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Chapter 16

'Men and books under watch': the Brussels' book market in the mid-sixteenth century through the inquisitorial archives

Renaud Adam¹

Scholars working on the book trade during the Ancien Régime face two major obstacles. The first one is of a heuristic nature: there is no reference work either listing all archives still preserved or providing a list of all those who have already been the subject of a critical edition. The second difficulty is related to the number of documents available; few lists related to the book trade have been preserved.² The city of Brussels is no exception.³ However, for the mid-sixteenth century, a source of an exceptional nature counterbalances that statement: the booklists established by the Council of Troubles in 1569. This article provides an overview of the context in which the Council of Troubles was established, as well as describing the documentary evidence it produced. It then examines the lists produced in Brussels, and proceeds to an in-depth analysis of an individual bookshop and its stock.

The booklists of the Council of Troubles as historical evidence

In the years 1565-1566, the Low Countries were shaken by a vast political and religious revolt directed against Philip II. In response to the uprising, the king established the so-called Council of Troubles, a special court active from 1567 to 1576. This institution was led in its early years by Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alba and Governor General of the Low Countries. The repression that followed claimed 10,000 victims; the most famous were the Counts of Hornes and Egmont, beheaded the 5 June 1568, in the main square of Brussels. The population renamed this court "the Bloody Council".⁴ The Council of Troubles also turned its attention to the book trade, that

¹ The author would like to thank Dr Emmanuel Joly (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, Brussels) for the rereading of this article; Prof. Annick Delfosse (University of Liège – *Transitions*, Research Department on Middle Ages and Early Modern Period), Prof. Andrew Pettegree (University of St Andrews) and Dr Shanti Graheli (University of Glasgow) for their remarks and comments.

² Considerations on book trade lists: Graham Pollard and Albert Ehrman, *The Distribution of Books by Catalogue from the Invention of Printing to A.D. 1800, Based on Material in the Broxbourne Library* (Cambridge: Roxburghe Club, 1965); Annie Charon and Elisabeth Parinet (eds.), *Les ventes de livres et leurs catalogues XVII^e – XX^e siècle* (Paris: École des Chartes, 2000); Annie Charon, Claire Lesage and Eve Netchine (eds.), *Le livre entre le commerce et l'histoire des idées. Les catalogues de libraires (XV^e-XIX^e siècles)* (Paris: École des Chartes, 2011); Malcolm Walsby, 'Book Lists and their Meaning', in Malcolm Walsby and Natasha Constantinidou (eds.), *Documenting the Early Modern Book World. Inventories and Catalogues in Manuscript and Print* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 1-24: 7-8; Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 347-387.

³ Regarding the early eighteenth century in Brussels, there is an outstanding source for the study of the book trade: the account book of the bookseller Guillaume Fricx covering the period from the 23 October 1705 to 2 January 1708 (Brussels, Archives of the City, Old Archives, 3438). See: Claude Sorgeloos, 'Les réseaux commerciaux de Guillaume Fricx, imprimeur et libraire à Bruxelles (1705-08)', in Renaud Adam, Ann Kelders, Claude Sorgeloos and David Shaw (eds.), *Urban Networks and the Printing Trade in Early Modern Europe (15th-18th Century). Papers presented on 6 November 2009, at the CERL Seminar hosted by the Royal Library of Belgium* (London: CERL, 2010), pp. 1-37; Claude Sorgeloos, 'Travaux et clients de Guillaume Fricx, imprimeur et libraire à Bruxelles (1705-1708)', *In Monte Artium. Journal of the Royal Library of Belgium*, 6 (2013), pp. 141-166.

⁴ Alphonse Verheyden, *Le Conseil des Troubles* (Flavion-Florennes: Le Phare, 1981); Solange Deyon and Alain Lottin, *Les casseurs de l'été 1566. L'iconoclasme dans le Nord* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires de Lille – Westhoek: Éditions des Beffrois, 1986); Gustaaf Marnef and Hugo de Schepper, 'Conseil des Troubles (1567-1576)', in Erik Aerts, Michel Baelde and Herman Coppens (eds.), *Les institutions du gouvernement central des Pays-Bas habsbourgeois (1482-1795)* (2 vols, Brussels: Archives générales du Royaume, 1995), I, 470-478; Aline Goosens, *Les Inquisitions modernes dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux (1520-1633)* (2 vols, Brussels: Presses de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, 1998), I, 114-121; Henry Kamen, *The Duke of Alba* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 75-105; Caroline Payen, *Aux confins du Hainaut, de la Flandre et du*

is, the production, the distribution as well as at the ownership of books. This investigation generated a considerable archive, which, in spite of their incomparable precision, have barely been used by scholars concerned with the study of the socio-professional milieu of the artisans of the book, or the dissemination of books, either as commodities, or as a cultural substrate of the Low Countries. The documents are mostly made of minutes of investigations of people working in the milieu of printing offices, as well as of inventories of thousands of books found in bookshops located in the southern provinces, and in libraries belonging to people suspected of sedition.⁵ All the books documented by these investigations were listed, whether they were forbidden or not. With the survival of these documents, the repressive measures taken by the Duke of Alba could be the entry point of a large multidisciplinary study on the state of book culture, its industry and its players in the different cities of the Low Countries during the last third of the sixteenth century.

One of the most famous measures taken by the Council of Troubles was the realisation and the publication of three indexes of prohibited books (1569, 1570, 1571). These reproduced and completed the Tridentine Index (1564), which itself reproduced and completed the Index of the University of Louvain (1546, 1550, 1558).⁶ According to the rules of application of the Roman Index, local inquisitors and bishops were invited to augment it as they saw fit. For this reason, the Duke of Alba tasked Benito Arias Montano with a catalogue of prohibited books specific to the Netherlands. The Spanish Orientalist was present in the Low Countries to help Christopher Plantin with the production of his famous Polyglot Bible. In the early months of 1569, Christopher Plantin, having been granted a privilege, published the first Index of Antwerp. The text of this was effectively the Tridentine Index, with further additions made by Montano.⁷ After its publication, the Duke ordered the Councils of Justice to search for prohibited books in all bookstores and printing offices of the Low Countries. The Duke of Alba wished, as he said, to “faire casser, abolir et anéantir tous livres deffendus et réprouvez” (to break, remove and destroy all books that were prohibited and frowned-upon) in order to “extirper les sectes hérésies et mauvaises doctrines régnaans ès pays de par dacha” (to eradicate heretical sects and bad doctrines in the Low Countries).⁸

On 14 March 1569, the local judicial authorities passed on the Duke of Alba's instructions.⁹ Two days later, inquisitors, theologians and police officers paid unexpected visits to various bookshops; suspicious books were seized and submitted to the examination of local authorities. In Tournai, Nicolas Soldoyer, a member of the Catholic bourgeoisie of the city, was sufficiently struck by this raid to mention it in his memoirs: “le 16 dudit mois [i.e. mars], on prit tous les livres chez les libraires, et on les mena dans des tonneaux à la cour spirituelle pour y estre examinez” (on the 16th of this month [i.e. March], all books found in bookshops were seized and taken in barrels to the spiritual

Brabant: le bailliage d'Enghien dans la tourmente iconoclaste (1566-1576). Étude de la répression des troubles religieux à la lumière des archives du Conseil des troubles et des Comptes de confiscation (Courtrai: UGA, 2013).

⁵ Some documents were edited: Philippe Rombouts, *Certificats délivrés aux imprimeurs des Pays-Bas par Christophe Plantin et autres documents se rapportant à la charge du Prototypographe* (Antwerp: Buschmann – Ghent: Hoste, 1881); Hendrik A. Enno Van Gelder, *Gegevens betreffende roerend en onroerend bezit in de Nederlanden in de 16^e eeuw* (2 vols, La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973-1975).

⁶ On this, see: Fernand Willocx, *Introduction des décrets du Concile de Trente dans les Pays-Bas et dans la Principauté de Liège* (Louvain: Librairie universitaire, 1929), pp. 140-148; Jesus Martinez De Bujanda (ed.), *Index d'Anvers 1569, 1570, 1571* (Sherbrooke: Centre d'Études de la Renaissance; Geneva: Droz, 1988); Kamen, *The Duke of Alba*, p. 118.

⁷ *Librorum prohibitorum index ex mandato regiae catholicae majestatis, & illustrissimi ducis Albani, consiliiique regii decreto confectus, & editus* (Antwerp, Christopher Plantin, 1569), USTC 411461.

⁸ The quotations come from: Louis-Prosper Gachard and Joseph Lefèvre (ed.), *Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des Pays-Bas* (6 vols, Brussels: Librairie ancienne et moderne, 1848 [vol. I]; Brussels-Ghent-Leipzig: C. Muquardt, [1851-1879] [vols. II-V]; Tongres, Imprimerie Michiels-Broeders, 1936 [vol. VI]), II, pp. 674-675.

⁹ For the example of Ypres, see: Isidore Lucien and Antoine Diegerick, *Documents du XVI^e siècle faisant suite à l'inventaire des chartes* (4 vols, Bruges: De Zuttere, 1874-1877), IV, 250-251.

court for examination).¹⁰ Two months later, on 16 June, Soldoyer mentioned that “on brusla sur le Marché deux tonneaux pleins de livres erroneques qu’on avait trouvés dans les boutiques des libraires” (they burned on the Market two barrels full of erroneous books found in the bookstores).¹¹ These barrels contained nearly 550 works, mostly French Bibles, New Testaments and psalters printed in Geneva.¹²

The lists of authorised and prohibited books found in the bookstores visited were sent to Brussels. In September, Alba instituted a commission of censors under the authority of Montano. Their work was completed on 3 October 1569. They established a catalogue, which was added as an appendix to the Tridentine Index published at the beginning of 1570 by Christopher Plantin.¹³ The State Archives of Belgium, located in Brussels, still preserve some inventories established in Hainaut, Flanders, Picardy and Brabant (i.e. Ath, Avesnes, Bavai, Mons, Binche, Enghien, Maubeuge, Arras, Tournai, Kortrijk, Mechelen, St Omer and Brussels). These archives are exceptional. They offer a sort of radiography of the book market in the Low-Countries on the eve of the Counter-Reformation.¹⁴

Brussels lists and the bookshop of Michiel van Hamont

Three representatives of the civil and religious authorities visited the eleven booksellers working in Brussels in the second half of March 1569. This committee was composed of Laurentius Metsius, dean of Saint Gudula and the official censor of the Council of Brabant; Gislenus de Vroede, pastor of the parish church of Our Lady of the Chapel; and a member the Municipal Council, Guiliemus Busleyden.¹⁵ Among the book-merchants who were paid a visit, only seven are known from other

¹⁰ Alexandre Pinchart (ed.), *Mémoires de Pasquier de La Barre et de Nicolas Soldoyer pour servir à l’histoire de Tournai 1565-1570* (2 vols, Brussels: Société de l’histoire de Belgique, 1865), II, 330.

¹¹ *Mémoires de Pasquier de La Barre et de Nicolas Soldoyer*, II, 339.

¹² The list is edited in: Gérard Moreau, ‘Catalogue des livres brûlés à Tournai par ordre du duc d’Albe’, in Léon-Ernest Halkin, Henri Piatelle and Nicolas N. Huyghebaert (eds.), *Horae tornacenses. Recueil d’études d’histoire publiées à l’occasion du VIII^e centenaire de la consecration de la cathédrale de Tournai* (Tournai: Archives de la Cathédrale, 1971), pp. 194-213.

¹³ *Index librorum prohibitorum: cum regulis confectis per patres a Tridentina synodo delectos, auctoritate sanctissimi domini nostri Pii IIII pontificis maximi comprobatus, cum appendice in Belgio ex mandato regiae catholicae majestatis confecta* (Antwerp, Christopher Plantin, 1570), USTC 401447.

¹⁴ On these archives and their contribution to the book history, see: Moreau, ‘Catalogue des livres brûlés à Tournai par ordre du duc d’Albe’, pp. 194-213; Henri Vanhulst, ‘Les éditions de musique polyphonique et les traités musicaux mentionnés dans les inventaires dressés en 1569 dans les Pays-Bas espagnols sur ordre du duc d’Albe’, *Revue belge de musicologie*, 31 (1977), pp. 60-71; Gustaaf Janssens, ‘Plantijndrukken in de Henegouwse boekhandel in 1569’, in Marcus de Schepper and Francine de Nave (eds.), *Ex officina Plantiniana. Studia in memoriam Christophori Plantini (ca. 1520-1589)* (Antwerp: Vereniging der Antwerpsche Bibliophielen, 1989), pp. 349-379; Renaud Adam and Nicole Bingen, *Lectures italiennes dans les pays wallons à la première Modernité (1500-1630), avec un répertoire des livres en langue italienne et des traductions de l’italien en français* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 61-63, 65-71; Renaud Adam and Nicole Bingen, ‘La réception du livre italien dans les anciens Pays-Bas à la première Modernité: regards sur le Hainaut et le Tournais’, in Lorenzo Baldacchini (ed.), *Il libro e le sue reti* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2015), pp. 31-42.

¹⁵ On these men, see: ‘Variété historiques’, *Analectes pour servir à l’histoire ecclésiastique de Belgique*, 5 (1868), pp. 220-226; 226; Edward Reusens, ‘Documents relatifs à l’histoire de l’Université de Louvain (1425-1797). III. Collèges et pédagogies. 34. Pédagogie du Lis’, in *Analectes pour servir à l’histoire ecclésiastique de Belgique*, 20 (1886), pp. 284-438; 366; Arthur C. de Schrevel, *Histoire du Séminaire de Bruges* (Bruges: Imprimerie de Louis de Plancke, 1895), pp. 371-372; Arthur-C. De Schrevel, ‘Metsius (Laurent)’, in *Biographie nationale [de Belgique]* (43 vols, Brussels: Bruylant, 1866-1986), XIV, pp. 622-629; Olivier de Patoul, ‘Généalogie de la famille de Busleyden’, in *La noblesse belge. Annuaire de 1892* (2 vols, Brussels: Imprimerie Veuve Monnom, 1892), I, p. 83; Henri de Vocht, *History of the Foundation and the Rise of the Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense 1517-1550* (4 vols, Louvain: Bibliothèque de l’Université. Bureaux du Recueil Publications universitaires, 1951-1955), III, pp. 221-222; Guy Van Calster, ‘La censure louvaniste du Nouveau Testament et la rédaction de l’Index érasmien expurgatoire de 1571’, in Joseph Coppens (ed.), *Scrinium erasmianum* (2 vols, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), II, 387-388; Milo Hendrik Koyen and Leo Cyriel Van Dyck,

sources, either as a result of their relationship with Christopher Plantin or for their role in the production of books (they are identified in the table below with an asterisk).¹⁶ The remaining four are known only through this document. The register contains 75 folios, where all the books present on the stalls of these merchants are listed; the lists include all their stock, whether these books are forbidden or perfectly orthodox.¹⁷

It is very difficult to give the exact number of books described in these registers. Some bibliographical descriptions are much too laconic. For this reason the figures given below are rounded totals.

Bookseller	Approx. number of titles	Completion of the inventory
Joachim de Reulx*	300	17/03/1569
Johannes vander Hagen	400	19/03/1569
Franciscus Trots*	800	21/03/1569
Nicolaus Torcy*	200	21/03/1569
Laurentius vander Broeck*	320	23/03/1569
Michiel van Hamont*	800	24/03/1569
Theodoricus Hermans	400	26/03/1569
Ferdinand Liesvelt	400	26/03/1569
Peter Goÿ*	500	31/03/1569
Jasperus Eyens	80	31/03/1569
Petrus Van Tombe*	1,000	01/04/1569
Total	5,200	

Figure 16.1: Brussels Bookshops inspected by the Council of Troubles, 1569.

These figures already give us a fascinating picture of a diverse and varied marketplace, in a city large enough to sustain a wide variety of book-selling businesses. For a more detailed analysis we have chosen to focus on the inventory of Michiel van Hamont, sworn printer to the King. Hamont makes an excellent case study, as his life is better documented than any of the other booksellers listed.¹⁸ He settled in Brussels around 1557 and his presses were running until his death in 1585. His production of books was negligible, comprising less than 15 titles, mainly in Dutch. These included texts by the abbot Louis de Blois and his Dutch translator Josse Schellinck, the schoolmaster Noël de Berlaimont, the historian Nicolaus Mameranus and the Franciscan Frans Vervoort. In addition, Hamont printed almost two hundred edicts and ordinances on behalf of the central government, in both Dutch and French. The privilege given to Hamont to allow him to print books specifies that he was also authorised to publish woodcuts and engravings (3 February 1557). Christopher Plantin confirmed this,

‘Abbaye de Tongerlo’, in *Monasticon belge* (8 vols, Liège: Centre national de recherches d’histoire religieuse, 1890-1993), VIII, pp. 327-328; *Index d’Anvers 1569, 1570, 1571*, p. 38.

¹⁶ Anne Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs, libraires et éditeurs belges des XV^e et XVI^e siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1975), pp. 30, 75, 87-88, 119, 187, 223, 226. Since the publication of this dictionary in 1975, Edmond Roobaert’s researches have refined our knowledge of the environment of Brussels’ booksellers: ‘De zestiende-eeuwse Brusselse boekhandelaars en hun klanten bij de Brusselse clerus’, in André Tourneux (ed.), *Liber amicorum Raphaël De Smedt* (4 vols, Louvain: Peeters, 2001), IV, pp. 47-70.

¹⁷ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28.

¹⁸ Léopold Le Clercq, ‘Michel van Hamont, ‘figuersnijder’ te Brussel (1556-1585)’, *De Gulden Passer*, 21 (1945), pp. 113-118; Rouzet, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs*, pp. 87-88; Edmond Roobaert, ‘Michiel van Hamont. Hellebaardier van de keizer, rederijker en drukker van de koninklijke ordonnances en plakaten’, in Frank Daelemans and Ann Kelders (eds.), *Miscellanea in memoriam Pierre Cockshaw (1938-2008)* (2 vols, Brussels: Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique, 2009), II, 465-485.

twenty years later, in the certificate renewing Hamont's licence to exercise his profession (15 July 1570). He described him with these words:

[...] expert [...] in the art of printing [...] is able to speak Latin, Spanish, German and Flemish well but no French, is able to carve wood engravings, and knows how to correct in formes and printed proofs, and is able to design images and other things.¹⁹

thus informing us that Hamont was also able to speak Latin, Spanish, German and Dutch, but not French.

The inventory of Hamont's store contains over 800 items, representing about 850 titles including around sixty books considered as suspicious or prohibited.²⁰ The descriptions are basic: a short title and the name of the author. Sometimes, we can find additional information, such as the place of printing, the name of the printer or the presence of illustrations. For example, we can find this description of a four-language dictionary printed in Louvain: "Colloquia Ende vocabulaer In vier spraken Lovanii".²¹ Elsewhere, we can read "Die Nieuwe werelt gedrukt by Jan van Loo", which is the Dutch translation of the book of Simon Grynaeus dedicated to the New World printed in Antwerp by Jan van der Loe in 1563.²² The Universal Short-Title Catalogue (USTC) was very helpful tool in identifying the books. Some titles were easy to identify, others less. Sometimes there is a big gap between the spelling of the title mentioned in the inventory and that of the title page recorded in USTC. Despite our efforts, about 7 per cent of the books remain unidentified. We could not find them in the USTC or in other bibliographical tools. One such example is the entry: "Crancheyt des Ooghen", apparently a treatise about eyes diseases, presumably lost.²³ Identification was at times prevented by too laconic a bibliographical description. It was not possible to indicate with certainty which edicts or ordinances were described as "multa edicta Regis", though one might reasonably infer that they were among those printed by Hamont.²⁴ It can also be the case that only the author's name is cited without further details. Which text by the Venerable Bede was simply described as "Beda"?²⁵ Or "Een devoet boecxken" ("one devotion book") of John Chrysostom?²⁶ Nevertheless, even when full identification was not possible, the name of the author or the title still allowed us to allocate the book a subject classification. So the "Crancheyt des Ooghen" fits into the category medicine and the "multa edicta" in law. Consequently, only 2 per cent of the entries remain unclassified.

Figures 16.2 and 16.3 present a break-down of Hamont's stock by literary category and language:

¹⁹ The original reads: "[...] expert [...] audit estat d'imprimerie [...] entendant for bien latin, espagnol, haut alleman et flameng et aucunnement François et taille aussi figures en bois, et scait corriger sur le plomb et espreuves, et patronner figures et autres choses [...]", Rombouts, *Certificats*, p. 5.

²⁰ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 27r-37v.

²¹ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 31r. This edition is: *Vocabulaer in vier spraken duytsch, francois, latin, ende spaensch* (Louvain: Bartholomaeus Gravius, 1551), USTC 347890.

²² Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 34r. This edition is: Simon Grynaeus, *Die nieuwe weerelt der landtschappen ende eylanden, die tot hier toe allen ouden weerelt beschrijven onbekent geweest sijn maer nu onlanx van den Poortugaloiseren en Hispanieren, inder nedergankelijcke zee ghevonden* (Antwerp: Jan van der Loe, 1563), USTC 411135.

²³ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 31r.

²⁴ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 28r.

²⁵ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 33r.

²⁶ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 31v.

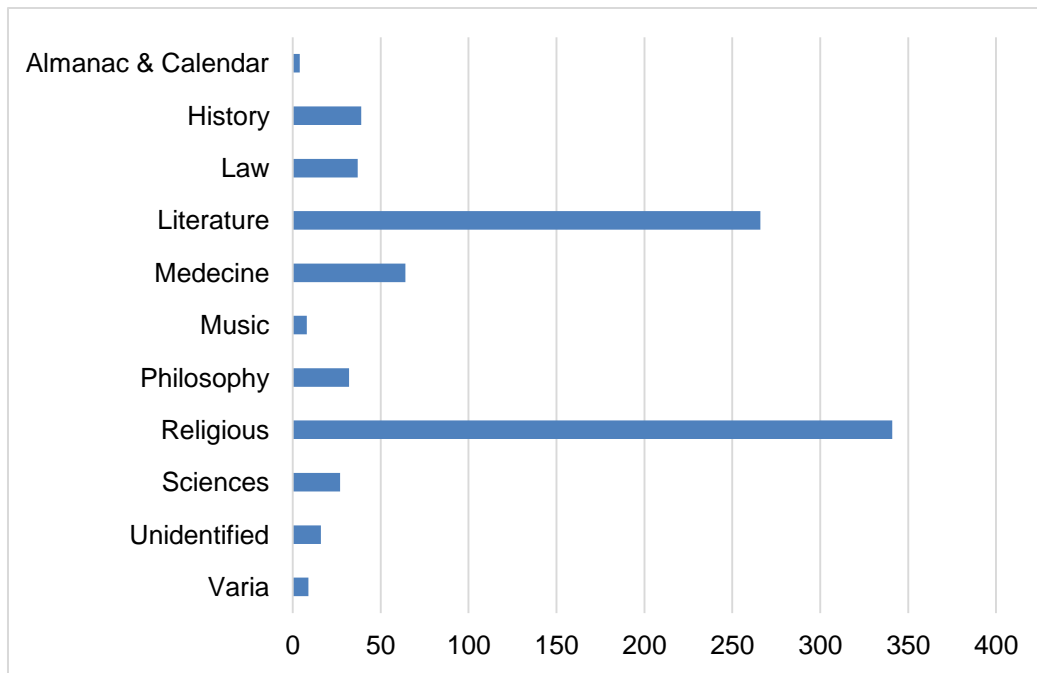


Figure 16.2: Michiel van Hamont's bookshop by literary category.

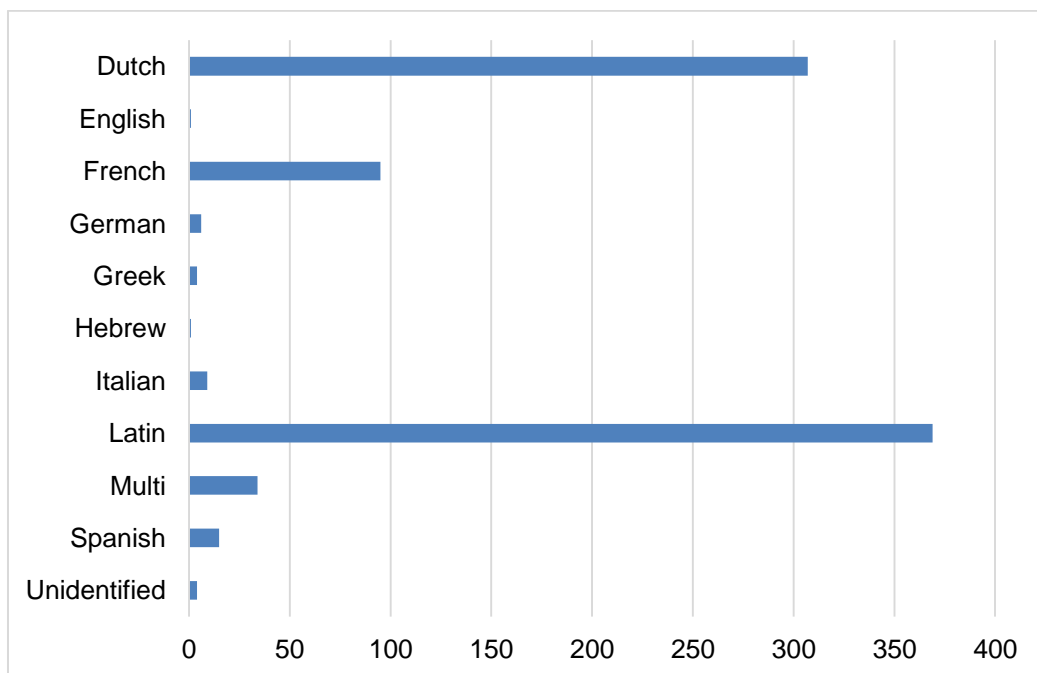


Figure 16.3: Michiel van Hamont's bookshop by language.

From this, we can infer that Hamont's bookshop was not specialized in any particular discipline. His stock mainly concerned itself with religious matters (342 books or about 40 per cent) and literary subjects (267 books or about 32 per cent). Medicine is in third place (64 books or about 7.5 per cent). History, philosophy, legal works and scientific disciplines are present in similar proportions, around 30-40 books (around 4 per cent). The other categories ('varia', 'music' and 'almanac and calendar') each contain fewer than ten titles. Almost 44 per cent (369 titles) of the works present in Hamont's stock were in Latin. Dutch books accounted for 36 per cent (307 titles). There are a far more modest 95 French-language titles (11 per cent). The number of works printed in other languages was minor, though not entirely negligible: 34 books were printed in a combination of languages (i.e. French-

Dutch, Latin-Dutch, Latin-Greek, French-Spanish, four-language dictionary, etc.), 15 in Spanish, 9 in Italian, 6 in German, 4 in Greek; English and Hebrew are represented by only one each.

Almost a third of the religious books stocked by Hamont were small devotional texts printed in the vernacular, mainly in Dutch and often anonymous, encouraging the reader to meditate on the life and the passion of Christ, the Virgin Mary and her Seven Sorrows or the Holy Sacraments.²⁷ The inventory lists works such as the anonymous *Devoet gebet om smorgens ende tsavons*, Cornelis Donthers' *Een zeer devote oeffeninge ende contemplatie op de seven principale bloetstortinghen in der passien Jesu Christi* in three copies or the anonymous *Dit sijn die seven ween van onser liever vrouwen int lange*.²⁸ Among these books, some were printed by Hamont, such as Josse Schellinck's *Devote ghebeden op d'evangelien van sondaghen, heylich daghen ende sommige andere vanden jare* (1567).²⁹ The presence of theological treatises should also be noted, including texts by both medieval and contemporary authors, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Heinrich Suso, Louis de Blois, Juan de Dueñas or Franciscus Sonnius, bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch and Antwerp.³⁰ Treatises of spirituality are also present in numbers, such as the evergreen *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas a Kempis, held in several copies, both in Latin and Dutch.³¹ The Church Fathers are also represented in the inventory, including St Augustine, Cyprian of Carthage or John Chrysostom.³²

In addition to these long-established bestsellers, Hamont's list also reflected the recent impact of the Counter-Reformation. These included the decrees of the Council of Trent, the catechism of Petrus Canisius (in Latin and in Dutch), the Index of prohibited books, and anti-Protestant texts by Martinus Cromerus, Richard Smith or Antoine Du Val.³³ One could also find Bibles, either the whole text or individual sections, as well as several commentaries written by theologians such as Desiderius Erasmus, Peter Titelmann or Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples.³⁴ Hamont also contributed to the satisfaction of spiritual needs of both priests and laymen by maintaining the provision of liturgical and para-liturgical texts. These included books of hours, psalters or breviaries according to the local or Roman Uses.³⁵ There are few hagiographic books listed (4), all in Dutch, such as a relation of miracles that occurred in 1433 in the land of Cleves written by Arent Bosman and an anonymous life of Saint Anna.³⁶ To conclude this inventory of religious books, it is worth mentioning the famous *Malleus maleficarum*, one of the most important treatises dedicated to the prosecution of witchcraft.³⁷

In quantitative terms, secular literature was the second most important part of Hamont's stock. His fund can be divided into four main categories: books to learn or improve command of a language (classical or vernacular), novels, poetry and theatre. The most frequent authors from all disciplines are, in order of popularity, Erasmus (12 titles), Gabriel Meurier (9 titles), Johannes Despauterius (6 titles), Ovid (8 titles), Terence (8 titles), Johannes Murmellius (7 titles), Georg

²⁷ On the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin and the Holy Sacraments in Brussels, see: Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary: Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries (c. 1490-1520)', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), pp. 252-278; Luc Dequeker, *Het Sacrament van Mirakel. Jodenhaat in de Middeleeuwen* (Louvain: Davidsfond, 2000); Renaud Adam, 'L'Histoire de Saint sacrement de Miracle d'Étienne Ydens (1605), œuvre de dévotion ou œuvre polémique?', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 92 (2014), pp. 413-433; Emily S. Thelen (ed.), *The Seven Sorrows Confraternity of Brussels. Drama, Ceremony, and Art Patronage (16th-17th Centuries)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

²⁸ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 27v, 30r, 34v, 35v.

²⁹ USTC 409886. Two copies are mentioned in the register (Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 28r, 32v).

³⁰ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 28r, 30r-31v, 32v, 34r, 35r.

³¹ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 30r-30v, 32r-32v, 35r-36r.

³² Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 28r, 31r-32v, 33v, 35r-36r.

³³ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 27v, 28v-31v, 32v, 34r, 35r-36r.

³⁴ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 27v-30r, 32r, 34v, 36v-37r.

³⁵ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 27r-30v, 31r, 32r, 33r, 34r, 35r.

³⁶ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 33r, 34v.

³⁷ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 29v.

Fabricius (5 titles), Johannes Sartorius (5 titles), Cornelis Lauerma (4 titles), Ravius Textor (4 titles), Juan Luis Vivès (4 titles) and Noël van Berlaimont (3 titles).³⁸ Medieval romances translated from French into Dutch and adapted to suit urban bourgeois values were particularly successful.³⁹ Hamont was offering for sale such titles as *Histoire amoureuse de Flores et Blanchefleur*, *Die Historie van Peeter van Provencen*, *Historie van Hughe van Bourdeus*, or the *Historie van Karel ende Elegast*.⁴⁰ There were also great names of Italian literature, including Pietro Aretino, Ludovico Ariosto, Baldassare Castiglione, Niccolò Machiavelli and Petrarch.⁴¹ These authors were present either in their original language or in translation in French, Dutch and even in Spanish such as Antonio Beccadelli's *Libro de los dichos y hechos del rey don Alonso* translated by Antonio Rodríguez Dávalos.⁴² Alongside these titles, the customer could also find local imprints, especially the works of local playwrights, Cornelius Crocus, Gregorius Holonius or Cornelis Lauerma, and rhetoricians (*rederijkers*) from Brussels, Jan van den Dale and Jan Baptist Houwaert.⁴³ Hamont himself was a member of the local chamber of rhetoric.⁴⁴ Indeed, on their behalf, he printed in 1563 several poems that had been declaimed at a rhetoricians' competition held in Brussels in 1562.⁴⁵ The poems were still available in his shop in 1569.⁴⁶

Compared to the body of religious and literary texts, the other categories were significantly smaller. Among these fields, the best-represented discipline is medicine (just over 7 per cent).⁴⁷ At that time, the dominant model of medical practice was the humoral theory of Galen and the ancients.⁴⁸ For the sixteenth century alone, nearly 600 editions of Galen are documented.⁴⁹ The

³⁸ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 27r-29v, 30v-35v, 36r-37r.

³⁹ On this topic, see: Herman Pleij, 'La littérature dans les villes aux xv^e et xvi^e siècles', in Jan Van der Stock (ed.), *La ville en Flandre. Culture et Société 1477-1787* (Brussels: Crédit communal de Belgique, 1991), pp. 171-182; Herman Pleij, 'Le bas Moyen Âge et le temps de la rhétorique', in Hanna Stouten, Jaap Goedegebuure and Frits van Oostrom (eds.), *Histoire de la littérature néerlandaise (Pays-Bas et Flandre)* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), pp. 71-155.

⁴⁰ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 29v, 31v, 33r.

⁴¹ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 29r-29v, 33r-34r, 36r.

⁴² Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 30r. We have further investigated the dissemination of Italian literature in Brussels from 1500 to 1650 in 'Le livre italien à Bruxelles (1500-1650)', in Renaud Adam and Chiara Lastraioli (eds.), *Itinéraires du livre italien à la Renaissance: regards sur la Suisse romande, les anciens Pays-Bas et la Principauté de Liège* (Paris: Garnier, 2018; forthcoming).

⁴³ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 27v-28v, 31v-32v, 35r-35v, 36v.

⁴⁴ On the rhetorical chamber of Brussels, see: Susie Speakman Sutch, 'Dichters van de stad. De Brusselse rederijkers en hun verhouding tot de Franstalige hofliteratuur en het geleerde humanisme', in Jozef Janssens and Remco Sleiderink (eds.), *De macht van het schone woord. Literatuur in Brussel van de 14^{de} tot de 18^{de} eeuw* (Leuven: Davidsfond, 2003), pp. 141-159; Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval and the Brussels Leliebroeders (1490-1500). The Model of a Conformist Rhetoricians Chamber?', in Bart Ramakers (ed.), *Conformisten en rebellen. Rederijkerscultuur in de Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), pp. 95-106; Remco Sleiderink, 'De schandaleuze spelen van 1559 en de leden van De Corenbloem. Het socioprofessionele, literaire en religieuze profiel van de Brusselse rederijkerskamer', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 92 (2014), pp. 847-875; Sleiderink, 'The Brussels Plays of the Seven Sorrows', in *The Seven Sorrows Confraternity*, pp. 51-66.

⁴⁵ *Refereynen ende liedekens van diversche rhetoricien uut Brabant, Vlaenderen, Hollant, ende Zeelant: ghelesen en ghesonghen op de Corenbloeme Camere binnen Bruessele, 26.07.1562, op de vraghe, wat dat de landen can houden in rusten?* (Brussels: Michiel van Hamont, 1563), USTC 402949.

⁴⁶ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 27v.

⁴⁷ This percentage is higher than the one generally seen in other shops at that time, close to 4%. See: Renaud Adam, 'La circulation du livre médical dans les anciens Pays-Bas au second tiers du xvi^e siècle', *Histoire des Sciences Médicales*, 51 (2017), pp. 47-59; Pierre Delsaerdt, 'Suam quisque bibliothecam'. *Boekhandel en particulier boekenbezit aan de oude Leuvense universiteit 16^{de}-18^{de} eeuw* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 2001), p. 129.

⁴⁸ On this, see: Vivian Nutton, 'The fortune of Galen', in Robert James Hankinson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Galen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 355-390.

⁴⁹ Data from USTC. See also: Richard J. Durling, 'A Chronological Census of Renaissance Editions and Translations of Galen', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 24 (1961), pp. 230-305.

Hamont stock echoes this influence with four titles of his works, all in Latin.⁵⁰ The other prominent name from classical antiquity is Hippocrates, with two titles, one in Latin, the other one in Dutch.⁵¹ From the Middle Ages, there is the French translation of Albertus Magnus' *Secretum*. Hamont's bookshop also offered treatises written by Renaissance physicians who denounced the limitations and errors of these authorities, questioning the prominent place still occupied by an erudition now considered sterile.⁵² For example, Hamont had five titles of Paracelsus in stock, in German, Dutch and French, and Ambroise Paré's text on the healing of wounds inflicted by harquebuses and arrows, in the original French and in Dutch translation.⁵³ No title is listed for Andreas Vesalius. Different branches of medicine were also represented in the shop: treatises on diseases, pharmacology, herbal medicine, nutrition or surgery. One notes the name of Dioscorides with his *De herbis*, Girolamo Ruscelli to whom has been attributed the authorship of *De secreti del reverendo donno Alessio Piemontese* (in Dutch translation), and Jacques Guérin's *Traicté très excellent contenant la vraye manière d'estre preservé de la peste en temps dangereux*, the only known edition of which was published by Christopher Plantin 1567.⁵⁴

Other scientific disciplines listed in the 1569 inventory include mathematics, geography, economy and agriculture. Geography seems to be of greater interest than other disciplines. Even if we still find books of Ptolemy, there is a growing audience for books describing exploration of the New World, with for example Levinus Apollonius, *De Peruviae, regionis*, mentioned twice, and Simon Grynaeus, *Die nieuwe weerelt der landtschappen ende eylanden*.⁵⁵ Various legal texts were also available. Customers could buy practical books intended for daily use as well as theoretical treatises. One finds books by contemporary jurists from the Low Countries, France, Italy or Germany, such as François Baudoin, François Hotman, Emilio Ferretti or Johann Aurbach.⁵⁶ There are also anonymous treatises, such as *Les exceptions de droit, les defenses contre le demandeur* and *La maniere pour demener un proces*, dedicated to criminal procedure.⁵⁷

Hamont's own role as sworn printer to the King ensured the presence in his store of many royal edicts or ordinances. Some are related to the regulation of the book market and the ban of heterodox books, such as his *Placcaet ende ordinancie tegens de ghene die eenige fameuse, schandaleuse oft seditieuse boecxkens, artickelen oft scriften maken, versieren, saeyen, divulgeren, drucken, ten voorschijne bringen, oft onder hen houden* (1568).⁵⁸ The enduring authority of Aristotelian philosophy is reflected by Hamont's stock. Almost a third of the category 'philosophy' is represented by Aristotelian works or commentaries.⁵⁹ In terms of historical works, Hamont's stock contains books spanning ancient to recent history. The history of the Low Countries is represented by works such as the *Chronike of Historie van Hollant, van Zeelant ende Vriesland ende van den sticht van Utrecht* or the memoirs of Olivier de La Marche. There are also texts devoted to German, Italy, Spain and even Peru, written by Herman Bote, Niccolò Machiavelli, Lorenzo de Sepúlveda and Pedro de Cieza De Leon.⁶⁰

⁵⁰ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 29v, 31r, 35v.

⁵¹ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 33r, 35v.

⁵² Andrew Wear, Roger K. French, Iain M. Lonie, *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁵³ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 29r-v, 30v, 31r, 33v.

⁵⁴ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 28v, 31r, 32v.

⁵⁵ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 27v, 32r, 35r.

⁵⁶ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 34r, 35v, 37r-v.

⁵⁷ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 36r.

⁵⁸ USTC 402960. Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 27r.

⁵⁹ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 29r-29v, 31v, 33v, 34r. Only the Cartesian revolution put an end to Aristotle's influence, although it was not until the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century that the last Aristotle treatises were removed from the curriculum in Louvain. See Michel Reulos, 'L'enseignement d'Aristote dans les collèges au XVI^e siècle', in Jean-Claude Margolin (ed.), *Platon et Aristote à la Renaissance. XVI^e colloque international de Tours* (Paris: Vrin, 1976), pp. 147-154.

⁶⁰ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 28r, 30r, 33r, 34r, 36r, 37r.

The bookshop also sold musical texts and books that can be classified in a wide variety of fields such as military treatises, cookbooks, heraldic works, games books, and alchemy treatises, among other minor categories. Hamont stocked works by Jacobus Clemens non Papa, a master of Renaissance polyphony; the *Instructions de toutes manieres de guerroyer tant par mer que par terre* by the jurist Georges Vivien, from Antwerp; the collection of culinary recipes composed by the physician Gheeraert Vorselman and entitled *Een nyeuwen Coock Boeck*; the famous book of fortune-telling by Lorenzo Spirito in his French translation, *Le passetemps de la fortune des dez*; or a heraldic compilation on families from the Low Countries by Jean Lutte, *Le jardin d'armoirs, contenant les armes de plusieurs nobles royaumes et maisons de Germanie inferieure*.⁶¹

The inventory of Michiel van Hamont's shop also provides valuable information on how books were brought from other parts of the European book market for customers in Brussels. For some entries, we have a more detailed bibliographic description, including the place of publication or the printer's name. In other cases, although the description in itself is rather limited, it is possible to identify the edition with a fair degree of certainty. This process overall has allowed us to identify a wide variety of places of publication, including Antwerp, Louvain, Paris, Deventer, Lyon, Ghent, Cologne and Leipzig. It is possible that Hamont relied on his personal network, and had direct connections in some of these cities; one can reasonably believe so in the case of editions from Antwerp and Leuven. We do not know if he had personal trade links with printers located in Paris or Cologne, or if he acquired these books through intermediaries.

Closer to home, Christopher Plantin in Antwerp recorded various direct transactions with Hamont, spanning the period between 1564 and 1580.⁶² It is interesting to note that, a few weeks after receiving a visit from Alba's emissaries, Hamont asked Plantin to send him numerous copies of the "Catalogus prohibitorum" and "Index librorum prohibitorum". Plantin's business archives give details of the shipment to Hamont, between the end of March and June 1569, of 250 copies of these texts.⁶³ In other cases, whether acquired through direct contacts or intermediaries, the geographical distribution of the editions stocked by Hamont testifies to a bustling business. It also seems likely that Hamont dealt in second-hand books as well as new titles. Various entries in the inventory seem indeed to refer to books printed well before Hamont's years of activity. For example, the only surviving edition that can be satisfactorily identified with the entry "Logices adminicula aut. Themst" was printed by Henri Estienne in 1511.⁶⁴ Second-hand books may also be detected in early modern inventories through the presence of a binding – as most new books were likely to be sold unbound, stitched, or in temporary covers. However, as the concern of those compiling this list was to produce a list of titles, and not an appraisal of the stock, the bibliographical descriptions analysed here do not extend to the materiality of individual copies.

Prohibited and suspicious texts in the bookshop of Michiel van Hamont

As mentioned above, Hamont's bookshop also stocked a number of prohibited books. In all, 63 books (or just over 7 per cent of the whole stock) were regarded as suspicious or prohibited.⁶⁵ These are both religious and lay books, mainly printed in Latin and Dutch. Figures 16.4 and 16.5 detail their distribution according to discipline and language:

⁶¹ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 30v, 32v, 33r, 34r.

⁶² Marc Lefèvre, 'Libraires belges et relations commerciales avec Christophe Plantin et Jean Moretus', *Gulden Passer*, 41 (1963), pp. 1-47: 18.

⁶³ Antwerp, Museum Moretus Plantin, Archives, 17, fol. 141.

⁶⁴ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 31v. The edition is: Aristotle, *Logices adminicula hic contenta: Ammonius In predicabilia Porphyrii, Pompon. praedicamenta Aristotelis editio una, In Peri hermenias editio prima. In praedicamenta Aristotelis editio una, In Peri hermenias editiones due... Themestii in posteriora* (Paris: Henri Estienne, 1511), USTC 180624.

⁶⁵ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, ff. 36v-37r.

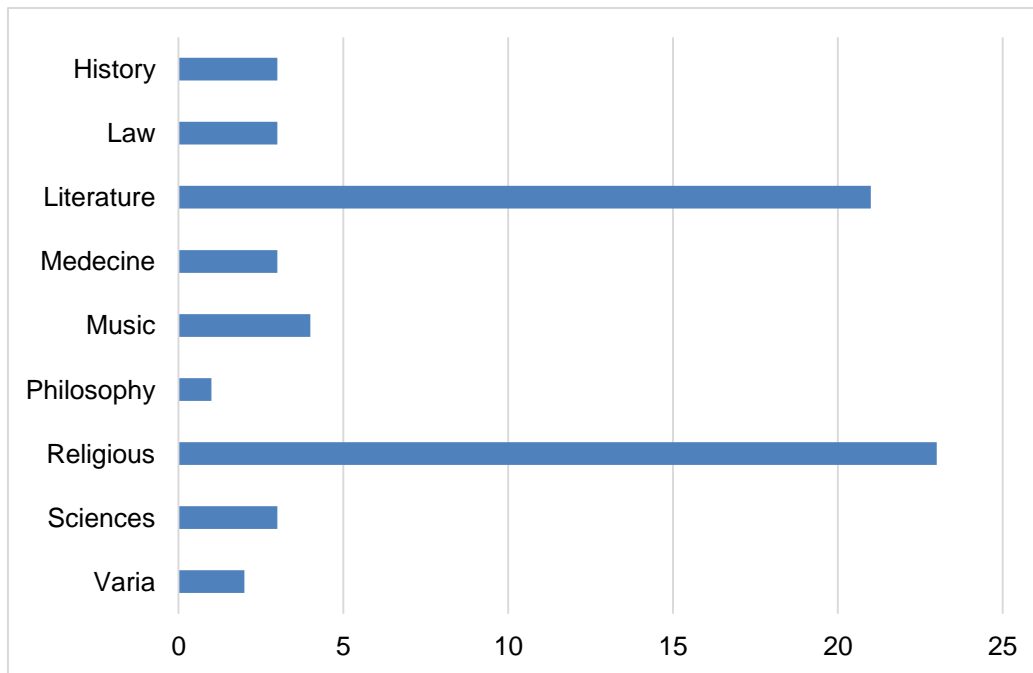


Figure 16.4: Prohibited books in Hamont's bookshop by literary category.

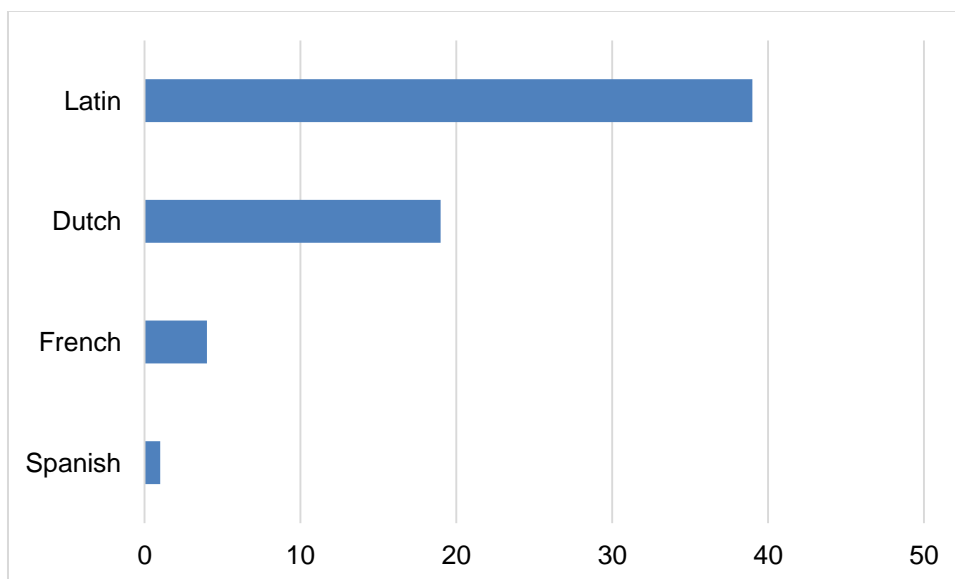


Figure 16.5: Prohibited books in Hamont's bookshop by language.

Religious literature accounts for 23 titles (36.5 per cent), closely followed by lay literature with 21 titles (33.5 per cent). The emissaries of Alba did not find forbidden Vernacular Bibles or Genevan psalters similar to those seized in Tournai by their colleagues. They mainly discovered books written by humanists and books dedicated to Bible studies and in the fields of devotion and spirituality. A handful of titles were found for the disciplines of music (four songbooks), history, law, medicine, and science (three titles each). The most represented author is Erasmus, with 18 books (28.5 per cent). There are three different editions of the *Colloquiorum*, which were banned by the Roman Indexes, and other religious books, as the *Novum Instrumentum* or *Paraphrases* of the Gospel of St John and of St Paul's epistles. The fact that Hamont still stocked so many titles by Erasmus is a clear indication of the high-esteem in which the author was still held in mid-sixteenth-century Brussels, notwithstanding the condemnation of Rome and some other theologians. University of Louvain has

been reluctant to join in the official condemnation of Erasmus.⁶⁶ Alba's emissaries did find books written by banned authors, including Georg Fabricius, Sebastian Münster and Poggio Bracciolini. The only name of a prominent reformer mentioned in the document sent to Alba is Sébastien Castellion, listed for his *Dialogorum sacrorum ad linguam simul et mores puerorum formandos libri quatuor*. Most of the forbidden books were in Latin, with 39 titles, followed by Dutch books (19 titles). The French (three titles) and Spanish books (one title) are in the minority.

One of the most interesting revelations of this list, is that only half of the books seized in Hamont's shop had to this point been formally condemned, either by the Faculty of Theology of Louvain or in the Roman Indexes. Eight titles were listed in the indexes of Louvain promulgated in 1546 and 1550. There are nearly all Dutch books, mainly songbooks, such as *Een suyverlyck leysen boecxken*. The songs in this volume, better known as the "Antwerps liedboek", contained open mockery of monks, nuns, beguines and beghards.⁶⁷ One also finds, amongst these small prohibited Dutch books, *Een ghyestelick en seer troestelick A.B.C.*, a volume of religious poetry written by the Antwerp rhetorician Cornelis Crul, who was also one of the Dutch translators of Erasmus.⁶⁸ The presence of such titles in Hamont's stock may seem surprising, considering that he also had in his shop a copy of the Index of Louvain printed by Merten Verhasselt in 1558; but as ever, having access to a text does not necessarily mean that the text has been read.⁶⁹ The 1569 inventory did not contain copies of the Roman Indexes promulgated by Paul IV (1559) or the Tridentine Index promulgated by Pius IV in 1564.

The remaining titles in Hamont's stock that were identified as suspicious by the emissaries of Alba had never been listed as prohibited books. Of these, fourteen were added to the Index printed by Plantin in 1570, while another would be inserted in the subsequent Index he printed the year after. The remaining twelve titles were never prohibited. Titles may have been flagged up by association with the author's name, if other works by the same individual had been prohibited. This was the case with François Baudouin, whose *Constantinus magnus* was listed in the Roman Index. His *Disputationes duae de jure civili*, found in Hamont's stock, were not themselves listed, and yet considered as suspicious.⁷⁰ The emissaries of the Duke of Alba were perhaps following the spirit of the Pauline Index in its overwhelming assumption that the religious convictions of an author contaminated all of his or her writings.⁷¹ The 1569 inventory also shows that the struggle against the prominent Reformed texts was yielding results. A mid-sixteenth-century Brussels bookseller would not dare to offer titles by Luther or Calvin on open sale.

Conclusions

The inventory of the Hamont's bookshop offers a snapshot of its customers and their taste. The typology of titles in stock suggests that a variety of readers would be frequenting the shop, from local clerks to students from Latin schools, merchant-readers or members of the local chambers of rhetoric. A bookshop was not simply a place of business, but also a place of encounter. It is also interesting to see that suspicious or forbidden books discovered in Hamont's bookstore were mainly books written by humanists, as for example Erasmus, Sebastian Münster or Poggio Bracciolini. Erasmus was still highly appreciated in Brussels forty years later, pleas from theologians that his works be prohibited. His influence was such that the University of Louvain itself hesitated to place all his work under a blanket ban.

The inventories compiled at the request of the Duke of Alba, although they stand witnesses to a time of cruel repression and deep fear, today contribute to offering a portrait of Brussels as a

⁶⁶ Guy Van Calster, 'La censure louvaniste du Nouveau Testament', pp. 381-436.

⁶⁷ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 36v.

⁶⁸ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 37r.

⁶⁹ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 35v.

⁷⁰ Brussels, State Archives of Belgium, *Council of Troubles*, reg. 28, fol. 37r.

⁷¹ Paul F. Grendler, 'Printing and Censorship', in Charles B. Schmitt (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 25-54: 45-46.

bustling hub of the book trade in the mid-sixteenth century, showcasing the variety of titles available even in a relatively small bookshop.