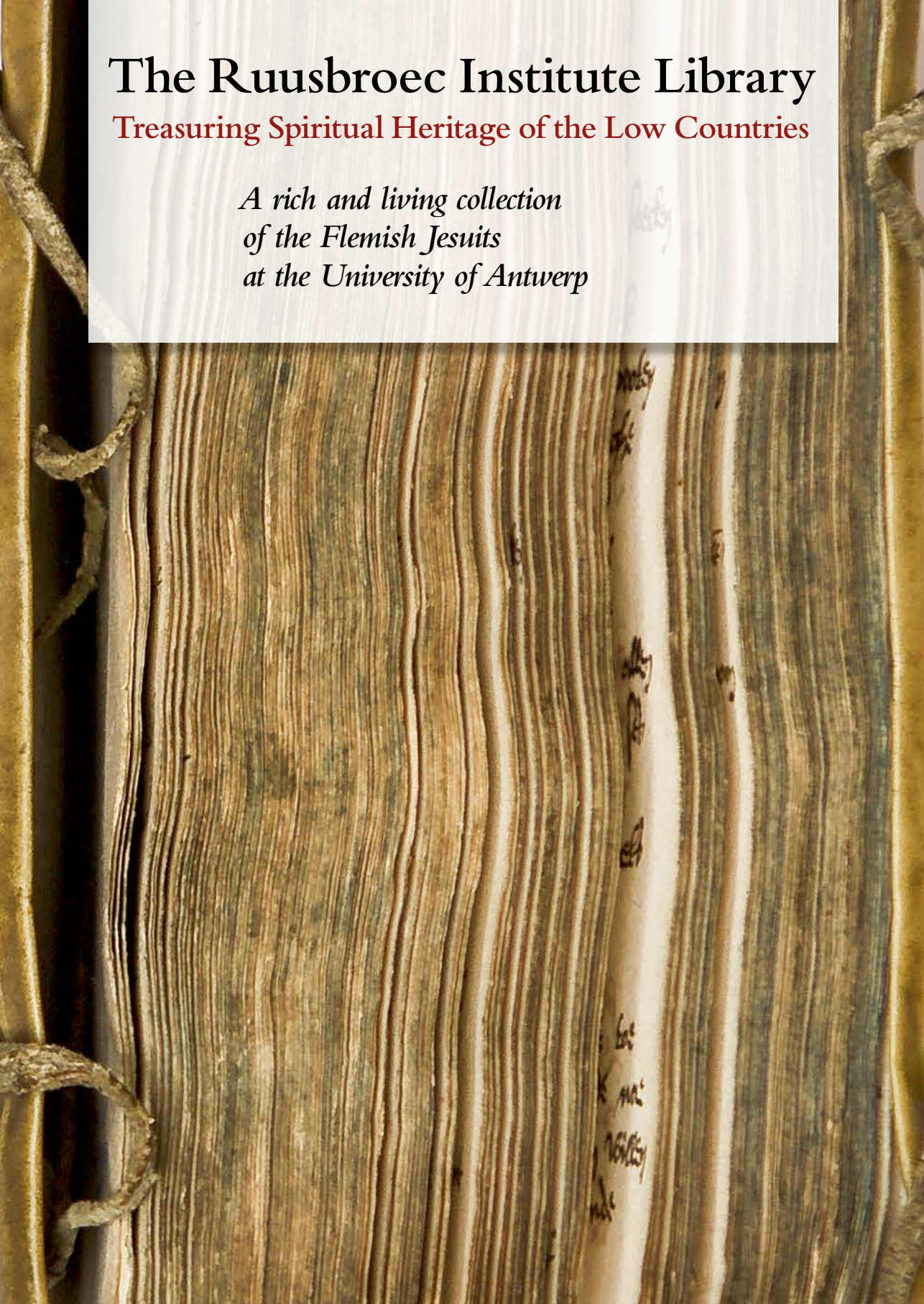


The Ruusbroec Institute Library

Treasuring Spiritual Heritage of the Low Countries

*A rich and living collection
of the Flemish Jesuits
at the University of Antwerp*





THE RUUSBROEC INSTITUTE LIBRARY
TREASURING SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF THE LOW COUNTRIES

The Ruusbroec Institute Library



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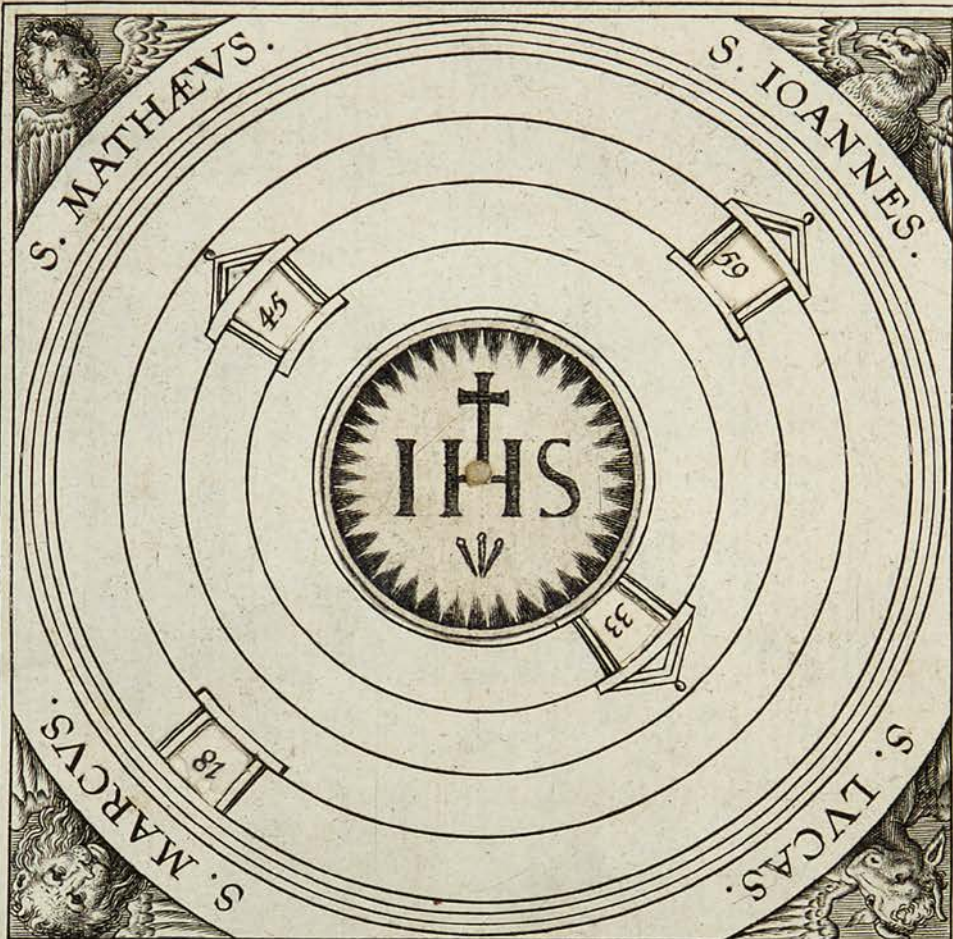
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gentis huma
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TREASURING SPIRITUAL HERITAGE
OF THE LOW COUNTRIES

A RICH
AND LIVING
COLLECTION
OF THE
FLEMISH JESUITS
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF
ANTWERP



SOECKT, ENDE SVLT VINDEN.



1. Kiest een van de vier Guangelisten.
2. Draeit dan het rolleken, sonder arghelisten.
3. Siet, wat ghetal v den stercken heeft:
4. En wat v tRegister op tselfde gheeft.
5. Soeckt dan, daer t spreekwoordt v boorder wyft:
6. Denmerket de figure; en datter uyt ryft.

Wie weet, wat Godt, midts sulck aenmercken,
Door tsien en lesen, int hert moght wercken.

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LETRE
DE
LITTERA

VII



An Invitation

The Ruusbroec Institute (Ruusbroecgenootschap) is a research institute at the University of Antwerp focusing on the study of spiritual history and the mystical tradition in the Low Countries until the early twentieth century. The Institute was founded in 1925 by four Jesuit scholars and was integrated into the University of Antwerp in the 1970s. It is unique and its research output has been highly valued for over ninety years. Internationally renowned publications by members of the Institute include editions of and studies on the works of the mystics Jan van Ruusbroec and Hadewijch, and on Middle Dutch sermons.



The library was founded at the same time as the Ruusbroec Institute. Nowadays, it works closely together with the University Library, while its collections are still owned by the Jesuit congregation in Antwerp. The books have all been described in the university catalogue and both libraries join forces for exhibitions or acquisitions. The library of the Ruusbroec Institute is an up-to-date research and heritage library and is recognized as such by the Flemish Government. It has facilitated the Institute's researchers for nearly a century, with acquisitions largely following trends in the Institute's research. This has resulted in a coherent collection with an abundance of historic material that can be divided in three special collections: manuscripts, early printed books and devotional prints. Apart from these special collections the library owns a large number of primary sources from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g. books on pilgrimages, Marian apparitions, etc.), and over 100.000 secondary sources (e.g. reference books, publications on devotional literature, publications on mysticism, etc.).

The manuscript collection at the Ruusbroec Institute Library counts 500 manuscripts – and over 100 medieval manuscript fragments – from the twelfth century to the twentieth century. The medieval manuscript collection is small, but there are several important manuscripts among the 35 codices, e.g. one with texts by Hadewijch. All other manuscripts are post-medieval, including an interesting

group of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuscripts which shows that boundaries between hand written and printed books were not always as clear as we tend to think.

The core of the special collections at the Ruusbroec Institute Library consists of the 30.000 early printed books. This

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© **ERNA VAN LOOVEREN** is librarian at the Ruusbroec Institute Library.



Left: *quesel* - miniature on parchment - Thijs Collection
Right: *St Donatus*, print touched by the relics of *St Donatus* at *St James Church* in *Antwerp* - coloured copper engraving, signed by *C. van Bael*

collection can be divided in two sub-collections. (1) The incunabula and post-incunabula collection consists of ca. 270 items, most of them donated as permanent loans by the Jesuits from the Antwerp College of Our Lady (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-College) in 1998. Since this donation the Ruusbroec Institute Library houses the earliest known printed book from Flanders: a 1473 print by Thierry Martens from Alost. (2) The books printed before 1800 (in Dutch or Latin) are nearly all on Christian morality and private devotion, and often show marks of intensive use. Among them are books of prayer, books on miracles and Marian devotion, books on saints or on martyrs, books on mystics, on pilgrimages and on Jesuits, books with religious drama texts, etc. A large part of the works printed in Flanders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been described in the *Short Title Catalogue Vlaanderen* (STCV).

The third special collection is the devotional prints collection. With an estimated 40.000 prints and drawings from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, it is unequalled in the Low Countries. Many of these prints were of Antwerp origin, Antwerp being an important Catholic stronghold in the Counter Reformation. There are a huge variety of prints in the collection. Some show scenes from the Gospels, others show saints; some have been decorated by adding pieces of cloth to 'dress' the saint on the print, while other prints have decorated



borders; some are printed, some are painted or drawn; all, however, intend to make the owner more pious.

For over ninety years the Ruusbroec Institute Library has facilitated the Institute's researchers by collecting these materials, and over the years it has welcomed many international researchers with an interest in religious culture, mysticism and spirituality. We hope this brochure, highlighting some remarkable items from our collection, may serve as an invitation to welcome you too, one day, to our reading room..

Further reading

Former librarian at the Ruusbroec Institute, Frans HENDRICKX, published an article on the history of the Institute and its library – 'Een bibliotheek in dienst van Ruusbroec en zijn Genootschap te Antwerpen' – in the journal *Vlaanderen* 50 (2001), pp. 20–24. A translation of this publication, and more information about the Ruusbroec Institute, can be found on the website www.uantwerpen.be/ruusbroec.

Dionysius Carthusienses (*Speculum conversionis peccatorum*

Alost, [Johannes de Westfalia and Thierry Martens], 1473, in-4°, [28] ff. RG-OLV 88 E 18

PIERRE DELSAERDT is Professor at the Department of History of the University of Antwerp and part-time Professor at the research unit for History of the KU Leuven. He was President of Flanders Heritage Library from 2008 to 2016.

Many extant ascetic writings can be ascribed to the Limburg Carthusian Dionysius Carthusiensis ('Dionysius van Rijkel', 1402/03–1471). The Ruusbroec Institute has a fair share. His *Speculum conversionis peccatorum* ['mirror of the conversion of sinners'] exhorts the reader to reflection and repentance.

This printed edition occupies a special place in the cultural history of the Southern Netherlands: it is the first dated book that was published there with the help of a printing press. Though the colophon only mentions that it was published 'in Alost, in Flanders, in the year 1473', it can be ascribed with certainty to the temporary cooperation between the German printer Johannes de Westfalia and the local Thierry ('Dirk') Martens.

The Ruusbroec Institute copy is the only complete one in a Belgian collection. It entered the library in 1998 when the Antwerp College of Our Lady divested itself of its collection of incunables. It is a modest publication of 28 folios forming part of a very special 'sammelband' (a binding containing several separate publications) with four titles issued by the Alost workshop in 1473 and 1474, and one Cologne impression from 1470. The sammelband

has been numbered throughout by hand; a hand-written table of contents has been added at the beginning. It proves that the five texts were bound together early on. An inscription shows the volume once belonged to the priory Rooklooster, in Oudergem near Brussels.

When it arrived at the Ruusbroec Institute, the volume was bound in a nineteenth-century half leather binding; the materials used threatened the integrity of the body of the book. With the help of a private foundation it was possible to call upon the services of a conservation expert. She dismembered the binding, cleaned and repaired the bifolia and then rebound the separate parts together into a half parchment conservation binding with wooden boards. The nineteenth-century binding was kept as part of the historical documentation of the exemplar.

In the course of conservation, the University of Antwerp Library ensured that the complete book was digitised to a high quality. Its five components can now be leafed through virtually on Flandrica.be, portal site for digitised material from Flemish heritage libraries.

C

Speculum cōuersionis peccatorū magistri dyonisiū
de leuuuis alias rihel ordinis Cartusienſis. :

Qonuertere ad dominū deum tuū quo
niā corruisti in iniquitate tua. *Dzee. x°.*
Cū peccatū sit auersio ac recessus mētis
create a summo imenso ⁊ icōmutabili
bono: atq; cōuersio quedā inordinata ad bonū cre
atum caducū ⁊ uanū. Constat q̄ ipsū peccatum sit
maxima profundissimāq; ruina. utpote lapsus a
summo ad infimū: ab optio ad pessimū: a dignis
simo ad uilissimū. Ideo peccator merito sue trāsgres
siois repelli meret̄ a deo altissimo ac p̄cipitari i pro
fundissimū inferorū: ut culpe correspōdeat pena. Cū
g° h° ita sit admoneo te peccator ut relicto impietatis
tue errore te ad inferos pertrahēte ad tuum redeas
creatorē ad tue salutis fontez. in q° sola tua cōsistit
sal⁹. Usquequo per abrupta ābulas uicioz? Cur itī
nera eligis tenebrosa ad terrā mortis caligie cooper
tā ducētia? Aperi oculos cordis ⁊ perpēdas quo ten
das. Peccator. Quis tu qui me increpare docere iu
dicare presumis? Cū scriptū sit. Nolite iudicare ⁊
non iudicabimini. ⁊ iterum: tu quis es qui iudicas
alienum seruu: suo domino stat aut cadit. Iustus.
Putas ne intelligis que allegas? Nonne sicut de o
cultis ⁊ ignotis iudicare uetamur: sic de manifestis
iudicare lisentiamur? Immo ⁊ sepe iubemur: quē ad
modū per Moyses locut⁹ ē de⁹. Iuste iudica proxi
mo tuo: ⁊ cur increpationē grauiter accipis? Cū rurs⁹
per Moyses locut⁹ est dominus: publice argue fra
trem tuū. i. proximū tuū peccantem ne habeas super
illo peccatū. Cur nō attēdis q̄ Salō dixit? Viro
qui corripientem dura ceruice contemnit repentinus

Speculum conuersionis
nerabili patre ⁊ domino: ⁊
alias de leuuis ordinis ca
Sui sanctimonia uite: litte
cuit: ut in hoc opusculo: u
uoluminibus fere innumer

Tabula articulorum pa
dicat speculū conuersionis pe

Prologus in quo iustus
tere peccatorem renitentem

Captatio beniuolentie ser
articulus

Quod periculosus impiū ⁊ c
usq; ad tempus egritudinis
articulus

Declaratio per scriptura
q; paucissimi uere in fine pe
uixerunt. articulus

Commemoratio horū q
delectationum detestatione
articulus

Quod enorme crimen sit ad
ligendum q; aliqui sancti in
nature leguntur concubinas
articulus

De multis remedijs cont
articulus

Exhortatio ad cupidita
articulus

peccatorum editum a ue
domino Dyonisio Kikel
rtusiensium professore +
raturaq; uelud sidus emi
erū ⁊ in ceteris q̄optimis
is patet.

ecedentis opusculi quod
peccatorum sequitur.

increpans nititur conuer

nis ad iuuenē cōuertēdū.

.i᠑.
lampnosuz sit penitētia ⁊
s aut senectutis differre.

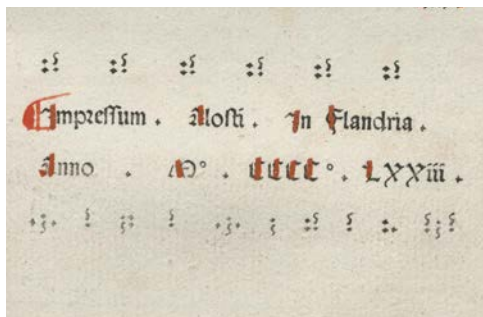
.ii᠑.
rū testimania ⁊ exempla
niteant qui ante scelerate

.iii᠑.
ue ad turpiū prauaruz
em ac fugam inducunt.

.iiii᠑.
ulterium ⁊ qualiter intel
ueteri testamento ac lege
s habuisse.

.v᠑.
ra uicia carnis.

.vi᠑.
tem uitandam
.vii᠑.



Above: *Speculum conversionis peccatorum*, (Alost: [Johannes de Westfalia and Thierry Martens], 1473), colophon, f. 126r

Below: A conservation expert rebound the 'Sammelband' into a half parchment conservation binding with wooden boards
© Boekrestauratie De Valk

Further reading

- R. ADAM, A. VANAUTGAERDEN, *Thierry Martens et la figure de l'imprimeur humaniste (une nouvelle biographie)*, Turnhout, 2009 (Passeurs de textes: imprimeurs et libraires à l'âge de l'humanisme, vol. 1).
- K. HEIREMAN, 'Ter verantwoording', in: *Alost in Flandria anno M^oCCCC^oLXXIII^o (...). Facsimile van de drie oudste Zuidnederlandse drukken Aalst 1473*, Alost-Brussels, 1973, pp. 9-34.
- De vijfhonderdste verjaring van de boekdrukkunst in de Nederlanden*, exhibition catalogue, Brussels, 1973.



Biblia Sacra, (Antwerp: Jan Moerentorf [Joannes Moretus I], 1599), binding



Biblia Sacra, (Antwerp: Jan Moerentorf [Joannes Moretus I], 1599), f. X1v–X2r

The Moerentorf Bible ☞ *Biblia Sacra, dat is de geheele Heylighe Schrifture bedeylt int Oudt ende Nieu Testament*

Antwerp, by Jan Moerentorf [Joannes Moretus I], 1599, 2°, [566] ff., ill. RG 3115 A 1

When Jan Moerentorf published his magnificent Dutch language Bible in 1599, it was already 33 years since his father-in-law Christophe Plantin brought out the last Catholic Bible in Antwerp (1566). Admittedly there had been some separate editions of the New Testament but even that series

had been concluded by his father-in-law in 1577. These were not good times for Catholic readers of the Bible: the iconoclastic movement and the arrival of the Duke of Alba, the setting up of Calvinistic republics in Antwerp and elsewhere and the reconquest by the Duke of Parma had led to confessional polarisation and economic decline. Not that Catholics were prohibited from reading the Bible, but the so-called fourth rule of the Index of the Council of Trent (1564) also introduced in the Netherlands, made the reading of it dependent on the prior authorisation of the Bishop. Caution

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was now required because freedom in reading – and interpretation – of the Bible had been partially responsible for the birth of Protestantism. That is the main reason why the Bible was no longer at the top of Catholics’ reading lists.

Moerentorf made a clear allusion to this long hiatus in Bible production in the prologue to his Dutch language Bible, which was marketed in two editions: one in his own name and the other in collaboration with Jan van Keerberghen (the image here shows a copy of the latter). In essence this Bible aims to offer a Dutch translation of the *Sixto-Clementine Vulgate*, which had been published in Rome in 1592 and which Moerentorf had been allowed to print in 1599 thanks to an exceptional privilege from the Vatican, an edition which is little-known. The theologians from the University of Louvain whom he consulted supported the translation project and supplied the publisher with the revision of the ‘Louvain Bible’ (1548), the official text of the Catholic Bible as edited by the Augustinian canon regular Nicolaus van Winghe from the monastery of Sint-Maartensdal in Louvain, which had now been adapted to the latest Roman Vulgate version.

As was required for Catholic Bibles, para-textual material was sober and kept to the minimal chapter summaries and cross-references to other Bible passages in the margins. This edition did contain some beautiful illustrations: those of the Old Testament were based on the *Histories and Prophecies* of Hans Sebald Beham and those of the New Testament were after the work of Bernard Salomon. Moerentorf’s Bible was to become the standard Bible for Catholics for the coming decades (and even centuries).



Biblia Sacra, (Antwerp: Jan Moerentorf [Joannes Moretus i], 1599), title page

The example in the library of the Ruusbroec Institute was well used in any case, as can be seen from the wear and tear.

Further reading

P. GILLAERTS, H. BLOEMEN, Y. DESPLENTER, W. FRANÇOIS & A. DEN HOLLANDER (eds), *De Bijbel in de Lage Landen. Elf eeuwen van vertalen*, Heerenveen, 2015.

Johannes David **C** *Christeliicken waerseggher.* *De principale stucken van t'christen geloof en leven*

[*The Christian Soothsayer, the Principal Tenets of Christian Belief and Life*]

Antwerp, by Jan Moerentorf [Joannes Moretus I], 1603, 372 pp., ill. RG 3045 i 1



Johannes David, *Christeliicken waerseggher*, (Antwerp: Jan Moerentorf [Joannes Moretus I], title page

C HUBERT MEEUS is Professor at the Department of Literature of the University of Antwerp.

Following the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church began a counter-offensive to win back lost souls. Jesuits especially thought of new ways to bind the faithful to the Church. In the first place they wanted to fire up the enthusiasm of the young. Johannes David, a Jesuit from Courtrai, packaged his catechism lessons in an attractive new way: a book with the title *Christian Soothsayer*. This title not only referred to a book telling the truth, but made young people think of fun, worldly books containing games, such as a spinning disc with which one could foretell the future.

David did not limit himself to an attractive title but went a step further. He wanted to exploit genres popular at the time such as emblem books. That

is why he commissioned the Antwerp engraver Theodore Galle to make one hundred copper engravings to illustrate his lessons. Inspired by the example of the Jesuit Hieronymus Natalis, Galle illustrated several scenes in a story on one engraving and each time referred with a capital letter to the relevant passage in the commentary. In order to formulate the engraving's message in a pithy way David placed a couplet in Dutch, French and Latin underneath as a motto. In this way it resembled an emblem book. Many of his colleagues followed his example so that Jesuit emblematics became a genre in its own right in the seventeenth century, one which became very popular. To make his book even more attractive, David organised it as a board game. Thus the reader could first spin the disc which referred to a verse from the Bible as well as to the engraving illustrating it.

When David offered his book to Jan Moretus the latter did not see the point of bringing out a Dutch language version. David subsequently translated his book into Latin in a few months and it appeared with the title *Veridicus christianus* in 1601. Such was its success that Moretus was willing to bring out the Dutch version the very next year.



At nonne hos Mundus, mera ceu ludibria, spernit?
Delirat: nec vera videt: nec iudicat æqua.

De Weerelt houdt den spot, met sulck; als hoo, en slecht.
De Weerelt die is sot: s'en weet niet wat sy secht.

Toutefois la race, Du mondain rechasse, Et hait ceste voix.
Le Monde radotte, Et son huneur sotte, N'entend pas ces loix.

Johannes David, *Christelicken waerseggheer*, (Antwerp: Jan Moerentorf [Joannes Moretus I], 1603), print 45

Further reading

- H. MEEUS 'What's Learnt in the Cradle Lasts till the Tomb. Counter-Reformation Strategies in the Southern Low Countries to Entice the Youth into Religious Reading', in: Sabrina Corbellini, Margriet Hoogvliet & Bart Ramakers (eds.), *Discovering the Riches of the Word: Religious Reading, Reform and Counter-Reform in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden, 2015, pp. 339–366.

Miracle Books

Philips Numan (C) *Historie vande Mirakelen die onlancx in grooten ghetale ghebeurt zyn door die intercessie ende voor bidden van die H. Maget Maria. Op een plaetse genoemt Scherpen Heuvel by die stadt van Sichen in Brabant.*

[*History of the miracles ... at a place called Scherpenheuvel*]

Brussels, by Rutgert Velpius, 1606³, 257 pp., ill. RG 3091 i 13

(C) **CRAIG HARLINE** (PhD) is attached to the Department of History at Brigham Young University, Utah.

(C) **JONAS VAN MULDER** (PhD) is a researcher at the Ruusbroec Institute, Faculty of Arts of the University of Antwerp.

The Catholic Counter Reformation in the Southern Netherlands went hand-in-hand with the re-birth of traditional devotions to the saints. Humanists and reformers had dislocated the foundations of late medieval devotional culture, and the quasi permanent state of war following the confrontation between the Calvinist Northern Netherlands and the Spanish empire in 1568 had structurally disrupted the pilgrimage infrastructure of the Southern Netherlands. The institutional reforms of Archbishop Mathias Hovius (1596–1620), the relative peace during the *Twaalfjarig Bestand* (1609–1621) (Twelve Year Truce), and the religious zeal of archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598–1621) constituted fertile soil for the revitalisation of neglected traditions and the institution of new, mostly Marian devotions. Miracles, which were ascribed to figures or relics of saints by pilgrims, were noted down by local secular or regular clergy, then collected and published after episcopal approval in order to promote the cults. Some of these publications gave life to the belief that this growing

stream of miracles could make profaned places sacred once again and heal recent war wounds.

An important stimulus to the publishing of miracle books in the seventeenth century was the success of Our Dear Lady of Scherpenheuvel. The Brussels city clerk Philips Numan (1550–1617) published four different miracle books between 1604 and 1617.



Philips Numan, *Historie vande Mirakelen ... op een plaetse genoemt Scherpen heuvel*, (Brussels: Rutgert Velpius, 1606), title page

Their conservation in numerous reprints and translations into Latin, French, Spanish and English reflects the belief in the possibilities of the miraculous for the promotion of cultic propaganda and devotional guidelines. Inspired by the example of Scherpenhevel, many miracle books were printed in order to promote larger and smaller places of Marian devotion such as Aarle, Kortembos, Duffel, Jezus-Eik or Alseberg. The Jesuits were the most active of all the orders in the publishing of miracle books. This was especially true in their promotion of the celebration of Ignatius of Loyola and Franciscus Xaverius, canonised in 1622.

Miracle books are the ultimate source material for a history of the religious culture of the Southern Netherlands. Their role was not confined to propagandistic pamphlets designed to draw as many visitors as possible to the altars of the saints. They were also devotional objects sold by hawkers in places of pilgrimage and used in sermons by local priests. In this way during the Catholic Counter Reformation in the Southern Netherlands they functioned as an important means for strengthening faith and for instructing lay people in their dealings with the supernatural. At the same time, especially in the first half of the century, they had an outspoken polemical and counter-reformational character and played an important part in confessional debates. Miracle books force us to question established religious and intellectual dividing lines (between religious ‘popular’ and ‘elite’ culture, and between ‘religion’ and ‘science’). Thus, the celebrated humanist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) wrote no fewer than three Marian miracle books at the end of his life (to the consternation of his Calvinistic intellectual peers) and the internationally renowned anatomist Philippus Verheyen (1648–1710) published a miracle book on the miraculous healing of the Courtrai Jesuit Joannes Baptista Onraet (1678–1743) in 1708.



Justus Lipsius, *Diva virgo Hallensis*,
 (Antwerp: Plantin [Joannes Moretus I], 1604), title page

Pious Prints from Antwerp

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries millions of pious images were printed on the Antwerp printing presses. Most of them were exported to the four corners of the Catholic world. For home consumption, the Antwerp printers also published specific images, focused on local devotion in the city's churches. Richly decorated churches form an important part of civic pride. Here the Antwerp elite was able to show its power and status. The Catholic Church ruled the daily life of people in a way that we can no longer imagine. The ordinary believer had a hard life. Illness and death were the order of the day and poverty was a given. This is why he/she sought solace and certainty in these churches. Here they could experience heaven on earth, a resplendent sanctuary where all their questions could be answered, where they could have the ear of the mother of God, and the support of numerous saints each of whom had a speciality that could improve their quality of life.

The church of St James in Antwerp is a rare example of church building that has retained its baroque interior almost intact. Already in the fourteenth century there was a chapel devoted to St James the Greater. This was re-

placed with a church whose Baroque interior was only completed in the eighteenth century. But it is not all decoration; the meaning of the church becomes clearer when we look at the many devotions which attracted believers specifically to this house of God. These were most often bound to a cult statue or a reliquary shrine that stood in a chapel, often above the altar. The printed pictures give us the most information. Thus, one shows the statue of St Joseph with Christ on his arm and, next to it the prayer which earned the believer, if he recited it piously, 40 days off his stay in fiery Purgatory. St Roch was supposed to guard the believer against death by plague. That infectious disease was still a serious threat and had claimed thousands of victims in the middle of the seventeenth century. Strange to us seems the worship of St Job, the only saint from the Old Testament, and very specific to Brabant. Not only did he cure ailments and minor illnesses but he also held up a mirror to believers. Job lost everything but even in deepest poverty he continued to worship God, the moral being that the poor believer should just accept his fate. The pictures of St Donatus were exceptional in having been touched by the relic kept in the church (see p. 8). This turned the picture into more than a piece of paper because Donatus protected the believer against fire and lightning. Strategically placed in the home meant you no longer needed fire insurance.

© **GUUS VAN DEN HOUT** studied art history at the University of Leiden. Subsequently he was Director of the museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder in Amsterdam and Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht. He currently works independently on projects in the fields of heritage, art advising and guest-curating.



St Joseph venerated in St James Church in Antwerp · copper engraving, anonymous

Illness, poverty, fire and even life after death became palpable in the church of St James. Devotional pictures testify to this. Over time most of them, torn and fingered, disappeared into the bin. Most collectors hardly looked after them. They are, after all, unremarkable, often crude and too sentimental. Luckily their importance has now been recognised. The Ruusbroec Institute is currently the proud owner of a valuable collection of devotional pictures which are of inestimable value in understanding the spiritual life in Antwerp during the Baroque.

Further reading

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- A.K.L. THIJNS, *Antwerpen internationaal uitgeverscentrum van devotieprenten, 17de–18de eeuw*, Louvain, 1993.

Jhesus collacien

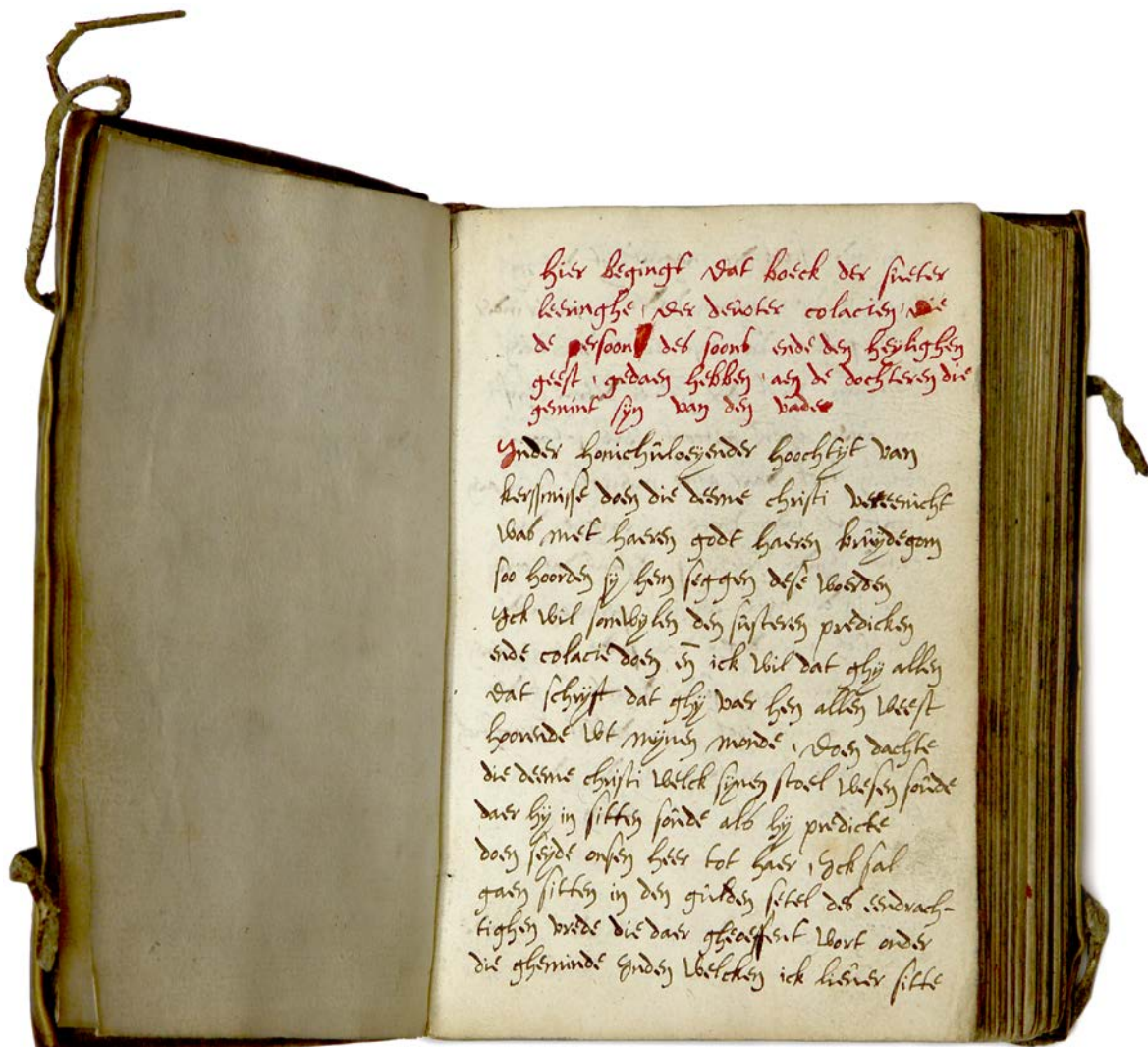
[*Jhesus' sermons*] Malines (?), ca. 1625, paper, 15 x 11 cm, 232 ff. · RG Hs. Neerl. 37

© THOM MERTENS is Professor at the Ruusbroec Institute, Faculty of Arts of the University of Antwerp. He is also editor-in-chief of *Ons Geestelijk Erf* and the former Director of the Ruusbroec Institute.

Between the years 1999 to 2008 a team at the Ruusbroec Institute worked together with the Free University of Amsterdam on a repertory of Middle Dutch sermons. In 2006, one of the collaborators on this project, Daniël Ermens, received a microfilm from an office colleague, Marleen Cré, which she in turn had received from a researcher friend in England. The manuscript on this microfilm turned out to contain the complete cycle of 72 sermons *Jhesus collacien*, as well as other texts, mostly prayers, meditations and exercises, including an unknown sermon by a Franciscan from Malines Josse van de Borgh (Judocus a Castro, † 1634). Thanks to the persistent detective work of Daniël Ermens, the actual manuscript was traced. It was privately owned and after the death of the descendants it was offered for sale. The University of Antwerp bought it in 2013 for its library and loaned it to the Ruusbroec Institute for further research. The University of Antwerp Library and the library of the Ruusbroec Institute work together in various ways and indeed they received the label 'Heritage Library' jointly.

The most comprehensive text in the manuscript is the series of 72 fictional sermons known by the titles *Jhesus collacien* and *Lelienstock* ('Branch of lilies'). These sermons are addressed by Jesus and the Holy Spirit in as many apparitions to a sister from a convent of Franciscan tertiaries during Lent. The manuscript, now in Antwerp, seems to date from the first decades of the seventeenth century and is therefore later than other versions of this text which seems to have its origin in the second half of the fifteenth century. However, this version contains an uncorrupted text which is important for the study of its transmission and reconstruction.

The other texts contained in the manuscript point in the direction of a convent of tertiary sisters, either Franciscan or Carmelite, and late descendants therefore of the circle for whom *Jhesus collacien* was originally written.



Hier begingt dat boeck der sueter leeringhe, der deuoter colacien [Here begins the book of sweet teachings, of devout sermons], Hs. Neerl. 37, f. 1r

Further reading

- W. VAN DIJK & D. ERMENS, 'Salich sijn sij di dat wort gods hoeren ende dat bewaeren. Repertorium van Middelnederlandse preken in handschriften tot en met 1550, dl. IV-VII', in: *Queeste*, 15 (2008), pp. 168-176.
- A. DEN HOLLANDER & Th. MERTENS, 'Een ontdekking die verdween en weer verscheen: Antwerpen, Ruusbroecgenootschap, Hs. Neerl. 37', in: *De Gulden Passer*, 90 (2013), pp. 253-265.
- Th. MERTENS, 'Private revelation and public relevance in the Middle Dutch sermon cycle Jhesus collacien', in: *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 53 (2009), pp. 31-40.

Prayers and Spiritual Exercises

Southern Netherlands (?), ca. 1625, paper, 13 x 9 cm, 162 ff. · RG HS. 452



Prayers and spiritual exercises, Hs. 452, ff. 143v–144r

This duodecimo manuscript prayer-book consists of prayers and spiritual exercises written to accompany a sequence of twenty-two small engravings mainly focusing on the life of the Virgin, of which four are missing. The engravings were cut down (generally to the plate mark), pasted in, and edged with scribal ornaments inked in red. The majority derives from a print series finely executed by an anonymous master, who based his set on the *Beatae intactae semper Virginis Mariae vita*, engraved by Jan Collaert II after designs by Jan van der Straet and published by

© **WALTER S. MELION** is Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Art History at Emory University in Atlanta.

Adriaen Collaert in 1585–1595. Other plates in the prayerbook are variants of devotional prints issued by Hieronymus Wierix before 1619.

One of the prints, *The Infant Jesus Carrying the Cross* [f. 130r], has been illuminated: transparent carmine calls attention to the tender flesh of Christ; gold gilt underscores the importance of the cross, crown of thorns, *via crucis*, and temple of Jerusalem. Written freely and expertly in black ink, with numerous rubrics, the bulk of the manuscript, comprised by folios 11r to 153r, was the work of one scribe. The likely date of production was the first quarter of the seventeenth century. As is evident from the book's opening invocation

of Saints Catherine and Barbara, its emphasis on the Marian privilege of bearing and rearing Christ, as well as its frequent references to *sondersse* [female sinner], Hs 452 must have been made for a votaress, probably a nun or beguine.

Between 1590 and 1630, Antwerp was the center of production for manuscript prayerbooks of this type, organized around an apparatus of small devotional prints engraved in the miniaturist style perfected by the Wierix and Collaert workshops. Designed for the use of priests, monks, nuns, and beguines, they functioned as meditative complements to the breviary and missal. The prayers are highly personalized, often spoken in the voice of the original owner, and they closely align with the pictorial images around which the various *orationes* are structured.

To take one example from Hs 452, *The Infant Christ Carrying the Cross* anchors a sequence of Eucharistic prayers that urge the votaress to visualize the arduous labors (“arbeijden”) borne by Jesus from infancy to adulthood, for the benefit of humankind [f. 129v]. His laborious and effortful life is contrasted with his tender humanity (“hoe schoen, hoe soet, hoe liefelijck sijt ghij”), in analogy to the adjacent print, which jarringly conjoins imagery of the Infancy and the Passion [f. 130v]. The point of this exercise is to ‘soften’ the votaress’ ‘wicked, iron-hard heart’ (“boose ijseren hert”) [f. 131r], opening it to the loving presence of Christ in the Eucharist (“ende geopent werden ende u ontfaen



The Infant Jesus Carrying the Cross - engraving by Hieronymus Wierix, Hs. 452, f. 130r

metter alder vierichste begeerte’) [f. 133v], so that she shall choose henceforth to labor indefatigably in word and deed on his behalf (“van mij het wereck mynder handen die woerden mijns monts”) [f. 129v]. Here and elsewhere in Hs 452, the emphasis falls on enlivening the votaress’ eyes, her faculties of corporeal and spiritual vision, thereby to facilitate her affective engagement with Christ: ‘And let me not with listless eyes meditate your innocent death, but instead grant me, poor worm that I am, always to consider with a mournful, constant heart the bitterness of your Passion’ (“Maer gheeft mij eermen arwor een rouwich hert ghestadich in u bietter passie altijt ghedencken’) [f. 147v].

Spiritual Virgins and their Passion for Devotional Prints

Ruusbroec Institute, Print room · Thijs Collection

◉ **EVELYNE VERHEGGEN** (PhD) works as a heritage specialist for religious heritage especially concerning devotional prints, pious objects and churches.
www.evelyneverheggen.nl

Some important sources for research into the religious history and culture of Flanders are *archivalia* and *Catholica*: pious books and manuscripts. Less well-known sources for research in this area are devotional prints or ‘prayer pictures’. These little pictures were disseminated from Antwerp throughout Europe and beyond at the time of the Catholic Counter Reformation. They served, in addition to the imagination of belief, as an important aid to prayer.

During the Early Modern period many people experienced the calling to follow Christ. Thousands of women united themselves via a mystical wedding with their heavenly groom and in the process made the vow of chastity. Most of these spiritual virgins or spiritual daughters (*filiae devotae*), however, in contrast to nuns, remained ‘in the world’ and were active in education and handiwork (e.g. embroidery and lacemaking). (Semi) religious women were a definite majority in relation to their male counterparts. In the northern Netherlands such spiritual virgins or daughters were popularly called ‘klopjes’ whereas in Flanders they were called ‘kwezels’. The ‘quesel’ depicted on page 8 stems from a series of representations of religious dress in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.



De lesse van de morale [The lesson on morality], coloured copper engraving on parchment, anonymous · Thijs Collection

In their daily lives the *virgins* made full use of devotional prints. In Antwerp millions of these pictures were printed to inspire a virtuous life following Christ, His mother Mary and the saints. On one of these prints two *Spiritual Virgins* are pictured together with their main exemplar Mary. They are in the process of receiving a meditation lesson from her while doing their handiwork.

SEER HEYLIGE EN PROFYTELYCKE DAGELYCX MORGENS OPDRACHT
 Tot oeffeningh van alle Gelooighe, om daer door befonderlyck deelachtigh te worden van alle de
 verdienften van JESUS, MARIA, en alle Godts lieve Heyligen, tot vergiffenis der sonden,
 beternis van leuen, en bekomingh der eeuwige faligheyt.

Godt Hemelſchen Vader, ſiet ick
 arm ſondarigh menſch drage u he-
 den op alle de verdienſten van het le-
 uen, lyden ende doot van uwen eenigen
 geboren Soone JESU-CHRISTU. Syn valſten,
 ſijn waecten, ſijn bidden, ſijn tranen, ſijn
 geleerthey, ſieghetmoedigheyt, oot-
 moedighen, gehoortamheyt, ſijn be-
 noetheyt, ſijne woorden, en alle ſijne ver-
 dienſten, met de verdienſten van ſijne
 gebenedeyde Moeder ende Maget Ma-
 ria, ende alle Godts lieve Heyligen, met
 alle Heylige ſacrificien vande Miſſen,
 dieſe liden inde heyl Wendelgeſchieden
 en ſullen geſchieden, tot vergiffeniſſe
 van myn, en alle menſchens sonden, vol-
 comen beternis van ons leuen, ende daer-
 naar d' eeuwige glorie, oock voor die in
 peryckel nu noch ſijn van sonden en
 fouden covenen in peryckel, dat u godde-
 lycke geesthey die foot belieuen daer
 van te bevryden, oock tot troot van al-
 leuenouwen bedruckte Harten, ende
 verloffing van alle Chriſtliche flauw vry
 de ſlavenye der ongelooighe, tot gene-
 ſinge, of ſalige doot van alle ſicke ende
 ſteruende menſchen, tot verheilinge van
 ons Heyligh Roomſch Catholyck Ge-
 loof, ende weluaren van onſen Allerhey-
 lighſten Vader den Paas van Roomen



ſinnelyck Opperhoofd der ware Kere-
 ke JESU-CHRISTU, en voor alle geestelycke
 ende werelycke Overigheyt en on-
 derdaen, Bichtvaders, en Selbſtſtorders,
 dat gy die en alle menſchen, door uwen
 Goddelycken Geest belieft te beſtuen.
 Ende syndelyck toe leeffenſe en ver-
 loffing van alle Gelooighe Zelen in-
 de pyne des Vagevire, oock voor N...
 N... tot dien gynde drage ick u op
 geneel myn ſeluen tot uwen eeuwigen
 lof, myn woorden, myn werken ende
 gepreyen, u biddende dat ſy alle gader,
 door u om u, en in u allen mogen be-
 ginnen, gedan worden, ende volcyden.
 Vereenicht met die van uwen eenigen
 Soone JESU, ende uwe welbemide Doch-
 ter MARIA, ootmoedelyck verfoeckende
 ons deelachtigh te maken van alle hun-
 ne verdienſten door JESU-CHRISTUM
 onſen Heere, welcken Alder goeder dien-
 ſten JESUS ick bedanke van al de me-
 nigvuldige weldaden en lieſde om my
 eouwerdich behoot, principelyk in ſijne
 Alderſijghelike menſchwoedinge
 ende geboorte, bittere Paſſie, ende Doot.
 Den welken leuef ende regereert, met
 Godt den Vader, en den Heyligen Geest,
 Godt inder eeuwighheyt der eeuwighen-
 den. Amen.

*Smaandaghs salmen dese Opdracht oeffenen ter eeren van het bloedigh sweeten in het Hofſten, ende ge-
 wangeniſſe JESU-CHRISTU. Ende dan dit miſterie inden dagh ſomwylen overpreſen principelyk in u Gebed of
 Meditatie, ende al ſoo doende dagelycx met de navolgende miſterien op die navolgende dagen.*
Dynſdaghs ter eeren vande vrede geuangeniffe JESU-CHRISTU.
Woensdaghs ter eeren vande ſchroomelycke geestlinge.
*Donderdaghs ter eeren vande pijnelycke Doorne Croone JESU-CHRISTU, en het Hoogbuerdigh II. Sacra-
 ment der Autaer.*
Vrydaghs ter eeren vande ſware Cruydraginge ende Cruyſſinge.
Saterdaghs ter eeren vande Doot en begraffeniſſe JESU-CHRISTU, ende bedruckte Moeder Godts Maria.
Sondaghs ter eeren vande Verriſſeniſſe en Hemelwaert van JESUS en Maria.

V. A. E. L. C.
 ANTWERPEN, By HENDRICK THIEULLIER, Boekdrucker en Verkooper, inde Welſtate. 1710.

Seer heylige en profytelycke dagelycx morgens opdracht [Very holy and profitable daily morning exercise], (Antwerp: Hendrick Thieullier, 1710) · Thijs Collection

A particularly rare combination of word and image is constituted by a detailed prayer picture *Seer heylige en profytelycke dagelycx morgens opdracht*, made by the Antwerp printer and bookseller Hendrik Thieullier from 1710. In the middle a virgin is meditating on the four last things: death, the last judgement, heaven and hell. Around it are printed some texts: a pious prayer to the Father and how one can follow Christ throughout the entire week in His suffering. This print was kept in a book, but was meant to hang on the wall as a reminder. Although probably printed in large numbers, this is the only surviving example, a fate that befell many of them.

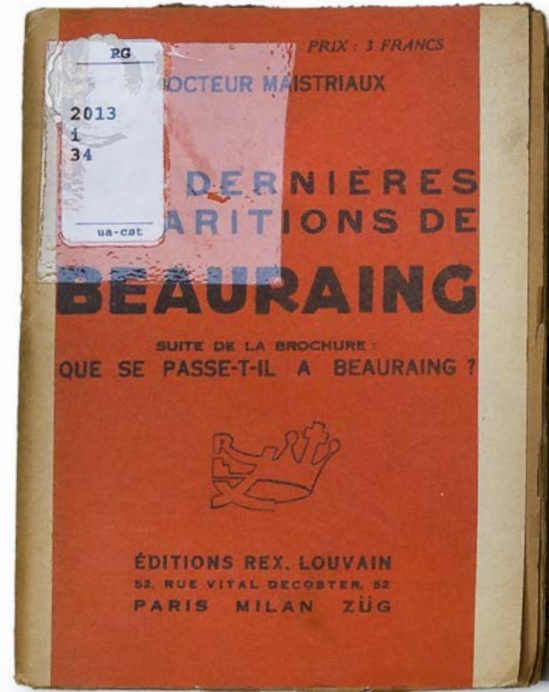
These three unique sources of the spirituality of the Spiritual Virgins come from the rich legacy of professor Alfons K.L. Thijs. Together with his friend Filip Lemmens he has contributed much to our knowledge of devotional representation. Following his death in 2014, the pictures were bought by the University of Antwerp Library and loaned to the large existing collection of pious pictures of the Ruusbroec Institute Library to aid research into the history of devotion during the Early Modern period.

Further reading
 A.K.L. THIJS, *Antwerpen internationaal uitgeverscentrum van devotieprenten, 17de–18de eeuw*, Louvain, 1993.
 E.M.F. VERHEGGEN, *Beelden van passie en hartstocht. Bid- en devotieprenten in de Noordelijke Nederlanden, 17de en 18de eeuw*, Zutphen, 2006.

Amand Gérardin ◀ *Verschiĳningen te Banneux* [*Apparitions in Banneux*]

Antwerp, Algemeene Uitgeversmaatschappij · Louvain, Uitgeverij Rex, 1933, 62 pp., ill. · RG 4092 B 9

◀ **TINE VAN OSSELAER** is Research Professor at the Ruusbroec Institute, Faculty of Arts of the University of Antwerp.



◀ Amand Gérardin, *Verschiĳningen te Banneux* [*Apparitions in Banneux*], (Antwerp: Algemeene Uitgeversmaatschappij; Louvain: Uitgeverij Rex, 1933), cover (detail)

During the winter of 1932–1933, a number of Marian apparitions were reported in the Walloon towns of Beauraing and Banneux. The events in the first locality received a great deal of news coverage and Beauraing was overwhelmed by visitors, whereas the apparitions in Banneux did not seem to interest many people. Nevertheless, there too, a promotional campaign started and already in April 1933 (a month after the events) Leo Olivers, a Dutch visitor, was able to purchase a little booklet on the apparitions. It was a richly illustrated work of 62

pages and was written at the request of Rex, publishers of the Catholic Action. Léon Degrelle, who was in charge of the publishing house, saw the commercial potential of such a publication. Similar publications on Beauraing had quickly brought financial health to the ailing company. To promote Banneux, Degrelle contacted Amand Gérardin, a lawyer by training (and poet by calling), who had written for Rex before. It did not take long before a translation of his *Des apparitions à Banneux* appeared to stimulate the interest of Flemish readers in the Banneux apparition.



Amand Gérardin, *Des apparitions à Banneux*, (Louvain: Éditions Rex, 1933), the Dutch translation and other examples of brochures to promote Banneux and Beauraing, published by Rex in Louvain

The Ruusbroec Institute Library does not only own these two booklets, the French and Dutch versions, but also a whole series of other brochures, cobbled together, sometimes in great haste, for the interested reader. They are testimony, not only to the commercial nous of many publishers, but also to the ambitions and convictions of the promoters of such places of miraculous apparitions. By bringing such works into circulation they drew attention to these miraculous phenomena and kept interest in them alive until they were recognized by the Church and

these localities developed into nationally recognised holy places. Other booklets, however, testify to the failed ambitions of, and fading interest in, non-recognised localities. Gérardin's works did not miss the target and that one Dutch visitor who in April 1933 still returned critically-minded from Banneux later testified that it was the small booklet that finally convinced him and turned him into one of the most powerful promoters of the affair in the Netherlands.

Editions of the Works of Middle Dutch Mystics

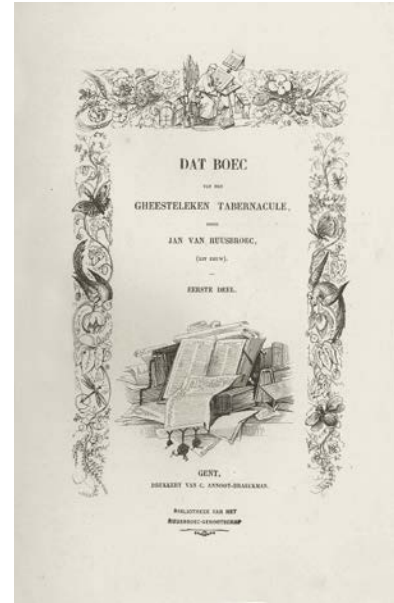
The Complete Works of Ruusbroec in Middle Dutch

◀ **GUIDO DE BAERE** is Professor Emeritus at the Ruusbroec Institute, Faculty of Arts of the University of Antwerp. He is also on the editorial board of *Ons Geestelijk Erf*.

The first complete edition of the works of Ruusbroec in the original language was by Jan Baptist David (1801–1866), *Werken van Jan van Ruusbroec*. Ghent, C. Annoot-Braeckman, 1858–1868. As professor of National Language and Literature at the Catholic University of Louvain, the development of a Flemish written language was close to his heart. His interest in Ruusbroec was therefore linguistically inspired although canon David also appreciated Ruusbroec's mystical-literary qualities.

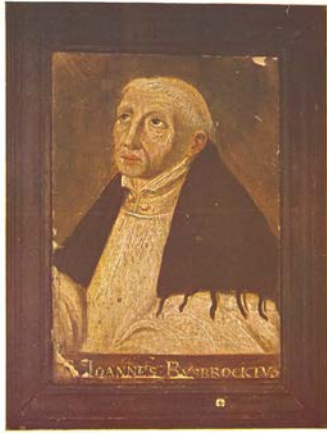
In the context of the 550th anniversary of Ruusbroec's death in 1931 the demand for a new edition of his works arose. David's small print-run was long exhausted and given the philological shortcomings a reprint was not desirable. That is why the newly founded Ruusbroec Institute of 1925 gave itself the task of providing a new edition: *Jan van Ruusbroec, Werken*. Malines/Amsterdam, Het Kompas/De Spieghel, 1932–1934. A revised edition appeared in 1944–1948 at Tielt with Lannoo. This publication was perfectly suited to the spirit driving the Institute at that time: religious zeal, social awareness and the promotion of Flemish culture. But this jubilee publication only gave the editors limited time for their work and already in the introduction the wish for a 'definitive critical edition' was expressed.

The title pages of the first volumes of the four successive editions of Ruusbroec's complete works: J.B. David, *Werken van Jan van Ruusbroec* (Ghent, 1858–1868); Jan van Ruusbroec, *Werken* (Tielt, 1944–1948); Jan van Ruusbroec, *Opera Omnia* (Tielt/Leiden/Turnhout, 1981–2006); *The Complete Ruusbroec* (Turnhout, 2014)



A start was made on the latter at the end of the 1960s, again under the direction of the Ruusbroec Institute. The first two volumes appeared in 1981 with the title *Jan van Ruusbroec, Opera Omnia*, and the project was completed in 2006 (volumes 1–2, Tielt/Leiden, Lannoo/Brill, 1981 and 1–10, Turnhout/Tielt, Brepols/Lannoo, 1988–2006).

The edition of the Middle Dutch text rests on a critical examination of as many textual sources as possible. It is accompanied by an English translation and the Latin translation of Surius (1552), which for many centuries was the entry point to the works of the master for the European intelligentsia as well as forming the basis for translations into modern vernaculars up to the end of the nineteenth century.



Het austerindemisch Ruusbroecportret van het Ruusbroec Genootschap, op natuurlijke grootte.

JAN VAN RUUSBROEC
 I. HET RIJCKE DER GHELIEVEN
 II. DIE GHEESTELIKE BRULOCHT

BEVERKT DOOR
 PROF. Dr. J. B. POUKENS S. J.
 EN
 PROF. Dr. L. REY PENS S. J.
 TWEDE HERZIENE EN VERBETERDE DRUK.



1944
 DRUKKERIJ-UITGEVERIJ LANNOO, TIELT

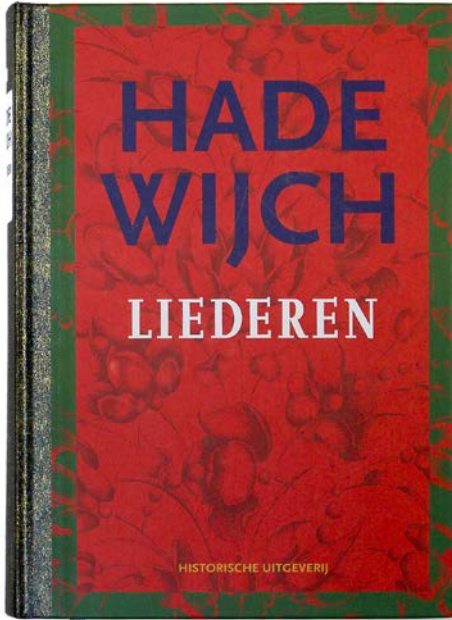
Given the scope and price of this edition there was now a demand for a more compact one. This has been published as *The Complete Ruusbroec. English Translation with the Original Middle Dutch Text*. Brepols, Turnhout, 2014, once more through the good offices of members of the Ruusbroec Institute.

Further reading

Th. MERTENS, 'De wetenschappelijke editie van Ruusbroecs werken in historisch perspectief', in: K. Schepers & F. Hendrickx (eds.), *De letter levend maken. Opstellen aangeboden aan Guido de Baere bij zijn zeventigste verjaardag*, Louvain, 2010, pp. 457-478.



The Works of Hadewijch



◀ Hadewijch, *Liederen* [Songs], edited by Veerle Fraeters and Frank Willaert (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 2009), cover

Hadewijch (ca. 1240) left a many-faceted mystical legacy. In the fourteenth century her *Visions*, *Letters*, *Stanzaic Poems* (also: *Songs*) and *Mixed Poems* (also: *Rhyming Letters*) were gathered into one volume manuscripts, a privilege usually reserved only for important religious authors. Yet her work, in contrast to Ruusbroec's, was not disseminated widely nor continuously. One of the last traces of its reception in the Middle Ages is a partial manuscript dated circa 1500, kept by the Ruusbroec Institute (Hs. Neerl. 385 II). Shortly after, Hadewijch was forgotten.

In 1838 two manuscripts with her collected works were rediscovered in the Belgian National Library (KBR) in

Brussels (ms. A en B) and a third collection was later found in the University Library at Ghent (ms. C). The Ghent manuscript was the base manuscript of the first critical edition in three volumes of Hadewijch's works in prose and poetry by Jozef van Mierlo SJ (1908–1912).

Between 1908–1912 and 1952 Van Mierlo, a co-founder of the Ruusbroec Institute in 1925, published Hadewijch's works a second time in the series *Leuvense Studiën en Tekstuitgaven*. These editions formed the basis of a steadily-growing national and international study of Hadewijch, of which the findings are currently being incorporated into a new edition of the collected works, edited by Veerle Fraeters (Ruusbroec Institute) and Frank Willaert (ISLN, Institute for the Study of Literature in the Low Countries).

Part one, *Liederen* [Songs], was published in 2009 by Historische Uitgeverij Groningen. It provides the original Middle Dutch text based on the oldest manuscript (ms. A), a modern translation, a thorough introduction and a detailed commentary for each song. The musicologist L.P. Grijp reconstructed the melodies to which Hadewijch presumably wrote her poems. The songs are vocalized on four enclosed CDs. Hadewijch, *Liederen* was rewarded the Kruyskamp-prize of the *Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* [Society of Dutch Literature, Leiden] for best edition of the last six years. The book has been translated into German (De Gruyter, 2016), Hungarian (L'Harmattan, 2016) and French (Albin Michel, 2017).

◀ **VEERLE FRAETERS** is Professor and currently Director at the Ruusbroec Institute, Faculty of Arts of the University of Antwerp. She is also on the editorial board of *Ons Geestelijk Erf*.

Colophon

This publication came into being during the celebrations of the 90th birthday of the Ruusbroec Institute Library, Faculty of Arts, University of Antwerp
Original title: *Het Ruusbroecgenootschap: 90 jaar hoeder van spiritueel erfgoed. Een rijke en levende collectie van de Vlaamse jezuiten aan de Antwerpse Universiteit*, Antwerpen, 2015

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